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On Modalities and Potentialities of Curatorial Practice

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EXHIBITION-MAKING AND THE POLITICAL IMAGINARY:

ON MODALITIES AND POTENTIALITIES OF CURATORIAL PRACTICE

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FOREWORD

This Ph.D. submission concerns itself with curatorial practice, its constituent modalities *and* potentialities. It consists of both a practical and a theoretical part. My submission is made up of the following two main components:

1. A written, analytical part, that contextualizes and problematizes my curatorial practice, as well as making general claims for the practices and possibilities of exhibition-making.

2. Enacted curatorial research, in the form of the exhibition Unauthorized*, at the Inter Arts Center, June 2 – 26. The exhibition is not an illustration of the proposals set forth in the written part, nor a conclusion, but an example of the way in which an exhibition can function as a test site for such ideas and ideals.*

Theory and practice are here not separate entities, but immersed in each other. They are viewed as interdependent, even if different moment of reflection and realization. The point of departure for the written component is my own practice, but making claims for a general analysis of the politics of exhibition-making. Rather than proving or disproving certain propositions, ideas will be presented as proposals, as possibilities, and investigated as such. It will ask what constitutes 'a practice', in terms of curatorial work as modes of address and circumscription of subjectivity.

In terms of curatorial practice, the situating of practice within my own work is an attempt to redirect the notion of subjectivity and agency into a mode emerging from subjectivity rather than one that is merely the producer of subjectivity. The written part of the submission is itself to be seen as part of such a practice, and claim a curatorial relationship to theory, rather than an art-historical or otherwise disciplinary one. It consists of four chapters, the first giving a background to the activity of exhibition-making, and the following three will outline three proposed terms for an analysis of exhibition-making: *Institution*, *Articulation*, and *Horizons*.

The thesis will look a certain modes of exhibition-making, focusing on case-studies of my own work, in form of two previous projects, the collective project *Models of Resistance* (Overgaden, Copenhagen, 2000) and *Capital (It Fails Us Now)* (UKS, Oslo, 2005 and Kunstihoone, Tallinn, 2006), a thematic exhibition, as well two research exhibitions realized as part of the Ph.D. project, *Vectors of the Possible* (BAK, Utrecht, 2010) and *All That Fits: The Aesthetics of Journalism* (QUAD, Derby, 2011), each dealing with one of the three theoretical notions developed in the Ph.D. project, *Horizon* and *Articulation*. The third term, *Institution*, will have its exhibition part in an exhibition presented at the Inter Arts Center in Malmö as part of the dissertation, entitled *Unauthorized*. A curatorial statement for *Unauthorized* can be found in the appendices. In the appendices is also included the exhibition folders for the two research exhibitions, *All That Fits* and *Vectors of the Possible*, the edited volume *On Horizons*, and an audience questionnaire from QUAD.

CHAPTER ONE: GROUNDING THE PRACTICE

1.1. INTRODUCTION: EXHIBITIONS AND DISCOURSE

Among the previous exhibitions of mine, that will be discussed in detail later on, is a show bearing the title *Capital (It Fails Us Now)*, realized in 2005-6. At the opening of the first version of this show, at the UKS in Oslo in 2005, a fellow curator and writer from the Nordic realm, reacted swiftly and strongly to the exhibition at hand, immediately upon entering the space exclaiming the dismissive words: "I hate discursive exhibitions!" This remark puzzled me for a number of reasons. I was surprised, to say the least, about the suddenness of the reception – that my colleague could see this right away, without actually looking at any of the individual works, but simply upon entering the space. I also found, and still find, it puzzling, even perplexing that the term discursive, which I associate with something descriptive rather than prescriptive, or for matter qualitative, was used as a purely negative adjective. Finally, it has made me wonder what the difference between a discursive and a non-discursive exhibition might be? That is, if the non-discursive is indeed the counter-point to the discursive. I wonder, if any exhibition can actually be non-discursive, if not discourse is a condition of the exhibition?

If discourse is a condition of exhibition-making, how does this discourse manifest itself in practice, and does this entail *all* exhibitions, *all* possible modes of address? As to what was implied in the statement, "I hate discursive exhibitions," discourse is here not a given condition, but rather a certain type of exhibition. This would then indicate that discourse can be *seen*, that it can be identified in a

certain style of display, or a certain style of displayed art works. It means, moreover, that discourse can be read as a visual sign within exhibition-making; that these works in this place, shown in this particular way instantly indicates its dreaded discursiveness. I would agree that discourse can be read through the modes of address of the particular exhibition, but not as an either-or. Rather, the style of the exhibition indicates its place within discourse, or its position towards discursivity. Discourse is therefore, in my view, not a specific style or genre, not made visible through a given theme, or set of themes, such as Capital and its possible failures. It might be, rather, that the theme, as implied by a given title and explored through a given selection and installation of works, contributes to the production of discourse, whether in the form complementation, affirmation, contradiction or negation. In this way, any particular presentation of art and artists is in a dialogue with other exhibitions, past as present, and related to other artists and works, as well as other institutional spaces, and maybe also to the surrounding social field and society.

However, it is also entirely possible that I am giving my assailant too much credit as an analyzer of images and modes of imaging here. Perhaps the list of artists, the significance of my signature as a curator and the very title of the exhibition, all available to the person before entering the exhibition, already had given the impression of a particularly discursive exhibition? Perhaps the invocation of capital failure had already determined the reading of the exhibition, indeed even over-determined it? Which would indicate that there are textual elements of sign value that informs the reception of an exhibition even before the encounter with the works on display, and the ways in which they are displayed, that is, the strategies of exhibition-making.

Indeed, the title, the very act of naming, as well as the significance and recognizability of the proper names indicated can be said to part of the strategy of the exhibition, part of its readability. There is thus a textual element to exhibition-making that goes before the rhetoric of the display itself, formalized in the title, its linguistic style and visual graphics that gives it its sign value, as well as the less visual but none the less narrativizing texts of the press release and maybe even the curatorial statement. But these should not alone, ground, secure or fix the reading and experience of the exhibition. Even to the extent that the title and other textual elements determine or even over-determine the exhibition itself, there is a gap between the textual and the visual – say between a title and its promise, and the actual experience of the works on display. One aspect of exhibition-making, or of the curatorial process, may be the activity that sutures this gap, or tries to open it, working with both discrepancy and semblance, irony and iconography, alienation and seduction, and the visual and (con)textual.

In this case, it must be said, the title was of course fairly deterministic: *Capital (It Fails Us Now)*. It may even have been over-deterministic as well... But as a title of some force, it signals something that other titles may not, such as a generic description like *Recent Works* or the like. A title not only signifies what is nominally on display, but also delivers a promise. This is a promise of what will be on display, perhaps even in terms of style, but also in terms of what will be discussed and proposed. It is an inscription of the works and the artists in a certain relation, to each other, to the potential theme, and to (art) history. The title promises the spectator something, and thus also inscribes the viewer in its relations of power and knowledge, at

least potentially. The viewer can always reject this inscription, whether by disregarding it or disagreeing with its articulation.

On the other hand, the aesthetics of the exhibition and the selected art works, the aesthetics of the exhibition's politics, so to say, attempts to prompt certain reactions and certain readings, and in some cases even instant readability. In this way, a purely descriptive title, such as *Recent Works*, can actually be said to be more instantly readable and inscriptive of the works than *Capital (It Fails Us Now)*. It is more modest in what it promises, namely that the works on display are recent, which does not say anything in particular about the aesthetics and themes of the works. Such a readability is not only a question of titling, of language, but also of aesthetics of display, and the artistic methods of the works, and the possibilities for instantaneous reactions and classifications, such as the one done by my dismayed colleague, may not be desirable. This immediacy may as well, depending the aesthetic-political project intended, be as counter-productive as inductive for the experience of the particular exhibition. As a curator, or as an artist, as well as from the point of view of the institution or the spectator, one would not necessarily want the exhibition to be immediately classifiable and instantly readable. In fact, in any of the respective positions readability and clarity may not even be desired at all, not just instantly, but also in mid-tempo or movement, or very slowly, or never. Is a slow realization, for example, preferable to instant epiphanies and are murky, indecipherable musings better than clearly enunciated speech? And does this depend on one's position as curator, artist, institution or spectator?

Finally, one may ask whether such readings are even controllable, or to what extend – that is whether a chosen form of exhibition-making

can predetermine reading, not all readings, obviously, but even mostly so and most of them? I will suggest that there are different methods, indeed even genres of exhibition-making, that have not only different aesthetics and ideas about art, but also diverging ideologies. These differences are, in my view, not only to be located in specific types of exhibitions, but also in how the particular exhibition employs its means, and to which ends. Since exhibitions can always be exactly dated, and thus in one very general sense located, they can also be historicized. Formats and themes arise and disappear at any given historical moment, and sometimes reappear, whether expectably or surprisingly. It is within these relations, also, that exhibitions should be analyzed, in precisely how they attempt to produce ideology, in terms of conception and reception, and whether consciously or subconsciously.

Furthermore, another point worth considering is whether all exhibitions do have a discourse, and if so how the discourse of a given exhibition can be analyzed? As I hope the example of the instant reaction to the exhibition on capital attests to, this analysis cannot be exempt from ideology or desire in any possible way, nor can it be analytical method that is shared, that can be agreed upon. Whereas I will, in the pages that follow, insist on looking at exhibitions as precisely discursive, as producers as well as reproducers of discourse, I am fully aware that my unnamed opponent would probably not agree on such a presumption or even ontology. Presumably, certain exhibitions are discursive, and others not so, although whether that makes them non- or even anti-discursive is difficult for me to speculate upon. They may very well be both, although I am not sure what that would mean in terms of an actual practice, since I think that exhibitions are always engaged in discursive productions, but differently so. There

are – different opinions on exhibitions, artworks and their qualities aside – no shared language through which to talk about such differences, no commonly agreed upon terminology.

Discussing the legacy of the alternative art movement in New York from the 1960s to 1980s, Julie Ault notes that despite of such efforts, "the art field is marked by polarization, with 'aesthetic' practice at one end of the spectrum, and 'the political' at the other."[1] While agree with this analysis, I think we are witnessing a growing rift in the world of art, between various positions and ideologies, certainly, but maybe also between worlds, between different artworlds and conceptions of art that are nowadays only nominally connected through institutions of art and the very designation of Art (with a capital A), but that has no shared system of value or even discourse. Writing at towards the end of the historical period Ault was describing, in 1983, Jean-François Lyotard invented the notion of a *differend* [différend], to describe a difference or antagonism that cannot be resolved by any one rule, since it is the clash between discursive formations with each their own and different rules:

> As distinguished from a litigation, a differend would be a case of conflict, between (at least) two parties, that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgment applicable to both arguments. One side's legitimacy does not imply the other's lack of legitimacy. However, applying a single rule of judgment to both in order to settle their differend as though it were merely a litigation would wrong (at least) one of them (and both of them if neither side admits this rule). Damages result from an injury which is inflicted upon the rules of a genre of discourse but which is reparable according to those rules. A

> wrong results from the fact that the rules of the genre of discourse by which one judges are not those of the judged genre or genres of discourse.[2]

This can be viewed in two ways, partly as a plea for consensus, or a nostalgic wish to return to the grand, universalizing narratives of modernity and the enlightenment's project of critical reasoning. Secondly, it attests to the impossibility of any such return, that no protocol or procedures can be universal, and if they are posited as such, it is not without violence. It is not my aim to here discuss this impossibility and injustice in terms of global politics, or what Tariq Ali has termed a clash of fundamentalisms.[3] Rather, I think that a differend can also be located in what, in Lyotard's term would have been one genre of discourse, such as contemporary art. In the world of art, and within various forms of exhibition-making, there are differences that can best be described as a differend, as different genres, even if they on the surface employ the same language. This would indicate that the differend, as a post-modern condition, is not only between genres, but at the heart of them, and as constitutive of them. However, where Pierre Bourdieu, in his famous concept of positions and dispositions within the cultural field, views this as what makes the field possible and dynamic – that every position automatically requires a counter position, this can also be viewed as its impossibility.[4] Perhaps the center cannot hold, and the field is constitutively split? In order to illustrate a little more where one can find this rift I am claiming, let us look at another, more general example from the period of Lyotard's writing and the waning of the alternative art movement in NYC, and transpose it to something similar in our actuality. This will, for the sake

of clarity, be an example relating only to the language on art, and the role it plays in the framing of exhibitions, rather than to the format of the exhibition itself.

I am thinking of the boom in new painting exhibitions of the early 1980s, with the emergence of so-called neo-expressionism and its celebrated, but also debated and reviled return to painting after the conceptual and social art of the 1970s. These exhibitions, they were all based on a theoretical argument in catalogue essays and such seminal publications such as Wolfgang Max Faust and Gerd de Vries' *Hunger Nach Bildern*.[5] It was, in other words, necessary for the triumph of this kind of art to present a theoretical and historical argument in relation to conceptual art and its conceptualization of art. It was, perhaps, in this way painting as a concept, a neologism, that was presented. Subsequently, the 'new' art of the 1990s, so-called installation art, was, in turn, billed as a return and continuation of conceptual art and in direct opposition to the art of the 1980s, thus nicely conforming to Bourdieu's theory of the quasi-mechanic generational position-takings. [6] Or even following the most classical of art-historical logics, maybe even stereotypes by this point, proposed by Alois Riegl: art developing as the turns of a screw, in dialectic relationships.[7]

However, the ensuing decade, the 2000s, have also shown us a reemergence of the primacy of painting, understood as being in opposition to the neo-conceptualism of the 1990s. Only this time it is no return, in the sense that no theoretical argument about its newness and so on is presented, the current catalogues do not feature long essays of theory, history and positionality, since they are not needed, the new painting is, I would argue, already consecrated by another,

non-linguistic discourse, the art market and its main mode of exhibition-making, the artfair. As opposed to the forms of mega-exhibition that can be found in museums and biennales, the fair has the advantage of being a marketplace. Its relation to economic assessment is not indirect and dependent on the mediation of criticism, but directly on display. It is not only the meeting place for art and its audience, but the market place for dealers, advisors, investors and collectors, and thus the place where the symbolic capital of the artist gets transformed into real capital.[8]

Simultaneous to this form of evaluation, the force of the market, there has also been the growth of what can almost be described as a cultural discourse industry, with a proliferation of symposia, lectures, panels and other public talking sessions within art institutions, that formerly were almost entirely devoted to the display of art objects. A change in institutional policies, and perhaps discourses on art, moving from purely exhibition making, and the presentation, circulation and affirmation of knowledge and discipline this may entail, to discussions and discourses on art practice (and its discourses) and beyond: these discussions may or may not be directly connected to the objects on display in the actual galleries, and to a certain extent such public talks can be viewed as a genre in itself, such as the category of the 'artists talk', running parallel to the aforementioned painting, but almost independent from object and exhibition making, and something that can be viewed in terms of the performative and/or be employed as an actual site for artistic intervention: a move from a discourse on aesthetics to the aesthetics of discourse, or rather, the staging of discourse.

One can then, perhaps, talk of a linguistic turn, meaning that language and (inter)textuality have become increasingly privileged and important, in art practice, the staging of the discourses around art, the aesthetization of discourse, and the new knowledge based industries such as marketing, public relations and services. In a contradictory double move of dispersion and centralization, the discursive exhibition is at once at a remove from the art market in terms of trading, while at the same time attaining a certain place in the market of exhibitions, and a certain marketability in terms of linguistic effects. It would seem that it is the connection to a market that is the unifying character of these disparate, often antagonistic practices, or at least as much as the very general denomination of 'art'. It is not my purpose here to point out the links between simultaneous tendencies in form of their role in an all encompassing global marketization, nor to place them in a dialectic or hierarchy, but simply to insist on viewing them as discursive formations, whether they recognize themselves to be so or not.

The practice of the exhibition amounts to more than acts of representations – representations of art, culture, values or even peoples, that is representation in both the artistic and the political sense – but is a place where various things come together. It is in this coming together, or apart for that matter, that meaning is produced and debated. The politics of the scene are thus at least twofold, as in political-artistic *intentionality*, and as in cultural and political *institutionality*, or what I shall later call *articulation* and *institution*. To these two instances one can also add something like a politics of reading, that has to do with both how both intentionality and institutionality play themselves out, in tandem or opposition or a

station in-between, and with the receptions of the viewers or publics. The exhibition is, in this view, a sort of meeting place for various discourses and agents, and it is an event capable of producing and presenting an argument – in both senses of that word. There is, though, an underlining assumption, that I shall stress, namely that the practice of exhibition-making, or what is nowadays known as curating, is a discursive endeavor. Exhibitions are rounded by, as well producers and possible negators of discursive formations, and as such inherently political.

Even though my theory of exhibition-making will have a general and ontological character, it will also be highly partisan, not only because there can be no agreed upon terminology, as I mentioned above, but also because there can be no theory that does not relate directly to practice, equally descriptive and prescriptive; either influencing or assessing practice; constructing the foundations for one or deconstructing them; or itself constituting a practice. Any theory of exhibition-making presented will thus be part of my practice as a maker of exhibitions. My concern is what constitutes a practice, both in terms of writing and in terms of curating, since both practices are, always standing in a direct relationship to another practice, artistic practice itself. My focus will be on exhibitions as discourse, trying to understand how they constitute a specific field through various modalities, and, moreover, how they can articulate what can be called a world-view in their ensemble of objects and positions. In the pages that follow, this notion of discourse will be examined through two different, albeit related, historical modes, the notion of *a conceptual history*, and the concept of *an archeology of knowledge*.

Installations views of Capital (It Fails Us Now), *at UKS in Oslo, works installed at the entrance, immediately visible to visitors. Video by Natascha Sadr Haghighian, installation by Andrea Creutz.*

Installations views of Capital (It Fails Us Now), *at UKS in Oslo. Views of the main exhibition space. Top: Installation by Ashley Hunt, below videos by Knut Åsdam and Michael Blum (l-r).*

1.2. A CONCEPTUAL HISTORY OF EXHIBITION-MAKING

If the examples used in the introduction seemed seamlessly shift between the 1980s and the 2000s, purely in terms of concepts, not contexts, this was because no method for their usage and placement was yet offered. In order to make any such statements, whether in terms of history or genealogy, one must first establish a methodology, its scope and limits. And one must examine the proposed ontology of exhibitions as discursive, that is, in terms of a conceptual history of exhibition-making, rather than the idea of social history (of art). Conceptual history has nothing to do with the art-historical category of conceptual art, it might even have little to do with art history per se, but it certainly is connected to the idea that conceptual art proposed, namely that art is based on ideas, that art are indeed a series of propositions, whether object-based or not. Conceptual history is, naturally, a specific method within the discipline of history, developed by the German historian Reinhart Koselleck. It is a meta-historical approach related to concepts and ideas, to linguistics rather than so-called facts and dates, but rather how facts and dates are inscribed into history, and how periodization of history must be done according to theoretical concepts, such as democracy, freedom and the state, to quote three more concepts mentioned by Koselleck:

> Conceptual history, as we attempt it, cannot manage without a theory of periodization. We do not mean temporality of a general kind, which can be procedurally stylized into historicity and which has to do with history in a fundamental way. It is, rather, a question of theoretically formulating in advance the temporal specifics of our political and social

> concepts so as to order the source materials. Only thus can we advance from philological recording to conceptual history.[9]

In this context this would that any history of exhibition-making would have to be delimited by a conceptual framing in terms of periodization. It would mean that criteria of some sort would have to be established in the selection of exhibitions examined. If such concepts are not to be derived from art history, or not exclusively, what terms could proposed, and what difference would they produce in the way in which exhibitions as events would be narrated? Rather than looking at recent exhibitions as postmodern in the sense of a post-conceptualist (in the artistic sense) notion of art production, one could narrate according to other conditions of formerness, such as post-colonialism or post-communism, as historical concepts. Similarly, the advent of neo-liberalism, or even neo-conservatism and its clash of civilizations could be posited as prisms through which to view current modes of exhibition-making. This has to do with what I shall later discuss under the rubric of horizonality. However, one can hardly say, I think, that all exhibitions made in this period address these problematics, certainly not consciously or directly, and certainly not in any articulate way, through any established and/or countered discourse.

Rather, it must be the other way round: that such historical concepts are categories imposed upon exhibition-making, prisms through which one can address and analyze them and their articulation. It can be, the concepts through which one can historicize the concepts of exhibition-making itself, as well as its adjacent curatorial practices. But there are more contexts, and besides conceptual history there is the discipline of art history, and its historical transformations. Or, more

accurately, there is the tenuous relationship between art history and conceptual history, especially since the method of conceptual history so far has had little or no place within the former discipline. As Koselleck remarks, history is a particular discipline, in so far as that it has no objects of study, but only history itself in all its generality, which is way conceptual history is a way of making history scientific, giving it the object of history itself as its object. On the other hand, art history is always limited to specific objects of art (their periodization in stylistic terms), and only more recently and moderately about the discipline and politics of art history itself. What does it mean, then, to shift focus from art objects to art exhibitions? After all, the encounter we have with most contemporary art comes to us through the temporary exhibition, rather than for more historical works that can be found in permanent collection. Furthermore, I would argue, in order to understand our recent history, we can only understand the concepts of works and exhibitions through their contemporaneous presentation and context, and certainly not through museum collections of the period, that always focuses on individual artists and works, and not contexts, exhibitions, projects and groups.

Can this be achieved within the discipline of art history, or must that discipline then be altered along the lines of conceptual history, and can the concepts be something like capital failure or horisonality, that is, political events and political imaginaries? In order for this to be the case, it means that one must argue for exhibitions as discursive practice, obviously, as articulation. By *articulation* I mean the positioning of the project, of its narratives and artworks, and its reflection of its dual public and placement both in and out of the art world. That an exhibition is always a statement about the state of the

world, not just the state of the arts, and as such it is always already engaged in particular imaginaries, whether or not it claims to be so engaged. A work of art is, at best, an articulation of something as much as it is a representation of someone. Articulation is, then, the formulation of your position and politics of aesthetics. In cultural production, there is no separation possible between form and content, between means and ends: modes of address articulate and situate subject positions. The matter at hand is how curating and the singular artwork can create synergy in their articulations, as well as antagonisms and dynamics: How the spectator's are placed, how they are subjected, how they can move and not move; which directions and detours the exhibition layout makes possible, as well as which narratives are implied in the works *and* their placement. Ways of installing an exhibition, as it were, are most often handed down as a kind of blind knowledge, but the staging itself – whether it figures or reconfigures, whether it's intentionalities are conflated with its expressions or not – are part and parcel of the mode of address. It is a manner of speaking, meant to produce a specific imaginary public (even in the case of the public being the 'general public' or 'intellect', those most elusive of imaginaries).

Even though the outcomes and readings of this work cannot be predetermined, that is, controlled in their reception or immersion in discourses, they nonetheless always participate in larger discourses and politics of art, in turn both being determined by this as always partly determined the field. And they can be grouped in certain typologies; or rather I would suggest, a sketch of a typology. Partly because I am not in any way capable of constructing a grand narrative of recent exhibition-making strategies nor a totalizing typology, that

being a logical impossibility. Which is not to say that this wholly impossible, but rather this in itself is a processual undertaking, and not least an inter-subjective, indeed even collective undertaking and discussion. Such a sketch of a typology of exhibitions will require a mapping of strategies and histories of exhibition making, including the usages and notions of architecture, art production, narrative, politics of aesthetics and establishing of audiences, constituencies and communities. The modes of address in exhibition making can thus be viewed as attempts to at once represent and constitute a specific collective subject, albeit often through a singular encounter with the artwork.

There is, then, a double notion of representation is at play, at once the narrations and sensations of the displayed artworks themselves – the aspect most commonly referred to in both curatorial discourse and criticism – and the representation of a certain public (as spectator), being represented, authorized and constituted through the very mode of address. Making things public is also an attempt to make a public, but this does not mean that the exhibition is a singular format with a given public and circulation of discourse. Rather, the format of the exhibition should be pluralized; obviously different types of exhibitions are speaking from different locations and positions, with different audiences and circulations, be it the self-organized group show in a small alternative space or the large scale international biennial. What they share, though, is the sense of a double public: the local, physically present (if only potentially) audience and the imaginary constituency and professional field of the art world (if only potentially). Exhibitions find themselves placed within an ecosystem as well as a hierarchy of exhibitions (and exhibition venues).

This also means, then, that a conceptual history of exhibition cannot stand alone, but must, rather be accompanied by another project, that of social history: But not a social history of art, as has indeed been attempted in art history by Arnold Hauser and others, but rather a social history of the artworld, its coming into being as a sphere of interest since, at least, 1980s and the end of the divided world and the appearance of the entangled world, which would another list of dates, names and events than actual exhibitions, as well as look not only at exhibitions, but behind the scenes of them, into their production, again both through and of discourse.[10] History, after all, including of the present, lives by tension between social transformation and linguistic articulations. Koselleck again:

> [...] social history and conceptual history both, in ways however different, theoretically presuppose ~~this~~ [a specific] connection. It is the link between synchronic events and diachronic structures that can be investigated historically. An analogous connection exists between spoken speech, synchronically, and the diachronically pregiven language that always takes effect in a conceptual-historical way. What happens is always unique and new, but never so new that social conditions, which are pregiven over the long term, will not have been made possible each unique event. A new concept may be coined to articulate experiences or expectations that never existed before. But it can never be too new to have existed virtually as a seed in the pregiven language and not to have received meaning from its inherited linguistic context.[11]

So, with this in mind I shall try and look at some concepts of exhibition-making, and how they construct a certain horizon, a certain micro-

cosmos of the possible through rhetoric in both language and visual representation as a language. The 1980s, was, among other things, significant as the time of the grand thematic exhibition as a new institutional practice. Mainly in such institutions as Gropius Bau in Berlin, and Centre Pompidou in Paris with exhibitions such as *Magiciens de la Terre*, *L'époque, la mode, la morale, la passion* in the late1980s, and *Feminimasculin* and *L'informe, mode d'emploi* in the 1990s. What such exhibitions shared was a new implementation of art history and theory, into themes and concepts rather than chronologies or histories, and has been categorized, along with the work in different institutional settings of curators such as Harald Szeeman and Jan Hoet as 'ahistorical exhibitions' by Deborah J. Meijers, in a seminal article from 1992.[12] The emergence of the ahistorical exhibition lead to several factors: A new usage of the museum, the museum working like a kunsthalle, that as a primary venue for contemporary art, not just historical collections, as well as a site for the production of art, often now commissioning works and exhibitions from artists. It has lead to the construction of the so-called mid-career surveys instead of monographic retrospectives of 'dead' artists and movement. Furthermore, the ahistorical exhibition, in the sense of a thematic exhibition, also led to the invention of the curator as creator (as presaged by figures like Szeeman and Hoet). With the certainty of history, that is, art history, and the pre-supposed methodological rigor of its research and modes of display disappearing, a new figure must bring order into the chaos and uncertainty of the present and thematicize it in order to make it palpable for an audience, in order to produce a public, and that is the figure of the curator, which is why we now talk about curating exhibitions rather than organizing or producing them.

And with this thematicization of the present comes the investment into the 'new', the logic of the new: new discourses, new medias, new subjects and new artists, but also new products and indeed new markets. A by now well-established type of exhibition-making thematicizing the new is, what I propose naming the *generational* show. These exhibitions have a very particular claim, to newness of course, in terms of age and therefore in terms of life experiences and life-style that is new and only shared by these practitioners from this generation, that is a form of authenticity. This has, also meant there are often popular cultural references abound in such work, attesting to the particular albeit short history of this generation, as well as their aspirations, so not only their presentness but their futurity. One more thing is necessary though, which is a certain shared style or set of concerns, a certain unity, which also to, formally, at least produce a difference: how this particular generation differs from the one before, and by implication that that will follow it 7 to 10 years later. As with the ahistorical exhibition the new is by definition an essentialist construct, and every new wave is followed by another, different, one. The new is bounded by endless returns and reactions: after new medias always follows the returns of, and to, (new or revived) painting, for example.

The generational show shares it sense of the new with two other types, namely what I would call the formal and the *locational* or *geographical* exhibition. The formal exhibitions is, though, going slightly out of fashion, mainly because are not so many new medias anymore, or that new medias are no longer new, meaning that formal shows, by which I do not refer to formal per se, but rather to a grouping of works in an exhibition according to media, are now mostly in the form of the

return, mostly to painting, never to sculpture interestingly enough. But also in more thematic versions, art and film, for instance, that can have both new and historical works, relating the new to the tradition. It can also be themed according to a specific, only partially medium-specific medium-based reference, such as to the body of work a single maker, such as *Notorious* on contemporary art and Alfred Hitchcock or *Close-Up* on contemporary art and Carl Th. Dreyer.

The locational show is more complicated, and can both mix the old and the new, or only produce the new, with unity being provided by the location, be it a city such as Berlin, Istanbul, Paris or for that matter Las Vegas, or a country, such as in the case of the many international exhibitions of new British art of the 1990s, but also Cuba, Russia and China, or even or more or less coherent geopolitically defined region, such as the former East or the so-called Nordic miracle. There are many differences in these articulations, and whether the location is seen through its history or its newness, the notion of the miracle, be it Scandinavian or Scottish, means that it has no predecessors, that the appearance of the specific practice in the particular place could not be expected, and is thus miraculous in its newness. This is also why that such miracles by definition must be explored from outside the scene, and cannot so easily be planned by a state or an arts council, as many unsuccessful attempts at emulating the Glasgow and Nordic miracles, mainly in other marginal European regions attests to. For a new scene to emerge internationally, since always by definition happen locally, they need to make claims for new subjectivities, unknown histories and/or specific visual regimes, but they must also be recognizable, be part of an international

conversation or style with a specific local flavor, that is making claims for both the particular and the universal.

But there are also counter-moves to such thematic exhibitions. If thematic exhibitions by definition thematicize, narrate and frame the work, they also condition the work, and, one could argue, fix the reading too tightly and narrowly, in one directed, and is as such always already over-determining the works and the artists. There are, in the main three alternative approaches to the thematic exhibition, which I will outline in turn. First, there is what Marion von Osten has termed 'the project exhibition' as opposed to the thematic exhibition.[13] The project exhibition is not developed, however, in direct contrast to the thematic group show, but parallel to it as an artistic and political strategy: the exhibition as medium for articulation, analysis and discussion. But instead of working with selection and installation of singular artists and art works, grouped according to a theme, the project exhibition produces the whole of the exhibition as an artistic work with a group of artists, theorists, activists, producers etc. getting together to organize an exhibition addressing a certain issue or problem. The project exhibition is thus an articulation in form, not a curatorial selection or collection of individual works of art by individual artists illustrating a theme, a history or a medium. And the project exhibition partly displaced the discussions on how audiences are produced as a community. Community is here produced among the practitioners as well as outside of the exhibition.

To move from the thematic, and from selection and installation as the primary narrative devices, was always the issue we struggled with in the interdisciplinary project group Globe, that I was part of in Copenhagen throughout the 1990s. Our problem was always how to

create coherence, how to address issues, how to articulate within the frame of the exhibition, and not just stage group exhibitions with one thing after another – one show after the other. On the one hand we always tried to develop concepts for exhibitions together, as projects, but on the other hand the exhibitions always consisted of individual projects and works suggested by single members of the group, that is from some, if rarely all, of the artists in the group. This was hardly an uncommon model, but it did attest to a central contradiction between collaboration and individuation: works were never collectively produced, and often we would revert to an institutionalized division of labor in realizing the projects, such as writer, curator, artist, assistant, laborer, although any individual might take on several of these roles simultaneously within the single project. In other words, there was no collective 'we' produced through the project internally, but rather a shifting team assembled for each occasion, unconsciously following the model of creative industry. I have deliberately twice used the word model to describe the work of our group, since the exhibition (as model!) I want to refer to as a good example of the problem and difficulty of how to actualize the difference between the project and the thematic, precisely deals with the notion of the model; our very last project, *Models of Resistance*, realized at Overgaden in Copenhagen in 2000. By this point of the group's brief history, we were, crucially, no longer new, no longer capable of making claims for the new or for the generational, which lead to a stronger emphasis on and investment into the thematic, as well as into how the thematic should be reflected in the working methods of the group, and vice versa.

The very title *Models of Resistance* consists of the bringing together of two nouns that also function as notions, model and resistance, and that might also seem contradictory, but certainly comes across as disparate: a model is usually not an act, where as resistance usually is active or reactive. Indeed, the title and theme did come from disparate sources and interests within the group, partially in architecture, urbanism and the modular as a producer of the social, and partially from an interest in certain contemporaneous artistic practices dealing with the urban in terms of political critique and alternative forms of being, and it emerged from a concern and discussion within the group around the terms disciplinary society and the society of control, as put forward by Gilles Deleuze (following Michel Foucault).[14] From these elements we tried to create a coherence of the elements, both those of discourse and research, as well as those of working collectively, as well as the still singular artistic contributions in the form of works, installations, projects and events. We were trying to create a frame or overall architecture of the exhibition that would allow the spectators to move around in a city-like environment, an urban space within the space of the white cube. This was attempted through the notion of the model, model landscaping as known architectural exhibitions and modes of display, naturally, but extended into the form of the installation. We thus collaborated with the architect Harald Thorvald to create modules for the design of the space, as well as to be modified by each participant for their use, which shows exactly the paradox, on the one hand an overall project and (modernist) aesthetic, on the other hand the individual art works/modifications; one thing after another. Additionally, we must ask whether such an approach does not merely create one architectural frame within another, our modules, or models, within the white cube, in itself a model of sorts?

There was thus a number of doublings taking place; our project and the individual projects, our overall installation (in the form of the modules for display made with Thorvald), and the installations in and around them by the individual artists (there was around 30 contributing artists), our texts and events, and the textual elements and event-like character of works employed by the individual participants, and so on. And then there is the relationship between the model, that is, a proposal for implementation in a spatial setting, and then the notion of resistance that, presumably, takes place in real spaces, actual situations? Or could we, perhaps, look at exhibition-making as such as models, also models of resistance? If so, this would have to do with more than typology, which is, after all, merely a system of classification, however useful for analysis that might be, but not necessary a tool for production (whether in terms of theory or practice). This will also have to do with the notion of articulation, as I will investigate further subsequently.

For now, I shall proceed to move ahead with this sketched typology, and move on to the second approach to the problematic of the thematic exhibition, we indeed find a model of resistance to the model of the exhibition itself, namely in the very undoing of the thematic exhibition, changing the exhibition, with its selection, placement and so on into another type of event, another congregation, another form. I propose calling this strategy the *un*exhibition. With the *un*exhibition, the thematic exhibition is again seen as inadequate to address certain concerns, and act discursively, socially and politically. The exhibition is seen as too representational, and instead other modes of address are employed to produce a public as a community. However, these type of events share a lot of formal and structural

characteristics of exhibitions – they often employ similar time frame and a spatial, institutional setting such a museum, kunsthalle or biennale, as well as similar divisions of labor and power, with a commissioning institution, appointed curators and selected, invited artists and theorists. And these events are indeed often thematic, but not in the form of an exhibition, not in the form of the display of artworks.

Precursors to the *un*exhibition can thus both be found in artistic and activist project work, but also in actual institutions only dedicated to the discourses of art and theory, not exhibiting art, such as the Depot in Vienna. But the *un*exhibition has become a curatorial strategy attempting to bypass the form of the exhibition, such as the whole programming of the Munich Kunstverein during the directorship of Maria Lind, which commenced with the following missive: "Every art institution is more than just a place of display. It is more than a building in which one places objects. It is a place of production, a meeting place for discussion [...]"[15] The exhibition as the central place for art and its discourses is clearly the problem, not the art institution, which can apparently house other forms of discourse production, or even take on other forms, such as the *un*exhibition that was curated as part of Cork being the cultural capital of Europe instead of a big, international and thematic group show, the *Cork Caucus*, organized by Charles Esche, Annie Fletcher and Art/Not Art. Interestingly, the term caucus is a notion taken directly from the realm of politics rather than aesthetics or even the aesthetic theory. It is usually used to designate a meeting of a political party, where decisions and selections (on candidates and mandates) are made. It is thus a form of discussion that leads directly to action, if not direct action. It is, moreover,

something that establishes a political community in the most direct and immediate sense of that word. Ironically, this community is always also a closed community, the processes and negotiations of a caucus are secret, only its outcome is made public, which is an entirely different process from the public access and display of discussion and discursivity as form that was the goal of the *Cork Caucus*. Such attempts at curating something other than an exhibition is also what has recently been called 'the educational turn', as in the anthology by Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson, implying a rhetorical relationship between curating and its placement of not only objects, but, indeed, of subjects.[16]

The *un*exhibiton can be seen as an institutionalization of project work from artist groups and artists-run spaces, of the artistic critique of institutions, and has even reached the level of the biennale, as with the unrealized *Manifesta 6* in Cyprus, that was to take the form of an art academy. Although too complex an issue and long a story to analyze here, the institution of the *Manifesta*, as a traveling biennale with ever-changing locality is a prime example of the development of curatorial strategies and the recent history of exhibition-making since 1989. It represents the synthesis of all curatorial forms and aims, from the site-specific exhibition over the opening and representation of the former east to the exhibition as project (or at least projected) and beyond. Actually, the very emergence of the Manifesta, as a direct reaction to the closing of the *Aperto* in Venice after 1993, and the inclusion of Eastern European art and artists into the exhibitions (and markets) of the west, can be used as an apt metaphor for at least the 1990s; that long decade between the fall of the wall in 1989 and the fall of the twin towers in NYC in 2001. And it can be named after the

retrospective book produced by and on the *Manifesta* biennale: *The Manifesta Decade*.[17]

The *Manifesta* was, at least initially, a specifically European biennale, making it locational in a much broader sense than the localities mentioned above. The scope may be European, but the actual city will be shifting, thus creating another, uneasy, relationship between the local and the international than other biennales, which are always already about connections between the place and the world, if only, as is regrettably most often the case, the artworld. Despite the claim made for such recurrent mega-exhibitions as being not only local or about locality, but rather world exhibitions, especially after the *Documenta 10*, 1997, curated by Catherine David, with its insistence on a connection between art and theory, history and politics, biennale culture has shown itself to be the prime location for the third alternative to the problems of thematic exhibitions. The third alternative reacts to the tyranny of thematics in a different way than the first two, and indeed rejects them as possibilities along with overdetermining curatorial themes. Rather than sidestepping the issue of curatorial selection and representation indicated by the project, or abandoning the exhibition as form suggested by the *un*exhibition, this third, and newest approach instead embraces selection, presentation and exhibition-making wholeheartedly. It is an investment into what has been termed the curatorial and indeed even a celebration of the figure of the curator. This last observation might seem odd, since one of the ideals of this third way is exactly to give each singular artwork more space in which to breathe, and not be overridden by a tight thematic.

There is therefore a deliberate looseness of the concept of the exhibition, which allows the works emerge on their own terms through

the framing, and the exhibition is also always pluralistic in terms of forms and styles, in order to not propagate one type of art over another. However, this very looseness of the concept tends to favor a curating selection of open-ended works, works that underplay its articulatory elements, in order for the exhibition to have any fixed nodal points, nor pre-determined agenda. Paradoxically perhaps, this approach then also highlights the curator, that is, the selection of the curator, as well as the aesthetics of the installation, since there – apparently – is no central theme to which the works are organized. It is a principle of anything goes, but not of everything being replaceable, since it is always this assemblage, and not that one, these curatorial choices of artists, placements and scale, and not another one, and not adhering to any pre-existing order. Indeed, it can be said to shift the role of the curator from the one bringing order into the chaos of contemporary cultural production, to bringing chaos into the logics of the institution and contemporary, established cultural forms. It is thus always individual and idiosyncratic.

As mentioned, this style seems ideally suited to large-scale exhibitions such as biennale, precisely because it favors pluralism, and disavow the use of the thematic, even of any ideological stance, which does not mean that it has an ideology of its own, even though that might be established more through depresentation than representation. I think of this style as being about style, about tastefulness, and that it can be characterized as the new mysticism, willfully obscure and suggestive. Again, I will simply exemplify through the rhetorical device of the title, that most obvious and primary of framings, and look at recent biennales, such as two successive editions of the Berlin biennale from the 00s, as well as the contemporaneous

Venice biennale of 2007. The latter, curated by Robert Storr had the very telling title, *Think with the Senses, Feel with the Mind: Art at Present*, which suggested both a tendency in art (at present, as it were), but certainly also, and maybe foremost, an approach to looking at art, to experience it not through a theme in the proper sense, and certainly not through language. And we see it equally in Berlin Biennale 4 & 5. BB 4, curated by Maurizio Cattelan, Massimiliano Gioni and Ali Sobotnik under the title *Of Mice and Men*, the famous John Steinbeck novel, which they did not try to illustrate, but rather, they claimed, it was an attempt to highlight 'the enigma of art', and the title of the follow-up, BB 5, was indeed very enigmatically named *Where Things Cast No Shadow*, curated by Adam Szymcyck and Elena Filipovic.

Finally, this new mysticism was, particularly, omnipresent at *Documenta 12*, 2007, directed by Roger M. Buergel. This edition of the Documenta was initially organized, if not around themes, then through something called leitmotifs, but emerged, upon realization, as centered around the notion of 'the migration of form'. These exhibitions certainly highlight the concept of openness (albeit more in the sense of Umberto Eco rather than Giorgio Agamben), but they also stress importance of the figure of the curator, which is why I have made the effort of mentioning all of their proper names rather than any of the artists presented in these exhibitions. It would be a mistake, however, to view this style as a return to the curator as creator introduced Szeeman and others, or to dismiss it as merely a return to the sanctity of such father figures and essentialist notions of art. Rather than positing the curator as creator, we are now witnessing the curator as collector, with all it implies of style and taste, as well as relationship to the art market.

The display aesthetics of BB5, in particular, can be seen as the epitome of this style, with its direct spatial connection between commerce and collection. The relationship was aestheticized through the employment of two different architectural spaces and exhibitionary forms within them: the smaller, more ragged Kunstwerke evoked the stall like forms of the art fair, whereas the larger, modernist Neue Nationalgalerie (designed by none other than Mies van der Rohe), recalled the style of a corporate collection. In this sense, the biennale pointed to the desirable movement of artists and objects from the one to the other, and posited this as the central function of the biennale, of the mega exhibition. In such endeavors the curator is posited as a connoisseur – the collector as a man of taste, and thus always individual and idiosyncratic, as well as dedicated and single-minded in all his choices. It is through the taste of this collector-curator that we must read and understand their curatorial choices, however willfully obscure that at times strike us as being. As we know from collecting, and collecting tastefully, the perfect home must not only have the finest furniture and the most magnificent design objects, but always also something off, something of questionable taste, which precisely shows that the owner has taste, a singular taste, and not just followed a decorator or catalogue. It is the bad object, or the bad art piece if you will, that shows *real* personality, *real* taste.

However, if there is then an 'illogic' logic of the collector to be found and followed, then the framings of these mysterious shows cannot – logically – be any less determinate or overdeterminate than, the framings of, say, capital and its failure, and certainly not if we think of aesthetics as politics in the terms of the art world's favorite philosopher of the moment, Jacques Ranciere, and his highly pertinent

concept of a politics of the aesthetic. As is well known, Ranciere places politics in art in terms of presentation rather then intention, in how an aesthetic gesture or form partition the sensible, what can be sense and not sensed. That is, not only through what is presented, what is shown, but also what is made invisible by this presentation, what is depresented. In terms of exhibitions, I would argue that this has not only to do with selection, what artists and positions are shown and which are not, but also in terms of the general horizon of the world and artworld is presented, what is made possible and impossible by a particular articulation. Moreover, it is crucial to remember Ranciere's quite specific, and, it must be noted, quite narrow definition of politics, as it emerged in *Disagreement*, a book about the relationship between philosophy and politics, which precedes the book on aesthetics, but is actually the beginning of his engagement with aesthetic regimes and the world of art.[18] Here, politics is distinguished from the notion of policing, by which Ranciere refers to all institutions and orders normally described as politics, such as laws, parliaments and even the very concept and of democracy. This is all no more than a police order, and the political only emerges in moments of interruption of this order, in radical breaks with the existing order, when those who have no part claim their part.

Transposed to the world of exhibitions, then only exhibitions that present new subjects and subjectivities in the form of the previously excluded can be considered truly political, and the rest is merely policing. So, only such exhibitions as Martha Rosler's *If You Lived Here*, that literally gave the homeless of NYC a voice within a cultural institution, the Dia Art Foundation, would deal with a politics of aesthetics, then? Or perhaps something like the oft-mentioned

Magiciens de la Terre would also be a political exhibitions, or maybe the many exhibitions of Eastern European art in Western Europe after 1989, such as *After the Wall*, to name but one? Well, surely showing the new in terms of subjects must be too narrow an interpretation of Ranciere's politics, and political subjects in exhibition-making must be expanded from subjects as persons to the more general understanding of the word, that is, presenting subjects in a political way, establishing such breaks and ruptures in the very way in which they are mentioned, represented and discussed.

Introducing 'new' subjects into the by definition exclusive and exclusionary canon of Western or world art doesn't necessarily constitute any rupture, but is part what keeps the imaginary order of such a canon in play, what actualizes it rather than circumvent or abolish it. Indeed, this is the function of the miraculous in relation to newness, and the inclusion of young artists from Eastern or Europe that has been a dominant factor of the artworld and its exhibitions and institutions since the 1990s is characterized not so much by giving part to those who have no part, but more likely giving part to those who have no past. Still, the question remains whether exhibitions are engaged with the politics or the policing of aesthetics. Perhaps, as curators, we are not politicians of the aesthetic, or even politicking, but rather police officers of the aesthetic, of the world of art? And our concern should then shift from one of political exhibitions to the issue of policing through the curatorial? And this may not be as sinister as it sounds, though, if we (re)consider the historical meaning of policing and modern *polizei wissenschaft* as acts of caring as well as punishing within a project of governmentality, following the work of Michel Foucault on the topic.

In conclusion, I would like to look at some examples of exhibition-making, and their relationship to the various modes of address I have mentioned, as well as their relationship to, and maybe oscillation between, politics and policing of aesthetics. I will look at three examples, *Backstage*, *Kontext Kunst* and *trap*, all from the German-speaking context, all from the same year, 1993, and also comparable on a formal level, since they are relating to post-conceptual art, or at least post-studio practice, but, I would argue, with different politics of aesthetics. 1993 was also, not completely incidentally, the year that I started organizing shows myself.

First, *Kontext Kunst*, curated by Peter Weibel, and staged in Graz. The exhibition assembled a number of international artists, mostly western European and North American, under the heading of contextual art, and showing mainly existing works, and accompanied by a substantial catalogue (in German only), featuring no less than 20 commissioned essays, creating a broad theoretical and historical context, as it were, for the exhibition, as well as spreads with images and texts documenting the 33 selected artists in a historicizing manner that goes far beyond the works presented in the actual exhibition.[19] The exhibition attempts to construct a 'new' genre – even subtitling book and exhibition "the art of the 90's" – or even brand name for specific practices, contextual art, consciously recalling the term conceptual art, establishing a historical line and legacy, but also an expansion. Indeed, rather than being concerned with issues of dematerialization of the art object, the exhibition is quite object-based, and focusing instead on spatial analysis in an expansion of institutional critique onto other spaces than the gallery and the art institution. The white cube is also adopted as the mode of address rather than goal for

critique, and the installation of the works are fairly classical, one could even say sculptural, with one thing after another, one artist after the other in separate, but connected rooms. And the politics of the exhibition lies in the subject matter of individual works and artists, as a potential rather than demand. What is noticeable about this declared contextualism is the focus on objects and installations in the exhibitionary strategy, with no social works or situations, for example, as well as no activist practices, within as well as outside of the art context.

The second example, *Backstage*, curated by Stephan Schmidt-Wulffen and Barbara Steiner in the Hamburg Kunstverein, has as its stated objective a so-called topology of contemporary art, to which end 31 younger artists were invited to do site-specific installations and interventions. However, the practices assembled in this exhibition are quite diverse, and do not amount to the formulation of a project in terms of a style or brand, but are united through the theme indicated by the title, that is, how they illuminate this theme, and vice versa. The theme being the institution in a, mainly, spatial sense, the actual building of the kunstverein, but not just the exhibition spaces, but also all the usually not visible or public spaces: the backstage area. In this sense we are again dealing with a type of spatial analysis, and the two exhibitions, *Kontext Kunst* and *Backstage* even share a number of artists (6 out 32 and 31 participating artists, respectively). However, in this case spatial analysis is only concentrated on the art institution (as a model for discursive spatial production), and with a lot less emphasis on objects and the sculptural, but also with less direct political comments, or for that matter political activism: the space is not given over to subjects or movement outside of the art context,

but specifically to artists as producers, as interventionist and, indeed, relational.

The last example takes a different route, that of the commentary, one might even call it essayistic, and it may even be a direct commentary and critique of the two abovementioned exhibitions, as well as of this sort of exhibition-making in general. The exhibition, or should we say project is named *trap*, and organized by artists rather than professional curators, namely the two groups Art in Ruins and BüroBert (Renate Lorenz and Jochen Becker) and Stephan Geene, then a member of the group Minimal Club. As such, the exhibition also did not consist of a number of assembled artworks, but was, rather a work in itself, what has been termed a project exhibition, and consisted of various material and examples, as well as a graphic display of text, posing specific questions on the role of the artists in relation to the political (in Germany at the time). A number of traps facing the cultural producer was presented, such as the co-optation of political artists, the aestheticization of politics and so on, as well as a critique of the commoditization of politics in art implied by such exhibitions as *Kontext Kunst*, for example. The exhibition did thus not want to contribute to the production of new images, but question the politics of the image, and positing a radical institutional critique. Its attempted radical break was thus not one of presenting the new, but rather one of refusal, although the visual style has, of course, subsequently been partially mainstreamed as info-aesthetics, as well as rejected and criticized by art criticism for being exactly that.

My interest here, however, is not whether these articulations are right or wrong, instructive or destructive, but in how these exhibitions narrate their politics of aesthetics. A successful exhibition is always

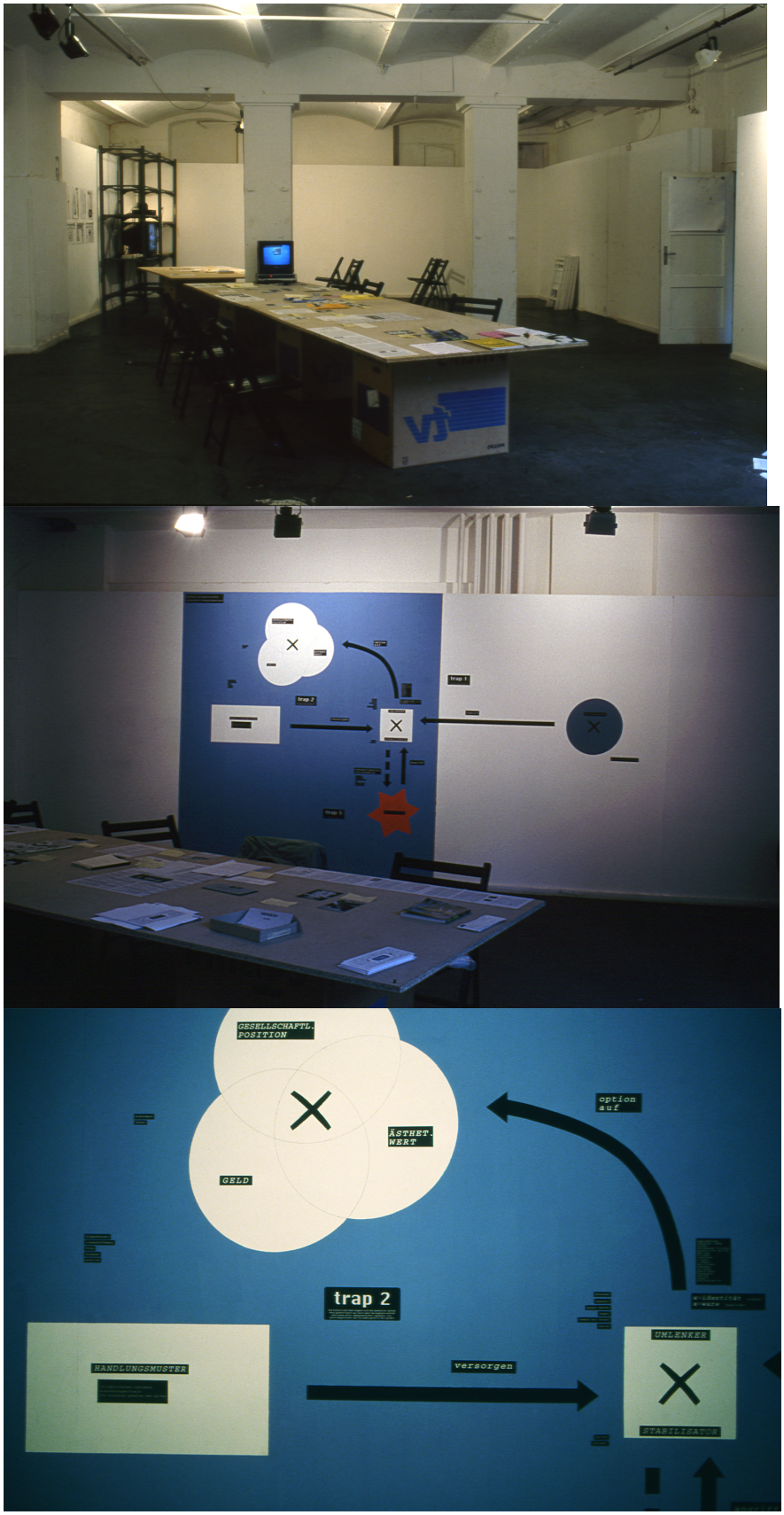
more than the sum of its parts: it creates something more, an addition to a discourse, a community, an argument, even. This can be discussed in terms of excess (as in life-style, the gift economy and the work of George Bataille, for instance) as well as in terms of surplus (indicating a surplus of meaning, marketability and the theories of Marxism, such as it theory of value). In a history of the present, one can see a renewed interest in the exhibition as the main vehicle for contemporary art, not only in terms of presentation, but also production: the exhibition as medium. We have also seen the specialization of exhibitions, into what can be characterized as instituted genres of exhibitions. We must therefore ask ourselves not only what a history of exhibitions will tell us about art, but also about history, and about how it is written and read, rewritten and re-read. And what are its relation to both histories *and* counter-histories, i.e. look into another notion of a history of ideas and concepts, namely that of a *genealogy*, which I shall look into in the following chapter.

Views of various usages of modules designed by Harald Thorvald for Models of Resistance, *organized by Globe (Peter Holst Henckel, Cecilie Høgsbro and Simon Sheikh).*

Installation views from Kontext Kunst, *Graz, 1993. Top: Gerwald Rockenschaub installation, bottom: Meg Cranston sculpture.*

Installation view of Heimo Zoberng's library installation in Kontext Kunst, *Graz.*

Installation views from Backstage, *Kunstverein in Hamburg, 1993. Left to right, Clegg and Gutman Library; Gerwald Rockenschaub sculpture/installation.*



Installation views of trap*, Kunstwerke, Berlin, 1993.*

1.3. GENEALOGY AS CRITIQUE OF CURATORIAL REASON

As Keith Tribe has observed, there are parallels in terms of topics and simultaneity in the work of Koselleck, on the concepts, semantics and ideas of history, and that of Michel Foucault on the history of ideas (in the form of archeology and genealogy), but also a fundamental difference, since "Koselleck was a historian and Foucault was not".[20] the point here is, in my view, not to privilege Koselleck as a proper historian as opposed to Foucault the amateur historian, nor, conversely, to place Foucault as a philosopher proper in a hierarchy of knowledge above and beyond Koselleck as a mere historian, but rather to stress how they wrote from, respectively, within and outside the discipline of history that was their object of study, and which ultimately affects their view upon it. Whereas Koselleck wanted to make history into a science by acknowledging its object as history itself, and that historians must thus "[...] recognize our need for theory, or rather, face the necessity of doing theory if history still wants to conceive of itself as an academic discipline",[21] Foucault tried to question the very premise of establishing such self-definitions, and rather pointed to its logical and philosophical impossibility, to its basic instability: "The purpose of history, guided by genealogy, is not to discover the roots of our identity but to commit itself to its dissipation."[22]

For Foucault, genealogy, as described in his essay on Nietzsche and history quoted above, is never the search for origins and grand narratives (even when dealing with historical concepts close to those of Koselleck, such as 'liberty'), it is, in its way, actually not about finding, something like the truth, but rather about losing what was

presumed right and correct, about undoing the subject. History thus is not contrasted with meta-history, but counter-history, and searches on both the margins of, and on marginal, historical documents in order to criticize the institution of history itself, the idea of history as science. It is does claim objectivity and neutrality, then, but rather acknowledges what Foucault, crucially, terms no less than a "system of injustice", going on to state that its "perception is slanted" and always either a "deliberate appraisal, affirmation, or negation".[23] In short, one can say that it is an involved rather than detached gaze on objects, concepts and events, and thus far from the discipline of art history, or for that matter the emerging histories of curating (and their attempts at canonization). Foucault's genealogy is, in the words of Rudi Visker, a method of *critique*.[24] For Visker, this is a critique of what can be termed historical reason, surely – and maybe in our case something like an art-historical reason – but also, more politically, of nothing less than the human sciences and their claim of scientificity, and a dismantling of the humanist notions of man. It is a relocation of something like 'history' from the apparently neutral to an immersion in the power-knowledge nexus, where it is precisely this hyphenation that produces an object of study in the technical sense, such as the delinquent, the prisoner, the madman, and by extension, the citizen, the subject. Visker calls this a "'searchlight theory' of power."[25] It is the very act of illumination that allows for examination, and for something to become visible, to emerge as a figure in discourse, exemplified by how the prison, as a tool of power, and mechanism of control, not only disciplines and normalizes, but also always observes and evaluates, making the prison into the matrix for all modern institutions of power and knowledge:

> Power-knowledge: one has control over the person one observes; one sees 'without being seen' and one can only see what one sees in this way because one is oneself not seen. One can only observe because one controls, and one controls all the more and gains more power as one observes and acquires knowledge.[26]

It is clear that this description would also seem to apply to other disciplines, or techniques of disciplining, such as the (human) sciences and its institutional sites, including the museum or modern exhibition space, and thus the function of the curator. Traditionally, the art-historian/curator was always in the background, giving primacy to the object of art, and by extension, the subject of the artist. However, already with this preliminary use of Foucault's critique, another relation between curating and art emerges, the more sinister issue of control, naturally, but also how it is the very method, the searchlight, that constitutes the object: by isolating the work of art from its context of production, and giving it a new context of reception (through its presentation in the exhibition) that is art history enacted, the practice of art is at once observed and modified through observation, through exposition.[27] In this sense genealogy is not history writing, not even counter-history, as Visker rightfully points out, but instead a radical, if uncertain critique of the very concept of history, including its possible conceptual history. Genealogy has a negative core, and is thus a critical intervention, rather than alternative production. Genealogy is, the, in the sense of exhibition-making not to be confused with dematerialization, a type such as the mentioned *un*exhibition is not to be equated with the genealogical critique, and it is indeed questionable

if genealogy can be an exhibitionary form, since it is a critical intervention into given forms (whether, in our case, artistic or critical, or both – both curatorial?). It is (im)possibility, as Gayatri Spivak will put it.[28] Can genealogy, then, lay the ground for a critique of contemporary curatorial reason better than conceptual history? And thus be a critique of not only the typology laid-out before, but also of the curatorial practices it attempted to describe, i.e. the current modalities of curating?

In order to do so, one will have to look beyond Foucault's short essay on genealogy, since it does not tell us much about how genealogy must be written, but rather how it must *not* be written, in a long series of rejections, and instead compare it to the methodology, however hesitant, found in his contemporaneous *Archeology of Knowledge*. Now, the move between genealogy and archeology is a slippery and, intellectually, quite hazardous one, since it constitutes one of the major, if not *the* historically central debate, in the reception history of Foucault's work. For a commentator like Visker, genealogy is a radicalization of archeology, what he sometimes even calls (an)archeology, in the way that it resists philosophy as a 'science' at every step, but rather sees it as a politics, as not only a theory of practices, such medicine etc., but as theory as practice, meaning that theory must be practiced, as in the study of specific power-knowledge relations and, if you will, institutions, such as the prison already mentioned. Now, as is well known, for Foucault power can not be theorized in the abstract or even general as a principle, but only as a relation or technique, and must be studied in its concrete formation and manifestation, what he calls, famously, "local centers", among which one can count the institutions of art, historical as contemporary.

However, to the notion of the local center of power, Foucault adds something more, namely the power-knowledge relations are not "static forms of distribution", but crucially what he terms "'matrices of transformation'" in his first book on a history of sexuality.[29] Indeed, in the second volume of this unfinished series, Foucault sees archeology and genealogy in an intersection structurally similar to that of power and knowledge, namely as a form of "problematization."[30]

This may or may not differ from archeology, or it may, rather, as Spivak suggests, in her tellingly titled essay, 'More on Power-Knowledge', pertain to "an asymmetrical homology between *énoncé-savoir-connaissance* and *force-pouvoir-puissance* that has something like a relationship with subindividual-ontic-ontological."[31] Spivak thus takes issue with the genealogy/archeology divide, mainly in the US context – as seen in Gutting and Rabinow, respectively – which she sees as an attempt at nothing more, nothing less than regularizing, normalizing, and not least confining to a compartmentalizable discipline, work that is actually about rejecting such efforts of formalizing – the sentence following the one I have quoted sees Foucault's critique as an attempt to avoid eurocentricism (and, one could add, eurocentricism of the very kind that is foundational for US academic humanities...).[32] There is also a difference between Spivak and Visker, that can be seen as being as much curatorially aesthetic as politically and philosophical, which has to do with the coupling of power and knowledge, or rather, how they de- and inscribe it. Whereas Visker uses *the hyphen*, power-knowledge, indicating how the meanings of two terms conjoined are eaten away by each other, Spivak employs *the slash*, power/knowledge, allowing for the reading of one concept into the other, similarly to the way in which she tries to read the proper

names of Derrida and Foucault into each other's programs in that particular essay. However, such choices of meaning are also aesthetic in the curatorial sense, where meaning is determined by how things are put together, next to each other, in opposition or in symphony, albeit always potentially as much as forcefully, as 'matrices of transformation' – of original meaning and enunciatory power, of locality and universality, of power play and resistant force, etc. Regardless of how one values the efficacy of the conjoining of Derrida and Foucault, or where one thinks one stands, or moves, in the archeology versus genealogy debate, such stagings of discursive problematics are exactly how exhibitions, more often than not, place artistic positions.

However, even when acknowledging a shift in focus from archeology, and its double move of privileging scientificity as such by criticizing it for its lack here of, towards genealogy and its negative rejection of the concepts themselves, perhaps this needs not be seen as a *break*, but rather as a *turn*: a turn from discursive production to the very machines that produce it. But if all discourse is the result of power and knowledge constituting each other as objects and producers, what are the structural workings of something like a discourse? That is not its purpose or reversals, but workings, or mechanics (terms absolutely crucial in transposing this discussion to exhibition-making). Whereas genealogical critique unfolded itself through the analysis of local centers, or case studies, archeology provided a long methodological, and anti-methodological thesis, found in the series of counter intuitive moves, known as nothing less grand than *the Archeology of Knowledge*, which is a strange, drawn out discussion of statements, objects, modalities, concepts and strategies. Terms that all sounds, amazingly, as if descriptions of the curatorial,

which it arguably could be, since it relates to disciplines and history, as what is called *discursive formations*:

> Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say, for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a discursive formation.[33]

Such formations could be natural history, political economy, psychiatry or medicine, where statements make up a field of relations with both regularity and rarity, but where it is not the individual statement or individual the speaking subject that matters, but rather how a discourse is produced as a whole by the relations created by various statements and their repetition, establishing both the place/context for the statements and their limitations. The statement is thus different from the sentence or the proposition, that are grammatical units, and dependent on a referent (object and/or subject), whereas the statement is the very "fact of language", and thus "neither visible nor hidden".[34] lastly, statements are limited in number, and also defined by their field, and not easily transposed – they always have a specific form of *additivity*.[35] For example, where successive statements within one particular formation, such as medical science, will not only supplement each other, but often also annihilate a previous statement – a particular discovery of the physiological connection between organs and thus their 'treatment' will disprove another earlier one, and completely erase from the discourse, from the (contemporary)

practice of medicine. Now, this is not so much the case in our context, although depresentations and exclusions constantly occur, more or less successfully. But even when something has been written out of history, as it were, there is no logical reason that it cannot be rediscovered, reinstated, repeated, whether thinking of a particular exhibition, event or artist, or whether thinking about a specific technology of an exhibitions that has been out of vogue or practice, but precisely for that reason is re-presented into practice, be it is a Salon-style installation of works on the wall or an insistence on using monitors rather than flat-screens.

The figure of the curator is not the same as that of the scientist or doctor, obviously, and may not even be the equivalent with our discursive formation, if curating, contemporary art and art history can at all be said to constitute such a formation, separately or in some combination. A curator does not lay down a law, indeed, his or her decisions and authority can always be questioned, by colleagues and artists, as well as by the public. The public can refuse, directly or indirectly, to engage, to be persuaded, to be involved etc. There is, contra Kant, no aesthetical demand to be followed by curatorial authority and the power-knowledge machine that is the museum. In this manner, exhibitions as statements are then not dependent on individual subjects and their agency, but entangled in a web of statements, present as past, that both contradict and condition each other. But how, then, to delimit the formation, what are its thresholds and ruptures? The question is whether exhibitions of art, let alone contemporary art, be said to constitute a different field than exhibition-making in general, from the anthropological to the trade fair, forming its own genealogy? And if it is a formation of its own, even

with uncertain and permeable boundaries, what makes up its statements – exhibitions only, or also their reviews, their receptions and, indeed, their rejections.

Indeed, the very idea of a Lyotardian differend mentioned in the introduction may now be recast in the light of discourse formation, and as a way of indicating how the seemingly incommensurable difference that I suggested is perhaps what constitutes the field as a discursive formation, as "enunciative coexistence".[36] Any critical evaluation, and, moreover, any outright dismissal of the concerns and terms of a given project is exactly *that*, both part of a formation and in critical opposition to a position, at once showing the limits of a discourse and establishing it as the sphere that made the claim possible, readable and understandable. It can be said to question whether an exhibition can at all said to be a statement in the foucauldian sense, while simultaneous making a statement countering it, perhaps depresenting, but nonetheless establishing a relation of statement within a discourse. So, my presumably many opponents problems with the very idea of a discursive exhibition can by seen as directly in line with Foucault's genealogy, proposing that the exhibition *Capital (It Fails Us Now)*, for example, is fundamentally 'wrong' since it actually misunderstood the function of the statement, and instead tried to deliver its statement – its discourse – in the form of a sentence: Capital, it fails us now. That is with a clear referent, and a grammatical understanding of the production of meaning (and non-meaning), whereas it, to be a statement, particularly in its chosen form of an exhibition, rather should have taken on the notion of the figure. Now, this may again be an overly complicated and counter-intuitive way of saying something apparently simply; namely that an exhibition should not establish a

grammar, that it should take the form of images rather than texts, ambience and experience rather than language as the site for discourse, a not uncommon approach to art and exhibition-making, and not least to forms of presentation and modes of reception. Which brings us to the second point, whether exhibitions of art, particularly contemporary art, can be separated, genealogically or for that matter typologically, from other modalities of curating and exhibition-making?

On the one hand, the formal aspects of exhibition-making are fairly similar, in the form of an ensemble of objects and positions, placed in a spatial manner, and often selected through a lens of research, semblance, simultaneity and/or locality. In this sense, the art exhibition is but one of many forms of the genealogy of exhibitions, and as such the notion of typology may be more useful in analyzing this particular strand of exhibition-making. On the other hand, exhibitions of art are also separate due to the status of their objects, and, conversely, the status they bestow upon their objects: the designation of art and art works, which has primacy, if not supremacy over notions of history, artifact, context, memory and so on. There is the perception of uniqueness and originality, as well as a certain trans-historicality, which sets them apart of other orders of things. At the same time, art history does not have the same authority as political or natural history, since these forms must appear as truthful and accurate at all costs. A history of certain atrocities such as the holocaust must not be questioned, just as the evolution of the species, albeit to a lesser degree, must also be precise and not questionable. As mentioned, the exhibition of (contemporary) art does not implement its laws of history in the same manner, but is rather always an imprecise precision, and does not deal in the right and the wrong, but

in the debatable: quality is ensured through selection and consensus, but one that must emerge from specialized discussions, evaluations and re-evaluations. And you are, principally, always allowed to disagree with the selection. Which is not to say that they do not deal in cultural hierarchies and hegemonies, but rather that these are not definite, but rather that they work with inclusion and exclusion, representation and depresentation as constitutive of the field, and thus with an essential instability despite the perceived solidity of tradition, nation and the walls of the institution, or what can be established as *the canon of art*. The establishment of a canon has long been the domain of art history and, to a large extent, its only premise and function. And the field of art theory and artists has for almost equally as long criticized this process. However, a number of the basic features of canonization persist, not only in art history, in which it seems to stick to even the most (self)critical of writing, but also within what can be termed enacted art history: collections and exhibitions of both historical and contemporary art. This does not mean, however, that the canon has remained the same, either in regards to what is included in it, or in terms of how it is enacted, situated, and distributed, but rather that some of the basic tenets of canonization have stayed unchanged in the very structuring of the field.

A canon can be defined as a list of authoritative texts (or works) that constitute a principle or rule, originally in a religious sense, and since expanded to various fields of cultural production, where this list sets a standard to which all new works produced within the field must be measured. Each new production can thus only be evaluated, and, by extension, be valued, through a pre-existing canon, in relation to which the merits and qualities of the new work can be assessed. In this way,

the canon, however loosely defined, is a pre-requisite for art criticism in the traditional sense, as well as for the writing of art history proper: a new work is not only measured against history, the canon, but also always affects it negatively or positively, and can thus be accepted or rejected by the canon. In other words, a canon is never genealogical, but it is also never stable, but can only exist through new additions to it, as well as the removal of previously included artifacts and individuals. However, the constant process of inclusion and exclusion also reveals a contradiction at the heart of the canon concept, which is not only its instability, but also its impossibility. On the one hand, a collection can never be complete—there will always remain that which is out of reach or purely outside—and secondly it will always be too limited, too exclusive—this is most often the critique targeted at collections and museums. But there is an even more fundamental contradiction and impossibility implied in the canon, namely how a work or a text most be constitutively split in its essential being: partly as illustrative and typical of its time and genre and partly as transcending it. In order to be included in the canon it must arise above all other works of it time, and not only be of its time, but simultaneously eternal and universal. This fundamental contradiction becomes even more explicit when one considers how most museum collections are national collections designed to create national histories, while the very works that guarantee this national identity and supremacy must at the same time been seen as international, as universally excellent.

In current curating some of these canonical features are necessarily weakened, but neither absent nor abandoned. Rather, as mentioned in the typology, the national element must always contribute to the international, add locality to the international

discourse. And just as historicizing a work does not necessarily entail canonization (which would require, after all, also require transcendence from history), the presentation or production of a work in a contemporary exhibition does not automatically indicate an attempt at canonization. Art work does not need to be constitutively split in order to be presented in a contemporary curatorial project, even if it takes place in a museum, since canonization, in this sense, has do with it being added to a (national) collection of art. Instead it is inscribed around slightly different parameters, namely those of actuality, those of the new. Although the new in art and culture can only be seen as such in relation to the tradition, its primary logic is, as Boris Groys has remarked, an *economic* one, rather than what could be called an art historical one.[37] And here one finds one of the ways in which the curator and the process of curating is related to processes of canonization—namely in how the figure of the curator is not only historicized, but sometimes also canonized.

Certainly, both archeology and canons of curating (and of both curators and exhibitions), are legion today, whether in seminars and academic curatorial courses or through publications, ranging from the journal *Afterall*'s book series dedicated to single exhibitions to curator Hans Ulrich Obrist's volume *A Brief History of Curating*. There is, in other words, a growing interest and awareness of something such as history and difference in the overall practice of exhibition making, as well as in the individual trajectories and careers of a short list of curators, past as present. There are at least two simultaneous tendencies, two strands that are coalescing and diverging at the same time. On the one hand, one finds a process of historicization, with both canonical and epistemological drives, that has to do with the

professionalization of the field of curating, with curators being educated in special programs and schools, rather than through apprenticeships at a museum or the learning by doing of self-organized initiatives (although both of these forms persist). With this formalization of curating inevitably follows a sense of history. Even if there is no history or discipline as such, they will have to be invented in the very moment of formalization in order to be part of the current educational complex with its modular systems of knowledge and instituted forms of measurement such as so-called peer review, where other, presumably more established curators, evaluate the emerging ones. Ideally speaking, this educational turn will have to constantly oscillate between canon and counter-canon, or canonization and deconstruction in its approach to history. A history of curating must be both posited and criticized in one move in order to define itself as academic learning and research.

The other strand has very little to do with the academy, but quite a lot to do with professionalization, and with the establishment of a system of peers and beyond: the category of established curators and its engagement with, if not a canon of curating per se, then surely a canon of curators. Here one can see both similarities and differences between the two strands of historicization, in how a system of peers, and thus internal evaluation, is crucial to the self-definition of the professional field. In terms of the educational, it is clear that a system of peer review is needed for research, and that established professionals must guide and examine those under training, even if this aspect seems to lean more towards a business model of mentoring than one of the sciences. Curatorial programs have as many, if not more, elements of vocational training as of theory and history built

into them—to the extent of irreconcilability and antagonism. As in business, the curatorial course offers aspiring curators entryways into the profession through its network of established colleagues; it is not your research results, as in science, that will facilitate your advance in the system, but more your personal skills of networking and self-presentation (to paint a rather crude picture). The student must try to enter the canon of curators, or at least into a respectful dialogue with it, since the standardization of professionalization requires the setting of standards. Curatorial statements that make up the discursive fields are thus limited in this very particular way. So, from the outset, the curator can be said to always already curate for the field itself, for other curators and, with the awareness that his work, not least that which is still to come, is dependent on the judgment of other curators. But this also pertains to those already established, and should not be seen as the effect of curatorial education, but rather the other way around—how curatorial education reflects upon the field, or industry if you will, that it emerged from. This has to with basic structures of the field, that any appointment is always wholly or partially dependent on peer review, on curators judging each other, although not in any evenly distributed way. It is, rather, a case of the few evaluating the many, but these chosen few are, crucially, not a constant group, but a dynamic one—there are always additions and deductions from the group. The group is therefore also difficult to precisely define and designate (although a certain handful of names would immediately spring to mind), since the curatorial ecosystem is a network structure that encompasses everyone, and as such everyone occupies positions with varying degrees of precariousness: even directors of the biggest and most powerful institutions and foundations are under evaluation. In this sense, a curator is always dependent on the views and goodwill of

peers, even if only marginally and abstractly, since the network is not only horizontal, but mainly vertical. Perhaps the most apt metaphor is that of a pyramid?

It is thus hardly surprising that curators may feel the need for a canon of curating, that is, as long as it includes themselves, of course. To be placed in the canon is the closest position to security available in times of precarization, and would seem to assure circulation within the network of curators and institutions. But such a canon, however loosely defined it may be—although the histories and courses may yet attempt to carve it in stone—must by definition be even smaller than any canon of artists. This can only be so, since there is always a large number of artists needed for exhibitions, but more often than not only one curator. In this sense, places and methods are represented in the canon in the same way as artists, as singular individuals rather than contexts, but even more explicitly so: representation is achieved through exclusions rather than inclusions. The selection of the chosen few in curating thus crystallizes how artists are already selected and rejected, circumscribed and reified. And with the ever-growing number of curators graduating from the many courses, the curatorial-institutional environment is only likely to become more competitive and exclusionary. It is therefore only logical that curators attempt to take on some of the classical characteristics of the idiosyncratic artist persona, appearing willfully obscure and mysterious, or one could even say "artistic," in order to fulfill the role of producer as demanded by neoliberal cultural economy, since its imperative is precisely to be creative and productive, constantly self-inventive and adaptable. Who better to answer this call than the curator? And what better way to publicize this ideality than by the implementation of a classicist

paradigm partly lost by contemporary art history writing, namely the canon? This is certainly what is implied in the above mentioned history of curating proposed by Obrist, whose history is oral, consisting not only of interviews with pioneers in the field of curating, but also, by implication, predecessors—that is, a writing of the history of curating as a canon that places oneself as the next in line.[38]

However, the question is not who has to the right to belong to the canon and who has not, but rather who has the right to write the canon, or, more precisely, which mechanisms and institutional inscriptions allow for such writings? Who or what sets the standards for the standard, as well as for standardization? Here another hierarchy is at play in addition to the one between individual curators, one that is institutional. For not every curatorial statement or history can become a standard, since it is not a matter of will or individual agency, but rather of from where one makes this statement, both spatially and temporally. To use a term from Judith Butler, that I shall also look into in the context of articulation, one can think of these placements as *scenes of address*, meaning that not only narratives, and how you construct them, that are at play, but also where they are uttered, from which location and institutional setting.[39] Interestingly, this question is for Foucault this is precisely the question of the speaker, of who has the authority to speak about certain things, making defining statements within a discursive formation. This authority is always locational, and one must thus "describe the institutional sites from which the doctor makes his discourse, and from which this discourse derives its legitimate source and point of application (its specific objects and instruments of verification)".[40] So, too, for the 'doctors' of the art world, curators, critics and collectors. For there are not only

canons of artists and curators, but also certain, centralized spaces that facilitate this canonization and, in turn, annihilate other attempts at history writing, canonical or not.

Canonization's scene of address is always the hegemonic institution, and cannot be otherwise. But while these scenes were historically the national institutions of art history, the museum, and the university, they are now spread in terms of locality, both in the narrow sense, with other institutions such as art centers, art fairs, and biennials taking part, and in the broader sense of being beyond the nation state proper, again with the biennial and the fair as the primary venues. Such institutions have differentiating symbolic power, and it is in this ranking that the canonization of artists by curators, of exhibitions by curators, and, finally, of curators by curators, take place. Three elements seem to give specific institutions this power: tradition, publicity, and capital. Tradition propels institutions such as national galleries, which are often also supported by the two other elements, a large audience and extensive funding (and it is always in their brief to create canonical collections of art). But it is not necessary to score high on all three categories to contribute to canonization, with certain places having large audiences without tradition and, sometimes, with very limited resources, just as very well-renowned and well-funded spaces run by private or corporate foundations may not have a large audience, but rather 'the right audience.' But in combination or isolation, at least one of the three parameters are necessary for a place to partake in the canonical work of curating and the canonization of individual curators.

It is to these institutional sites of enunciation that I shall now turn, but first a few concluding remarks about canonization. First, in

terms of history writing: We know from art history that only very little is won by trying to include the excluded in the canon, since it works and maintains itself exactly through this inclusion/exclusion game. The inclusion of the excluded will again always be limited to only a select few individuals from whichever chosen excluded group, who will then have to suffer the indignity of representing this group forever. The canon only holds individuals, as works or subjects, and not contexts and histories. Instead of trying to expand the canon, it should be disposed of altogether, and perhaps begin to be thought of as what Stefan Nowotny has termed "Anti-Canonization" in his reading of Foucault's genealogy, and the notion of *differentialty*:

> [...] this knowledge is differential because it does not allow itself, being resistive, to be subjected to any authorized discursive field, to any authorization by a dominant discourse, but instead recognizes the power effects found in the separation of knowledge, yet without composing itself into a new totality of knowledge. Hence as plural knowledge it also does not 'organize' itself under a unified form, but rather in an open, non-dialectical game of concurrence. For precisely this reason, the Foucaldian genealogy can be concerned with "preparing a historical knowledge of struggles and introducing this knowledge into current tactics."[41]

Nowotny goes on to list how this led to Foucault's political commitments in the 1970s into anti-psychiatry, prisoner's rights and sexual morals, and how these struggles were also the topic of his archeological research and intellectual work, and he suggests that an investigation of institutional critique, as a theoretical proposition and

artistic practice, should today follow the same route. There are two features here that need to be remarked upon; first the connection of genealogy to social struggles, and how this expands on the criticality of genealogy noted above (in Visker et al.), secondly the transposition of the genealogical critique into the field, and practice, of art. The first feature is crucial, in an understanding of not only the theoretical 'radicality' of Foucault's genealogy, but of the his idea of practicing (radical) theory: the prison was not only to be analyzed and criticized, but this critique and analysis must also take the form of activism, of politics proper, and, moreover, in a form consistent with the analytical findings and theoretical propositions – no straight forward task, surely. In other words, genealogy as practice meant not only writing case studies, but also activist work in the very same field of problematics.

Regarding the second feature, the call for an artistic practice of differentiality, I would not only agree with this position, but I would also claim it as an already ongoing practice, even if marginal and occasional (and, if Foucauldian, how could it be otherwise?). And to this I would like add exhibition-making, I mean truly *add* it in the sense if transforming its currency and an acknowledgement of something currently lacking, if not downright an actual *wrong*: as if a practice of curating could be a anti-canonical project, if only imaginatively, and to see if not also the exhibition can also act like "both battle and weapon, strategy and shock, struggle and trophy or wound, conjecture and vestige, strange meeting and repeatable scene" as Foucault himself hoped for his books at the beginning of the 1970s.[42]

Now, such a proposition will inevitably have to do with the notion of *articulation*; the position of the speaker and the agency of art, and the notion of a *horizon*, the world-view of possibility and impossibility

set up by different types of exhibition-making, that we shall soon turn to. It will also, for now, allow for a reconsideration of some of the exhibitionary positions layed out in the previous section, such as the three comparative examples of *Backstage*, *Kontext kunst* and *trap*. Clearly, as they are put together, they are a discursive formation, and was so in their historical moment of emergence within the circuit and culture of exhibition-making at that time, the early 1990s. However, they are now also historical, and when placed as exemplary in my typological account, they are not only the possible object of an archeology of exhibition-making, but also stand as an origins of sorts, albeit unwittingly, and as such preventing the work of genealogy. When placed in a genealogy, one would instead focus on their relation to power and knowledge, or rather as the referent through which the power and knowledge nexus becomes effective. They must, in other words, be seen as local centers and matrices of transformation. Now, first looking at *trap*, I tried to show how it acted as a critical negation of the current hegemonic discourse, and was, in its way, a statement of additivity that was meant to change the discourse, if not even break through exposure. It did so by positing three possible traps for a critical and socially engaged art practice, presented graphically and linguistically on a map in the space, alongside various documents and large table with chairs, turning the exhibition space into a work space, or forum for discussion. The presentation of the traps indicated the field of cultural production as a language game that one, seemingly, could only lose if involved at all. Perhaps this is the reason that the exhibition described itself as a statement, as a proposition rather than a thesis that could be discussed, proved or disproved philosophically or sociologically: “The exhibition does not attempt to present its theme in a sociological manner, nor to explore it through research. On the

contrary, 'trap' is a statement, a declaration and a commitment to opposition."[43] *trap* is thus an attempt at resisting power, and refusing to be knowledgeable, but nonetheless caught up in the power games of the discursive formation that is contemporary art, or, caught in a trap, if you will. By posing its questions as potential traps, *trap* can also be seen as an example of a genealogical critique, not only involving itself in the politics of art, but also making connections to the social spheres that are exactly excluded by this game, and the question we could ask this project would be in the vein of the genealogical-archeological problematic of Foucault's method: if there is resistance where there is power, that is, if resistance is always already a response/relationality to the fact of power, why is there, then, in the first instance, always power?

Turning to the other two examples, *Backstage* and *Kontext kunst*, the answer is seemingly more simple, and therefore always somewhat more problematic, since they both oppose the power and knowledge of institutions and hegemonic discursive formation with, in the first case, the power of art, and in the second with powerful art (as critique). For the curators of Backstage, the work of art is "an instrument" and "a model for action,"[44] that can intervene in different spaces and social relations. It is the historical dematerialization of art, and the (then) current artistic interests in other fields, that, in conjunction, has created a new space of resonance for art, as well as a new aesthetic space of 'relationality.' Here, the whole institution of the Hamburg Kunstverein was made available for artistic works and interventions, and thus made public to the audience, hence the metaphor of the backstage, which does not only refer to conditions of production, as in theater and rock music, but also a certain projection

of desire: to be able to get backstage and mingle with the stars. But these interventions were not necessarily of a negative, critical nature, but rather playfully immersing itself in the game. There was no idea of a critical gesture that could, if not escape the game and its trappings, but then perhaps change the rules a bit, but rather of the work of as a matrix of transformation, i.e. the potentially transformative powers of art. Similarly with *Kontext kunst*, even though it more implicitly argued for a politics of art, was not engaged in negating in its own terms, or of doubting the efficiency of art, but, contrarily, tried to present art as knowledgeable by presenting it in a powerful way. As mentioned, this exhibition attempted to invent a genre, and was as such consciously and politically engaged in a certain canonization of practices and artists. It is the presentation of knowledge, and here knowledge production is directly equated with not only artistic work as such, but with a specific practice, that which is named contextual, that supports power, as in the exhibition as articulatory statement and the institution behind it as discursive formation, which in turn bestows power onto the artists and their objects in the form of inclusion, narrativization, historization and canonization. At the same time, curator Peter Weibel draws upon the discourse analysis of Foucault, perhaps mostly in the archeological form, and not the genealogical, since the very format of the exhibition (that I described as *sculptural* in its installatory form) or the art-historical publication is never questioned, the project itself participates forcefully and willfully in the power-knowledge hyphenation in its mode of address as a survey rather than statement.

The question that emerges, then, is if a genealogical approach can be productive for the making of an exhibition, and must not rather be confined to the historical reflection of exhibition-making? Can an

exhibition reflect its own conception, not only materially, as in *Backstage*, but mentally, in its intellectual itinerary? Can it be a statement and a reflection at the same time, can it have a disordering order, so to speak? This is a problematic that I shall return to in the following chapter, after some more words on power/knowledge in the glocal center of power that is the contemporary biennale, but here I shall just end with this note of caution, that a genealogical critique should give one reason to pause, something that the machinery of cultural production does not really allow for, the idea of suspension, or of quotation marks, so central to Visker's reading of Foucault, which he sums up as follows:

> The establishment of an aporia: a 'radical' critique of reason itself no longer has rational criteria at its disposal – genealogy becomes a machine de guerre. The outcome of the reading we have carried out? Repeated hesitation.[45]

2.1. INSTITUTING THE INSTITUTION

If statements (such as, possibly, exhibitions) must always be seen in the context of their institutional siting, two other, but closely related issues emerge, part what institution we are thinking of in the most concrete sense of the term, i.e. the actual, place, building and function in a given society, and secondly what institution means in the broadest sense, politically and philosophically. I shall first turn to the latter question, and then, in the following section, look into the concrete institution, the art institution and the venue of exhibitions. Let me begin by stating the obvious: institutions *institute*. That is to say, that, institutions are not just physical structures, but also sites – or scenes – for instituting, meaning that they produce certain relations and posit certain ideas and ideologies. Moreover, institutions should not only be thought of in the most concrete sense of the term, i.e. the actual, place, building and function in a given society, but also in the broadest sense, politically and philosophically. In other words, institutions are not merely practical, or for that matter impractical, but they have a practice, or even *praxis*. But what exactly does it mean to institute, and what is being instituted, more concretely? Furthermore, does a particular institutional form always already institute in the same way, that is, does institutions of the same type, such as an art space, entail the same form of instituting? Finally, how does a given institutional form correspond to what is supposedly being instituted, or what, in lack of a better term, might be called the institution's *content*?

To use a phrase such as institutional content may sound close to John Searle's concept of institutional facts, which is how he famously defines institutions – rather than trying to answer what is an

institution, Searle shifts his enquiry onto the notion of facts, then, when scientifically determined, can then provide the contours of an institution and its production, a whole that consists of a "systematic set of relationships between collective intentionality, the assignment of function, the assignment of status functions, constitutive rules, institutional facts, and deontic powers."[46] Which would then indicate an interdependent web of meaning making processes, where form and content are not only intermingled, but also mutually constitutive. There is, thus, also a certain circularity to not only the process described, but also the method of analysis used – indeed where Searle initially shifts from institution to institutional facts, in order to say what an institution is, he ends up answering this question by stating that "an institution is any collectively accepted system of rules (procedures, practices) that enable us to create institutional facts."[47] If this is the case, I would then suggest focusing not on institutions, but on how institutions institute, and, furthermore, perhaps one should not focus solely on institutional facts, but rather, and precisely, on what could called *institutional myths*.

The reasons for this strategic move are numerous. First of all, there are, surely, many myths surrounding actual institutions in any given society, that are as much part of their status function, both adding to and detracting from it. The many myths that may be about a correctional facility, for example, would seem to enhance its powers and functions more than dismantling it, while other myths that attain to place's inabilities, such as an art institution having a bad reputation among its constituents and larger public, may very well lead to its actual demise, its defunding and closure. Secondly, there are not only myths about an institution – and here I am thinking of institution in the

broadest terms – but also myths and stories produced by an institution, that is integral to how it institutes, such as in the case of the institutional myth that is the Nation. Whereas any Nation is a geographical and juridical entity that is held together by its constitutive laws and territorial boundaries, it is nonetheless, and perhaps even foremost, perpetuated by its own myth of coherence and uniqueness, which can then in turn be seen as being particularly strong or weak, ascending or descending at any given historical moment, conceived and construed as *the state of the nation*.

Theoretically, I now want to look closer at what it means *to institute*. That is, how institutions are instituted as institutions, as function and place, and how institutions in turn institute. The concept of institution I want to specifically refer to is the French-Greek philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis' theory of society as an *imaginary institution*, with actual instituted social imaginaries and relations: "It is the instituting social imaginary that creates institution in general (the institution as form) as well as the particular institutions of each specific society, and the radical imagination of the singular human being."[48] Now, these words stems for a text that Cornelius Castoriadis wrote toward the very end of his life, written in 1996-97, a particularly bleak and pessimistic essay tellingly entitled 'Imaginary and Imagination at the Crossroads'. Here, he claimed that we were in a state of crisis, which had to do with both the singular human imagination and the instituting social imaginary. We were witnessing the end of a great period of creation and innovation, that effected – equally – four designated areas of the imaginary: politics, philosophy, science and, singled out as privileged, artistic and cultural production. Art is here seen as the vector for the measuring of both social and singular

imagination and institution. Castoriadis dated this demise back to the 1950s, and saw the subsequent period as one of growing conformism and preservation as opposed to invention and revolution, and he meticulously goes through each of these four categories searching for evidence. Now, it would be easy to dismiss this as a typical lament for historical modernism, and indeed the text has its fair share of cultural pessimism and bitterness, and can even be said to contradict his own theories of the imaginary and of the instituting of society as an everlasting process, which would mean that imagination could not really be measured as high or low at any given period.

For Castoriadis, society is an imaginary ensemble of institutions, practices, beliefs and truths, that we all subscribe to and thus constantly (re)produce. Society and its institutions are as much fictional as functional. Institutions are part of symbolic networks, and as such they are not fixed or stable, but constantly articulated through projection and praxis. Any society must be instituted as symbolic constructions, held together by specific social imaginaries and institutions, which solidifies imaginary signification into what he termed 'instituted social imaginary'. But by focusing on its imaginary character, he also suggests that other social organizations and interactions can be imagined. Societies are not created through a natural rationalism or through historical progressive determinism, but are instituted through creation, through imagination(s):

> That which holds society together is, of course, its institution, the whole complex of its particular institutions, what I call 'the institution of a society as a whole' – the word 'institution' being taken here in the broadest and most radical sense: norms, values, language, tools,

> procedures and methods of dealing with things and doing things, and, of course, the individual itself both in general and in the particular type and form (and their differentiations: e.g. man/woman) given to it by the society considered.[49]

These institutions and ways of instituting (meaning, subjectivity, legality and so on) appear as a more or less coherent whole, as a unity, but appear so only through praxis and belief. But as an ontological proposition it means that a society must always be instituted through creation, and that there cannot be more or less creativity. If a particular social imaginary comes be viewed as inaccurate or obsolete, false even, it will mean the collapse of that given society, the way that historical empires have crumbled and fallen, only to be replaced, in turn, by another imaginary order of society. Perhaps this is what Castoriadis meant when he spoke of the decline of Western civilization, of standing at a particular crossroads? Social imaginaries can thus be actively redefined through other instituting practices, and existing ones collapsed when no longer viewed as adequate, just or true. Social change thus occurs through discontinuity rather than continuity, either in the form of radical innovation and creativity (such as Newtonian physics) or in the shape of symbolic and political revolutions (such as France 1789) that never can be predicted or understood in terms of determinate causes and effects or an inevitable historical sequence of events in the way, say, most liberalist commentators view the fall of communism is being brought about by some natural law of economics. Change emerges, then, through the establishment of other imaginaries without predeterminations, through praxis and will that establishes

another way of instituting. This requires a radical break with the past in terms of language and symbolization, and thus of ways of doing.

In effect, it is about creating a new language with which to say things, not just saying the same things with new words. *Autonomy* and striving for autonomy is therefore the central theme in Castoriadis' *political* thinking. He defines autonomous societies in contrast to a heteronymous ones; while all societies make their own imaginaries – institutions, laws, traditions, beliefs, behaviors and so on, autonomous societies are those whose members are aware of this fact and explicitly *self-institute.* In contrast, the members of heteronymous societies attribute their imaginary order to something outside, to some extra-social authority, such as God, tradition, progress or historical necessity. Whereas contemporary parliamentary democracy has replaced the notion of the sovereign with the empty center of the representative, could one not nonetheless – particularly after the credit crunch of 2008 and its aftermath – today argue for capitalism itself as the fundamental and historically inevitable category? That capitalism today has assumed the role of a natural law, as the extra-social authority and inevitability? Which would be another way of understanding the crossroads, as well as our world making through institutionalization. First, standing at the crossroads – and I shall return more precisely to this metaphor in Castoriadis as well its possible actualization shortly – can then be said to be between the route of autonomy or the ways of heteronomy. Now, remember that autonomy meant self-institutionalization, not anti-institutionalization, but what would heteronomy mean today in institutionalized democracy that does not refer to any order outside its own system of elect ability and accountability? Here the distinction between instituted social

imaginaries and the singular human imagination comes into play, since the individual imagination is always circumscribed by the socialization of society's institutions and ways of instituting, so even when a society might not be heteronymous as such, the individual might still very much be so, since he or she is are making their decisions and judgments based on social criteria rather than their own mind or will, and, as Castoriadis points out "enormous amounts of people in our societies are in fact heteronymous" since they "judge on the basis of 'conventions' and 'public opinion'."[50] And as for our society, can the blind faith in the market and global capital not be said to be of a heteronymous nature, even if it disorders rather than orders society?

This distinction between autonomy and heteronomy also has bearings on the makings and workings of cultural institutions, whether state institutions or non-governmental organizations. Does an institution adhere to the logics and demands of the state and governmentality, or does it seek other another path? Obviously this has not only to do with funding structures, but also with articulation of one's perceived public role. An institution institutes through more than its programming, but does so also in its spatial production, social relations within the workplace, production of subjectivity as spectatorship and so, in general, its instituted social imaginaries. Does the institution simply say the same things with new words or invent a new language? Here Gerald Raunig's recent notion of 'instituent' practice might prove instructive and useful. He describes it the in following manner:

> [...] *in*stituent practices thwart the logics of institutionalization; they invent new forms of instituting and continuously link these instituting

> events. Against this background, the concept of 'instituent practices' marks the site of a productive tension between a new articulation of critique and the attempt to arrive at a notion of 'instituting' after traditional understandings of institutions have begun to break down and mutate. When we speak of an 'instituent practice', this actualization of the future in a present becoming is not the opposite of institution in the way that utopia, for instance, is the opposite of bad reality. [...] Rather, 'instituent practice' as a process and concatenation of instituent events means an absolute concept exceeding mere opposition to institutions: it does not oppose the institution, but it does flee from institutionalization and structuralization.[51]

Still, one of the problems of any revolutionary project is exactly this: how to implement a radical change, not just in the significations and sedimentations of institutions, but in the very way they institute; that is, how they produce social relations anew. Let me illustrate with an example of how an institution is caught between its perceived autonomy of the arts and radical thinking on the one hand and the heteronomy of the state and its neo-liberal demands on the other, namely the now defunct Nordic Institute For Contemporary Art, with which I was affiliated 2003-4. This organization was based in Helsinki, but was responsible for making projects in the whole of the Nordic region, as well as administers of an extensive residency program in the region and beyond. It was funded, and politically monitored, by another organization, the Nordic Council of Ministers, comprised of the five nation-states Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, with the aim of enhancing Nordic cultural collaborations. While this single example cannot constitute any hard, factual evidence, it is nonetheless a fairly typical example of a certain type of international and regional

cultural institution and inherent ideology. And since I was involved with this institution directly, I can at least act as a native informant on this case.

Now, among the programs initiated during my tenure there, was a residency program in the Balkans, where Nordic artists would awarded a stay, and artists from the chosen Balkan countries would go to the Nordic region. However, this program, was not started by NIFCA itself, but designed by someone with the Council of Ministers and imposed on the institution by political decree, and, one must presume, following specific political interests. Certainly no particular rationale was ever offered, and the time in which to begin execute this program was exceptionally short, just a few months. Even so, the program can probably be described as fairly typical in its genesis and reasoning, and perhaps as fairly benign. What was noticeable, though, was the selection of countries from the Balkans and their regional designation: the west Balkans, which was, at least to me, a new concept. Where was, then, this west Balkan, and which countries and territories did it consist of? As it turned out, the west Balkans was short hand for a number of specific places, or even nations, namely the republics of the former Yugoslavia, although without Slovenia, but with the addition of Albania. This led to some consternation among NIFCA's staffers, not only over the ethical aspects, but also over what to actually call it: should one, as a cultural worker, accept such new and apparently random designations such as a 'west' Balkan, and this new geography being solely the invention of bureaucrats to fulfill political and trade interests? Or could it be negotiated and engaged with critically and productively in its implementation, that is, its choice of collaborative partners in the respective countries and the selection of artists

participating? Certainly this is what the institution, like most institutions, and indeed most of us as circulating cultural producers, *did* attempt. Still, this left the question of naming, and since no other name was forthcoming, no geo-political nor metaphorical title was invented, I suggested calling it simply the *Ex-Yugoslavia Minus Slovenia Plus Albania Residency Program*, which was, needless to say, uniformly rejected by my colleagues. But why couldn't one use such a name? Would it make fewer artists apply? Would it make artists apply differently? Would it produce difference? Would it make a difference? Perhaps such questions are the ones to ask in this context, rather than the usual generic ones about numbers, effectiveness and usefulness of residency programs.

Grants and residencies is, then, not so much a case of money following artists, as it mostly portrayed by benevolent funding bodies and patrons, since it rather forces the artists to follow the money. It is not a matter of controlling what an artist makes per se, that would be official art, or even worse, censorship, but rather of controlling the field indirectly by setting residencies for certain people and places, always specified, and by transforming more and more state grants from direct production grants into thematic areas and aims. It is, if not controlling the products, then certainly the flow of products and subjects, which returns to the dual sense of the word subject mentioned earlier, subjects as persons and subjects as topics, and the definition of both are the means through which the global flow in cultural production, specifically the exhibitions and programs of the artworld, are controlled and measured. Which brings me back to the question of contemporary cultural production and the imaginary. Which new languages are being created, which new imaginaries are being

produced, and which old things are being said with new words? Or, what can be imagined, and what cannot be? Which modes of critique are affirmative and which are transformative? And which artistic creations are illustrative, and sometimes even celebratory, of the 'new' immaterial phase of global capital? An aesthetic gesture, like a political one, thus consists in the creation of a new ensemble of things, in a (re)staging of the (perceived) real. This also means that one cannot distinguish between political and nonpolitical works of art (or, in a broader sense, representations), but rather that there lies – in the very imaginings of each specific mode of address, or what Jacques Rancière has, in a wholly other context called the politics of aesthetics, as already mentioned previously. If the politics of aesthetic practices does indeed lie in how they partake in the partition and distribution of the sensible; that is, of what can be seen and sensed, and what can be said and not said, one could also say, with Castoriadis: what can be imagined, and what cannot be imagined. Whereas the political in works of art is usually described either in terms of a) a sense of use value, or even propaganda, or b) the so called politics of representation; that is, how and who the artwork represents, I suggest expanding on this notion and analyze artworks through their imaginary character; what kind of horizon they set up, set themselves up against or are limited or framed by, without these aspects necessarily standing in opposition to each other.

The politics of artworks and exhibition-making lie, then, not so much in the intentionality of the artists, nor in the reception of the spectator only, i.e. the politics of reading, nor exclusively within the so-called politics of representation, i.e. *how* things are shown, who are represented and who are excluded, but rather in how they imagine we

can represent or depresent, think or not think, include or exclude, amaze or shock, entertain or lecture, and so on. And the same goes for the institutionalization and socialization of institutions, whose work can indeed be seen as new modes of instituting, producing and projecting other worlds and the possibility of self-transformation of the world; as an institutionalization that is produced through subjectivity rather than (only) producing subjectivity. It can, obviously, offer a place from which to *see* (and to see differently, to see other imaginaries), as much as objects to look at. Notions of critical and affirmative artworks need therefore to be rephrased in terms of how they attempt to institute their particular imagining of the world and, indeed, of the phantasmagoric. It is primarily in the imaginations (or lack there of) of the particular cultural production and instituting, and not the intentions of the producer, that the politics of aesthetics are located.

However, what is at stake is what imagination of future as well as past, or to put it in Benjaminian terms, *past-as-future*,[52] is proposed: how the work produces other imaginaries of the world and its institutions, rather than merely reiterating already existing ones, even if in so-called critical terms (or what can be termed affirmative critique). It becomes, then, a matter of what horizon can be imagined, as well as how to institute it. Taking the cue from Castoriadis and his analysis of society as self-created, as existing through institutions, one can present it as a question of imagining *another* world, not merely another way of describing this one in the phantasmagoric imagination, and thus of instituting other ways of being instituted and imagining. To say that other worlds are indeed possible, to offer other imaginaries, ways of seeing and thus changing the world. Here, the notion of self-institutionalization appears as crucial, not only as an organization of

collective experience, as evident in certain artist groups and platforms, but also in the very mode of address in works that politicize aesthetics rather than the other way around. Any 'political' aesthetic is not just a representational act that supports politics but is also the mode of address that politicizes aesthetics. One must reconfigure the very mode of address itself and, in turn, it's imagined subjects (as audiences, constituencies, communities and/or adversaries): a reconfiguration of both the mental and material conditions of the work *itself*. Let me turn once more to Cornelius Castoriadis, who wrote:

> [The] supersession [of present society] – which we are aiming at *because we will it* and because we know that others will it as well, not because such are the laws of history, the interests of the proletariat or the destiny of being – the bringing about of a history in which society not only knows itself, but *makes itself* as explicitly self-instituting, implies a radical destruction of the known institution of society, in its most unsuspected nooks and crannies, which can exist only as positing/creating not only new institutions, but a new *mode* of instituting and a new relation of society and of individuals to the institution.[53]

It is thus not only a question of changing institutions, but of changing how we *institute*; how subjectivity and imagination can be instituted in a different way. This can be done by altering the existing formats and narratives, as in the queering of space and the (re)writing of histories – that is, through deconstructive as well as reconstructive projects, *and* by constructing new formats, by rethinking the structures and implementations of the exhibition altogether – even to the extent of

abandoning it for events and formats of *un*exhibition, and disappearance as dissipation and participation. Secondly, any institution and its ways of institution, such as exhibition-making, should not be understood as unitary, but as dispersed – its modes of address need not be uniform, but different in scale, grammar and reach. Thirdly, the institution and the exhibition, and their respective ways of instituting, may not always play themselves out in unison, but sometimes as off-key, dissonant or even atonal. Rather then seeing this as a problem, as is our wont as individual curators (and maybe also as directors, although I cannot say), this can also be viewed as a potential, as a space of resonance – between curator, artist and institution, naturally, but also between producer and audience, art and society at large – and as a space of conflict – major as minor – as a space for possibility. In other words, institution- and exhibiting-making should be described in terms of its *outlook*: its *position* and how this emerges through the exhibition, what I shall call *articulation*, and its *scope*, its view on and of the world, what I shall call its *horizon*. Here, the notion of 'the crossroads' invoked at the outset of this chapter becomes primary in Castoriadis' critique of his age as being not only conformist in its lack of imagination, but also relapsing into heteronomy in the acceptance of the status quo, whether this be the racing techno science, neo-liberal economic policies or the (poor) state of the arts. But this is only one possible path at the crossroads, albeit clearly marked, and, he claims, one that will only lead to loss of meaning, economic disaster and an overall crisis in societal imaginary significations and institutions. But there also another path, one which "has not been marked out at all", and which, although by definition unpredictable, would have to be opened up by the creative imaginary: "Only a social and political awakening, a renaissance, a fresh upsurge of

the project of individual and collective autonomy – that is of the will to be free can cut that path".[54]

This essay about the crossroads was written almost 15 years ago, but today we would seem to find ourselves at a similar crossroads, and have, if anything eerily proceeded further down the first path marked out, despite such disastrous events as 9-11 and the current credit crisis, that has so far only been answered by undemocratic policies of security and growing xenophobia in the first case, and more of the same farcical economic policies that lead to the crisis in the first place in the case of the latter. Is there really no alternative, and how did capitalism and consumerism become so naturalized? I shall later on relate this to the question of horizons – of the construction of a particular horizon of possibility and impossibility as hegemonic, as well as the perceived lack of other horizons. The setting up of an image as seemingly banal as the crossroads is the creation of precisely such horizons. Having inherited the apparent endgame of liberal democracy and its adjacent politics of administration implicated in the first path, the well-trodden one, it becomes an urgent task to attempt to go beyond resignation or empty critique and to insist that it is still possible to imagine another world.

An institution or institutional production must imagine a public in order to produce it, and to produce a world around it, a horizon. So, if we are satisfied with the world we have now, we should continue to make exhibitions and works as always, and repeat the formats and circulations. If, on the other hand, we are not happy with the world we are in, both in terms of the art world and in a broader geopolitical sense, we will have to produce other exhibitions: other subjectivities and other imaginaries. And we have to be not only resistant or

insurgent, but also *instituent*. In this way, I suggest thinking of Raunig's notion of the institutent in terms of instituting, and I shall now turn to the curatorial approach to the institution and attempts at instituting differently from the last decade, but modalities that can now already be considered historical, and thus part of both a conceptual history and a genealogy of exhibition-making, and in this instance, institution-making.

2.2. CURATING THE INSTITUTION

In the beginning of the 2000s, a new term suddenly came into use, that of *New Institutionalism*. Although from outside the field(s) of art theory and curatorial practice, stemming instead from sociology where it indicates the study of institutions and their interaction with society in the form of reciprocal influence, it was here imbued with a completely different meaning, introduced into the discourse and altering it, not unlike the transformations of discursive formations described by Foucault:

> The transformation of a discursive practice is tied to a whole, often quite complex set of modifications which may occur either outside of it (in the forms of production, in the social relations, in the political institutions), or within it (the techniques for determining objects, in the refinement and adjustment of concepts, the accumulation of data), or alongside it (in other discursive practices).[55]

In this case, one can probably talk about changes along the lines of the two instances, although the first would soon prove to have the most impact. New Institutionalism can also, however, be viewed as a concept within the history of art and its institutions (as a floating signifier soon to become very fixed). And if look into to, admittedly, short history of this concept, one will quickly discover that it was actually not a concept, at least not at first, but rather a phrase, picked up somewhere, over heard in conversation perhaps, or vaguely remembered from social theory, but not consciously recalled, and then

somewhat employed to mark out a specific current discourse, and, as I shall argue as much a proposition for a discursive practice dealing with art institutions. The common reference to the term is now the book bearing its name, edited by the critic and curator Jonas Ekeberg, and published by OCA, a Norwegian 'new' institution in 2003.[56]

Indeed, the first time I heard of the term was exactly on the occasion of the publication of this book, when Ekeberg asked me to participate in the public debate marking its release. Since I did not know of the concept, nor of its usage in social theory, I asked Ekeberg how and why he had invented this term, and what is was to designate and to produce in forms of discourse. His answer was both surprising and interesting, since he simply claimed not to have coined the term New Institutionalism at all, but was merely quoting a term already in use to designate a particular way of curating institutions. The book was in no way intended to be a survey of a phenomenon, nor a manifesto for a movement, but simply a reflection, within the Norwegian context and the newly established institution of OCA, and it does also have the format of a booklet, almost of working papers. In actuality, none of the three essays in the book discusses, or even mentions, the term, only referred to fleetingly in Ekeberg's introduction and the title, clearly as indicated that the term is already in use, already fixed within the discourse, and thus therefore not need any further definitions or elaborations.

This is a typical example of how concepts emerge and codify within the contemporary artworld, often a phrase is used in conversations and discussions, and then subsequently put into writing somewhere, that then becomes the original statement in art historical terms. Often this codification happens when a concept moves from

one of the centers to more peripheral places, which arguably also happened here – Ekeberg even refers to symposia taking place elsewhere although with a twist, with the concept being then formed and traveling back into the center of discussions in the form of an almost mythical, originary book, that nobody could find a copy of, since it was published by an arts agency, not a publishing house, and without any real distribution (regionally as internationally), which is only appropriate, since New Institutionalism was, for the most part, something that happened outside of the major centers and cities of the artworld, and that maybe could only have happened in this outside, and was, in the main, a Nordic or North European phenomenon.

As mentioned none of the essays in this small book discusses the idea, although one of them does mention, in very critical terms, as it were, two of the institutions and two of the curators who were the main proponents of the practice; Maria Lind and her work at the Kunstverein in Munich, that has already been mentioned and quoted, and Charles Esche and his work at the Rooseum in Sweden. I shall return to this case, and the criticisms of it, but here it is important to note that this essay, 'Harnessing the Means of Production', is written by a British writer and curator, Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt, since the reception of New Institutionalism was always at a geographical remove, and it is surely no coincidence that the two major essays on the movement, that were both much more influential in the definition and historization of the movement, were both also written by British writers, and in British magazines, one in an academic journal and the other in a major art magazine, authored by Claire Doherty and Alex Farquharson, respectively.[57] In both cases, the writers were watching from a distance, from a specific time and place, a Great Britain

undergoing massive neo-liberal reform under New Labour rather than New institutionalism...

And this notion of locality is crucial in understanding the movement, both its rise and fall. Most of the institutions mentioned in connection with the term were located in countries with a social democratic welfare state system, and were mostly publicly funded, with little or no demands on seeking sponsorships and other types of private funding or revenues derived from ticket sales. However, as these welfare states, be it in Scandinavia, France or Holland are now all finally being dismantled, so too has the room for institutional experiments such as new institutionalism dwindled and disappeared, with the advent of neo-liberalism, that has, in the apt words of David Harvey: "...entailed much 'creative destruction' [...] of prior institutional frameworks and powers (even challenging traditional forms of state sovereignity)."[58] Hence my reference to it in the past tense, and hence my reference to the first transformative event for discourse as found in the Foucault quotation, that of political and economic change. Indeed, I would argue that New Institutionalism, while idealist, was also somewhat nostalgic, referring to a sense of community, possibility and openness already on the wane at the time of the curatorial/institutional work. That is, that New Institutionalism was not only an attempt at finding new, progressive avenues for institutions to explore rather embracing the culture industry and the society of spectacle, but also retrospective and preserving, a cultural expression of the withering away of the welfare state. It is thus not co-incidental that one of the last projects at the now long gone 'new' institution of Rooseum was entitled *Whatever Happened to Social Democracy?*

In many ways, the case of Rooseum is emblematic for the whole enterprise and history, but before looking a little more into the Scandinavian context, its important to describe what New Institutionalism was actually supposed to indicate in its historical form. It was used to designate the curatorial practice of certain institutions, that was even listed in various texts and projects, and included such institutions as BAK and Witte de With in Holland, Index and Rooseum in Sweden, the kunstvereins in Frankfurt and Munich in Germany, as well as CAC in Lithuania, Palais de Tokyo in France, and Platform Garanti in Turkey, give and take a few more. All of these institutions, plus a few more, all actually participated in what is, to my knowledge, still the only art exhibition that showed other art institutions rather than artists, an exhibiton called *Institution*^{2} (as in institution squared), curated by Jens Hoffmann for NIFCA, and shown at the KIASMA art museum in Helsinki in 2003 (not only curated by an independent, external curator, by also commissioned by one institution, and hosted by another – institution squared, indeed!).

This truly institutionalized project was but one in a long series of such self-reflexive projects undertaken by NIFCA, an institution that be seen as a forerunner to New Institutionalism itself, although it has not featured much in the histories of it. By the same token, one can only speculate as to the selection criteria – always such a central feature of a curator's work, although always the least publicized and mostly willfully obscured – for *Institution*^{2} and its attempt at creating a canon of new institutions. One needs only to mention two spaces from the German speaking context that Hoffman surely must have been aware of, Shedhalle in Zürich and Kunstraum Lüneburg, the former emerging out of artistic self-organization and the politics of autonomy that was

the squatter's movement, and that had employed a collective and decidedly feminist and queer mode of curating from the early 1990s onwards, in the form of what I called the project exhibitions, while the latter, also clearly project orientated, sprang from an academic context, the University of Lüneburg, and as such attempted a merger of critical theory with curatorial practice in the mixture between exhibitions, workshops and courses. Perhaps it was these two very characteristics that lead to their depresentation: queer politics and academia?

However, NIFCA had long been discussing the role of the contemporary institution, which partly stemmed from that very institution itself, and its transformation in 1997 from an exhibition space for Nordic art in Helsinki to being an institute for contemporary Nordic art without any fixed exhibition venue. Indeed, one of the very first projects initiated by the new institutional form that was NIFCA's first director Anders Kreuger was an international seminar with 23 thinkers and curators from all corners of the world on the island of Lofoten. I am mentioning the place and the number of participants to give an idea of the institutional possibilities at the time, both politically and economically. Even though this event, which was but one many such events, only took place 15 years ago it might as well have happened in a totally other age: it seems impossible to imagine that any institution today could afford such an enterprise, certainly not from its core funding, and its unlikely that it would politically possible to organize something on that scale with little or no public profile. The theme, or title of the project is also instructive, it was named *Stopping the Process?*, and as such sharing the concerns of New Institutionalism with questioning establish institutional forms and practices. The later

event by Hoffman, now focusing on institutions as forms rather than curators as positions, was also to be part of an on-going research project into yet another rethinking of NIFCA's brief and structure, just five years later, entitled *The Utopian Institution*, for which the curator Nina Möntmann and myself were hired to produce a report on the field and suggest alternative models for the institution. We write only two lines about assessing *Institution²*, to the effect that the problematic of big seminars (as the one that accompanied the opening of the exhibition) was, as we write, "discussed"... Not a single word about what was discussed, which surely has to do with the fact that no single event was discussed so vehemently internally, but also because no consensus on the event or even how to describe could be reached, quite the contrary. The reactions of NIFCA staffers truly ranged from excitement to disgust, some finding it a valuable tool for discussion and networking, others as a self-indulgent scene celebrating itself, and various positions in-between, but this will never be known from looking at the report.[59] But what did, then, this new scene or network of institutions consist of? What united these spaces apart from the curatorial proposition and exposition of grouping them in a group show? Apart from the locational issues, a few other things spring to mind: there is the matter of their sizes: these insititutions are all small to medium size, with certain parameters given for the size, if not scope of the exhibitions, and thus also to the expectations in terms of visitor numbers and general public reception (beyond the circles of the artworld); and none of them are museums, and does thus not have responsibilities in terms of history, collections and archiving, both characteristics that make them suitable for experimentation in terms of format, and as venues primarily dedicated to contemporary art. Surely one of the structural reasons for these places to begin to

reconsider their activities and move them, partly, as much towards the production as the presentation of contemporary art.

With New Institutionalism, the exhibition venue became a production unit, both concretely and metaphorically, producing new works and projects of art, but also new subjects and ways of interacting with art, often with a simple historical dialectic, with traditional institutions, such as museums, as places for passive viewing, and with new, smaller institutions as active spaces of participation, or as Esche famously stated it at the outset of his tenure at Rooseum: "It has become an active space rather than one of passive observation. Therefore the institutions to foster it have be part community center, part laboratory and part academy, with less need for the established showroom function."[60] There are several things at play in this quote, and shall shortly return to the transformative qualities of the metaphors of community center, laboratory and academy, but first place them in distinction from, or even opposition to, the very idea of a museum, particularly in the form that it had taken in the last two decades of the 20th century. In a way, New Institutionalism was a response, as well as outcome, of a preceeding process of 'new musealization.' From the 1980s onwards, the museum had undergone massive transformations as a growth industry, literally becoming a museum industry, either in the building and opening of many new museums (particularly in Germany, France and the United States), and through a spatial and functional transformation of existing museums, that were now made more modern and entertaining, in an effort to increase visitor numbers and a new conception of them as primarily customers. As machines, museums grew ever bigger, while the actual spaces for exhibition, and thus centrality of the artworks, decreased in

favor of more social, representational spaces, such as lobbies, gift shops and cafés.[61] Andreas Huyssen has, in a essay that actually defends musealization, as the safeguard against 'cultural amnesia', from the attacks of institutional critique, even described the museum as now being a *mass medium*.[62] This would entail totally other communicatory possibilities, more akin to those of popular culture, and thus also another evaluation of reception, that has to do with accessability, entertainment and a mass audience.

If one is, then, to think of the role of the art institution in terms of popular culture, New Institutionalism was then the institution as an Indie label as opposed to the museum's bland, corporate mass entertainment. However, this new function for the institution, and thus for its ways of instituting, was nonetheless established on some already established institutional forms and cultural spaces – the community center, the laboratory and the academy – that were there being used as the template, but crucially institutions with another mode of addressing and instituting its public as constituency rather than audience. As opposed to the community center, the laboratory and the academy traditionally have no public, and where the community center is, ideally, self-organized, the laboratory has very rigid organizational forms, and the academy an idea of learning being passed or shared between different agents. The 'new' institution of art was thus conceived as a kind of hybrid, that would produce, not just new ways of making, thinking and viewing art, but also, and perhaps more importantly, new social relations.

The institution was, if you will *a model* for society as such, not only a part of society and its institutions. Rather, an idealistic claim for the institution as a different social model was proposed, one that

would not just be part of a – nominal – democracy, but also produce another, more thorough and radical democratic process of subjectivization than the pedagogical production of national citizens. On the one hand it should produce a more egalitarian form of spectatorship, if not participation, while simultaneously be able to make social antagonisms productive, perhaps even to the level of transforming them into agonism, to use Chantal Mouffe's famous phrase. The art institution was, in short, to be truly and wholly *democratic*, and more so than other institutions. However, these claims for the institution and its conception of its constituency did not fundamentally change the notion of spectatorship as the model of reception. Whereas the art displaced may have experimented with modes of display, dematerialized the art object, shifted from product to project, and focused on social as much aesthetic relations, the communicatory model nonetheless remained the same, with the artist and the institution transmitting knowledge to a more or less anonymous public. There was, for example, no blurring of the lines between producer and consumer, between artists and audience, which remained exactly that, regardless of political claims and intentions for inclusiveness. In other words, the ways in which the institution worked with artists changed, and often in radically progressive ways, but the conception of the public remained mostly unchanged, if not unchallenged.

A part of these idealist presumptions and prescriptions for the new institutions also has to do with a factor not immediately visible from the institutional list sketched out above, but which was pointed out by most commentators, but particularly by Farquharson, namely that these 'new' institutions became so when they all had new young

directors between 1999 and 2002, directors who were all part of a new generation of curators, who had emerged as independent curators during the 1990s, and were of a similar age to the new artists of that period, and as such the curatorial equivalent of the Scottish or Nordic miracles (for example). In other words, New institutionalism was a generational concern, and marked the ascension of certain curators of that particular generation into positions of power and institutionalization, and stopped being independent curators, but instead became a class of circulating curators. And the subsequent demise of New Institutionalism, simultaneous to these curators becoming more established – sometimes directors of museums, even, or, most often, recurring curators of international biennials, large as small – was perhaps as equally an effect of this coming of age, as was socio-political changes and harsh economic realities. The discourse was thus changed both from within itself and from outside of it.

In other words, the closeness to artistic production, small audiences and experimentation with formats, the rejection of spectacle and other qualities of the *un*exhibition, have all become part of personal genealogies and careers, and are not justifiable as the stakes and budgets and visibility in terms of public scrutiny increases with biennial and museum formats and their possible or impossible modes of exhibition-making. But this change is not just a matter of changing contexts and possibilities, but also a reading of institutional possibility within specific institutional models and sites – what is surely a site-specific reading of different institutional spaces and their contingencies, which points to the last shared feature of the generation of curators associated with New Institutionalism. Most of them may have had an educational background in art history, but at

the same time most of them had worked closely with artists, and thus had a knowledge of not only how art is received, but also how it is produced, and were very aware, among other positions, of artistic self-organization on the one hand, such as the actuality and history of alternative and artist-run spaces, and on the other hand of the practice and history of so-called *institutional critique*.

The very term institutional critique seems to indicate a direct connection between a method and an object: the method being the critique and the object the institution. In the first wave of institutional critique from the late 1960s and early 1970s – long since celebrated and relegated by art history – these terms could apparently be even more concretely and narrowly defined; the critical method was an artistic practice, and the institution in question was the art institution, mainly the art museum, but also galleries and collections. Institutional critique thus took on many forms, such as artistic works and interventions, critical writings or (art–)political activism. However, in the so-called second wave, from the 1980s, the institutional framework became somewhat expanded to include the artist's role (the subject performing the critique) as institutionalized, as well as an investigation into other institutional spaces (and practices) besides the art space.[63] Both waves are today themselves part of the art institution, in the form of art history and education as much as in the general de-materialized and post-conceptual art practice of contemporary art. It shall not be my purpose here, naturally, to discuss or access the meaning of institutional critique as an art historical canon, or to engage in the writing of such a canon, but rather to point out a convergence between the two waves, that seems to have drastically changed in the current 'return' of institutional critique that

was New Institutionalism, and that may or may not constitute a third wave. In either of its historical emergences, institutional critique was a practice mainly, if not exclusively, conducted by artists, and directed *against* the (art) institutions, as a critique of their ideological and representative social function(s). Art's institutions, that may or may not contain the artists' work, were seen, in the hard words of Robert Smithson, as spaces of "cultural confinement" and circumscription, and thus as something to attack aesthetically, politically and theoretically.[64]

The institution was always posed as a problem (for artists). In contrast, the current institutional-critical discussions seem predominantly propagated by curators and directors of the very same institutions, and they are usually opting *for* rather than against them. That is, they are not an effort to oppose or even destroy the institution, but rather to modify and solidify it. The institution is not only a problem, but also a solution! There has been a shift, then, in the placement of institutional critique, not only in historical time, but also in terms of the subjects who direct and perform the critique – it has moved from an outside to an inside. Interestingly, Benjamin Buchloh has described the historical moment of conceptual art as a movement from institutional critique and "the aesthetic of administration to the critique of institutions", in a famous and controversial essay entitled, tellingly, 'Conceptual Art 1962–1969: From the Aesthetics of Administration to the Critique of Institutions'. While Buchloh focuses on the emergence of conceptualism, his suggestive distinction is perhaps even more pertinent now that institutional critique is literally being performed by administrative aestheticians, i.e. museum directors, curators etc.[65] Taking her cue from her onetime mentor

Buchloh, Andrea Fraser goes a step further in her recent essay 'From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique', where she claims that a movement between an inside and an outside of the institution is no longer possible, since the structures of the institution have become totally internalized. "We are the institution", Fraser writes, and thus concludes that it is rather a question of creating critical institutions – what she terms "an institution *of* critique", established through self-questioning and self-reflection.[66] Fraser also writes that the institutions of art should not be seen as an autonomous field, separate from the rest of the world, the same way that "we" are not separate from the institution. While I would certainly agree with any attempt to view art institutions as part of a larger ensemble of socio-economic and disciplinary spaces, I am nonetheless confused by the simultaneous attempt to integrate the art world into the current (politico-economic) world system *and* the upholding of a "we" of the artworld itself. Who exactly is this "we"? If the artworld is seen as part of a generalized institutionalization of social subjects (that in turn internalizes the institutionalization), what and where are the demarcation lines for entry, for visibility and representation? If one of the criteria for institutions is given in the exclusions performed by them (as inherent in any collection), the question which subjects fall outside institutionalization, not due to a willful act or exodus as certain artistic movements thought and desired, but through the expulsions at the very center of institutions that allow them to institutionalize? Obviously, this would require a very expanded notion of institutional critique, that lies somewhat outside the history of institutional critique as discussed here.

So, to return to the object at hand, institutional critique as an art practice: what does it mean when the practice of institutional critique and analysis has shifted from artists to curators and critics, and when the institution has become internalized in artists and curators alike (through education, through art historical canon, through daily praxis)? Analyzed in terms of negative dialectics, this would seem to indicate the total co-optation of institutional critique by the institutions (and by implication and extension, the co-optation of resistance by power), and thus make institutional critique as a *critical* method completely obsolete. Institutional critique, as co-opted, would be like bacteria that may have temporarily weakened the patient – the institution – but only in order to strengthen the immune system of said patient in the long run. However, such a conclusion would hinge around notions of subjectivities, agencies and spatialities that institutional critique, arguably, tried to deconstruct. It would imply that the historical institutional critique was somehow "original" and "pure", thus confirming the authenticity of the artist-subjects performing it (as opposed to the current "institutional" subjects), and consequently reaffirming one of the ideas that institutional critique set out to circumvent, namely the notion of authentic subjects per se (as represented by the artist, reified by the institution). If institutional critique was indeed a discourse of disclosure and demystification of how the artistic subject as well as object was staged and reified by the institution, then any narrative that (again) posits certain voices and subjects as authentic, as possible incarnations of certain politics and criticalities, must be said to be not only counter to the very project of institutional critique, but perhaps also the ultimate co-optation, or more accurately, hostile take-over of it. Institutional critique is, after all, not primarily about the intentionalities and identities of subjects,

but rather about the politics and inscriptions of institutions (and, thus, about how subjects are always already threaded through specific and specifiable institutional spaces).

Rather, one must try to historicize the moments of institutional critique and look at how it has been successful, in terms of being integrated into the education of artists and curators, that is of what Julia Bryan-Wilson termed "the curriculum of institutional critique" in Ekeberg's book.[67] One can then see institutional critique not as a historical period and/or genre within art history, but rather as an analytical tool, a method of spatial and political criticism and articulation that can be applied not only to the artworld, but to disciplinary spaces and institutions in general. An institutional critique of institutional critique, what can be termed *institutionalized critique*, has then to question the role of education, historicization and how institutional auto-critique not only leads to a questioning of the institution and what it institutes, but also becomes a mechanism of control within new modes of governmentality, precisely through its very act of internalization. And this is the expanded notion of institutional critique that I briefly mentioned above, and which could become the legacy of the historical movements as much as an orientation for what the critical and productivist art institutions of New Institutionalism claimed to be.

However, the few texts, such as mission statements by Esche or Lind, written, as it were, from deep within a practice, that was, after all, identified and codified from the outside, does not mention institutional critique at all, but focuses instead on innovations in artistic practice and production in the 1990s that necessitates similar process-orientated and dematerializing seismic shifts in exhibition- and

institution-making. In this sense, institutional critique is not so much the genealogy of New institutionalism as it its hidden history, there for excavation by a genealogical approach to history writing, and it is to be understood as an aporia in the very construct of the concept (only mentioned by Farquharson among the contemporary commentators). But it is, as I shall argue, only one of three such aporias.

The second aporia in this history is parallel to the example institutional critique, namely the idea of alternative spaces, and the 1990s were, particularly in the region where New Institutionalism was grounded, the decade of the artists run space, before gentrification forced these spaces to close, and the artistic communities to dissolve as individual artists became canonized and, conversely, others written out of the story. Although now mainly known in the annals of art history through the U.S. American movement of alternative spaces throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the 1990s were the high point of such activities in Europe, which is, almost exclusively, the context for the production *and* reception of New Institutionalism. Again, just citing the German speaking world, such projects as *Team Compendium* and *Messe 2 OK* respectively listed 42 and 49 self-organized groups, spaces and initiatives by the mid-1990s, most of them defunct by the early 2000s and the advent of New Institutionalism.[68] Indeed, the many artists-run spaces and initiatives can be seen as the hidden history of the decade, or the shadow history to the success stories of YBA or the Nordic miracle, as the production of discourse, context and subjects that makes these stories, these inscriptions possible in the form of what Gregory Sholette has described as "the missing mass" in his theorization of what he calls, rather evocatively, *dark matter*.[69] And in her, as I mentioned, highly critical essay, Rebecca Gordon Nesbitt

even goes as far as to suggest that new institutional models like the Rooseum are not only indebted to the history of artists-run spaces, but actually dependent on them as raw material, and that their success is thus at the expense of artists-run spaces. Certainly, the moment and movement of alternative spaces seemed to be on the wane as New institutionalism was on the rise, as in the figure of the double helix. So, on the one hand New Institutionalism was a continuation of the collaborative and experimental spirit of alternative spaces, and an institutionalization of these forms (although not philosophically), while on the other they can be said to co-opt them through this institutionalization, and even annihilating them by transforming the institution (in the philosophical sense) of autonomy into the governmentality of the state system.

The third blind spot would have to be New Institutionalism's conception of the social, or what can be called the positivity of the social. New institutionalism tended to think of the institution in terms of a social and political agency that stood apart from classical, more mainstream and or bourgeois, art institutions, and always imagined their audience as a type of constituency, while at the same time as highly pluralistic. However, the actual take-up by these publics, were often quite small in terms of number, and arguably of a certain, similar persuasion and background in terms of class and taste. This was something that they were also held accountable for by politicians and officials, for whom smallness is always a swear word and synonymous with elitism, to the extent that both NIFCA and Rooseum was, rather unceremoniously, closed down by the authorities by the late 00s. New Institutionalism may have seen itself as a democratic alternative to populism, but they were not able to counter it, precisely because they

were publicly accountable and indeed governed. There was thus a contradiction between how these institutions viewed themselves as truly democratic, or as being in the service of democracy and democratization (such as in the notion of a radical democracy), and how they were unable to respond from to the policies and politicking of actual, existing democracy and its representatives. The politics of art appeared, in this case, to be at a far remove from any *realpolitik*, and from the concerns and interests of politicians. Whereas the methods of art presented and propagated were highly advanced, and indeed much more so than New Institutionalism's sometimes obtuse usages of social theory, and generally one-sided positively loaded invocation of the social itself, the language games and publicity of the political world shared none of these features, but mostly a dedication to spectacle, infotainment and numbers (of visitors and in the black in the annual accounts).

Moreover, there was, in my view, also a philosophical problem with their conception of the social, which had to with how and where the social was located, both in terms of spatiality and subjectivity. So, in addition to the contradiction between politically-minded institutions and institutionally-minded politicians, there was a contradiction in the very idea of the social, namely its perceived positive contents, that the identities are fully formed and grounded by the social, while socializing institutions, such as the new and 'progressive' art space simultaneously produce the social. That is to say, does the institution *produce* the social, i.e. institute, or does it work from already given social identities and entities? Surely, there must be an element of both in all institution-making that is not a complete overturn of a given hegemony (i.e. a revolutionary rupture), but this does not mean that

these institutional forms can take place independently, or, if you will, the first form in an autonomous manner, and the second form heteronomously, or vice versa. Perhaps, then, one should think about the institutions ways of instituting as not only edifying, but also as divisive in their constitution? One must ask if the art institution does not also produce difference, even *differend,* and is sometimes as radically divisive and dismissive as it is constructive and communal? That it also has a kernel of negativity and impossibility constitutively built in? If so, the idea of instituting must in the form of exhibition-making must also be investigated along these lines, not only as an active or passive space, but always oscillating between both categories, actively passive, and passively active, which will create both a positive and negative space of resonance for the endeavor. Its production can thus be discussed in terms of what I shall call *articulation* – and if the social does not emerge from a ground, perhaps political imaginaries can be better understood in the terms of a *horizon*?

2.3. THE POLITICS OF BIENNIALIZATION

Despite the rise of biennials, in both size and importance in recent years, there has, so far, been no notion of 'new biennialism' or, for that matter, 'biennial critique' invented or circulated. However, there is no question that there is an ongoing debate into their useful and politics, as well as into their perceived increasing monopoly and art and the new, as well as commodification and capitalization of arts, cities and culture. As the editors of a recent tome on the subject write in their intro "it is the biennial exhibition that has arguably since proved to be *the* medium through which most contemporary art comes to be known", and Filipovic, van Hal, and Øvstebø, all themselves active curators, goes on to stress that "this is the case, no matter what one's position on or opinion about may be".[70] Certainly, biennial culture seems to have highlighted the role and not least name of the curator, always to be announced before any artists or thematics of a biennial, and has to some degree even presented the idea of the curator and curating to a larger public consciousness beyond the circles of the artworld. But the biennial is central to any discussion about curating and exhibitions for another reason as well. As an institutional site is primarily concerned with exhibition-making, and indeed all its structural, economic and public work revolves and evolves around this punctual event of the exhibition, the biennial itself. As such, all the issues of institutionalization and politicization of art, of determining over-determining artistic practices within the curatorial crystallizes on the occasion of the biennial. In the following, I want to discuss these issues of the biennial, both positively and negatively, so to say, but also to point to their placement, both in terms of geography and

punctuality, and thus a spaces/events that connects places and times, and is, as such, a testing ground for the relation between the local and the universal that is inherent to all exhibition- and institution-making.

In a famous dialogue on exactly the notion of *universality*, Judith Butler has suggested that we understand this concept in the plural and conflictual, and that the political task thus becomes to establish what she calls *practices of translation*:

> If the spectrally human is to enter into the hegemonic reformulation of universality, a language between languages will have to be found. This will be no metalanguage, nor will it be the condition from which all languages hail. It will be the labour of transaction and translation which belongs to no single site, but is the movement between languages, and has its final destination in this movement itself. Indeed, the task will be not to assimilate the unspeakable into the domain of speakability in order to house it there, within the existing norms of dominance, but to shatter the confidence of dominance, to show how equivocal its claims to universality are, and, from that equivocation, track the break-up of its regime, an opening towards alternative versions of universality that are wrought from the work of translation itself.71

This is not, however, a matter of translating the particular into the universal, in order to make it politically salient or effective, but rather that the universal is always a particular, competing universal. The universal is not anterior to the particular, and commonalities and overlaps can be found within such competing notions of universality, and thus also among various political movements and groups through acts of translation without transcendence. Movement here takes on a

double significance, partly in the sense of concrete social movements with political aims, and partly, and more abstractly, as the movement between moments and sites of political contestation and articulation, which can be named *a politics of translation*.[72] Now, the question I would like to raise is whether the contemporary forms of the biennial can be considered one such site, and what movements can be traced through and around them? In other words, what is to be translated, and through which method of translation? Since the theory and history of translation in conjunction with culture is highly contested, and it is not my aim to reiterate these intellectual debates here, but only to point to one singular dichotomy in translation, that of the original and copy, and to suggest what it could mean in a geopolitical sense. The most widespread version of translation indicates a relation between an original text in an original language, and a copy that translates this text into a secondary language, leading to choices of fidelity, to either the original and the transfer of its meaning as accurately as possible, or to the new, secondary language and its specificity. In this theory, there is always something that is untranslatable, and which requires literary skills of equivalence on the part of the translator. It is also a theory, and practice, of translation that has colonialist implications in terms of site, privileging the originality of European culture in opposition all the colonial copies.

In terms of biennials, the original to be copied and exported is the biennial in Venice, held 52 times since 1895, and based on the concept of national pavilions, that is, with national (self)representation, with each nation sending their best and brightest artist(s). The Venice Biennial exists as a sort of Olympic Games of the artworld, complete with a first prize. However, it should be immediately noted that most

of the biennials that have emerged all around the world since then has not followed this model, and indeed most of them do not make claims for world art, but rather for a regional, cultural particularism (with universalist elements), be it in Havana or the Whitney Museum in NYC, or the ever shifting locale of the *Manifesta* in Europe. While this might be the predominant alteration of Venice, there is also the brief of bringing the world of art to a particular place, in effect translating the international to the local(s), be it in Berlin, Istanbul or Sao Paulo, or, specifically so, the poignantly named *Peripheric Biennial* in Iasi. Finally, there are the biennials that make claims for a specific kind of art, for a certain medium as nation, one could say, such as the Liverpool biennial and the Berlin *Transmediale*, among a few others.

It is thus not exclusively a matter of a culture of the copy, but also of with deviation and hybridity as well as repetition and simulation, with different notions of fidelity. Biennials find themselves in an unregulated and informal system, that is, paradoxically, both rhizomatic and hierarchical. Although they are directed towards several vantage points and spheres of interests, their meaning and placement can only be seen from one place at a time. They may make up one place after another for an, again, loosely defined and organized group of art professionals, but for most regular visitors, their recurrence is time based, if not timely. In this case, they are more likely to be read in terms of the previous versions of the specific biennial and its scope, choice of artists, curators, venues and so on, rather than an international circuit and communication of exhibitions and articulations. While the exhibition format remains the main vehicle for the presentation of contemporary art, this does not mean that the exhibition is a singular format with a given public and circulation of

discourse. Rather, the notion of an exhibition is to be understood in the plural, with different types of exhibition speaking from different locations and positions, with different audiences and circulations indicated and implicated, from the self-organized student show in a small provincial town to the larger (inter)national biennials that are the topic of this essay. What they share, and this is especially true of biennials, is a double sense of public and publicity: the local, physically present (if only potentially) audience and the imaginary constituency and professional field of the art world (if only potentially). There is, in the landscapes of biennials, not only the original and the copy, the deviant and the hybrid, but also always a here and an elsewhere.

Biennials are placed within an ecosystem as well as an economic system of exhibitions (and exhibition venues) in geopolitical terms. They do not command the same immediate attention internationally, despite the number of (local) visitors. More people visit the biennial in Mercosul biennial in Porto Alegre than do the Documenta in Kassel, for example, but historical importance in the artworld, geographical placement and media attention all play a role in the significance of a biennial's standing and influence as well. In short, a biennial builds up a brand, as well as an audience and a constituency, both locally and internationally. And with the recent growth of new biennials, especially in Southeast Asia, it is becoming an increasingly competitive environment in which to vie for international attention, which affects designated centers and peripheries as well. Take the aforementioned Documenta, although not a biennial in the proper sense of the word, it has, since its inception in 1957, taken a different route than the Venice biennial, rather than the Olympic model of national competition, Documenta tried to make a statement about the state of art. That is, a

transnational survey of the most dominant trends within contemporary art at the given moment. Movement was here understood as an artistic movement, and was originally dedicated to 20th century avant garde art in a re-education of the German people after the Second World War, and as part of an assessment of Western German democratic ideals in opposition to its Eastern, Communist Other. Its brief has naturally then changed since the fall of Communism in Europe, and indeed the last three versions, Documenta 10 through 12, has attempted to redefine the idea of a world exhibition of art and address the idea of a globalized world by showing art from all corners of the world as opposed to Western Europe and the USA mainly. However, the Documenta has simultaneously been challenged to its centrality and discursivity by the many new biennials, both in its neighborhood and around the world, and it remains to be seen if it can maintain its importance and placement in the top of the hierarchy, both in terms of discourse, attention and economy in the future.

For biennials, it is becoming a matter of creating a niche market, a specific identity, reputation and prestige that can place it on the map of the world and the artworld alike. And this placement may be vastly different, and might even require speaking different languages and in two tongues. On the one hand, there are the circulation of discourse of the international art world with its system of competing universalities, as well as a competition for symbolic capital, market shares and monopolies, and on the other the local political and economic demands for cultural significance and supremacy: the uniqueness of this culture, this country, this place. The uniqueness of a particular place and culture is not only a question of nationalism and of nation building, though, but also a means of establishing a niche market and attract an

international audience, to generate cultural capital as well as increased revenues through (art) tourism. Biennials are, in this way, part of the experience economy, with the whole experience of the city and the exhibition being the commodity rather than the singular artworks as is, presumably, the case with art fairs. In his book *Spaces of Capital*, David Harvey has analyzed the relationship between globalization, city-marketing and the commodification of culture through the Marxian category of 'monopoly rent':

> The collective symbolic capital which attaches to names and places like Paris, Athens, New York, Rio de Janeiro, Berlin and Rome is of great import and gives such places great economic advantages relative to, say, Baltimore, Liverpool, Essen, Lille and Glasgow. The problem for these latter places is to raise their quotient of symbolic capital and to increase their marks of distinction to better ground their claims to the uniqueness that yields monopoly rent. Given the general loss of other monopoly powers through easier transport and communications and the reduction of other barriers to trade, the struggle for collective symbolic capital becomes even more important as a basis for monopoly rents.[73]

Monopoly rent occurs when a producer can generate a steady increase of surplus and thus income over time through exclusivity. This is achieved either by being the only producer of a certain commodity in a regional economy, or through the uniqueness of the brand in more global economy. The example given is the wine trade, where an exclusive vineyard can both sell its wines as commodities, but also itself; the land, resource and location. Historically, a producer of wine or beer could gain monopoly rents in its region or area by simply being

the only brand available, but in a global and globalized market, the product has to have some sort of local uniqueness in order to be tradeable outside its region and in order to compete over market shares with other brands being imported into its region. It has to achieve a symbolic quality besides its actual taste in order to generate revenues, therefore the wine merchants in the Bourdeaux region has copyrighted the usage of the name 'Chateau' and only the producers of sparkling wine in the Champagne region can now legally call its products 'champagne'. This has to do, then, with a culturalization of commodities as much as with the commodification of culture. However, there are also other factors involved in the wine market, specialist publications and international competitions give value judgments based merely on taste rather than origin, suddenly bringing wine from, say, South Africa, Chile or Australia to the fore, and then there is, naturally, a competition in terms of prices, which compared to the specialist judgments of taste creates a consciousness of value for money among potential consumers in a global market. Hopefully, the parallels to the artworld, and market, are obvious. Here, there are also historical centers, in a biennial context places such as Venice and Kassel, but also new, emergent players around the world, most lately and massively Southeast Asia. Also, there are judges of taste in the form of critics and magazines, as well as a competition on price and uniqueness in terms of locality. Venice obviously has the history, not only of its biennial, but also of its city, giving it an incredibly strong brand and attraction. Secondly, it has a centrality in terms of location, certainly within the artworld, but also, from a European perspective, in terms of geography. All these factors clearly outweigh the fact that the city is very expensive for travelers. Other cities, like, say, Sao Paulo, are obviously cheaper to be in for the art tourist, but more

expensive to travel to from most places, both in Europe and the USA, not to mention Asia. Indeed, the Sao Paulo biennial was originally based on the same principles of National pavilions as Venice, which also made each nation participating financially responsible, but has recently abandoned this model, presumably due its decreasing symbolic value and credibility in the artworld as such. Perhaps this format is a bit too crude within the global (art) economy?

Instead, biennials have to brand themselves differently and specifically in order to achieve not only cultural hegemony, but also to extract monopoly rent, in terms of both symbolic and real capital. They must be, on the one hand, recognizable as a certain format, a festival of art, and, on the other hand be specific, *this biennial*, not *that one*. With these specific properties and attributions, in *this* specific place, city, region and country. The branding of the biennial is thus twofold: partly the city as attraction and allure giving context and value to the biennial, and partly the glamour and prestige of the biennial branding and upgrading the otherwise non-descript of even negative image of the city, region or country. In this scenario, it is only logical that most biennials today are taking on a dual purpose, at least, both highlighting the uniqueness of the particular place or region and its culture, as a way of cultivating the national audience and attracting an international one, *and* bringing international artists and positions to the local situation, cultivating the national citizens as international consumers and connoisseurs of culture: the lure of the local meets the glamour of the global. In other words, biennials do not only situate a place, but they also always establish a connection, and herein lies their potentiality. Indeed, one of the most widespread complaints about contemporary biennials are their lack of connection to the 'local'

audience, but this often takes the form of a positivity of the social: that social relations and identities in a specific context are given and whole, if not holy, that the local audience is a singular group with essential qualities and shared agencies. This is a residue of the myth-making of the nation state and its production of citizenry through cultural means, such as exhibitions and institutions, and hardly seems adequate in the postmodern and post-public condition, where identities are, at least, hybrid and agencies multiple, and even contradictory and schizoid. It is, rather, a question of how a biennial produces, or attempts to produce, its public(s) that must be analyzed and criticized. One must ask what assumptions of place and participation is at work, what notions of subjectivity, territoriality and citizenship are invoked? And one must ask in what way participation is valued in terms of cultural consumption and legitimation? Additionally, the 'lack of local sedimentation' argument tends to overlook the potential biennials actually offer for a reflection of the above-mentioned double notion of publicness: the local audience and the international, and the artworld and the world. The potential for not only addressing presumed existing audiences, both locally and in terms of artworld credibility and circulation, but also for creating new public formations that are not bound to the nation-state or the art world. By being recurrent events, both locally placed and part of a circuit, they have the potential for creating a more transnational public sphere, with both difference and repetition in the applied mode of address and implied notion of spectatorship and public participation.

Moreover, location is to be understood in the sense of *interconnectedness*: this means that we do not only connect through the public formation of the event of the biennial and the encounter

with the art works, but also that any place is always seen in relation to another place, or a series of possible places. We view other places through the prism of our own place, as subjects with history and geography. Our places of dwelling and of action are also always related to other places, whether visible or invisible, present or absent. What goes on 'here' always has effects 'there', and vice versa, even when we are not aware of these movements. This is, in my view, a current global condition, and art today must reflect this double sense of place, public and non-public, presence and absence, the visible and the invisible. Any sense of locality always involves a here and an elsewhere: a constant movement between centeredness and marginality, be it in aesthetic, geographical or economic terms, and one of the characteristics of advanced art is precisely that it allows to see more than one view-point: more than one story or situation, and more than one way to look at them. Any locality, regardless of its self-image, is connected to other places in subtle and often unexpected ways: what is produced here is consumed there, what is seen there is invisible here and so on. This is also the situation for biennials: they find themselves in an artworld system of exhibitions and festivals (public formations), as well as in an international economy of desire. But how is this made visible to a local community, and how is it relevant to the experiences of the audience, both inside and outside the exhibition, as well as before and after the exhibition? The question is what our relationship is to different spaces, and, moreover, how continuity is established and made productive in a biennial setting. It is therefore not only a matter of what a biennial can give, or give *back*, to its community and constituency, but also what kinds of community and constituency it can produce, put into play or suspension. The relationship between the art works and the audience created by the exhibition is one of

positionality, and as such the position of the speaker is something that must be made visible by the exhibition and its ways of display. The biennial is not only a container of artworks, but also a mass medium in itself, and must as such establish a social space, that is, a place where meanings, narratives, histories, conversations and encounters are actively produced and set in motion. A place where connections are made and unmade, subjectified and suspended. In other words: *politics of translation*.

Translation is here to be understood in multiple ways, not only between original and copy, primary and secondary culture, also not only geographically, that is, between different places, but also as *locational*, as taking place *in-situ*. However, it would also be too limited and limiting to merely understand translation as a pedagogical exercise of explaining works and their contexts to different audiences and groups. Rather, translation must be understood within the transposition of forms of language, i.e. be understood in terms of exhibition display, or what I have called *modes of address*, which is the instituent practice of exhibition-making – its placing of objects and subjects within a framing and a horizon, a world and a world-view.[74] This has, then, not only to do with representation in the form of artworks and the (geopolitical) selection of artists, but also with public programming and exhibition design. One can, for instance, try to imagine and implement ways of showing and seeing within an exhibition design that does not follow the historical, apparently neutral museum display of the white cube – hiding its political positioning of the works and the viewers – and rather attempt spatializations that makes such positions more visible and locational.

One of the ways to achieve this is *historization*: interconnectedness in time. Exhibition-making has certain historical forms of display, and a part of biennial enterprise could be to focus on historical forms of exhibition making, an exhibition on exhibitions. Exhibitions are, I believe, micro-cosmoses of the possible, and as such directly connected to our political imaginary: what is possible and impossible, visible and invisible, to be done and not to be done, and so on. Biennials are not only part of the present, but also always the past, in forms of the previous editions of the particular biennial itself, art history in general and, naturally, the history of the place, with its contestations of space, cultural hegemonies, forgetting and remembrance of struggles past. And by immediately inscribing itself with art history and processes of marketability and canonization of the artists included as well the institution of the biennial itself, it is always an investment into the future: A statement about art (and thus specific artists and practices) is an attempt at achieving hegemony, not just instantly, but even more so in the short *and* long run. This connection with history, or with the making and unmaking of history and its relation to our view of the world, our horizon of possibilities and impossibilities, connects to an important nodal point, *the sense of place* and *the situation of exile*. These terms may seem to be strange bedfellows, especially within the context of art and culture, and it's privileging of place, location, site and specificity. Today, our sense of place has as much to do with that place's connection to other places, be they possible or impossible, permeable or incommensurable, perceivable or invisible, as with the originality of the place. Places exist through connections, within the global flows of objects and subjects, rules and (de)regulations. One can thus only sense a place through other places, albeit only from one place at the time. But we also move

from place to place, geographically and politically, within larger global flows of migration. So, how exactly does one belong to a place, a culture and a language, both as a cultural producer *and* consumer? Who can speak for a place, or even *speak the place*? Is it the 'local' artist and/or community, for instance, or is it, conversely, the specialist cultural producer dealing in intervention and/or site-specific strategies?

These questions have both concrete and abstract answers, but always in terms of time rather than space. Politically, citizenship is either something you are born with, or something that is acquired after living legally in a given country for a certain number of years, varying on the country, naturally, and these the option of getting a new citizenship varies greatly as well depending on the country. However, as is clear from the Nationalist debates that have swept Europe for the last decade, citizenship in legal terms do not equate citizenship in cultural terms. And even though cultural terms of National identity are arguably of a symbolic nature, they are perceived and discussed – culturalized – as *real*. To have Danish citizenship, for example, does not make you a 'real' Dane necessarily, thus the distinction in media reports and debates between 'Dane' and 'Danish Citizen', with the former being the real Dane. This can, of course, be even more fine-tuned when talking about a specific region or city: there may be several different people, even of the same color and creed, living in a place, but the 'real' _____ (insert your place/identity of choice here) are the ones who were born here. A sense of place known as roots, indicating an organic relationship to the place. However, as mentioned before, we are, regardless of origin and current location, rarely in a

position of full coherence and identity, but rather selves in the making, and on the move.

To be on the move is, naturally, one of the characteristics of the much-maligned star curators and artists of the international biennial circuit. But expertise is also implied through method, and through commitment over time: how long has a curator or artists spend in a place? How deep is their work? Even though this can be measured in terms of time, such a measure is ultimately meaningless in terms of assessment and judgment, but also in terms of critique and potentiality. Rather, I would look at what connections are made and unmade: What sense of place are analyzed through the prism of what other places? Hence, the situation of exile, both inside and outside of one's given nation or society. Exile is not just a matter of leaving a nation geographically, be it voluntarily or involuntarily, but also leaving it conceptually and politically, that is, an exodus from the current state of affairs, from the state of the state, as it were, again both voluntarily and involuntarily. It is not co-incident, I believe, that Giorgio Agamben titled his Italian diary of 1992-94 *In This Exile*, writing as an Italian in Italy, but somehow outside of the current hegemony, politically and culturally.[75] Everybody is, surely, involved some sort of movement – even when staying still geographically, one might be moving ahead, or up or down, socially and economically. But we do not all travel on the same class and itinerary, nor even with similar destinations, or, for that matter, destinies. Some are sidelined to the margins, others exiled on main street, but everybody is in some sense displaced: where one comes from and where one is, or is going, is no longer the same place, neither in terms of time nor geography, and one can never go home any more. Our sense of belonging and place are, in this way, becoming

more and more conceptual and relational. It is therefore obvious why a major theme in contemporary art production should be an *uncertainty of place*, not only geographically, but also socially: who has access to which spaces, both generally and locally? Access is here not only to be understood in terms of physicality, but also symbolically and culturally. When thinking about the politics of translation implied in the contemporary biennials, one must think in relations of difference and contextuality, and the fragmentation of the public sphere (including a fragmentation of the artworld), and what this means trans-nationally. One must look at connections and lines of flight between different points of departure and arrival. Such theorizing could perhaps be employed as a form of actualization; realizing, imagining, representing and communicating the possible, but not yet implemented.

However, biennials are not just politicized in terms of their locality, but also in terms of their relation to politics of representation: whether a biennial, with its obvious relations to nationalism, city-branding, tourism industry and capital, totally determines, or over-determines, any politics of aesthetics of the singular work, or the singular work of the curators at any given biennial (which is, mostly, a once in a lifetime opportunity in each case)? In other words, biennials as mega-exhibitions have the nature of overpowering or overwriting the artistic and the curatorial, always already making it part of *its* politics and capital interests, with no opportunity for working other than in unison with the institution visible, with no or very little space for negotiation of the terms above, in brief, the complete co-optation of any oppositional politics, and the real subsumtion of artistic (and creative) labor under capital. While such a critique is very valid, and perhaps more valid than any of us likes to think, it must nonetheless

be unpacked in terms of what one understands when talking about art and the political, or about political art and the, apparently, stifling official politics of the institution. I would to illustrate with an example, namely the latest, 29th, edition of the Sao Paulo biennial in Brazil, or, more specifically, an example of a work of political art within this biennial.

In the last Sao Paulo biennial, the artist Roberto Jacoby had installed a work about the making of the propaganda material for a political campaign. The work was interactive, in the way that allows visitors to contribute to a fictitious campaign, in the form of slogans and images. That is, an investigation into the particular aesthetic form of a political campaign. Now, this does not in itself make it a 'political' work of art, the definition(s) of which I shall return to slightly, although it does make a work of art about politics. But the work also consisted of the installation of propaganda from an actual political campaign, even an ongoing one, and this where the trouble began, quite literally and politically. The posters and campaign material installed by Jacoby were covered up by the biennial immediately upon installation, and was subsequently only present through their absence, in the form of a wall covered in brown paper, hiding the images (and thus eerily if unintentionally echoing to other works in the exhibition that plays upon the coverage of images as the metaphor for both censorship and the unwillingness to look and to know, namely the installations of Antonio Manuel and Gustav Metzger). The reason for this act of censorship, pure and simple, were juridical: no public institution in Brazil are allowed to host political propaganda or endorsements in any form during an election campaign, and Jacoby's installation included real posters supporting a specific candidate for the presidency. Interestingly,

Jacoby's work actually supported the candidate of the ruling party, Dilma Rousseff from the Workers' Party, and is as such not in opposition, nor critiquing the politics of Brazil, and is as such principally not a criticism of the biennial, itself a part of the official politics of the Brazilian state.

Indeed, the reason for the covering of the posters was not cited as political (obviously) by the biennial's curators, Agnaldo Farrias and Moacir dos Antos, but as purely juridical, that the law is the law, and that the biennial cannot break the law. On his part, Jacoby claimed to have been censored, not only in terms of his political affiliations, but also in terms of artistic freedom and the freedom of speech. It is not my purpose to take sides in this debate, that is as complicated as the law is – seemingly – simple, complications that have not only to do with censoring, but also with the implications of an artist supporting a reigning party explicitly, the claims for art as political in the biennial exhibition itself versus the biennial as a public institution not being permitted to engage in actual, contemporaneous political campaigns, to which the issue of party politics and citizenship must be added, since Jacoby is not a recognized political subject of Brazil, but Argentinean. Needless to say, this episode lead to a huge debate in the Brazilian arts community, on the relationships between, art, politics, the role of the biennial and acts of censorship, but can also be taken into account outside this particular situation, in a discussion of the politics of art, and the politics of exhibition-making, such as large scale international biennials, and it can serve as one very concrete version of what political art might mean. Jacoby's work is not just a work about politics, the aesthetics of politics, but it also takes a political position, aligning itself with a particular political party, which was, of course,

also what made it unacceptable to the biennial. This gives credence to the Brazilian theorist, Suely Rolnik's remark, that the debacle around Jacoby's work, and the covering of it, exemplified how the art institution is only capable of political representation, but never political action. Which is not to say that art institutions do not act politically, in the sense of having a political function within a given society as public institutions, a function that may not always correspond to the politics of the individual artists or curator. Rolnik seemed to indicate that the institution, in this case a biennial, cannot act outside this designated and historical role. And it suggests that there are limits to what the institution can actually present, what it can absorb.

Such limits to the institution has long been thought out by critical practice, in both art and art theory, from the Duchampian invention of the Ready-Made through institutional critique, transgressive performances, unsitely practices and art activism. And cynical reasoning has long since declared the institution not only immune to critique, but indeed a machine designed to integrate all forms of critique, in each turn making it self stronger. Does the example of Jacoby's installation and the institution's intervention suggest otherwise? That is, if his work can be seen, formally, as a Ready-Made, that then not all Ready-Made objects can actually be co-opted? That the biennial, as a machine at the forefront of capitalization of culture, has limits to its absorption? Or, rather, that the biennial, as the gatekeeper of high culture, in the current regime of governmentality and security discourse actually does its job by refusing? That its role is exactly that of both refusal and reification in a double move? The answer to such questions lies exactly in the how one defines the political role of the biennial, and thus not only its

politics of aesthetics, but also what can be termed its political economy. First, let us look at the economic aspects, and their influence on the presentation and production of artworks. All biennials are established through political as much as cultural demands and decisions, and are always part of the economy of the particular hosting city and its international reputation and connections. As mentioned, it is a matter of creating a niche market, a specific identity, reputation and prestige that can place a biennial on the map of the artworld and the city on a world map of tourism: on the one hand, the circulation of discourse of the international art world with its system of competing universalities, as well as a competition for symbolic capital, market shares and monopolies, and on the other the local political and economic demands for cultural significance and supremacy. Biennials are, in this way, part of the experience economy, with the whole experience of the city and the exhibition being the commodity rather than the singular artworks as is the case with the art fair. The biennial is, then, a place for circulations of different kinds, and thus a place for simultaneous differentiation and equalization in both economic and aesthetic terms, to the point of in-distinction.

The politics of the biennial does not only reside within the merger between art and capital, but also in terms of representation, in term of what representations can be circulated, in terms of the political proper. Indeed, the political is here not to be understood as an adjective to be placed in front of something like the noun art, but rather to be understood as a noun within political theory. In other words, in order to discuss something like political art, a definition of the political is needed. Oddly, there are actually two usages of this term that have been circulating extensively in art theory and practice

in, at least, the last decade, coming from the same trajectory, but strongly divergent, even though rarely discussed as such, and in fact often used inter-changeably. I am referring, naturally, to the concepts presented by Chantal Mouffe and Jacques Ranciere, respectively. Ironically, both theorists belong to a post-Althusserian tradition in philosophy, but with very different notions of politics and the political, as well as to the relationship between politics and art. For Mouffe, the crucial distinction is between the ontic and the ontological levels, between what she terms *politics* and *the political*:

> By 'the political' I mean the dimension of antagonism which I take to be constitutive of human societies, while by 'politics' I mean the set of practices and institutions through which an order is created, organizing human coexistence in the context of conflictuality provided by the political.[76]

So, whereas the political is an ontological proposition, and as thus imminent to all social and cultural relations, it is the noun politics that is used in everyday language, and from which the adjective the political stems. Politics is a set of operations, from debates to administration to exhibitions, that structures actual society. Moreover, on it is these two levels that Mouffe places her concepts of *antagonism* and *agonism*, respectively. Cultural practices are thus by definition mostly concerned with the antagonistic, and indeed, according to Mouffe, it should be the political role of art to contribute to the establishment of a agonistic public sphere of democracy, and very rarely with pure antagonism. Seen in this light, Jacoby's installation at the Sao Paulo biennial and the subsequent intervention from the institution is a case

of the politics of art and the biennial only being capable of agonism, and not of housing antagonism: the images had to be covered. This is, not, however, to say anything about the project as radical, but only that it shifted from one level to the other, in accordance to a specific notion of politics and the political. This distinction politics and the political often lead to some confusion, not only in everyday language, but also in the employment of politics and 'politicality' in art practice and theory. This is mainly a confusion, though, whereas the employment of Jacques Rancière's theory of politics in current art speak mostly builds a misunderstanding proper. Rancière offers a quite different distinction, namely between politics and policing, with the latter understood as what is most often refered to as politics in everyday language:

> Politics is generally seen as the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of the collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, and the distribution of places and roles, and the system for legitimizing this distribution. I propose to give this system of distribution and legitimization another name. I propose to call it *the police*.[77]

All political institutions and orders, parliaments and elections, laws and rules, and indeed the very concept of democracy, is thus no more than a police order, and instead the truly political only emerges in moments of interruption of this order, in radical breaks with the existing order, when those who have no part claim their part: "politics exists wherever the count of parts and parties of society is disturbed by the inscription of a part of those who have no part".[78] So, political art must then thus

indicate not only a partition of the sensible, but only so in terms of breaking visual regimes and orders in terms radical forms and interventions on the one hand, and introducing that and those outside the system onto the scene on the other, which really amounts to another kind of 'outsider' art. The problem with this model, and this is something that still remains unresolved in Rancière's many subsequent writings on art, is that the artworld as a system – as a politico-aesthetical regime – always orders through simultaneous inclusions and exclusions. In other words, what feeds the machine of contemporary, of which the biennial is a primary instrument, is the constant introduction of the new: new subjects, new generations, new markets. At the same time, there must always be those without part, something outside in order for the system to assess itself and appear as a whole, but the point is that it can never be a closed system, not matter how hermetic and insiderish it may look, it must stay permeable in order to stay hegemonic, and in order to expand globally and thus financially.

Returning to the case of Jacoby within the Rancièrian frame, two other features now become evident. One can see quite clearly how the biennial is then *not* the realm for politics, but for policing. In this case, the curators as police officers rather than political agents become apparent in its most crude form, that of the petty police, which is, though, not the same as to say that they are good or bad police officers. And if they were bad cops in the rejection of Jacoby, they were surely fair and good cops when giving space to the street artist group Pixação SP, who had, in protest, illegally entered the previous biennial and placed their tags – or, if you will, claimed their part in the whole. However, it might also be the other way around: that allowing support for the government by an artist, be it Jacoby or someone else

for that matter, would have been good policing, supporting consensus, whereas the inclusion of the graffiti artist were the bad policing, since their inclusion equals their co-optation to the artworld system. Either way, the function of the biennial and its curators are that of policing aesthetics, not politicizing it. But doesn't the same go for the artist(s) in the biennial, really? Jacoby was not someone who has no part claiming his part, nor, clearly, giving voice and visibility to the part with no part: he was, as I wrote, urging for support to a *ruling* party. Indeed, if politics is only to be understood in the narrow sense of Rancière, it is questionable whether the work of Jacoby can be termed political at all?

Probably such a reading would seem counter-intuitive, but the key is to displace the role of politics and the political from the intention of the individual artist and curator, partly onto the structural level of the institution and its function within society, but also onto the form of the exhibition: How a biennial not only partitions the sensible, as Rancière would have it, but also how it engages with these questions, how it establishes a mode of address. To say that all exhibitions and artistic statements are political does not tell us very much about their actual politics, or attempts at politics, nor much about its police work, and it would seem implausible, if not impossible to clearly separate the political from the non-political, and the political from policing. Rather, I would suggest thinking of it in terms of oscillation (but not dialectics). In other words, I would not say that biennials reduce the politics of an artwork, but rather that it *inscribes* it – into certain institutional logics as well as logics of capitalist circulation. Such inscriptions always favors the consensual, even a flattening of (political) difference, but contextual determinations are not always necessarily over-determinations, neither of artistic nor

curatorial work and motivations. In other words, the political task of the politically minded artist or curator is exactly to understand the political role of the artist and curator, both in general societal terms, as well as within localized relations of power. Only thus, and only then, can political art projects acquire a political agency of their own.

This also applies to the discussion of a decentralization and/or globalization of the art world and its biennials. Rather than viewing biennials and mega-exhibitions as essential categories having fixed representations and implications, I would suggest this contextual and relational view on them. They offer a stage – but one does not have to follow the script. That is, one can look at their specific placement and relation to their surroundings, each other and the general circulation of discourse through the artworld. What are, for instance, the relationship between site-specific art projects and the notion of the local, the relationship between site-specific projects and tourism, and, finally, between tourism and migration? Often site-specific projects not only bring a cultural value to remote areas, and interact with the local in a displacement of art from the centers to the margins, but they also bring financial rewards to the site in terms of increased tourism. And the same can be stated about international biennials and other recurrent mega-exhibitions. But the notion of tourism should not be separated from another form of travel that brings about cultural exchange and interaction, that is, migration. The differentiation between these two kinds of travel not only indicates the content of these forms of travel, but also their contexts; tourism indicates a legalized travel and spending, usually from richer countries to other rich countries and/or poor countries. Tourism equals income and enlightenment, consumption and information – just like in a biennial.

Migration, on the other hand, is nowadays mostly illegal, and usually viewed as unwelcome as it is unprofitable and culturally alien. One only has to watch the literal fence on the US side of the US-Mexican border, or the establishment of an internal open market in Europe while its external borders, especially against North Africa and the middle east, are increasingly guarded and closed, turning the European Union into a *Fortress Europe.*

Global flows are not only voluntary, as art tourism supposedly is, but also brought about by the same structures and strictures of global capitalisms that produces the demand for city-branding and the surge toward monopoly rent. The artworld, for instance, is not so much multi-cultural, as it is multi-centered, hence the global spread of the biennial phenomena, but also the seeming interchangeability of participating artists without any shifts of significations. Perhaps, then, interconnectedness should be fore grounded over the uniqueness of place? I would suggest thinking in terms of what Sathya Rao has called 'Non-Colonial translation', and its non-homogeneous and even chaotic space without residues of the colonial original, and without any unifying textual-ontological plane of reference.[79] In this way art and its institutions can become public platforms that relate not only to a more or less centralized art world, but also to other fields of knowledge and modes of production in a society that seems more and more specialized and fragmented, thus creating several public, semi-public and even counter-public spheres within the existing ones. From such formulated platforms one can relate to other spaces and spheres, indicating that biennials are not predominantly to be seen as utopias, but rather as heterotopias, capable of maintaining several, contradictory representations within a single space. Biennials are part

of (inter)national cultural hegemonies as well as city-branding and the creation of monopoly rents, but that does not mean that they can only represent these features, or that they can only affirm them. Indeed, they can question them by highlighting them, as well as create other possible connections, other ways of concepts for stranger sociability and senses of place and placement. It is improbable that a biennial can exist without taking part in such processes of capital accumulation (both symbolic and real, of course), so the question is rather if they can do something else simultaneously? That is, if they can produce something other than merely more symbolic-turned-real capital for the involved cultural producers, curators and artists alike, something else in terms of interconnected global political transaction and translation. While biennials remain spaces of capital, they are also spaces of hope.

3.1. EXHIBITION AS ARTICULATORY PRACTICE

If there is, then, a contradiction, even paradox, at play between the art institution, both in its historical role and form and its contemporary immersion in governmentality, what does this entail for the idea of the exhibition as a practice of articulation? Or even: the exhibition as a possible site for articulation, and for an articulation that is, in turn, altering the elements of the situation itself, i.e. as in the notion of *critique*? To whom does the exhibition present via its chosen mode of address, and whom does it represent at this moment of articulation? Furthermore, does the context of the institution, with its histories and contingencies, predetermine or over-determine the attempted articulation of the exhibition, and if it never does so fully, can this determination be measured, in terms of degree, or otherwise? Certainly, the institutional, both in the narrow sense of an art institution discussed in the previous chapter, or in the broader sense of an instituted society proposed by Castoriadis, can be said to be a condition. In other words, all discursive statements are, by definition, *conditioned* statements, or *situated* articulation.

In the following, I shall look at the notion of articulation mainly in linguistic terms, as statements and speech acts, but even when using such linguistic metaphors, it is important to note that any notion of a language of exhibition-making is to be understood in expanded terms. An exhibition does never only, or even primarily, articulate through language (title, proper names etc., as mentioned before), but also, and mostly, through installation and exhibition design, through the placement of the spectator in a setting, or course of events (i.e. works). However, such spatial techniques of narration can be read as

signage, as rhetorical devices. It is thus in the relation to space that a discourse is produced, for example a certain theme and selection of works may be very coherent and stringent, but have they are actually placed in a space will decide how they are read in relation to each other, the theme and the spectator, which is why a lot of curatorial shop talk is about spatialization – are there too many or too few works, creating crammedness or emptiness, are the sequence proper, or, more contextually, is the space and the city the right one for this kind of exhibition and so on. These are the very building blocks of exhibition-making in the technical, rhetorical sense, as much as any use of theoretical notions and selection of specific artists and art works.

In her reading of Foucault's notion of discourse, of conditioned statements, Judith Butler coins the phrase of a *scene of address*, which can be useful in understanding the relationship between the exhibition and the institution. A scene of address is both a moment and a place, the moment when speech is uttered, statements made, and thus reflexivity made possible, as well as the actual place, or institutional form, where this reflexivity can happen, but also, and for the same reason, where speech is not only presented, but demanded. Referring to Nietzsche's genealogy, Butler reminds her readers of the very direct employments of force and power, as well as guilt, that constitutes self-reflection for Nietzsche: "We start to give an account only because we are interpellated as beings who are rendered accountable by a system of justice and punishment."[80] In this instance, then, self-presentation has little to do with the care of the self, but rather with coercion and confession. The subject is addresses from outside, and asked to give an account of him- or herself, and is only doing so because of this external mode of address, or what Butler

(echoing Althusser) calls interpellation. This account of the self is thus not necessarily voluntary, but forced out in a juridical scene, as a possible defense or admission of guilt, and only is this way the production of a kind of truth of the self. As is well known, Foucault looked at similar institutions of legality and punishment in his genealogical case studies, as in his work on the asylum or the prison, but as Butler points out, his later historical theories of the subject, of a hermeneutics of the subject, instead focuses on ethical techniques of the self that are not purely effects of a discourse, but in a relation to discourse, similar to the ways in which the statement was both conditioned by discourse (or, in Butler, scene of address), as well as contributing to it, modifying it, even radically transforming it: "The subject forms itself in relation to a set of codes, prescriptions, or norms and does so in ways that not only (a) reveal self-constitution to be a kind of *poiesis* but (b) establish self-making as part of the broader operation of critique."[81]

Now, Butler's main interest here is the formation of subject, and the relation of the subject to the production of truth, and the scenes implied are therefore juridical and psycho-analytic – indeed the even seems to a parallel between the interrogation on one side and analysis on the other, and in any case the crucial ethical element is that of the limits to the self; the subject is never fully formed or fully aware, but immersed in a discursive system of speech and regimes of truth, and as such always caught up between narration and articulation, and always in relation to a real or imaginary other or power, which is primary. Several conclusions that are useful for our endeavor can be drawn from this, albeit with a change in scenery from the juridical arena to the aesthetic, and, if you will, from coercion to seduction. We

can see the self, as giving an account, as a type of statement within a discursive, which then has bearings on the notion of critique. In the Foucauldian logic, the critical moment of self-reflection happens when the norms for self-presentation do not make self-recognition possible: I cannot recognize myself in any of the given narratives or even narrative forms (which is another way of saying that I do not want to be governed like that, in this particular way). At the same time, the subject and its statements are not autonomous, not self-instituting as in Castoriadis' model, but can only be reflexive in relation to power, and to established modes of self-accounting, whether these are found to be adequate or faulty. In this way, the limits to the subject and its self-knowledge and self-realization, must also, then, indicate certain limits to articulation in the exhibitionary sense, or at least place it in relations to the form(s) of exhibition-making available and imaginable, as well as to the institution as site, and to institution, context and history in terms of power and interpellation.

In order to make such a move it is necessary to position, or even translate, the exhibition into terms of scene of address and accountable subject, or, more generally, discursive formation and conditioned statement, and this will be one of the ways in which to understand the concept of articulation. As not only a mode of address, but a *scene* of address, the exhibition is related to certain histories and contingencies, as well as contemporary institutional inscriptions. On the one hand, one could say that the institution, and its ways of instituting *is* the scene of address (regardless of whether one is thinking of an institution in the formal sense of museum or other public instituting, or whether of an alternative space and its attempts at self-instituting), and this is then the discursive formation that

circumscribes the activity of exhibition-making, as well as its potential for reflexivity (as in the theorizing of these pages) as well as any notion of critique. However, on the other hand the exhibition itself, as a spatialization of discourse, as a statement both narrative and articulatory, as both self-knowing and unknowing, is a scene of address. Indeed, one of the problems of historicizing curatorial processes and positions, as well as for institutional critique, can be said to the differentiation and/or conflation of these two moments and places. The political history of the modern museum, for example, is not the same as the history of modernist critical forms of exhibition-making, and it attests to the originality and insight of Brian O'Doherty when he constantly oscillates between the institutional and architectural form of the space of art and the installatory practices of artists in *Inside the White Cube*.[82] And it is precisely for this reason that he subtitles his book not the *aesthetics* of the gallery space, as would perhaps seem logical, but indeed the *ideology* of the gallery space.[83]

Historically, exhibition making has been closely related to strategies of discipline and Enlightenment ideals, not as a contradiction or dialectic, but rather as a simultaneous move in the making of the 'new' bourgeois subject of reason in Europe in the 19th century. Exhibition making marked not only a display and division of knowledge, power and spectatorship, but it also marked a production of a public. By making museum collections public and staging temporary exhibitions in the salons, a specific public was imagined and configured. What is nowadays called curating, is in effect this organizing of displays and publics, had constitutive effects on its subjects and objects alike. The collection and display of specific objects and

artifacts, according to certain curatorial techniques, represented not only the writing of specific colonial and national histories, but also, and crucially, the circulation of certain values and ideals. The emerging bourgeois class was simultaneously positioning and assessing itself, and thus extending its world-view onto objects – things present in the world, both historically and presently – and thus onto the world. But this dominant, or hegemonic gaze was not to be seen nor visualized as a sovereign dictum, or dictatorship, but rather through a rationalist approach, through a subject of reason. The bourgeois class attempted to universalize its views and visions through rational argument rather than by decree. The bourgeois museum and its curatorial techniques could thus not express its power (only) through discipline, but also had to have an educational and pedagogical approach, present in the articulations of the artworks, the models of display of the objects, the spatial layout and the overall architecture. It had to situate a viewing subject that not only felt subjected to knowledge, but was also represented through the mode of address involved in the curatorial technique. In order for the mode of address to be effectively constitutive of its subjects, the exhibition and museum had to address *and* represent at the same time.

The cultural theorist Tony Bennett has aptly termed these spatial and discursive techniques of the curator 'the exhibitionary complex' as a means of describing the complex assemblage of architecture, display, collections and publicness that characterize the field of institutions, exhibition making and curating. In his article of the same name, Bennett has analyzed the historical genesis of the (bourgeois) museum, and its installment of relations of power and

knowledge through its dual role, or double articulation, of simultaneously being a disciplinary and educational space:

> The exhibitionary complex was also a response to the problem of order, but one which worked differently in seeking to transform that problem into one of culture – a question of winning hearts as well as the disciplining and training of bodies. As such, its constituent institutions reversed the orientations of the disciplinary apparatuses in seeking to render the forces and principles of order visible to the populace – transformed, here, into a people, a citizenry – rather than vice versa. They sought not to map the social body in order to know the populace by rendering it visible to power. Instead, through the provision of object lessons in power – the power to command and arrange things and bodies for public display – they sought to allow the people, and en masse rather than individually, to know rather than to be known, to become subjects rather than the objects of knowledge. Yet, ideally, they sought also to allow the people to know and thence to regulate themselves; to become, in seeing themselves from the side of power, both the subjects and objects of knowledge, knowing power and what power knows, and knowing themselves as (ideally) known by power, interiorizing its gaze as a principle of self-surveillance and, hence, self-regulation.[84]

Whereas the 'strictly' disciplinary institutions (in the Foucauldian sense), such as schools, prisons, factories and so on, tried to manage the population through direct inflictions of order onto the actual bodies and thus behavior, the exhibitionary complex added persuasion to coercion. Exhibitions were meant to please as well as to teach, and as such needed to involve the spectator in an economy of desire as well as in relations of power and knowledge. In a sense, the exhibitionary complex was also meant to be empowering, in that you could identify with the histories on display and act accordingly. In this

way, exhibition making was directly connected to the construction of a national body, and as such it was involved in identitarian as well as territorial politics of representation. The knowledge that became available to the subject was a means of inscribing that subject within a given nation-state, of cultivating the populace into exactly that: a people, a nation. The modes of address in exhibition making can thus be viewed as attempts to at once represent and constitute a specific (class-based) collective subject. This also means that a double notion of representation is at play, at once the narrations and sensations of the displayed artworks themselves – the aspect most commonly referred to in both curatorial discourse and criticism – and the representation of a certain public (as spectator), being represented, authorized and constituted through the very mode of address. Making things public is also an attempt to make a public. A public only exists "by virtue of being addressed", and is thus "constituted through mere attention" as Michael Warner formulates it in his book *Publics and Counterpublics*.[85] What is significant here is the notion of a public as being constituted through participation and presence on the one hand, and articulation and imagination on the other. In other words, a public is an imaginary endeavor with real effects: an audience, a community, a group, an adversary or a constituency is imagining, and imagined through a specific mode of address that is supposed to produce, actualize or even activate this imagined entity, 'the public'. As I tried to show in the case of New Institutionalism, the challenge for a critical-political curatorial project has been how to use this double notion of representation in a different, radically or not, form of constitution through the mode of address that is the exhibition. If there are these given elements in the scene of address (the institution *and* the exhibition), how can they be reconfigured to create another

articulation, or, conversely can articulation reconfigure the elements, and thus the constitution?

However, before turning to this inherently political concept of articulation, more questions emerge from Butler's (re)reading of the Foulcauldian subject. This has to do with the very idea of a speaking subject, ungrounded or not, self-knowing or not, recognizable or not, but nonetheless some sort of subject emerging in discourse (or in opposition to it), and whether any such subject can be said to be speaking in curatorial acts? In brief, is there a subject in curating, and not just a subject of the curatorial? Is there an 'I' who is speaking, who is constructed? Now, as can be drawn from Bennett, there was, in the double representation involved in the exhibitionary complex, a collective body produced through the articulation of the exhibition: the exhibition was by definition *authoritative,* but not necessarily *authored*. Indeed, if anything was authored, it was the grand narrative and culture of the nations, and any author positions offered were those of the singular artists as representatives of this national culture – something which has been continued in art-historical exhibitions were artists are grouped according to a style or ism, as well as in the many contemporary, generational shows of the new, with the artists as representatives of a certain regional identity and modification of an international, post-conceptual style of art making. Rather, the curatorial process as authorship is one that remains, for the most part, hidden: partly in the publicity speech of curators and institutions, along the lines of following history and servicing the artists vision, and secondly in the way in which the proper names of curators circulate publicly. In the first case, the curator is not seen as the author, but rather, publicly, the artists, and, covertly, the institution (as organizer,

as the embodiment of 'history'), which has lead to the discussion of the curator as mediator or even 'middleman'.[86] In the second case, there has been the undeniable rise of the star curator, from Szeemann to Hoffman, and the strange phenomenon of the announcement of curator names in conjunction with big exhibitions, such as biennales long before, and sometimes ultimately in the place of any artists names, via lists such as e-flux and its competitors. However, as dominant and this can be seen, it is a listing that remains mainly internal to the professional field of the artworld, and hardly reaches the general public, and when it does, it seems to carry little weight compared to the brand and presumed worthiness of the biennale itself. The same goes for the canonization efforts of curating, that, although unfortunate and ideologically problematic, seems destined to stay internal to an evermore solipsistic and self-celebratory circuit of curators who enjoy mutual recognition.

Furthermore, it remains questionable whether the authorship in curating can be solely located to any possible author position inherent to the name and ideas of the curator. Or, more precisely, if articulation is dependent on the mode of address and its double notion of representation, the speaking subject, to the extent that it can be identified in the singular at all, must be similarly ungrounded and multiplied. As an articulation, it is surely the exhibition that articulates positions and meanings, and not the preceding curatorial statement, nor the subsequent press release or catalogue essay. Naturally, such texts are often attempts to control the reading and reception of the exhibition, but can as well be efforts to create perspectives, contexts, complications, lines of flights, further speculation and so on. But it is adjacent, as is the methods of mediation proper, as I shall return to. It

is thus difficult to talk about any first person singular in the form of the exhibition – accounts given of one self as an exhibition-maker tends to take other, more primarily, linguistic forms, as in texts and talks on curatorial practice. Additionally, the 'I' giving an account of itself in Butler's scenery is doing so due to outside command, be it in interrogation or analysis, and the traditional role of the curator, as the caretaker of the collection, and thus an art-historian of some sort, is thus that of the interlocutor in this particular scene of address. The one giving an account of him or herself would then be the artist in the exhibition, and the curator taking on the role of the analyst rather than analysand, and thus not required to give an account of him or herself. If anything, the curator gives an account of the self of the artists, probably, and of the institution of art, maybe? If there is no single 'I' speaking in a group exhibition (but supposedly one being accounted for in the one-person show), but rather multiple agencies on display, competing or collaborative, one should perhaps think of a multiplicity of 'we's' rather than 'I's': the we of the artists, of the organization, the institution, the culture, the nation, the public, and so on?

If so, one of the lessons of the experiment that was New Instiutionalism, must then be not to confuse or equalize these many forms of we. And here I am not only referring to the difference and distance between producers and receivers, but also in more abstract terms of historical reception, the economic and institutional constraints, and the (im)possible collectives of the project and the public, separately and in the encounter. Two more questions arise from this insight, though, a) can one then truly *account* for any 'we' of the exhibition form as a mode of address, and what role does reception play in the effort of articulation, if any? And these questions are

intimately connected, not just in terms of the notion of the production of a public through modes of address, as described by Warner, among others, but also in the relation between speaking and listening invoked by Butler when she writes:

> If I am trying to give an account of myself, it is always *to* someone, to one whom I presume to receive my words in some way, although I do not and cannot know always in that way. In fact, the one who is positioned as the receiver may not be receiving at all, may be engaged in something that cannot under any circumstances be called "receiving," doing nothing more than establishing a certain site, a position, a structural place where the relation to a possible reception is articulated. So whether or not there is an other who actually receives is beside the point, since the point will be that there is a site where the relation to a possible reception takes form.[87]

In the context of art, this would mean that the exhibition is the form, and the institution the site, but also that the institution in the broad sense of the term, such as the institution of culture and society, or the history of art etc., is as much the possible recipient as any concrete attending audience, and this why modernist artists to a large extend could reject any notion of audience, and why curators can, with some justification, make apparently grand, provocative claims, such as denying any responsibility for audience reception or numbers, but having only "a responsibility to history!"[88] At the same time, such statements are not acceptable in the contemporary language game of neo-liberalism, which has taken onboard part of the vocabulary of so-called social art, if a sense of customer satisfaction rather than a participatory political culture of equality, or what has been termed *dialogical* practices.[89] In any case, it indicates an instability at the heart of the relation between exhibitionary articulation and reception, and it

highlights the imaginary address involved in exhibition-making and its production of a public. Beyond the modernist rejection, or should one say strategic rejection, since its mainly a rhetorical device, there is the constant work of redressing the elements involved in the particular mode of address that is the exhibition, in order to produce another public, both inside and outside the project group as von Osten has suggested, in order to find other forms of representing and making alignments than the historical production of the Bourgeois subject of reason. I would also suggest calling this *the alternative formation of the 'we'* – of a non-unitary collective involved both as constitution, context and reception.

As I mentioned earlier, the formulation of this 'we' was one of the major issues in the curatorial group Globe, and the various forms and formats we employed throughout the 1990s, in parallel with many other groups and collectives around that time.[90] I earlier wrote about the contradiction we experienced between collaboration and individuation, and between the installation of singular works/installations and the overall installation and design, which could also be phrased in the terms of a contradiction between author positions, and in terms of the exhibition as articulation of a 'we', of some sort of authorial voice or position, giving an account of itself and its artistic and intellectual itinerary. In other words, how does one produce such a 'we', even if one acknowledges that it must be necessity be ungrounded, in formation, and so on, if one does not agree on the position of this 'we'? How does one account for an author position that is in *dis*agreement? In other words, how can difference be articulated in any coherent exhibitionary form? Obviously, in the case of Globe, and surely many other collectives of its kind, the conclusion,

sooner or later, is that this center cannot hold, and that the group must thus come to an, usually unglorious, end! However, if foundationally faulty as collaborative model and producer of project exhibitions, endeavors such as Globe nonetheless opened some interesting avenues, still left largely unexplored, namely within the very contradictions and synchronicities between curatorial techniques and exhibition design on the one hand and the articulation of the singular art work / installation on the other, as in the example of *Models of Resistance*. Retrospectively, these unresolved contradictions are no longer a reason for concern, but for reflection, and can be seen as much as productive as unproductive.

This must also mean, then, that articulation of any politico-aesthetic ideas and ideals for exhibition-making must no longer be scrutinized in terms of their internal social troubles of team work, but in terms of the exhibition itself as articulation, and as a space for reflection. And the self-reflexivity of the exhibition can be contained within it, not only around it and about, as in textual form. Rather than being located, in timely terms, either before the exhibition as in the curatorial statement, or after as in the press release review or historical analysis, it can happen simultaneous, in the space itself, in the very exhibitionary form, or mode of address. Naturally, institutional critique was one such form, although mainly focused on the institution as scene of address rather than the exhibition form and event itself. But there are other forms of accounting for oneself as an exhibition, and one of them should be to allow for contradictions and contrasting positions – between artists and curators, organizers and institution, yes, but also between different artistic positions and politics. Rather than trying to smooth over these differences, they can be heightened,

or articulated, if you will, through contrasts of display, dialectical clashes, and various forms of montage. As a scene of address, the exhibition is by no means a primarily linguistic form of articulation, but a spatial one, using both pictorial and linguistic elements, and it thus through these elements that the various positions must be set into place and play. For example, a use of rotating display and changing works will automatically break the unitary order of an exhibition to a larger or smaller degree. In *Models of Resistance*, we tried to do this by adding new elements to the exhibition as it went on, in the form of a textual sign system narrating the space, giving a (new) sense of direction in the city-like structure of the architecture.

Historically speaking, I think that this impulse must be ascribed to developments within artistic practice, namely the form of the installation, and its insistence on involving if not engulfing the spectator, and transforming the viewing of art into a bodily, if not directly social, experience rather than a contemplative, non-bodily gaze of the sublime. And by employing the cityscape as display technique, we were obviously concerned with the idea of a, literally, moving spectator, moving through the space through different routes, and thus through different narratives, different stories and readings, inspired equally by the modernist concept of the *fláneur* and the situation concepts of *derivé* and psycho-geography. The sign text that was gradually added was thus thought of as a kind of street signs, but also as a subversion of pedagogical, explanatory museum wall texts, but nonetheless something that directed movement in one way or another – even a detour can be guided, obviously... The critical question must then be what such a direction, even if it allows for several routings, mean for the experience of the exhibition? Moreover,

what does it mean for the reflection of experience *and* the experience of the exhibition's supposed reflexivity? A sign system is usually meant to give a sense of orientation or guidance, but in this case the words did not really do so: the words were generic in their institutionalism, but nonetheless misguiding, not really leading anywhere, since there was no 'Cafeteria', 'Library', 'Service', 'Information', 'Recycling' or 'Escape Route', as some of the signs indicated. This also meant that the signs did not really 'explain' the works, but it did situate them within an institutional logic of governmentality (or perhaps 'municipality' is a better metaphor in this case!). We had actually discussed using more narrative or even inflammatory statements, but none could be agreed upon, except from these more contextual, urban and institutional words. They could not be used, then, to find one's way, or another way, through the maze of the exhibition, but rather to see the structural devices of the exhibition and the works on display in a broader, if very loosely defined, societal setting. It also, though, had a certain circularity to it, or regularity, indicating not only a placing, but also that there was no way out of this setting, that no overview was offered or even possible, but only the horizontal movement of the body as in the city itself, and a such a rather enclosed sense of horizon, if any.

Previously I had also pointed to the contradiction between the two terms of the title, resistance and model, and this needs to be revisited in terms of articulation and reflexivity. In the purely linguistic sense of articulation, there are two very different types of statement at play, the model which is exemplary, but not praxis, and resistance which is by definition active (or reactive), and standing in opposition to structures of power. And if the example can be said to be

constructive, the form of critique implied in resistance is that of negativity and punctuation, even violent revolt. And perhaps this *is* the political articulation of this exhibition, shifting between moments of deconstruction and reconstruction, between negativity and positivity, and even between articulation and reflection? In other words, that the possibility for critical reflection lies precisely in being situated in the middle of a contradiction, an uncertainty, an argument. Reflexivity is here something else than giving an account of oneself as speaking subject, but the opening of the very moment of forming something called a discursive formation, the very moment articulation is attempted put into form (the form of 'an exhibition'). The exhibition is, in this sense, not really so much a model as it is an *apparatus* (i.e. *dispositif*). In an attempt to update, and perhaps radicalize, Foucault's use of this term, Giorgio Agamben describes the apparatus as the opposite of living beings, but nonetheless the technique or relation between the two that *produces* the subject.[91] Although Agamben seems the apparatus mostly in negative terms, as instruments of power, he nonetheless acknowledges that it has an "elusive element", that escapes the grasp of power.[92] I think this is the case of exhibition-making as well, that despite the complicity of the institution in regards to power, despite alignment with the powers that be that can be found in most exhibitionary practices, there is the elusive element, that which cannot be recaptured, but opens the mechanism of the machine to itself, for public display. And this is where the articulation of the exhibition must be understood in terms of *the political*.

The political notion of articulation, can be found in so-called post-foundationalist philosophy, such as the writings of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, and their work on hegemony. For Laclau and

Mouffe, articulation has to do with the production of discursive formations, as described by Foucault in *The Archeology of Knowledge*, and his insistence on dispersion rather than unity of statements. They thus see a discursive formation as consisting of differential positions, but which are organized in a very specific way, one that is always particular, but exclusive – hegemonic, as a signified totality. This signification or ordering is done through articulation, and the possible positions within the discursive formation are thus particular crystallizations, what they call moments, whereas that which is not articulated, but disarticulated, suppressed or depresented, but nonetheless ontologically present, they call elements. There are, then, always elements, that then become moments in the process of articulation. Moreover, Laclau and Mouffe designates articulation as "any practice establishing a relation among elements such that there identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice."[93] Which, of course, sounds exactly like a description of curating: an ensemble of things, brought together in such a way that their meaning is altered through their ordering. Now, Laclau and Mouffe are thinking strictly in political terms, in how a given society is not only ordered through hegemonic order, but also how it is altered through any articulation that re-organizes the elements, or, in their terminology unfix moments, and, in turn, transform elements into moments: "if contingency and articulation are possible, this is because no discursive formation is a sutured totality and the transformation of the elements is never complete."[94] Here, they clearly differ from Foucault, but more importantly, from the historical materialist Marxist tradition, and the act of articulation becomes the privileged political form: the redress the situation is to change the world. And the political task become articulatory practices that describes the world in a meaningful manner,

that can align different struggles and problems into chains of equivalence, and posit a horizon of possibility.

Articulation therefore also differs from the notions of *representation* and *mediation*, again terms that it is not difficult to re-read in the context of art and exhibitions. Whereas articulation is an external reorganization of the elements, mediation is an organization where both articulation and elements belong to the same totality. The distinction between articulation and representation follows a similar anti-essentialist line, using the example of 'class', which is not something that can simply be represented from a given social totality, but which must always be a principle of articulation in a specific historical context. In other words, something like class, and I would argue in this context, culture, is an empty signifier, to be given particular, if universalizing context, through the practice of articulation. There is a certain complexity in this concept of articulation, since, on the one hand it is ontologically given, that it must always happen as a political narrativization of a society that is not given, and thus, perhaps ontically, always dependent on being articulated, that certain agents, be it in political struggle or not, take it upon themselves – as a political task – to articulate. Although turning against orthodox Marxism, this nonetheless has echoes of Marx's famous dictum that it is not enough toe describe the world, but one must do so in order to change. Here, it is rather that any description of a situation always already hegemonizes, but can do so in an ordering or re-ordering of the elements (as in the difference between articulation and mediation). Now, I do not mean to say that one can simply transfer these notions and their specific usages onto the art and its institutional situations, including exhibition-making, but rather focus on why articulation is an

important notion for understanding the politics of exhibition-making. It is a political tool, and it aims to connect exhibition-making to political struggles while simultaneously marking the connections to the political inherent in exhibition-making. It is also a way of explaining why a focus on the articulatory process of curatorial work indicates a shift in how exhibitions are conceived, less as representing someone, willfully or unknowingly, but as producing someone, as producing political publics. In this sense, I agree with Julie Ault's concept of "exhibition-making as a political process that takes place in the cultural field."[95]

It would seem self-evident to think of the exhibition as a political space in the case of a project such as *Capital (It Fails Us Now)* – the title alone has the character of a statement, or exclamation, and relates to a notion, capital, that is by no means non-partisan, and which, simultaneously, is claimed to be faulty, to consist of a wrong. Indeed, the title was chosen for this very reason: that it was direct, even confrontational, but also, I hope, somewhat playful. First of all, it was crucial to use the very word, capital, as a starting point for an artistic analysis as well as curatorial circumscription, to state that we are living under conditions of capitalism, also influencing artistic processes of production and circulation, and in order to make this a political point. This direct naming of capital immediately created a link to Marxism as well, of course, which was a way to distinguish this project from the, at the time, more prevalent optimistic titles and projects about 'the social' and 'community' and so on. The title was not too open for interpretation, and deliberately so, even if this could be criticized for over-determining the works shown in the exhibition.

Now, over-determination is not only a linguistic or psycho-analytic term, but also a analytic term in Marxist theory, as developed

by Louis Althusser as both 'index' and 'problem', relating to society as a complex and not least contradictory totality.[96] For his followers, Laclau and Mouffe, this notion takes an interesting turn, when they see this as an anti-essentialist notion, transforming the social relations to a symbolic field, where over-determination is which inscribes and produces these very relations, and thus related to the political task of articulation: "This analysis seemed to open up the possibility of elaborating a new concept of articulation, which would start from the overdetermined character of social relations."[97] In this manner, it would be difficult to separate over-determination from any social signification (unless one was to return to a more essentialist concept of immanent social or economic features), which is not to simply say, in our case, that *all* titling is over-determining its contents, except on a more structural and abstract level, but more to say that over-determination is unavoidable for articulation, that it is a feature of articulation. As a title, *Capital (It Fails Us Now)* also delivers a promise, that capital fails us, which may or may not be desirable, depending on your political subject position, and, furthermore, that the works on display will be about, or bring about, failures of capital. But there was also another element of potential critique, or failure, if you will: it is stated that capital fails, understood as capitalism failing, but it could also refer to the work *Capital* by Marx. It could also be read as being about a certain, actual incapacity of that particular book, and as I would argue, as a full critique of the contemporary forms of capital. Marx's book needs to be historicized, if it is to be actualized as critique.

Historical placement in our actuality, that does not only mean presence in terms of time, but also location. Indeed, the analysis and readability of this exhibition, would potentially be quite different

according to where it took place, partly geo-politically, as well as in how the particular institution in which it was shown was placed in an eco-system of spaces and meanings locally (and, but to a much lesser extent, internationally). As a common denominator with universalizing effects, capital always functions and fails locally as well, impoverishment on one end of the (global) scale leads to enrichment elsewhere, and vice versa. Capital acts doubly, on the one hand it is an equalizer: everything becomes the same in the sense that it can be exchanged, but on the other hand, everything becomes different through the exchange, through its exchange value, as it were. This is capital's universal claim, its universalizing move. In order to understand how capital works as universalizing, it is thus crucial to study its particular articulations and implementations, it's local as well as global workings and effects. Hence the focus on *location*, here particularized by double, but connected sites or economic, territorial organizations: the (post)welfare state – as exemplified by Norway in this case – and the post-communist country – as embodied by Estonia – the two places where the exhibitionary interventions took place. This focus was thus placed in the current moment in history, 2005/6, with its structural changes, and, arguably, crisis, within global capital, and looked at the two specific locations as models, as machinery within the production and proliferation of capital. Partly, the Western European model of the welfare state is undergoing a massive structural change, if not deconstruction. This can also be seen in the refined variation of the welfare state, the Nordic social democratic model of redistribution and equilibrium; a compromise between liberalism and socialism, but also a temporal territorial alliance between capital and labor that is now historical. In other words, capital must be localized and historicized (as

suggested by Immanuel Wallerstein with his notion of 'historical capitalism').[98]

Needless to say, the title, as a promise or proposition, turned out to be prophetic with the global capital failure and collapse of finance in 2008, but financial speculation was not really the focus of the exhibition, but rather the shift from Fordism to post-Fordism, understood as a linguistic turn in production, and, specifically what does meant for the production of subjectivity. I would say that it concerned itself with the subject in relation to power, to the naturalization of capital in two seemingly different social situations, that were nonetheless structurally similar, not only in being subjected to deregulation and a neoliberal paradigm, but also, epistemological in the change from a modernist systemic society (social democracy and Soviet communism) to a post-modern one. Despite these general characteristics of similitude and comparability, the reception and readings of the two shows, first at UKS in Oslo, and then at Kunstihoone in Tallinn, were quite dissimilar, which had to do not only with the public discussion around contemporary capital, and the status of a left project today, but also due to the very different institutional placement of the two spaces. Nominally, both are a kind of artists' spaces, although highly institutionalized, with UKS belonging to the association of young artists in Norway, and Kunstihoone to the old artists' union in Estonia, but whereas UKS has long been committed to experimental, conceptual and politically minded work, Kunstihoone stands for tradition, and some hesitation towards practices such as those shown at UKS.

This difference can even be found in spatial terms, where UKS is located in a former industrial building, refurbished as a white cube, and

Kunstihoone is located in a grand 19th century building, built specifically for art exhibitions. Along these lines, the number of artists was also increased from 13 in Oslo to 16 in Tallinn, also broadening the scope of artists from the Nordic focus of the first installment.[99] And where the public for the first exhibition in Oslo was mostly sympathetic to the exhibitions and its politics, understanding it as part of an ongoing discussion about art and politics, and so on, the response in Tallinn was starkly divided; some complimented the exhibition for its perceived bravery in critically addressing contemporary capitalism, whereas other equated any such discussion with Communist crimes and Soviet imperialism. Its not that these reactions were surprising, or in any way unwelcome, but whereas the response in Norway among UKS's constituents were positive, there was also a tendency to place it immediately in an established circuit of recognition, whereas the antagonistic and contradictory response in Tallinn, also attested to an engagement with the work, with a transformation of the elements through the articulation of capital failure. Articulation here worked in at least two ways, that of bringing a community together, and that of exposing the inherent social antagonisms and political ideologies of a public formation. Both, I find, equally valid, and interestingly brought about by the same articulation, or text if you will, but in different contexts, thus bringing about a different organization, or re-organization of the specific elements.

Installation views, Models of Resistance, *Copenhagen, 2000, with sign system. Top: Recycling. Bottom (l-r): Library, Information, Service, Escape Route.*

Installation views, Models of Resistance, *Copenhagen, 2000. The exhibition as urban space. Signs on bottom photo: Dead End, Exit.*

Installation views, Capital (It Fails Us Now), *Kunstihoone,Tallinn, 2006, main space. Top (l-r): viewing station for videos, Stephan Geene wall piece, Susan Kelly installation (after Rodchenko), Ashley Hunt video + blackboard. Bottom: detail of viewing station, videos by Jason Simon and Michael Blum.*

Capital (It Fails Us Now), Kunstihoone, Tallinn, 2006. Top: Installation by Chto Delat?/What Is To be Done?. Bottom: Installation by Oliver Ressler.

3.2. THE PRODUCTION OF TRUTH

When discussing the practice of exhibition-making as articulation, I did so in two ways: in terms of reflexivity and re-organization. Both these terms were given a political meaning, and moreover, the potential for critique. It is in its place, then, to question this apparent privileging of reflexivity, and, secondly, to discuss how reflexivity in exhibition-making manifests itself? As an artistic practice, the idea of (self)reflexivity has long been tightly connected to the idea of auto-critique, almost to the point of indistinction. There is no need here, however, to re-iterate this debate, but simply to point to two important features, or propositions, namely that self-reflection understood as the structuralist exposure of one's modes of production in the very moment of presentation creates transparency, and thus reflection on the part of the spectator, and, moreover, that this transparency creates a critical gaze on representation itself, both narrowly in the terms of the concrete image (or work of art), and broadly, in terms of the viewing context (i.e. the institution of art). Seen in the Castoriadisian terms of instituting, this entanglement becomes even more prescient, since the way of instituting conditions the institutional form, and vice versa, and for Laclau and Mouffe, this entanglement might be thought of as consisting of similar elements, that is crystallized into different moments, and in Foucault it would be discursive formation and statements, and so on. In artistic practice, this mutual constitution is precisely the issue for such disparate genres as constructivism and institutional critique, for example. But what unities all these reflexive moments is the introduction of critique, of what Foucault called a critical attitude, and, moreover, I would argue

an engagement with truth, or more accurately with *the production of truth*.

The notion of truth production obviously implies articulation and narration, that something is developed and proposed as truthful. The term production also indicates something that is not a given, but that requires work. Traditionally, the notion of truth, on the other hand, has to do with a strange contradiction: one the one hand it requires proof, trial, argumentation, etc., as in the very idea of science, while at the same time requiring belief, as in religion. Now, the institution of art, with its nationalist histories, always tried to posit truth through symbolization and narration, and in ways that were both scientific and absolutist, that were both autonomous and heteronomous, but that never revealed its production process, since this would endanger the very truth, as specific content and narrative, that was produced. Even though the production of truth can be theorized in certain ontological terms, institutions require faith – including that of science – that precludes transparency of production processes, structural similarities and self-reflexivity. This has, then to do with the instituting of society, and why Castoriadis describes it as imaginary; that its organizing principles and narrative features require upkeep through belief, through praxis, even if the dominant imaginary, as in modern societies, is something like rationality and progression. (And in the critical, even revolutionary sense this also why how it can always be disarticulated as instituted social reality at any given moment). As an instituted society, the modern nation state are the prime example of this double bind, as is described in Benedict Anderson's exegesis on the topic of nations as "imagined communities".[100]

Indeed, Anderson points out the curious contradiction between similarity and uniqueness in the national construction, that all modern nations are constructed around the same organizing principles, land, territory, people, language, culture and so on, but nonetheless always claim to be unique in this very conception. That 'our' country is special, its language and landscape uniquely beautiful, that 'our' people are particularly great, and so on. The art and the history museum holds a central place in this construction, and is thus also the perfect battleground for counter-articulation, for forms of critique to formulate and locate themselves. In effect, exhibitions are always conditioned and located, also nationally, even when they are designated as *inte*national, as statements, but this does not mean that cannot be the medium for other articulations, that they cannot deconstruct existing narratives and institute, as Castoridis would say, *anew*. This also means that the *differend* is a condition: they can never be consensus on art and exhibitions, since they are always already invested with different political projections, nor can there be agreement on the very functions and possibilties of exhibition-making as such, but only articulations and counter-articulations, that do not necessarily accept not only each other's aims, but also not each other's terms. There are no terms of agreement, only terms of disagreement. It is, in other words, precisely the representational sites of power that also becomes the location for contestation and dissensus, as is evident from over a century of so-called critical art and artistic critique, whether in the form of punctual intervention or the edifying position of alternatives, and various combinatory constellations here of. Whenever one find the machines of power and knowledge, one also, inversely, can locate the models of resistance.

For Foucault, the critical attitude has – as famously described in the essay 'What is Critique?' – to do with the issue of government: "I would therefore propose, as a very first definition of critique, this general characterization: the art of not being governed quite so much."[101] It is not, then, a complete disavowal of power, but interlinked to it, and questioning actual forms of authority, which reads almost like a description of the historical avant-garde and its relation to the art institution, but no matter! Foucault goes on to describe this not wanting to be governed too much or too hard, to call it a confrontation with authority, that questions not only what the powers that be may tell you to do, but also what they tell you is true:

> I will say that critique is the movement by which the subject gives himself the right to question truth on its effects of power and question power on its discourses of truth. Well, then!: critique will be the art of involuntary insubordination, that of reflected intractability. Critique would essentially insure the desubjugation of the subject in the context of what we could call, in a word, the politics of truth.[102]

This critical attitude towards governmentality has often been understood as an effort of confronting power through direct correction and commentary, from artistic strategies such as institutional critique and its permutations, to critical theory, such as in the figure of the public intellectual proposed and practicised by someone like the emblematic figure of Edward Said, and his concept of 'speaking truth to power.'[103]

The idea of the public role for the intellectual/artists as someone certainly capable, but foremost ideally located to speak the truth to power draws upon Foucault performance of the public intellectual as specifically involved in struggles, i.e. not a generalist critic of society,

and from his later writings on the notion of truth production, as in his reading of the ancient Greek notion of *parrhésia*. Literally meaning telling the truth, Foucault first it describes in seemingly heroic terms: telling the truth in the face of power, and about power, regardless of the consequences and any personal costs. Indeed, *parrhésia* involves telling truth even at the possible cost of one's own life. It is thus uncompromising truth, but also compulsory, something that one has to say, and that one believes to absolutely be the truth, fully and fundamentally. But for Foucault, the notion of *parrhésia* also has to do with the position of the speaker, with his relation to power. Not everyone can speak truth to power, even if one should feel so inclined. The person speaking the truth has to be involved in what Foucault describes as "a parrhesiastic game" involving both the speaker and the sovereign. It involves some sort of vicinity to those in power, that one has – if only nominally and potentially – the ear of the despot. It requires that the powers that be accept the speaker's authority and knowledge, and is willing to listen. The result may still be death, so the element of risk is great and real, but whether the regent rejects or accepts the truth is dependent on the position of the speaker as a truth-sayer, as someone believable and credible in a specific context, in a relation of, and to, power. A contemporary example would be the protest against the invasion of Iraq, where the leaders of the warfaring nations, all acknowledged the protesters' right to demonstrate, but also made it quite clear that they in no way felt obliged to listen. Simply put, such protests may as well have been the incoherent ravings of a lunatic, since the position of the speaker in no way qualified them for being taken seriously, neither as advisor nor threat to the government(s). (Although this may say more about the current

regimes if governmentality than it does about the protesters' nominal attachment to democracy and its possible parrhésiastic games.)

However, this description of the parrhésiatic game, that stems mainly from various lectures held in the USA, and in Foucault's seminar at College de France in 1983, was to undergo further complication and even contradiction in his very last seminar there, of 1984.[104] Rather than focusing on the role and position of the truth-sayer in relation to power, Foucault shifts *parrhésia* onto the self: what does it mean to speak the truth about one self? This would indicate that speaking the truth also means self-reflection, and the willingness to disclose the position from where one is speaking, and through which means and methods one is constructing the speaking (of the truth). To speak the truth is also to speak the truth about oneself and one's acts of speaking, thus exposing subject and object of the speech equally. At this time, Foucault also, perhaps, provocatively, claimed – in interviews – that he had never really been interested in power per se, but only the nexus of power and knowledge in the sense that it circumscribes the subject, and more precisely, the subject's relation to truth. In this sense, critique is also self-critique, and concerned not just with claiming the truth, but living truthfully.

What does it mean, though, to lead a true life, both in relation to the self and to governmentality? Here, Foucault again looks for examples in ancient Greece, partly in Socrates, and, mainly, in the cynics and their philosophical truth production as a scandalous event. For the cynics, especially, *parrhésia* indicates a way of life, a living with the truth, no matter how unpopular it may be: truth is both invasive and proved by example, of how one lives. Following Socrates, they do see parrhésia as mainly political in the pragmatic or technical sense,

but as ethical, as a way of entering a discussion not by answering a given problem, but by turning it around, by altering the parameters of the discussion itself. The phrase used for this particular critical attitude is the quite enigmatic, *change the value of the currency*: "The principle of altering the *nomisma* is also that changing the custom, breaking with it, breaking up the rules, habits, conventions and laws" and, moreover, "the fundamental precept is 'revalue your currency'; but this revaluation can only take place through and by means of 'know yourself,' which replaces the counterfeit currency of one's own and other's opinion of oneself, with the true currency of self-knowledge."[105] In economic terms changing the currency would usually be understood in the sense of de-evaluation – the mechanism the current *Europact* wants to remove, of course – but here it refers to not accepting the terms in which a given situation is articulated politically: Rather than discussing the pros and cons of such a pact, the cynics would reject the whole economic system. Such an evaluation of critique could have wide ranging implications for both artistic critique and critical theory. I would suggest to understand this as a move from *criticism*, such as art criticism in its historical form, to something that can be defined as *critique*, following Michel Foucault's by radicalization of Kant: whereas reason for Kant was ultimately about judgment, and thus ethical command, Foucault sees critique as that which suspends judgment, and is rather about a critical attitude towards ways of governance. So, it is statements directed towards commands, towards the historical order of things, towards the ever-present hegemony – a critique that is "genealogical in its design and archeological in its method."[106]

An exhibition such as *Capital (It Fails Us Now)*, could be articulated as exactly an attempt at changing the currency: by claiming

the failure of the mode of production and exchange in the contemporary world system. I would make this argument, certainly for most the works of art on display in the exhibition, such as Oliver Ressler's extensive documentary project on groups and individuals worldwide who has implemented various alternative economic models, or Maria Eichhorn's Made for *Documenta11* in 2002, *Maria Eichhorn Public Limited Company*, originally produced for *Documenta11* in 2002, which took that production budget, € 50,000, and transferred them into a joint stock company under the said name. However, the stocks did not belong to the person Maria Eichhorn, but rather to the company itself, and could therefore not be bought or sold by anyone. Additionally, the company could not, and may never, invest the money. It this way a large chunk of actual capital is taken out of circulation, not eliminated but at least suspended. And it the currency is tilted, the discussion altered in the form of conversations set up by Fia Stina Sandlund, who engaged in a strange dialogue with the new organizer and owner of the *Miss Sweden* contest, which she successfully been part of discontinuing the year earlier through a direct intervention on live television. Now, she proposed that the pageant could return if only the organizers would accept a post-gender definition of 'Women', thus changing the parameters for the discussion and contest. And this is what happens, when Ashley Hunt, in a long line of investigations into the ramifications of the growing prison industry, asks an Estonian human rights officer, herself a former Prosecutor, what the difference is between those who were put in jail during Soviet times and the present, as such historicizing and politicizing the notion of the criminal – a list, perhaps even an A list – of artistic strategies that could surely be continued, both within the frames of this particular exhibition, and beyond it. But positing, however persuasively, these singular artists

does not reveal any truth about the exhibition, per se. I have not given an account of *Capital (It Fails Us Now)* along the lines of truth production, nor, for that matter, about myself as the curator of said exhibition. All I have done is to make the artists *exemplary*, and to put them in the position of the truth-sayer.

It is precisely this gesture of using the artist as an example that is one of the criticisms that can be, and often is, directed towards thematic exhibitions, as in the previously mentioned notion of over-determination. Another problematic needs to be added to this, however, namely the way the works are inscribed into the theme in the form of listing. As I showed above, the way in which a theme manifests itself has do with how the works on display illustrates the idea, or set of ideas, whether the theme is topical as in this case, or more formal or historical, as in isms and generation, for example. The reading of the works, and their relevance, has to do with the theme they are grouped under, rather than any method of aesthetics and politics they may employ, and principally regardless of the overall project, or even oeuvre, of the particular artist. In reviews, the exhibition will most likely also be valued according to how well the works fit the theme, and curatorially there is always the tendency to list works and (potential) artists in almost an order of priority, which has to do with their perceived centrality to the theme. This list of works, which could be like the four artists I just mentioned, will be the building blocks for the exhibition, its backbone, if you will, and more and other works will be added as extensional limbs, all according to the size of the exhibition (both spatially and economically). This is the real tyranny of the theme, and of the institutional production process, rather than the concept of over-determination. There is a tendency for exhibitions of

this kind to have an uneven distribution of value, for them to install, quite literally, a center and a periphery. There are, though, three ways in which to undo this problematic, the first one being to alter the status of the theme as mentioned in the sketched typology, either in the form of another exhibition, such as the project exhibition or the *un*exhibition, but also in the loosening of the theme itself.

These three avenues are all quite ideological propositions, but additionally there are also two, more pragmatic, possibilities of undoing the logic of the list, which pertain to the production and selection process, and which does not abandon or shift the centrality of the theme, quite the contrary. In terms of production, this has to do with the possibility of commissioning new works specifically made for the exhibition, not in the terms of site-specificity, but thematic development; meaning that the artists are not invited to show an existing work, but rather on the background of existing work, their general methodology and perceived field of interest, or through some more or less ongoing dialogue about these things between the commissioning curator and the commissioned artist. As a working relationship between artist and curator or institution, this often promoted as ideal, by both artists and curators. This may very well be the case, but only in certain cases, so to say. Regardless of the time and finances put into this process, and it requires a certain economy of course, the possibility for misfit or misrepresentation, not to mention over-determination, is in principle equally present. The other mechanism has to with selection in terms of size, in terms of the size of the list. The larger the number of artists in a thematic show, the more exhaustively the theme is seemingly unfolded and investigated – again, at least in principle. So a long list automatically gives the

exhibition the character of a survey, of a full exploration of a given field or topic. It is for this very reason, that the other pragmatic solution to the problem has been to reduce the number of artists, to work with a shorter list, the idea being that gives more attention to the single contribution and position, a more coherent juxtaposition, as well as remover some of the expectation, and thus potential criticism, of the attempted, exhaustive survey. While this would seem to be functioning, it is also clear that it allows for a more controlled articulation, with less potential for lines of flights, detours and counterpoints, unless the curatorial technique is exclusively one of dialectics (this artist pitted against that one).

In the case of *Capital (It Fails Us Now)*, these issues are indeed very present, and it can therefore be of some use to disclose some of the thinking behind it, to look into the process of production. In terms of size, for example, the list was actually expanded from the first version to the second, not only because of the different spaces and contexts, but actually in an attempt to unfold the theme, or idea, a more thoroughly, while staying away from the notion of a survey. Surely this would not be the last word on capital – how could it be – but only an entryway into an analytic of the contemporary ways of capital, and as an introduction into political artistic projects, and, moreover, into a politically tendentious curatorial position, which was why, as I have indicated, that the articulatory element was so much to the forefront.[107] More importantly, there was the way in which the exhibition was envisaged and developed, as what I would consider a confusion of the project form and the thematic curatorial selection. It was attempted produced in a project-like style, with a workshop for all artists and writers, to discuss themes and idea well before producing

their individual contributions, and, if sensible, to initiate collaborations. This did create coherence between the works, and how they thought of the theme, which made them much simpler, in side-effect, to place them in a sequence and narrative. However, there were not any collaborations made, and no common position or platform produced. During the workshop, there was also an internal critique that never became visible, where one of the participants expressed discomfort with the very idea of collaboration, not wanting to participate in any 'we' constructed, and thus authored, by me, and certainly not with this particular group of people. This pointed out a major oversight, or problem in the conception of the project, that the people invited had *not* constituted themselves as a group, nor chosen the thematics proposed: this authoring remained exclusively within the remit of the curator. Whereas the invitation was fairly open, it did not alter the division of labor, nor really allow for that course of action to be taken subsequently. Although this criticism was far from shared by everyone, it did make clear that a curatorial gesture cannot produce sharing as such, cannot produce a collective without the leaving behind of curatorial authority and responsibility itself. The workshop may have been helpful for the individual artist, and certainly for the production of the exhibition as thematically coherent, but it did not make a group, and did not solve the basic contradiction between the form of the project, as self-instituted, and the thematic, as demanded and proposed by the curator.[108] It highlights the problem of autonomy, both politically and artistically, in the work of exhibition-making.

None of these processes and problematics were visible in the exhibition, which is not the same as saying that the exhibition cannot produce or propose truth, whether about itself or its surroundings. It is

important to note that a politics of truth is not only produced through the rhetorics of an exhibition, but also in the production and reception processes. Surely, the many roundtables and discussions on curatorial ethics is a way of controlling reception, of claiming an ethical relation to, mainly, artists and art-history on the part of the curator. But how are such ethics played out through the production processes and their divisions of labor? And how is it manifest in the exhibition itself? In its style, in how works are placed in relation to each other and the space? All too often does a discussion of ethics, as it is done after the fact and outside of the production process, amount to little more than a kind of curatorial 'indulgence', in the Christian sense – it's a way of paying for one's sins publicly, while simultaneous having no impact on the actual working conditions and modes of address in exhibition-making. It is reflexivity without *parrhésia*. Still, if the curator is more of a police officer than political agitator as an orator and functionary, the question remains if truth production, in the form of reflexivity rather than confession, has any place in the curatorial? This has not only to do with intentionality, but with institutional inscription, with the curator understood as an enabler and a connoisseur rather than as an author or even agent. The position of authorship is, rather, delegated to the artist, and any claims for an author function of curating is, in this light, seen as an infringement on the domain of the artist, and if not even a violation of their autonomy. As conditioned statement, exhibition-making would seem to have little to do with autonomy in the artistic sense, and may only be purposeful to employ as an ideal at the moment of conception (curatorially) and creation (artistically), since the moment of conception and creation, and the moment of presentation, i.e. exhibition, are rarely simultaneous or similar.

Perhaps it is, then, in the relationship to autonomy, also politically, that one might understand the difference between exhibition-making artistically and curatorially, besides the obvious different historical conditions for the emergence of these roles. The artist may invoke autonomy, if only as a strategic tool, whereas curators, also strategically, but certainly rhetorically, tends to avoid this invocation, as we tend to downplay our roles as police officers and thus ways of policing. As mentioned earlier, with the idea of a project exhibition as proposed by Marion von Osten, exhibition-making was seen as a primarily artistic method, also in an attempt to break the current divisions of labor, and to reclaim curating for artistic (and political) practice.[109] Taking another route to this issue, the exhibition-maker Julie Ault, who more than anyone has developed the idea of the exhibition as medium, both in her work with Group Material and later on her own, consciously insists on the designation of artist as producer, and never labeling herself as a curator for a number of specific tactical and rhetorical reasons: "because of its historical association to connoisseurship and elitism; in order to make visible a subjective approach which curators don't necessarily avow; to emphasize exhibition-making as a form of cultural production; and to claim artistic license."[110] This points to two things, a difference in possibility, with the strategic use of the artist as autonomous, *and* to a difference in professionalization. As a professional, the curator, whether freelance or institutionalized, always answer to the institution, and are part of its production, not of truth, but of knowledge, deep inside of the power-knowledge nexus. One should therefore think, that it is actually the curator rather than the artists, who is located in a relationship to power that can supply the possibility of speaking truth to power, as in the first meaning of *parrhésia*. Is it only that the sovereign does not

listen, or is it because of our *Esprit de Corps* as police officers, which means that we must always have each other's back, even if this does not uncover the truth or uphold the law?

In discussing such past projects as *Models of Resistance* and *Capital (It Fails Us Now)* I have thus tried to produce some truthful claims about their conceptualization and realization that does not take the form of a confession, but of a problematization, and of what Spivak calls an *itinerary*:

> The power of this specific metaphor arises from its illustration of how Spivak's thinking proceeds: it is not fixed and finite in the form of thought as a "product," but active – think*ing* – a journey that involves moving back and forth over familiar and less familiar intellectual terrain while constantly interrogating its own premises.[111]

The notion of journey is crucial here, not only as an intellectual journey, the itinerary of thinking and reading, but, I think, also in the literal sense of physical travel. For Spivak this is a condition of the post-colony, which in itself is unfixed, moving forwards while revisiting the past, and that the post-colonial condition brings with it constant traveling, constituted by flows of capital, production migratory flows. Understood in the terms of a curatorial practice, which I think one can only do very carefully and hesitatingly, this also means a criss-crossing of markers of identity onto the curatorial subject – in both senses of that word – as someone immersed in discursive formations and histories, such as specific institutions, but also in terms of location as background, movement as middle-ground, and interconnectedness as

foreground. On the other hand, the moving back and forth over one's practice and that which informs it – theories, desires, contingencies, etc. – are precisely what can amount to an accounting this self (understood as the practice), what can form the basis for reflexivity and critique. The past projects that I have mentioned, *Models of Resistance* and *Capital (It Fails Us Now)*, are thus linked not only in a chronology, or a *curriculum vitae*, but also in an itinerary. The very failure of the group that lead to us abandoning the name Globe in the former project, probably has to do with attempts a recapturing a collaborative spirit in the latter project, just as very forceful political title and them is an outcome of the unresolved contradiction of terms in the former. In both cases, there was an unresolved tension between the thematic and the project, between the individual articulation, the collective formation and the exhibition as statement, which is why they are possible objects for research into the workings, and indeed failings, of the terms I am testing in this submission, *institution*, *articulation*, and, as shall be tried later, *horizonality*. However, besides looking into exhibitionary practices as a form of research, can one also think of the exhibition itself as research*ing*?

In other words, can the exhibition be the site for research, and can one, then, also think of it as a type: the research exhibition? Now, in terms of the typology sketched out earlier, it should be evident that an art-historical exhibition by definition requires research, but that does not tell us what research is – it does not give a definition of research. Rather, research here has multiple meanings, there is, in certain cases, the research of tracking and registering all the works of a certain artist, period or genre, then the research into the availability of such works for a given exhibition, and so on. But there is also a

more scientific notion of research involved, partly in techniques of preservation, but also in the claims for art-historical methods as scientific, both in terms of a tradition and I terms of giving a new analysis of the given works and constellations, and so on? But what are the moments and notions of research in exhibitions of contemporary works and positions? Again, they might differ according to the type and scope of the exhibition – a regional exhibition, for example requires research in terms of reading, study visits, consultancy with important players in the local place, etc., which may differ drastically from the research involved in the formulation of a proposition (be that about capital failure, or, for that matter, about the relationality of aesthetics, or art and the social). It may be useful here, to recall the double meaning of the word in many languages, such as in German, where both *recherché* and *forschung* are employed. By *recherché* is usually meant reading, fact finding and checking, such as in journalism for instance, whereas *forschung* relates to science, and to the idea of the laboratory and the thesis. It is obvious that almost any exhibition employs *recherché* to a larger or lesser degree, but not all exhibitions can truly be thought of as *forschung*, neither as having a thesis, or for that matter a proposition, nor as functioning like a laboratory.

The idea of the research exhibition, where the exhibition is not only a vehicle for the presentation research results (in both senses), but also a site for the ongoing research, both with the formats and thematic concerns of the exhibition, was behind the conceptualization of the exhibition *All That Fits: The Aesthetics of Journalism*, realized in 2011 at QUAD in Derby (as well behind the exhibition *Vectors of the Possible* of 2010, that I shall return to in the last chapter). Whereas the research involved in *Capital (It Fails Us Now)*, through the

workshop and book production, was mostly in the exploration of the theme, *All That Fits*, did research in the very form of the exhibition, in turn unfolding the intricacies of the topic in spatial terms, and in experiments with the modes of (possible) viewership. Presenting seemingly incompatible components such as aesthetic experience and political activism; community events and private investigations, with *All That Fits*, Co-curator Alfredo Cramerotti and myself tried, perhaps provocatively, to advance the idea that art and journalism are not separate forms of communication, but rather two sides of a unique activity: the production and distribution of images and information. What the exhibition brought to surface are the ways of communicating this nexus of imaging and informing, and the aesthetic principles used in such an ordering, in such acts of transmission. The artworks, many of which were time-based, were presented in three groupings, or chapters, that followed each throughout the exhibition period, although with a few continuous displays.[112] This change of scenery and topicality was made clearly visible through a special exhibition design, consisting of a different color scheme for each group – red, blue and green, mirroring the cathodic ray and the RGB color code – as well as of a specifically designed modular system of display, consisting of small adjustable cubes, that could be combined and reconfigured in various ways to accommodate the different works. At the same time this should reflect the rotation of the news cycle, albeit at a different, slowed-down speed. We believed that this would make not only our curatorial editing more visible, and also the material more user-friendlier, with the works not just one after another in an endless row of images and information, but with a juxtaposition of different approaches each dialoguing with each other, with the media and the overall theme in various ways and in various combinations, particularly

since 16 out of the altogether 24 works were time-based, mostly videos, which we wanted to give the audience a proper chance to watch, and even re-watch (since QUAD do not charge any entrance fee).[113]

The three chapters in the exhibition, *The Speaker, The Image* and *The Militant*, all related to the notion of an analysis of local centers of power and knowledge, in this case with the truth production implied by the genres of art and journalism. As aesthetic regimes, both journalism and artistic makes claims for the truth, albeit of a different kind. One is a coded system that speaks *for* the truth (or so it claims), the other a set of activities that questions itself at every step (or so it claims), thus *making* truth. Whereas journalism provides a view on the world 'out there,' as it 'really' is, art often presents a view on the view, truth posited as acts of (self)reflection. *All That Fits* examined both as types of truth production, as systems of information that defines truth in terms of the visible: producing not only what can be seen, but also what can be imagined, and thus imaged. As such, the exhibition revolved around what we called the aesthetics of journalism: how images are produced and how they are produced to appear as truthful. Referring to the concept of *parrhésia* in Foucault, the question of the truth-sayer was examined: who can speak the truth, and does this require certain types of speaking as well as certain subject positions? As single figures, both the reporter and the artist have throughout modernity been viewed as authentic voices and heroic figures. Simultaneously, they are constantly vilified as being complicit and corrupt. But we what wanted to investigate was the aesthetic means of representation and rhetoric that makes these figures, journalist and artists as truth-sayers, become visible, as such, in discourse.

In this way, *The Speaker* concerned itself with a specific figure; the speaking subject or author, its figures of authority and figures of speech, as well as its framings of the real in terms of editorial processes and camera angles. How does this figure emerge through discourse, and what are its functions? What can be said and not said in order for a speaking subject to appear as real, as authentic, as authoritative and/or as truthful. What is implied in certain speech acts and subject positions, such as the figure of 'the reporter' and 'the artist, as well as the 'witness' and the 'source'? *The Image* examined how images are ideologically produced, through the framings and positionings of the above-mentioned categories, but also how counter-images can be created. Here, the very makings and politics of image production was reflected, discussed and deconstructed, proposing an aesthetics of journalism and documentary as that which can get to the truth of the ideology of mass-media images, in opposition to their claim neutrality and pragmatism. Finally, *The Militant* continued the strand of counter-images and counter-information, but through the artistic employment of journalistic traits such as expose and research. However, the practices highlighted here tended to function in the place of the media, and uncover what it does not do, going where it does not go, and thus returns to some of reportage's initial claims, that have been left behind in an increasingly commercial and corporate media industry, or what could also be summarized as attempts at changing the currency.

I think the chapters had the potential for a dual function, that of broadening the issues the exhibition tried to discuss – namely how does one frame the truth, how does one make it appear truthful? – supplying several entry points and exit ways, and then that of making the possible makings of a show visible through the transformation of

the same installatory elements, re-arranging and re-painted for each constellation. Simultaneously, the cubes were fairly simply and cheaply made, which heighten a sense of pragmatics and changeability: it would be easy to imagine more or less of them, placing them differently, and it was feasible to make them oneself, hopefully a metaphor for, if not the production of truth, then the formation of discourse. In this sense, and I think a positive one, the exhibition was something less modernist than a model, something less clinical, and more a suggestion for the exhibition as a try-out, or a mock-up. As truth production, the exhibition tried to pose a principal question, whether it is possible to work with both aesthetics *and* informatics, to be both reflexive and meditative, all the while asking the viewers to question how reality is presented as real, and thus engage in a politics of truth. However, the articulation, however truthful and/or pedagogical it attempts and appears to be, it does not stand alone in its linguistic effects, in contemporary institutions such as QUAD, for example, it is always accompanied by another mode of address that is that of mediation, that of the educational department, an effect to which I shall now turn in a further investigation of what is the formation of articulation.[114]

All That Fits: The Aesthetics of Journalism, *QUAD, Derby, 2011. Various uses of cube module. Top: two cubes combined for Katya Sander video installation; middle: as table for Anita DiBianco newspapers; bottom: box for Wynne Greenwood and K8 Hardy video.*

Installation views, All That Fits, *QUAD, Derby, 2011.*

3.3. TWO RHETORICS

If New Institutionalism, and projects of an *un*exhibitionary impulse was the new addition to the discursive language of curating in the early 2000's, by the end of the decade another notion was gradually ascending, and with it, perhaps, another set of concerns: the so-called *educational turn*. This was no mere rhetorical device, however, but, an attempt to describe three interconnected phenomena: the apparent growth in extra-exhibitionary activisties, such as symposia, discussions, workshops and other forms of discourse production; the clear growth industry of museum mediation, of pedagogical endeavors, both due to government decrees of accessability and social outreach, and due to market demands in the form museums becoming part of both the service sector and entertainment; and, finally the massive, European, re-structuring of arts education through the EU decreed Bologna process. All this was not only possible themes for exhibitions and artistic interventions (as I shall attempt to show, particularly the latter), but also for the exhibition as project. It was to both inform and influence how exhibitions were made. As with New Institutionalism, this debate has now somehow been codified, if not fixed, by the wide-ranging anthology on the topic, *Curating and the Educational Turn*, edited by Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson.[115] In their introduction, O'Neill and Wilson sensible notes these various strands, and therefore the necessity for a wide range of approaches to the turn, to various ways of problematizing the issue, rather than synthesizing the discussions. They also, in what they admit is a short list mention some 21 curatorial/educational – this deliberate Spivakian slash is my insertion

– efforts, ranging from high profile exhibitions such as Documentas to local, self-organized projects that are totally marginal.

The point here being, I think, that the educational permeates all parts of the artworld, and that it does so in a constitutional sense. However, as I shall argue, this is also historically the case, and that the notion of the exhibition can therefore not be separated, although distinguished, from the notion of pedagogy. Moreover, education is not only a concern of aesthetics, but a general and generative discourse formation in society as such, and not only in the disciplinary sense, but also in an economic sense, with education being immersed in development, whether of products or regions, and with such concepts as innovations, creative industries and life-long education. It shall not be my purpose here to discuss whether this entails a re- or deskilling of labor (in the Marxist sense), nor how education is part of project of governance (as in Foucault), nor its role the post-colonial as recolonialization and so on, but only to indicate the ways in which the educational turn is tied to much more than the local center that is the curatorial and its ways of instituting, which is what narrowly concerns me here. What I will try to discuss is how education and exhibition are historically connected to each other in co-dependence not unlike that of power and knowledge, which they are an implementation of. And it is perhaps for this very reason that education has been both an artistic method *and* an object of artistic critique.

Now, in her famous 1989 performance, *Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk*, Andrea Fraser appeared as the docent Jane Castleton, giving a guided tour of the Philadelphia Museum of Art and its collection to a number of unsuspecting visitors.[116] This piece now holds a significant place in art history, as a prime example of institutional

critique, of what some has termed the second wave of institutional critique, as well as an example of art as service (in Fraser's own critical terms), and finally as a seminal piece of performance art employing such theoretical notions such as 'speech acts' and 'performativity'. It is, for our purposes here, more important which persona she embodies in order to perform her critique (of institutions, gender and speech), namely the role of a docent, someone involved with the institution in a specific way, instituted, as it were, as a guide to the audience, as a pedagogue: as someone working in the educational department of the museum, rather than as a curator or, for that matter, janitor in the museum. Jane Castleton is there to *explain*, *educate* and *engage* the public on behalf of the institution, both in the narrow sense of the Philadelphia museum and in the broader sense of the institution of art and its constituents. But she is, crucially, not a creator of art or a producer of knowledge, but a mediator, and as such situated in a specific relation of time and space vis-à-vis the objects of art. She comes in *after* the moment of creation, the studio, presumably, and *after* the moment of engagement and indeed purchase between the artist and the curator (as a representative of the institution, again both concretely and generally), as well as after the period of installation, and thus presentation to the public. Time-wise, she comes in at the very moment of presentation and contemplation, at the moment of publication, one could say; that is, the very moment when the public becomes constituted as a *specific* public, namely viewers of art. In spatial terms, the placement of the docent is also quite specific, even peculiar: she is situated in front of the work, *in between* the work and the spectators, not only mediating, but as an intermediary. She provides entry into the work, and by extension, into the institution of art and art appreciation. And she is herself a representative of the

institution, re-presenting its discourse on art, its order of things, towards the public, at once dictating the right perspective *and* involving them in the knowledge of the museum.

Jane Castleton is, in a sense a pedagogical subject, her position is that of the pedagogue, and as such inscribed in special relations of knowledge and power within the museum, within certain politics (of representation). In turn, she also inscribes the visitors in this relation, albeit in a dual, and perhaps even contradictory manner. First of it all it is clear that she speaks to the audience, but unlike the critic, that other major figure of mediation, she does not speak on their behalf. As stated she speaks for the museum, for the institution. She *institutes* a *relation*, then, where the visitors are, in the first instance objects for her (or, more accurately, the museum's) discourse on art, and brings the visitors onto the same plane as the (art) objects, that is, as objects of knowledge in the museum. Even though the docent creates docile bodies, her specialty actually is twofold – obviously a purely passive body of visitors is neither adequate nor productive, rather, interaction and involvement are desired: The spectators must also be made to partake in the distribution of knowledge, to become subjects with a greater appreciation of art. In other words, to cease merely being objects in the museum, to becoming subjects. It is therefore that the docent, in contrast to the objects on display as well as the curators of them (in the main), are open to questions. She is there, on behalf of the museum, but for the public, offering, to use own Fraser's term, a *service*:

> Providing the services of a guide in the galleries and at the information desk, a volunteer docent is not just someone who gives tours for a

> small percentage of the museum's visitors; she is the Museum's representative. Unlike the members of the museum's non-professional maintenance, security, and gift shop staff that visitors come in contact with, the docent is a figure of identification for a primarily white, middle-class audience. And unlike the museum's professional staff, the docent is the representative of the museum's voluntary sector.[117]

Mediation is, then, a service to the public, part of what makes the museum a public place. Educating the audience, guiding the visitors, informing the guests, and so on, are public services alongside the access given to the museum's exhibition spaces and works on display. (Similarly, there are the non-public spaces of the museum, such as offices, workshops, storage spaces etc.). Indeed, the service consists of giving another access to the works than the one you would get by just being there, namely a linguistic introduction and initiation into the works and art appreciation, and, moreover, an initiation that is proper if not formal: it is always more than just looking, but looking justly, in the appropriate manner; getting it right, and not wrong. It implies that there is something that one cannot see without the introduction, that a certain knowledge – the right view, and even point of view – can be transmitted from the institution through the mediator onto the audience. Or, perhaps, I should simply say through *mediation*, through pedagogy in its many forms and mediums.

The museum mediates, and as such pedagogy, often personified in the docent, is not an additional function of the institution, but constitutive of the institution. It is how the institution institutes both its subjects and objects of knowledge. The museum, and by extension curatorial processes, inscribes both subjects and objects in specific

relations of power and knowledge, in a transfer of knowledge and direction of desires and agencies that are educational, entertaining, narrative and/or informative – traits that are as often complementary as they are conflicting.[118] Simply put, the museum and the practice of exhibition-making is always already a pedagogical endeavor, as Tony Bennett argued with his analysis of the museum as an exhibitionary complex. Taking his cue from Douglas Crimp's suggestion to read the museum as a disciplinary space in Foucaultian terms, Bennett saw the museum as a space for not only disciplining bodies, but also for enlightening minds. It is thus not a space of *discipline* and *punish*, but *discipline* and *pedagogy*, at once panopticon and panorama, surveillance and spectacle. It does not assess its power through coercion, but persuasion: "This was, in other words, a power which aimed at a rhetorical effect through its representation of otherness rather than at any disciplinary effects."[119]

In this way, *the right way*, as it were, of seeing was not to be enforced on the spectators, but was rather, through the exhibitionary complex, offered as narrative pleasure, giving the spectator access to the points of view of power – indeed empowering them by infusing them with knowledge, as well as situating them within a grand narrative of the Nation state and Western civilization. The discourse of the museum is thus one of *cultivation*, but also of one of a *corrective* vision, from the early academism in 17th century France, to today's multi-facetted and mediated art institutions with their confluence of spectacle and education, national history and multi-cultural internationalism.[120] The exhibitionary complex, and its myriads of disciplines and functions and curatorial techniques, is by definition pedagogic, and not just something belonging in the educational

department (of large scale public institutions). Indeed, the existence of educational departments can be seen as a later development, and specialization of the museum alongside the establishment of curatorial departments and public programming divisions. It attests to a corporatization in managerial, maybe even governmental, terms, and a partition of the sensible in aesthetic and philosophical terms. Perhaps this division of labor, and division time-wise between production and reception as mentioned in the role of the docent, separating curating from mediation, indicates that a pivotal connection has been severed? And perhaps the educational turn in contemporary curating is, then, rather, a *re*turn?

That is, how can the role of the educational departments in institutions be understood, if exhibition-making is in itself an educational enterprise? Is it a matter of educating on education, and what would could that possibly imply or even produce? Conversely, if the exhibition is indeed educative, what are its pedagogics, and are these transposed through the curatorial method and history, or merely implied in the contexts and thematics? In other words, are the narratives and spatializations of subjects, objects and their relations in curatorial techniques – what I have termed their *articulations* – also their pedagogics? Since such questions are not rhetorical, but immersed in praxis, they must also be attempted elaborated, answered and problematized. First, education on education may sound like moving onto a meta-level of pedagogy and curating, when, as indicated above, it is rather a matter of an addendum, the transformation of the idea of public service into corporate servicing. Which is not to say that education on education cannot be a speculative category, and certainly an artistic practice, as in the case of Andrea Fraser's shifting of the

docent function into an aesthetic object of desire, as well as in recent concepts of *paraeducation* and *participation*, by such artists as Sarah Pierce and Jorge Menna Barretta. By 'paraeducation' are implied the institutional and spatial support for self-organized reading and meeting groups, within the exhibition, but taking its departure in concerns and interests that may well lie outside of it. It can be set up according to a few and simple principles of engagement, and take its cue from the educational ideas of such writer-educators as Noam Chomsky, Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich. Groups are given access to the space for discussions without audience, they shall not act as representatives of certain fixed positions, and they shall be self-sustained, taking the form of reading groups, at least initially. The principle is thus one of self-education, or, if you will, self-instituting.[121] Working in Brazil, Jorge Menna Barretta's participatory projects also sees the exhibition space as a social space. One method is to set up a space for reflection within the exhibition that allows for a more informal mediation, a so-called 'Café Educativo'. It would be cafés (or a café) in the exhibition where the public could have a coffee, relax, but also have access to magazines, videos, computer and other 'mediational material' (both directly connected to the exhibition as well as unrelated). The interaction with this material, then, does not depend on any direct discourse by the mediators. The difference in this kind of café, and that is why it is called 'educativo', is that its attendants will have the training and ability to talk about art and the exhibition or other related cultural and contemporary issues. In other words, they would also be 'collaborators', and thus trained just like the others, and could engage in a conversation with the public in an informal way.

As Fraser's intervention also shows, educating the public on exhibitionary displays of knowledge and value is a means of control over the *language on art*, if not *the language of art*. Indeed, there may or may not be a difference, even dispute, between the language on art and the language, that is the rhetorics, articulations and pedagogics of the art works and artists themselves, whether or not represented in the specific gallery, the specific encounter. As Fraser mentions in her text on the performance, her language on language, her education on education, if you will, the docent is there to represent not only specific class interests, but also specific class aspirations: Jane Castleton is a volunteer, representing both museum (directly) *and* audience (indirectly) – the latter in the form of identification and aspiration, to know what she knows, which is, after all, to know what power knows, is desirable *and* attainable. As a docent she is an expert, but as a volunteer she is an amateur (in the positive sense of the word, meaning enthusiast), and thus much closer to the life-world and experiences of the audience than, say, the curator or the artist. She is thus representable, not only a representative, and anyone can become her, can occupy her subject position, and this why it is she, and not the curator, who does the guided tour of the exhibition or collection, whereas the curator would rather do tours for other professionals and indeed class positions, such as other curators and critics at a so-called professional preview, and for potential and active sponsors at the fundraiser. In both cases, however, it is a matter, poignantly, of speaking *over* the works, not besides them, indicating an ironic hierarchy of language, the institutional voice *above* the art works, the artists and their times and contexts: "The function of the warden-curator is to separate art from the rest of society," As Robert

Smithson once wrote on the overdetermination of the language on art in institutions.[122]

Smithson's comments was in fact directly aimed at curatorial language (in the shape of selection and display), initially delivered as his contribution *Documenta 5* in 1972, arguably the first one to highlight the figure of the curator, Harald Szeeman, which leads us to the second issue: *exhibition as education*, *curating as pedagogy*. If one accepts that the educational is part and parcel of exhibition-making's modes of address, that is, ways of placing subjects and objects in a situation, a narrative or even nation, then it can be said there are merely two sets of rhetoric's: those of mediation and those of curating. These two rhetoric's are separated only through institutional hierarchies and space-time divisions, but, crucially, not in functionality nor in ideology. These rhetorics, may or may not, as stated, overwrite the works and their contexts, as Smithson insists, and create differences between, and be in conflicts with, them. Seen from a contemporary perspective, the clearly anti-curatorial institutional critique of Smithson seems overly didactic and ideological (rightfully skeptical of museal power and curatorial authority, Smithson never questions the author-position of the artists, in the way that, for example, Fraser does), and other antimonies seem to appear, such as between the practice of mediation teams as separated from curatorial processes in most institutions, an unfortunate consequence of specialization and compartmentalization in current modes of governmentality. What should be, at least, parallel processes are too often contradictory and counter productive. Surely, then, the pedagogical turn is, at best, an attempt to reconnect these processes, to recover what has been lost, and, at its most ambitious, to redirect

these processes towards a new self-reflexivity and auto-critique, and anew towards possible publics, and how these are produced.

Because, there are other antagonisms than those that might exist between artist and curator, and between the intentions of curating and the practicalities of mediation, namely those between the exhibited works, specifically modern and contemporary art, and its both present and absent spectators. Pedagogics does not always achieve its goal, both within mediation and curating, and their confluence, since subjects are not always responsive nor responsible, not content with how they are implicated and represented. Indeed, they may even downright rebel in the encounter with the artwork and mediator, that is, with both presentation and representation, or negating mediation more indirectly by refusing to show up, and thus become, however nominally, 'the public'. To be addressed as a public requires only the slightest of participation, that one is present in the space and time of the event, and in this way, staying away, as it were, is an act of refusal, whether at the polls or in the museum. Hence the great preoccupation with numbers in modern democracy and its self-authorization and perceived legitimacy. And hence the many outreach programs that art institutions are obliged to implement due to political demands, mediating great art to social groups, who for one reason or the other do not already feel addressed by art, represented by the institution and its values, or, indeed even excluded by it (art and its institutions).

Whether or not such exclusions are active or passive, perceived or real, is hardly the issue at hand here, but only to say that pedagogics can, again, not be thought of as separate from artistic productions nor institutional policies in any productive way, but rather

as modes of address that produces its publics, its constituencies, for better or worse, ranging from so-called populism to so-called socially engaged art practices. In any case, the curatorial cannot be distinct from its mediation, and outreach programs can never truly reach out, never really be adequate in any sense of political subjectivity and agency without a (re)consideration of the whole praxis of exhibition-making and instituting itself, since an exhibition does not only present art works, but also represents social subjects: It places the spectators in a specific relation to works and narratives, and produces a public and thus a relation that is simultaneously social and aesthetical. If the exhibition indeed always has had a pedagogical role – although one often forgotten or overlooked – it is also a *historical* role. Something that must be historicized: the history of exhibitions is also the history of specific and shifting modes of pedagogy, shifting subject positions and productions of subjectivities.

Whereas exhibitions historically attempted to produce a (national) citizenry and, from the 19th century onwards, a specific bourgeois subject of reason, and thus had a strong disciplinary inclination, today the pedagogy of exhibition making must take the fragmentation of the public into account, that there is no unified public, but only a number of possible public formations that are sometimes aligned, but as often oppositional to each other and to the grand narratives of the state, of ideological state apparatuses such as the public museum, among others. The museum, and the exhibition, is likewise no longer the central and centralizing space for the articulation of national narratives, as it, arguably, was in the classical and early modern period, even when it attempts to act like a mass medium, as in the case of mega-museums and large scale exhibitions. Such

modifications and modulations need to be taken into consideration in contemporary projects and producing publics through exhibitions. Other narrations and modes of address, politically and socially, must be formulated if the intention truly is to reach other groups and produce other subjects, and not just tell the same old stories with new words. And only then and there can a discussion on the politics of pedagogy begin; whether there are disciplinary or emancipatory, progressive and regressive, and though which traits this can be traced and traded.

The alienation of misrepresentation is not only manifest through disinterestedness and (presumed) passivity towards art and its institutions, but also through disdain for contemporary art and its (presumed) constituency and values, through direct conflict and confrontation, from sneering to shouting matches. This is not only within the situation of mediation in the narrow sense, that is, the guided tour, but also through mass-media, and even mass movements, that have gained more and more political currency in the postmodern era. While there were also anti-modern art attitudes in historical modernism (roughly from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century), such attitudes are now part of party politics, mainly from the right end of the political spectrum. Contemporary art and its support structure is viewed as not only expensive, but also expendable – as questionable as public service. It is, it is argued, difficult to understand, fundamentally elitist and in opposition to the 'real' people and their 'real' values. And it is perceived as *anti-national*, and thus not a cause worthy of state funding, of national interests.

This is the attitude that modernist thinkers such as Adorno deemed 'philistine', recently revisited as a more 'positive' category, or certainly as art's inevitable 'other' or aporia, by Dave Beech and John

Roberts as 'the philistine controversy'.[123] Interestingly, they view philistinism as potential acts of resistance in what is basically a cultural class struggle, and as such attempts to rewrite the history of the high/low culture debate and divide, taking issue with what the term the Left's 'new aestheticism', meaning its continued belief in the maxims of high modernist art and its enlightening, if not downright emancipatory, politics of possibility. Instead, Beech and Roberts sees political agency and emancipation in the pleasures of mass- and 'low' culture, in what I propose to call *fan-ism*, i.e. strategies of (over)identification established through self-construction rather than through the disciplinary subject production of 'good taste' and established (modernist) culture. Rightfully critical of certain leftist cultural theory (perhaps even self-critical?), they nevertheless, like Robert Smithson, do not directly imply modernist *artistic* strategies in their critique, only aesthetic theory.

After all, is anti-modernism, or philistinism, if you will, always already a *reaction* only? Whether evaluated by theorists as backwards and/or resistant, it is viewed as a mode of *reception* rather than *production*, as being on the receiving end of a flawed communication. That is, *a failed pedagogy*, if you will, or, moreover, implying that certain subjects are beyond the reaches of enlightened knowledge, beyond the reach of pedagogy. But what if the philistine negation is actually encouraged by the mode of address, is actually the *required response*? What if, in other words, the artistic program is explicitly *anti*-pedagogical? And here I am not so much thinking of provocative, transgressive artistic practices, which, although that could never be openly admitted, have a very clear pedagogics of its own, albeit in the form of highly reductive dialectics. The provocateur is always out to

expose boundaries, to prove a point, even if that point is merely that everyone can be provoked when pushed hard enough. (Wow!).

Rather, I am thinking of the modernist tradition of elusiveness, non-linguistic approaches, both deconstructive and romanticists such as dada and expressionist abstractionism, respectively (to employ a bit of reductive dialectics of my own). With such approaches, and their contemporary permutations, there is never any explanation, never a discourse to be discussed, but rather either the circumventing of any stability of discourse and language, or the attempt to exist outside language, or at least linguistics (there are often the positing of an 'artistic' or 'painterly' language as the counter-point to 'linguistic' language). And it has allowed artists to disengage from the politics and ethics of the image by stating, that the work 'means whatever you want it to mean', that most lame of responses or, if you will, excuses in (post)modern art speak: readings of the work can never be controlled by the creator of it, but that cannot mean that the author has *no responsibility whatsoever*! The death of the artists does not automatically mean the birth of the viewer, who automatically gets tangled up in the game of meaning by receivership, and sometimes gets strangled in the strictures, too.

Refusal by the author, of meaning or of audience, *and* by the spectator of (modern) art *as art* (in a universal sense), or of grand narratives as adequate, inclusive representations and identities, are all *political* positions, and as such filled with conflicts and conflicting desires and (re)directions of desire; again, regressive and/or progressive, disciplinary and/or emancipatory, and so on. So, when taking about pedagogy, about pedagogical turns, one is talking about politics, not only of reading and representation, but also of circulation

and production. Indeed volumes could be written analyzing modern art history through art's relationship to the viewer and to pedagogy, along the lines of how Brian O'Doherty rewrote modern art history according to its usage of space in *Inside the White Cube*.[124] What were, for example, conceptual art if not a pedagogical turn, in the installation of art as well as in the philosophy of aesthetics?[125] At the same time, however, there is the anti-pedagogical impulse within the aesthetic theory that informs the practice. Here, I would like to briefly consider a trio of influential essays from the period: Umberto Eco's 'The Poetics of the Open Work', 1959, Susan Sontag's 'Against Interpretation', 1964, and Roland Barthes' 'The Death of the Author', 1967, that are all different ways of undoing the power of discourse, finding liberation in openness, silence, even death.[126] For Eco and Barthes the main focus is on the role of the reader, of course, although Eco at least finds specific art practices instructive and productive in securing the open. More puzzling is Sontag's effort, which actually concerns itself with the role of the critic, or what I named the other great figure of mediation: what Sontag tries to do is the logically impossible of removing the pedagogical from the function of the critic, which is not to say that it is entirely impossible, but that it creates a highly paradoxical figure; *the anti-pedagogical pedagogue*.[127]

This heroic figure can also be met in the philosophy of Jacques Rancière, nowadays so central to art discourse. The anti-pedagogical pedagogue is the topic of *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, the story of a Joseph Jacotot, the exiled French teacher, who in the early 19th century discovered that he could teach French to Dutch students without knowing a word of their language, and vice versa. Instead of a hierarchical distribution of knowledge, from the master to the inferior

students, the master offered his ignorance rather superiority, and thus emancipation rather than stultification. Rancière calls this universal teaching, that we are all equal, all capable in each our different ways: "Universal teaching is above all the universal verification of the similarity of what all the emancipated can do, all those who have decided to think of themselves as people just like everyone else".[128] It is therefore no real method of teaching, no pedagogy, no explicatory model, but a radical break with the distribution of knowledge and the circles of power and powerlessness. Rather, it is *artistic*, "Me Too, I'm a Painter!" he even exclaims, following Joseph Beuys, but making demands for artists, that one cannot help but wonder if some Rancière's recent supporters such as Thomas Hirschhorn and Liam Gillick would really follow, when he states that artists needs equality the way that pedagogues need inequality, and that true emancipation will annihilate any difference between artists and non-artists, indeed any idea of expertise? This is only the most radical version of the anti-pedagogical impulse, but also a much more forceful insistence on equality as foundational than is readily apparent from a quick reading of his later *Politics of Aesthetics*. Still, even pedagogy if pedagogy is artistic in Ranciere, it is nonetheless never visual, but always linguistic (as is, perhaps, his notion of politics?):

> Understanding is never more than translating, that is, giving the equivalent of a text, but in no way its reason. There is nothing behind the written page, no false bottom that necessitates the work of an other intelligence, that of the explicator; no language of the master, no language of the language whose words and sentences are able to speak the reason of the words and the sentences of a text.[129]

In the *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* Rancière furthermore mentions how Jacotot achieved his goal the reading of a novel, that is through an artistic expression, but also indicates that it could have been any other book, that this particular novel is of no significance. But is this really so? Would French have been learned from a book that did not have a clear narrative such as the classic novel *Télémaque* that Jacotot used? What would happen if the *Télémaque* was exchanged for a quintessential modernist work instead, say James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*? Could French be learned from that work, or would it, rather, lead to wholly other notions of language? That is, the book, any book, surely articulates, it surely situates its reader in a relation that is pedagogical as well as narrative, literary, aesthetic and so on. Which is not to say that it needs explanation and exploration on top of it, not to say that it transmits successfully or unsuccessfully, not to say whether it is instructive or deconstructive, but rather that it is always fully immersed in such impurities. And that it cannot be disentangled, but must rather be constantly formulated and reformulated towards specific politics of pedagogy. It is thus pertinent to ask how the pedagogical can be turned by the aesthetic, and vice versa, and therefore try to engage educators in questions of aesthetics and production, and curators in questions of mediation and educational models as modes of address on par with exhibition- making. In turn, we must develop some new models of our own, that is, *instituent* practice rather than merely institutional: models for emancipatory rather than disciplinary pedagogies, for another production of the social, that can include people's experiences with art as well as outside of it in the very encounter with art and its exhibitions, the interlocutor, the situation

and the other participants. This will be, then, a series of dialogues and discussions without an end or resolution, but rather an expansion of the questions posed rather than a simplification or even foreclosure. What is needed, in my mind, is not only *an educational turn*, but rather *a turn in pedagogigs*.

4.1. HORIZONALITY

It would seem self-evident to say that art is connected to the symbolic and the imaginary. But what does it mean to say that art imagines or is imaginative? Does artistic imagination have anything to do with *political* imaginaries—that is, ideas of the world and society, its past and present, but also its possible futures? Are there specific—immanent—features that create this connection, or rather do certain points of connection exist in terms of figures (understood as figures of speech as well as figuration within image production) and institutions (as speech acts as well as spatial formations in a given society)? Is the figure of the horizon precisely such a connection? Could the horizon, in this sense, be common to political imaginaries: from Lenin's pointing to the horizon to Kennedy's metaphor of a new frontier; as well as artistic imagination: from classical landscape painting to postmodern installations and *Gesamtkuntswerke*? In order to untangle these questions, we need to turn once more to notion of the imaginary in Castoriadis, and the web of meanings he calls social imaginary significations:

> I call these significations imaginary because they do not correspond to, or are exhausted by, references to 'rational' or 'real' elements and because it is through a creation that they are posited. And I call them social because they are and they exist only if they are instituted and shared by an impersonal, anonymous collective.[130]

In this sense, we can see both aesthetic and political images as imaginary significations, as creation, but also as inherently social and shared. Although Castoriadis's conception of the imaginary society has ontological claims, in the sense that there can be no society that does not imagine itself, that is not instituted, this is by no means a tautological or a-historical proposition: there is always *this* imaginary order and not *that* one, always *this* society, and not *that* one. At the same time any order can – through imagination and thus institution –be supplanted by another. Hence his focus on the idea of an autonomous society, brought forward through radical imagination, the possibility for societies to explicitly *self-institute.* And hence its opposition to heteronymous societies, and their attributing their imaginary order to an extra-social authority, such as God, tradition, progress, historical necessity, and so on. Thus couldn't one argue that in today's world, the marriage of liberal democracy and free market capitalism is instituted as a fundamental and historically inevitable category? Does it not function as precisely this kind of society-defining authority, as we are constantly assured of the almost god-like immanence of market and its 'natural laws', despite liberalism's claim for rationality? There is, then, both a curious contradiction and double-bind to found in this world-view. On the one hand, there is the rationality and pragmatism of liberal democracy as the best possible and most just system, while on the other, the market, despite its clear institutional sitings, is abstracted, and apparently as irrational as inevitable. Additionally, this mixture of realism and magic that has produced the Western totality, has proved itself to be in a hierarchical relation as well, as evidenced by the political response to the economic crisis of 2008. Today, political realism and rationality seems to be to accept the supremacy of the

market, to accept its apparent illogic logic, to accept the market as inevitable, even unsurpassable, but only regulative.

Two other questions emerge from this predicament, that both have to do with the historical, or temporal, namely, how did this endgame become our horizon? And, moreover, when did this narrative of inevitability become the dominant one? If it is the dominant one, particularly within parliamentary politics, economics and mainstream media, it is hardly the only narrative. However fully integrated and wholly implemented as it seems in the political and bureaucratic structures of our everyday lives – our spaces of experience – this horizon is also heavily contested, indeed detested, even if it is so from 'marginal' points of view. As disparate as movements such as the anti-globalization movement or fundamentalist Islam are, they nonetheless each attest to the possibility to think outside of the frame of the current neo-liberal hegemony, and imagines *another* world. That is, another set of social and political relations that do not merely attempt to criticize or modify the dominant discourse, but rather imagines and desires them radically transformed, and ordered around another set of co-ordinates: another horizon. These are questions that have to do with the imagination of possible futures. But the current hegemony, and its discontents, stem from a specific historical nodal point and its narratives, the symbolic year of 1989. The events of that year, with the apparent end of real existing communism, have often been articulated as a triumph of the democratic West, which has led to the effective institution of an endless equilibrium of liberal democracy and global capital growth. Indeed, this claim was even formulated by Francis Fukuyama and others as the 'end of history', which also implies the impossibility of developing any new, or alternative, horizon.[131] And

yet history did not end—by contrast new conflicts and antagonisms arose immediately after 1989, both identitarian and economic. But rather than looking at a chain of events as empirical data to dispute the end of history claim, I should like to examine it as the curious ontological proposition it is, namely that our horizon, understood as our surroundings and sense of direction, is, actually, *horizonless*.

In this sense, the object that is the horizon is only present through its absence, its disappearance. It would seem to only exist in its negative form, despite claims for this situation's positive contents as a liberal-democratic endgame. In order to understand this object that is not one it is necessary, however, to leave the aesthetic and political usages of the figure aside for a moment, and look at the notion of the horizon within the philosophy of phenomenology. Philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty writes about what he calls the *object-horizon*, that which guarantees the identity of objects throughout exploration, and which places the gaze in relation to things in space. And to the spatial dimension, he crucially adds the temporal:

> Each moment of time calls all the others to witness; it shows by its advent 'how things were meant to turn out' and 'how it will all finish'; each present permanently underpins a point of time which calls for recognition from all the others, so that the object is seen at all times as it is seen from all directions and by the same means, namely the structure imposed by a horizon.[132]

We can say that without this double horizon of retention and protention we are not able to see, to project, or to imagine. The idea

of an end of history, then, can no longer be viewed as simply a naïve, over-optimistic representation by the right, but something much more sinister, a falsification of our view of the world. It is a deliberate act of *depresentation*, the rhetorical removing of certain ideas from the spectrum of not only the representable, but also the thinkable and unthinkable, once and for all exorcising the specter that is communism from the world, and with it all attempts at equality. And this is where neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism converge, in a new, active understanding of conservatism not as the slowing down of inevitable progress, but rather turning back, peeling back the rights and benefits won by left social movements and political organizations throughout the twentieth century. The end of history doctrine performs its acts of depresentation through political rhetoric and articulation. There is a line of not only ideology, but also strategy, from former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's infamous remark that there is no such thing as society (but only individuals and families), to former Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen's speech declaring that the end of the twentieth century had brought with it the end of a number of struggles or wars, such as the Cold War, the class war, and the war between the sexes.

Not unlike Fukuyama, the politicians are talking about a specific moment in history that consequentially limits the imaginaries of this situation, and limits the horizon of possibilities. Indeed, as it has been argued by political theorist Nancy Fraser, among others, what can be termed the post-socialist condition is characterized by the lack of any overarching project of social justice and redistribution: in other words, the lack of any discernable horizon.4 But if the horizon, as I shall look into shortly, can be said to always stand in relation to the concept of

experience, this lack would then also mean the canceling out of certain experiences, a depresentation of possible pasts as futures, which was exactly what was attempted: the so-called post-communist, or, in as it is known some quarters, post-political, must be viewed as *post-horizonal*, and therefore as a logical impossibility, even falsification of reality.

Additionally, the horizon is not only spatial, as we saw, but also temporal, and as such not only connects to possible future scenarios and ways of living and thinking, but also to real and imagined pasts in the form of residues and traditions, as well as possibilities lost and found. The horizon functions as a vector for probability, prognosis, and expectations. Writing at the same time as Fukuyama, in a book tellingly entitled *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, philosopher and theorist Ernesto Laclau described the horizon as a societal self-image that unifies experience, and as such a definition that disputes the ontological proposition of an end of history. But here the horizon is also a floating signifier, with different unifying images being produced in different historical periods, and, I suppose, geographical locations, in order to hold them together and give them direction: natural order for the renaissance, reason for the enlightenment, science of positivism, and, we could add, progress for modernity. However, the postmodern condition has placed such categories under critical scrutiny, even deconstruction, and all such images are seen as limited rather than limitless.We thus arrive at the horizon as a limit concept, and this is to be understood in two ways. First, the very idea of a limitless horizon of progress, growth, and so on has been deeply questioned, or, as Laclau writes: “After decades, even centuries, of announcing the arrival of ‘the new’, it is as if we have reached a point of exhaustion, and

mistrust the outcome of all experimentation."[134] The new is in this way a receding horizon, and the future no longer an infinite number of limitless advancements. Secondly, the very image of the horizon as a line necessarily presupposes a limit, something that quite literally can never be reached—as we move closer to the horizon, it also shifts, and moves correspondingly further away. So as an image, a unifying signifier, the horizon has impossibility as well as possibility built into it. It is something that we can decide to move towards, and that can thus give us direction, but which can never be surpassed: it is always out there. It may occur blurry at times, and our view can be blocked, but the horizon remains as that which rounds and grounds experience. There cannot be a society, an organization of the social and political, without the positing of a horizon. This is what we can call *the general condition of horizonality*. The term "horizonal" is to be understood here in the philosophical sense deriving from phenomenology, as opposed to the everyday usage of the adjective "horizontal." The horizontal is, strictly speaking, a geometric term, and we therefore tend to associate horizontality as something opposite from the horizon and the horizonal, namely with a lack of overview, of being on a singular plane. Perhaps this is indeed the situation we find ourselves in today—that we are horizontally situated, and cannot see the horizon?

Simultaneously, horizontality rather than the horizon has long been one of the prime metaphors, if not imaginaries, of postmodern, contemporary art, both as a way of describing its basic features, as well as its politico-aesthetical aspirations. I think this is at play in the numerous quotations of Deleuzian theory in art criticism and curating, such as the image of the rhizome, or the myriad discussions on relationality, as well as the ideas of art producing equal communities,

where there are no claims for hierarchy, verticality, or transcendence, but plenty for presence, being, and openness—all of which are mainly horizontal metaphors. However, if the horizon is to be understood as a floating signifier that unifies experience, that creates a worldview, we can see how its placement is central to both art and politics, as an image of possible futures, goals and aims. Positing the horizon as an image, not just a metaphor, implies aesthetics—not only the aesthetics of politics and political movements, but also the politics of aesthetics. Perhaps we can even argue for the figure of the horizon is the way in which art and politics could be connected? An exhibition of art always sets up a horizon, a proposal of what can be imagined, and what cannot, and art therefore not only partakes in certain imaginaries, but it is also the producer of such imaginaries, and therefore potentially of other ways of imagining and imaging the world, as well as other possible worlds. Art has the capacity to thematicize the very situating of the horizon, with its contingencies, histories, institutions, and struggles, as well as limits. Imaginaries can become visible precisely through how the horizon is staged—positioned, blurred, circumvented, and (re)constructed within artistic practices and, especially, current ways of exhibition-making.

I am focusing on the idea of exhibition-making rather than singular works for a particular reason, since exhibitions are always an assemblage of objects and positions, placed in a spatial and discursive relation to each other and its spectators, providing a horizontal line, if you will, that makes viewing possible and actual, as well as delimiting it, conditioning it. As with the object-horizon, this staging is not only spatial, but also temporal: in terms of the time it takes to move through and exhibition, to see the various works (whether time-based

or not); and more generally in terms of the free time available to the spectator and so on; as well as in terms of art-historical time, as each exhibition is placed on a timeline of other exhibitions, both in the given site and beyond it. Finally, the relation between horizontality and space/time divisions or continuums can be found in the imaging of art itself, whereas there in the classical age of art, always was a continuum of time and space within horizontality, nearness and distance indicating a movement in time, such as in landscape painting, modernist painting condensed time and fused it with space (in each their ways, this is a prominent theme of Cubism and Futurism, for example). Contemporary art has to some extent re-introduced time, not just in time-based works like video, but also through the spatialization of the subject that is installation practices, though with discontinuity rather than continuity. Seen in this light, the installation is not only an experiment in horizontality, but perhaps also a vehicle for horizonality, and the exhibition may function as a model for a future society.

In more ideological terms, we can say that where the horizon was posited as an image of the future, even a brighter future, in the Enlightenment and within the many guises of the modernist project. The horizon, and its placement, was connected to an idea of movement and progress, both key terms within modernist political thought *and* artistic practice. However, in the postmodern and post-communist, if you will, present day, the horizon is mostly perceived as a limit – that which cannot be surpassed, that which cannot yet be experienced, but only imagined. In both aesthetics and politics, then, it has been a matter of what horizon could be imagined as well as the ways in which to institute it: how far, how soon, through which route does one enter the future, if not the present? Politics and aesthetics

can be said to share this concern, how a horizon must be placed in order to be effectual – as nearby or faraway, unattainable, and so on. This all presupposes that the horizon is an absolute limit that cannot be surpassed, as such understood as an image in phenomenology translated into political practice, which is not historically true: political projects always project, naturally, but they also institute; that is they not only imagine how things could be, but also transform these imaginaries into actual social relations through institutions. As we know from endless historical events it is perfectly possible for a political project to reach, if not its conclusion, then some form of ending, closure, finishing. Otherwise we could not talk about any post-communist or post-political condition, regardless of how debatable such terms might be. In any case empires always end, and political movements dissolve as much when their goals are reached, and not only, if ever, when they are suppressed or defeated. What then is the relation between expectation and experience within the regime of horizontality?

Writing specifically in relation to historical time, conceptual historian Reinhart Koselleck has employed the terms "space of experience" and "horizon of expectation." As formal and meta-historical categories, they stand in an inverse relationship to each other. What one expects, both personally and politically, has to do with what one has experienced, and experience is always conditioned by what one expected. These are not mirror images, however, since the one can never be fully deduced from the other. The experience of an event, for example, be it a political event or a visit to an exhibition, is likely into change over time, while the event itself remains the same,

and, conversely, with different experiences expectations and prognoses over the future are like to change:

> Past and future never coincide, or just as little as expectation in its entirety can be deduced from experience. Experience once made is as complete as its occasions are past; that which is to be done in the future, which is anticipated in terms of an expectation, is scattered among an infinity of temporal extensions.[135]

This has ramifications for our understanding of the horizon as a limit, both aesthetically and politically, and in their intersection. The horizon is an absolute limit, since what is on the other side cannot be experienced presently, only hypothetically and in the future, when it is no longer a horizon, but a history. The horizon is, in this view, not just that which cannot be overcome or surpassed, but also something that shifts in relation to experience. That has bearing on its position within both political imagining and artistic imagination: if a specific horizon of expectation, that is a society to come, is posited by a political project, it has to be related to the concrete, located space of experience and must be perceived as visible, not just in terms of vicinity, but in terms of imagination. It must suggest that that other world is possible from this real world. Similarly with the proposition made by an exhibition, a certain claim for art and society and their interrelation must have meaning within experience, even when positing something as phantasmagoric.

At the same time, should a certain horizon be surpassed in terms of history, such as the so-called end of history, this will inevitably

create a new space of experience. Indeed, this can be said to be one of the problems of historical communism, as for every utopian fulfillment: once the horizon has been reached, political goals achieved, such as emancipation, equality, etc., what will be the horizon of the new space of experience? In other words, what will be the horizon on the other side of this horizon? For the field of cultural production, and more narrowly the practice that is exhibition-making, this has several consequences. First of all, that we acknowledge an exhibition, however speculative, as not only positing a horizon, but always doing so in relation to a space of experience, both past and present. So, the space of experience is not only the exhibition itself and the concrete institution, but also past experiences with exhibitions in this space as well as in others, and, in addition, experiences with other institutional spaces that are not those of an art institution, and finally experiences outside of this context altogether. Perhaps it is the lack of such considerations that provides some of the difficulties many of us have with exhibitions being political, not just about the political? Not to get caught up in a simplifying argument of institutional critique, but it goes without saying that a single exhibition or artistic gesture cannot easily or instantly undo institutions' ways of instituting subjectivity, without simultaneously transforming the institution itself.

But can aesthetic experience, like political events, create a rupture? Can it not only posit or represent a certain horizontal line, but also cross this line in some way? Can an exhibition be a passage to a new space of experience, where a new horizon becomes visible? Here we must return to the idea mentioned at the outset, that of *radical imagination*, which is where art has a crucial role to play in providing vectors of the possible, posing questions of possibility and vicinity, as

well as making invisible limits visible within the ontology of the horizon. Art works and exhibitions can suggest and assess how a horizon must be placed in relation to both experience and expectation in order to be effectual: how far and how close. And like a political project, an aesthetic project can be a kind of praxis, and can go beyond an assessment of this world and how we must critique it, but also in fact posit other worlds as possible. As we know, in the current economy of experience, art is expected to deliver the unexpected, but as Castoriadis suggested, change does *not* occur through expectation and prognosis, but only in unforeseeable breaks with the present order. In other words, exhibitions must attempt to set up horizons, and not only in relation to existing horizons of the possible and impossible. Unlike political projects, artistic production does not necessarily follow a logic of cause and effect, of grounding the social, but rather one of speculation, interjecting a crucial conceptual *if*: "If I do this, then what," as artist Lee Lozano wrote in one of her notebooks. As mentioned above, this suggests that the exhibition is (can be) a sort of mock-up of the possible for a society, not just something modeling itself on a the (im)possibility of present society. (In our case, the totalizing regime of creative destruction known s neo-liberalism).

A recent exhibition project in Brazil, curated by a group of young artists, bore the title *In the Shadow of the Future*, indicating that the future, as projected, casts shadows over our present. This is particularly pertinent in Brazil, a country that boasts a huge population under twenty-five and sees itself as a future global player. In the context of the project, the artist/curators asked what being the objects of projection and future hopes could mean, and placed this in relation to history, specifically to the history of art in Brazil. In this way

they pointed to the fact that while artists of the modern period attempted to create a matrix for art and modernization in their works, there is no comparable artistic movement produced by artists today, only individual gestures undertaken mostly for career advancement.

Does this rather defeatist position indicate a lack of imagination, even among those artists that literally embody the future? If this is so, we must turn the question upon ourselves, especially those of us from the West, who attempt to be critical of the project of the West and critical of the projection of the West as our *past-as-future*, to invoke Walter Benjamin's famous concept. Benjamin, a thinker who only partially wrote about horizons, wrote the following lines in his *Arcades Project*: "The present, however, already stands to the recent past as the awakening stands to the dream. [...] Every epoch, in fact, not only dreams the one to follow but, in this dreaming, precipitates its awakening."[136] Now, Benjamin's perhaps most sympathetic contemporary reader, Susan Buck-Morss, has expanded on this notion in her seminal book on the two modernities and the post-communist condition after 1989, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*, where she wrote, in what could be our response to the young Brazilians today: "Benjamin wrote, 'We must wake up from the world of our parents.'" But what can be demanded of a new generation, if its parents never dream at all?[137]

4.2. VECTORING OF POSSIBILTY

Dreamworld *and* catastrophe. These are the two terms conjured by Susan Burck-Morss in the title of her book, as a metaphor for the projectionist relationship between the East and West during the Cold War. And this pair has a double meaning, partly as how the capitalist West and the Communist East officially viewed each other in the bi-polar world, with each bloc understanding itself as the fulfillment (however gradual) of dreams, and the other as utterly catastrophic and dystopian, and, as Buck-Morss explains, it relates to the gap in each society between aspirations and realities, particularly in the case of modernism, or capitalism and Communism as two variants of modernism, and thus each other's mirror image. The book has a long afterword, though, that describes, through personal lived experience, what happened when the mirror was broken, after the end(s) of Communism in 1989-91. Whereas Buck-Morss and the Moscow colleagues with whom she had previously dialogued, and been agreeing with regarding the version of a double modernity, there was now a shift, in the East, after the fall of the wall: "Rather than stressing what was common to the methods and substance of our critiques of modern power, they seemed compelled to emphasize the differences,"[138] and, moreover, "the commonality of that project seemed to depend on the very divide that it sought to transcend."[139] In other words, it could be said that it was the emergence of one world rather than a divided world that produced radical difference, and a (new) politics of identity, something which has, precisely, been paramount to exhibition-making in the subsequent period. As I mentioned in the first chapter, the notion of a regional show became one of the dominant modes of

address in the late 1990s, particularly with exhibitions of art from the former East, as it quickly became known.[140]

If Buck-Morss and her interlocutors could use the visual culture of modernism as the basis of their analysis, could we look at the many regional shows about the post-Communist countries – from *After the Wall* at Moderna Museet in Stockholm in 1999 to *Ostalgia* at the New Museum in New York in 2011 – as the basis for a similar post-modern analysis of difference? In other words, can the East-West divide be seen in exhibitions *after* the demise of the divided world-system, and what cultural logic would that attest to? Why the need for differentiation after the end of dialectics, and the establishment of a global art world and art market? Surely one of the reasons must be found in the last entity, the art market, as a sector within "the financialization of the globe, or globalization", to use Spivak's apt phrase.[141] Difference is a method of economic-cultural integration, and the continued success of the regional exhibition as a form, bears witness to the logic of late capitalism, as is also present in the, perhaps brutally honest, but also slightly cynical (in the modern sense), remark by Boris Groys about his insistence, or 'invention', of post-Communism as a term, as a way of having something to sell, both symbolically and actually: "...you have to show very clearly what is the difference of your product, and what is the other and why you are the other. Because if you are not other, you are not interesting."[142] Groys' post-communism is, in this sense, a recapturing of the lost second world, the former East, as distinguished from the first and third worlds, even as they are undergoing various structural changes, not in any equalizing move, but, rather, in an uneven geographical development, with different implementations of the discourse that is neo-liberalism,

and the interconnectedness that is global financialization. However, this perceivable and projectable 'otherness' has to be placed within a circuit of recognizability, whether it is art or theory, or some other possible commodity. If we look at contemporary exhibitions, biennales in particular, it seems to me, moreover, that the subaltern (still) cannot speak, but is, rather, *spoken* through exhitibion-making. The subaltern can, then, be curated, and the remark from Groys should thus not only be discussed in its embrace of the commoditization of knowledge production, but also in its apparently strategic invocation of 'the other,' but as self-designation rather than any *accounting* for the self (as interpellated by discourse).[143]

Previously, I mentioned the different takes on the *Capital (It Fails Us Now)* exhibition in geopolitical terms, both in regards to conception and reception, as it took place in the different cities and contexts of the former West and East. While it would be false to see *Capital (It Fails Us Now)* as an expression of 'selling' the first or the second world, neither in Oslo nor in Tallinn, since it was, in effect, not two different representations of identity, it nonetheless inevitable addressed the possible new difference between the former East and former West, after the demise of the great divide. One of the major discussions we had in the workshop that was meant to produce the exhibition, was exactly about this difference, where the participants from Estonia did not see East and West as two different spaces, necessarily, but rather as two different temporal contexts. Although they did not subscribe to the idea of a catch-up modernism in the former Communist countries, they did describe their actuality as an early stage of capitalism, and thus had, if nothing else, the faint hope that the 'wild east' would not develop into a US American model of capitalist democracy, but rather a

Scandinavian one. However, it remains contestable if this historical time of the former East is lagging or advancing in regards to the West, if not the massive deregulation, privatization and nationalist sentiment is actually the future of Europe as such, meaning that the post-Communist condition, if we can speak of one, is all pervasive, and it is the West catching up, not the East. In my itinerary, as a curator and political subject, I thus now view *Capital (It Fails Us Now)* as not only being chronologically halfway between *Models of Resistance* and the work on horizons that was *Vectors of the Possible*, but also in terms of its conception, whereas the *Models of Resistance* exhibition worked, however tentatively, on articulating a position between criticality and edification, *Capital (It Fails Us Now)* positioned itself as pure critical attitude, while *Vectors of the Possible* tried to transform critique into a discussion of political, ontological possibility in the form of the horizon, and art's capacity for positing and suspending it.

It is such histories and problematics that I think that the long-term research and exhibition project called *Former West* tries disentangle, although there is no consensus in the research group in this regard.[144] *Former West* has to with the writing of the history of the present, albeit a long present that goes back 20 years, and tries to think about the immediate (but not foreseeable) future, and doing so on a certain axis, namely the proposition of something like a former West itself. Obviously, the term is a provocation, deliberately trying to unsettle the tiresome debates about a former East (after 1989), and instead ask what it would mean to think of a former West, and what the demise of the Communist bloc in Europe meant for the culture, politics and art production of the West? Similarly, the supposed end of the East-West divide has also lead to the disentanglement of all other

conflicts from that axis. Now, this has also lead to other conflicts along the North-South divide (and whether the free world vs. communism narrative has been supplanted by the so-called clash of civilization is a matter of some, let's say, debate). The project attempts to encircle and address such debates from the point of view of artistic production; and artistic production and its institutional inscriptions as sites of struggle, even if they are constantly attempted made tools of a purely consensual nature, and thus the masking of conflict by state and market powers.

In my participation in *Former West* as an advisor and researcher, and I have mainly done research into the role of exhibition-making in the cultural-political landscape of the era, proposing, positing, a relationship between exhibition-making and what can be termed political imaginaries (in the Castoriadisian sense). By arguing for an understanding of exhibitions as political imaginaries in the ways in which they present a world-view, and thus dealing with articulation and horizonality, the latter of which was the topic of the *2nd Former West Congress* that I co-organized with Maria Hlalvajova in Istanbul and the exhibition *Vectors of the Possible*, at BAK in Utrecht, both in the fall of 2010, and the book entitled *On Horizons*, issued in the spring of the following year.[145] Across the formats, or three conditioning modes of address that is book, conference, and exhibition, the aim was to introduce and discuss the notion of the horizon into the discourse of art and critique, and to see it as the connection between aesthetics and politics (as discussed in the previous section). If every age is indeed rounded by a specific horizon – a particular view of the world – how does this horizon become visible, as well as contestable? The horizon is not only reflected in terms of the image, of visualization, but

also in terms of vicinity and velocity: are we close by or a long ways away? Is it receding or emerging? And is it approaching fast or coming at us like a slow train? The first part of this investigation was in the assemblage of a number of artworks, five pre-existing ones, reframed and reinstalled, and three newly commissioned, in the form of a research exhibition under the title *Vectors of the Possible*.[146] The works in this exhibition all established certain horizons—proposals of what can be imagined and what cannot, and could in this sense be be seen as *vectors*, reckoning possibility and impossibility in (un)equal measures, always detecting and indicating ways of seeing, and thus of being, in the world, in *this* world. The works could be described as performing *ground research* into the notion of horizontality, but in terms of image production and conceptualization. *Vectors of the Possible* was thus an attempt at positing what can be termed *the ontology of the horizon* – of its placement and function within political imaginaries.

As a so-called research exhibition, *Vectors of the Possible*, did not represent this notion in stylistic terms, such modeling itself on the laboratory, archive or library, nor in a privileging of ephemera, source materials, works in progress, sketches and so on, but in terms of its articulation of the theme, in the ways the works themselves were presenting artistic research into the visualization and positioning of something like a horizon. The frame of the horizon was thus a prism through which to see the works, to interpret them, to illuminate them, rather than having them illustrate the theme. Research was invoked in a form of enactment, of actualization in spatial terms. The exhibition took place in quite different exhibition rooms, with a large white cube on the ground floor, and the 2nd floor divided into three spaces with

each their installation, and with a converted office space on the 3rd floor housing one installation, and finally one work was discretely inserted on the staircase between the floors. There was a conscious effort of differentiation at play, with the ground floor containing four works in a sort of choreography of the open space, and with the smaller spaces having the character of a study room, which, in the case of Elske Rosenfeld's and Ultra-red's rooms was only heightened by the inclusion of various materials presenting in a more archival approach. In total contrast, the four works on the ground floor were all installed in a gallery-like setting, together almost creating a horizontal line weaving through the space. On the curve end wall, which immediately visible when entering the space, was thus placed a large billboard with the members of the group Freee holding up a large banner (and thus obscuring them) with the text "protest drives history" in a barren landscape without perspective (actually a huge quarry). If there is anything that acts as a horizon phenomenologically in this image, it is the horizontally placed banner, it is text statement about history (and what drives it) that is the horizon, thus marrying the phenomenological with the political understandings of this term. Thus is what is meant with the assertion that art has the capacity to visualize the horizon, and/or any lack here of.

Protest Drives History work did not stand alone or uncommented, but was contextualized by the other works, as well as by the exhibition title, in turn also conditioning the reading of them. Right alongside it, for example, were Matthew Buckingham's timeline and photograph of Mt. Rushmore, predicting its future disintegration: With its disappearance, the paradox of Rushmore's meaning as a declared "shrine to democracy" intensifies: it is carved on land stolen

from the Native American Sioux tribe and made by an artist who was an active member of the Ku Klux Klan. The work attempts to imagine what the mountain will look like in the future, as its power to represent fades alongside the histories it tries to suppress. In addition, the last two works in this particular mock-up were Hito Steyerl's short video documenting the so-called Universal Embassy in Brussels, and a slide installation (continued on the next floor to create continuity and narrate the show) of Sharon Hayes' solo re-enactments of historical protest in contemporary urban situations, all of which is exactly about the work of as a vector of the possible, continued upstairs with the newly commissioned works on the political history of the House / Ballroom scene of New York (Ultra-red), the never actualized, post-Communist constitution of East Germany (Rosenfeld) and the struggles against the erection of a gigantic Gazprom tower in St. Petersburg (chto delat?). What was at stake were what imagination of future and past can be proposed, or, in Walter Benjamin's terms, *past-as-future*: How a work of art produces other imaginaries of the world and its institutions, rather than merely reiterating already existing ones, even in so-called critical terms (or, what can be termed affirmative critique). The task is not just to accept the limited horizon of the current political imaginaries, or to be placed within it, however oppositional, but how to thematicize the general condition of horizonality.

In terms of an itinerary, I already mentioned this exhibition as an outcome of the work on capital critique, but it also sprang from a reading of a dialogue between Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Zizek from 2000.[147] In their book, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*, Butler, Laclau, and Zizek attempted a discussion of a leftist political project, of what's left of the left in the period of so-

called ‘post-politics’. Here the notion of a horizon plays a crucial role as the empty signifier that unites political struggles and gives them direction, although there are great differences as to how and where this horizon is to be situated. Notoriously, Zizek accuses his interlocutors of being well and squarely placed within the dominant imagination of liberal capitalist democracy, and asks that if there is no horizon but only an endgame of liberal democracy and the aesthetics of administration rather than politics, how can there be any politics at all? Instead Zizek makes a claim about imagination: only by imagining a horizon as far away can one advance in giant steps. The closer we are to the horizon, or rather, the more limited it is, the less space we have for movement and thus for social change and, yes, progress (as defined by our very (political) imagination). Rather than accepting the horizon of post-politics and the aesthetics of administration, we must posit *another* world – socially, sexually, economically, politically, as the imaginary institution of a society to be, the community to come.

Moreover, the idea behind the whole horizon discussion, in the three forms it took, was we to contribute to an aesthetical-political project that replaces the notion of a ground with that of a horizon. And, more specifically, we proposed a horizon of becoming former, as in former west. The 2nd Former West Congress thus revolved around the theoretical notion of the horizon, and the understanding of it in the linkage between contemporary art and political imaginaries. As a contested term, the horizon was understood here to suggest not only political aims or utopias, but also the very framing of any aesthetic and political project. Since the 1989 (default) victory of capitalist democracy over the only functioning competing ideological system (communism), the world has been faced with the loss of an

overarching project of progress and left bereft of what could be termed a horizon of opposition to the dominant marriage of free market capitalism and liberal democracy. Having inherited this endgame of capitalist democracy, we felt it an urgent task to attempt to go beyond resignation or empty critique and to insist that it is still possible to imagine another world. The congress was divided into three days, with each its particular topic: 1) *Positing the horizon in art, philosophy and politics*; 2) *Horizontality enacted – spaces, places and sites*; and, 3) *Reclaiming a horizon – art as political imagination*.[148]

Before turning to some of the contributions, the location of Istanbul must be noted, since the relationship between Turkey and the so-called West is particularly complex, not only due to how modernization in Turkey has always equaled Westernization, but also in the current on/off negotiations between Turkey and the EU concerning membership. And even though, most of the local audience, which constituted about half of the audience, presumably did not share any of the official policies of Turkey, their critical attitudes also has to do with these histories and contingencies. In any case, and this a general critique of this type of conference, there was somewhat a feeling of an international theory caravan passing through town, which may or may not have any urgency in relation to what people are discussing and thinking about in a given community of artists and intellectuals. What was noticeable, was that none of the questions from the floor during the whole three days was asked by anyone from Istanbul, but only from those who had traveled for attending the event, and thus, presumably, with some interest and stake in the conversation. The topic, and its take on art and politics was also a highly abstract one, and for the most unfamiliar – as I mentioned we wanted to introduce

the term, to propose as a way of thinking this relation. We had therefore initially planned to publish the book *On Horizons* before the congress, creating a link between the two events, with contributions from both artists in the exhibition (Sharon Hayes, Ultra-red, Hito Steyerl) and some of the theorists talking at the conference (Ernesto Laclau, Peter Osborne). Regrettably for the event, this turned out to be impossible for logistic reasons, but the book now stands as a reflection of both events, as an entity of its own, since it does not document either (fully), but allows for a condensation of the debate, an introduction to the proposed terminology, and, hopefully, as the indication of further research and revision.

Here, I want to focus on two of the philosophical injunctions, and try to unfold what they might mean for exhibition-making. First of all, my employment of the notion of the horizon as a useful category was challenged by Peter Osborne, in a direct critique of Reinhart Kosselleck's positing of a space of experience in a relation to a horizon of expectation, which obscures rather than clarifies. The horizon of expectation is, in its way, a way of grounding the horizon in the present, also in terms of (im)possibility, whereas the truly revolutionary, according to Osborne (and in accordance with the ideas of Castoriadis), true change is always unexpected, and that one cannot expect the unexpected, which means that Koselleck's notion of a horizon is a device that aims to *prevent* any radical changes from happening. Osborne goes on to cite the example of the fall of real existing communism as unexpected, not as a radical change in the horizon of the (former) west, but rather as its fulfillment, it was only the exact calculation of the time of this collapse that was, perhaps, unforeseeable. Rather, "what *was* unexpected about the collapse of

historical communism – certainly unexpected to the citizens of the former Eastern European socialist states – was the ferocity of the capitalist revolution that followed."[149] Osborne is thus highly doubtful about the use of the very term horizon, certainly in its historical form, and definitely against the idea of a general loss of horizon after 1989, that the congress and Former west in general has suggested, as well as of the proposal that art could partake in the construction of a new horizon. Instead Osborne posits the potential for art in the form of negative critique: "at its best, contemporary art models experimental practices of negation that puncture horizons of expectation."[150] The role of critical art is thus not in any way to be constructive, but to negate, in the form of punctuations of the present.

Osborne mentions a work of Mona Vátámanu and Florian Tudor called *Long Live and Thrive Capitalism!*, that, in its transformation of an old Communist slogan strikes as being more concerned with irony, however biting, than with the tradition of critique as pure negation. Personally, when re-reading Osborne's essay, I am struck by a remark made in a talk by the artist and exhibition-maker Alice Creischer, who described her work over the last 20 odd years, whether in writing or exhibiting, as always being polemical, and on the side of *untruth*, as she put it.[151] I was intrigued by this comment, not only in light of my interest in truth production and exhibition-making, but also in how this placed Creischer within negative dialectics, and did so as a way for her to distinguish between what I would call an artistic-critical position towards exhibitions as opposed to a curatorial-constructive one. If the critical attitude, including its practices of negation and polemics, is part of a project of speaking truth to power, against ways of being governed, what would it mean to speak the untruth? For Creischer,

untruth had to do with the very positioning of critique as polemic, as a way of opposing the distribution of power and knowledge in the institution of art, and beyond. So, rather than accepting knowledge, rather than accepting reason, untruth is to be understood, in my view, as the denial of the factual, of *recherché*, of a particular regime of truth, even if this indicates that the speaking subject, as being active against a given hegemony, places herself on the side of untruth. Perhaps we can even call this *strategic untruth*? A strategy squarely aimed at puncturing the horizon.

As touched upon earlier, the notion of negation, and punctuation, is a sound working model for, albeit one version, of artistic critique, but perhaps less so for exhibition-making, and its inevitable presentation, rather than punctuation, of a world-view, a horizon? It may even, in my theorizing of the endeavor be a logical impossibility, which does not mean that it is wholly impossible, or, for that matter in any way illegitimate. The question remains how an exhibition can negate, if that negation is indeed a self-negation, and not just a negation of its institutional setting. In other words, how can an exhibition *not* institute, not govern? Can the exhibition distribute, as it were, the *in*sensible? Clearly, it cannot do so by obscuring articulation, or its principles of design, selection and so on, as in the type of new mysticism, since that form is complicit with the conservative inscription of inherent value in the art object, or artist, extended to the figure of the curator, but must do so through self-reflection in one form or the other, while simultaneously, and this is the great difficulty, or challenge, if you will, constantly circumventing this reflection at the same time. It must show its (im)possibility, and it is thus questionable if such an enterprise would ever by embraced by its

institution or its public. I am not sure that I can give any example of such an exhibition, which might not be surprising in light of the last observation, but if I can imagine it, it could be something like an equivalent of Orson Welles' pseudo-documentary *F for Fake*, which was, after all, sort of a film about art, or at least the art of deception and the questioning of the very status of the work of art as art – but then again few Hollywood directors had as much problems with the studio system as Orson Welles...

A completely other way out of this apparent impasse would be the embrace of the exhibition as setting a horizon (and not just the setting for one), but with the proposition of the horizon as a replacement of the notion of a ground, as in supplying identity and ensuring meaning. This proposal is found, albeit in a political philosophical way, in Ernesto Laclau's contribution on the differential relation between ground and horizon as organizing principles.[152] Laclau argues for the concept of the limit as necessary in order to produce meaning, but rejects the concept of the ground in both its transcendent and immanent versions:

> The ground as a totality of its partial processes is an impossibility, because equivalence and difference cannot be logically reconciled into a coherent whole. Totality as a ground is impossible. On the other hand, without totalization there would be no signification. So totality is an object at the same impossible and necessary.[153]

Laclau thus suggests totality as a horizon rather than ground, since it is not the basis for differential identities and partial processes, but the

outcome of their interaction. The horizon is thus "a signifying element that makes possible a field of signification and, at the same time establishes the limits of what is representable within that field."[154] With this insight it might be easier to understand, or situate the exhibition, in relation to the works of art, or for that matter other objects, signs and artifacts it presents, as a different moments of signification. Both the exhibition and the artwork are elements of signification, but the exhibition has the dual function of also being the signifying element that makes possible the field of meaning for the works, and that sets up a limit for them. This limit is to be understood in both the most abstract and the most concrete sense: abstract in the way it circumscribes the limits to perception (i.e. the horizon), and consigning the staus of art onto an object (such as the *ready-made* and the *objet trouvé*), and in the concrete sense of a particular, by definition limited number of works on display. In this way, an exhibition always includes and excludes at the same time, both representing and depresenting – there is always that which is constituted as outside by the very selection of objects. The exhibition establishes a horizon, for the works, and of a world, but this is a horizon that the works themselves always has the possibility of punctuating, naturally, whether by design or default, since what constitutes critique is always related to the particular power-knowledge set-up. That which punctuates at one historical moment may not do so in another, and what plays out according to a certain logic in a specific context, will have a completely different meaning in another, and so on. This is probably what Laclau would describe as contingency, but this does not do away with the inevitable question that emerges in relation to Laclau's political theory, namely its ontology: is the discursive making of society and political identity always structured around the same principles, thus making the

idea of hegemonic inscriptions into some sort of meta-theory, that can encompass all societies at all times?

There is one more thing, though, that can be drawn from the replacing the ground with the horizon in our case, which has not to do with only a general condition of horisonality, but what this means politically and aesthetically. Returning to the quote about self-commoditization from Groys, perhaps it can be reviewed in the light of this last debate. Maybe the market – and all its social relations – is really all pervasive: but what if it is so *only in the form of a ground*? Which would then be an immanent one, surely? If one accepts this idea of the commercial subject, one only can do so, in my view, if it is grounding this subject, and one must thus ask what would be the horizon of this particular situation, for the subject position proposed by Groys? This would then lead to a different politics of aesthetics, which would not only discuss how a given situation, such as the contemporary state of the artworld, is be analyzed, and how one can operate in its field of signification, but also ask what horizon can be imagined from this place, if any? As a scene of address, the exhibition does not have to (only) suggest a grounding of subjects and objects, even in the form of a postmodern groundless ground, but also posit a horizon, a vectoring of possibility.

In her political and aesthetic cultural history of a double modernism, Buck-Morss, mentions the famous 'kitchen debate' between Nikita Khrushchev and Richard Nixon, in the display of a modern, American kitchen in Moscow in 1959. This was, of course, a highly staged discussion, with the two men exchanging insults, and positing their respective dreamworld against the other's catastrophic reality. The debate become known as the kitchen debate, since they

were discussing the merits of Communism and capitalism in relation to consumer goods, such as a fully industrialized, modern kitchen. It is important to recall where this fabled kitchen was installed, which was in something called the *American National Exhibition in Moscow*, that was part of a cultural exchange program between the two superpowers. The exhibition, commissioned by the American government, was designed by the architect George Nelson, and consisted of four main elements, a geodesic dome made from Buckminster Fuller's principles to house the exhibits, that were a large seven-screen film installation by Charles and Roy Eames, an IBM computer capable of answering 4000 questions about the USA, and finally panels with information about American products and samples of these products.[155] Today, this work would probably be describe and desinated as curating, and in a sense one can see the staging of the discussion between the two men as a part of the exhibition, the same way as panels and talks are scheduled today as an integral part of an exhibition's discursive production. The exhibition is, here, something that presents and stages an argument, in both senses of that word, both proposition and quarrel, but the limits of this argument, and its scripting, is highly regulated and predefined. Although a lot was, seemingly, at stake in this mission of propaganda, in other ways not much was risked by the display.

I therefore suggest to think of another scene of address with much higher stakes, and a different way of staging a debate, of producing truth. In his discussion of *parrhésia*, and the relationship between truth and courage, Foucault mentions the dialogue between Laches and Nicias, two important political and military men in Athens in the fifth century.[156] The two men asked by two friends, Lysimachus

and Melesias, about whom they should entrust the upbringing of their children. I shall not concern myself too much with the specific technicalities of the value of this discussion here – but briefly it has do with courage: that the two men who have not distinguished themselves in battle or politics asks the advice of those who have, and should thus be better equipped to ensure the best training for the future of their children. However, what happens is that Socrates is in tow, who changes the currency of the coin, or the parameteters for discussion, by having the two men disclose the truth about themselves rather than about their achievements and merits (something that is sorely missed from curators' talks and panels in our time). What is important is the scene of address, where this debate takes place, where the subjects are interpellated. As Foucault writes, the two men are invited to *an exhibition*. It is in this setting that an argument can be made and presented, but with the display as catalyst and backdrop, and with no given outcome of the discussion, of the reception. The two men are put the test, but in a site for a testing of a particular kind:

> You can see that already we are in a dimension which is not one of verbal presentation, of the ability to present verbally what one is supposed to be able to do; we are in the domain of the test, but of the direct visual test.[157]

Installation views, Vectors of the Possible, *BAK, Utrecht, 2010. Top: Freee billborad and hito Steryrl video. Bottom: Sharon Hayes slide projection, Matthew Buckingham wall text.*

Installation views, Vectors of the Possible, *2010. Top: Hayes, bottom: Buckingham.*

Installation views, Vectors of the Possible, *2010. Top: photograph by Runo Lagomarsino & Johan Tirén installed on staircase. Bottom: Video projection by Chto Delat?/What Is To Be Done? And slide projections by Sharon Hayes.*

Installation views, Vectors of the Possible. *Top: the room by Elske Rosenfeld; bottom: the room by Ultra-red.*

NOTES.

1. Julie Ault and Martin Beck, *Critical Condition*, Kokerei Zollverein: Essen, 2003, p. 314.
2. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend – Phrases in Dispute*, University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1988, p. xi.
3. Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms – Crusades, Jihads and Modernity*, Verso: London, 2003.
4. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, Polity Press: Cambridge, 1993.
5. Wolfgang Max Faust and Gerd de Vries, *Hunger Nach Bildern*, DuMont: Cologne, 1982.
6. Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production.*, p. 59.
7. Alois Riegl, *Problems of Style*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 1992.
8. For an overview on contemporary art and its markets, see: Noah Horowitz, *Art of the Deal – Contemporary Art in a Global Financial Market*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 2011, or Maria Lind and Olav Velthuis (Eds.), *Contemporary Art and its Commercial Markets – a Report on Current Conditions and Future Scenarios*, Sternberg Press: Berlin, 2012.
9. Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, Stanford University Press: Stanford, CA, 2002, pp. 4-5.
10. A remark on a social history of art, this should have to do with a critique of the way art history is written as a victorious, canonical and individualized history. For example, I have, much to my regret, seen the period which I know intimately as a participant in its discourse and events, the 1990s, now being written as a story of individual artists and their works, even if the mode of analyzing works are, let's say, post-structuralist rather than formalist. The problem with this

approach is that it overlooks the contexts of the work, and the environment in which they were, mostly, created, which was in some sort of dialogue among artists in a given situation, city or scene. Artists do not appear as fully formed subjects and auteurs, but within a discourse. And this discourse is not only, if ever, that of art history and museums, but rather specific times and places. It is this social history that is sorely missed in contemporary art history and criticism. Moreover, this should be coupled with the idea of a conceptual history, i.e. the history of certain concepts, their emergence in discourse and their various accents and constellations. Instead of continually asking and assessing who are the best artists or curator today or in a generation, one could imagine questions such as: Why, for example, are a lot of artists revisiting certain positions and reading certain books a particular moment, but in different places? And how does it affect artistic production? So, an art history of certain concepts, such as queer space, cinematic time, or post-colonial versus post-communist identity, and so on, would be most useful, and perhaps less involved in supplying the museum industry and art fairs with new products and new stars.

11. Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, pp. 30-1.
12. Deborah J. Meijers, 'The Museum and the "Ahistorical" Exhibition: The latest gimmick by the arbiters of taste, or an important phenomenon?', in: Reesa Greenberg et al (Eds.), *Thinking about Exhibitions*, Routledge: London, 1996, pp.7-20.
13. Marion von Osten, 'Producing Publics – Making Worlds! On the Relationship between the Art Public and the Counterpublic', in: Barnaby Drabble and Dorothee Richter, *Curating Critique*, Revolver: Frankfurt Am Main, 2007, pp. 230-43.
14. Gilles Deleuze, 'Postscript on Control Societies', in: Deleuze, *Negotiations*, University of Columbia Press: New York, 1995, pp. 177-82.

15. Søren Grammel, Maria Lind and Katharina Schlieben, 'Editorial. In Place of a Manifesto', in: Maria Lind et al. (Eds.), *Spring Fall 02 04 Collected Newsletters*, Revolver: Frankfurt Am Main, 2004, p.18.
16. Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson (Eds.), *Curating and the Educational Turn*, Open Editions: London, 2010.
17. Barbara Vanderlinden and Elena Filipovic, *The Manifesta Decade*, The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass, 2005.
18. Jacques Ranciére, *Disagreement – Politics and Philosophy*, University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1999.
19. Indeed, of the 33 artists represented in the catalogue, only 32 were actually in the exhibition, since the artists Fareed Armaly chose only to be in the catalogue, but not the exhibition.
20. Keith Tribe, 'Translator's Introduction', in: Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past*, Columbia: New York, 2004, p. x.
21. Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, p. 1.
22. Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', in: *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, The New Press: New York, 1998, p. 386.
23. Ibid., p. 382.
24. Rudi Visker, *Michel Foucault – Genealogy as Critique*, Verso: London, 1995.
25. Ibid., p. 65.
26. Ibid., P. 67.
27. For an excellent analysis of the shift in the meaning and value of the artwork when moving spatially, from the studio to the museum, see Daniel Buren's modernist critique in the three part essay, 'The Function of the Studio / The Function of the Museum / The Function of Architecture', in: AA Bronson & Peggy Gale (Eds.), *Museums by Artists*, Art Metropole: Toronto, 1983, pp. 57-74.
28. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'More on Power/Knowledge', in: *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, Routledge: New York, 1993, pp. 25-51.

29. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality – Volume 1: An Introduction*, Penquin Books: London, 1981, p. 99.
30. Foucault describes this, intriguingly, as "[...] the point where an *archeology of problematizations* and a *genealogy of practices* of self intersect" [My italics], which would indicate a difference in mehod between archeology and genealogy as between a set of problematics versus (the analysis of) a set of practices. See Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure – The History of Sexuality Volume 2*, Penguin Books: London, 1985, p. 13.
31. Spivak, 'More on Power/Knowledge', P. 41.
32. On the great divide, Spivak states that she is closer to Gary Gutting's claim that all is archeology, i.e. continuity of thought, rather than Hubert Dreyfuss and Paul Rabinow's idea that who propagates an end to archeology, and instead says that all is genealogy. For more, see Gary Gutting, *Michel Foucault's Archeology of Scientific Reason*, Cambridge Uinversity Press: Cambridge, 1989, and Hubert L. Dreyfuss and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1983.
33. Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, Pantheon Books: New York, 1972. p. 38.
34. Ibid., p. 109.
35. Ibid., p. 124.
36. Ibid., p. 99
37. Boris Groys, *Über das Neue: Versuch einer Kulturökonomie*, Carl Hanser Verlag: Munich, 1992.
38. Indeed, in his postscript to the book, fellow curator Daniel Birnbaum even goes as far as talking about the previous curators as parents and grandparents, indicating a direct lineage. Although he entitles this an archeology to come, echoing Foucault, his notion of genealogy is nonetheless decisively anti-foucauldian, searching, as it is, for origins and pedigree. See Daniel Birnbaum, "The Archeology of Things to

Come," in: *A Brief History of Curating*, by Hans Ulrich Obrist, JRP-Ringier: Zurich, 2008, pp. 234–9.

39. Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself*, Fordham University Press: New York, 2005, pp. 9-22.
40. Foucault, *Archeology of Knowledge*, p. 51.
41. Stefan Nowotny, 'Anti-Canonization', in : Gerald Raunig and Gene Ray (Eds.), *Art and Contemporary Critical Practice*, Mayfly: London, 2009, p. 26-7.
42. Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*, Routledge: Abingdon, Oxon, 2006, p. xxxviii.
43. My translation from the German original: "Die Austeellung versucht nicht, das Thema sziologisch darzustellen oder durch Recherche aufzuarbeiten. Im Gegenteil ist 'trap' ein Statement, eine Behauptung + ein Arbeiten am Gegentail." See Art in Ruins, Stephan Geene & BüroBert, 'TRAP', in: BüroBert (Eds.), *Copyshop – Kunstpraxis & politische Öffentlichkeit*, Edition ID-Archiv: Berlin, 1993, p. 215.
44. My translation from the German terms "Das Werk (als) Instrument" and "Handlungsmuster", employed by Stephan Schmidt-Wulffen and Barbara Steiner in their catalogue essay for the exhibition. See Stephan Schmidt-Wulffen and Barbara Steiner, *Backstage – Topologie zeitgenössischer Kunst*, Kunstverein in Hamburg: Hamburg, 1993, p. 5 + p. 125.
45. Visker, *Genealogy as Critique*, p. 106.
46. John Searle, 'What is an Institution?', in: John C. Welchman, *Institutional Critique and After*, Zürich: JRP/Ringier, 2006, pp. 21-51.
47. Ibid. p. 50.
48. Cornelius Castoriadis, *Figures of the Thinkable*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007, p. 71.
49. Cornelius Castoriadis, *World in Fragments*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997, p. 6.
50. Castoriadis, *Figures of the Thinkable*, p. 75.

51. Gene Ray & Gerald Raunig (Eds.), *Art and Contemporary Critical Practice – Reinventing Institutional Critique*, London: Mayfly, 2009, p xvii.
52. See Walter Benjamin's 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' in: *Illuminations*, Pimlico: London, 1999, pp. 245-55, and his *The Arcades Project*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 1999, pp. 388-396.
53. Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, London: Polity Press, 1987, p. 373.
54. Castoriadis, *Figures of the Thinkable*, p. 86.
55. Michel Foucault, 'The Will to Knowledge', in *Ethics – Subjectivity and Truth*, New York: The New Press, 1997, p. 121.
56. Jonas Ekeberg (Ed.), *New Institutionalism*, OCA: Oslo, 2003.
57. Claire Doherty, 'The Institution is Dead! Long Live the Institution! Contemporary Art and New Institutionalism', *Engage 15*, Summer 2004, and Alex Farquharson, 'Bureaux de change' Frieze 101, September 2006.
58. David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2005, p. 3.
59. Nina Möntmann and Simon Sheikh, *NIFCA: An Art Institution as Production Unit?*, internal report, NIFCA: Helsinki, 2004.
60. Charles Esche on the now defunct Rooseum website, quoted from Ekeberg, p. 78.
61. For a stellar analysis of this development, using new museums in the US as a case study, see Poyin Auyoung, 'Museum Space: Privatizing Culture/Imaging Desire', in: Katya Sander, Simon Sheikh and Cecilie Høgsbro Østergaard, *The Meaning of Site*, Ø: Copenhagen, 1998, pp. 96-119.
62. Andreas Huyssen, ''Escape from Amnesia: The Museum as Mass Medium', in: *Twilight Memories – Cultural Memory in a Culture of Amnesia*, Routledge: New York, 1995, pp.13-35.

63. See James Meyer's essay 'Whatever Happened to Institutional Critique?', which tries to establish a genealogy rather than (art) history proper of institutional critique. Reprinted in Peter Weibel, *Kontext Kunst*, 1993.
64. Robert Smithson, 'Cultural Confinement', in: *The Collected Writings*, The University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, 1996, pp. 154-6.
65. See Benjamin Buchloh, 'Conceptual Art 1962–1969: From the Aesthetics of Administration to the Critique of Institutions', *October 55*, 1990, pp. 105–143.
66. Andrea Fraser, 'From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique', *Artforum*, September 2005, XLIV, No. 1, pp. 278–283.
67. Julia Bryan-Wilson, 'A Curriculum of Institutional Critique', in: *New Institutionalism*, pp. 89–109.
68. Although not the most widely distributed publications, these projects were documented in book form, and thus available to some extent, but has nonetheless remained fairly hidden, if not directly buried by art history. See Rita Baukrowitz & Karin Günther (eds.), *Team Compendium – Selbstorganisation Bereich Kunst*, Hamburg: Kellner Verlag, 1995, and Alice Creischer, Dierk Schmidt & Andreas Siekmann (eds.), *Messe 2ok – ökonoMiese machen*, Cologne/Berlin: Permanent Press, 1996.
69. Gregory Sholette, *Dark Matter*, Pluto Press: London, 2011.
70. Elena Filipovic, Marike van Hal and Solveig Øvstebø, *The Biennial Reader*, Hatje Cantz: Ostfildern, 2010, p. 15.
71. Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau & Slavoj Zizek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*, Verso: London, 2000, pp. 178-9.
72. The notion of a 'politics of translation' indicates a shift from, as well as affinity with, what Michel Foucault termed 'the politics of truth'. But where the politics of truth has to do with a questioning of authority, and a wish for being governed in a different way, politics of translation

seems to confront different regimes of truth, the ways in which truth is produced.

73. David Harvey, *Spaces of Capital*, Routledge: New York, 2001, p. 405.
74. Simon Sheikh (Ed.), *In the Place of the Public Sphere?*, b_books: Berlin, 2005.
75. Giorgio Agamben, 'In This Exile (Italian Diary 1992-94)', in: *Means Without Ends*, University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 2000, pp. 121-42.
76. Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political*, Routledge: London, 2005, p. 9.
77. Jacques Ranciére, *Disagreement – Politics and Philosophy*, University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1999, p. 28.
78. Ibid., p. 123.
79. Sathya Rao, 'From a Postcolonial to a Non-colonial Theory of Translation', in: Naoki Sakai and Jon Salomon (Eds.), *Translation, Biopolitcs, Colonial Difference*, Hong Kong University Press, 2006, pp. 73-94.
80. Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself*, Fordham University Press: New York, 2005, p. 10.
81. Ibid., p. 17.
82. Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube – The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, The Lapis Press: San Francisco, 1986.
83. Interestingly, O'Doherty has later indicated a shift in how this ideology of the white cube functions. Towards the very end of his more recent essay, 'Studio and Cube', O'Doherty coins the strange phrase, "anti-white cube", which has to do with a reversal of its modernist aims to secure all objects a status as art, whereas it is now simply a "place [...] where something is, was, or is to be", it is merely site for possible reception, we could say, and one that, according to O'Doherty reverses the process, instead always transforming the gallery itself rather than the objects. See Brian O'Doherty, *Studio and Cube – On*

the Relationship Between Where Art Is Made and Where It Is Displayed, FORuM: New York, 2007, p. 40.

84. Tony Bennett, 'The Exhibitionary Complex', in R. Greenberg, B. Ferguson, S. Nairne (Eds.), *Thinking About Exhibitions*, Routledge: London, 1996, p. 84.
85. Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, Zone: New York, 2002.
86. Søren Andreasen & Lars Bang Larsen, 'The Middleman: Beginning to Think About Mediation', in: Paul O'Neill (Ed.), *Curating Subjects*, Open Editions: London, 2007, pp. 20-30.
87. Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself*, p. 67.
88. This provocative remark was actually made, in all seriousness, by the curator Anselm Franke, during a conference organized by the Comité van Roosendaal called *Institutional Attitudes*, during the round table entitled *Dismeasurement and Public Responsibility*, in Brussels on 25 April, 2010. The roundtable itself is, unfortunately, not available online, unlike most of the conference, perhaps on demand of the participants, who knows? However, the bad faith in which this panel was received, part in no doubt to the political uncorrectness (!) of Franke's statement about hiss responsibilities, or lack here of to 'the public', can be seen on the Comité's vimeo site, where the Q&A with audience after the round table is available: http://vimeo.com/12527006
89. For an account of the politics of dialogical art, as socially engaged art, see Grant Kester's study *Conversation Pieces*, University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2004.
90. Previously, I had mentioned such German publications such as *Messe 2OK*, and in 1996, Globe also organized a project with participation from 12 curatorial collectives, compiled in: Globe (Eds.), *Compartments*, Politisk Revy: Copenhagen, 1996.
91. Giorgio Agamben, *What Is an Apparatus?,* Stanford University Press Stanford, CA, 2009.

92. Ibid., p. 23.
93. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy – Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, Verso: London, 1985, p. 105.
94. Ibid., p. 106.
95. Julie Ault, 'Exhibition As Political Space', in: Julie Ault and Martin Beck, *Critical Condition*, Kokerei Zollverein: Essen, 2003, p. 360.
96. Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, Verso: London, 1969.
97. See Laclau and Mouffe, p. 98. By stressing the possibility of Althusser's insight, they naturally also point out to something he left unexplored, namely articulation itself: hence their project!
98. Immanuel Wallerstein, *Historical Capitalism*, Verso: London, 1983.
99. The full list of artists across the two shows were: Michael Blum, Chto Delat?, Copenhagen Free University, Andrea Creutz, Regina Dold, Maria Eichhorn, Katia Fouquet, Florian Gass, Stephan Geene, Olafur Gislason, Ashley Hunt, Susan Kelly & Stephen Morton, Marietta Kesting, Oliver Ressler, Natascha Sadr Haghighian, Katya Sander, Fia Stina Sandlund, Jason Simon, and Elin Wikström.
100. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities – Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso: London, 1983.
101. Michel Foucault, *The Politics of Truth*, Semiotext(e): New York, 1997, p. 29.
102. Ibid., p. 32.
103. See Edward W. Said, 'Speaking Truth to Power', in: *Representations of the Intellectual*, Vintage Books: New York, 1994, pp. 85-102.
104. See Michel Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others – Lectures at College de France 1982-1983*, Palgrave Macmillan: Houndsmill, Basingstoke, 2012, and *The Courage of Truth – Lectures at College de France 1983-1984*, Palgrave Macmillan: Houndsmill, Basingstoke, 2011.
105. Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, p. 242.
106. Foucault, *The Politics of Truth*, p. 125.

107. That this articulation functioned as a statement within a discursive formation became clear in the most unexpected of ways. The same weekend as the exhibition opened in Oslo, there was the an opening of a large exhibition at the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art entitled *Uncertain States of America – American Art in the 3rd Millenium*, curated by Daniel Birnbaum, Gunnar B. Kvaran and Hans Ulrich Obrist, who were interviewed by the same daily newspaper as I had been the subsequent day, and probably due to this previous encounter the interviewer asked these curators how they say the relationship between contemporary art, capitalism and critique, to which Birnbaum answered that their artists were not interested in dismantling capitalism, but only in making it more human and creative. Now, without taking issue with the these too last terms, and what that could possible mean, what is crucial here is that the curator decides to stat his own ideology and politics through the artists, and at the same time making them accountable for his views. The curator here takes upon himself to speak both for and through the artist.

108. In retrospect, I think that this method was even more helpful for the publication that stemmed from the project than the exhibitions, since it gave the rare opportunity for all writers to meet and discuss with each other and the artists, and therefore to not work in the customary isolation, and at a remove in both spatial and temporal terms.

109. In one of the only examples of an exhibition giving an account of itself, of its production, is the publication that accompanied the exhibtion *Sonsbeek 93*, curated by Valerie Smith, including both diary notes, correspondence and even the initial exhibition proposal, the book is a compendium of insights into the making of a major, international group show. Interestingly, one also here find the discussion around the difference between artist and curator as exhibition-maker, in a remark made by Smith to the artist Mike Kelly, whose contribution was a whole exhibition rather than installation, called *the Uncanny*, since then

often used, even canonized, as a prime example of a curated, coherent thematic exhibition, where she writes: "I think of your project for Sonsbeek as site-specific to the museum, not really a curated show, but a gathering of objects to make a point." See Jan Brand, Catelijne de Muynck and Valerie Smith (Eds.), *Sonsbeek 93*, Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon: Ghent, 1993, p. 136. Naturally, this definition of exhibition-making that is not curating, but something's that makes a point, is exactly what I have termed articulation, and see as a key point in curatorial work, whether organized by a 'curator' or an 'artist'.

110. Julie Ault and Martin Beck, *Critical Condition*, p. 364.

111. Donna Landry and Gerald Maclean, 'Reading Spivak', introduction to *The Spivak Reader*, Routledge: New York, 1996, p. 7.

112. The 'permanent' installations were the works of Eric Baudelaire, Graziela Kunsch, Walid Raad / The Atlas Group, Michael Takeo Magruder and SLUM-TV, although Kunsch's selection of short videos were re-mixed according to each chapter, and the position of Raad's piece was shifted. As for the other three pieces, they were kept unchanged due to their relevance to all three chapters in the case of Baudelaire's staged photographs, whereas the other two, Magruder's commissioned work on the then news-breaking phenomenon of Wikileaks, realized quickly to comment on current events, were both placed in the lobby outside the exhibition space proper as a kind of commentary. SLUM-TV's work is a short, pseudo commercial, advertising the possibility of winning an artists residency in Mathare, a slum in Nairobi, Kenya.

113. QUAD also houses a BFI archive, that can accesses free of charge, as well as a commercial cinema. The cinema was used for the screening of Douglas Fishbone's feature film, and we worked a curator from the BFI to make a special selection from the archive relating to the theme of our exhibition, to be available in the BFI space for the duration of *All That Fits*. The full list of artists participating in *All That Fits* were:

Sammy Baloji, Yael Bartana, Eric Baudelaire, Ursula Biemann, Ross Birrell, Michael Blum, Broomberg & Charain, Abraham Cruzvillegas, Anita Di Blanco, Marcelo Exposito, Douglas Fishbone, Zachary Formwalt, Tamar Guimaraes, K8 Hardy & Wynne Greenwood, Lamia Joreige, Graziela Kunsch, Renzo Martens, Walid Raad / The Atlas Group, Oliver Ressler, Katya Sander, Hito Steyerl, SLUM-TV, Michael Takeo Magruder, and Alejandro Vidal.

114. Another issue is the articulation and disarticulation that is the current modes of addressing the audience through surveys. In the case of QUAD, for example, a questionnaire is made available to the visitors with but one question about the exhibition itself. The rest, rather, is about establishing the identity of the visitor in nominal terms of governmentality, in an almost pure form of *polizei wissenschaft*, and attempt to get to know the poulace in order to order it, so to say. For instance, question 18 asks the viewer to identify themselves with a pre-defined ethnicity, what really is giving an account of oneself through outside, governmental interpellation. The audience is not imagined as produceable, but only as mapable. See the questionnaire in the appendix.

115. Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson (Eds.), *Curating and the Educational Turn*, Open Editions: London, 2010. It is worth noting the background of the editors, O'Neill is an artist and curator, Wilson an artist and educator, which attests to the expansive and shifting identity of this particular turn.

116. Andrea Fraser, 'Museum Highlights: a Gallery Talk', October 57, 1991, p. 122.

117. Fraser, p. 107.

118. Indeed the assemblage of the relationship between them is the task of any reflexive curatorial practice, and what should be taught in the now myriads of curatorial training programmes, that are, in a their own way

also a pedagogical turn in curating, as well as a so-called professionalization of the field.

119. Bennett, 'The Exhibitionary Complex', p. 89.

120. I have taken the introduction of 'explication,' in the form of language, in the classical period as an historical 'fact' and 'evidence' from Norman Bryson's highly interpretative study of the period, in which he duly notes "In 1666, at the instigation of Colbert, LeBrun introduced the practice of the Discourse: every month a work from the royal collection was to be discussed before the public by the Académie assembled as a whole. Whereas the guilds had transmitted instruction by practical example, now instruction takes the form of codex, and an official stenographer is employed to transcribe and later publish the proceedings of the debates." See Norman Bryson, *Word and Image – French painting of the Ancien Régime*, Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 32.

121. Sarah Pierce, *The Paraeducational Department*, Belfast: Interface, 2006.

122. Smithson, 'Cultural Confinement', *The Collected Writings*, pp. 154-5.

123. Dave Beech and John Roberts, *The Philistine Controversy*, London: Verso, 2002.

124. O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*, 1986.

125. In this sense it is only logical that a figure like Jane Casteton appears within the second wave of institutional critique, since the figure of the docent was just about the only function of the museum that Marcel Broodthaers did not spatialize in his seminal installations, probably because it precisely could not be installed, but had to be performed, thus Andrea Fraser's continuation of Broodthaers' work in other forms.

126. Umberto Eco, 'The Poetics of the Open Work, *The Role of the Reader*, Bloomington: Indiana university Press, 1979, pp. 47-66. Susan Sontag, 'Against Interpretation', *Against Interpretation*, New York: Farrar Giroux & Strauss, 1966, pp. 3-14. Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the

Author', *Image-Music-Text*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1977, pp.142-48.

127. Famously, and mysteriously, Sontag ends her essay with a section consisting a single line, the final statement: "In place of a hermeneutics we need an erotics of art". Within my short genealogy of pedagogics in art theory an unforeseen parallel to Beech and Roberts' philistinism that forsakes aestheticism in favor of the pleasures of the "voluptuous" body can be found here.

128. Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster – Five lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991, p. 41.

129. Ibid., pp. 9-10.

130. Castoriadis, *World in Fragments*, p. 8.

131. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, The Free Press: New York, 1992.

132. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Routledge: London, 1962, p. 69.

133. Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus – Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition*, Routledge: London, 1997.

134. Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, Verso: London, 1990, p. 3.

135. Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p. 260.

136. Walter Benjamin*, The Arcades Project*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 1999, p. 898.

137. Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*, The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 2000, p. 209.

138. Ibid. p., 235.

139. Ibid., p. 228.

140. No more is this visible than in the truly revisionist *East Art Map* project, that tries to establish a particular Eastern European conceptual tradition and network retrospectively, by mapping artists

from former socialist countries, and not just those united in the Warsaw pact, but also Yugoslavia and Albania, from 1945 onwards. It writes a canonical history that never was, and thus produces the image of a particular culture, or rather, a particular twist on the international style of, mainly, conceptual art, a line that is also followed by the collection of East European historical conceptualism instigated by Erste Bank in Austria. It will require more thinking and discussion to understand both the economics and politics of such endeavors, especially since they are not documenting artistic developments per se, but rather what was truly underground, but can now be appreciated, and perhaps included, in the Western genre of conceptualism? And what does this mean for our understanding, historically and philosophically, of the politics of conceptualism? See www.eastartmap.org

141. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason – Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*, Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1999, p. 364.

142. Boris Groys, 'Utopia is Investment in the Artificial', in IDEA: http://idea.ro/revista/?q=en/node/41&articol=323
For a fuller, and more theoretical account, see Boris Groys, Anne von der Heiden and Peter Weibel (Eds.), *Zurûck aus der Zukunft _ Osteuropäische Kulturen im Zeitalter des Postkommunismus*, Suhrkamp: Frankfurt A.M., 2005.

143. I am drawing my argument from Dipesh Chakrabarty's problematization of his own work with *Subaltern Studies* group as a way for 'Indians' to finally represent themselves in the writing of history, since the "master narrative", as he terms it, is the history of Europe, any other history, such as Indian history is thus be the very fact of being history as a discipline, always in a subaltern position, which then needs to be articulated. See 'Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History' in his

groundbreaking book *Provincializing Europe*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 2000, pp. 27-46.

144. The project, running from 2008 to 2014, is directed by Maria Hlavajova with the curators Charles Esche and Kathrin Rhomberg, and the research group is made up of Claire Bishop, Boris Groys, Tom Holert, Marion von Osten, Piotr Piotrowski, and Simon Sheikh. For more information, see www.formerwest.org

145. Maria Hlavajova, Simon Sheikh and Jill Winder (Eds.), *On Horizons*, BAK: Utrecht, 2011.

146. The artists included were Matthew Buckingham, chto delat?/What is to be done?, Freee, Sharon Hayes, Runo Lagomarsino & Johan Tiren, Elske Rosenfeld, Hito Steyerl, and Ultra-red.

147. Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Zizek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*, Verso: London, 2000.

148. The full list of speakers were: day one; Julie Ault, Keydar Caglar, Maria Hlavajova, Peter Osborne, and Simon Sheikh, moderated by Boris Buden, day two; Beatriz Colomina, Jodi Dean, Bülent Diken, Fulya Erdemci, Vasif Kortun, Lisette Lagnado, Shuddhabrata Sengupta, and Wouter Vanstiphout, moderated by Vivian Rehberg, day three; Ernesto Laclau, Gerald Raunig, Robert Sember, Hito Steyerl, and Dmitry Vilensky, moderated by TJ Demos.

149. Peter Osborne, 'Expecting the Unexpected: Beyond the "Horizon of Expectation"', in: Maria Hlavajova, Simon Sheikh and Jill Winder (Eds.), *On Horizons*, BAK: Utrecht, 2011, p.127.

150. Ibid., p. 128.

151. Creischer made this remark during the Q&A after a talk of hers, during the symposium Bleibender Wert?, organized by Springerin for KUB Arena, and held at Kunsthaus Bregenz, 24/02 – 26/02, 2012.

152. Ernesto Laclau, 'Horizon, Ground, and Lived Experience', in: : Maria Hlavajova, Simon Sheikh and Jill Winder (Eds.), *On Horizons*, BAK: Utrecht, 2011, pp. 100-11.

153. Ibid., pp. 105-6.

154. Ibid., p. 110.

155. See Jack Masey and Conway Lloyd Morgan, *Cold War Confrontations – US Exhibitions and their Role in the Cultural Cold War*, Lars Müller Publishers: Baden, Switzerland, 2008, pp. 154-243. Strangely, the only thing that Khrushchev and Nixon can agree upon is an aesthetic dislike, they both admit to dislike Jazz – perhaps this was an aesthetic gesture that punctuated the horizon of both men's political visions.

156. See Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth – Lectures at College de France 1983-1984*, Palgrave Macmillan: Houndsmill, Basingstoke, 2011, pp. 121-38.

157. Ibid., p. 130.

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APPENDICES

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

Unauthorized

Martin Beck, Eva la Cour, Ines Doujak, Jandek, Nils Lomholt.

Inter Arts Center, Malmö, June 2-26, 2012.

Organized by Simon Sheikh

The exhibition will showcase various archival artifacts and works of art, organized around the notion of unauthorized cultural practices and initiatives. What is the role of authorization within artistic practices of self-organization and publishing? And how does such efforts relate to, as well as alter their articulation, when confronted with institutional inscription and initiation?

The artists will all exhibit objects and artifacts that has do with artistic production, research and autonomy, each referring to its own system of production, ordering and circulation, as exemplified by the historical case of mail art, self-publishing and personal collections. These will be displayed through and around a reconstruction of George Nelson's Struc-tube display system, a light transportable module produced for trade for exhibitions in the 1950s.

The works and objects will be presented in the form of the eccentric archive, with internal and perhaps uncertain rules, that may or may not

go against official cultural policy, while at the same time shedding light on the very processes of collecting and exhibiting: the exhibition as a mode of address. The exhibition is thus a site for both presentation and representation, where forms of display are interwoven with the discursive formation of marginalia and authority, not least in the sense of a politics of autonomy in the act of self-instituting.

Unauthorized will interweave different histories and temporalities through the excerpted and exhibited collections. The artist Niels Lomholt will show a small selection of objects from his extensive mail art collections, a loose, global network of artists to which he belonged in the 1970s and 80s. An even earlier historical moment of self-publishing can be found in the magazines produced by the Danish communist Otto Melchior between 1918 and 1922, excavated and reorganized by the artist Eva La Cour. Similarly, Ines Doujak has, for almost two decades, collected objects, mainly textiles, from Peru and Bolivia, which have formed the basis for some of her collage work, as well as being exhibited as artifacts. Finally, a collection of 21 album covers, mostly from the 1980s, by the reclusive Texan outsider Jandek will be on display, alongside a documentary on his enigmatic work. The works will displayed through the introduction of a fifth position, in the form of the Struc-tube exhibition system, appropriated and reconstructed by artist Martin Beck.

Section 2 - About You

I have a few questions about you if that's OK. You don't have to answer these questions, but they are useful in helping us understand our audience. All data provided will remain confidential and will be processed in accordance with relevant legislation, in particular the Data Protection Act 1998.

Q14. **Are you:** Male ☐ Female ☐

Q15. **What is the first part of your postcode? (e.g. DE12)**
This is just to allow us to understand how far you have come to get here

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

If visiting as a non-UK resident, please identify your country of origin below

.....

Q16. **What is your age?**

Under 5 ☐ 5-11 years ☐ 12 – 15 years ☐

16 – 19 years ☐ 20 – 24 years ☐ 25 – 64 years ☐

Over 65 ☐

Q17. **Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

Q18. **To which of these groups do you consider you belong?**

Asian or Asian British	Bangladeshi	☐
	Indian	☐
	Pakistani	☐
	Chinese	☐
	Other Asian Background	☐
Dual Heritage	White & Asian	☐
	White & Black African	☐
	White & Black Caribbean	☐
	Other Dual Heritage	☐
Black or Black British	African	☐
	Caribbean	☐
	Other Black background	☐
White	White British	☐
	Irish	☐
	Other White background	☐

Any other background .....

Q19. **Would you like to go on our <u>email mailing list</u> so we can ask for your views and inform you about future festivals, events and shows within the area?**

If yes, please give us your email address below

.....

Thank you for your time, have a good day and enjoy the rest of your time at QUAD!

Questionnaire

All That Fits: The Aesthetics of Journalism
28th May – 31st July 2011

Date Questionnaire Completed.....

Hi there, could you spare a few minutes for a short questionnaire about 'All That Fits: The Aesthetics of Journalism'?

The questionnaire is not for marketing purposes and all information collected will be treated in the strictest confidence. It will be used purely to help us to understand your views of our exhibitions. Your answers will enable us to provide high quality activity in the future. Any responses in this survey cannot be attributed to any individual.

Section 1 - About your visit

Q1. Are You:

A day visitor and local resident in Derby City	☐	Go to question Q3
A day visitor and resident of the East Midlands	☐	Go to question Q3
A day visitor from outside the East Midlands	☐	Go to question Q3
Here on an overnight stay, short break or holiday	☐	If yes, go to Q2
A visitor to Derby from overseas	☐	If yes, go to Q2

Q2. How many nights will you have stayed in Derby by the end of your visit?

☐ ☐

Q3. *Group visits only:* How many people in your group fit into the following age brackets:

0 – 10	.....	36 – 45	.....
11 – 25	.....	46 – 55	.....
26 – 35	.....	56+	.....

Q4. Are you part of an organised group visit? If yes please name the organisation or institution you are from.

.....

Q5. What is the purpose of your visit to Derby today?
Please tick all those that apply

To see specifically this exhibition	☐
To see a film at QUAD	☐
Shopping & Leisure	☐
Visiting friends or relatives	☐
Work/business	☐
Educational – School	☐
Educational – College	☐
Educational - University	☐

Q6. How did you hear about QUAD? (Please tick all answers that apply)

Printed Flyer or Poster	☐		
QUAD website	☐		
Facebook/Twitter	☐	Local Media (please state below)	☐
Word of mouth	☐	National Media (please state below)	☐

Other (please specify) .....

Q7. Is this the kind of exhibition that you would expect? *(Referring to title & venue)*

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐

Q8. Have you already visited, or will you be visiting other events within the exhibition programme?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐

Q9. Have you been to any previous exhibitions at QUAD?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please specify: .....

Q10. What has been your overall impression of the exhibition?

Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Average ☐ Poor ☐

What element of the exhibition/programme has been your highlight or are you most looking forward to?

.....

Q11. Have you been to any of these other events previously in Derby?

Festé ☐ GLEAM ☐ ID Fest ☐ FORMAT ☐ No ☐

Q12. Has your experience today made you more likely to visit arts and cultural venues and events in Derby more frequently in the future?

Likely ☐ Unlikely ☐ Not sure ☐

If Unlikely, please give reasons why

.....

.....

Q13. Do you have any general comments on QUAD/the exhibition? *(Please use block capitals)*

ALL THAT FITS:

The Aesthetics of Journalism

When we make *our* reality not a given, irreversible fact, but a possibility among many others.

All That Fits

Anthony Downey

In an era defined by a widespread suspicion with journalistic means as a way of generating both discussion and open enquiry, it would seem that artists are engaging with issues more commonly associated with journalistic discourse. Whilst this is not necessarily a complete departure from previous practices, the imbrication of both art and journalism has produced a different series of questions about the ethics and politics of representation. What, for one, are the implications of artworks employing the apparent objectivity associated with journalism? Does the use of an investigative methodology within contemporary art shift our understanding of spectatorship and our relationship to truth and forms of subjectivity? And what challenges—to the viewer and curator alike—are being made by these works in the broader context of current institutional and exhibitionary practices?

If art increasingly employs the investigatory forms and aesthetics of journalism, then we may also need to ask what forms of knowledge are being produced and what critical tools we are being encouraged to develop? Why does art use journalistic forms but does not present its practice as a form of journalistic knowledge? It is perhaps all the more pertinent to note the extent to which *aesthetic journalism* attempts to provide a view on the view (or angle) we regularly receive and consume through various media. This already involved series of questions can be further complicated if we consider the subject matter being explored in a significant number of works in *All That Fits*; works in which we see so-called marginalized figures—the refugee, the political prisoner, the dispossessed—and the extent to which they have been excluded, to different degrees, from the fraternity of the social sphere, appeal to the safety net of the nation state, and recourse to international law.

Although such figures have become a staple of contemporary art and journalism, it is notable that they are presented here not as the exception to modernity but, more often than not, as an exemplification of its representational strategies. Which brings us to a far more radical proposal: what if the fact of representation, in all its strategic forms of inclusion and exclusion, is the point at which we find not so much an imperfect modern subject as we do the exemplary subject that underwrites the representational logic of journalism and the stock images of media outlets? How, thereafter, can these subjects be represented *beyond* the images we find in journalistic media and, crucially, how can contemporary art practices blast open the representational continuum within which we have come to accept images of dispossession, death, starvation, injustice and genocide as part of our everyday consumption of images?

The responsibility of the news, we are told, is to report the facts of a situation truthfully and objectively; artists are not bound by these constraints. By assuming the role of a reporter, the artist exposes both the situation and the way in which the situation is constructed (aestheticised). Aestheticisation, moreover, can produce forms of an aestheticisation: an inability to deal with the particularity of the subject—the refugee, for example—portrayed before us beyond its symbolic and thereafter depoliticized significance. To grapple with such complexity, needless to say, calls for a complexity of response. The artists in this show, in offering a view on the view and thereafter implicating themselves into the scenarios unfolding before us, complicate our viewing experience. In so doing, they explore the far from simplistic issue of responsibility and audience culpability. There is, in sum, no such thing as an innocent bystander-cum-viewer in the works in this show and each of us are called upon to engage with our responsibility for the images being produced in our name and for our everyday consumption. If *aesthetic journalism* does indeed reflect and refract upon the order of information that defines our relationship to the world, then it is, finally, a crucial element in opening up and redistributing our sensibilities and how we understand (or fail to understand) the world in which we live in today.

The Production of Truth

An introduction to *All That Fits: The Aesthetics of Journalism*

Alfredo Cramerotti and Simon Sheikh

At first glance the premise, and promise, of this exhibition might seem contradictory and unlikely, even unfeasible: what on earth could be meant by the *aesthetics* of journalism? Surely journalism is something to be thought of and discussed in terms of ethics not aesthetics?

But move from the glance to the gaze and something else will appear, something will come into view: a certain organisation of matter, maybe a certain framing of the real that allows it to be perceived and accepted as real, and a specific modality and mediation become visible, whether on the TV screen, the pixilated surface of your pc, or the smudgy print of your newspaper and the glossy pages of your magazine. These formats and their styles of writing and imaging are all the results of very precise and finely tuned aesthetic choices, even if we do not give them much thought in our daily contact with them. Some things such as editorial processes, long since established into given formats in terms of length, image sizes, segment durations and so on, are also aesthetic and not only ethical.

With this exhibition, we set out to explore these aesthetics of the medium, journalism, in terms of what can fit into existing formats. The first half of our title is *All That Fits* and refers to the *New York Times*' famous slogan "All the News That's Fit to Print!" Surely, this dictum had an ethical impulse, if not a moral tone, indicating that they would never print something that was improper or ill-timed, and certainly also never anything that was untrue. But it can also be understood in a more formal way, that is in terms of what fits into the format of the newspaper as an object and circulator of discourse, as well as the formats within it, from front page, feature article, columns, obituaries, paragraphs and so on.

What happens to that which cannot fit into the formats of, for example, an article or a news segment, or a documentary? There seem to be just two possible answers: either it is cut down until it can fit, that is, it is made to fit regardless of its materiality and identity, or it is simply discarded altogether, since the formats cannot be altered. (The exception to this rule would be rare rather than regular, for example the photographic horrors of natural disasters, major political upheavals or sudden wars.)

However, we think there might also be a third answer. That which does not fit into the formats of mass-media becomes the potential material and topic for works of art. Here we are primarily not thinking of strategies of excavation, archiving and an interest in the arcane that has long been one of the hallmarks of contemporary art. We are thinking of documentary and activist practices that attempt to highlight what has been left in the dark. We can consider the artist as a journalist, researching and reporting from the frontlines of cases and stories outside the blinding light of mainstream media. This, then, would be another meaning of the phrase *The Aesthetics of Journalism*, covering instead the use—from the point of view of artistic production—of traditional journalistic devices for an aesthetic and political project.

All that Fits: The Aesthetics of Journalism presents seemingly incompatible components such as aesthetic experiences and political activism, community events and private investigations. The exhibition thus provocatively tries to advance the idea that art and journalism are not separate forms of communication, as mostly thought, but rather two sides of a unique activity, which is the production and distribution of images and information. What the project brings to the surface are the ways of communicating that this nexus of imaging and informing produces, as well as the aesthetic principles used in such an ordering, in such acts of transmission.

As visual regimes, both the journalistic and the artistic make claims for the truth, albeit of a different kind. The former is a coded system that speaks *for* the truth (or so it claims), the latter a set of activities that questions itself at every step (or so it claims), thus *making* truth. Throughout modern times, it has been of vital importance for journalists that their reports are taken to be truthful: true images, correct facts and impartial wording. For the artist it has been more important that s/he was true and *authentic*. Because it is increasingly difficult to look at something and safely identify it as art, the figure of the artist must appear as truthful and real as possible. Whereas journalism traditionally provides a view on the world 'out there,' as it 'really' is, art often presents a view

on the view, positing truth through critical acts of (self) reflection and auto-critique of how images are produced, and what they say. *All that Fits: The Aesthetics of Journalism* will examine both as types of truth production, as systems of information that define truth in terms of the visible: producing not only what can be seen, but also what can be imagined, and thus imaged. As such, this exhibition revolves around the aesthetics of journalism: how images are produced and how they are produced to appear as truthful.

Here, we start to get closer to the core of reality itself when we make *our* reality not a given, irreversible fact, but a possibility among many others. There are always stories to tell and many ways to tell them. But what is important is how *we* partake in this narration of the real, and not just leave it to others. We do not only consume images and ideas, but also criticise them, and in turn, maybe make some of our own. The production of truth is a shared undertaking, with vast political and social ramifications.

In his late work, the philosopher Michel Foucault wrote about the politics of truth, particularly what could be the meaning of the ancient Greek term *parrhésia*, which means telling the truth.[‡] What Foucault was questioning was the figure of the truth-sayer. Who can speak the truth, and does it require certain ways of speaking as well as taking up certain positions? In antiquity, the occupation of this position was at the peril of one's own life, and thus required courage and self-sacrifice. This has led many a contemporary commentator to focus on the heroic aspects of *parrhésia*, pointing out injustices and speaking on behalf of the people against the power that be, regardless of the consequences for oneself.

As single figures, both the reporter and the artist have throughout modernity been viewed as such authentic voices and heroic figures. Simultaneously, though, they are constantly vilified as being complicit and corrupt, of reneging on their potential position of truth-sayer. However, for Foucault the situation is even more complex, indeed double: in order to have the ability to speak the truth to power in antiquity, one could not be just anyone, one had to have a position that was somehow connected to the despot, and speak from a position of authority. Secondly, *parrhésia* does not only mean to speak the truth to someone, i.e. those in power, but also the ability and insight *to speak the truth about oneself.*

This would indicate that speaking the truth also means self-reflection, and the willingness to disclose the position from where one is speaking, and through which means and methods one is constructing the speaking (of the truth). To speak the truth is also to speak the truth about oneself and one's acts of speaking, thus exposing subject and object of the speech equally. In this light, we find it highly timely, and pertinent, to reflect the journalistic in the aesthetic, and the aesthetic in the journalistic.

In order to do so, we have divided the works into three subgroups or themes: *the position of the speaker*; *the politics of the image*; *exposition and militant research.*

The exhibition will take the form of a rotating display of works, figuring in different compositions that all revolve around the key questions of truth, images and information. At the same time this will reflect the rotation of the news cycle, albeit at a different, slowed-down speed. We believe that this will make our curatorial editing more visible, and also user-friendlier, with the works not just one after another in an endless row of images and information, but with a juxtaposition of different approaches each dialoguing with each other, with the media and the overall theme in various ways and in various combinations.

The Speaker concerns itself with a specific figure; the speaking subject or author. How does this figure emerge through discourse, and what are its functions? What can be said and not said in order for a speaking subject to appear as real, as authentic, as authoritative and/or as truthful? How are subjects positioned, and how is truth produced, and subsequently staged? What is implied in certain speech acts and subject positions, such as the figure of 'the reporter' and 'the artist', as well as 'the witness' and 'the source'?

The Image examines how images are ideologically produced, through the framing and positioning of the mechanisms of modern mass media, its figures of authority and figures of speech, but also how counter-images can be created. Here, the many different ways of image production will be reflected, discussed and deconstructed. An aesthetics of journalism and documentary will be proposed as that which can get to the truth of the ideology of mass-media images, in opposition to the claim of neutrality and pragmatism.

The Militant continues the strand of counter-images and counter-information, but through the artistic employment of journalistic traits such as exposé and research. However, the practices highlighted here often uncover what the media do not want uncovered. This returns us to some of the media's initial claims that have been brushed aside in an increasingly commercial and corporate media industry.

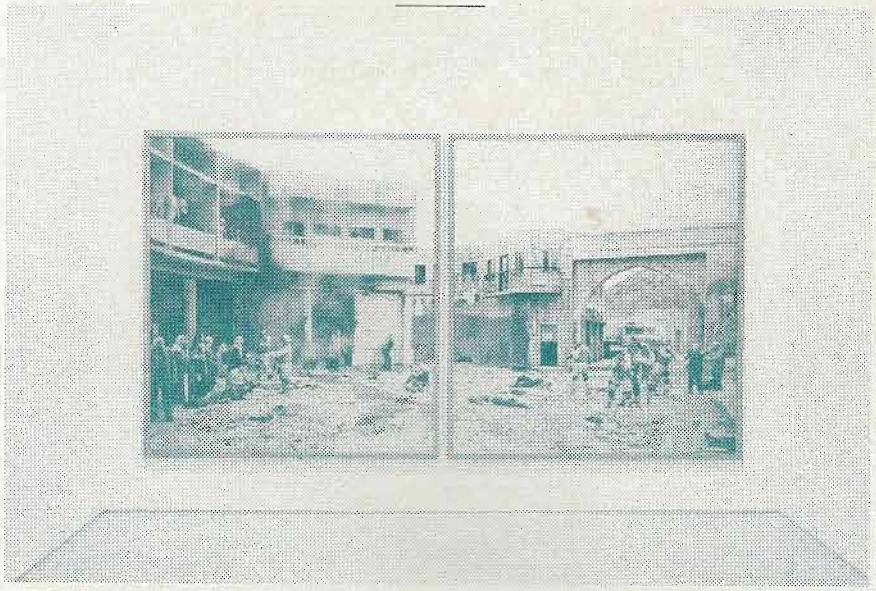
The artistic positions in the exhibition thus generate a principal question: is it possible to work with aesthetics *and* informatics, to be both reflective and

precise? To both employ documentary techniques and journalistic methods while remaining self-reflecting and critical on those means? Ultimately, the artist's work here is not about delivering information but questioning it, to highlight both the aesthetic working of reportage and the informational turn within current artistic production.

‡ Michel Foucault, 'The Courage of Truth' Lectures at the Collège de France 1983—1984, Houndsville, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

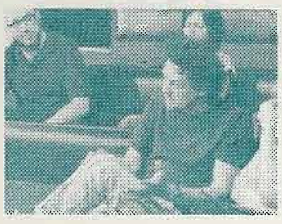
THE SPEAKER

WHO CAN SPEAK THE TRUTH, AND DOES IT REQUIRE CERTAIN WAYS OF SPEAKING AS WELL AS TAKING UP CERTAIN POSITIONS?



THE DREADFUL DETAILS | ERIC BAUDELAIRE

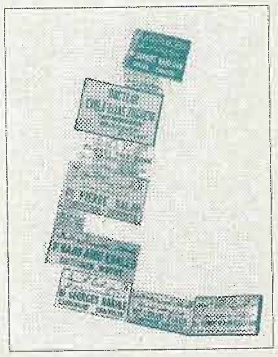
INSURANCE.AES256 | MICHAEL TAKEO MAGRUDER



THE MUTIRAO PROJECT EXCERPTS
GRAZIELA KUNSCH

TELEVIZED I | KATYA SANDER

EPISODE 1 | RENZO MARTENS



NO ILLNESS IN NEITHER HERE OR THERE
WALID RAAD/THE ATLAS GROUP

13 Juli 2007. Peinlicher Rückzug bei der BBC, der Fernsehsender entschuldigte sich gestern bei Königin Elizabeth II. für die Ausstrahlung eines Videos, auf dem sie „eingeschlafen" vorzeitig während einer Fotosession mit der amerikanischen Fotografin Annie Leibovitz erstarrt. Sie wie das Video zusammengestellt sei, stelle es nicht die tatsächliche Abfolge der Ereignisse dar, erklärte der Sender in einer offiziellen Entschuldigung bei der Queen und England bei Le Monde.

Damit widersprach die BBC ihrer eigenen früheren Darstellung, wonach die Königin Aufnahmen mit der Amerikanerin vor Wut [illegible] abgebrochen hatte [illegible] Die [illegible] Bitte der Fotografin, worauf dem Video zwar enthalten, das [illegible] wie die Königin scheinbar [illegible] und [illegible] Saal in Buckingham verließ. Zwischen beiden Szenen gab es jedoch einen Schnitt. Es sei nicht die tatsächliche Abfolge der Ereignisse gewesen, dass die Queen [illegible] nachdem der Bitte von Leibovitz den Saal verlassen habe, erklärte die BBC in ihrer Rechtfertigung. Die Königin habe die Fotosession „nicht vorzeitig" abgebrochen.

12 July 2007. The BBC has today apologised to the Queen after airing a "misrepresentative" clip implying she struck a photo shoot with American photographer Annie Leibovitz, filmed for the documentary, A Year With The Queen, to be aired later this year. Leibovitz is seen in the clip asking the Queen as she [illegible] the room. However, [illegible]

At the airtime's launch, BBC1's channel controller, Peter Fincham, added: "Annie Leibovitz gets it slightly wrong and the Queen walks out in a huff." However, it has emerged that the scene where the Queen was complaining to an aide was actually filmed on her way to the sitting. In a later joint statement, the BBC and production company RDF Media said the film had been edited out of sequence and apologise to the corporation is error.

Dienstag | Tuesday 26.9.2006

In der Montagausgabe sind in der Grafik zur Tagesthemen zum Abkommen verwechselt worden. Die angeblichen Sozialisten firmieren unter dem Kürzel MSZP und die Liberalen unter SzDS.

We said in an article about plans by McDonald's to offer online learning for its employees, September 19, that 97% of British households now have a computer. In my remarks comparing of its staff that McDonald's estimates has access to a computer.

Montag | Monday 25.9.2006

In an article on page 12, September 21, we described Kolmylia as a country when it is a region of Russia. Its leader, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, claims he was abducted by aliens in 1997, not seven years ago.

We said in an article, page 14, September 19, that when the First Crusade reached Jerusalem in 1099, the entire Muslim population was massacred. In fact the Crusaders massacred the entire population, Muslim and Jewish.

Freitag | Friday 22.9.2006

In a report headed Iranian government labels US a lawbreaker, September 20, we referred to a stand-off between the US and Iran over the latter's "nuclear weapons programme". We should have said simply "nuclear programme", as in that context perhaps "alleged nuclear weapons programme".

Donnerstag | Thursday 21.9.2006

In der Berichterstattung über die Strompreiserhöhung der Energiekonzerne Vattenfall und Vattenfall in der gestrigen Ausgabe in der Unterzeile ein Fehler unterlaufen. Die durchschnittliche Erhöhung von 40

Dienstag | Tuesday 3.10.2006

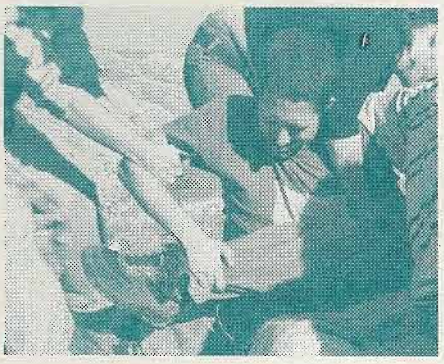
In a piece of confusion over a reference to Che Guevara as a "Cuban", page 18, September 30, it is perhaps worth reminding ourselves that he was born in Rosario, Argentina (on June 14, 1928).

and alleged logging in Malaysian and Chinese timber firms, [illegible] week forestry laws and export logs to China, Japan and Korea. We meant that [illegible] firms.

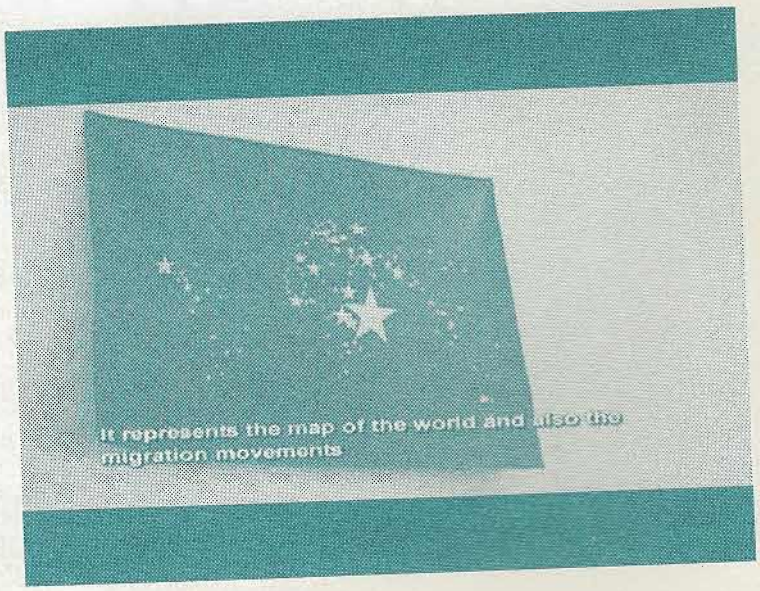
Samstag | Saturday 30.9.2006

Greenery and [illegible]

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS | ANITA DI BIANCO

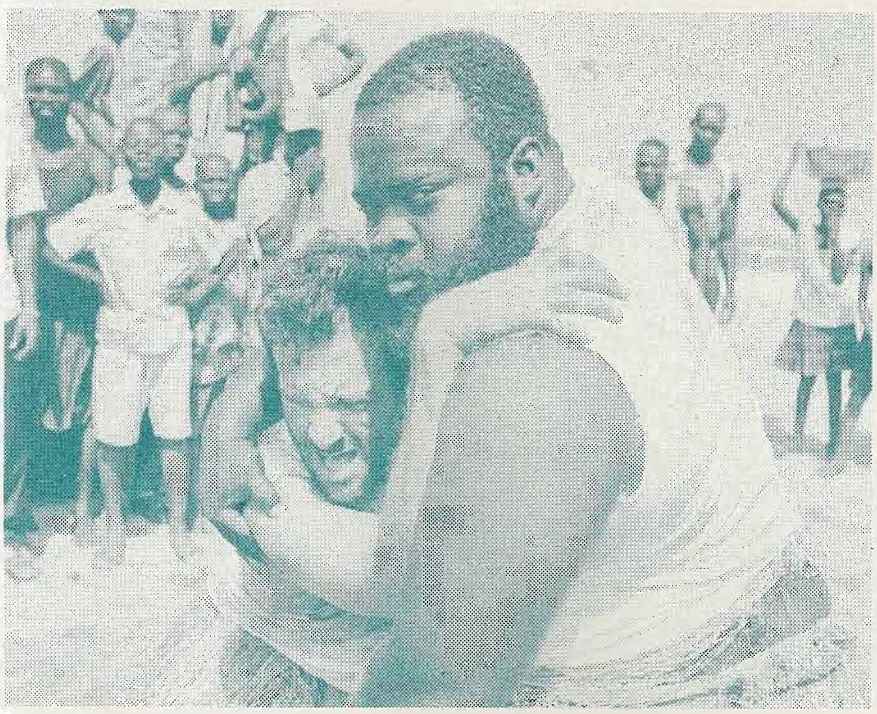


WILD SEEDS | YAEL BARTANA

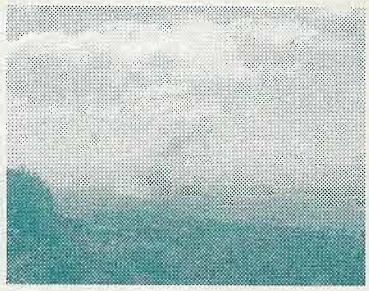


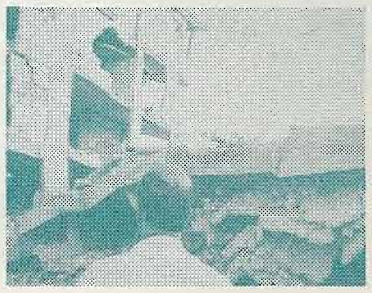
UNIVERSAL EMBASSY | HITO STEYERL

MATHARE SAFARI | SLUM-TV



ELMINA | DOUGLAS FISHBONE





NIGHTS AND DAYS | LAMIA JOREIGE

THE SPEAKER

THE DREADFUL DETAILS

ERIC BAUDELAIRE

What can a war image do? *The Dreadful Details*, a diptych composed by Eric Baudelaire, proposes an answer. The piece, a 'grand machine' on modern forms of conflict, revisits all of the images of war that haunt us. It also engages in a subterranean exchange with Gilles Deleuze. In the process, we understand how a beautiful photographic image can, in a single stroke, let us see again and reaffirm the sacred persistence of the human.†

INSURANCE.AES256

MICHAEL TAKEO MAGRUDER

On the 28th July 2010, WikiLeaks—a non-profit organisation renowned for publishing classified and censored materials—posted a link to a mysterious 1.4GB file entitled insurance.aes256 on its *Afghan War Diary* website. The file's appearance generated speculation and debate as no official explanation was given about its contents or purpose.

Countless individuals and interested parties have now downloaded insurance.aes256 and redistributed it across innumerable hard drives and servers spanning the world's vast unregulated file-sharing networks, rendering it forever obtainable and impossible to eradicate. An anonymous collective now patiently awaits the day in which the key to opening it will be revealed. *What knowledge (or secrets) will be uncovered within its cryptic digital form?*

THE MUTIRAO PROJECT

GRAZIELA KUNSCH

The Mutirao Project‡ is an open-ended dialogical research process that exists solely in the form of conversations, lectures and classes. The starting point for these verbal exchanges are single take videos that investigate the ways in which self-organized cities are generated. These 'A.N.T.I. cinema excerpts' are designed to kick start discussions. Graziela Kunsch varies her screening programme at each presentation to create different focuses for debate. The videos mainly document political activities Kunsch is engaged in and which she has filmed herself—the housing and free transport struggles in Brazil.

TELEVIZED I

KATYA SANDER

What is a news-studio? What kind of speech becomes possible from this space—and what kind of subject? What does it mean to anchor the news? How to get a news anchor to speak about her/his own position in the news? It is from this problem that *Televised I*: the Anchor, the I, and the Studio departs.

We all know that the news anchor reports from a news studio. But what exactly is this thing that we call a news studio. What kinds of relations does it allow to be established between what is seen and what is said? If the utterance of 'I' is avoided by news anchors, then what comes to stand in place of this utterance? What relates the seen to the said if not 'I'?

NO ILLNESS IN NEITHER HERE NOR THERE

WALID RAAD/THE ATLAS GROUP

From 1975 until 1991, Dr Fadl Fakhouri was in the habit of carrying two 8mm film cameras with him wherever he went. With one camera he exposed a frame of film every time he thought the wars had come to an end. With the other camera he exposed a frame of film every time he came across the sign of a doctor's or dentist's office. Dr Fakhouri titled the two rolls of film, *Miraculous Beginnings* and *No, Illness is Neither Here Nor There.*

EPISODE 1

RENZO MARTENS

Episode 1 is the registration of Renzo Martens' activities in Chechnya. He penetrates the war-zone—alone, illegal and carrying a Hi8 camera—and takes on the role of the single most important actor in war: that of the ubiquitous, yet forever undefined, television viewer for whose attention the battles are being fought. Amidst ruins and bombings, he does not ask refugees, UN employees and rebels how they feel. Those stories are well known, and serve no purpose for those who tell them. Instead, he asks them how they think he feels. The film forms a metaphor for an economy of images, roles and emotions. At the same time, there Martens stands, alone, with his camera, recording. The film is not about some external phenomenon, but about the terms and conditions of its own existence.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

ANITA DI BIANCO

Corrections and Clarifications is an ongoing newspaper project, an edited compilation of daily revisions, retractions, re-wordings, distinctions and apologies to print news from September 2001 to the present. A reverse-chronological catalogue of lapses in naming and classification, of tangled catch-phrases, patterns of miss-speech and inflection, connotation and enumeration.

Previous editions have examined the printed news media in the US, UK (as well as other international press from Asia, Australia, and India printed in English), Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and more recently, that of Bosnia, Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia.

WILD SEEDS

YAEL BARTANA

Wild Seeds consists of two projections shown on adjoining walls. One of the two projections focuses on a group of youths in the middle of a barren West Bank mountain landscape. The group is simulating the 'evacuation of the Gilad settlement' in the form of a game. The game was developed by Israeli activists and is based upon an actual confrontation between the Israeli army and Jewish settlers, the atmosphere moves back and forth between being playful and aggressive.

The second projection allows the viewer to read English translations synchronized to the cries and exclamations within the other film: words such as 'traitor' or sentences like 'A Jew does not deport another Jew' or 'This is our land'. The text projection creates a second narrative that has less to do with the game but more with the political moment in evacuation.

UNIVERSAL EMBASSY

HITO STEYERL

The former Somali Embassy in Brussels is being squatted by 'Sans-papiers', who proclaim a Universal Embassy on the premises.

MATHARE SAFARI

SLUM-TV

Mathare Safari is a competition for young European filmmakers, eager to explore the dangerous and exotic world of Mathare, a slum in Nairobi. Filmmakers are requested to enter a film explaining how they would prepare for a week in Mathare. The prize; a week in Mathare. This film, which launched the competition, offers a glimpse of life in the slum, eschewing images of suffering and poverty. Adopting the style of a travel program, it tours the local eateries, hotels, transport and entertainment venues.

ELMINA

DOUGLAS FISHBONE

Elmina, Fishbone's feature-length melodramatic film, explores consumer culture and the mass media from a radical new direction, presenting an unusual experiment in collaboration and co-authorship. Shot entirely on location in Ghana, *Elmina* was scripted and filmed by Revele Films, a leading Ghanaian production company, with a cast of major Ghanaian celebrities.

The project is made more provocative by the strategy surrounding its release. Made with the support of three collectors who acted as Executive Producers, *Elmina* is available as a low-cost mass-market DVD throughout West Africa and African immigrant markets, as well as a limited edition in the art world. As such, the film challenges the way art film is normally financed, collected and distributed, and defies one singular reading or identity.

NIGHTS AND DAYS

LAMIA JOREIGE

Nights and Days uses notes written and filmed during summer 2006 to recount the personal experience of War. The first part which resemble, yet is not a diary of war, alternates day-shots with night-shots and features a soundtrack expressing the idea of time passing, the awaiting, the interrogations and fears experienced in such unusual time. The second part is a journey to south Lebanon which has been devastated during that war. It alternates beautiful and peaceful landscapes with ruins and destruction with only music for sound, as not a word can express this devastation. *Nights and Days* questions the relation between image and sound and also reflects on the notions of *beauty* and *horror* as most of the images are *beautiful* urban or natural landscape, where only a detail may réveal the presence of war and its violence.

† *The Fresco Of Icons* by Pierre Zaoui

‡ *Mutirao* is a Portuguese word meaning participatory mutual aid

the IMAGE

HOW IMAGES ARE
IDEOLOGICALLY PRODUCED,
THROUGH THE FRAMING
AND POSITIONING...

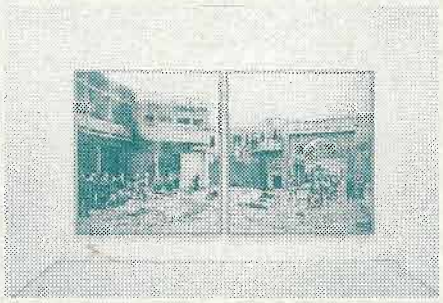
CHICAGO *Broomberg and Chanarin*

TROPICAL BLOW UP *Tamar Guimarães*

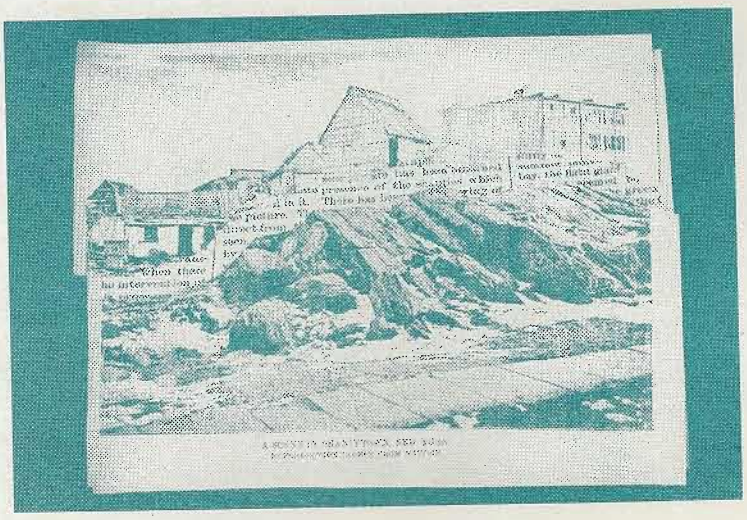
UNTITLED RETRIEVAL *Abraham Cruzvillegas*

NO ILLNESS IN NEITHER HERE OR THERE
Walid Raad/The Atlas Group

SOMEWHERE IN A GREAT COUNTRY *Alejandro Vidal*



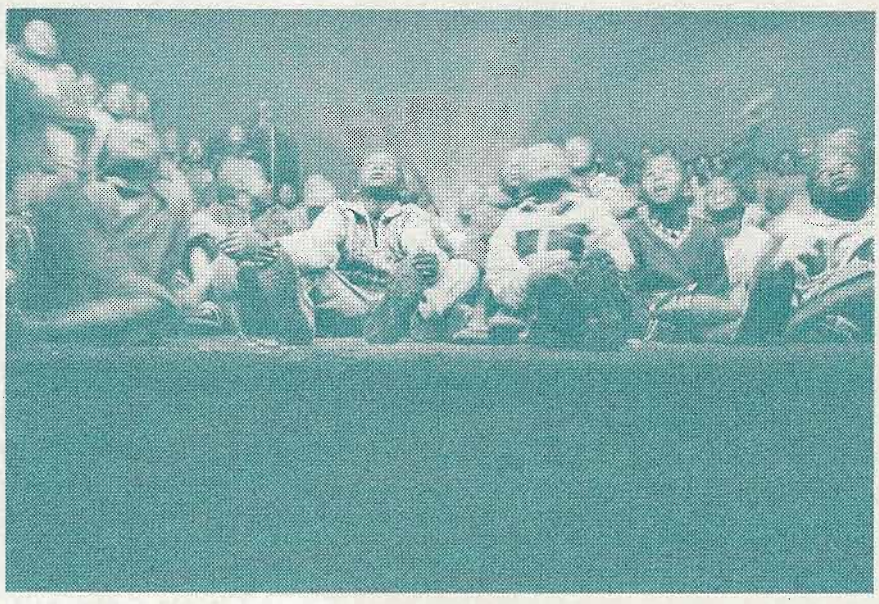
THE DREADFUL DETAILS *Eric Baudelaire*



READING THE ECONOMIST *Zachary Formwalt*

THE MUTIRAO PROJECT EXCERPTS
Graziela Kunsch

INSURANCE.AES256
Michael Takeo Magruder



MATHARE SAFARI *SLUM-TV*

NEW REPORT *Wynne Greenwood and K8 Hardy*

the IMAGE

CHICAGO

Broomberg and Chanarin

Every thing that happened, happened here first, in rehearsal. The invasion of Beirut, the first and second Intifada, the Gaza withdrawal, the Battle of Falluja; almost every one of Israel's major military tactics in the Middle East over the past three decades was performed in advance here in Chicago, an artificial but realistic Arab town built by the Israeli Defence Force for urban combat training.

TROPICAL BLOW UP

Tamar Guimãraes

The silent black and white film *Tropical Blow Up* is based on photographs from two Brazilian tabloid newspapers active in the 1960s as well as Guimarães' own photographic work. She found the images in the São Paulo state archive under the rubric 'urban crime'. In one of the photographs a man points at a clearance in the bush where something or someone once was or should have been. In another image, sectioned in parts, a woman's corpse lies partly mutilated on the ground. This gruesome image is sectioned in Tropical blow up in such a way that the viewer only momentarily sees a fraction of the corpse. Combined with Guimarães' own foliage-garden images, the result is a dreamy and uncanny experience.

UNTITLED RETRIEVAL

Abraham Cruzvillegas

Untitled Retrieval is a piece made by chance. Cruzvillegas blindly bought a plastic transparent supermarket bag with a bunch of medium format slides, on the impulse that there must be something interesting amongst them.

Only after being invited by Francesco Bonami to feature in an exhibition, did he finally decided to look through the slides and found within them pictures from different moments of a family life, holiday snaps, documenting places and experiences: a private journalism.

The images describe their fascination of being there, wherever it may be, capturing reality, but without any other intention than witnessing everyday life. Sailing, walking, breeding dogs, eating, having fun, celebrating, being sad...

This work explores his response to contemporary life, to the over whelming flood of information, related to consumption and pretension. This is life as it is.

NO ILLNESS IN NEITHER HERE NOR THERE

Walid Raad/The Atlas Group

From 1975 until 1991, Dr Fadl Fakhouri was in the habit of carrying two 8mm film cameras with him wherever he went. With one camera he exposed a

frame of film every time he thought the wars had come to an end. With the other camera he exposed a frame of film every time he came across the sign of a doctor's or dentist's office. Dr Fakhouri titled the two rolls of film, *Miraculous Beginnings* and *No, Illness Is Neither Here Nor There.*

SOMEWHERE IN A GREAT COUNTRY
Alejandro Vidal
Alejandro Vidal works close to the conflict and power relations. Control mechanisms, privatization of insecurity, suspicion and new communication tactics have been recurrent themes being addressed from various perspectives and through multiple formal strategies. *Somewhere in a Great Country* (2010), comprised of imagery taken from captured low resolution Internet videos. These images belong to popular celebrations or festive acts like Independence Day, political rallies, etc. in which fireworks are used. However, there is scarcely any human presence in the photos, resembling instead acts of dissent or sabotage, car bombs or threats. The image quality is reminiscent of surveillance, or the green tone of a night vision lens. This work reminds us of the relationship between history and fiction.

THE DREADFUL DETAILS
Eric Baudelaire
What can a war image do? *The Dreadful Details*, a diptych composed by Eric Baudelaire, proposes an answer. The piece, a 'grand machine' on modern forms of conflict, revisits all of the images of war that haunt us. It also engages in a subterranean exchange with Gilles Deleuze. In the process, we understand how a beautiful photographic image can, in a single stroke, let us see again and reaffirm the sacred persistence of the human.†

READING THE ECONOMIST
Zachary Formwalt
A notebook kept by Karl Marx in 1868 on The *Economist*, a couple of episodes in the history of spirit photography, the infamous photographs of bank queues in 2007, and an image found at "the beginning of the photo-illustrated press" are brought together in an attempt to capture the space that separated financial journalism from photo-journalism as they emerged in the nineteenth century.

THE MUTIRAO PROJECT
Graziela Kunsch
The *Mutirao Project*‡ is an open-ended dialogical research process that exists solely in the form of conversations, lectures and classes. The starting point for these verbal exchanges are single take videos that investigate the ways in which self-organized cities are generated. These 'A.N.T.I. cinema excerpts' are designed to kick start discussions. Graziela Kunsch varies her screening programme at each presentation to create different focuses for debate. The videos mainly document political activities Kunsch is engaged in and which she has filmed herself—the housing and free transport struggles in Brazil.

INSURANCE.AES256
Michael Takeo Magruder
On the 28th July 2010, WikiLeaks—a non-profit organisation renowned for publishing classified and censored materials—posted a link to a mysterious 1.4GB file entitled insurance.aes256 on its Afghan War Diary website. The file's appearance generated speculation and debate as no official explanation was given about its contents or purpose.

Countless individuals and interested parties have now downloaded insurance.aes256 and redistributed it across innumerable hard drives and servers spanning the world's vast unregulated file-sharing networks, rendering it forever obtainable and impossible to eradicate. An anonymous collective now patiently awaits the day in which the key to opening it will be revealed. *What knowledge (or secrets) will be uncovered within its cryptic digital form?*

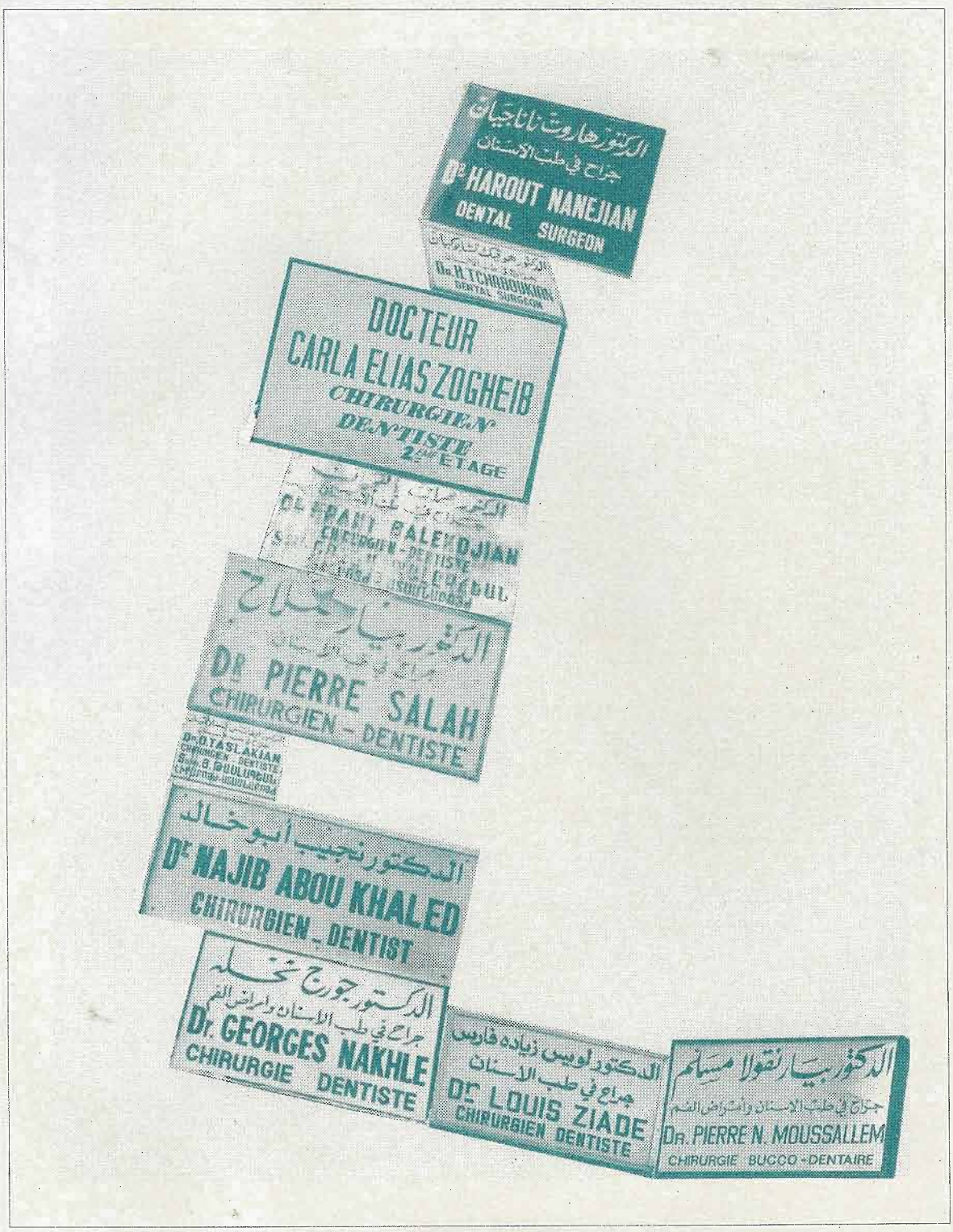
MATHARE SAFARI
SLUM-TV
Mathare Safari is a competition for young European filmmakers, eager to explore the dangerous and exotic world of Mathare, a slum in Nairobi. Filmmakers are requested to enter a film explaining how they would prepare for a week in Mathare. The prize; a week in Mathare. This film, which launched the competition, offers a glimpse of life in the slum, eschewing images of suffering and poverty. Adopting the style of a travel program, it tours the local eateries, hotels, transport and entertainment venues.

NEW REPORT
Wynne Greenwood and K8 Hardy
In *New Report*, Wynne Greenwood and K8 Hardy are reporters at WKRH —the feminist news station that is 'pregnant with information.' As Henry Irigaray (Hardy) and Henry Stein-Acker-Hill (Greenwood), these two lesbian feminist artists stage reports on and with their friends, their social her stories, their nerves, and their bodies. It is urgently broadcast live to the newsroom and out to their studio audience. An ongoing collaboration, *New Report* investigates how news is made and received, while restating the spaces, crises, and histories that deserve to be publicly considered.

† *The Fresco Of Icons* by Pierre Zaoui
‡ *Mutirao* is a Portuguese word meaning participatory mutual aid

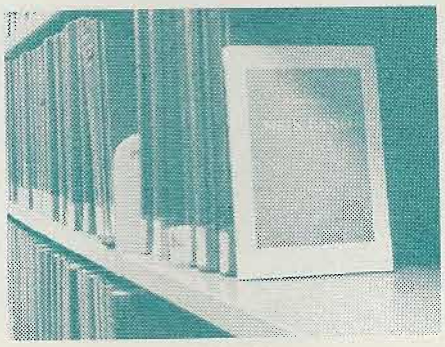
THE MILITANT

ARTISTIC PRACTICES OFTEN
UNCOVER WHAT THE MEDIA
DO NOT WANT UNCOVERED



NO ILLNESS IN NEITHER HERE NOR THERE
WALID RAAD/THE ATLAS GROUP

CONTAINED MOBILITY
URSULA BIEMANN

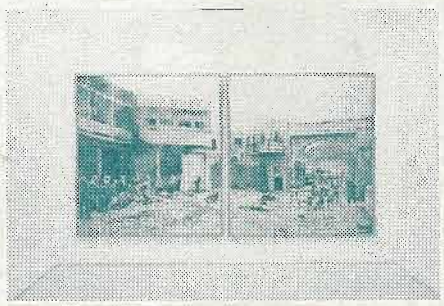


MEIN LAND
MICHAEL BLUM

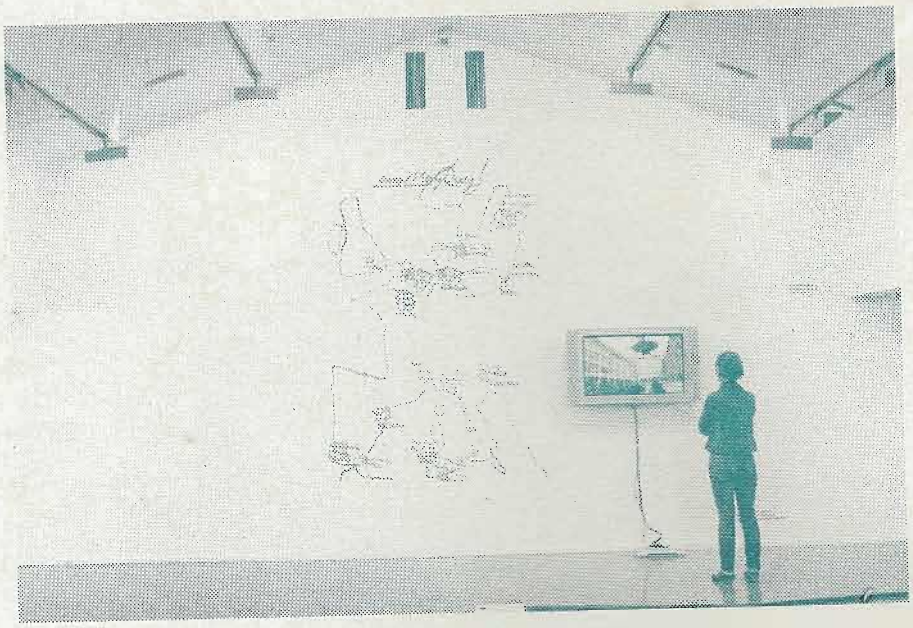
CHICAGO
BROOMBERG AND CHANARIN

THE FITTEST SURVIVE
OLIVER RESSLER

MÉMOIRE
SAMMY BALOJI

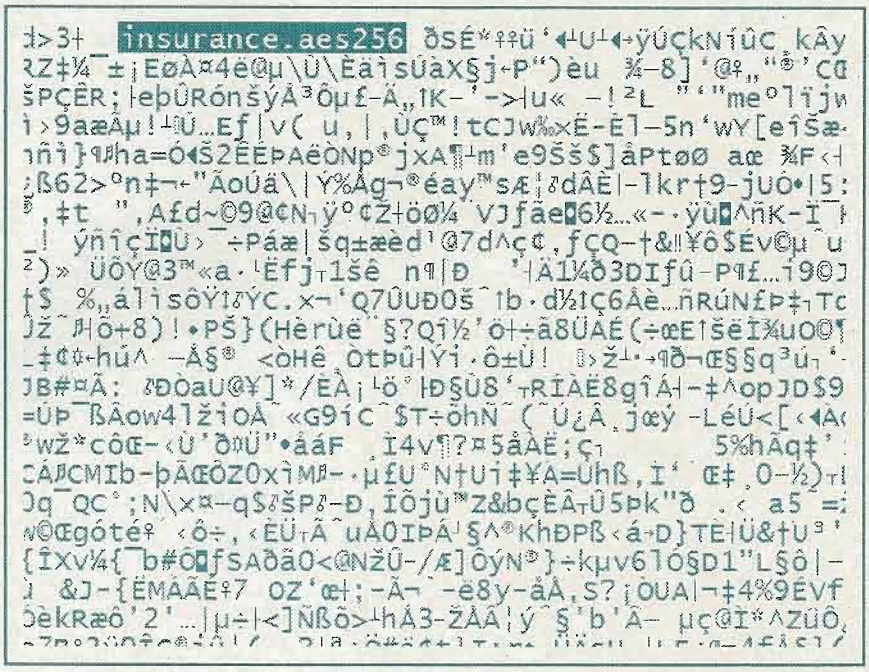


THE DREADFUL DETAILS
ERIC BAUDELAIRE



FIRST OF MAY (THE CITY-FACTORY).
MARCELO EXPOSITO

MATHARE SAFARI
SLUM-TV



INSURANCE.AES256
MICHAEL TAKED MAGRUDER

ENVOY
ROSS BIRRELL

THE MUTIRAO PROJECT EXCERPTS
GRAZIELA KUNSCH

THE MILITANT

NO ILLNESS IN NEITHER HERE NOR THERE

WALID RAAD/THE ATLAS GROUP

From 1975 until 1991, Dr Fadl Fakhouri was in the habit of carrying two 8mm film cameras with him wherever he went. With one camera he exposed a frame of film every time he thought the wars had come to an end. With the other camera he exposed a frame of film every time he came across the sign of a doctor's or dentist's office. Dr Fakhouri titled the two rolls of film, *Miraculous Beginnings* and *No, Illness is Neither Here Nor There.*

CONTAINED MOBILITY

URSULA BIEMANN

The 2-channel video projection *Contained Mobility* looks at the condition emerging from the reinforced regulations of movements to Europe with a focus on the sophisticated methods and technologies which have been developed on either side: on the part of the authorities to discipline the movement of goods and people and on the part of the passengers to outwit the restrictions and achieve mobility and security. Following the Belorusian refugee Anatol from the Siberian Gulag to Liverpool, the video mixes fictional documents with real facts to narrate the trajectory of a migrant in the post-humanist age. *Contained Mobility* was commissioned by the International Liverpool Biennial, 2004.

MEIN LAND

MICHAEL BLUM

Mein Land (My Country) is a collection of about a hundred compressed texts about cases of deportations in Europe. Based on daily reports documenting the deportation of 'illegal immigrants', Michael Blum developed a scary litany of lives broken and destinies crushed in the name of legality and democracy. Each story is economically written and edited, thus developing a style mid-way between news dispatch and objectivist poetry.

CHICAGO

BROOMBERG AND CHANARIN

Every thing that happened, happened here first, in rehearsal. The invasion of Beirut, the first and second Intifada, the Gaza withdrawal, the Battle of Falluja; almost every one of Israel's major military tactics in the Middle East over the past three decades was performed in advance here in Chicago, an artificial but realistic Arab town built by the Israeli Defence Force for urban combat training.

THE FITTEST SURVIVE

OLIVER RESSLER

The video *The Fittest Survive* is based on filming the five-day course "Surviving Hostile Regions" done in January 2006 in Wales, Great Britain by the AKE Group. The course instructors are British ex-special force soldiers. The participants are businessmen who are preparing for business in Iraq and other dangerous regions, government officials and mainstream journalists. / The video, primarily filmed by hand camera, follows the survival-course participants as they experience the staged reality of live shell bombardments, an assault by armed guerrillas, the rescue of accident victims, and moving through mine fields. Above this training camp in Wales, low-flying British fighter planes hold manoeuvres and foreshadow the real war theatres in which the class participants will soon be.

MÉMOIRE

SAMMY BALOJI

Mémoire addresses colonial violence, shattered dreams of independence and the postcolonial political fallout that exists within the Democratic Republic of Congo. A beautifully crafted abstract video, *Mémoire* is shot in collaboration with the Congolese performance artist Faustin Linyekula. Sammy Baloji's work shines a powerful spotlight on contemporary Congolese reality. It interrogates the abuse of power and its legacy, revealing the devastating impact that exploitative cultures have on both society and the environment. It calls for greater awareness of the local consequences of 'development' and highlights the rights of local people. Baloji creates videos that investigate the body, and, despite restrictions on photographing public sites, he produces images of the Congo's urban architecture. His work raises social consciousness and stimulates artistic development in the Katanga region, a locus for colonial and postcolonial exploitation of its wealth of minerals essential for Western technologies.

THE DREADFUL DETAILS
ERIC BAUDELAIRE

What can a war image do? *The Dreadful Details*, a diptych composed by Eric Baudelaire, proposes an answer. The piece, a 'grand machine' on modern forms of conflict, revisits all of the images of war that haunt us. It also engages in a subterranean exchange with Gilles Deleuze. In the process, we understand how a beautiful photographic image can, in a single stroke, let us see again and reaffirm the sacred persistence of the human.†

FIRST OF MAY (THE CITY-FACTORY)
MARCELO EXPOSITO

Project description: *First of May (the City-Factory)* is the first work of *Between Dreams. Essays on the New Political Imagination*, a series devoted to the portrayal of the rise of the new metropolitan social movements, in relation to the contemporary urban transformations and the archetypal and historical representations of the modern city. This film articulates, at a first level, a critical dialogue with the way in which the Italian political philosopher Paolo Virno uses the metaphor of virtuosity to represent the condition of both contemporary labour forms and new political action.

MATHARE SAFARI
SLUM-TV

Mathare Safari is a competition for young European filmmakers, eager to explore the dangerous and exotic world of Mathare, a slum in Nairobi. Filmmakers are requested to enter a film explaining how they would prepare for a week in Mathare. The prize; a week in Mathare. This film, which launched the competition, offers a glimpse of life in the slum, eschewing images of suffering and poverty. Adopting the style of a travel program, it tours the local eateries, hotels, transport and entertainment venues.

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ENVOY
ROSS BIRRELL

For All that Fits, Birrell set up reading groups in the twinned cities of Derby and Osnabrück to perform a 'reading exchange' of Erich Marie Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* and Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*. The two novelists engaged the world of journalism. Richardson was by trade a printer who also contributed to newspapers. Erich Maria Remarque's background in journalism contributed to the popular appeal of *All Quiet on the Western Front*. The question of truth and aesthetics is addressed through discussions in each reading groups for the duration of the exhibition, along with a selection of Ross Birrell's *Envoy* photo and video works which address politics, truth and place through the act of silent readings.

THE MUTIRAO PROJECT
GRAZIELA KUNSCH

The Mutirao Project‡ is an open-ended dialogical research process that exists solely in the form of conversations, lectures and classes. The starting point for these verbal exchanges are single take videos that investigate the ways in which self-organised cities are generated. These 'A.N.T.I. cinema excerpts' are designed to kick start discussions. Graziela Kunsch varies her screening programme at each presentation to create different focuses for debate. The videos mainly document political activities Kunsch is engaged in and which she has filmed herself—the housing and free transport struggles in Brazil.

Truth in terms of the
visible: producing not
only what can be seen,
but also what can
be imagined...

List of Artworks

Sammy Baloji
Mémoire (2006)
Video and slide installation
Duration: 14:32
Kind support from
Autograph ABP, London

Yael Bartana
Wild Seeds (2005)
Two channel video and sound installation
Duration: 6:39
Courtesy of the artist

Eric Baudelaire
The Dreadful Details (2006)
C-print
209 × 375cm diptych
Commissioned by the
Centre National des
Arts Plastiques (CNAP)

Ursula Biemann
Contained Mobility (2004)
Synchronized double video
Duration: 21:00
Courtesy of the artist

Ross Birrell
Envoy
Looking Backward (2005)
Video
Duration: 5:40

Mein Kampf (2008)
Video
Duration: 5:40

Disagreement (2010)
Video
Duration: 5:00

The Road to Wigan Pier (2010)
Video
Duration: 2:45
4 short videos of public readings:
All courtesy of Ellen de Bruijne
Projects, Amsterdam

Michael Blum
Mein Land (2008)
Book, 96 pages
14 × 20.5cm
Courtesy of the artist

Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin
Chicago (2006)
Framed photo
Dimensions: 128 × 183cm
Published by SteidlMACK
With the support of
Arts Council England

Abraham Cruzvillegas
Untitled Retrieval (2004)
Slideshow
49 × 35mm slides
Courtesy of Jack
Kirkland Collection

Anita Di Bianco
Corrections and Clarifications
(2001—2010)
Newspaper stack
Courtesy of the artist

Marcelo Exposito
First of May (The City-Factory)
(2004)
Video
Duration: 61:00
Courtesy of the artist

Douglas Fishbone
Elmina (2010)
Feature film
Made in partnership with Revele
Films
Support of Executive Producers
Tamer Amr, Wendy Fisher and
the Zabludowicz Collection and the
Arts Council England

Zachary Formwalt
Reading the Economist (2010—2011)
Video, book, photograph
Through a Fine Screen (2010)
Video
Duration: 20:30
Courtesy of the artist

Tamar Guimäraes
Tropical Blow Up (2009)
Silent black and white video
Duration: 4:45
Courtesy of the artist

K8 Hardy and Wynne Greenwood
New Report (2005)
Video
Duration: 12:00
Courtesy of Video Data Bank

Lamia Joreige
Replay and Replay (2006)
Video
Duration: 17:00
With the support of Ministère de
la culture et de la communication
– Centre National Des Arts
Plastiques, France; Ashkal Alwan
(The Lebanese Association
for Plastic Arts); The European
Cultural Foundation, Né à
Beyrouth Film Fund

Graziela Kunsch
The Mutirao Project,
(2007—present)
A.N.T.I. cinema excerpts,
conversations and shared books
Courtesy of the artist.
Kunsch's stay at Derby was
supported by the Ministry of
External Relations of the
Federative Republic of Brazil
Cultural Department.

Renzo Martens
Episode I (2003)
Video
Duration: 45:00
Production financed by
Sony Belgium, BoHil Media,
Liquid Thoughts, Noordstarfonds.
Postproduction financed by
Dutch Foundation for Visual Arts,
Dutch Filmfund. Courtesy of
Wilkinson Gallery

Walid Raad/The Atlas Group
No Illness in Neither Here Nor There
(1976—1999)
15 framed digital colour prints
42 × 32cm each
Courtesy of Jack Kirkland
Collection

Oliver Ressler
The Fittest Survive (2006)
Video
Duration: 23:00
Courtesy of the artist

Katya Sander
Televized I (2006)
3 Multi-channel videos
Duration: Horia Grusca: 40:38;
Adriana Muraru: 15:30;
Cosmin Prelupceano: 18:30
Courtesy of the artist

Hito Steyerl
Universal Embassy (2004)
Single channel video
Duration: 3:00
Creative Commons
Courtesy of the Artist

SLUM-TV
Mathare Safari (2008)
DVD
Duration: 2:00
Courtesy of SLUM-TV | CPH DOX

Michael Takeo Magruder
Insurance.aes256 (2011)
Mixed-media installation
Courtesy of the artist

Alejandro Vidal
Somewhere in a Great Country
(2010)
20 prints from digital file
30 × 40cm each
Courtesy of the artist and Galería
Joan Prats, Barcelona

Biographies

Sammy Baloji (b.1978, Lubumbashi, DR Congo) Having studied literature and human sciences at Lubumbashi University, Baloji was drawn to photography and video as expressive mediums. In the past few years he has been analysing the architecture discipline conceived as 'trace', and has created works about the cultural, industrial and architectural heritage of his country, Katanga. Baloji has exhibited his works at several international exhibitions in Bruxelles; at the *Bamako Biennale*; at Musee du Quai Brantly in Paris and at *Cup Biennale* (South Africa). In 2007, he received two prizes from *Bamako Biennale*, namely Prix Afrique en creation (Cultures France) and Prix pour l'image (Foundation Blachere). In 2009, Baloji was nominated for the 2009 Prix Pictet award.

Yael Bartana (b.1970, Kfar-Yehezkel, Israel, lives and works in Amsterdam and Tel Aviv). She studied at the School of Visual Arts, New York (1999) and the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam (2000—2001). Her solo exhibitions include the Moderna Museet in Malmö (2010), the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw (2009), PS1 in New York (2008), the Center for Contemporary Art in Tel Aviv (2008), and many more. She participated in the *Sao Paolo Biennial* (2010 and 2006), *Documenta 12* in Kassel (2007) and the *Istanbul Biennial* (2005). She was awarded the prestigious Artes Mundi 4 in 2010. Her work has been included in numerous public collections, at the MOMA in New York, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, Tate Modern in London and the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven.

Eric Baudelaire (b.1973, Salt Lake City, lives in Paris) Working in film, photography, printmaking and installation, Baudelaire is interested in the relationship between images and events, documents and narratives. He has had solo exhibitions at The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, Elizabeth Dee gallery, New York, Galeria Juana de Aizpuru, Madrid, and in Belgium at the Galerie Greta Meert and the Musée de la Photographie, Charleroi. His work is present in several public collections, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Centre Pompidou, the Fond National d'Art Contemporain, and the FRAC Auvergne, and his films have been shown at the International Rotterdam film Festival in 2010 and 2011.

Ursula Biemann is an artist, theorist and curator based in Zurich. Border, mobility and extraterritoriality are central recurring themes in her video from *Performing the Border* (1999) to *X-Mission* (2008). Biemann's video essays and installations are shown internationally at festivals, art biennials and museums. Publisher of numerous books on gender in transnational spaces, art practice in the field, geography and the politics of mobility, migration movements in the Maghreb, video essay-ism and most recently a monograph on her video works *Mission Reports – artistic practice in the field*, (Cornerhouse Publishers, 2008). Curator of the collaborative research and exhibition project *The Maghreb Connection*, Cairo/ Geneva 2006 and *Supply Lines* 2011—2012. She is founding co-editor of the online publication www.artterritories.net.

Ross Birrell is an artist, writer and part-time lecturer at Glasgow School of Art. Solo exhibitions include, *Homo Ludens: Works from the Envoy Series*, 1998—2005, FriesMuseum, Leeuwarden (2005); Büro Frierdich, Berlin and Ellen de Bruijne Projects (2003), Amsterdam. Group exhibitions include *Under the Volcano*, Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool (with David Harding); *TIMECODE*, Dundee Contemporary Arts (2009); *Das Gelände*, Kunsthalle Nürnberg (2008); *Romantic Conceptualism*, Kunsthalle Nürnberg/BAWAG Foundation Vienna (2007); *QUAUHNAHUAC – Die Gerade ist eine Utopie*, Kunsthalle Basel (with David Harding) (2006); *Between the Lines*, Apex Art, New York (2003); P_A_U_S_E, 4th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, Korea (2002).

Michael Blum is a writer and artist based in Vienna and Montreal. He studied history (University of Paris) and photography (Arles, France). Recent projects include *A Tribute to Safiye Behar* (*9th Istanbul Biennial*, 2005), *Lippmann, Rosenthal & Co.* (De Appel, Amsterdam, 2006), *Cape Town – Stockholm* (Mobile Art Production, Stockholm, 2007), and *Exodus 2048*, (Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2008, New Museum, New York, 2009). In 2010, he produced *Oriental Dream*, in collaboration with Damir Niksic. Latest publications: *Mein Land* (Münster, 2008), *With Different Clothes, it's a Different Lady* (Tel Aviv, 2008). He is currently a Guest Professor at the Ecole des arts visuels et mediatiques, UQAM, Montreal.

Adam Broomberg and **Oliver Chanarin** have been collaborating for over a decade. They have produced six books which in different ways examine the language of documentary photography; *Trust* (2000) *Ghetto* (2003) *Mr Mkhize's Portrait* (2004) *Chicago* (2006), *Fig* (2007), and *The Red House* (2007.) Broomberg and Chanarin regularly teach workshops and give master classes in photography, and teach on the MA in Documentary Photography at LCC in London and the MFA at the School of Visual Arts in New York. Awards include: the Vic Odden Award from the Royal Photographic Society, and they are members of the board of trustees for Photoworks and The Photographers' Gallery.

Abraham Cruzvillegas (b.1968 Lives and works in Mexico City). Cruzvillegas is best known for his sculptures that transform everyday objects, such as found scrap wood and weathered buoys, into elegant compositions. His recent solo exhibitions include shows at REDCAT, Los Angeles (2009); The Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco (2009); The Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow (2008); Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Oaxaca, Mexico (2005); and Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (2003).

Anita Di Bianco studied history and Russian language at Columbia University, Fine Arts at SUNY-Purchase in New York, received her Master of Fine Arts from Rutgers University in 1997 and was awarded a research stipendium at the Rijksakademie by the Dutch Ministry of Culture in Amsterdam in 2000—2001. She has had artist's residencies at the Irish Museum in Dublin, Tramway in Glasgow, and at Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin. Di Bianco's works in film and print have been shown at PS1 in New York; Kunsthaus Zürich, The Rotterdam Film Festival, Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers, Paris; The Salzburger Kunstverein, Kunstverein Braunschweig, K21 in Düsseldorf, Cinematexas film festival, Austin, Galerie Elisabeth Kaufmann, Zürich, among others.

Marcelo Expósito (b.1966, Spain based in Barcelona and Buenos Aires). His practice usually expands towards the territories of critical theory, editorial work, curatorial activities, teaching, and translation. He teaches at Independent Studies Program (PEI), Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) and Facultad de Bellas Artes, Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha (Cuenca). He is currently member of the networks Universidad Nómada and Red de Conceptualismos del Sur, and forms part of the editorial team of the online magazine *Transversal*. He was co-founder and co-editor of *Brumaria* magazine (2002—2006). He has edited or co-edited numerous books, among which are *Producción cultural y prácticas instituyentes. Líneas de ruptura en la crítica institucional* (2008), and *Los nuevos productivismos* (2010).

Doug Fishbone (b.1969 New York, lives and works in London.) He earned an MA in Fine Art at Goldsmiths College, London, 2003. Selected solo exhibitions include *Rokeby*, London (2010—11, and 2009), *Gimpel Fils*, London (2006) and *30,000 Bananas* in Trafalgar Square (2004). Selected group exhibitions include *Rude Britannia: British Comic Art*, Tate Britain (2010), *Busan Biennale*, Busan, South Korea (2008); *Laughing in a Foreign Language*, Hayward Gallery (2008), London; *British Art Show 6*, Newcastle, Bristol, Nottingham and Manchester (2006). He performs regularly at both international and UK venues, including appearances at London's ICA and Southbank Centre.

Zachary Formwalt (b.1979 Georgia, USA, lives and works in Amsterdam). Recent solo exhibitions include *Zachary Formwalt*, ar/ge kunst Galerie Museum, Bolzano (2011); *Future Park – Reproduction Direct from Nature*, Casco, Utrecht (2010); *Zachary Formwalt – The form of practical memory*, Kunsthalle Basel (2009). Recent group exhibitions include *Large Abstractions*, The Suburban, Oak Park Illinois (2011); "*To the Arts, Citizens!*, Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Porto; *Monumentalism*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Amsterdam; *Neither From, Nor Towards…*, Umjetnicki paviljon / Art Pavilion Zagreb, Zagreb; *Bucharest Biennale 4* (all 2010). Formwalt received his master of Fine Arts from Northwestern University in Chicago, 2003 and attended the Critical Studies programme at the Malmö Art Academy, 2005. In 2008—2009 he was an artist-in-residence at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam.

Tamar Guimarães (Born in Belo Horizonte, lives and works in Copenhagen). She works with film, sound and installations. Her work is research based, often making use of found material. This material is then manipulated, recombined, restructured, re-enacted and presented as cases studies, generating associative narrative threads in documentary or semi-documentary films, recordings and installations. Her recent exhibitions among others include: the *29th São Paulo Biennale*; *Monkey See, Monkey Do*, Centro Cultural Montehermoso, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain; and solo shows at David Risley Gallery, Copenhagen, at Artspace Sydney and the Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane, Australia. She was a studio fellow of the Whitney Independent Study Program (NY), 2007—2008 and a research curator for the *Third Guangzhou Triennial*, 2008.

K8 Hardy is an artist and performer based in New York. Her recent solo exhibition *To All the G%#&$ I've Loved Before*, was featured at Reena Spauldings Fine Art in New York in 2010. Her work and performances have also been included in exhibitions at Casco Projects, the Netherlands; PS1, New York; the Tate Modern and the Serpentine Gallery, London; and the Generali Foundation, Vienna. She is a co-founder of the queer feminist collective LTTR, and organized performances, events and screenings. Hardy has been making experimental film and video since 1998, she is a fellow of the Whitney Museum of American Arts Independent Study Program, and a graduate of Smith College with a degree in Women's Studies and Film Studies.

Wynne Greenwood (b.1977) is a queer feminist artist working with video, performance, music, sculpture and installation. After studying video production and art history at Rutgers University, NJ, Greenwood began performing the art-band tracy + the plastics in 1999. In 2009, Greenwood was visiting faculty at Seattle University, teaching 'Video, Performance and Identity.' Selected performances and exhibitions include Reena Spauldings Fine Art, NYC (2005), Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, LA (2006, 2008), Tate Modern (2007), On the Boards, Seattle (2009), d.i.y. art spaces and nightclubs (2001—present). Greenwood currently lives and works in Seattle, WA. She received her MFA from The Milton Avery Graduate School for the Arts at Bard College.

Lamia Joreige (b.1972, Lebanon) is a visual artist and filmmaker who lives and works in Beirut. She uses archival documents and fictitious elements to reflect on the relation between individual stories and collective history. She explores the representation of the Lebanese wars and their aftermath. Exhibitions include: *Told Untold Retold*, MATHAF, Doha, (2010) and *All about Beirut*, Kunsthalle Whitebox Munich (2010). Film festivals: Les Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin/ Madrid and the Images Festival, Toronto. She did a residency at Delfina Studio, and was part of the Edgware Road project organised by the Serpentine gallery, London. Joreige is a co-founder and co-director of Beirut Art Centre, a non-profit space dedicated to contemporary art, Lebanon.

Graziela Kunsch (based in Sao Paulo, Brazil). Along with her video and performance works she also assumes curatorial and editorial roles. Between 2001—2003 she opened her house as a 'public residency' (Casa da Grazi) and there she organised many residencies and exhibitions, involving collaborations from all around Brazil. She is; co-organiser of the project *Art and the Public Sphere* and editor of the magazine *Urbania*, Member of the architecture collective USINA. In 2010 she participated in the *29th Sao Paulo Biennale*, was a resident at The Grand Domestic Revolution and curated *Outline for New Cultures: city projects in debate*.

Renzo Martens (b.1973, Sluiskil, NL) The Dutch artist creates works that raise questions about the use of journalism and documentation. He is currently working on a series of films that try to mediate their own complicity with dominant visual regimes. His works have recently been shown at Tate Modern, London, Kunsthaus Graz, La Vireina, Barcelona, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam and the *6th Berlin Biennale*.

Walid Raad (b.1967, Chbanieh, Lebanon) is a contemporary media artist. **The Atlas Group** is a fictional collective, the work of which is produced by Walid Raad. All his works deal with the contemporary history of Lebanon with particular emphasis on the wars in Lebanon between 1975 to 1991. Raad received his BFA from the Rochester Institute of Technology, 1989, received his MA and Ph.D. in Cultural and Visual Studies at the University of Rochester in 1993 and 1996, respectively. His works have been exhibited at *Documenta 11* (Kassel), the *Venice Biennale* (Venice), the *Whitney Biennial* (New York), the *Ayloul Festival* (Beirut, Lebanon) among others.

Oliver Ressler (b.1970, Austria) produces exhibitions, projects in the public space and films on issues such as economy, democracy, forms of resistance, social alternatives, racism and global warming. Solo-exhibitions include among others: Berkeley Art Museum; Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Center, Istanbul; Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade and Centro Cultural Conde Duque, Madrid. Ressler participated in more than 200 group exhibitions all over the world. Films have been screened at Duisburger Filmwoche; International Media Art Biennale WRO, Wroclaw; Image Forum Festival, Tokyo; Centre Pompidou, Paris and many others. In 2002, Ressler won 1st prize International Media Art Award of the ZKM. His book, *Alternative Economics, Alternative Societies* was published by the Wyspa Institute of Art, Gdansk in 2007.

Katya Sander (b. Denmark, lives and works in Berlin and Copenhagen) is a conceptual artist exploring the influence of the imaginary on political issues, everyday-life and everyday-language. Sanders recent solo exhibitions include *A Landscape of Known Facts*, Project Arts Centre in Dublin 2010 and *Production of Futures – A Science Fiction about Counting*, Künstlerhaus Stuttgart 2008. Group exhibitions include *Publics and Counterpublics*, Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporaneo, *Power Games*, Ludwig Museum, Budapest 2010, *Coming to you Live* Art in General 2008—2009 and the *6th Taipei Biennale* 2008. Sander is part of the collective of artists who produced *9 Scripts from a Nation at War*, commissioned by *Documenta 12*, 2007, and she is a series editor of *OE–Critical Readers in Visual Cultures*.

Hito Steyerl works as filmmaker and author in the area of essayist documentary film / video, media art and video installation. The works are located on the interface between cinema and fine arts, and between theory and practice. They centre on the question of media within globalisation and the migration of sounds and images. Recent solo exhibitions include: Wilfried Lentz Gallery, Rotterdam (2011); Chisenhale Gallery, London; Picture This, Bristol; Collective, Edinburgh and Henie Onstad Centre, Høvikodden; Villa Stuck, Munich (both 2010) and Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (2009)

Michael Takeo Magruder (b.1974, US/UK) is an artist and researcher based in King's Visualisation Lab, located in the Department of Digital Humanities, King's College London. His projects have been showcased in over 200 exhibitions in 30 countries and his writings have been published in various academic books and journals. His practice explores concepts ranging from media criticism and aesthetic journalism to digital formalism and computational aesthetics, deploying Information Age technologies and systems to examine our networked, media-rich world.

Alejandro Vidal (b.1972, Palma de Mallorca, Spain, lives and works in Barcelona). He has exhibited his work at numerous international Museums and Art centres such as Participant Inc. in New York, Kunsthalle Winterthur, Switzerland; Fundació La Caixa, Barcelona; Palazzo delle Papesse, Sienna; Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei; MIS, Sao Paulo; Da2, Salamanca; Kling & Bang, Reikjavik; Mambo Bologna and Kunstmuseum Bern in Switzerland. He took part in the *Busan Biennial*, South Korea, 2006. Recently he has exhibited at, Galeria Joan Prats, Barcelona; Galleria ARTRA, Milan; Galeria Elba Benitez, Madrid; Galerie Thomas Schulte and Play Platform for Film and Video, Berlin; and Monitor, Rome.

SLUM-TV. The basic premise behind SLUM-TV is to provide the community of Mathare (Nairobi, Kenya) with a means of documenting and representing what is happening in the neighbourhood. Over a period of 2 months a 'newsreel' is produced on a certain theme. This consists of 5—8 short documentaries, together with a longer drama. The newsreels are screened every two weeks at large community screenings, they are distributed via the local informal cinema network and are available online for an international audience. The idea was first conceived in 2006 when the Austrian artists Alexander Nikolic and Lukas Pusch came to Kenya and met with Julius Mwelu, Fred Otieno and Sam Hopkins. The idea was to create a participatory media collective that would begin to document the fast changing life and culture of Mathare. SLUM-TV aimed to represent the whole spectrum of experience in the slum. SLUM-TV hopes to act as an outlet for young people in Mathare to talk about what they felt was important.

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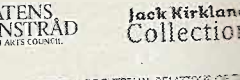

Colophon

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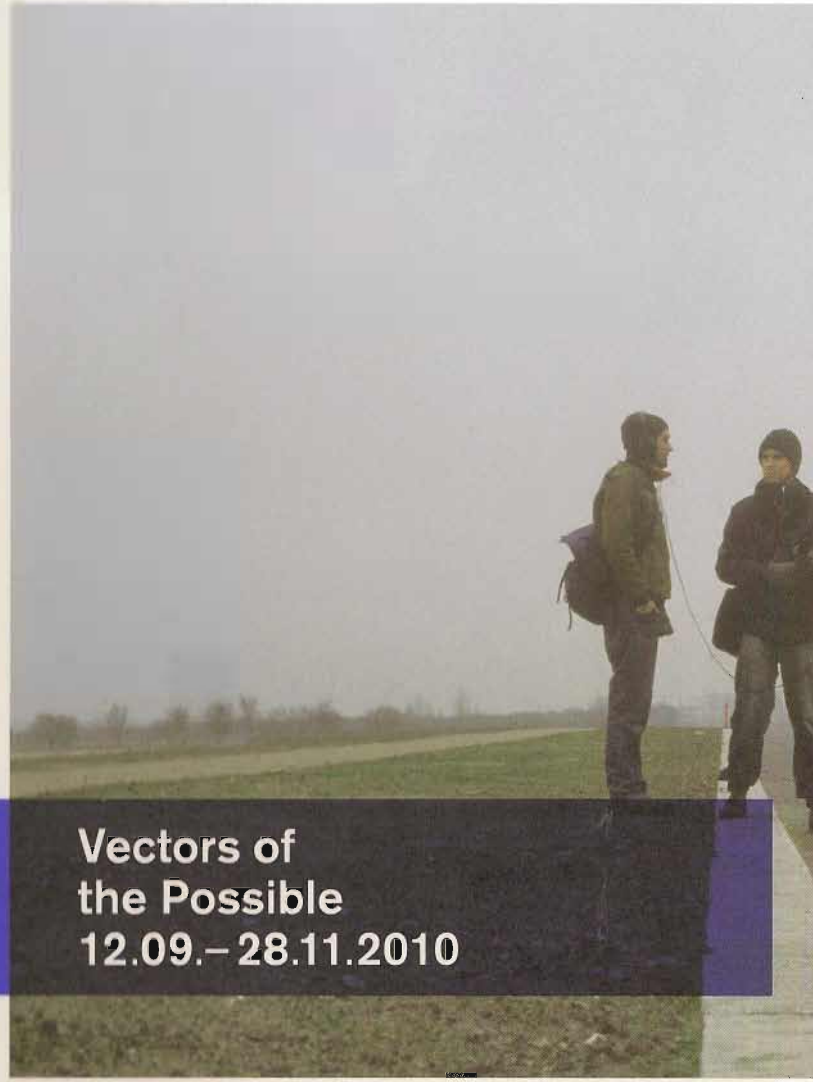


Vectors of the Possible
12.09.–28.11.2010

< omslag/cover: Runo Lagomarsino & Johan Tirén, *Waiting for the Demonstration at the Wrong Time*, 2003/2007

BAK, basis voor actuele kunst

nodigt u uit voor de opening van
de tentoonstelling/invites you to
the opening of the exhibition

Vectors of the Possible

op 11 september 2010 vanaf
18.00 uur./on 11 September
2010 from 18.00 hrs.

De tentoonstelling is te zien
t/m 28 november 2010./
The exhibition is on view until
28 November 2010.

Curator:
Simon Sheikh

Kunstenaars/Artists:
Matthew Buckingham
chto delat/What is to be done?
Freee
Sharon Hayes
Runo Lagomarsino & Johan Tirén
Elske Rosenfeld
Hito Steyerl
Ultra-red

Vectors of the Possible is een
onderzoekstentoonstelling in
het kader van het project
FORMER WEST./
Vectors of the Possible is a
research exhibition within
the framework of the project
FORMER WEST.

Vectors of the Possible 12.09.–28.11.2010

Voorwoord

Foreword

Sinds 1989 lijkt het een gemeenplaats te zijn geworden om te denken dat de *horizon* van het mogelijke, waardoor we ons een andere wereld voor kunnen stellen, begraven is onder het puin van de Berlijnse Muur. Het neoliberale kapitalisme, dat al snel oprukte in de delen van de wereld die voorheen voor het enige levensvatbare concurrerende politieke idee stonden, het communisme, heeft met zijn totaliserende krachten velen van ons gedwongen de strijd aan te binden met de luide verkondiging dat een alternatieve constellatie van de wereld niet mogelijk is. Diezelfde stemmen beweren dat het handhaven van de status quo alles is wat gedaan kan (en moet) worden, in plaats van het verspillen van energie aan het nutteloos overwegen van andere mogelijkheden. Toch heeft de kunst, naar mijn mening, altijd getracht onafhankelijk te zijn van standaardiserende en homogeniserende krachten door de taak op zich te nemen het idee van het zoeken naar een betere wereld te beschermen tegen de beperkingen en banaliteiten van de 'echte' wereld, en door zich in te laten met contradicties, fricties, weerstand en onenigheid waar hardnekkige conventies de collectieve verbeelding belemmeren. Dit idee van de horizon, als een motiverend en emancipatoir middel dat ons kan

Since 1989 it seems to have become commonplace to think that the *horizon* of possibility, which would allow us to imagine another world, was finally buried under the fallen masonry of the Berlin Wall. The totalizing forces of neoliberal capitalism, which quickly made their advance in the parts of the world that previously held to the only viable competing political idea—that of communism—have forced many of us to struggle with the loud proclamation that no alternative constellation of the world is possible. These same voices insist that all that can—and should—be done is to manage the status quo rather than waste energy on useless rumination about any other potentialities. Yet art, I would argue, has always sought independence from standardizing and homogenizing powers by taking upon itself the task of protecting the notion of looking for a better world from the constraints and banalities of the "real" world, and by engaging in contradictions, frictions, resistance, and dissensus there where stubborn conventions hold back the collective imagination. This notion of a horizon—as a motivating and emancipatory tool that might inspire us to overcome the limitations of the present—seems to belong to what art can offer to society for an examination of the options beyond

inspireren de beperkingen van het heden te overwinnen, lijkt deel te zijn van wat kunst de samenleving kan bieden voor een onderzoek naar opties voorbij de dominante ideologie. Een begrip van de horizon in die zin is wat curator Simon Sheikh samen met de groep kunstenaars onderzoekt in de tentoonstelling *Vectors of the Possible*. "Stelt een kunstwerk en zeker een tentoonstelling niet *altijd* een horizon op, een voorstel van wat verbeeld kan worden en wat niet?", vraagt hij. Tegenover het post-1989 gevoel van berusting en rouw om de verloren mogelijkheid van een andere wereld oppert Sheikh dat het op het gebied van de kunst de horizon is — als een 'lege betekenisgever', een na te streven ideaal en een 'vector of possibility' — die de politieke strijd verenigt en richting geeft. De horizon ligt inderdaad onvermijdelijk ten grondslag aan iedere artistieke verbeelding.

Vectors of the Possible is een tentoonstelling die bijdraagt aan de verkenning van het voorstel van een 'former West'. Het is een onderzoekstentoonstelling binnen een veelzijdig project dat BAK ontwikkelt in dialoog met een netwerk van internationale kunstenaars, wetenschappers en kunst- en onderwijsinstellingen

the dominant ideology. An understanding of horizons in this sense is what curator Simon Sheikh explores together with the group of artists in the exhibition *Vectors of the Possible*. "Isn't it so," he asks, "that a work of art, and certainly an exhibition, *always* set up a horizon, a proposal of what can be imagined, and what cannot?" Counter to the post-1989 sense of resignation and mourning of the lost possibility of another world, Sheikh suggests that in the field of art, it is the horizon—as an "empty signifier," an ideal to strive towards, and a "vector of possibility"—that unites political struggles and gives them a direction. Indeed it is what inevitably stands at the foundation of any artistic imaginary.

Vectors of the Possible is a research exhibition that contributes to the exploration of the proposition of "former West" within a multifaceted project that BAK is developing in dialogue with a network of international artists, scholars, and art and educational institutions (2008–2013, www.formerwest.org). The project is motivated by the urgency to rethink the place of contemporary art in the so-called West vis-à-vis the global histories after 1989, and speculates about the notion of "one world," which would do away with privileging political

(2008–2013, www.formerwest.org). Het project wordt gedreven door de noodzaak om de plaats van de hedendaagse kunst in het zogeheten Westen te heroverwegen in relatie tot de mondiale geschiedenissen van na 1989. Het overdenkt het idee van 'één wereld' die een einde maakt aan de politieke geografie en machtsstructuren die op privileges zijn gebaseerd. Vanwege dit complexe kader en de veelheid aan theoretische en esthetische vragen breidt de tentoonstelling zich uit middels verdere beschouwingen over het thema horizon op het 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress, dat later dit jaar plaatsvindt in Istanboel, en in de publicatie van een BAK Critical Reader begin 2011.

Graag maak ik van deze gelegenheid gebruik om de kunstenaars van deze tentoonstelling te danken voor hun inspirerende werk en Simon Sheikh voor niet alleen zijn uitdagende ideeën en prikkelende vragen waarmee hij het project FORMER WEST onvermoeibaar heeft bezield, maar vooral voor het tot leven brengen van deze tentoonstelling die ik, namens het hele team van BAK, met veel trots en enthousiasme presenteer.

Maria Hlavajova
Artistiek Directeur, BAK

geography and genealogies of power. Given this complex framework and the richness of the theoretical and aesthetic questions raised, the exhibition extends itself, if you will, through further deliberations on the subject of the horizon at the 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress taking place in Istanbul later this year, and in the publication of a BAK Critical Reader in early 2011.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the artists in the exhibition for their inspiring work, and curator Simon Sheikh for not only tirelessly infusing the project of FORMER WEST with challenging ideas and provocative questions, but mainly for bringing to life this exhibition, which I, on behalf of the entire team of BAK, present with immense pride and excitement.

Maria Hlavajova
Artistic Director, BAK

Vectors of the Possible

During the short period between the opening of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the parliamentary elections held in East Germany in March 1990, a new constitution for East Germany (the German Democratic Republic or GDR) was drawn up in a series of round table meetings and discussions. Since the outcome of the elections favored parties recommending a swift reunification with West Germany, this work was soon obsolete. But what kind of state and which subjects would it have produced had it ever been effectuated? What future would it have brought about, being neither the Communist regime of the former East Germany, nor integration into its capitalist counterpart West Germany? These are speculations that arise in the excavation of the documents and recordings of these proceedings undertaken by the artist Elske Rosenfeld, herself a former subject of the defunct GDR. In her ongoing work, *Our brief autumn of utopia* (2010), Rosenfeld urges us to look at this lost history, not in order to resurrect or rewrite the past, but in order to imagine another, alternative future. At stake is what imagination of the future and past is proposed: how a work of art produces other imaginaries of the world and its institutions, rather than merely reiterating already existing ones, even in so-called critical terms (i.e. affirmative critique). It is a question of *horizon*.

Now perhaps we can say that the East German legislators were swept up by the forces of history—that they were, already then, out of time. But what could be meant by metaphors such as "the forces of history," and how might we understand timing and timeliness in this context? In her installation *In the Near Future* (2009), Sharon Hayes tries to project the recent past into the present, to be out of time while acting in real time. On thirteen occasions, Hayes went out to a different location mainly in New York City, parading around with a sign from a protest movement of the past. How are such statements

readable now, and what do they mean when they are no longer the expression of the people, as signified not by the crowd of demonstrators, but by a lone figure holding a sign, putting her body on the line? It is, then, not only history and the history of struggles that are being put on display, but also our actuality; the gesture asks which struggles, and not least forms of signification, are adequate today. At stake is a questioning of the very format of the demonstration, historically and in the present, as well as the singular body taking part in it, forming it, *and* the histories and actualities of that body.

Artists Runo Lagomarsino and Johan Tirén also take up the demonstration in their contribution to the exhibition, a single photograph documenting an event entitled *Waiting for the Demonstration at the Wrong Time* (2003/2007). The image is a portrait of the two artists, of the "artist-as-protester." Lagomarsino and Tirén are equally out of time, not too late, but... too early in fact. We see them standing alone on a country road at the site of a planned gathering protesting a European Union summit, some wintertime morning, a couple of hours prior to the manifestation. Again, this work reminds us of the timeliness of action and presence, of being at the right place but at the wrong time; as such it recalls the problem of any revolution or revolutionary leader: when is it the right time? How soon is now? When is that time imminent on the horizon? And it is furthermore a comment on the artists' locality—Scandinavia—and its societies' presumably consensual relationship to political deliberation, an image that has, since the troubles of Gothenburg in 2001 and Copenhagen in 2009, long since been shattered. Here violent events are present through their absence.

Also dealing with the aesthetics of protest, but employing a large billboard rather than a small photograph, artist group

Freee likewise stages themselves in a particular situation, in a political space as politicized subjects circumscribed by that space. The artists are shown in the middle of a huge quarry that completely engulfs them, eliminating perspective, skyline, and any sense of localizable space. The monumental scale of the environment belies the size of Freee's own five-meter-long banner depicting the statement *Protest Drives History* (2008). Situated in a barren landscape with no visible perspective, one can ask what history is possible without a horizon, and thus a sense of movement backwards or forwards. On the other hand, the horizontal line of the composition of the image, and thus the one presented to us, can be said to be that of the banner itself, pointing not only to its potential meaninglessness and the abandonment of its enunciative powers, but also its potentiality and futurity. By positing the horizon as an image and not just a metaphor, it implies a specific aesthetics—not only an aesthetics of politics and political movements, but also a politics of the aesthetic.

An entirely different image and metaphor is the foundation of the video *Universal Embassy* (2004), in which artist Hito Steyerl documents the history of this activist project, established by artists in the former headquarters of the Somali diplomatic mission in Brussels. Hosting and assisting *sans-papiers* individuals who are fighting for legalization or official recognition, the embassy not only attempted to explore the possibilities of the narrow juridical space it managed to identify, but also worked on making possible and nurturing the basic, everyday social bonds that homelessness, destitution, illegality, and clandestine living tend to make precarious and fragmentary. The embassy is a deliberate contradiction in terms, and of terms: a *Universal* Embassy. It is an impossible—but actual—embassy that represents those who are not represented, and gives space to those without a state. A utopian question is

inherent in the undertaking: can we imagine a world without borders, without the state and its monopoly on granting rights? Can we imagine universality as equality?

Sound art collective Ultra-red's installation *Vogue'ology* (2010) comes out of a current investigation into sound and spatializes an analysis of political terms within the New York gender-queer House/Ballroom community. *Vogue'ology* anticipates the articulation of such an analysis by exhibiting a series of text pieces produced in collaboration between Ultra-red and members of the scene. These text pieces, or protocols, guide communal reflection and analysis of sound recordings, testimonies, and historical objects, forming a collective articulation of political terms that can be employed to organize the massive archive of ballroom dresses, trophies, photographs, video, and ephemera, and places them within a horizon of visibility and readabilty. The collective archiving project is an attempt at a different way of conceptualizing political practice beyond the critique and production of political representations as we know them. For Ultra-red, sound and the question "what did you hear?," amplify another mode of aesthetic operation within political struggle—the political organization of listening.

From the instances of utopia and pleasure invoked by the works of Steyerl and Ultra-red, we move to a rather dystopian take on our actuality in the form of artist collective chto delat/ What is to be done?'s film *The Tower: A Songspiel* (2010). It is based on actual documents and speeches from current Russian political culture, and on an analysis of the conflict that has developed around the planned Okhta Center development in St. Petersburg, where the Russian oil and gas giant Gazprom intends to house the headquarters of its locally-based subsidiaries in a 403-meter-high skyscraper. This has provoked one of the fiercest confrontations between the

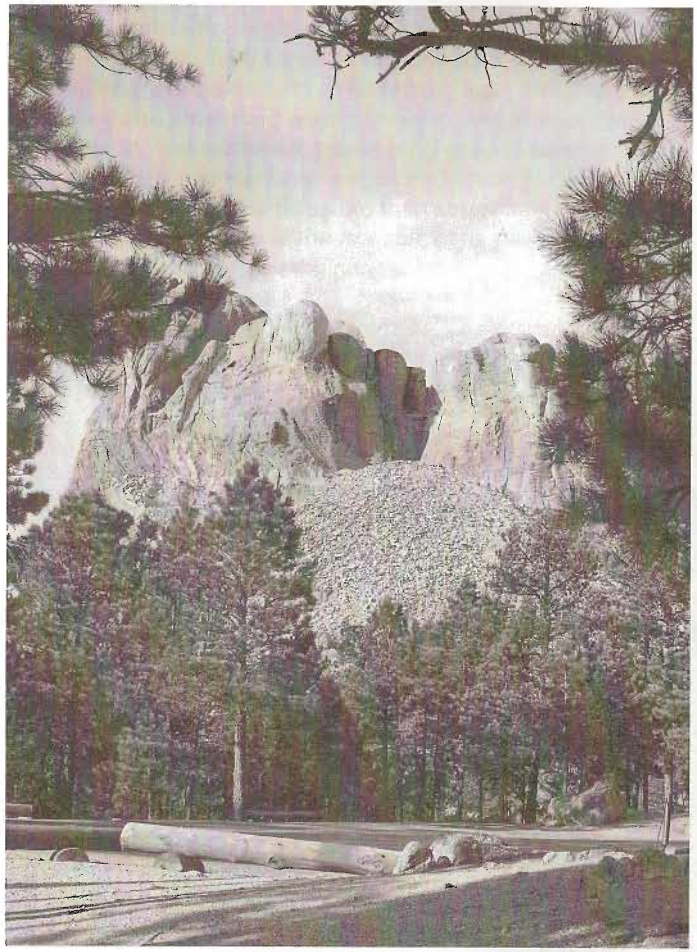
authorities and society in recent Russian political history. Presented as a Brechtian play, with the people as the chorus, and decision-makers and intellectuals as soloists, *The Tower* offers a vision of the crushing verticality of power in contemporary Russia. The horizon is presented as purely vertical, with all decisions and debates being imposed from the top down, by the few toward the many.

If the Gazprom tower is indeed a monument to the power of capital, it can be compared to that monumental symbol of American hegemony that is Mount Rushmore. Consisting of a digital photograph and a timeline, Matthew Buckingham's *The Six Grandfathers, Paha Sapa, in the Year 502,002 C.E.* (2002) reconsiders Mount Rushmore as a cultural, political, and social symbol by imagining its inevitable disintegration. Having worked with geologists, Buckingham estimates that it will take approximately 500,000 years for the portraits of the four U.S. presidents carved on Mount Rushmore to erode and become unrecognizable. With its disappearance, the paradox of Rushmore's meaning as a declared "shrine to democracy" intensifies: it is carved on land stolen from the Native American Sioux tribe and made by an artist who was an active member of the Ku Klux Klan. The work attempts to imagine what the mountain will look like in the future, as its power to represent fades alongside the histories it tries to suppress.

If every age is grounded by a specific horizon—a particular view of the world—how must such a horizon be placed in order to be effective as well as affective: as nearby or faraway, unattainable? As real, or as wholly imaginary? The horizon is not only reflected in terms of the image, of visualization, but also in terms of vicinity and velocity: are we close by or a long way away? Is it receding or emerging? And is it approaching fast or coming at us like a slow train? The works in this exhibition

establish certain horizons—proposals of what can be imagined and what cannot. They can thus be seen as vectors, reckoning possibility and impossibility in (un)equal measures, but always detecting and indicating ways of seeing, and thus of being, in the world. The works are performing ground research into horizontality, but in terms of image production and conceptualization. *Vectors of the Possible* thus suggests what can be termed *an ontology of the horizon*, of its placement and function within political imaginaries.

Simon Sheikh



 Matthew Buckingham, *The Six Grandfathers, Paha Sapa, in the Year 502,002 C.E.*, 2002

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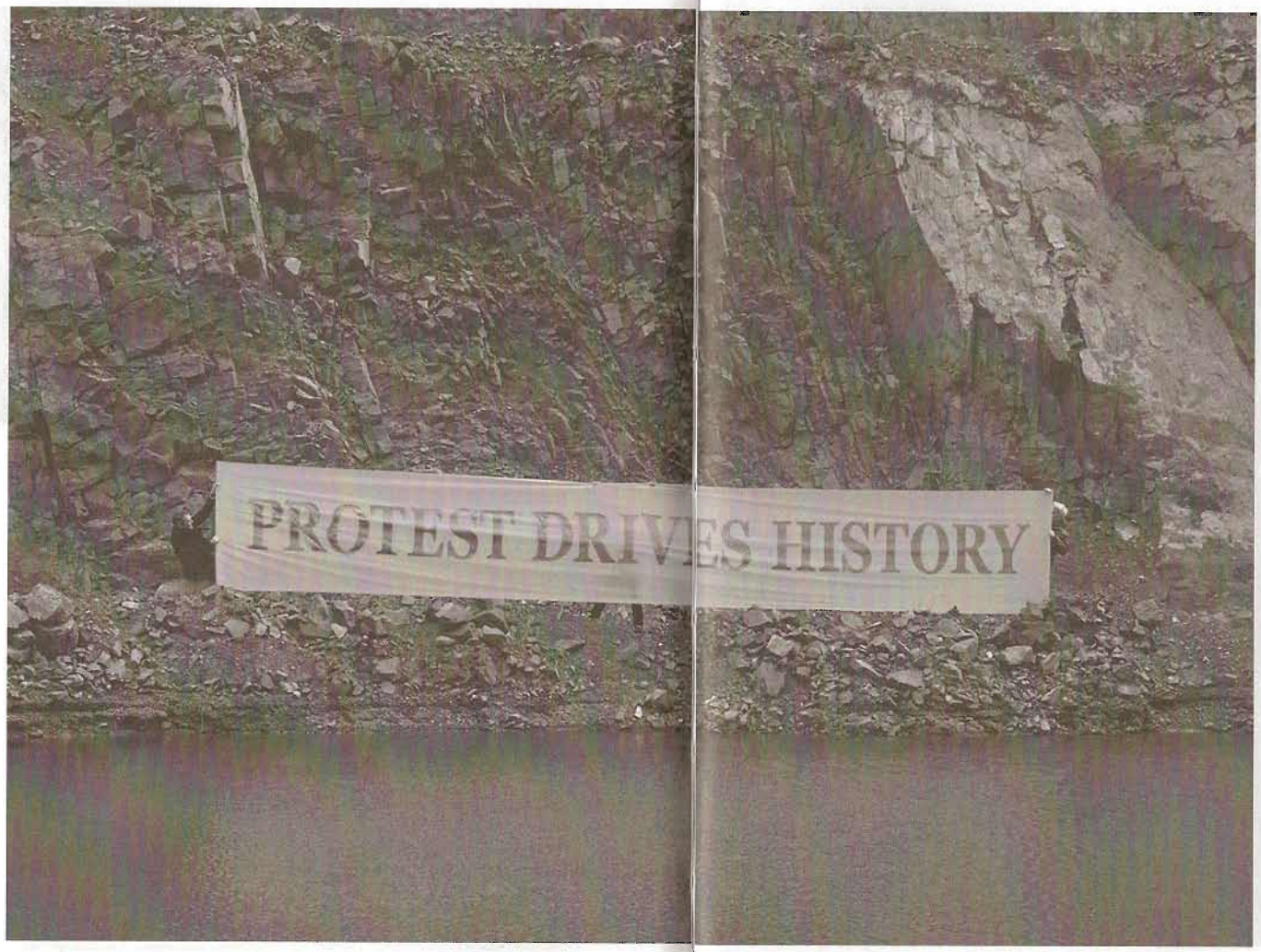
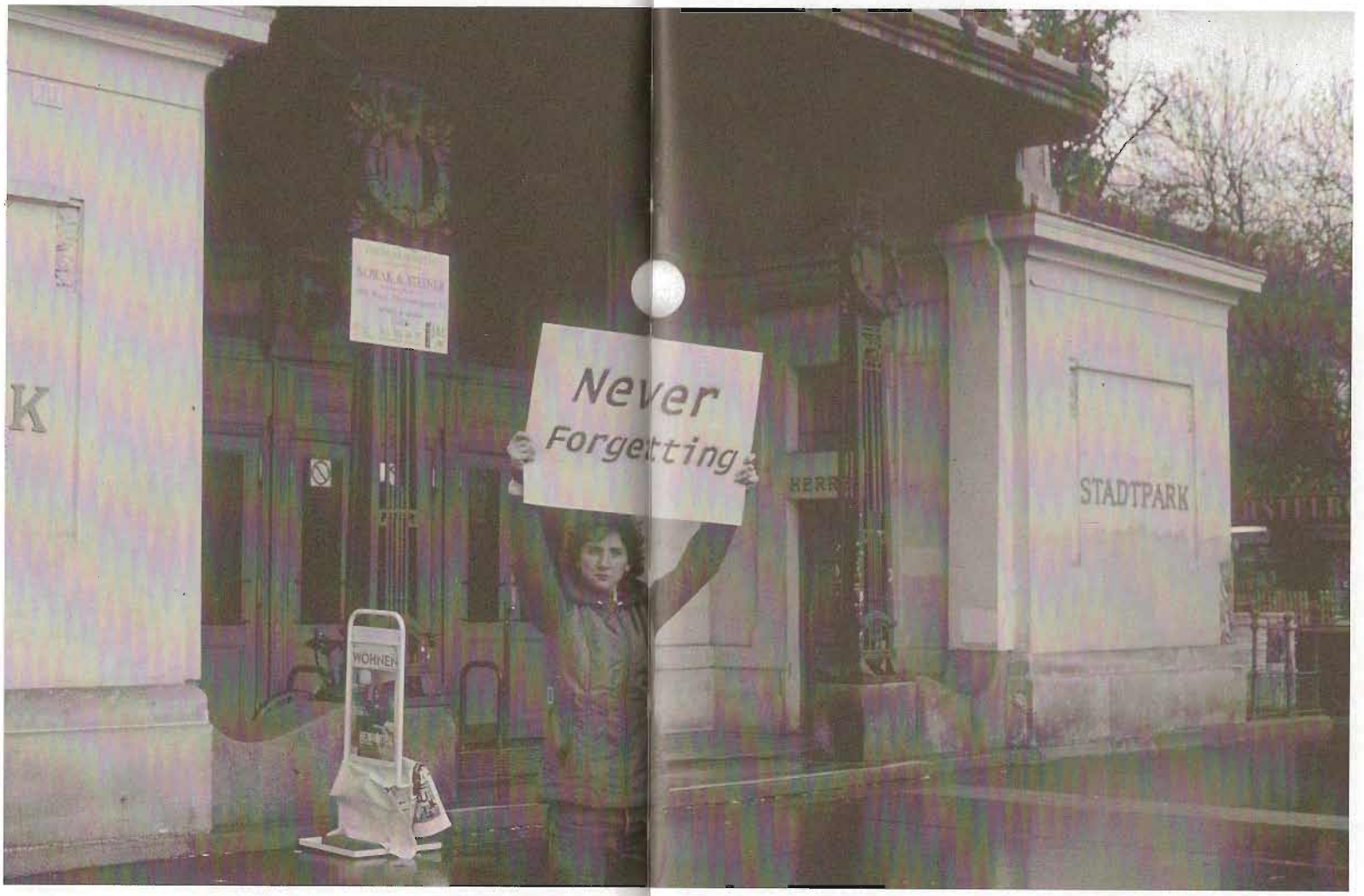
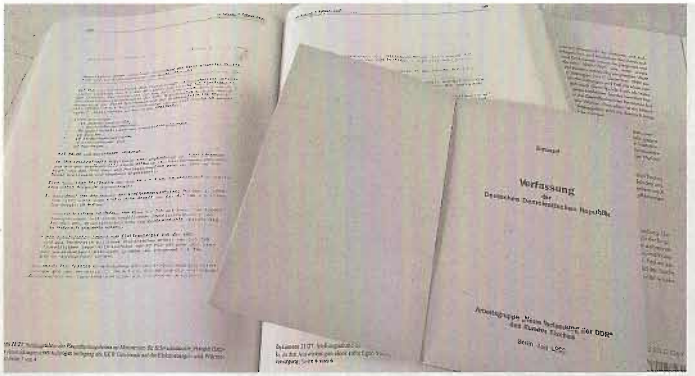


Freee, *Protest Drives History*, 2008

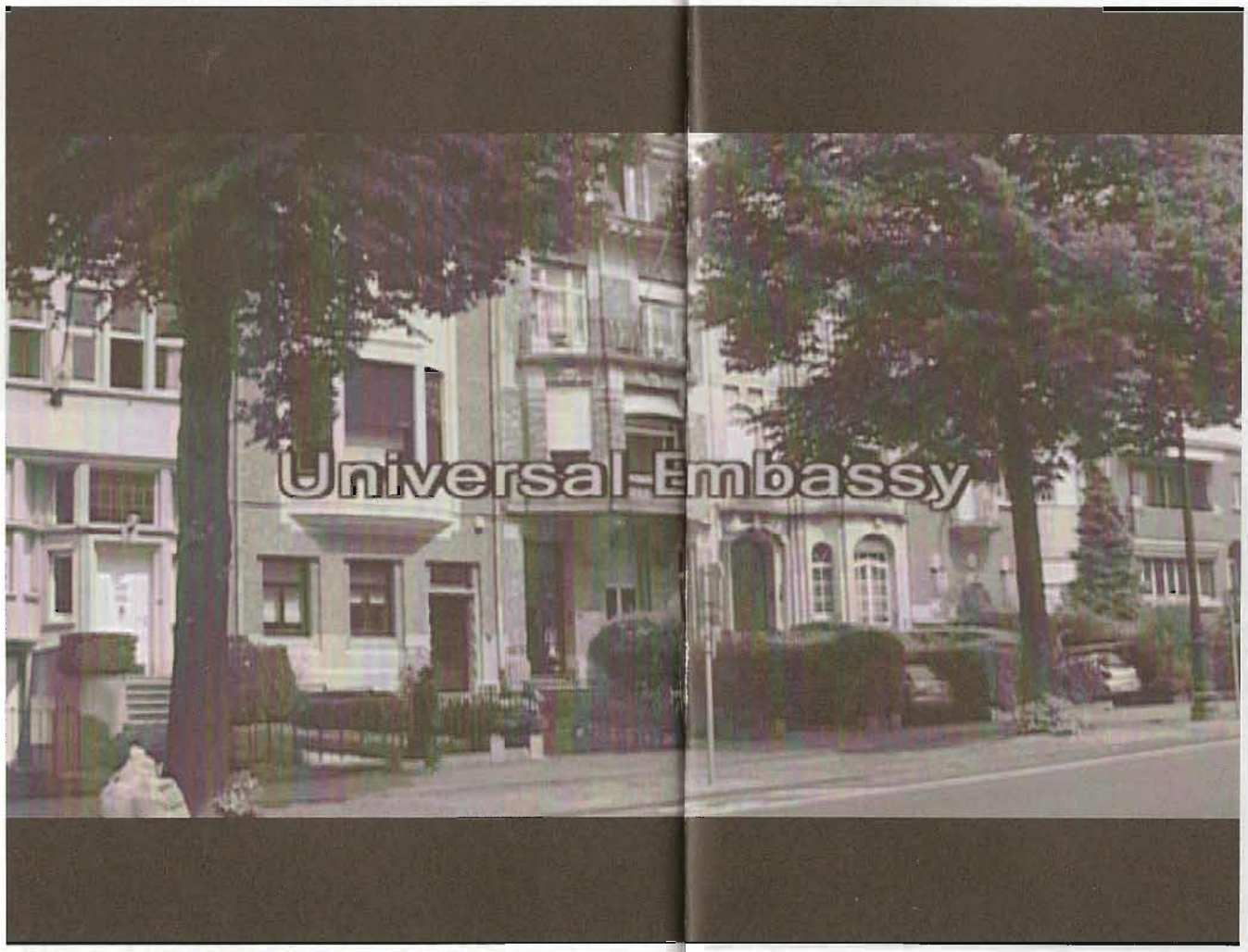


28 Sharon Hayes, *In the Near Future*, 2009



30 Elske Rosenfeld, *Our brief autumn of utopia*, 2010

Runo Lagomarsino & Johan Tirén, *Waiting for the Demonstration at the Wrong Time*, 2003/2007



 Hito Steyerl, *Universal Embassy*, 2004

Ultra-red, *Vogue'ology, Scene One: The New School Encuentro*, performance in/at The New School, New York, 8 mei/May 2010

Lijst van werken in de tentoonstelling/List of works in the exhibition:

Matthew Buckingham, *The Six Grandfathers, Paha Sapa, in the Year 502,002 C.E.*, 2002, digitale C-print op papier/digital C-print on paper, z & w/b & w; dry transfer muurtekst/wall text; A1 poster prints, dubbelzijdig/double sided

chto delat/What is to be done?, *The Tower: A Songspiel*, 2010, single screen video projectie/projection, geluid/sound, 37:02 min., gerealiseerd door/realized by Nina Gasteva, Gluklya (Natalia Pershina), Tsaplya (Olga Egorova), en/and Dmitry Vilensky; muziek van/music by Mikhail Krutik

chto delat/What is to be done?, krant/newspaper, 2010

Freee, *Protest Drives History*, 2008, billboard poster, kleur/color, 4 x 12 m

Sharon Hayes, *In the Near Future*, 2009, meervoudige diaprojectie installatie/multiple-slide-projection installation, 35 mm kleurendia's/color slides, 13 projectoren/projectors, afmetingen projecties variabel/projection dimensions variable

Runo Lagomarsino & Johan Tirén, *Waiting for the Demonstration at the Wrong Time*, 2003/2007, C-print foto/photo, kleur/color, 70 x 100 cm

Elske Rosenfeld, *Our brief autumn of utopia*, 2010, installatie/installation, tekst- en videomateriaal/text and video material, afmetingen variabel/dimensions variable

Hito Steyerl, *Universal Embassy*, 2004, single screen video projectie/projection, mini-DV, geluid/sound, 4:00 min.

Ultra-red, *Vogue'ology*, 2010, installatie/installation, verzameling van objecten, tekst en geluid/collection of objects, text, and sound, afmetingen variabel/dimensions variable

Biografie/Biography curator

Simon Sheikh (geboren 1965) is onafhankelijk curator, criticus en research advisor voor FORMER WEST. Op dit moment verricht hij doctoraal onderzoek naar de praktijk van het maken van tentoonstellingen en politieke verbeelding aan de University of Lund, Lund. Sheikh was coördinator van het Critical Studies Program, Malmö Art Academy, Malmö van 2002 tot 2009. Tentoonstellingen die hij heeft samengesteld zijn: *Capital (It Fails Us Now)*, UKS, Oslo, 2005 en Kunstihoone, Tallinn, 2006; en *Circa Berlin*, Nikolaj – Copenhagen Contemporary Art Center, Kopenhagen, 2005. Recente publicaties die hij heeft samengesteld zijn: *Capital (It Fails Us Now)* (2006) en *In the Place of the Public Sphere?* (2005). Sheikh woont en werkt in Berlijn en Kopenhagen./
Simon Sheikh (born 1965) is a freelance curator, critic, and research advisor for FORMER WEST, currently undertaking doctoral research on the topic of exhibition-making and political imaginaries at the University of Lund, Lund. Sheikh was coordinator of the Critical Studies Program, Malmö Art Academy, Malmö from 2002 to 2009. His curatorial work includes: *Capital (It Fails Us Now)*, UKS, Oslo, 2005 and Kunstihoone, Tallinn, 2006; and *Circa Berlin*, Nikolaj – Copenhagen Contemporary Art Center, Copenhagen, 2005. His edited publications include: *Capital (It Fails Us Now)* (2006) and *In the Place of the Public Sphere?* (2005). Sheikh lives and works in Berlin and Copenhagen.

Biografieën/Biographies kunstenaars/artists

Matthew Buckingham (geboren 1963) is een kunstenaar die gebruik maakt van fotografie, film, video, geluid, tekst en tekeningen om de rol van het sociale geheugen in het leven van vandaag de dag te bevragen. Recente tentoonstellingen zijn: *Matthew Buckingham*, MCA Denver, Denver, 2009 en *Matthew Buckingham: Time Proxies*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2009. Buckingham woont en werkt in New York./
Matthew Buckingham (born 1963) is an artist who makes use of photography, film, video, audio, writing, and drawing to question the role of social memory in contemporary life. Recent exhibitions include: *Matthew Buckingham*, MCA Denver, Denver, 2009; and *Matthew Buckingham: Time Proxies*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2009. Buckingham lives and works in New York.

chto delat/What is to be done? (opgericht 2003) is een platform en werkgroep opgezet door kunstenaars, critici, filosofen en schrijvers, met als doel politiek, kunst en activisme bij elkaar te brengen. chto delat richt zich op collectieve projecten, waaronder videowerken en kranten, en artistieke verkenningen van de stedelijke ruimte en ideologie. Recente tentoonstellingen zijn: *What is to be done?... The urgent need to struggle. Part 02*, ICA, Londen, 2010 en *Principio Potosí*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2010. Leden komen uit Sint-Petersburg, Moskou en Nizhny Novgorod./
chto delat/What is to be done? (founded 2003) is a platform and workgroup initiated by artists, critics, philosophers, and writers with the goal of merging political theory, art, and activism. chto delat engages in collective projects, including video works and newspapers, and artistic examinations of urban space and ideology. Recent exhibitions include: *What is to be done?... The urgent need to struggle. Part 02*, ICA, London, 2010; and *Principio Potosí*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2010. Members are from St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Nizhny Novgorod.

Freee is een kunstenaarscollectief gevormd door Dave Beech (geboren 1965), Andy Hewitt (geboren 1966) en Mel Jordan (geboren 1966). Hun werk bestaat uit verschillende media zoals billboards, t-shirts en slogans, en gaat de uitdaging aan met vercommercialisering en bureaucratie in de vorming van de publieke opinie. Recente tentoonstellingen zijn: *The Peckham Experiment*, Camberwell Space, Londen, 2009 en *On Joy, Sadness and Desire*, SMART Project Space, Amsterdam, 2009. Leden van Freee zijn gevestigd in Londen en Sheffield./
Freee is an artist collective formed by Dave Beech (born 1965), Andy Hewitt (born 1966), and Mel Jordan (born 1966). Their work consists of various media such as billboards, t-shirts, and slogans, and challenges commercialism and bureaucracy in public opinion formation. Recent exhibitions include: *The Peckham Experiment*, Camberwell Space, London, 2009; and *On Joy, Sadness and Desire*, SMART Project Space, Amsterdam, 2009. Members of Freee are based in London and Sheffield.

Sharon Hayes (geboren 1970) is een kunstenaar die de vorming van het individu of collectief in relatie tot politiek, geschiedenis en taal onderzoekt door artistieke en op onderzoek gebaseerde performance, installatie en videowerken. Recente tentoonstellingen zijn: *Andrea Geyer | Sharon Hayes*, Göteborgs Konsthall, Göteborg, 2010 en Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, 2009; en *The Future is Unthinkable*, Objectif Exhibitions, Antwerpen, 2009. Hayes woont en werkt in New York./
Sharon Hayes (born 1970) is an artist who investigates the formation of the individual or collective in relation to politics, history, and speech through artistic and research-based performance, installation, and video works. Recent exhibitions include: *Andrea Geyer | Sharon Hayes*, Göteborgs Konsthall, Gothenburg, 2010 and Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, St. Gallen, 2009; and *The Future is Unthinkable*, Objectif Exhibitions, Antwerp, 2009. Hayes lives and works in New York.

Runo Lagomarsino (geboren 1977) en Johan Tirén (geboren 1973) zijn kunstenaars. Zowel individueel als gezamenlijk reflecteren zij op de (de)constructie van ideologie en macht in het ontstaan van hedendaagse (sociale en politieke) realiteit. Recente tentoonstellingen zijn: *Posted 4*, openbare ruimte, Cork, 2009 en *Ours: Democracy in the Age of Branding*, Parsons The New School for Design, The Sheila C. Johnson Design Center, New York, 2008. Lagomarsino woont en werkt in Malmö; Tirén woont en werkt in Stockholm./
Runo Lagomarsino (born 1977) and Johan Tirén (born 1973) are artists. Both individually and together they reflect on the (de)construction of ideology and

power in the shaping of contemporary (social and political) reality. Recent exhibitions include: *Posted 4*, public space, Cork, 2009; and *Ours: Democracy in the Age of Branding*, Parsons The New School for Design, The Sheila C. Johnson Design Center, New York, 2008. Lagomarsino lives and works in Malmö; Tirén lives and works in Stockholm.

Elske Rosenfeld (geboren 1974) is curator, kunstenaar en schrijver en voormalig lid van de groep Big Hope. Haar huidige artistieke onderzoek richt zich op de geschiedenis van de DDR, de ruimtes tussen persoonlijk en collectief geheugen en de processen waardoor geschiedenis wordt geschreven. Recent onderzoeksproject is: *Watchtower/Ghosts. About the (Im-)Possibility of Speaking about 89*, Berlijn, 2010. Rosenfeld woont en werkt in Berlijn./
Elske Rosenfeld (born 1974) is a curator, artist, and writer, and former member of the group Big Hope. Her current artistic research focuses on the history of the GDR, the interstices of personal and collective memory, and the processes by which histories get written. Recent research projects include: *Watchtower/ Ghosts. About the (Im-)Possibility of Speaking about 89*, Berlin, 2010. Rosenfeld lives and works in Berlin.

Hito Steyerl (geboren 1966) is documentairefilmmaker en auteur. Haar werk bestaat uit films, essays en installaties en behandelt onderwerpen zoals globalisering, feminisme en postkoloniale kritiek. Recente tentoonstellingen zijn: Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, 2010; Taipei Biennial, Taipei, 2010 en *Hito Steyerl*, Henie Onstad Art Centre, Oslo, 2010. Steyerl woont en werkt in Berlijn./
Hito Steyerl (born 1966) is a documentary filmmaker and author. Her work includes films, essays, and installations and deals with subjects such as globalization, feminism, and postcolonial critique. Recent exhibitions include: Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, 2010; Taipei Biennial, Taipei, 2010; and *Hito Steyerl*, Henie Onstad Art Centre, Oslo, 2010. Steyerl lives and works in Berlin.

Ultra-red (opgericht 1994) is een samenwerkingsverband op het gebied van kunst, bestaande uit verschillende leden die betrokken zijn bij activistische bewegingen. De groep initieert uitwisselingen tussen kunst en politieke organisatie. Hun werk bestaat met name uit geluidskunst, gepresenteerd in workshops, installaties, uitzendingen, performances en via hun online platenlabel *Public Record*. Recente tentoonstelling is: *Thomas Bayrle, Ann Lislegaard, and Ultra-red*, Raven Row, Londen, 2009. Leden zijn gevestigd in New York./
Ultra-red (founded 1994) is an art collaboration consisting of various members who are involved in activist movements. The group sets up exchanges between art and political organizing. Their work consists mainly of sound art, presented in workshops, installations, broadcasts, performances, and via their online record label *Public Record*. Recent exhibitions include: *Thomas Bayrle, Ann Lislegaard, and Ultra-red*, Raven Row, London, 2009. Members are based in New York.

2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress
On Horizons: Art and Political Imagination
4–6 november 2010
Istanboel

Het 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress is de tweede in een reeks van toonaangevende publieke bijeenkomsten georganiseerd in het kader van het langlopende onderzoeks-, educatie-, publicatie- en tentoonstellingsproject FORMER WEST (2008–2013). Terwijl het 1st FORMER WEST Congress (dat plaatsvond in november 2009 in Utrecht) gericht was op de impact van het jaar 1989 op de maatschappij en kunst van de afgelopen twintig jaar in het voormalige Westen, overweegt het tweede Congres het heden. Het Congres speculeert over het begrip van het 'verlies van een horizon' in de wereld na 1989. Het onderzoekt de horizon als een filosofisch-politiek construct en beschouwt haar relatie tot hedendaagse kunst en politieke denkbeelden. De volgende dringende vraag staat op het spel: waar staan we nu in het verbeeldingsproces van een andere wereld als deze tijd zo gekenmerkt is door het gebrek aan een overkoepelend project van vooruitgang, beroofd van wat kan worden betiteld als een 'horizon'

2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress
On Horizons: Art and Political Imagination
4–6 November 2010
Istanbul

The 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress is the second in a series of key public gatherings organized within the framework of the long-term research, education, publishing, and exhibition project FORMER WEST (2008–2013). While the 1st FORMER WEST Congress, which took place in November 2009 in Utrecht, focused on the impact of the year 1989 on society and art over the last twenty years in the former West, the 2nd Congress considers our present moment, speculating about the notion of the "loss of a horizon" in the post-1989 world. It examines the horizon as a philosophical-political construct and considers its relationship to contemporary art and political imaginaries. At stake is the urgent question: where are we now in relation to the possibility of envisioning another world in the face of the loss of an overarching project of progress, left bereft of what could be termed a "horizon" of opposition to the dominant marriage of free market capitalism and liberal democracy?

van verzet tegen de dominante verstrengeling van het vrije markt kapitalisme en de liberale democratie?

Het 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress is ontwikkeld door BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht en SKOR, Stichting Kunst en Openbare Ruimte, Amsterdam, en gerealiseerd in samenwerking met IKSV Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts, Istanboel. Het Congres vindt plaats in de Istanbul Technical University en is mede samengesteld door curator Simon Sheikh.

Het 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress wordt genereus gesteund door de Mondriaan Stichting, Amsterdam; ERSTE Stiftung, Wenen; en het Consulaat-Generaal van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, Istanboel.

FORMER WEST wordt gesteund door de Mondriaan Stichting, Amsterdam en het EU Culture Programme, Brussel.

The 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress is developed by BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht and SKOR, Foundation Art and Public Space, Amsterdam, and realized in collaboration with IKSV Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts, Istanbul. The Research Congress is hosted by Istanbul Technical University and is co-curated by Simon Sheikh.

The 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress is generously supported by the Mondriaan Foundation, Amsterdam; ERSTE Stiftung, Vienna; and the Consulate General of the Kingdom of The Netherlands, Istanbul.

FORMER WEST is supported by the Mondriaan Foundation, Amsterdam; and the EU Culture Programme, Brussels.

Mondriaan Stichting (Mondriaan Foundation)

Education and Culture DG
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ERSTE Stiftung

Kingdom of the Netherlands

On Horizons: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art
Verschijnt februari 2011

On Horizons: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art is opgezet rond de theoretische notie van de horizon en het begrip daarvan in de relatie tussen hedendaagse kunst en politieke denkbeelden. Het omstreden begrip van de horizon suggereert hier niet alleen politieke doelstellingen of utopieën, maar ook de omkadering van esthetische en politieke projecten – van een wereldbeeld, met andere woorden. Door een gevarieerde selectie van in opdracht geschreven teksten en bloemlezingen door theoretici, kunsthistorici, curatoren, kunstenaars en andere denkers, worden centrale vragen die binnen deze discussie aan de orde zijn onderzocht, zoals: Hoe kunnen we de relatie tussen hedendaagse kunst en de horizon begrijpen? Hoe moet een horizon gepositioneerd worden om krachtdadig te zijn, dichtbij of ver weg, onbereikbaar? De reader onderzoekt de manieren waarop kunstwerken en tentoonstellingen horizonten van mogelijkheden en onmogelijkheden kunnen opzetten, hoe kunst participeert in specifieke denkbeelden, en hoe kunst nieuwe denkbeelden kan bewerkstelligen en dus andere manieren kan aandragen om de wereld te verbeelden.

On Horizons: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art
Forthcoming February 2011

On Horizons: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art revolves around the theoretical notion of the horizon and the understanding of it in the linkage between contemporary art and political imaginaries. The contested term of the horizon is understood here to suggest not only political aims or utopias, but also the very framing of any aesthetic and political project—of a worldview, in other words. Through a diverse selection of newly commissioned and anthologized texts by theorists, art historians, curators, artists, and other thinkers, central questions at stake in these debates are explored such as: How can we understand the relationship between contemporary art and horizons? How must a horizon be placed in order to be effectual, as nearby or faraway, unattainable? The reader explores the ways in which art works and exhibitions can be said to set up certain horizons of possibility and impossibility, how art partakes in specific imaginaries, and how it can produce new ones, thus suggesting other ways of imagining the world.

On Horizons: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art is de vierde publicatie in de Critical Reader Series van BAK. In het bespreken van de notie van de horizon is het conceptueel verbonden met zowel de tentoonstelling *Vectors of the Possible* en het 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress in Istanboel (4–6 november 2010). De reader is samengesteld door Maria Hlavajova, Simon Sheikh en Jill Winder en wordt uitgegeven door BAK en post editions, Rotterdam.

On Horizons: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art is the fourth publication in BAK's Critical Reader Series. In its consideration of the notion of the horizon, it is conceptually linked to both the exhibition *Vectors of the Possible* and the 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress in Istanbul (4–6 November 2010). The reader is edited by Maria Hlavajova, Simon Sheikh, and Jill Winder, and co-published by BAK and post editions, Rotterdam.

Colofon/Colophon:
Nieuwsbrief 2010 #4 is gemaakt in het kader van de FORMER WEST onderzoekstentoonstelling *Vectors of the Possible*, georganiseerd door BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, 12 september–28 november 2010./Newsletter 2010 #4 is published on the occasion of the FORMER WEST research exhibition *Vectors of the Possible*, organized by BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, 12 September–28 November 2010.

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Simon Sheikh wil bedanken/wishes to thank: Cosmin Costinaş, Marlies van Hak, Maria Hlavajova, Jill Winder, en iedereen bij/and all at BAK; Julie Ault, Matthew Buckingham, Gertrud Sandqvist, en de/and the Malmö Art Academy, Malmö; Anders Michelsen; Katya Sander; Cornelius Zinédine Sheikh-Sander; en/and last but not least de deelnemende kunstenaars/the participating artists.

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korting/discount (studenten/students, 65+/seniors, groepen/groups min. 10, kinderen/children < 12): €2,00
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ONDERWIJS CULTUUR EN WETENSCHAP
Gemeente Utrecht

On Horizons:
A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art
explores the theoretical notion of the horizon and the linkage between contemporary art and political imagination. The horizon is commonly taken to be the "line" demarcating that which is beyond reach, obscured, or declared impossible by the dominant order. Yet could the horizon be recharged—via artistic and political imaginaries—with potentially liberating significance? A diverse range of speculative new texts by artists, philosophers, theorists, and art historians examine the genealogy of the horizon in philosophy and art, explore how today's neoliberal hegemony has been produced at the expense of a loss of a horizon of change and difference, and consider how art works and exhibitions set up certain horizons and thus partake in the production of the political.

Edited by Maria Hlavajova, Simon Sheikh, and Jill Winder

bak 2011 On Horizons: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art

post editions

Nancy Adajania &
Ranjit Hoskote
Jodi Dean
T.J. Demos
Sharon Hayes
Ernesto Laclau
Peter Osborne
Alexei Penzin &
Dmitry Vilensky
Simon Sheikh
Hito Steyerl
Ultra-red

On Horizons:
A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art

On Horizons: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art
(BAK Critical Reader Series)

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On Horizons: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art

Edited by Maria Hlavajova, Simon Sheikh, and Jill Winder

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Maria Hlavajova, Simon Sheikh, and Jill Winder
Introduction

On Horizons: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art is the fourth in BAK, basis voor actuele kunst's series of publications comprising select collections of new and anthologized writings by a rich array of artists, art historians, philosophers, theorists, and other thinkers grappling—with, from, and through the prism of contemporary art—with what we believe to be the critical matters of concern of our time. The texts in this reader, employing distinctive forms, styles, and methodologies, examine the contemporary "western" condition in both art and society through the notion of the "horizon." Departing from various traditions and understandings of the horizon and speculating on its possibility in today's world from a number of different perspectives in art, philosophy, and politics, the reader attempts to move forward the discussions that unfolded through BAK's long-term examination of these issues in two related projects: the group exhibition *Vectors of the Possible*, and *On Horizons: Art and Political Imagination*, the 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress.[1]

Within BAK's continuous research[2] into the question of how art has registered, explored, taken part in, and contributed to the cultural and political changes following the upheavals of 1989—globally and in the so-called West in particular—we

1 *Vectors of the Possible*, a FORMER WEST Research Exhibition curated by Simon Sheikh, was on view at BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, 12.09–28.11.2010. *On Horizons: Art and Political Imagination*, the 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress, which took place in Istanbul, 04.11–06.11.2010, was developed by BAK and SKOR, Foundation for Art and Public Domain, Amsterdam, and co-curated by Simon Sheikh. More detailed information about the projects can be found on pages 218–224.

2 One of the major forms this research takes is FORMER WEST, an international contemporary art research, education, exhibition, and publishing project (2008–2013), which aims to speculate about possible futures through a critical reinterpretation of recent, post-1989 global histories, and in so doing cast new light on contemporary art in relation to developments in society and politics. It is organized and initiated by BAK and realized with a dense international network of researchers and institutional partners. For more information or to access the project's digital platform and research archive, please see: www.formerwest.org.

have been confronted repeatedly with the notion of a "loss of horizon." With the (default) victory of capitalist democracy over the competing system of communism in 1989 (and with it the removal of the opposition which, while central to both blocs' ideological premises, ironically kept alive a certain hope for change), the striving for a better world driven by the horizon of overarching social progress seems to have been reduced to a commitment to the production of wealth for its own sake… and for the benefit of a very select few. Yet, despite this insistence on the language of "loss," the horizon—albeit of another kind—is in fact anything but absent in contemporary reality. The totalizing horizon of economic expansion and consumption to which the contemporary common project of globalized capitalism adheres is omnipresent, alive, and well.[3]

Embedded in this tension, however, is a possibility to rethink the notion of horizon as a critical instrument for emancipatory, experimental artistic and intellectual work, and this became one of the starting points for our considerations. Could the (contested) notion of horizon be recharged with new meanings to help facilitate such thought? For if we envision a horizon to be, simply put, the "line" demarcating (either in spatial or temporal terms) that which is not yet within our grasp—something perhaps even not yet imaginable, obscured, or indeed declared impossible by the dominant order—could we not find in the notion of horizon a new and potentially liberating significance? And through its intrinsic connection to the notion of the "ground," could it help us to free ourselves, even momentarily, from the exhausted analysis of the conditions that ground

3 Not unlike the Berlin Wall, whose "fall" not only ushered in a disappearance of that particular barrier but also led to the multiplication of many new division lines around the world, the horizon of overarching progress—the loss of which is really at stake—has arguably proliferated into manifold, particularized, competing horizons (religious fundamentalism would be but one example) with clear ideological programs delineating disparate world views and various ways of being in the world.

us, to instead tilt the balance towards new horizon-driven speculations? It is precisely here that contemporary art, with its faculty of imagination and of the imaginary, comes to play a crucial role in the construction (and deconstruction) of political imaginaries. For could it not be said that there is a space within the field of contemporary art where art works and art exhibitions *do* set up a horizon penetrating the space of the (otherwise) impossible, or even pointing to what is (said to be) unimaginable? Couldn't we say that what we so unproblematically call the "artistic imaginary" is in fact an indication of the presence of (new) possibilities—new horizons as it were—that society seems to have resigned from seeking?

The history of the horizon is brief, if precise, within the genealogy of philosophy. It stems mainly from the phenomenological tradition and is found in the writings of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Hans-Georg Gadamer. In the late 1970s it makes an unexpected return in the conceptual history of Reinhart Koselleck, with his discussion of "space of experience" and "horizon of possibility" in the history of social change and political movements. Writing about—and against—this history, philosopher Peter Osborne takes issue with this pairing in his text *Expecting the Unexpected: Beyond the "Horizon of Expectation*." Rather than enabling us to posit a horizon of difference, Osborne sees Koselleck's ideas as a barrier to thinking about the unthinkable. Similarly, the purely phenomenological approach to the question of the horizon is critiqued in philosopher Ernesto Laclau's intervention, *Horizon, Ground, and Lived Experience*. Here Laclau, who has long employed the concept of horizons in his work, writes that we can define a horizon in relation to signification as that which "establishes the limits of what is representable." He claims that the notion of symbolic and social totality as a "ground" should rather be understood as a horizon, and places both in relation

to political movements and struggles (to which we ideally could add artistic movements and struggles). For Laclau, the advantage of this move is to be able to think of unevenness as constitutive and of representation as impure within the political.

The tradition of the horizon within western philosophy has also been taken to task in postcolonial theory as a symbol of the gaze of a hegemonic western subject position. In light of these critiques, curators and cultural theorists Nancy Adajania and Ranjit Hoskote turn their attention to a more fragmentary and perhaps subversive lineage of the horizon in their text *The Nth Field: The Horizon Reloaded*. Beginning with a consideration of the "classical twentieth-century conceptualization of the horizon as a limit fraught with the potentiality of cultural self-definition"—and in particular Gadamer's evocative concept of a "fusion of horizons"—they quickly turn to the way that contemporary thinkers such as Homi K. Bhabha have instead conceived of the horizon as a locus of resistance and contestation. Adajania and Hoskote then suggest a new conceptualization of a horizon, which they call the "nth field": a place of transcultural encounter that can both assimilate and contradict the global flows of contemporary capitalism.

Yet how might we speak of the relation between the notion of a horizon and the conditions of artistic production and exhibition-making today? And what understanding of politics might that entail? One could begin, as curator and writer Simon Sheikh proposes in his text *Vectors of the Possible: Art Between Spaces of Experience and Horizons of Expectation*, by considering how art works and exhibitions construct horizons of their own through the linkage between art and political imaginaries. Using philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis's notion of radical imagination, Sheikh suggests that new imaginaries, "…can become visible precisely through how the horizon is staged—positioned, blurred, circumvented, and (re)constituted within artistic practices, and especially, current ways of exhibition-making." If art can "thematize the very situating of the horizon, with its contingencies, histories, institutions, and struggles, as well as limits," he claims, it is also possible for exhibitions to unsettle the status quo, to go beyond the current vantage point of the horizon to in fact "posit other worlds as possible."

Art historian T.J. Demos considers the complexities and pitfalls that accompany any such attempt in his contribution *Is Another World Possible? The Politics of Utopia and the Surpassing of Capitalism in Recent Exhibition Practice*. Here he critically examines contemporary curatorial practice and exhibition-making that deals with the utopian, exploring "how this engagement with the utopian has operated in exhibitions that have transformed since the 1990s into sites of research, experimental presentation, and the adoption of leftist politics." Through a close reading of three major exhibitions from recent years—*Utopia Station* (2003–present), *Forms of Resistance* (2007–2008), and the 11th Istanbul Biennial (2009)—Demos discusses how in each case the curatorial premise, exhibited artworks, exhibition installation, institutional affiliations, and conditions of production of the shows reflected—and at times came into confrontation with—their stated political-aesthetic aims. As to if and in what way such projects might be effectual in proposing alternatives to the reigning neoliberal order, Demos sees them as flawed yet productive attempts to challenge "the imprisonment of aesthetic and political imagination" within the post-political consensus of today, but urges for "more, even stronger engagements."

In their own practice, artists envision the horizon in a range of ways: literally or figuratively as an image that demarcates the

possible and impossible, what can be seen and what cannot; as a metaphor for both the limits of our vision and the expansiveness inherent to artistic and creative thinking; as a "ground" (in Laclau's sense of the term) that might allow us to see in the horizon a common feature and shared futurity; and many others. In *Organizing the Silence*, for example, members of the art collective Ultra-red, whose practice fluidly traverses sound art and installation with concrete political engagements (such as AIDS activism), discuss the relationship between the horizon and silence. In sound, they explain, "the horizon is typically figured as some form of silence, as in the limit—either phenomenological or epistemological—of perception." Yet when silence is mobilized as a way of facilitating a space for listening, as an occasion to ask the question "What did you hear?" then, Ultra-red argue, "…the horizon becomes less a fixed point toward which one gestures than a measure of movement that constructs and reconstructs thresholds of change." In such a way a space not for listening "to" each other, as in the polite bourgeois ideal of the public sphere, but for listening *together*—as in collective scenes of address—can be created.

The phenomenological term "horizonal" can be distinguished from the everyday usage of the adjective "horizontal," which suggests, strictly speaking, a geometric relationship between ground and horizon. In her text *In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment*, artist Hito Steyerl charts the shift from a perspective of horizontality—exemplified by a western, hegemonic, central perspective (echoing some of the critiques in Adajania and Hoskote's text)—to a new regime of visuality: that of the vertical. Within this shift the "ground," as a stable vantage point and basis for "metaphysical claims or political myths of foundation," is rocked to the core. Instead Steyerl suggests, the paradigm of today is a visual regime of drones and surveillance, of "free falls" and "3D nosedives into virtual abysses."

As horizontal planes are supplanted, the horizon becomes uncertain and wildly fluctuating for both politics and aesthetics. The political consequences, Steyerl reminds us, are significant. We must "consider the perspective of verticality as a social issue," reacquaint ourselves with the "dimension of above and below, up and down, rich and poor—and act against it."

We might also consider how a horizon is not only connected to possible future scenarios and ways of living and thinking, but also to real and imagined pasts in the form of residues and traditions, as well as possibilities lost and found. In the text *Certain Resemblances: Notes on Performance, Event, and Political Images*, artist Sharon Hayes ruminates on the relationship between lived experience, political images, and the shifting grounds of expectation and anticipation. In her own work, Hayes is interested in what she calls "arresting images" and the way that they present "a disruption to various straightforward narratives of the progressive march of historical time." Such images, Hayes suggests, can impress upon the beholder a sense of "having been there," a conviction that interestingly complicates a literal definition of experience. Yet within artistic practice, when an artist mobilizes a procedure of displacement—wresting an image from its "original" context (temporal, spatial, geographic, etc.)—it might open "a space in which it is possible to consider the future."

But from which real or imagined past can the future be constructed? As political theorist Jodi Dean argues in her text *The Communist Horizon*, one horizon that was quickly proclaimed to have passed into the dustbin of history was communism. In contrast to this mantra of the neoliberal age, Dean points out that communism—as a present force, a force of the common and commons, and the actuality of revolution—is alive if not exactly well. This is not least because, as she writes, "the gross

inequality ushered in by rampant neoliberalism—let's call it despotic financialism—is visible, undeniable, and global." Dean argues that "the mistake leftists make… is thinking that democracy replaced communism rather than serves as a contemporary form of communism's displacement." Communism is therefore the alternative, a horizon that is not lost, only clouded over. And it is because any understanding of a horizon depends on where you stand, on your point of view—not just phenomenologically or physically but also geopolitically and historically—that we must attend to specific contexts, histories, and localities in order to see how certain notions of horizons of possibility fare within them. One such concrete analysis relating to the post-Soviet condition in today's Russia can be found in the conversation between theorist Alexei Penzin and artist Dmitry Vilensky, *From the Perspective of Hope*. Drawing on the experience of perestroika and Russia's dramatic transformation after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, as well as the tradition of left politics more generally, they consider the potential horizon that might be constructed as a "dialectic of victories and defeats." Penzin and Vilensky attempt to think through a practice of emancipatory politics that would display a commitment to a particular understanding of hope. "Despite everything," they claim, "we create the future today. Genuine hope arises from the clear sense that not everything is determined and there is always a certain supply of freedom," a "space of struggle."

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As with other readers in the BAK series, *On Horizons* is an attempt to confront our own "not-knowing," to couple it with a desire—and, we feel, an obligation—to learn about, open up for discussion, explore, and express issues or ideas of increasing urgency in today's world. We thus invite you to join us to think from, through, with, or even against the arguments and claims put forward in the two main entwined lines of the artistic and the philosophical that follow in the reader texts. Each contributor ponders the usability and the potential of the notion of horizon in her or his own work and taken collectively, these considerations suggest that the horizon as a concept could be a useful tool in discussing the linkages of art and the political in a new way, bringing us further than the entrenched positions of the politics of representation and representational politics that have so demarcated and influenced discussions in the field in recent years. Nevertheless, the exploration of the relevance of the notion of the horizon today is in fact in its nascent stages, where even its definitions and histories of use are up for debate. Far from presenting a closed body of knowledge on the topic, open questions and experimental approaches are revealed in these pages. For, given the current constellation of the world and the pervading horizon of neoliberalism, reclaiming the very notion of a horizon with new meanings may help us *resituate* it, and thus also invest artistic practices and political projects in speculation and new possibilities rather than grounding experiences and fixed identities.

On Horizons: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art is the fourth publication in the BAK Critical Reader Series, following *Concerning War* (2006/2010), *On Knowledge Production* (2008), and *The Return of Religion and Other Myths* (2009). BAK Critical Readers explore and expand upon exhibitions, projects, and the results of artistic research, presenting significant writing by artists, curators, theorists, and other cultural producers.

Nancy Adajania and Ranjit Hoskote

The Nth Field: The Horizon Reloaded

The Surveyor's Fiction

The horizon does not exist in nature. Despite its perennial evocation as a key trope of the mystery and splendor of the natural world, whether in the literature of travel or the art of the Sublime, the horizon as a universal limit or *limen* of experience is a fiction invented by the surveyor and the navigator. An orientational construct established by sentient beings while forming a visual estimate of their environment and the optimal direction they must take while moving within it, the horizon comes to carry a freight of spiritual, cultural, and political connotations. It speaks of the possibilities of self-definition, self-extension, self-transformation, and the disclosure of the unknown, the sensed that is not yet seen. Symbolically, therefore, it embodies the relationship between the self and a range of human, natural, and supranatural alterities indicated by that useful blanket term "the Other."

If the horizon is a fiction, the sovereign perceiving self from whose viewpoint it is established as a universal limit is, likewise, a fiction. That sovereign perceiving self incorporates within itself a multitude of selves, each with its own individual horizon; but all of these are subsumed, by coercion or consent, within the common fiction. This realization, which is crucial to various conceptualizations of the horizon—whether in the phenomenological, the postcolonial, or what we shall designate in this essay as the transcultural accounts—offers us three optics through which to consider the horizon.

The first of these is the optic of intersubjectivity: How do various subjectivities engage one another in negotiation, processing through their convergences and divergences to arrive at the common fiction of a shared horizon? If the horizon is visualized as an osmotic membrane, a porous barrier, an interface between heterogeneous groups or moments, may we see it as a site

where intersubjective encounter takes place and the possibility of transformation is offered? Related to this optic is a second one, that of political spatiality. Such negotiation among subjectivities would undoubtedly generate an interplay between the dissensus of opinions and the consensus mandated by authority; the horizon becomes, accordingly, the site where this interplay is either repressed in the interests of stability or achieves vibrant elucidation through the irrepressible expression of heterogeneity. To the extent that any conception of a horizon produces a range of spatial relationships, of site and the possibilities of situation, it also proposes a ground of relationships developed in relation to the distribution of power, authority, and equity. Finally, since the horizon always marks the site of desire—which is approached and constructed through the mode of expectation, anticipation, and hoped-for consummation, where rival claims and cathexes are played out—we are also invited to regard it through a third optic: that of the erotic.

In the account that follows, we apply these optics to three broad and successive conceptualizations of the horizon, each situated within a set of interlocking historical, philosophical, and political contexts. The first of which is a brief reflection on a classical twentieth century conceptualization of the horizon as a limit within the phenomenological tradition. A consideration of more overtly political visualizations of the horizon in postcolonial thought follows; and we conclude—through critical engagement with these two bodies of theoretical inquiry—with an emergent conceptualization of the horizon, the *nth field*, which in our view corresponds more substantially to the experience of transcultural encounter and cultural production in the age of globalization. In arranging these conceptualizations successively, we hope to mark the shifts and ruptures that distinguish them from one another as responses to radical transformations of historical experience, while also suggesting

a dialectical genealogy that connects the various manifest and latent impulses that each carries.

Horizon as Monocultural Heterotopia

The metaphor of the horizon, as conceived within the philosophical tradition of phenomenology associated with Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and Hans-Georg Gadamer, functions as a hermeneutic means of overcoming the lacunae in the understanding of the past by the present, and the lacunae of mutual understanding between present subjectivities. In Gadamer's handling, especially, it thus acts as an ontological guarantee, securing the affirmation of the contemporary subjectivity within a tradition that is defined and enforced by the repeated acts of reading, engagement, and empathetic address by which that contemporary subjectivity maps the lifeworld of an anterior text or event through its own; in Gadamer's celebrated phrase, this procedure is described as an enriching "fusion of horizons." In consonance with Heidegger's suggestion that the boundary does not mark the end of something, but rather the point where something begins to "presence" itself, Gadamer broke with previous philosophers who noted that the central crisis of hermeneutics was the inevitable alienation of interpreters in the present from the texts or events of the past that they hoped to interpret; to overcome this alienation, philosophers such as Friedrich Schleiermacher and Wilhelm Dilthey proposed that the interpreting subjectivity should erase from within itself the impress of the predicament of the contemporary, while bearing witness to a past from which it was separated by an unbridgeable temporal distance. By contrast, Gadamer pointed out that one's anchorage in the present is a fundamental and ontological rather than an incidental and transient condition. Accordingly, he set out to deepen the sense of ontological entitlement with which an act of interpretation could mediate past and present, enriching this act both

with the presuppositions of the present and the deconstruction of such presuppositions in the face of the past's disclosures. As translator and scholar David E. Linge writes:

> As mediation or transmission, the interpreter's action belongs to and is of the same nature as the substance of history that fills out the temporal gap between him and his objects. The temporal gulf that the older hermeneutics tried to overcome now appears as a continuity of heritage and tradition. It is a process of 'presencings', that is, of mediations, through which the past already functions in and shapes the interpreter's present horizon. Thus the past is never simply a collection of objects to be recovered or duplicated by the interpreter, but rather what Gadamer calls an 'effective history' (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) that alone makes possible the conversation between each new interpreter and the text or event he seeks to understand. The prejudices and interests that mark out our hermeneutical situation are given to us by the very movement of tradition—of former concretisations that mediate the text to us—and constitute our immediate participation in this effective history.[1]

Viewed dispassionately, Gadamer's account of the fusion of horizons can take on the character of a reinforcement loop, a self-fulfilling prophecy. This horizonal experience bypasses intersubjectivity as understood to be the exchange between the individual subjectivity with other and heterogeneous contemporary subjectivities in the present. Instead, it comprises the mobilization of a series of encounters with the auratic and ancestral presences of legatory texts and events. And while the tradition is not visualized as a museum of artifacts, it is nonetheless presented as a series of dormant impulses that, if

1 Hans-Georg Gadamer *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, ed. and trans. David E. Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp. xvi–xvii.

animated with the breath of the present, would serve to validate a specific idiom of cultural life. The enriched subjectivity, in this account, is a cultural selfhood defined through the recursive protocols and accreted readings of an activated tradition.

When considered through the optic of political spatiality, the implications of Gadamer's conceptualization of the horizon are inescapable: it would shape the experiencing subjectivity within the boundaries of a cultural tradition, one that has inevitably been formalized and codified within the armature of a nation-state concept, underpinned by the fixative processes of print capital and print modernity, which conflate the invented unities of language, ethnicity, and in the worst case, religion and a notion of race.[2] What Gadamer's vision of the individual act of negotiating with a tradition through a fusion of horizons masks is the often involuntary manner in which the horizon as invented unity has been imposed by authority in such situations: the often contiguous apparatuses of expansionist capital and colonial-imperialist states dictated, through the late nineteenth and most of the twentieth century, the relative ordering and disposition of social, economic, political, and cultural locations for the individuals and communities within their ambit. This translated, also, as the structuring of most intersubjective encounters along well-defined relations of power and asymmetries of capital.

At the same time, through the optic of the erotic, the Gadamerian conceptualization of the horizon connotes an invitation to completeness, whether or not such completeness is actually accomplished, even through repeated mediation between past and present (the fusion of horizons is understood to be an open-

2 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991) (rev. ed.), pp. 37–46.

ended project). Impelled by the drives of aspiration and anticipation, the hope of participation and the dream of transcending the logic of temporality, Gadamer's vision of the horizon encrypts the risk of the remaking of identity, as well as the promise of redemption from the contemporary limitations on self-definition. It is not impossible, then, to read this as a wager on a possible heterotopia, one that the contemporary subjectivity may reach by releasing the musealized temporalities buried within itself. And yet, this is a monocultural heterotopia: it is conceived as a retrieval of elements from within one's own presupposed originary matrix, so to speak, rather than admitting of a receptiveness towards the elsewheres that lie beyond the boundaries of the nation-state, and their unknown subjectivities. We may begin to move beyond the limitations of the Gadamerian account by considering instances of the horizon otherwise conceived; for example, the notion of horizon-as-contact zone found in post-colonial theory.

The Contact Zone

A marvelous and melancholy loss of innocence is recorded in the Philippine nationalist and writer José Rizal's 1887 novel, *Noli Me Tangere*. The course of the narrative conspires to bring Rizal's young mestizo hero back to the colonial Manila of the late nineteenth century after a long period of residence in Europe; riding past the botanical gardens, he looks out of his carriage window to realize that he is in the grip of a mysterious vertigo.[3] He finds that he cannot look at these gardens as themselves; rather, they are layered over with the images of such gardens and parks in Heidelberg, Paris, and Berlin. Nothing that he sees in the Spanish dominion can ever be the same as when he left it; everything is seen, so to speak, in

3 José Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere* (1887) (Manila: Instituto Nacional de Historia, 1978), p. 43.

double images by a double consciousness that is simultaneously present and absent, proximate and distant, constantly shifting the focal length of its optic; there is neither native nor alien, colonized or colonizing, but rather a series of spectral claims to ontological definition in ceaseless fluctuation. This Rizal calls *el demonio de las comparaciones*; rendered by the political scientist Benedict Anderson as the "spectre of comparisons,"[4] this term is perhaps more vibrantly translated as the "demon of comparisons." For it names a condition of eerie normality, a predicament of simultaneous debilitation and enablement; the "demon" connoting wry mischief, and the "daimon" connoting a visionary mandate, perhaps spell this condition out better than does the forbidding "spectre." In identifying such a *demonio*, Rizal spoke for all denizens of the colonial territories of the European powers and proposed a patron saint for a specific kind of horizon: a horizon conceived of as a space that is approached from either side of the intended demarcation, by at least two, opposed experiencing subjectivities, or a subjectivity twinned within and sometimes turned against itself.

For Rizal's colonial Manila—like the Bombay, Mombassa, Penang, Singapore, or Calcutta that preoccupied many of his contemporaries writing in the imperial centers of Western Europe or the colonial territories of Asia, Africa, and Australia—was quintessentially an embodiment of what the linguist and cultural anthropologist Mary Louise Pratt has described as the "contact zone." Pratt uses this term to refer to "the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of

4 Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 2.

coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict."[5] It is well worth the effort to quote the relevant passage from the introduction to Pratt's 1992 study, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, in its entirety. She continues:

> I borrow the term 'contact' here from its use in linguistics, where the term contact language refers to improvised languages that develop among speakers of different native languages who need to communicate with each other consistently, usually in [the] context of trade. Such languages begin as pidgins, and are called creoles when they come to have native speakers of their own. … 'Contact zone' in my discussion is often synonymous with 'colonial frontier'. But while the latter term is grounded within a European expansionist perspective (the frontier is a frontier only with respect to Europe), 'contact zone' is an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect. … I aim to foreground the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed by diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination. A 'contact' perspective emphasises how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations among colonisers and colonised, or travellers and 'travelees', not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically assymetrical relations of power.[6]

In terms of the varied forms of intersubjectivity that the contact zone makes possible, it opens up a space of mediation, mirroring, mimicry, and heteroglossia. While it incarnates the archetypal and originary moment of a politics of imperial

5 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 6.
6 Ibid., pp. 6–7.

hegemony, it simultaneously allows for the emergence of a corresponding politics of self-assertion, through the interplay between coercion and consent, interpellation and resistance. In terms of its political spatiality, the contact zone embodies not a unified or common horizon, but a site where frictive horizons may cusp and intersect: historically, indeed, it was a site where the system of colonial and later imperial domination was simultaneously tightened and loosened in terms of its allocation of locations and roles to its participants and conscripts. Transitions of identity and degrees of mobility, sometimes quite dramatic, were possible here. Perceptions of Self and Other, while becoming heightened and hardened in ideological discourse, became increasingly fluid in political and cultural practice. It is no accident that the literature of the period, both that produced by the colonizers and the colonized, refers repeatedly to the erotics of self-surrender, treason, and the fear of becoming the Other (whether it was the colonizer "going native" or the colonized "being converted"). The crucial bearer of this volatile erotics was the go-between or the native informant: the mestiza, the dragoman, the translator-as-traducer, and in colonial Bombay, the Parsi *dubashee* or "two-tongued one." Recurrent in the administrative, anthropological, and literary narratives of the contact zone, these agents of communication incarnated the unprogrammed mobilities and reorientations of their predicament, the loss and remaking of selfhood.

Precisely through such instabilities and recalibrations, the contact zone presents itself as a heterotopia in the exact sense, a place of Otherness, where disparate subjectivities enter into dialogue and contestation, developing new idioms of cultural expression that are compellingly hybrid. It is to such a horizon, which is productive of new potentialities, that postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha assigns the term the "Third Space." In Bhabha's account, the contact zone as horizon emerges as a

dynamically in-between space: an interstitial region of enunciation, a porous and osmotic membrane, a location for the cultivation of resistance and the uneven, contradictory, yet vivid co-production of new futures that spring neither from Self nor Other, but from their mediation. As Bhabha writes:

> The intervention of the Third Space of enunciation, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code. Such an intervention quite properly challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenising, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People. … It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory… may reveal that the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualising an *inter*national, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity*. To that end we should remember that it is the 'inter'—the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between* space—that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. … And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves.[7]

The Nth Field[8]

While Bhabha's Third Space marks a distinct move beyond the relative stasis and monoculturalism of the Gadamerian fusion of horizons, it is clear to us that yet another shift is called for in order to provide testimony to the global cultural experience of the early twenty-first century. We must reconfigure the horizonal experience in response to the accelerated variousness of intersubjective encounters after the onset of globalization and its plural temporalities; the collapse of the rigid spatialities of Cold War geopolitics; the transnational mobility of people, labor, goods, and ideas; the emergence of diverse regional theatres that claim the space of the contemporary; and the expansion of the net and its communicative forms of social media as a major locus of experience. Whereas the Third Space is often conceived of in terms of the colonial encounter and its various aftermaths—the contact zone, diaspora, the dissolution of the center/periphery binary, and the circulating mobility between former postcolonial hinterland and former imperial metropole—we have developed the concept of the *nth field* to mark a transitive engagement among individuals, irrespective of a shared colonial history, which is no longer the only or the most important criterion for an intersection, encounter, or exchange among dissimilar subjectivities. Thus we see the nth field as a site for the staging of a transitivity of horizons, a space where different kinds of cultural imaginations may engage one another in dialogue.

And where the Third Space remains associated with the demarcation of difference between Self and Other, or even selves and their others, arising from the specific historical crisis of the colonial encounter, the nth field is premised on the identification of affinities that form a ground for transcultural mutuality, to be explored through the extension of one's complicity in the crisis, but also the pleasure of the Other; and through an ethical responsiveness to the predicament of the Other. In the nth field, culture is produced through all forms of intersubjective encounters among heterogeneous actors—the crucial factor involved here is the unpredictability of circulation in the epoch of globalization. Today, cultural actors are developing nth fields

7 Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 37–39.

8 The nth field signifies, to us, the untagged and unnumbered zone of cultural and political possibility that arises from the unpredictable encounters among diverse actors in the transverse spaces opened up by migration, dialogue, and mutual curiosity. We draw the term from the discipline of computer programming, where an nth field stands for the as-yet-unspecified but foreseeable iteration of a loop process, the "nth" representing an ordinal number. While it seems, formally, to be a repetition, its actual effects are amplificatory—and can only be experienced when one has, so to speak, arrived at the field. We have adopted this term for its expressive potential, and attempted to extend its nuances.

for themselves, rather than simply finding themselves in contact zones by reason of inheritance or happenstance, or working their way through to a Third Space against the grain of inherited turbulence. Crucially, therefore, the nth field goes beyond Pratt's classical conceptualization of the contact zone, which she regards as the site of "spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated… and whose trajectories now intersect."[9] Instead, the nth field is a site for the active seeking out of engagement, exchange, and intersection through the modes of mutuality, collaboration, and emplacement, an experimental poetics of belonging. The shift marked here is that from the outcomes of structure to the choices of agency; from a scalar-oriented vision of cultural actors acting out the consequences of world-historical stagings of travel, colonial expansion, and imperial rule, to a vector-oriented account of cultural actors shaping a way in and through a complicated world. In terms of political spatiality, too, the nth field redistributes equity through a lattice of newly formulated and negotiated relationships, many of which begin in the awareness that the long-existing constraints of asymmetry must be broken; indeed, such a resistance often overtly inspires and sustains the nth field's relationships of collaboration and synergy. The erotics of the nth field is one of confident encounter, based on the understanding that Self and Other need not be locked either in communion or antagonism, hostage to fragmentation or subjugation, but that they can weave together a fabric of "adjacencies and distances,"[10] to adapt art historian Miwon Kwon's memorable phrase for our purpose.

To our generation of cultural producers, location has long ago liberated itself from geography. We map our location on a transregional lattice of shifting nodes representing intense

9 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 7.
10 Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004), p. 166.

occasions of collegiality, temporary platforms of convocation, and transcultural collaborations. As we move along the shifting nodes of this lattice, we produce outcomes along a scale of forms ranging across informal conversations, formal symposia, self-renewing caucuses, periodic publications, anthologies, traveling exhibitions, film festivals, biennials, residencies, and research projects. This global system of cultural production takes its cue from the laboratory—as in all laboratories, the emphasis is on experiment and its precipitates. However, to the extent that this system is relayed across a structure of global circulations, it also possesses a dimension of theater: a rather large proportion of its activity is in the nature of rehearsal and restaging. We would like to address the dilemmas as well as the potentialities of a mode of cultural production that *is based on global circulations yet is not merely circulatory*; and a mode of life that is based on transnational mobility but is not without anchorage in regional predicaments.

Everywhere and increasingly—whether we are teaching at a para-academic platform in Bombay, engaging in curatorial discussions or conducting research in Berlin, co-curating a biennial in Gwangju, contributing to an international exhibition in Karlsruhe, responding with critical empathy to a triennial in Brisbane, or developing a research project in Utrecht—we find ourselves working with interlocutors and collaborators in what we think of as nth fields. All nth fields have similar structural, spatial and temporal characteristics. In structural terms, these are receptive and internally flexible institutions, rhizomatic and self-sustaining associations, or periodic platforms. In spatial terms, these are either programmatically nomadic in the way they manifest themselves, or extend themselves through often unpredictable transregional initiatives, or are geographically situated in sites to which none (or few) of their participants are affiliated by citizenship or residence. Temporally, the rhythm of

these engagements is varied and can integrate multiple time lines for conception and production.

These nth fields certainly throw into high relief the vexed questions that haunt the global system of cultural production: Who is the audience for contemporary global art? How may we construe a local that hosts, or is held hostage by, the global? Can we evolve a contemporary discussion that does not merely revisit the exhausted Euro-American debates of the late twentieth century by oblique means? Is it possible to translate the intellectual sources of a regional modernity into globally comprehensible terms? What forms of critical engagement should artistic labor improvise, as it chooses to become complicit with aspirational and developmentalist capital and its managers across the world? At the same time, these nth fields are optimal nodes for the staging of what art theorist and curator Sarat Maharaj has described as "entanglements,"[11] the braided destinies that knot together selves accustomed to regard one another as binary opposites: colonizing aggressor and colonized victim; Euro-American citizen and denizen of the Global South; Occidental and Oriental; and so forth. A history delineated under the sign of entanglement lays bare the ideological basis of all fixed identities, conjoins them in sometimes discomfiting but always epiphanic mutuality. When such identities are thus unmasked, de-naturalized, and dissolved, we are free to work out new forms of dialogue and interaction across difference, a new and redeeming solidarity. In these complex circumstances, the architecture of belonging can never be static. In our own practice as theorists and curators, we have drafted different versions of it in different places. We have

11 Sarat Maharaj, "Small Change of the Universal," unpublished keynote lecture, delivered at the 1st FORMER WEST Congress, organized by BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, 5–7 November 2009. A video recording of Maharaj's address may be viewed online at: http://www.formerwest.org/ResearchCongresses/1stFORMERWESTCongress/SaratMaharajSmallChangeoftheUniversal.

drawn on various models of emotionally and intellectually enriching locality, including the *mohalla* (an Urdu/Hindi word meaning a web of relationships inscribed within a grid of lanes, streets, and houses), the *kiez* (a Germano-Slavic, specifically Berlin word, meaning much the same thing, and conferring on the resident the privilege of non-anxious belonging), the *adda* (a Hindi/Bengali term meaning a venue for friendly conversation and animated debate), and the *symposium* (not the academic format but its original, a Greek word signifying a drinking party that was also a venue for philosophical discussion). These traveling localities are the neighborhoods and convocations where the nth field is manifested.[12]

And what might we discuss at these convocations? The power of infinitives, perhaps, to disclose the complicities between an official contemporary and its unacknowledged cousins; to celebrate the carnivalesque; to document the half-forgotten; to allude to elusive historical realities; to annotate our encounters. In the nth field, iterated freshly in every new and provisional neighborhood and convocation, we could generate modes of comprehending, critiquing, and resisting various hazards: the incessancy of theoretical articulation and the riddle-like silence of history; the volatile rhetoric of political elites and the absolute secrecy of the strategic operations through which they exploit the planet. The vibrancy of the nth field rescues us from being conscripted in the cause of a single past or being mortgaged to a single future. The nth field returns us to the potency of the horizon as the perennial and renewable site of the not-yet. It is, in the final analysis, not an ontological guarantee of a retrievable selfhood (as in Gadamer's account), nor a staging of the

12 Some passages in this section appeared previously in our text entitled "Notes towards a Lexicon of Urgencies," *DISPATCH*, the online journal of Independent Curators International (October 2010), online at: http://www.ici-exhibitions.org/index.php/dispatch/posts/notes_towards_a_lexicon_of_urgencies/.

confrontation between binaries, however productive (as in Pratt and Bhabha's accounts). Rather, it is a provocation to constantly destabilize and re-imagine ourselves beyond our provisional locations, to converse beyond our presuppositions about belonging and alienation, and so to invite ourselves to the feast of hazard.

Jodi Dean

The Communist Horizon

In everyday language the word "horizon" is usually understood in a rather mundane, spatial fashion as the line dividing the visible, separating earth from sky. In that sense, but also in much broader terms, the horizon demarcates a fundamental division. It is something that we experience as impossible to reach, that we can neither escape nor cross. Horizon marks not a lost future but a dimension of experience we can never lose, even if, lost in a fog or focused on our feet, we fail to see it. The horizon is Real not just in the sense of *impossible*—we can never reach it—but also in the sense of the *actual* format, condition, and shape of our setting (and I take both these senses of Real to be Lacanian). We can lose our bearings, but the horizon is a necessary condition for shaping our actuality. The horizon is the fundamental division establishing where we are.

With respect to politics, the necessary and unavoidable horizon that conditions and curves our experience in the United States is communism.[1] In the wake of the collapse of the communist regimes in Europe in 1989, the US assumed a mantle of unparalleled hegemony justified by its ideological "victory" over communism. This ostensible victory might tempt us to think of the communist horizon as a lost horizon and so to adopt capitalist and liberal-democratic rhetoric about communism's defeat. But giving in to this temptation would be a mistake, a mistake that capitalists, conservatives, and liberal democrats *don't* make insofar as they see the threat of communism everywhere, twenty years after its alleged demise. The communist horizon isn't lost. It's Real. To think further about how this communist horizon manifests itself to us today, how we feel its force, how it formats our setting, I treat communism as a tag

1 I first heard the term "communist horizon" from writer and translator Bruno Bosteels, in a paper he gave in Rotterdam in summer 2010. He was quoting Alvaro García Linera, the Vice President of Bolivia. Linera gestures to the "communist horizon," not explaining it or developing the idea but assuming it as an irreducible feature of our setting.

for five features of our conjuncture: a specific state formation that collapsed in 1989; a present, increasingly powerful force; the sovereignty of the people; the force of the common and commons; and finally, the actuality of revolution.

Communism: the Soviet system

In the US, the most conventional referent of communism is the Soviet Union. Since the Soviet Union changed over time, it is stabilized via the proper name "Stalin," where "Stalinist" connotes practices of monopolizing and consolidating power in the state-party bureaucracy. Communism as Stalinism is marked by authoritarianism, prison camps, and the inadmissibility of criticism. Within this view, post-Stalinist developments in the Soviet Union, particularly with regard to successes in modernizing and improving overall standards of living, don't register.

Two interlocking stories of the collapse of communism dominate US politics. The first is that communism collapsed under its own weight: it was so inefficient, people were so miserable, and life was so stagnant that the system came to a grinding halt. It failed. The second is that communism was defeated. We beat them. We won. Capitalism and liberal democracy (the elision is necessary) demonstrated their superiority on the world historical stage. The details of this victory matter less than its ostensible undeniability. After all, there is no Soviet Union anymore.

But if the fall of the Berlin Wall were the same as the end of communism, if 1989 marked a temporal horizon separating the time of the Soviets from the present, then communism would be past—like the Roman or the Ottoman empires. As a particular political formation, it would be an artifact to be analyzed and studied. Whatever gave it breath, made it real, would be gone.

It would be a dead political language. Yet communism persists. It's a living presence or possibility.

Communism: a present force

In the US, "communism" is used as a term of opprobrium so frequently that one would think the Cold War never ended. What is communist? National healthcare. Environmentalism. Feminism. Public education. Progressive taxation. Paid vacation days. Gun control. Bicycles are a "gate-way drug" to communism. One right-wing commentator called Web 2.0 communist because it holds out "the seductive promise of individual self-realization" that Karl Marx evoked in *The German Ideology*.[2] Who is communist? Anyone who protested US military aggression in Iraq and Afghanistan, anyone critical of the Bush administration, or major Democratic political leaders such as former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. And, of course, President Barack Obama. It's obvious enough that contemporary Democrats are not communists—the Democratic Party did not even attempt to pass a single-payer public health insurance program (instead, people are required to purchase insurance from a private company). Its response to the economic crisis focused on the finance sector. The constant evocations of an encroaching communist threat in the US could thus seem a not very creative return to the language of the Cold War and Red Scare, a conservative retreat to a formerly effective rhetoric of fear.

In a recent article in *New Left Review*, philosopher Slavoj Žižek emphasizes that the ruling ideology today wants us to think that radical change is impossible. This ideology, Žižek says, attempts to "render invisible the impossible-real of the

2 Andrew Keen writing in *The Weekly Standard*, as quoted in the article "Web 2.0 Is Reminiscent Of Marx," online at: http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/02/15/opinion/main1320641.shtml?tag=contentMain;contentBody.

antagonism that cuts across capitalist societies."[3] I disagree. Žižek's description might have worked a decade or so ago, but not anymore. In the US, for example, we are reminded daily that radical change is possible, and we are incited to fear it. Right-wing media scream about the threat of communism. If we don't do something, we will be under the communist yoke. The right, even the center, regularly invokes the possibility of radical change and it names that change communism.

Why does the right name the change communism? Because the gross inequality ushered in by rampant neoliberalism—let's call it despotic financialism—is visible, undeniable, and global. Increasing in industrialized countries over the last three decades, income inequality is particularly severe in Mexico, Turkey, and the US, the three industrialized countries with the largest income gaps: the income of the richest is twenty-five times that of the poorest in Mexico, seventeen times that of the poorest in Turkey, and sixteen times that of the poorest in the US, according to a 2008 report.[4] Dominant ideological forces *can't* obscure the antagonism that cuts across capitalist countries. So they name it, and they name it communism.

The powers that be in the US typically position extreme inequality, indebtedness, and decay elsewhere, offshore. But the economic recession, collapse in the housing and mortgage markets, increase in permanent involuntary unemployment, and trillion dollar bank bailouts have made what we in the US thought was the *Third World* into *our world*. Contra Žižek, the division cutting across capitalist societies is in fact *more visible, more palpable* in the US *now* than it's been since at least the 1920s: we learn, for example, that more of our children live in poverty than at any time in US history; and that the wealth of the very, very rich, the top 1 percent, has dramatically increased while income for the rest of us has remained stagnant or declined.

Admittedly, US popular media rarely refer to the super rich as the bourgeoisie and the rest of us as proletarians. They use terms like "Wall Street" versus "Main Street." Sometimes, they avoid a direct contrast between two hostile forces, instead juxtaposing bank bonuses with strapped consumers looking for bargains or cutting back on spending. In a culture where we've been urged to believe that inequality is good because what benefits the rich trickles down to the rest of us, the current undeniability of division isn't nothing. It's something. Inequality is appearing as a factor, a force, a crime.

No wonder, then, that we are hearing the name communism—precisely because the antagonism cutting across capitalist societies is visible, palpable, pressing. The right, even the center, tries to evoke communism as a threat, something to warn against, a terrible past we should all hasten to avoid. If communism is Stalinism and if it is in the past, why is it still a threat? Because the right—in its neoliberal and neoconservative guises—realizes that communism is not Stalinism. It is the radically egalitarian alternative to capitalism, the answer to our current economic crisis. Social theorist David Harvey explains that capitalists view a healthy economy as growing about 3 percent a year. The likelihood of continued 3 percent annual growth in the world economy, however, is small. This is in part because of the difficulty of reabsorbing the capital surplus. By 2030 it would be necessary to find investment opportunities for 3 trillion dollars, roughly twice what was

3 Slavoj Žižek, "What is the Left to Do?," *Counterpunch*, 15–17 October 2010, online at: http://www.counterpunch.org/zizek10152010.html.

4 "Poverty Around The World," OECD Report, 2008, online at: http://www.globalissues.org/article/4/poverty-around-the-world.

needed in 2010.[5] The future of capitalism is thus highly uncertain—and, for capitalists, grim.

Neoliberals and neoconservatives evoke the threat of communism because it is Real. I've considered the right's relation to the communist threat. But what about the democratic left? Whereas the right treats communism as a present force, the left is bent around the force of loss, that is, the contorted shape it has found itself in as it has forfeited or betrayed the communist ideal. The rejection of communism shapes the left. Fragmented tributaries and currents, branches and networks of particular projects and partial objects, are the left form of the loss of communism. Some think of this form as an advance. They name it democracy, envisioning struggles on the left specifically as struggles for democracy. In the setting of parliamentary democracies, for leftists to refer to their goals as a struggle for democracy is strange. They proceed as if the most pressing political problems were matters of participation, thereby avoiding and occluding the fundamental antagonism between the top 1 percent and the rest of us. The mistake leftists make when they turn into liberals and democrats is thinking that we are beyond the communist horizon, that democracy replaced communism rather than serves as the contemporary form of communism's displacement. And with this mistake, leftists disavow our complicity in despotic financialism: if political struggle is always an irreducible dimension of capitalism and capitalism is always interlinked with conflict, resistance, accommodation, and demands, then rejections of the terms of these struggles will affect the form that capitalism takes.

For example, sociologists Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello document the dismantling of a class-based approach to work

5 David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital. And the Crises of Capitalism* (London: Profile Books, 2010), p. 216.

and the assembling of a new view of work in terms of individual creativity, autonomy, and flexibility. The resulting shift of responsibilities from organizations onto individuals undermined previous guarantees of security. Individual work displaced work as a common condition, freeing capital from the constraints it encountered when it had to deal with workers as a collective force. The actuality of flexible employment was thus precarity—temporary work, subcontracting, project-based employment, multitasking, and opportunities contingent on personal networks.

Rather than fighting for an ideal, engaging in a struggle on behalf of the rest of us, the left in the US repetitively invokes democracy. These appeals to democracy suggest the Lacanian notion of drive. For psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, drive, like desire, describes the way the subject arranges its enjoyment, *jouissance*. In the economy of desire, enjoyment is what the subject can never reach, what the subject wants but never gets. In the economy of drive, enjoyment comes from missing one's goal; it's what the subject gets, even if it doesn't want it. The subject's repeated yet ever-failing efforts to reach its goal become satisfying on their own. Democracy for the left is drive: our circling around, our missing of a goal, and the satisfaction we attain through this missing. We talk, complain, and protest. We make groups on Facebook. We sign petitions and forward them to everyone in our mailbox. Activity becomes passivity, our stuckness in a circuit, which is then lamented and mourned as the absence of ideas or even the loss of the political itself and then, yet again, routed through a plea for democracy although it doesn't take a genius to know that the real problem is neoliberal capitalism and its extreme inequality. What leftists call the loss of the political is the fog they muddle around in because they've lost sight of the communist horizon.

In the contemporary networks of communicative capitalism, drive is a feedback circuit that captures our best energies. Invigorating communism as a political alternative requires amplifying the collective desire that can cut through these affective networks. Fortunately, that desire is already there.

Communism: the sovereignty of the people

The right thinks communism is a continued threat to democracy; the left is stuck in democratic drive as the actuality of its suppression of communist desire. In each instance, communism names that in opposition to which our current setting is configured, the setting within which despotic financialism unfolds. Why is communism that name? Because it designates the sovereignty of the people, the rule of the people, and not the people as a whole or a unity but the people as the *rest of us*, those of us whose work, lives, and futures are expropriated, monetized, and speculated on for the financial enjoyment of the few.

One way to explore this point is via philosopher Michel Foucault's insight into the limitation of sovereign knowledge crucial to economic liberalism. Liberalism's emphasis on the economic activities of individuals shot a hole through sovereignty. It said that there was a natural limit to sovereignty, a limit arising not from the rights of individuals but from a set of natural dynamics and processes that the sovereign could not know. As Foucault points out, economic man is bound up in a world he can neither predict nor control. The unknown actions of one have effects on others in ways none of them can know.[6] Yet, and here is the mystery of economic liberalism's invisible hand, in precisely these conditions of collective blindness, each can benefit. In fact, these conditions of collective blindness are *necessary* conditions for each to benefit. Collective benefit can only be secured through the pursuit of individual self-interest. Moreover, just as individual economic actors cannot see the whole, neither can the sovereign. A visible hand would be no hand at all; it would be necessarily partial, distorted, and incapable of combining the multitude of economic interests. Liberal political economy thus announces: "There is no sovereign in economics. There is no economic sovereign."[7]

What sort of sovereignty is this? Foucault doesn't emphasize it, but we should keep in mind that it's the sovereignty of the people. A certain version of the economy, one first focused on the market and later on a narrow, odd notion of competition, is presented as a barrier to governance, as a limit on what government can know and do. As Foucault makes clear, the limiting of the people as a common political force turns them from active agents of power into a passive population. For liberalism and neoliberalism, people are active only as individuals, little entrepreneurs, or enterprises. What appears as the freedom of the market, then, is a certain foreclosure of the collective power of the people in and as a common. The power that matters, to affect the basic conditions in which they live, is displaced onto an economy that they are told they cannot govern because they cannot know.

Philosopher Giorgio Agamben raises (but does not linger on) a similar point. Noting shifts in the referent of the people from all to some—from a mythic, impossible, *all of us* to the division between the privileged and the rest of us—Agamben writes, "It is as if what we call 'people' were in reality not a unitary subject

6 Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 278.

7 Ibid., p. 283.

but a dialectical oscillation between two opposite poles: on the one hand, the set of the People as a whole political body, and, on the other, the subset of the people as a fragmentary multiplicity of needy and excluded bodies…"[8] The idea is that the constitutive division within the people expresses itself in language. The term "the people" can refer to an imagined unity of everyone. It can also refer to the less well off, the poor, the workers, the exploited, the majority whose lives and labor are expropriated to benefit the few. To appeal to the people in this second sense is to express and politicize a division between the few and the many, to make the many appear in their need and in their power. Unfortunately, Agamben's language confounds the reading of the division in the people I suggest. He splices together different images of division. That is, Agamben refers to two opposite poles and to a unified whole and what is excluded from it. The political problem thus shifts from an opposition within the people, between exploiters and the exploited, to one of being excluded from the people. The political solution then appears as inclusion and the initial matter of division and opposition within the people is effaced.

A better way to conceive the division within the people, one capable of expressing the power of the people in and as a common but not a whole and not a unity, makes use of the distinction between desire and drive. The people as desiring have needs, needs they can only address together, collectively, as an active common. The people as caught in drive are fragmented, dispersed into networks and tributaries. Stuck in drive's repetitive loops, they pursue their separate enterprises even as they are governmentalized objects, a population.

8 Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998) p. 177.

But is capitalism best understood as a system that constitutively excludes persons or one that constitutively exploits them? Building from philosophers Alain Badiou and Jacques Rancière, Žižek claims that the antagonism between the included and the excluded *is* the fundamental antagonism rupturing capitalism today (and hence crucial to the idea of communism). Žižek recognizes that the focus on exclusion easily elides with "the liberal-tolerant-multicultural topic of 'openness'. . . at the expense of a properly Marxist notion of social antagonism."[9] Yet he argues that the inclusion of the proletariat is an inclusion of a different sort, an inclusion of capitalism's point of symptomal exclusion ("part of no part") that effectively dismantles it.

A lot rides on the notion of "proletariat" here, especially since contemporary capitalism relies on communication as a productive force, rather than industrial labor. On the one hand, Žižek detaches "proletarian" from the factory, treating "proletarianization" as a process that deprives humans of their "substance" and reduces them to pure subjects. On the other, he identifies exclusion as a particular kind of proletarianization, one by which some are made directly to embody "substanceless subjectivity." They are the material remainders of the system, its unavoidable and necessary byproducts. Because the entire system relies on their exclusion (or their inclusion as remainders), because they embody the truth that capitalism produces human refuse, surplus populations with no role or function, to include them would destroy the system itself.

Žižek's argument is compelling as it echoes and reinforces current sentiments around vulnerability, exposure, and bare life. That proletarianization is a process disconnected from

9 Slavoj Žižek, *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce* (London: Verso, 2009), p. 100.

industrial labor makes it feel unleashed, as if any one of us at any moment were at risk. Yet part of the difficulty stems from Žižek's treatment of contemporary communicative capitalism as if it were a whole marked by a constitutive exclusion where that exclusion designates persons as a part of no part. As Boltanski and Chiapello outline, the inclusion/exclusion binary today designates a relation not to a whole but to a network. The excluded are those who are vulnerable because they are disconnected, they lack links to networks of opportunity, security, sustenance. If one thinks in terms of a network model, then, there are no symptomal points. There are just more links. Links can be added or dropped with little impact on the network form.

Žižek's treatment of the proletarian in terms of a part of no part or symptomal torsion of a system is a component of a larger endeavor to rethink the idea of communism today. Marxists have long identified the proletariat as the universal class, the subject-object of history. In communicative capitalism, the idea of the subject-object of history combines better with feedback loops, self-organized networks, and emergent formations where we are bringing ourselves into being as something new, where we are the objects of our work. We are already configuring our setting. The point is to do it differently, not for the enrichment of the few.

Communism: the force of the common and commons

For a couple of decades now, many of us have been making something together. We've been building alliances and awareness, sharing knowledge of crimes, inequalities, violence, and exploitation. At the same time, we've seen the right claiming their revolution and we've been swept up in the reality of their counter-revolution. We've heard the neoliberals and financial despots claim that they are entitled to 90 percent of the wealth.

We know, and because we are interconnected we know that we know, that they are wrong. It is not theirs to own.

A crucial aspect of contemporary struggle thus relies on the assertion of the commons against claims to private ownership—a point some claim is justification enough for the renewal of communism. Theorizing the commons is tricky, though, because contemporary capitalism is communicative.[10] Capitalist productivity derives from its expropriation and exploitation of communicative processes. Cultural theorist Cesare Casarino's distinction between the *common* and the *commons* is helpful here. For Casarino, the *common* is another name for the self-reproducing excess that is capitalism. It is another name, but it is not exactly the same thing. The common is not a thing or an attribute; it is a dynamic process. It is production. Glossing theorists Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Casarino writes, "nowadays the common is virtually indistinguishable from that which continually captures it, namely, capital understood as a fully—that is, intensively and extensively—global network of social relations."[11] The idea becomes clearer in contradistinction to the commons. The commons is finite and characterized by scarcity. In contrast, the common is infinite and characterized by surplus. The common thus designates and takes the place of labor power (Marx's source of surplus value), now reconceived in the broadest possible terms of the potential of creativity, thought, knowledge, and communication as themselves always plural, open, and productive.

How does the move from commons to common help us understand exploitation and expropriation in contemporary capitalism?

10 This is an argument advanced by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in their book *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001).

11 In a paper given at the "Commonalities: Contemporary Italian Thought" conference, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, September 2010.

For example, at least one of the problems with the expropriation of the *commons* is that a few get a lot and some are left with nothing, thus having to sell their labor power. Privatization leaves them deprived of what they had. The widespread extension of credit—whether in the form of high-interest credit cards, mortgage refinancing, or leverage in investment banking—is a kind of privatization of the future as it deprives the indebted of what they will have. The situation with the *common* is different. There is expropriation, but an expropriation that does not appear to leave many with little. There is more than enough, perhaps even too much. A question for the capture of the common in communicative capitalism, then, is the crime or harm: if there is abundance or surplus why is expropriation a problem? Or is the problem some kind of exploitation and if so what kind?

Although I can't go into the variety of contemporary instances of expropriation and exploitation of the communicative common here, one version is worth noting as an iteration of the division within the people, an iteration that exposes this division as a matter of exploitation rather than exclusion. I call this network exploitation, and it involves the basic structure of complex networks. As physicist and computer scientist Albert-László Barabási explains, complex networks follow a "power law" distribution. The item in first place or at the top has much more than the one in second place, which has more than the third one and so on such that there is very little difference between items "at the bottom" but massive differences between the top and the bottom. Popular media express the idea as the 80/20 rule, the winner-take-all or winner-take-most character of the new economy. In this example, the common designates the general field out of which the one emerges. Exploitation consists in efforts to stimulate the creative production of the field in the interest of finding, and then monetizing, the one. We should be clear here: this isn't competition in the old political economy

sense of pressures that discipline buyers and sellers or the classical economic sense of the equilibrium of supply and demand. It's not even competition in the sense of games, contests, and rivalries. It's an arrangement of strength and chance for the emergence of the one.

The instability of the distinction between common and commons also indexes exploitation in communicative capitalism. One pertinent example can be called "attention." The myriad entertainments and diversions available online, or as apps on our iPhones, are not free. We don't usually pay money directly for Gmail, YouTube, Facebook, or Twitter. These don't cost money. But they cost time. It takes time to post and write and time to read and respond. We pay with our attention. Our attention isn't boundless. Our time is finite—even as we try to extract value out of every second. We cannot respond to every utterance, click on every link, read every post. We have to choose even as the possibility of something else lures us to search and linger. Demands on our attention, injunctions for us to communicate, participate, are like so many speed-ups on the production line, attempts to extract from us whatever bit of mindshare is left. When we do respond, our contribution is an addition to an already infinite communicative field, a little demand on someone else's attention, a little incitement of an affective response, a digital trace that can be stored. We pay with attention and the cost is focus.

This cost is particularly high for left political movements. Competition for attention in a rich, tumultuous media environment too often and easily means adapting to this environment and making its dynamic our own, which can result in a shift in focus from doing to appearing, that is to say, a shift toward thinking in terms of getting attention in the 24/7 media cycle and away from larger questions of building a political apparatus

with duration. Infinite demands on our attention—demands we make on each other and which communicative capitalism captures and amplifies—expropriate political energies of focus, organization, and duration vital to communism as a movement and a struggle. It's no wonder that communicative capitalism is participationist: the more participation in networked media environments, the more traces to hoard and energies to capture or divert.

Communism: the actuality of revolution

My initial inclination was to associate the idea of the horizon with the (pseudo) Derridean notion of democracy to come. Democracy, in this conception, can never fully arrive. It is forever postponed, deferred. That democracy cannot be realized is ostensibly a strength, as it keeps open the possibility of deconstruction and the new. So conceived, democracy relies on a sort of gap that holds open a promise not to totalize, not to terrorize, a promise or commitment to futurity and the unknown. Any given decision or act will necessarily be lacking, but this very lack is the opening democracy demands.

In contrast with this openness, the Leninist party appears as a specter of horror, as the remnant or trace of the failed revolution the terrors of which must be avoided at all costs. In such a vision, communism is reduced not simply to the actual (which is always necessarily ruptured, incomplete, irreducible to itself, and pregnant with the unrealized potentials of the past) but to the parody of one actuality, an actuality that itself has changed over time and from different perspectives. This reduction (an ongoing process) displaces actuality with an impossible figure, a figure so resolute as to be incapable of revolutionary change.

What is the actuality of revolution? At a minimum we can say that it involves change, confusion, disturbance, chaos, and the possibility wherein tendencies in one direction can suddenly move in a completely opposite direction. As philosopher Georg Lukács makes clear in this book *Lenin: A Study on the Unity of his Thought*, for the Leninist party, the actuality of revolution requires discipline and preparation, not because the party can accurately predict everything that will occur, because it cannot, and not because it has an infallible theory, which it does not. Discipline and preparation are necessary in order to adapt to the circumstances. The party has to be consistent and flexible because revolution is chaotic.

The actuality of revolution, then, is a kind of enabling impediment. It is a condition of constitutive non-knowledge for which the party can prepare. It's a condition that demands response if the party is to be accountable to the people, if it is to function as a communist party.

The actuality of revolution is the press/pressure for equality and the end of private property that we feel, that we can't put off but must redirect. The communist horizon is what we must target and use as a guide if this redirection is compelled by the force of the common rather than the speculation of the few.

This text is a revised version of a keynote lecture delivered at the 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress, Istanbul, 4–6 November 2010.

T.J. Demos

Is Another World Possible? The Politics of Utopia and the Surpassing of Capitalism in Recent Exhibition Practice

We live in a world where there is no alternative to the ruling politico-economic order—or so the reign of "capitalist realism" would have us think, a term that, for critic Mark Fisher, defines the world hegemony of the free market economy. Ever since the "new world order" proclaimed by the chorus of world leaders after the dissolution of the USSR in the early 1990s, we have been led to believe that henceforth the united world of globalization would be one of liberal democracy and free market capitalism. Political economist Francis Fukuyama glimpsed the philosophical ramifications in 1989 when he wrote: "What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government."[1] The slogan of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, "there is no alternative," would take on added significance in the post-socialist age, not only in that there would no longer be options to capitalism as such, but also in ostensibly necessitating the market reforms, cuts to social spending, and privatization that have defined neoliberalism ever since, and particularly following the 2008 financial crisis.[2] One additional consequence of the so-called post-historical era is what cultural theorist Susan Buck-Morss has called "the passing of mass utopia in East and West," as there is no longer any need to think beyond the present system, which to its proponents completes the Enlightenment project. Besides, socialism, degenerated into totalitarianism, has proved itself to be no

1 Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?," *The National Interest*, no. 16 (Summer 1989), p. 3; see also Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

2 See David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

more than modernity's catastrophe.[3] Apparently there's nothing more to do than let the free market run itself, for as critics such as philosophers Jacques Rancière and Chantal Mouffe have pointed out (and importantly have contested), the system of post-political consensus requires only the technical attention of managers and experts for maintenance—or so we've been told time and time again.[4]

Against that wishful thinking, a diverse range of experimental and politically committed exhibition projects have proposed alternatives in recent years—including the itinerant *Utopia Station* (2003–present), organized by Molly Nesbit, Hans Ulrich Obrist, and Rirkrit Tiravanija; the Van Abbemuseum's exhibition *Forms of Resistance* (2007–2008), curated by Will Bradley, Phillip van den Bossche, and Charles Esche; and the 11th Istanbul Biennial (2009), organized by the Zagreb-based collective WHW/What, How and for Whom?.[5] Of course there have been additional exhibitions since 1989 worth considering for their challenge to the West's politics of neoliberalism, such as Catherine David's critical engagement with globalization in Documenta 10 (1997) and her subsequent investigations of Middle East zones of conflict in the series *Contemporary Arab Representations* (1998–present); or the arc of Okwui Enwezor's projects, including *Trade Routes* (1997), *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945–1994* (2001), Documenta 11 (2002), and the 7th Gwangju Biennial (2008),

3 Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000). See also Chantal Mouffe's essay "Politics and Artistic Practices in Post-Utopian Times," in *Meaning Liam Gillick*, ed. Monika Szewczyk (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009). Of course, utopian thinking had already taken a beating in the 1970s and 1980s by the neoliberal disciplining of the revolutionary hopes and energies of the 1960s, as explains Kristin Ross in *May '68 and its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 166–167.

4 See Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (London: Routledge, 2005), and Jacques Rancière, *On the Shores of Politics*, trans. Liz Heron (London: Verso, 2007).

5 The collective consists of curators Ivet Ćurlin, Ana Dević, Nataša Ilić, and Sabina Sabolović, who often collaborate with designer Dejan Kršić.

which have drawn on the postcolonial to destabilize the West's legacy and current practice of imperialism.[6] But here I want to examine specifically how the engagement with the utopian has operated in exhibitions that have transformed since the 1990s into sites of research, experimental presentation, and the adoption of leftist politics. This move in exhibition practice indicates a trend toward a form of "curatorial utopianism," defined by a renewed interest in the tradition of utopian thinking. In an admittedly complex maneuver, this practice brings examples of utopian commitment into the art institution in a desirous, and perhaps paradoxical, attempt to escape that context's grasp or transcend its control, and in so doing, surpass the limits of the utopian construct itself by attempting to transform political and economic reality in a significant and immediate manner, to create alternatives in the here and now. Such imaginative thinking is welcome in today's environment of cynicism and political fatigue.

Certainly the notion of utopia lends itself to the posing of alternatives to reality: philosopher Thomas More's original sixteenth-century conceptualization of a beautiful non-place implies the rejection of the present, which suggests a critical logic for theorists like Louis Marin, for whom it works precisely against present political arrangements. As a negative shadow of reality, utopic practice criticizes society and its laws, and, for Marin, lashes back on the real world by initiating "the beginning of revolutionary practice."[7] Of course the turn to utopia is by no

6 On the earlier precedents of exhibitions in 1989—*Magiciens de la Terre*, *The Other Story: Afro-Asian Artists in Post-war Britain*, and the 3rd Havana Biennial—and their relation to art and culture of the Global South in the transition to the "former West," see Sarat Maharaj's presentation, "Small Change of the Universal," at the 1st FORMER WEST Congress, 5–7 November, 2009, Utrecht, online at: http://www.formerwest.org/ResearchCongresses/1stFORMERWESTCongress/SaratMaharajSmallChangeoftheUniversal.

7 Louis Marin, *Utopics: Spatial Play*, trans. Robert A. Vollrath (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1984), pp. 81–82.

means simple or uncontestable, and many are opposed to it for legitimate reasons. Interviewed by the curators of *Utopia Station*, Rancière warns about "misguided utopian metaphyics," and Étienne Balibar explains that owing to its disastrous twentieth-century history "we need a vacation from utopia, while at the same time freeing the powers of the imagination."[8] According to theorists Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, "One primary effect of globalization… is the creation of a common world, a world that, for better or worse, we all share, a world that has no 'outside'."[9] A related question is whether the distancing from reality occasioned by utopian thinking might represent a further instance of the post-political, even coming to parallel, by virtue of an unintended consequence, capitalism's own utopian imaginary? With such skepticism in mind, it is nonetheless worthwhile taking seriously—and critically—the recent mobilizations of utopia, and to study them in their singularity, for these projects attempt to go beyond the traditional critiques of utopia as a space for irrelevant political dreaming, instead insisting on posing alternatives to the political status quo, even if each engagement does so in specific and complex ways. In approaching this material, one overarching concern for me is to consider how the commitment to the utopian—in the critical and creative meaning of the term outlined by Marin—might represent a counter-hegemonic political-aesthetic project, in the sense implied by Mouffe, that is, the construction of a real alternative to neoliberalism today and thus a challenge to its post-political consensus.[10]

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8 See Molly Nesbit, Hans-Ulrich Obrist, and Rirkrit Tiravanija, "What is a Station?," in *Dreams and Conflicts: The Dictatorship of the Viewer*, ed. Francesco Bonami (Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, 2003), pp. 355, 375.

9 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 2009), p. vii.

10 See Mouffe, *On the Political*.

Forms of Resistance. Artists and the Desire for Social Change from 1871 to the Present at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven focused on various moments of western modernity when revolutionary politics intertwined with radical artistic practice. Organized around key revolutionary flashpoints—the Paris Commune in 1871, the Russian Revolution in 1917, the Popular Front in the early 1930s, the May Revolts of 1968, and the fall of the Wall in 1989—it gathered examples of leftist artistic engagements that corresponded to each moment, including the Arts and Crafts wallpaper of William Morris, the socialist textile designs of Liubov Popova, the Proun Room of El Lissitzky, the Workers' Club of Aleksandr Rodchenko, the posters of the Atelier Populaire from May '68, and a mini-survey of post-89 activist works and anti-corporate globalization interventions in the video-based *Disobedience Archive* curated by Marco Scotini.[11]

On the whole, the show was not explicitly concerned with the utopian, although that tendency entered prominently with certain inclusions, particularly the Soviet avant-garde, redolent of the hopes of joining aesthetics and politics in the expression of a post-capitalist visual culture, one of revolutionary perceptual experience and subjective and collective reinvention. But by virtue of its breadth, the survey worked to highlight the significant differences between art at different historical junctures:[12] Morris' decorative objects looking back to pre-modern modes of communal production that resisted industrialized forms of exploitation, for instance, strongly contrasted the Soviet's

11 See http://www.disobediencearchive.com/. *Forms of Resistance* follows an organizational method similar to Gerald Raunig's book, *Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century*, trans. Aileen Derieg (Cambridge, Mass.: Semiotext(e), 2007), with chapters dedicated to the Paris Commune, Courbet, German "Activism" in the 1910s, the Situationists, Viennese Actionism in 1968, and post-9/11 interventions.

12 Hal Foster makes several related points in his review of *Forms of Resistance* in *Artforum* (January 2008), p. 272.

futurist-oriented commitment to modernization and modernist functionality. As well, the optimistic political posters of May '68 differed significantly from the doomsday anti-Nazi photomontages of John Heartfield. Such diverse approaches offered significantly varied political affects from room to room—from the utopian to the desperately sarcastic—proposing a comparative methodology of art-historical investigation rather than an engaged, activist mode of contemporary politicization.

While the installation presented custom-designed galleries in order to individualize the presentations, one setback was that the exhibition tended to reinforce its museological dimensions, in that the work lost its interactive dynamism, social engagement, and dialogue—the cross-over space between art and revolution to which the exhibition was pledged. More research exhibition than activist engagement, the project also included an important reader, *Art and Social Change*, to supplement the artistic presentation with radical offerings of political and artistic texts covering the same period. Yet while the publication, in addition to the exhibition, will certainly be useful as a resource for future research, the visitor's experience of the work remained all too contained under the museum's roof, which contradicted many of the original intentions of the pieces to break down the division between art and life (as theorized in art theorist Gerald Raunig's catalog essay, *The Many ANDs of Art and Revolution*).[13]

That situation, too, characterized the presentation of the *Disobedience Archive* (2005–present), which reflected on the art and politics of the post-89 context. Comprising an ongoing, multiphase project,[14] its diverse and constantly changing selection of videos presents instances of artistic activism

13 See Will Bradley and Charles Esche, eds., *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader* (London: Tate Publishing and Afterall, 2007).

14 It was also shown, for example, in Lars Bang Larsen's exhibition *A History of Irritated Material* at Raven Row in London, 2010.

surrounding multiple recent political events, including the fall of the Berlin Wall, the financial collapse in Argentina in 2001, the ongoing conflict in Israel-Palestine, and the formation of anti-globalization protests in post-9/11 America. In Eindhoven, the "rhizomatic" assemblage of videos, in curator Scotini's words, was built of fluctuating material in order to engender unexpected connections between engagements by artists, activists, film producers, philosophers, and political groups such as Dario Azzellini, Canal 6 de Julio, Guerrillavision, Huit Facettes, PILOT TV (Experimental Media for Feminist Trespass), Oliver Ressler, Dmitry Vilensky, Paolo Virno, and Peter Watkins. Presented in a large gallery on white tables and pedestals, forming a somewhat daunting labyrinth of time-based works, the sheer mass of material far surpassed the time allowance of the typical visitor. While there was clearly much valuable material on offer, the framing of the archive had several weaknesses, beginning with its conceptualization. For Scotini, the project is meant to resist the temptation of "the reterritorialisation of the classic left as a possible response to the advancing neo-capitalistic cultural barbarism," by aiming instead "to provide an alternative model of thought and action."[15] What matters "is not so much an 'alliance' between activist demands and artistic practices in order to achieve common goals," we are told, but rather the "common space or a common base that is emerging," wherein it is "impossible to draw a precise line between forces and signs, between language and labor, between intellectual production and political action."[16] It is far from clear, however, what that means in relation to political opposition, although the intended rupture from party politics and union-based collective mobilization clearly adopts the lessons of Italian autonomists like Negri and Virno.

15 See Marco Scotini, "Disobedience, an Ongoing Video Archive," online at: http://www.ravenrow.org/exhibition/irritatedmaterial/.

16 Ibid.

Forms of Resistance, installation view with work by Brigada Romana Parra, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2007–2008, photo: Peter Cox

Forms of Resistance, installation view of *Disobedience Archive*, 2005–present, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2007–2008, photo: Peter Cox

However, the danger remained unshakable that what Scotini termed "a polyfocal approach that is not immediately directed, channelled, and disciplined" would end up instead presenting itself as a directionless dispersion of diverse but unrelated positions, articulations, and historical and cultural references, which, for me, was not saved by the apparent structureless installation. Nor was it clear in the end how the archive's conceptual framing identified a new political configuration, or how its embrace of the abandonment of the classic left escaped from a depoliticizing evacuation of political engagements with the state and its corporate masters—a still unresolved challenge for promoters of the "micropolitical."[17]

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Utopia Station shares Scotini's commitment to building a mutating research exhibition over several years, one with an expanded magnitude of possibilities, although significantly it dispenses with the *Disobedience Archive*'s and *Forms of Resistance*'s explicit political commitment. *Utopia Station* has comprised various manifestations since its inauguration in 2003, including a poster project in collaboration with roughly 150 artists disseminated by e-flux, various art exhibitions, and educational seminars and social gatherings in multiple cities such as Paris, Venice, Frankfurt, Poughkeepsie, and Berlin. For curators Nesbit, Obrist, and Tiravanija, these activities function without hierarchy of importance, as, for them, "there is no desire to formalize the Stations into an institution of any kind."[18] In their

17 See Raunig, *Art and Revolution*; this issue was also discussed at the panel I moderated at the 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress, *On Horizons: Art and Political Imagination*, Istanbul, 6 November 2010, with Raunig, Hito Steyerl, and Ernesto Laclau. A video recording of this discussion is available online at: http://www.formerwest.org/ResearchCongresses/2ndFORMERWESTResearchCongressOnHorizonsArtandPoliticalImagination/TJDemosErnestoLaclaunamewithheldandHitoSteyerlDiscussion.

18 Nesbit, Obrist, and Tiravanija, "What is a Station?," p. 330.

catalog essay accompanying the presentation of *Utopia Station* at the 50th Venice Biennale in 2003—the clearest formulation of their project—the curators introduce the subject of utopia by referencing the well-known 1964 discussion between Frankfurt School philosophers Theodor W. Adorno and Ernst Bloch. Whereas for Adorno, utopian thinking means fundamentally to imagine "the transformation of the totality,"[19] for which he had in mind social, political, and economic realities as an integrated system, for Bloch, utopia issues from the realization, as playwright Bertolt Brecht put it, that "Something's missing."[20] What is this something? To find out, the curators met with various philosophers—among them Rancière, Immanuel Wallerstein, and Édouard Glissant—to discuss the topic, which typifies the project's interrogative approach to utopia.

Whereas Rancière stresses the importance of dissensus, Wallerstein, the need to build non-hierarchical, decentralized non-profit institutions, and Glissant, the "poetic" heart of utopia, the curators "use utopia as a catalyst, a concept so much useful as fuel" and "leave the complete definition of utopia to others."[21] And so *Utopia Station*'s contribution to the Venice Biennale followed the same logic of non-partisan curatorial promotion. Situated in the final room of the Arsenale and on the lawn outside, the Venice installment presented the work of sixty artists, architects, and groups, along with the poster project. A large plywood structure created a series of small rooms containing installations and video screenings, and an assembly of circular benches and tables placed in front of a

19 Adorno cited in Nesbit, Obrist, and Tiravanija, "What is a Station?," p. 327. The reference is to "Something's Missing: A Discussion between Ernst Bloch and Theodor W. Adorno on the Contradictions of Utopian Longing" (1964), in Ernst Bloch, *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature*, trans. Jack Zipes and Frank Meckleburg (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988), pp. 1–17.

20 Bloch cited in Nesbit, Obrist, and Tiravanija, "What is a Station?," p. 327.

21 Nesbit, Obrist, and Tiravanija, "What is a Station?," p. 333.

large platform equipped the space with a performance-meeting-lecture area. The Station was completed by a program of performances, concerts, lectures, readings, film programs, and parties. Among the various pieces on view were Atelier van Lieshout's *Total Faecal Solution, The Technocrat* (2003), a series of biomorphic toilets equipped with video surveillance, which proposed to transform human waste into biogas and purified drinking water over a twenty-one-day cycle, thereby joining ecological recycling, scatological systems, and voyeuristic control; and Elmgreen & Dragset's *Spelling U-T-O-P-I-A* (2003), a number of sculptural blocks inscribed with letters out of which two chimps tried to form the word "utopia" during the opening weekend (their failure to do so elicited the concept's elusive nature). In addition, Superflex served bottles of Guaraná Power, a soft drink they produced in collaboration with Brazilian farmers, encouraging the reclaiming of local resources from multinational corporations' monopoly on raw materials, including guaraná seeds, in the Amazon.

Any one of the many works in Venice could be considered at length for the way it specifically defines utopia, and considering these few examples it is clear that no shared program—aesthetically, politically, or conceptually—unified *Utopia Station*'s inclusions, resulting in what some (myself included) saw as a chaotic presentation.[22] Yet it could be argued that this elusiveness was part of the point; for the curators, utopia necessarily "resists capture and summary as a single image," and suggests "the image of open possibility."[23] While *Utopia Station*'s

22 See, for example Jacob Dahl Jürgensen, "50th Venice Biennale," *Frieze*, no. 77 (September 2003): "There is a danger that the overload becomes just too much, causing a communication breakdown and thus jeopardizing the social relations that it is trying to facilitate. But then again, this simultaneous construction and wrecking might be the point." This report accords with my own experience visiting the Station.
23 Nesbit, Obrist, and Tiravanija, "What is a Station?," p. 334.

Utopia Station, Édouard Glissant speaking, with view of the project *Sonic House* by Uglycute and Karl Holmqvist, 50th Venice Biennale, Venice, June 2003, photo: Pierre Huyghe

gatherings and discursive basis recalls past exhibition projects, such as the geographically dispersed, discursive "platforms" of Documenta 11, its manifestation pushed the transformative dynamism and non-finite flexibility to the extreme. In this regard, the curators' version of utopia as "open possibility" recalls as well the development of relational aesthetics during the 1990s, which similarly emphasized the "space of human relations" as a "social interstice" within the capitalist economic field, and it is not surprising that several of its key participants and organizers—Tiravanija, Liam Gillick, Pierre Huyghe, and Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster—participated in that earlier formation.[24] More theoretically, *Utopia Station*'s peripatetic machine of social connectivity and knowledge production proposes a Deleuzian nomadology,[25] one with shades of Hardt and Negri's elaboration of the multitude mixed in—but notably without these philosophers' explicit political ovations, as exemplified in the famous last line of *Empire* where the authors confessed their "irrepressible lightness and joy of being communist."[26] And here *Utopia Station*'s risk becomes manifold: by resisting conceptual definition in an effort to escape ideological dogmatism, the project courts a paradoxical convergence between its pledge to flexibility and capitalism's post-industrial character, defined similarly by the indeterminacy of work and life, creative cooperation, and individual freedom (itself a lasting critique of relational aesthetics, where indeterminacy "inverts [its] anti-

24 Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (original publication in French: 1998) (Paris: Les presses du reel, 2004), p. 16.
25 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari were explicit politically too, and they write: "to say the revolution is itself utopia of immanence is not to say that it is a dream, something that is not realized or that is only realized by betraying itself. On the contrary, it is to posit revolution as plane of immanence, infinite movement and absolute survey, but to the extent that these features connect up with what is real here and now in the struggle against capitalism, relaunching new struggles whenever the earlier one is betrayed." Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (London: Verso, 1994), p. 100.
26 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 2000), p. 413. See Natilee Harren, "Utopia Station: Manufacturing the Multitude," *Part*, no. 12 (2010), online at: http://web.gc.cuny.edu/dept/arthi/part/.

capitalist impulse," as Stewart Martin has argued).[27] The complicity of the project with the art market, its corporate sponsors, and art institutions, a neoliberal network par excellence, further underlines such risks.

But before dismissing *Utopia Station*, one should consider what might be taken as its most radical move: to exit the cosy familiarity of its art world framework and join the anti-capitalist left at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in January 2005. Operating under the slogan "Another World is Possible"—a longstanding mantra of the anti-corporate globalization movement—the WSF has served over recent years as a platform for international members of civil society, including leading activists such as Arundhati Roy, Mustapha Bargouti, Shirin Ebadi, and Gilberto Gil, and a multitude of environmentalists, human rights advocates, labor organizers, and antiwar protesters, all allied in opposition to neoliberalism and in support of an equitable distribution of wealth, resources, and political participation worldwide.[28] The 2005 meeting in Porto Alegre was unique in that the Forum placed "the role of culture" in emancipatory politics on its agenda. *Utopia Station/Porto Alegre* would be "a Station without Walls," diffused and informal, comprising several appearances and interventions, including six ninety-minute video programs broadcast on late-night TV (with works such as Philippe Parreno's *The Boy from Mars*

27 See Stewart Martin, "Being Liam Gillick," online at: http://www.metamute.org/en/content/being_liam_gillick; and "Critique of Relational Aesthetics," *Third Text* 21, no. 4 (2007), pp. 369–386.
28 The World Social Forum Charter of Principles (2002) explains: "The World Social Forum is an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and interlinking for effective action, by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neoliberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism, and are committed to building a planetary society directed towards fruitful relationships among Humankind and between it and the Earth." The full Charter of Principles is available online at: http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=4&cd_language=2.

(2003); Allan Sekula's *Tsukiji* (2002); Huyghe's *Streamside Day Follies* (2003); and Paul Chan's *Now Promise, Now Threat* (2005); a bilingual radio show, hosted by experimental musician Arto Lindsay, on Radio Ipanema; and a presentation of the *Utopia Station* poster project on the city's walls.[29]

Utopia Station's Porto Alegre edition was significant in that it brought experimental artistic practice to the center of the global justice movement, a place where visual presentations are politically instrumentalized and often "folkloric or just plain stiff," as curator Nesbit reportedly said of the offerings at such gatherings, probably referring to the political posters, ad hoc installations, and homemade media interventions of participants.[30] In this regard, this iteration of *Utopia Station* attempted to enact what Rancière terms a "rupture" in the distribution of the sensible—meaning, as the curators summarized it, "the inevitable relation between the arts and the rest of social activity… that together distribute value and give hierarchy, that govern, [and] that both materially and conceptually establish their politics."[31] By disrupting the political orthodoxy of ideological positions and their propagandistic visual manifestations in favor of open-ended speculative process and collective creativity, the presence of the project was meant to destabilize the politically directed representations of the Forum. But what did it mean to insert Matthew Barney's *De Lama Lâmina* (2004), or Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla's *Returning a Sound* (2004) on late-night TV during the Forum with panels dedicated

29 E-flux announcement, 27 January 2005, online at: http://www.e-flux.com/shows/view/1765, and the "Utopia Station—Letter to Artists" (4 December 2004). Thanks to Molly Nesbit for discussing *Utopia Station* with me and for providing records of its Porto Alegre edition.

30 Reported in Pamela M. Lee, "The revolution may be televised: Pamela M. Lee on the World Social Forum," *Artforum* (April 2006), online at: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0268/is_8_44/ai_n18764234/.

31 Rancière and his book *Le partage du sensible* [*The Politics of Aestetics. The Distribution of the Sensible*] are cited in "What is a Station?," p. 330.

Utopia Station posters in situ, Porto Alegre, January 2005, photo: Liz Linden

to "Organic Agriculture, Biodiversity and Climate Change" and "Speak-out on Fight for U.N. Treaty on Right to Water?" With little trace of *Utopia Station*'s presence registered in the art or political press, it is impossible to say, which is one cost of operating outside of the familiar channels of artistic dissemination.

Ironically, *Utopia Station*'s commitment to "open possibility" mirrored the WSF's own definition as an "open meeting space," one constitutionally forbidden by its charter from making shared political declarations, for which the Forum has been criticized.[32] As Heikki Patomäki and Teivo Teivainen of the Finland-based Network Institute for Global Democratization wrote of the 2005 meeting: "Is it possible to do anything else than merely organize a pluralist space for meetings, discussions and festivities? Can transnational civil society organizations and movements accomplish anything efficacious to bring about 'another world'?"[33] These questions should also be addressed to *Utopia Station*. One wonders, in other words, whether the project's implicit challenge to activist visual culture resulted in merely an art world gesture, drawing attention to its own representational complexity, aesthetic play, and experimental form, but defusing the pointed messages of the Forum's own politicization of aesthetics. *Utopia Station*'s very openness, directed against political orthodoxy and institutionalized positions, thereby risked diluting the directed, pragmatic energies

32 According to the WSF Charter of Principles: "The participants in the Forum shall not be called on to take decisions as a body, whether by vote or acclamation, on declarations or proposals for action that would commit all, or the majority, of them and that propose to be taken as establishing positions of the Forum as a body."
33 Heikki Patomäki and Teivo Teivainen, "The Post-Porto Alegre World Social Forum: An Open Space or a Movement of Movements?," 20 March 2005, online at: http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/dinamic.php?pagina=bal_teivo_fsm2005_in. For further criticisms, see Alex Callinicos and Chris Nineham, "Critical Reflection on the Fifth World Social Forum," 20 March 2005, online at: http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/dinamic.php?pagina=bl_Callinicos_vfsm_i; and Hilary Wainwright, "WSF on Trial," 20 February 2005, online at: http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/dinamic.php?pagina=wsf_trial.

of the Forum, especially given the decision not to organize any collaborative intersections between itself and the Forum's events. As confirmed by some of the participants, *Utopia Station/Porto Alegre* was ultimately lost in the Forum's overwhelming environment, with its Woodstock-like carnival of meetings, parties, and panels (often in Portuguese without adequate translation).[34] With little reciprocal interest by Forum-goers in the presentations of *Utopia Station* artists, a frustration resulted regarding the perceived alienation of art from politics amidst the project's desires for renewed synergy. Still, *Utopia Station* deserves credit for attempting to link its artistic projects to broader social and political movements, even if the results were ultimately invisible and without clear consequence.

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Utopia Station's non-committal position vis-à-vis its use of utopia appears as the converse of the 11th Istanbul Biennial of 2009, which attempted to activate and put utopia to task politically from an explicitly articulated curatorial position. It did so by drawing on Brecht's "belief in the utopian potential and [the] open political engagement of art" as inspiration for the show. Curatorial collective WHW/What, How and for Whom? asserted that if art's utopian political potential seems "dated, historically irrelevant, in dissonance with this time of the crumbling of the institutional left and the rise of neoliberal hegemony," then this is "symptomatic" of the fact that "something has gone

34 Anton Vidokle in conversation with the author, 17 September 2010. Allan Sekula explained that, "The whole affair was for me something more akin to unplanned research for a not-very-flattering novel about the follies of the art world." (E-mail correspondence with the author, 26 September 2010.) Others, such as Immanuel Wallerstein, have written that he dedicated his time in Porto Alegre to the Forum, rather than spend it with *Utopia Station*, a project he otherwise supports (e-mail correspondence with the author, 19 September 2010).

wrong with contemporary society, and with the role of art within it."[35] But here, this "something" was specified, as WHW titled its biennial after Brecht's devastating *The Threepenny Opera* finale, "What Keeps Mankind Alive?," whose refrain answers the blunt question in the harshest of terms: "The fact that millions are daily tortured, stifled, punished, silenced, oppressed."[36] That contention—foretelling Germany's dark future at the time of its writing in 1928—was adopted by WHW as an analogy for our current moment, in the grip of global changes with disastrous effects including the growing inequality of wealth and poverty, political corruption, gender oppression, and corporate domination worldwide. Against our dystopian present, the curators turned Brecht's call to politicize art into a rallying call in their effort to re-situate aesthetics today in renewed solidarity with socialist modernity. As they contended in their catalog essay, "communism," with its "basic values" of "social equality, solidarity, [and] social justice," remains unique as an emancipatory politics capable of challenging the global hegemony of neoliberalism, which, in an environment of increasing political authoritarianism and military domination is leading, they claim, toward fascist tendencies.

Putting utopia to task as a mode of reanimating communism is a risky venture—what of the catastrophic totalitarianism of its lived experience?—and raising the specter of fascism is potentially hyperbolic, if not irresponsible, especially if it cheapens our appreciation for the uniqueness of its mid-twentieth century formation. Yet WHW articulated its goals guardedly, seeking

35 What, How and for Whom/WHW, "What Keeps Mankind Alive?," e-flux announcement, 21 May 2009, online at: http://www.e-flux.com/shows/view/6800.
36 The full refrain, reprinted in the catalog, runs as follows: "What keeps mankind alive? The fact that millions are daily tortured, stifled, punished, silenced, oppressed. Mankind can keep alive, thanks to its brilliance in keeping its humanity repressed. For once, you must try not to shirk the facts: Mankind is kept alive by bestial acts." In *11th International Istanbul Biennial: What Keeps Mankind Alive? The Texts*, eds. WHW (Istanbul: Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts, 2009), p. 477.

to avoid a nostalgic return to the past in their effort to extract the current potential of socialism; and they defined fascism today as any system that promotes extreme economic disparity, political disenfranchisement, unjust warfare, and environmental destruction. While WHW's proposals may not ultimately satisfy the most contrary of critics, they do warrant serious consideration. Whereas all analogies, one could argue, are monstrous because they eliminate historical singularity in creating superficial continuities, such comparisons may nevertheless be useful, for on a strategic level they grant foresight and raise warnings of disastrous potential futures, warnings capable of inspiring the energies of resistance now. In addition, historical juxtapositions allow instructive differences as well as useful parallels to emerge: Brecht's time, as WHW acknowledges, was one of socialist struggle clearly posed against a mounting German National Socialism, whereas today's post-socialist era leaves sympathizers without existing leftist options to contest the intensification of neoliberalism, even while the recent financial crisis resembles the disastrous years after the 1929 economic collapse—hence the need to rejuvenate a project of emancipatory politics.

Set in three post-industrial buildings in Istanbul's nineteenth-century European Beyoğlu district, the biennial's inclusions focused largely on practices from the immediate region of Eastern Europe and the Middle East, exemplifying areas of post-socialism and postcolonialism now enthralled to so-called free market democracy. Presenting work by a high proportion of lesser-known and underrepresented artists (only twenty-two of its seventy artists are represented by commercial galleries, as we learn from the show's publicized statistics), the exhibition's spaces were visually united by constructivist-red wall texts and signage. The biennial, however, was not so much a matter of forcing Brechtian aesthetics onto contemporary

art, although certainly the use of defamiliarization, reflexive theatricality, and pedagogical experimentation—Brecht's signature devices—surely appeared to inspire certain of the selected works, as did the playwright's positioning of art as a means of popular education and political agitation. Rather, WHW made selections that dramatized the erosion of liberal democracy and offered a political imagination that was inventive rather than doctrinaire. Advancing the curators' intention to politicize aesthetics, the biennial included numerous historical works that retrieved former engagements with anti-capitalist and socialist art, such as Mohammed Ossama's documentary film *Step by Step* (1977), portraying nation-building in socialist Syria; Uzbekistani artist Vyacheslav Akhunov's reuse of socialist propaganda imagery in his cycle of collages, *Leninania* (1977–1982); and Turkish artist Yüksel Arslan's allegorical paintings from his series *Capital* (1973–1974). Such pieces, oscillating between 1970s socialist realism and post-constructivist agit-prop, granted the show a sense of historical depth, operating much like the archive of revolutionary practices in the *Forms of Resistance* exhibition, but here more regionally and historically focused. Revealing the earlier hopes for a socialist future now largely forgotten, the display reanimated an alien prehistory to our own environment of depoliticized consensus.

That latter conclusion was most powerfully—and depressingly—captured in Polish artist Artur Żmijewski's multichannel video installation, *Democracies* (2009), which presents a row of some twenty flat-screened monitors depicting various street rallies and public protests that have occurred recently across Europe, including the funeral of Austrian right-wing leader Jörg Haider, an Irish Loyalist march in Belfast, and Palestinian demonstrations against the Israeli occupation along with Israeli counter-protests against the Palestinians. Playing simultaneously without commentary, the cacophonous display of videos

11th Istanbul Biennial, installation view with works by Vyacheslav Akhunov, 2009, photo: Nathalie Barki, courtesy Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul

reveals the ominous transformation of public space into an arena of mob spectacle, one of fanatical nationalism, ethnic and religious exclusionism, and neo-fascist intolerance—precisely the kinds of impassioned and collective acting-out that Mouffe's theory envisages as becoming characteristic of the post-political environment today.

WHW also called on art to invent a socialist aesthetic that would "set pleasure free" so that society can regain the "revolutionary role of enjoyment," rather than submit to the mechanisms of social regulation and repressive control, suggesting an important attempt to join utopian imaginings to political desire and aesthetic affect.[37] Coming closest to answering this imperative was the Moscow and St. Petersburg-based artistic and political collective Chto delat?/What is to be Done?, who presented a series of videos documenting and re-enacting the last days of Gorbachev's USSR under perestroika (*Perestroika Chronicles*, 2008–2009). Video footage of energized street discussions, a form of spontaneous grassroots socialist democracy, corresponded to the group's graphic timeline of political history ending with the Soviet Union's dissolution. Another of the installation's videos, *Perestroika Songspiel—The Victory Over the Coup* (2008), a kind of contemporary *Lehrstück*, showcased an allegory of the descent of post-communist Russia into the hands of greedy entrepreneurs, as the wall text/chronology of the post-1989 years juxtaposed the question "What has happened?" with "What might have happened?"—which in the present context reads as one apt retort to the diktat "there is no alternative." Alluding to the potential of a reconstructed socialism—one of democratic participation, economic equality, and social justice—

37 WHW, "What Keeps Mankind Alive?," online at: http://www.iksv.org/bienal11/icsayfa_en.asp?cid=6&k1=content&k2=conceptual.

11th Istanbul Biennial, installation view with work by Chto delat?/What is to be done?, 2009, photo: Nathalie Barki, courtesy Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul

that was lost in the fragile last days of the USSR, Chto Delat?'s project inspired political desires to imagine a future beyond the horizon of the capitalist-realist present.[38]

While the exact relation of many of its contemporary inclusions to socialist utopia was often tenuous, the curators argued "that a just world order and distribution of economic goods and services is viable and absolutely vital—and that communism is still the only name for that desirable project," making its position clear, even if all questions were not answered.[39] And while the biennial could have integrated a greater awareness of actually-lived communism's history of oppression into its program, in order to advance its attempted re-invention with greater credibility, WHW's was an ambitious paradigm-shifting agenda, moving away from the neoliberal consensus in the former-Soviet bloc counties and in the Middle East. Nonetheless, critics took WHW to task for playing along with the Istanbul Biennial institution and its corporate sponsors (particularly the industrial conglomerate Koç Holding), ostensibly rendering the curators' radical rhetoric hollow, if not hypocritical. Pointing out that the biennial would run during Istanbul's hosting of the annual meeting of the IMF and World Bank, yet was doing nothing about it, Resistanbul, a formation of several leftist activist groups involved in planned protests, sarcastically asked: "What [does] enthusiastically clapping [after] the speeches of the CEO of Koç Holding and the Minister of Culture [mean], right after shouting out 'every bourgeois is a criminal'"—as WHW quoted Brecht during the biennial's opening—"if not a

38 Chto Delat?'s work was also included in the *Disobedience Archive* in the *Forms of Resistance* exhibition, although their presentation in Istanbul was significantly larger in the context of the expansive biennial.

39 WHW, "This is the 11th International Istanbul Biennial curator's text," in *11th International Istanbul Biennial: What Keeps Mankind Alive? The Texts*, eds. WHW (Istanbul: Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts, 2009), p. 101.

symptom of cynicism?"[40] In a discussion of the biennial in the journal *Afterall*, editor Pablo Lafuente added additional charges, namely that: "The exhibition was—in terms of its display, of its mechanisms of discourse production and distribution and its relation to funding and supporting institutions, private and public—business as usual," which, in his view, "allows Resistanbul to dismiss it easily, as it's not apparent how this format may contribute to changing anything."[41]

However, even though the exhibition was indeed conventional in format (particularly compared with *Utopia Station*'s experimental approach) in that it presented objects, installations, and videos in post-industrial spaces according to a standard art gallery display, and was also instrumentalized by corporations for cultural capital (typical of most contemporary biennials today), the above criticisms strike me as problematically determinist and facile—as if sponsorship automatically overrides an exhibition's content, as if modernist installations cannot yield critical engagements today and require ever more curatorialist feats of experimentalism to hold our attention. In fact, WHW entered the fray aware of the risks, writing explicitly about how mega-exhibitions subject art to "cultural tourism" and serve as vehicles of self-promotion for cities in a globalized world, yet they nevertheless tried to "functionalize" the biennial as a revolutionary form, precisely to counter the reduction of art to

40 As quoted on Brian Holmes's weblog in, "Continental Drift: the other side of neoliberal globalization," 21 September 2009, online at: http://brianholmes.wordpress.com/2009/09/01/istanbul-biennial/. They continue: "13.000 robbers under the name of the IMF and the WB will be in Istanbul on 6–7 October… the streets of Istanbul will be shut down for them. Let the carnival of our resistance be their nightmare!" For further criticism, see Eric Goodfield, Angela Harutyunyan, and Aras Ozgun, "Spectacle and Counter-Spectacle: The Political Economy of the 2009 Istanbul Biennial," *Rethinking Marxism*, forthcoming.

41 Pablo Lafuente, Maria Muhle, and Pip Day, "The 11th Istanbul Biennial," *Afterall* (December 2009), online at: http://www.afterall.org/online/istanbul.biennial.

global spectacle and crass entertainment.[42] And their exhibition, in my view, did so quite compellingly. In this regard I would agree with those such as theorist Brian Holmes, who responded to Resistanbul's critique by arguing that the counter-globalization movement should enter and change institutions, not merely criticize and ignore them. To form strategic alliances with project's such as WHW's would diversify activists' social base, expand the sites of its desired political transformations, and connect aesthetic practices to pressing social issues on a local, regional, and international scale.[43]

In fact, WHW's biennial, in my view, enters into a productive constellation with recent developments in Europe geared toward rethinking the political possibilities beyond capitalism. While it is impossible to identify all such formations, the biennial brings to mind, for me, not only Chto Delat?'s wider political activities in Russia, but also educational initiatives such as the eipcp's Transform project in Austria that investigates art's relation to radical politics and emancipatory policies and institutions, and the series of conferences under the title *On the Idea of Communism* led by philosophers Slavoj Žižek and Alain Badiou at London's Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities and Berlin's Volksbühne during 2009–2010. The latter included philosophers and theorists such as Jean-Luc Nancy, Negri, Rancière, and Terry Eagleton, who have been involved in rethinking "the question of what could be today a positive meaning

42 See WHW's statement in the Istanbul Biennial catalog, where they write: "Is it possible, instead, to follow Brecht as a kind of (red) thread that leads the way in a search for a form and format for the exhibition, which would be, so to speak, 'beyond looking,' and could transform a viewer into a more productive participant-even accomplice?" Also available online at: http://www.iksv.org/bienal11/icsayfa_en.asp?cid=6&k1=content&k2=conceptual.

43 As Brian Holmes continued: "For that we need many events like *What Keeps Mankind Alive*, better ones, stronger ones, more deeply connected to active social forces which cannot only be protesters but must go much further into the whole cultural, professional and class structure of the contemporary societies." Online at: http://brianholmes.wordpress.com/2009/09/01/istanbul-biennial.

of the word 'Communism'," twenty years after the fall of socialist regimes; that is, in defiance of the notion that "society organized above all around the rules of competition and maximum profit-making [is] really the only option left nowadays," as the conference organizers put it.[44] The question for WHW—as with *Forms of Resistance*—is how it could have done more to connect its biennial with social movements beyond the art world, expanding the ambition of their project and the scope of its political and aesthetic aims and dissemination—something about which they could have learned from the ambitions and mistakes of *Utopia Station/Porto Alegre*.

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Rather than conclude by arguing for or against any one of the models considered above, in my view more discussion is needed to assess the strengths and weaknesses of such ventures so that we can learn from these experiences. As we have seen, *Forms of Resistance*, *Utopia Station*, and the 11th Istanbul Biennial each creatively challenged the imprisonment of aesthetic and political imagination by the enforced conviction that "there is no alternative" to present reality; and what is needed are more, even stronger engagements. To review the lessons, it appears that one risk of curating the utopian is to end up in the non-place of its institutional and discursive invisibility (as in the case of *Utopia Station/Porto Alegre*)—but that is not to say that such activity is necessarily inconsequential, only unreported. Conversely, to bring the utopian into a dominant institutional location and insist on its materialization as an

44 Conferences under the title *On the Idea of Communism* took place at the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities, University of London, 13–15 March 2009, and at the Volksbühne, Berlin, 25–27 June 2010, both organized on the initiative of Slavoj Žižek. See also Alain Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis* (London: Verso, 2010) and the volume stemming from the London conference, *The Idea of Communism*, eds. Costas Douzinas and Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 2010).

active force on social and political reality, as in the 11th Istanbul Biennial, courts charges of complicity that may polarize stakeholders, with whom one might otherwise form political alliances. Perhaps owing to its very flexibility, *Utopia Station* held the promise of building bridges to independent voices and disparate social movements, creating political solidarities beyond clearly delineated sectarian positions—even if that promise was not fully realized or articulated. Conversely, the politically entrenched 11th Istanbul Biennial, and the militant *Disobedience Archive* shown within the context of the *Forms of Resistance* exhibition, may have drawn lines that exclude the non-committed, narrowing the range of supporters to the already ideologically sympathetic. Then again, desperate times call for desperate measures, and here declarations of leftist solidarity defy the post-political flexibility that mirrors third-way consensus politics and non-agonistic pluralist agendas. In this regard, the most recent Istanbul Biennial was a compelling counter-hegemonic project for both thinking beyond the horizon and venturing a rupture in the system of neoliberalism, even if its site of presentation is deeply contradictory—but where today is not?

Sharon Hayes

Certain Resemblances: Notes on Performance, Event, and Political Images

1. On 14 February 1965, seven days before he was shot and killed at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem, Malcolm X gave a speech at an awards ceremony in Detroit, Michigan. Near the end of this speech, he said:

Quickly, if you'll notice in 1963, everyone was talking about the 'centennial of progress!' I think that's what they called it. A hundred years since the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, and everyone is celebrating how much white and Black people have learned to love each other in America. You probably remember how they were talking in January of 1963. Well, if you had stood up in January at the same time that they were talking all this talk about a good year ahead, good things ahead, and told them that by May, Birmingham would have exploded, and Bull Connor would be known as an international thug for the brutality that he heaped upon Black people; if you would tell the people in January of '63 that John F. Kennedy would be killed for his role in everything; if you had told them in January that Medgar Evers would be murdered and nobody able to bring his killer to justice; or if you were to have told them in January of 1963 that a church would be bombed in Birmingham, with four little Black girls blown to bits while they were praying and serving Jesus—why, they would say you're crazy.

In 1964 they started out the same way. That was the year of promise. If you were to have told them while they were talking about this great year of promise ahead, you know, civil rights and all of that, what was coming, that before long three civil rights workers would be brutally murdered and the government unable to do anything about it. A Negro educator in Georgia brutally murdered in broad daylight and the men who did it be known, and the government not able to do anything about it. If you had said this in January of '64, they'd say you were nuts.

Now they are starting out 1965 the same way. Talking about the 'Great Society,' you know, 'antipoverty.'

If you tell them right now what is in store for 1965, they'll think you're crazy for sure. But 1965 will be the longest and hottest and bloodiest year of them all. It has to be, not because you want it to be, or I want it to be, or we want it to be, but because the conditions that created these explosions in 1963 are still here; the conditions that created explosions in '64 are still here. You can't say that you're not going to have an explosion and you leave the condition, the ingredients, still here. As long as those ingredients, explosive ingredients, remain, then you're going to have the potential for explosion on your hands.

While Malcolm X's often-cited readiness for his own death is usually narrated as a premonition, in this rumination on the disconnect between media-generated rhetorical optimism and brutal lived experience, Malcolm X clearly positions his awareness as a material recognition rather than a psychic revelation. In this 1965 speech, Malcolm X sets out a conditional protagonist, a "you" that might have predicted the events that transpired in the volatile years of '63, '64, and '65 in the United States. A conditional "you" that would have, had he or she done so, been deemed crazy, certified as "nuts." In the tactics of Malcolm X's brilliant political pedagogy, this "you" is thrown out to the audience to whom he speaks, given to potentially be any one of them, just as it is given to be Malcolm X himself. There is a group of people who want you to believe everything is going well now and will continue to do so in the near future, he says, and we, who know better, are posited as crazy for thinking and for knowing otherwise. In this open proposal to change, in fact to challenge, the dominant narrative of collective expectation, Malcolm X elucidates the complexity of the relationship between rhetorical production, lived experience(s), and, to use his characterization of that particular historic moment, the explosive (un)predictability of future events.

In this case, Malcolm X posits experience and an astute awareness of the conditions of the present moment as the foundational ground on which the future can be imagined or, perhaps more appropriately to Malcolm X's political project, the foundational ground on which the conditional "you," he, we, are given to prepare for possible futures. Malcolm X asserts the refutation of certain "horizons of expectation" (to use conceptual historian Reinhart Koselleck's meta-historical category) as a way to incite a political challenge to very particular oppressive conditions of experience.

2. Feminist theorist and critic Teresa de Lauretis writes: "Experience is the process by which, for all social beings, subjectivity is constructed. Through that process one places oneself or is placed in social reality, and so perceives and comprehends as subjective (referring to, originating in, oneself) those relations—material, economic, and interpersonal—which are in fact social and, in a larger perspective, historical."[1]

3. In 2004, I asked two young women in their mid-20s to go onto the streets of New York City to interview people in the lead-up to the 2004 US Presidential Election. Not thinking through the consequences of doing so, we went out to do interviews on September 11, 2004. As we negotiated our way around the overwhelming expectation that we wanted responses, from whomever we approached, to the events of September 11, 2001, we landed upon the question: "What is the first political image you remember?" Amongst a field of answers that ended up

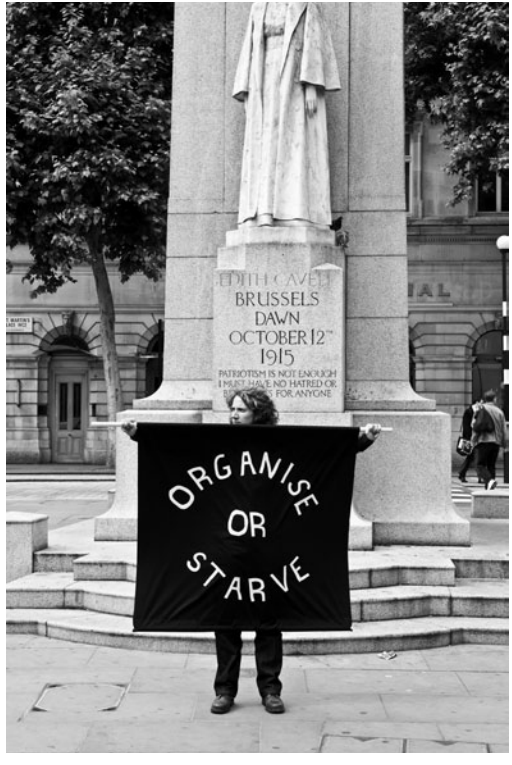
1 Teresa de Lauretis, cited in Joan W. Scott's essay, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 17, no. 4 (Summer 1991), pp. 773–797.

placing people in loose generational affiliations, there were two answers that surprised me then and continue to agitate my understanding of both politics and history. One was that of a 12-year-old African American girl who was walking with her friends after school in the East Village. "The death of John F. Kennedy," she said. A few weeks later in Times Square we stopped a young black man who had been born in Saudi Arabia and was going to college in the States: "The Black Power salute at the Mexican Olympics," he said. There are many rational ways to explain these two responses: that as young people they don't necessarily have a lived direct relation to politics or a way to interrogate for themselves a term like "political image," or that the two images each of them recalled circulate often in our present moment and so their citation of them is not extraordinary, but rather an all too ordinary demonstration of a larger operation of instrumentalizing and trivializing political history. But I also found those explanations unsatisfactory. And I began to accept their answers as sincere and, in doing so, to try to understand not only exactly what it could mean that a 12-year-old girl in New York City saw documentation of the assassination of JFK sometime between 1992 (when she was born) and 2004 and that this constituted, for her, not only a witnessing of the assassination, but something she later recounted as her first recognition of a political image; but also what this does to my understanding of the relationship between history, political identification, and temporality; and what this does to my understanding of the possibilities of political affiliation, political community, and collective political horizons.

4. "Live performance," feminist scholar Peggy Phelan writes, "plunges into visibility—in a maniacally charged present—and disappears into memory, into the realm of invisibility and the unconscious where it eludes regulation and control."[2]

2 Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 148.

Sharon Hayes, *In the Near Future*, 2009, detail, multiple-slide-projection installation, 35 mm color slides, 13 projectors, projection dimensions variable, courtesy of Tanya Leighton Gallery, Berlin and the artist



5. In my work, I am trying to think through so-called "arresting images" as a disruption to various straightforward narratives of the progressive march of historical time. I'm trying to understand what these images suggest about how we understand and constitute the "experience" of an event, particularly any number of traumatic/dramatic political events: pivotal protests, bodily acts of resistance, or eruptions of state violence.

Arresting images are those images we know from political events that can be conjured without reproducing them. From my geopolitical-historical frame: an anguished woman kneeling over the body of a fallen student at Kent State; Tommie Smith and John Carlos raising their gloved fists from their pedestals as gold and bronze medal winners at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City; or a slight man with a white shirt and black pants, standing clutching a bag of some sort, in the path of four military tanks in Tiananmen Square in Beijing. These images are, I think, colloquially called arresting images because they seize us. They seize me, they hold me, freeze me in some affective space of witnessing—witnessing what I also know to be an event I have not witnessed.

6. Art historian Amelia Jones writes: "I was not yet three years old, living in central North Carolina, when Carolee Schneemann performed *Meat Joy* at the Festival of Free Expression in Paris in 1964; three when Yoko Ono performed *Cut Piece* in Kyoto; eight when Vito Acconci did his *Push Ups* in the sand at Jones Beach and Barbara T. Smith began her exploration of bodily experiences with her *Ritual Meal* performance in Los Angeles; nine when Adrian Piper paraded through the streets of New York making herself repulsive in the *Catalysis* series; ten when Valie Export rolled over glass in *Eros/Ion* in Frankfurt; twelve in 1973 when, in Milan, Gina Pane cut her arm to make blood roses flow (*Sentimental Action*); fifteen (still in North Carolina, completely unaware of any art world doings) when Marina Abramovic and Ulay collided against each other in *Relation in Space* at the Venice Biennale in 1976. I was thirty years old—then 1991—when I began to study performance or body art from this explosive and important period, entirely through its documentation."[3]

Jones's recitative paragraph asserts: I was somewhere else when these events happened, I didn't see them, I don't have an experience of them, but I have an experience, which shouldn't be considered less important, of the work through its documentation.

But political events, and political traumas in particular, exceed the particular boundaries of their temporal and spatial occurrence. Martin Luther King's assassination in 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee happened to everyone, not just to people in Memphis in 1968 who may have been witness to the event itself. This is what large cultural traumas do—they happen to all of us. This is why we so habitually recount where we were… when JFK was assassinated, when Malcolm X was shot, when Fred Hampton was murdered, when the Wall came down, when the space shuttle blew up, when the towers fell, when the village was bombed. We mean "I was here when" I experienced the event. In this sense "being there" and "not having been there" loses its distinct geographic necessity.

7. Jones's recitation could be rewritten: I was not yet three years old, living in central North Carolina, when *Nelson Mandela was sentenced to life in prison* in 1964; three when *the United States Congress passed the Civil Rights Act*; eight when *the*

3 Amelia Jones, "'Presence' in Absentia: Experience Performance as Documentation," *Art Journal*, vol. 56, no. 4, "Performance Art: (Some) Theory and (Selected) Practice at the End of This Century" (Winter 1997), pp. 11–12.

Chicago 8 went to trial for their actions at the Democratic National Convention; nine when *four students were shot and killed at Kent State in Ohio*; ten when *Idi Amin seized power in Uganda*; twelve in 1973 when, *in Chile, a military junta violently overthrew the government of Salvador Allende*… etc.

8. I first heard the work of performance artist Tehching Hsieh narrated as one-sentence descriptions. "Tehching Hsieh, lived in a cage inside of his apartment for a year." "Tehching Hsieh punched a time clock every hour of every day for a year." "Tehching Hsieh and Linda Montano lived for a year tied together by a 7ft. rope."

Similarly, I heard about artist Adrian Piper's *Catalysis* series through a series of oral descriptions such as: "Adrian Piper soaked her clothes in cod liver oil for a week and then rode the New York City subway system."

It was only much later that I saw any images of Hsieh's one-year performances from 1979–1980 and 1980–1981 or of his one-year performance with Linda Montano in 1983–1984, or any images of Piper's *Catalysis III* or *Catalysis IV* (both 1970), and in each instance the photograph was utterly incapable of representing the event but all held my attention, seized me in much the same way as I have experienced with various photographs of protests or other political events.

9. Artist and writer Robert Smithson explains his concept of site and non-site as follows: "By drawing a diagram, a ground plan of a house, a street plan to the location of a site, or a topographic map, one draws a 'logical two dimensional picture.' A 'logical picture' differs from a natural or realistic picture in that it rarely looks like the things it stands for. It is a two dimensional analogy or metaphor—A is Z. The Non-Site (an indoor

Sharon Hayes, *In the Near Future*, 2009, detail, multiple-slide-projection installation, 35 mm color slides, 13 projectors, projection dimensions variable, courtesy of Tanya Leighton Gallery, Berlin and the artist

earthwork) is a three dimensional logical picture that is abstract, yet it represents an actual site in N.J. (The Pine Barrens Plains). It is by this three dimensional metaphor that one site can represent another site which does not resemble it—thus The Non-Site."[4]

10. While in Smithson's formulation, the non-site represents the site but does not resemble it, in the relationship of an event to its document, it is the reverse: the not-event does not represent the event, it resembles it. Photographs of performance or political events are, in fact, usually extremely poor representations of the events they are given to capture. They may, with the aid of a caption, give us one or two bodies who were there or involved or show us where the event occurred, but they rarely tell us anything at all about the other registers of the events unfolding: how, why, for how long? Did it begin slowly or just suddenly ignite, was it planned or spontaneous, how did it sound or smell?

And as with Smithson's site and non-site, the not-event (photographs but also films, videos, audio clips) are bound to the event and, in turn, these not-events also bind those of us who view, watch, or listen to them.

11. The not-event of the document, whether a photo, an audio tape, or a narration speaks to us, addresses us in an attenuated psychic space between "being there" and "not being there," and this produces a kind of opening, I think, a temporal opening that has as much to do with our present relationship to the past as it does to our ability to project ourselves into the future.

4 Robert Smithson, "A Provisional Theory of Non-Sites," in *Robert Smithson: Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), p. 364.

12. In an essay about feminist historian Carolyn Dinshaw's theorization of "touching history," activist and scholar Ann Pellegrini writes about racing to meet a writing deadline while the undetermined US presidential election of 2000 unfolded on television. "While the vote counting continued, halted, continued again, until the Supreme Court's votes were counted once and for all, cable TV was my constant companion; like me, it was up at all hours with not much new to report. How many times did pundits—those 'mediatized' historians of the sixty-minute hour—tell us, variously, that 'we were witnessing history,' 'this election is one for the history books,' or 'we will be telling our grandkids about this one?'" She continues: "The forecast anchors that future and this present in a certain past."[5]

How different this description-masked-as-reportage is from the slogan-offered-as-warning of 1960s and 1970s: "The whole world is watching." The admonition of spectatorial responsibility that was constitutive of and constituted by the notion of arresting images.

13. Those images that we can conjure without reproduction, the ones that position us as witnesses to events that we do not coincide with physically or temporally, circulate across time and space in relation to our singular and collective identifications. By this I mean that these arresting images don't accumulate like an ever-expanding archive but rather we cathect to specific images, we choose and are chosen by certain documents of certain events. Through these relationships, we accumulate a field of events to which we are witnesses, not passive observers of a thing that has past, but watchers with collective

5 Ann Pellegrini, "Touching the Past: Or, Hanging Chad," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 10, no. 2 (April 2001), p. 186.

and individual spectatorial responsibility in the present moment. I say *field* out of a necessity to assign some organizing word to this collection of image-events that I don't think has a definitive shape despite the ways in which it continually slides in and out of various organizational spatial understandings: timeline, landscape, horizon, etc.

14. There is an anecdote that I remember from a Lacan seminar I took with art historian and critic Juli Carson in grad school. Let's say I sit down, accidentally, on a chair with a tack on it and I leap up and scream "Ow!" I make an assumption that the tack caused the pain, however one could also say that it was the pain that made me recognize the existence of the tack and so that it is the pain that caused the tack.

I often refer to this anecdote to refute the simplified construction of before and after in relation to the document of an event. It could be said, I assert, that the image of the slight man with a white shirt and black pants who stood in front of a line of tanks in Tiananmen Square in Beijing on 4 June 1989 caused the event in as much as the action is predicated on that man's ability to envision the image.

15. This complication of the conventional operation of causality *also* disrupts our simplified understanding of a photograph's indexical relationship to the person/event/object it images.

The relationships between photographs and events, actions and expectations, documents and projections are formed through the complex cooperation of imagined and actualized experiences (past, present, and future) and practices of record making. The investment then, in a descriptive reality that constitutes the photograph as of the past, as following the event, as loss, as deficit, as nostalgia, is the investment of the

Sharon Hayes, *In the Near Future*, 2009, detail, multiple-slide-projection installation, 35 mm color slides, 13 projectors, projection dimensions variable, courtesy of Tanya Leighton Gallery, Berlin and the artist

newscaster who offers us the understanding of ourselves as passive observers of political experiences rather than as bodies/subjects with experience(s) of the past, present, and future at once. And thus, as bodies with knowledge, imagination, desire, and claim, individual and collective, of and toward a range of unpredictable and productively confusing future possibilities.

16. In February 1937 in *Modern Language Notes*, a journal of philology and literary criticism, philologist Herman L. Ebeling wrote that the word anachronism, from the Greek *ana chronos*, can be defined as: "an error in respect to dates; an error which implies the misplacing of persons or events in time."[6] Anachronism is also defined as: "The representation of someone as existing or something as happening in other than chronological, proper, or historical order." Also as "the representation of an event, person, or thing in a historical context in which it could not have occurred or existed or a person or thing that belongs or seems to belong to another time." Or "A person or a thing remaining or appearing after its own time period." "An error in chronology." "An artifact that belongs to another time." "A person who seems to be displaced in time, who belongs to another age." "A chronological misplacing of persons, events, objects, or customs in regard to each other. The state or condition of being chronologically out of place." "Something that is no longer suitable for or relevant to modern times. Such as the statement: She regards the marriage ceremony as a quaint anachronism."[7]

17. I'm invested in deploying anachronism as an active error, a willful mistake, a deliberate confusion of temporality that exists as or insinuates itself into/as experience. (In this sense, I would argue against Koselleck, and instead find a reversal of his conceptual coupling more illuminating: horizons of experience and spaces of expectation.) If I, as an artist, disrupt the spatial and temporal assumptions that underlie our understanding of what events, persons, objects, and actions constitute our realm of experience, can I construct—even if for a very brief period of time—a space in which it is possible to consider the future, our expectation of what is to come, and our own position in and responsibility toward the explosive (un)predictability of 2011, 2012, 2013, and beyond?

6 Herman L. Ebeling, "The Word *Anachronism*," *Modern Language Notes* 52 (1937), pp. 120–121.
7 The above passage includes definitions of the word "anachronism" taken from a number of online dictionaries, amongst which are: dictionary.reference.com, merriam-webster.com, macmillandictionary.com, etc.

Ernesto Laclau
Horizon, Ground, and Lived Experience

The notion of "horizon" was first given systematic treatment in the phenomenological tradition. Philosophers Barry Smith and David Woodruff Smith summarize Edmund Husserl's views on horizons in the following terms:

> Associated with each act of consciousness is a *horizon* of possible further experiences of the same object. The noemata of these further acts are compatible with the noema of the given act. These horizon noemata prescribe further properties or 'determinations' of the object, say that it has four legs, is made of wood, etc., in addition to those delineated in the act with which one starts. An act's horizon thus maps out an array of possible states of affairs that fill in what is left 'open' or 'indeterminate' by the noema of the act itself.

And, as they add, the Husserlian analysis of horizons "can be seen as anticipating the analysis of meaning in terms of possible world semantics developed by philosophers Saul Kripke, Jakko Hintikka, and others in the 1950s and 1960s and inspired in part by Rudolf Carnap's method of state descriptions."[1]

This is closely related to the notions of "retentions" and "protensions" in the phenomenology of time and experience. I cannot enter into a detailed exegesis of Husserl's approach to these categories, but I want to refer to a crucial aspect in which our views differ from Husserl and, indeed, from the whole phenomenological tradition. For Husserl, the ultimate ground of all predication is to be found in a pre-predicative stratum of lived experience that precedes, and in that way grounds, any possible predication. For us, there is nothing which is, strictly speaking, pre-predicative. Any lived experience is constituted—in the transcendental sense of the term—through a set of syntactic and semantic rules which structure experience as such. The level of

1 Barry Smith and David White Smith, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 25–26.

discourse is irreducible. As a result, it is to the structure of signification that we have to refer to, to detect, within it, that which makes possible the emergence of something like a horizon.

Grounding the ground

I will start by comparing the notions of "ground" and "horizon," and look at two versions of the ground: the transcendent and the immanent. Whereas a ground always presupposes a fullness of being, a horizon does not. It is true, of course, that a horizon also grounds, but it does so in a different way than a foundation. A ground, in the strict sense of the term, is something out of which everything else proceeds. It is the *natura naturans* as opposed to the *natura naturata.* And here we find a first difficulty. If the ground is not a sham, if it is a real ground, we have to explain how and why multiplicity proceeds out of it. And this task is not easy. If the ground is self-enclosed perfection, why does it have to move to what is less perfect than itself? In the Plotinean vision, for instance, why does the One, which is an absolute unity to which the soul has to return, have to go through the whole procession of the successive emanations? And in the Christian version: why did God need to create a world? This is the difficulty that every transcendent notion of a ground has always been confronted with. What happens, however, if we move to the alternative hypothesis, namely that the ground is not transcendent but immanent to what it grounds? In the early Middle Ages this line of thought was developed in connection with another intractable problem: the question of the presence of evil in the world. If God, as Almighty, is responsible for the existence of evil in the world, He cannot be Absolute Goodness. If, on the contrary, He is not responsible for evil, He can be Absolute Goodness, but, most definitely, He is not Almighty. It is at this point that immanentism as a line of thought started during the Carolingian Renaissance. For medieval philosopher John Scotus Eriugena, evil is an illusion: what appears to us, finite beings, as

evil, are, in actual fact, the stages through which God reaches his ultimate perfection. From the point of view of an infinite mind, there is no such a thing as evil.

This way of posing the problem of the ground—which was originally theological, but which evolved later into several secularized versions—has enjoyed a considerable fortune in western thought. We find it in various ways in Northern mysticism, and in the philosophical tradition in Nicholas Cusanus, in Spinoza, and finally in Friedrich Hegel and Karl Marx. In Hegel's *Logic* any duality between the grounded and the ground disappears. We could say, in contemporary terminology, that for Hegel, all ontic distinctions—given their necessity—become ontological. The cunning of Reason is the highest formulation of this line of thought. And the same happens in Marx: the underlying logic of History is to be found in the development of productive forces and their compatibility/incompatibility with successive systems of relations of production, while the manner in which men live their conflicts is a mere superstructural effect. The difficulties with a strong transcendent notion of the ground have already been pointed out. It is my contention that a purely immanentist, but equally strong conception of ground is not a coherent solution either. As an alternative I propose a weakened version of the grounding process, which will lead us straight into the notion of horizon.

Weakening a ground is not simply obliterating it, but rather, modulating it in a different way. I see the transition from ground to horizon operating as follows.[2] Language, according to linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, and, by extension, all signifying process is a system of differences. So if all identities are differential, this

2 In the next two paragraphs I summarize an argument that I have more fully developed in my book *Emancipation(s)* (London: Verso, 1996).

means that the *system* of differences, in order to be truly systematic, is required to be a closed one; if it was open, without precise limits, there would be a pure dispersion in which nothing would mean anything. The consequence would be that it would be impossible to fix any identity whatsoever. The closure of the system, however, requires it to establish its limits, and there is no possibility of seeing a limit without seeing what is beyond it. But if what we are dealing with is the system of all differences, that "beyond the system," being simply another difference, should be internal and not external to the system. With this, the very notion of limit is jeopardized and, as the limit is the very condition of closure, and closure the *sine qua non* of signification, it is the possibility itself of signifying identities that is at stake.

I have argued elsewhere that the only way out of this dilemma is to postulate that the external difference is of the nature of an exclusion, that is, an element which threatens the identity of the ensemble of the other differences. I have quoted as an example a famous speech of Saint Just to the Convention, where he asserted that the unity of the Republic is only the destruction of what is opposed to it—namely, the aristocratic plot. So the external threat, at the same time that it puts into question the very existence of the systematic ensemble of differences, creates the very condition that makes such an ensemble possible: all differential identities reach their differential (= identitarian) status through their common rejection of the external threat.

Let us now link this conclusion to our previous discussion concerning immanent grounds. We said that, differently with what happens with a transcendent ground, immanence brings into a unitary whole the grounded and the ground. And this is exactly what happens in the case of our differential identities: each of them being the condition of possibility of all the others,

none of them can acquire a transcendent status. This is not far away from the conclusions reached by Hegel in the "Doctrine of Essence" of his *Logic*: for him also the notion of the ground as transcendent had to be superseded in order that the unity of the categories made possible a pure immanence.

If matters remained at that point it would be necessary to conclude that the case for a purely immanent ground which would have established the ontological character of all ontic distinctions would be logically impeccable, and that the terrain for the possible emergence of a horizon as different from a ground would have collapsed. However, this is not the case. Here we have to move to the second step of our argument. On the basis of the rejection of the excluded element we would have apparently created the conditions for a domain of purely differential identities. Except for the following: all identities, vis-à-vis the excluded element, are not only differential but equivalent to each other in their common rejection of that element. And a relation of equivalence is exactly what puts into question a differential one. So to put the argument in deconstructive terms: the condition of possibility of an object—the differential ensemble resulting from the exclusion—is also its condition of impossibility. Between difference and equivalence there is no square circle which would logically bring these two dimensions into unity. What should have been an univocal ground, immanent to the system of differences, is occupied by a logical void, by a bottomless abyss—by an *Abgrund*, in the Heideggerian sense.

Let us see the paradoxical situation in which we are located. The ground as a totality of its partial processes is an impossibility, because equivalence and difference cannot be logically reconciled into a coherent whole. Totality as a ground is impossible. On the other hand, without totalization there would be no signification. So totality is an object at the same time

impossible and necessary. As impossible, it is not representable in a direct, unambiguous way. As necessary, however, it needs somehow to have access to the space of representation—although it will necessarily be a distorted representation. So let us see how such a distortion operates, because it will lead us to our central thesis: *that totality is not a ground but a horizon*. How so?

Horizon as totality

To consider this notion of "distorted representation," we can see that if it is distorted it is because "totality" is not an independent object, having an identity of its own. What are, in that case, the means of representation of that necessary albeit impossible object? Obviously, only the particular differences constituting the system. It is only when a particular difference, without ceasing to be particular, assumes the representation of a totality regarding which the particular is incommensurable that that evanescent object—the totality—acquires some form of discursive presence. Its status is not, however, that of a ground, because it is not the source of its partial processes and identities, but it emerges out of the interaction between them. What is, in that case, its theoretical status? The answer is: *that of a horizon.* We have to determine, in what follows, its defining features.

In one of the footnotes accompanying their English translation of philosopher Martin Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* [Being and Time], John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson include the following commentary:

> Throughout this work the word 'horizon' is used with a connotation somewhat different to that to which the English-speaking reader is likely to be accustomed. We tend to think of a horizon as something which may widen or extend or go beyond; Heidegger, however, seems to think of it rather as something we can neither widen nor go beyond, but which provides the limits for certain intellectual activities performed 'within' it.[3]

Let us concentrate on this dual operation—widening and limiting—none of whose two dimensions, we would argue, is absent from the Heideggerian text. On the one hand, a horizon has a widening function: a certain ontic content "expresses" or "supports" something going beyond that content. But, on the other hand, the horizon has a limiting function: by anchoring the ontological widening in the materiality of its ontic content, it limits what is visible—and *a fortiori* sayable—within a certain context. The ontic content, so to say, has a double function: first, it's incarnating something transcending itself—being as such; second, being as such, lacking a body of its own, can only show itself through its incarnation in an ontic body. We start seeing here in what the distortion we were speaking before consists of: in an ontological difference which is the locus of a strictly constitutive—i.e. unsurpassable tension.

Given the general presuppositions of our theoretical approach, however, this is not enough. Having denied that there is any pre-predicative substratum as constitutive of experience, what we have to do is to see the emergence within signification of this tension, which leads from ground to horizon. This requires two steps. The first is to show how that tension affects the structure of the sign, that is, the duality signifier/signified. To do this is not complicated. The tension between openness and closure, which, as we have seen is constitutive of any horizon, is going to destabilize such duality. While in the case of a ground we have a "superhard" transcendentality by which to each unit of the signifier will correspond one and only one signified, in the case of a horizon that strict correlation between the two orders is broken. In a horizon the signifier signifies something

3 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco: Harper, 1962), p. 19.

different from its usual signified—i.e. it signifies the ultimate impossibility on which the process of signification is based.

To give a political example that I have discussed elsewhere: the symbols of Solidarność in Poland were, at the beginning, linked to a very particular set of demands: those of the workers at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk. So there was initially a strict correlation between signifiers and signifieds. However, as these demands were formulated within a social context in which many other social demands were equally frustrated, the symbols of Solidarność became the terrain of inscription of a plurality of demands considerably vaster than the initial ones—that is, *those symbols became a horizon* in the sense that we are trying to define it. The two dimensions of "opening" and "closure" that we have suggested are characteristic of a horizon are equally present here. Opening, first. For a plurality of demands to express themselves through the same signifier, that signifier has to weaken its links with its initial signified. This is exactly the effect of distortion introduced in the structure of the sign, which, as we have seen, is inherent in the constitution of any horizon. *From this point of view, a horizon requires the production of tendentially empty signifiers.* But the second effect, that of closure, is equally present: once, in a certain context, social protest has become attached to some particular signifiers, one is not free to change the latter at will. If, referring to the dimension of opening, we can speak of empty signifiers, from the perspective of closure we can call them *hegemonic signifiers* (comparable to the notion of "master signifier" in Lacanian theory). Both effects coexist in the constitution of any horizon.

Signification and horizonality

We have now to take our second step. The gap in the correlation between signifier and signified, which makes possible the transition from ground to horizon, also makes impossible

any ultimate literality. Any term is ultimately figural because the differentiality which constitutes its meaning depends, in the last instance, on naming something which is, strictly speaking, unnamable. This fact results from the duality necessity/impossibility described earlier. And this is what opens the terrain of ontology (the determination of being qua being) to a generalized rhetoric. Roman philosopher Cicero asserted that catachresis is necessary because there are in the world more objects to be named than the words available to us in our language. For him this was, of course, an empirical deficiency of our language. But if we have established that such "deficiency" is constitutive of the logic of signification as such, we cannot avoid the conclusion that rhetorical mechanisms lie at the heart of objectivity. There is no ultimate ground because any grounding operation depends on figural representations which are not governed by any aprioristic syntactic rule.

This last conclusion is crucial. Saussure himself had already pointed out that while in the syntagmatic pole of language, combinations are submitted to specifiable rules, in the associative (paradigmatic) pole, the substitutions freely operate in a myriad of directions (following, we would say today, the movements of the unconscious). But the pole of substitutions is as much as that of combinations, constitutive of signification. So we have to conclude that the figural is required by any signifying operation—i.e. that rhetoric is not an external addition to language, but an internal requirement of the latter. It is at this point that the significance of our argument concerning empty signifiers is fully shown: it is because there is something strictly irrepresentable in a literal way that its (distorted) representation will always be figural. And this is not a merely capricious substitution but a strictly necessary one, derived from the need of representing the presence of an absence, without which signification would be impossible. In that sense, signification is

always catachrestical: there is no way of returning from the figural to a mythical literality. Psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan used to say that sublimation consists in elevating an object to the dignity of the "Thing" (in the Freudian sense). The object is going to be transformed by incarnating the (impossible) Thing, but the Thing only acquires a form of presence through the distortions that it introduces in the object—in Kantian terms: it only shows itself through the impossibility of its adequate representation. A signifying element that makes possible a field of signification and, at the same time establishes the limits of what is representable within that field, is what we call *a horizon*. So we have moved all the way from the literality of a ground to the figural grounding operated by a horizon.

There is a last aspect that requires mentioning although, unfortunately, I cannot explore it here as much as it deserves, and that is the relationship between empty signifiers and the figure of the horizon.[4] We have seen that, for the immanentist conceptions of the ground, all categories of the system, whether they correspond to the ground or to the grounded, belong to the same ontological level. There is no unevenness or differential cathexes between them. In the case of a horizon, on the contrary, unevenness is constitutive. The "empty" or "master" signifier, which is the condition for signification to be achieved, has a privileged ontological status vis-à-vis the other categories of the system. This privilege is not, however, a *conceptual* privilege, because, in that case, it would be *in pari materia* with all the other categories of the system, which are also conceptual in their differentiality. The empty signifier being hegemonic, as a result of incarnating an *impossible* totality, it has to be the locus of an investment which is not conceptually

4 See a preliminary discussion of this topic in my book *On Populist Reason* (London: Verso, 2005), chapter 4.

grounded. The horizon, which is the condition of all conceptual (i.e. differential) distinctions, cannot itself be conceptual. Our thesis is that a horizon is something which only grounds through the very act of being named, and that this naming is not the translation or (as philosopher Bertrand Russell assumed) the abbreviation of anything conceptually specifiable. This is the same as saying that naming is a primordial operation, which is catachrestical through and through. At this point our views are not far away from the anti-descriptivism of Kripke and especially, from the Lacanian view according to which the name is the ground of the thing.

To assert that there is no signification without horizons involves that we are going to find the structural distinctions that we have established operating at all levels of human reality. At the linguistic level, we find signification as structured around two and complementary poles: the syntagmatic and the paradigmatic. At the rhetorical level, we have the opposition between metaphor and metonymy, whose homology with the linguistic distinction has been stressed by authors like linguist Roman Jakobson. At the psychoanalytic level, we have the Freudian distinction between condensation and displacement (the two forms of overdetermination), which Lacan has assimilated to metaphor and metonymy. Finally, in political analysis we have introduced the distinction between the logic of equivalence (whose homologous correlates would be paradigms, metaphor, and condensation) and the logic of difference (homologous correlates: syntagms, metonymy, and displacement). The consequences of introducing the notion of horizon in philosophical analysis are far-reaching, but their potentialities are far away from having been fully explored.

This text is a revised version of a keynote lecture delivered during the 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress, Istanbul, 4–6 November 2010.

Peter Osborne

Expecting the Unexpected: Beyond the "Horizon of Expectation"

Expectation is the main concept through which western philosophy has thought the futural dimension of the "time of the soul" since theologian and philosopher Saint Augustine. In Augustine, for the first time, a present-centered but future-orientated temporality of the soul was conceived, overlaid upon a linear, Christian form of historical time. The time of the soul is the time of a "three-fold present" in which the temporal dimensions of present/past/future are contacted into the subjective orientations of attention/memory/expectation, respectively.[1] Thus was the ground laid for the philosophical pre-history of the concept of modernity as a "subjectively"-orientated form of historical time, in relation to which, from the Enlightenment onwards, politics came to be understood as the means for the actualization of historical expectations. Today, in the wake of the collapse of the remnants of the main effective historical representative of that conception of politics ("historical communism"), and in the midst of a major geopolitical reordering of the world, the concept of expectation requires thinking anew.

In early twentieth-century European philosophy, Augustine's proto-phenomenological conception of the three-fold present was freed from its theological presuppositions by the technical rigors of Edmund Husserl's idea of philosophy as "pure phenomenology." In the process, the concept of expectation was subjected to Husserl's methodological conception of the "horizon." The theologically determined historical framework of the Christian doctrine of The Last Days was thereby replaced by a descriptive idea of the "horizon of expectation." A rethinking of the political meaning of expectation thus requires a revisiting of the concept of horizon of expectation. There is something to be learnt, I think, by reconstructing the conceptual grammar of the term horizon in its main philosophical usages.

1 Augustine, *Confessions* (398), trans. R.F. Pine-Coffin (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961), Book XI.

Should we think of our relationship to the future in terms of new horizons, or, do we need to think beyond the concept of horizon of expectation itself? In considering these questions, I begin with a brief philosophical genealogy of the phenomenological concept of horizon of expectation, as it morphs from an epistemological into a historical category. That is followed by some reflections, first, on its limitations of as a historical category, and second, on its place within discourses on the fall of historical communism and the future of capitalism "post-1989."

Horizon of expectation as a historical category

The history of the concept of horizon of expectation can be developed in three main stages: from Husserl, via philosopher Martin Heidegger, to conceptual historian Reinhart Koselleck. To begin, a clue to some of the problems that infect the concept in its later, historical usage may be found in its philosophical source: Husserl's phenomenological description of the "natural attitude" in the first chapter of Part 2 of the 1913, *First Book* of his *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to Phenomenological Philosophy – General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology* – the chapter entitled "The Positing that Belongs to the Natural Attitude and its Exclusion." It is important to appreciate something of the philosophical specificity of this founding usage. Husserl is discussing the intentional constitution of meaning in perception: "What is… perceived and what is more or less clearly co-present and determinate (or at least somewhat determinate)," he writes, "are penetrated and surrounded by an *obscurely intended to horizon of indeterminate actuality*." Husserl continues:

> I can send rays of the illuminative regard of attention into this horizon with varying results. Determining presencings [*Vergegenwärtigungen/*making presents], obscure at first and then becoming alive, haul something out of me; a chain of such quasi-memories is linked together; the sphere of determinateness becomes wider and wider, perhaps so wide that connection is made with the field of actual perception as my *central* surroundings. But generally the result is different: an empty mist of obscure indeterminateness is populated with intuited possibilities or likelihoods; and only the 'form' of the world, precisely as 'the world' is predelineated. Moreover, my indeterminate surroundings are infinite, the misty and never fully determinable horizon is necessarily there.[2]

The misty and never fully determinable horizon is necessarily there… As Husserl continues, later on in the same text, "there always remains a horizon of determinable indeterminateness."[3]

In the first instance, then, for Husserl, a horizon is part of the "positing" that belongs to the natural attitude, a pre-reflective immediacy, and it always involves "a determin*able*, but never *fully* determinable, *in*determinateness." Horizon is thus the phenomenological version of what has been known since Immanuel Kant as a boundary-concept (*Grenzebegriff*): a concept that registers and articulates the bounds of knowledge. However, unlike Kant's rigid conceptualization of transcendental limits (*Schranken*) as borders (*Grenze*)—with its binary classification of concepts that fall on one or other side of it, and are judged as either *legitimate* or *illegitimate* by the transcendental border police of self-reflecting reason—Husserl's conceptualization of limit as horizon (*Horizont*) contains an essential indefiniteness, corresponding to the *movement* of determination. This movement has an ultimate limit, of "never *fully* determinable indeterminateness," but—and this is the crucial thing—this limit is *not* conceived as a "boundary" or "border," since it does not posit anything on the other side. The horizon is phenomenologically immanent but *infinitely* receding. It remains obscure. A mist.

2 Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book. General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, trans. F. Kersten, (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1982), p. 52.
3 Ibid., p. 95.

The concept of horizon thus transforms the spatial imaginary of the Kantian concept of limit, placing the subject of knowledge *within the field* of a moving limit, thereby however, holding it permanently at arms length. It does so, moreover, in a way that is completely different from the everyday connotation and metaphorical field of the horizon as something that *promises* something *beyond* the limit, and is therefore associated with the idea of *hope*—in its difference from expectation. Hope is a category of the post-Kantian philosophy of religion. More specifically, since Kant, hope has been a category of moral—at best, political—theology. In the chapter on "The Canon of Pure Reason" in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant claimed that all interest of our reason is united in three questions: "What can I know?;" "What should I do?;" and "What may I hope?" The third question sounds initially as if it is one of historical epistemology. However, in Kant's understanding, it is "simultaneously practical and theoretical," for it is shorthand for the question "*If I do as I should*, what then may I hope?"[4] As such, hope is part of the Kantian problematic of ideas: concepts of objects beyond possible experience. Horizon, on the other hand, is part of a phenomenological problematic—an alternative approach to Kant's quite different question: "What may I know?" As a spatial *image*, horizon points towards a beyond, something existent but out of sight, and hence unknown—and yet in principle knowable once you travel there. The horizon will move, but what was beyond the horizon can come to be within it, if you travel; hence the inherent hopefulness of travel. But its phenomenological meaning is not that of possibility so much as a confirmation of finitude and a subjective constitution of meaning that can never, in principle, break through the ultimate *in*determinateness of the horizon as such.

4 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 677.

The concept of the horizon of *expectation*—and, metaphorically at least, the notion of horizon seems to be indelibly associated with expectation, even when it refers to the past—derives, firstly, from the simple combination of the phenomenological notion of the "misty" horizon with the similarly "naively natural" concept of expectation, as *the "forward-looking" aspect* of what is made present [*Vergegenwärtigung*] to consciousness, one of our three temporal horizons. Secondly, however, in Husserl, it derives methodologically from the "purification" of this conceptual combination by the reflective method of the phenomenological reduction. This transcendentalizes what was previously the merely descriptive necessity of the horizon within the "natural attitude," making it a condition of possibility of experience.

It is this transcendental-phenomenological understanding of horizon that was taken over by Heidegger in *Being and Time* (1927) and subjected to the problematic of the question of the meaning of being. And it is within the terms of this ontological problematic that it first acquires a practical dimension. This marks the second stage in the development of the concept. The "provisional aim" of *Being and Time*, we are told on the very first page of the book, prior to the Introduction, is "the interpretation of *time* as the *possible horizon* for any understanding whatsoever of being." It is thus within the terms of the transcendental-phenomenological concept of horizon that time comes, in Heidegger's writings, to assert its priority over "being." Heidegger's *Being and Time*, as a whole, moves within the conceptual space of horizonality. Horizon is no longer connected to temporality derivatively (as it was in Husserl), but fundamentally, through the notion of the "horizonal schema." As Heidegger put it in Part IV of Division 2, "Temporality and Everydayness":

> *The existential-temporal condition for the possibility of the world lies in the fact that temporality, as an ecstatical unity [a unity of the three temporal ecstasies], has something like a horizon.* Ecstasies are not simply raptures in which one gets carried away. Rather, there belongs to each ecstasis a 'whither' to which one gets carried away. This 'whither' of the ecstasis we call the 'horizonal schema.'[5]

Horizon is immanent to existential temporality. This is Heidegger's ontologized version of Kant's "schematism"—the transcendental time-determinations as the schema of the pure concepts of the understanding. "In each of the three ecstasies," Heidegger continues:

> the ecstatical horizon is different. … The horizon of temporality *as a whole* determines that *whereupon* factically existing entities are essentially *disclosed*. With one's factical being-there, a potentiality-for-being is in each case projected in the horizon of the future. …[6]

Unlike the phenomenological horizon of expectation, which is part of a subjective constitution of meaning, this *existential* "horizon of the future" is ontologically fundamental. Earlier in the book, Heidegger prefigures this distinction between horizon of expectation and horizon of the future with a distinction between expectation and anticipation, as different ways of relating to the possible.

> To expect something possible is always to understand it and to 'have' it with regard to whether and when and how it will be actually present-at-hand. Expecting is not just an occasional looking-away from the possible to its possible actualization, but is essentially a *waiting for that actualization*. Even in expecting one leaps *away* from the possible and gets a foothold in the actual. It is for its actuality that what is expected is expected. By the very nature of expecting, the possible is drawn into the actual, arising out of the actual and returning to it.[7]

We can feel here the shadow of Augustine's famous definition of expectation, in Book 11 of his *Confessions*, as "the present time of future things." In contrast, Heidegger's term for being-towards a possibility *as a possibility* is "anticipation." It is because, in being-towards-death, death gives us "nothing to be 'actualized'," but *is* only as a pure possibility, that the ontological distinctiveness of human existence is defined by Heidegger as "anticipation itself." For Heidegger, awaiting actualization is a characteristic of the "*inauthentic* future." "Expecting" temporalizes itself authentically only as anticipation.[8] And we can also see Heidegger breaking with the theological presuppositions of expectation, which continued to infect Husserl's conception of time-consciousness, in his understanding of more extended forms of expectation, the "prophetic" aspect of which is explicitly acknowledged in his earlier lectures *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*.[9]

This Heideggerian distinction between expectation and anticipation is helpful in thinking about the political implications of the historical application of the concept of "horizon of expectation," especially in the light of the crisis of the Enlightenment philosophy of history. First, though, let me complete the narrative of the becoming-historical of the phenomenological concept of horizon of expectation by turning to Koselleck's famous 1976 essay, "'Space of Experience' and 'Horizon of Expectation': Two Historical Categories."[10] The concept of the horizon of

5 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Maquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), p. 416.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid., p. 306.
8 Ibid., pp. 307; 386–387.
9 Husserl, *Ideas I*, p. 175. See also Edmund Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, in *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, trans. John Barnett Brough (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1991).
10 Reinhart Koselleck, "'Space of Experience' and 'Horizon of Expectation': Two Historical Categories," in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), pp. 267–288.

expectation plays no role in Heidegger's "existential-ontological exposition of the problem of history" (the title of chapter 72 of *Being and Time*). Rather, it is with the collective and practical aspects of "anticipatoriness" (*Vorlaufigkeit*)—anticipatory resoluteness—that he is concerned. Horizon of expectation acquires its place as a historical category from Koselleck's use of it to specify the distinctiveness of modernity (*Neuzeit*) as a structure of historical experience, within the "generality of history" as a whole. In this respect, Koselleck extends Husserl's concept by placing it into the context of his own work on the semantics of historical time, on the basis of philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer's reiteration of the importance of the concept of horizon to a hermeneutical phenomenology in his 1960 *Truth and Method* (where it is, though, almost exclusively deployed with regard to the "effective-history" of tradition: the horizon of tradition).[11]

Koselleck's thesis is three-fold. First, "during modernity [*Neuzeit*] the difference between experience and expectation has increasingly expanded; more precisely… modernity [*Neuzeit*] is first understood as a new time [*neue Zeit*] from the time that expectations have distanced themselves evermore from all previous experience."[12] Second, this distancing of expectation from experience is constitutive not merely of modernity but of "history in general" as "a totality opened towards a progressive future"—indeed, Koselleck claims, the concept of history has "the same substantive content" as the concept of "progress." Both are manifestations of the time-consciousness of modernity. In fact, "history," in the collective singular, is an *effect* of

11 Hans-George Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1975), pp. 267–274. Gadamer here follows Nietzsche in "his complaint against historicism that it destroyed the horizon bounded by myth in which culture alone is able to live."

12 Koselleck, "'Space of Experience' and 'Horizon of Expectation'," p. 276.

modernity. Third, such "expectations have themselves *produced* new possibilities at the cost of passing reality."

The concept of horizon of expectation is thus used by Koselleck as a way of formally unifying the whole constellation of concepts, the semantic history of which his name is rightly associated with: *modernity*, *history*, *progress*, *revolution*, *the new*, and *crisis*. In particular, Koselleck is insistent upon the epochal character of the shift from the Christian doctrine of The Last Days, with its apocalyptical mode of historical expectation, to the hazards of an open but "progressive" future. However, it is not clear that he has reflected sufficiently here either upon the *dialectic of the expected and the unexpected* that is thereby put into play in modernity, or upon the way in which the structure of historical time has been affected by the historical development of capitalism and the experience of historical communism (further complicated now, for us, by the latter's passing). In particular, he seems not to have detected the profound complicity between the phenomenological concept of horizon and *historicism*, as the philosophical form of what Heidegger, Walter Benjamin, and Louis Althusser alike conceived as "the ordinary understanding"—we might say, ideological misrepresentation—of history.

Critique of Koselleck

Koselleck makes the disjunction between experience and expectation his criterion of modernity as a form of historical time. Yet he also acknowledges that it is the extent to which expectations are *exceeded* (rather than fulfilled) that "reorders" the relations between experience and expectation: "Only the unexpected has the power to surprise, and this surprise involves a new experience. The penetration of the horizon of expectation, therefore, is creative of new experiences."[13] It is the concept of

13 Ibid., p. 275.

the new as the *un*expected that transforms the relationship between expectation and experience; and it is thus, in the part, the *unexpected* that we come to *expect* and also to value. This renders expectation dialectical, but also abstract, in a way that problematizes Husserl's depiction of it as constrained by a "horizon" of "determin*able*, if never *fully* determinable, *in*determinateness"—a "predelineation" of "the world." For expectation of the unexpected paradoxically projects the "penetration" of its own horizon. As such, it seems closer to what Heidegger called "anticipatoriness" (*Vorlaufigkeit*): a relation to possibility stripped of the determinate shape of a potential actuality, albeit here, nonetheless something "objective" (given by the structure of historical time), rather than grasped as an existential structure of human existence per se. The distinction is important, since the former (the structure of historical time) has definite socio-historical conditions, while the latter (the existential structure of human existence) does not. Or at least, Heidegger's philosophy forbids us to interpret it so; although, as cited above, his philosophy does acknowledge, positivistically, that "[w]ith one's *factical* being-there, a potentiality-for-being is *in each [individual] case* projected in the horizon of the future." Famously, Heidegger's philosophy achieves a radical possibilization only at the cost of an existential abstraction from its socio-historical conditions—an existential abstraction posing, in philosopher Theodor W. Adorno's phrase, as "pseudo-concreteness."

Regarding Koselleck, though, the point is that however radically disjunctive the "horizon of expectation" may be from what he calls the "space of experience," it can *never* be disjunctive enough, in principle, to produce the unexpected. That comes from "outside" the phenomenological framework. Yet it is the unexpected that reorders the relations between the space of experience and the horizon of expectation to produce the

disjunction that Koselleck takes to *define* modernity, phenomenologically, as a form of historical time. *The concept of horizon of expectation thus obscures the true structure of the problematic that it used to articulate: modernity as the production of the new.* The only phenomenological category adequate to Koselleck's account of the structure of modernity as a form of historical time is the *unexpectedness of the new*. In contrast, the role of the concept of horizon in transcendentally regulating a progressive determination of meaning aligns it with the naturalized temporal continuity of historicism: the projection of future time as chronological continuity with the past, the very opposite of a qualitatively temporalized history.[14] *In the unexpected, meaning is produced (insofar as it is produced) through dialectical negation—not further determination—of the expected.* It is true that we may come to expect such negations—and "revolution" did, of course, become established as a horizon of expectation in the 200-year period from 1789–1989—but insofar as expectation is of the genuinely *un*expected, it is not "horizonal" in either Husserl's or Heidegger's senses. Rather, theoretically, it involves a certain readiness to subject the unexpected to dialectical retrospective interpretation and appropriation (conjunctural analysis). Practically, it involves a certain commitment to *experimental* practices of negation. The political crisis of socialist "revolution," on the other hand, stemmed precisely from its becoming part of a horizon of expectation—paradigmatically, in the progressivist form of the Second International—the main object of criticism of Benjamin's 1940 theses "On the Concept of History."[15]

14 See Peter Osborne, "Historicism as Bad Modernity," in *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde* (London and New York: Verso; 1995/2011), pp. 138–144.
15 Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," in *Selected Writings, Volume 4, 1938–1940,* eds. Howard Eiland & Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 389–400. Benjamin's alternative is famously (negatively) "messianic." The current dilemma of the philosophy of history, one might say, is that it remains trapped in an antinomy of historicism and messianism.

We can see something of what is at stake here in a comparison of what are for many people two recent paradigmatic examples of the unexpectedness of an historical event: the collapse of historical communism in Eastern Europe, and the aerial attack on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York on September 11 2001.

Puncturing the Horizon

These two events—the collapse of historical communism and the attack on the Twin Towers—have very different temporalities and they are very different kinds of "event." But they are both historical events in the same fundamental, if no longer fashionable, sense of being occurrences that move the narrative of "history" forward. For event is, fundamentally, a narrative category and its meaning has changed as the range and complexity of types of possible narrative have expanded in the wake of literary and other modernisms.

Much has been made of the supposedly "unexpected" character of the collapse of historical communism. But did the collapse of historical communism really "penetrate" the horizon of expectation governing the dominant western political imaginaries, or did it not rather, precisely, *determine* their previously indeterminate but nonetheless determin*able* horizon, fulfilling the long-held expectation of the unviable character of any non-capitalist historical road, thereby simultaneously extending and reinforcing that same existing horizon? *That* particular horizon of expectation was undoubtedly massively reinforced. What is actually meant by the unexpected character of the disintegration of historical communism derives, I think, from the *inability to predict* its occurrence at a particular chronological time—to see when and how it was going to happen—rather than that it was going to happen, which, as I have said, was for many, for a long time, a foregone conclusion.

It is thus misleading, I think, to conceive of the post-1989 era as being characterized by a *generalized* "loss of horizon." Instead, one might say, it is characterized by the loss of two particular historical horizons and the generalized restitution of a third.

The lost horizons are those of "communism" and "revolution," respectively: "communism" as the horizon of historical communism (an "empty mist of obscure indeterminateness… populated with intuited possibilities or likelihoods"—as Husserl put it—predelineating "only the 'form'" of a world); and "revolution," similarly, as a horizon of expectation within capitalist and colonial societies ("populated with intuited possibilities" of non-capitalistic social forms)—although the horizon of expectation of revolution had been dissolving in advanced capitalist societies since the end of the Second World War, and where it persisted, it increasingly functioned as a barrier to the qualitatively historically new, a barrier to revolution, in fact, rather than the framework for it that it understood itself to be, precisely because of the manner in which it "predelineated" it. The horizon of expectation that has emerged victorious is, of course, that of the renewed development and planetary universalization of capital accumulation as the basis of social development. "Long Live and Thrive Capitalism!" as artists Mona Vătămanu and Florin Tudor's banner declares. This inversion of the 1926 Russian revolutionary slogan "Long Live and Thrive Communism!" (which became a staple of Romanian state propaganda in a modified form, as "Long Live and Thrive Socialism!"), nicely reduces the two opposed political imperatives—Communism! and Capitalism!—to a common political-historical form. This has the effect of emphasizing, not only the raw ideological form of capitalism, but also the repetitive and monotonous *stasis* of its dynamic core as an economic ideology and a system for the reproduction of the social relations of

Mona Vătămanu and Florin Tudor, *Long Live and Thrive Capitalism!*, 2009, banner, variable dimensions, installation view, Frieze Art Fair, London, 2009, photo: Peter Osborne

commodity exchange. However, this repetitive sameness at the heart of capitalism should not be mistaken for the absence of a horizon: it posits a horizon of endless accumulation (ultimate indeterminateness as infinite progression), politically coded in economic terms as the progressive freedom of ever-greater consumption.

What *was* unexpected about the collapse of historical communism—certainly unexpected to the citizens of the former Eastern European socialist states—was the ferocity of the capitalist revolution that followed, which genuinely punctured the horizon of expectation of those involved in the transformation, who sought a new, "third way." But what of 9/11? It was certainly unexpected in a sense in which the collapse of historical communism was not, and not merely as a punctual event (and there were plenty of unexpected events in the course of the collapse of historical communism, in that sense of event), but as a symbolic harbinger of a new, religiously-coded geopolitical antagonism, and a return to "civilizational" discourses. In this respect, it both punctured the initial western horizon of expectation of the post-communist situation, and darkened it, in the sense of rendering it more "misty" and "obscure." As such, that is, by rendering "the form the world" *less* determinate, it heightened expectations of the unexpected. One might say that it instituted a certain possibilizing *anticipatoriness*; that it laid bare the political aspect of the historical process. At the level of the determination of that process, however, in its deeper structural respects, 9/11 was (as intended) merely emblematic of a particular, secondary antagonism. Within a horizon of expectation internal to the future—and the internal transformations—of capitalism, another, far less dramatic punctual event was of far greater significance: 8–15 November 2002, the Sixteenth Congress of the Communist Party of China, at which a series of decisions were ratified about private property

in land and means of production and the regulation of capital, of enormous determinate significance to the future of the world economic system.[16] That congress opened up a new horizon of expectation within capitalism, but the possibilities it contains (possibilities of the unexpected) are not horizonal, but *counter*-horizonal. We will not reclaim a future qualitatively different from the present by reclaiming the very idea of horizon, but rather by puncturing it. And at its best, contemporary art models experimental practices of negation that puncture horizons of expectation.

This text is a revised version of a keynote lecture delivered during the 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress, Istanbul, 4–6 November 2010.

16 Cf. Peter Osborne, "Interpreting the World: September 11, Cultural Criticism and the Intellectual Left," *Radical Philosophy*, no. 117 (January/February 2003), pp. 2–12.

A Conversation Between Alexei Penzin and Dmitry Vilensky
From the Perspective of Hope

The dialectic of victories and defeats

Alexei Penzin (AP): Hope, which we have decided to discuss with reference to the present political moment, would appear to be an important and attractive theme, but it simultaneously contains a number of traps. Hope has long been part of mass culture's standard set of sentimental banalities. It forms the basis for psychotherapeutic normalization techniques that aim to adapt individuals to the fragmented society of what has been called "late capitalism," a society replete with anxiety-inducing uncertainties, by persuading them of the need for "positive thinking" as a guarantee of personal and career success. Old and new populist politicians employ the rhetoric of promise and hope as a means of mobilizing the masses, exploiting their longing to belong to one or another (as a rule, national) identity.[1] But what is hope if not an abstract form that everyone can fill with their own content? Hope contains a transcendent, religious element primarily associated with the Judeo-Christian tradition. But it arises from our everyday secular experience: we hope for an important encounter, for an answer, for an inspiring collaboration, for the realization of our plans and expectations. We share our hopes with others, thus infecting them with our own enthusiasm. The question is how to make this general sense of hope something capable of transfiguring reality, rather than just a realm of passive, unconscious collective fantasies and utopias—or daydreams, as philosopher Ernst Bloch would have put it.

In contemporary societies, hope goes beyond religion: it has become a complex of affects associated with political struggle, although perhaps it continues to be informed by theology surreptitiously. In fact it is difficult to free oneself completely

1 Barack Obama's 2008 election campaign was based to a significant degree on a strategy whose main thrust is expressed in the title of his book *The Audacity of Hope*.

from the "theology" of hope, which always implicitly presumes an inscrutable, almighty "Other" (God, Master, savior, etc.) that must come to our rescue. But we can turn this attitude upside down by locating an activist impulse in orthodox theological thinking about hope, as philosopher Alain Badiou does in his book about Saint Paul. Badiou argues that Paul sees hope not in the promise of the Judgment Day, the promise of heaven or hell, but in the affirmation of persistence and faithfulness in the here and now, in the activist realization and universalization of truth despite everything, even the most desperate circumstances. Hope is not the hope for an "objective" victory, that is, for retribution or compensation in the future. On the contrary, it is "subjective" victory that produces hope, even if this victory is neither global nor final. This is definitely an important aspect that shapes the subjectivities of activists in modern anti-capitalist movements, for example.

The historical experience of emancipatory politics, however, is filled not only with victories but also with defeats. If we reject "victory" as a capitalist transaction, as compensation for expended effort, then can we rely on elusive subjective experience? If we reject all figures of the transcendent Other (including its theoretical equivalents such as the "ironclad logic of history" that should lead ineluctably to the realization of our emancipatory goals), can we rely only on ourselves? Doesn't this lock us—artists, intellectuals, and cultural and political activists—within ourselves by excluding the emergence of something new and unexpected, of radical subjectivities whose genesis might simply be *incomprehensible* to us? Even if our experience is a collective one, don't we always risk lapsing into purely sectarian enthusiasm? Should we limit our notion of the production of hope in politics to the heroic figure of "victory?" These are all quite tricky questions, particularly under current conditions, when many things that were once

clear have become opaque. I think that in our conversation we could focus on two issues: attempting to define hope while taking all these contexts into account, and trying to understand what specific processes and events give us hope.

Dmitry Vilensky (DV): I once wrote a short essay entitled *What Does It Mean to Lose?* As you'll recall, this was the title of an issue of our newspaper dealing with the experiences of perestroika.[2] For me, perestroika is a vivid manifestation of a process in which the subjective experience of victory via participation in a liberation struggle ends up being co-opted by the forces of reaction.[3] Hence what is in the foreground is the issue of one's readiness for particular historical transformations, as well as the need to renew the struggle on the basis of a cogent analysis of what has happened. We should always be vigilant towards the dialectic of victories and defeats demonstrated by any liberatory process or revolution. Nevertheless, "leftist" political consciousness has historically tended to be heroically dramatic, and this has been its strength. It is based on the analysis of cruel and often bloody defeats: we learn from the experience of loss. Even the seemingly most vivid chapters in this history—the Paris Commune, the October Revolution of 1917, the collapse of the USSR in 1991, and a multitude of other particular episodes of the struggle—are simultaneously defeats and betrayals. But if humanity is still capable of contemplating it, the experience of these defeats is more important than capital's meaningless victories. It is through these defeats that we can genuinely question ourselves and the society in which we live. Each defeat that we have

2 *Chto Delat?/What is to be done?*, "What Does it Mean to Lose? The Experience of Perestroika," no. 19 (September 2008), available online at: http://www.chtodelat.org/images/pdfs/19_perestroika.pdf.

3 Here we drastically part ways with Badiou, who has totally condemned this process as lacking in political imagination. In my view, this shows his own lack of knowledge of the situation.

comprehended contributes to the potential for a renewal of the struggle, a potential that works toward creating a new historical breakthrough. But right now we find ourselves at a point where the most sublimely tragic interpretation of history is called into question. To a great extent this predetermines the crisis of the leftist position in general after the collapse of party politics, which has rejected the possibility of a grand, universal narrative right at the moment when reactionary forces continue to cynically employ it by exploiting patriotism, the idea of the nation, militaristic zeal, etc.

AP: I agree; we need not only to take the figure of victory into account, but also to think hard about the phenomenon of defeat itself and the possibilities for reviving a mobilizing, tragic vision of history. But the crisis of the leftist position in the past decades doesn't only have to do with a shift in ideological or narrative strategies. The ontology of late capitalism itself changed. Its historical foes (alternative social formations, which is what the countries of "actually existing socialism" were, for all their faults) quit the field, and capitalist relations have even more aggressively seeped into all the pores of society, subjugating it to their own functions. What matters is the question of the *limits* of this penetration by capital and the resources for resisting it and developing activist "spaces of hope," to borrow social theorist David Harvey's expression. Of course people do not want to be only machines for maximizing profit, as neoliberalism's primitive anthropology would have it. Between this unwillingness and an active anti-capitalist stance, however, there are a huge number of obstacles—from liberal ideology, which fosters the illusion that private space, ethics, and "human values" are beyond capital's power, to direct disciplinary and punitive interventions on behalf of our "alternativeless" order.

I'm more interested in a different question in connection with all these transformations: how has the mechanism for producing mass militant subjectivity—a subjectivity that is optimistic, hopeful, triumphant, and simultaneously (as you correctly note) unafraid of defeat—been weakened or even partly destroyed? How is it changing now with the advent of new movements and experiences of resistance? As you know, I am partial to the approach elaborated by philosopher Michel Foucault in his final lectures at the Collège de France in which he analyzes the subjectivation techniques transmitted within various philosophical schools during antiquity. The subjectivation achieved via these practices involved self-possession, the establishment and formation of the self as a force set against externally imposed, institutionalized governance. Using this as our starting point, we can speak as well of contemporary subjectivity, which is bound up with the evolution of liberalism and biopolitics as doctrines and practices. This is a set of techniques for forming individuals and masses as objects of investigation and analysis, as well as the interiorization of control mechanisms such that power no longer has to resort to the mass application of harsh discipline and punitive measures. Departing from several uncompleted fragments in Foucault's work, we can also speak of the most important alternative model from our viewpoint—the model of revolutionary subjectivity, which is discussed in several passages in the lecture course *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*.[4] The entire ensemble for the production of

4 The figure of "conversion to revolution" arose in the nineteenth century, when the anti-capitalist movement, as yet scattered and unorganized, was beginning to take shape. It was then that antiquity's practices for forming the self as a kind of "counterforce" began to sprout up again on the new soil of emancipatory politics and the mass movement. Subsequently, the formation of activists was defined by the emergence of revolutionary parties. And now, when the old models of party organization are mired in crisis, we finally come to the question of subject-formation within the new anti-capitalist movements. See Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France 1981–1982*, ed. Frédéric Gros, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 208–209.

militant subjectivity (agitation, collective action and struggle, protest techniques, self-education, alternative modes of daily living) is a vital part of nineteenth- and twentieth-century history, something that we still have to study, comprehend, and make relevant again.[5] In fact we can speak of the process by which the old mechanism of political subjectivation broke down by employing the coordinates of our "post-communist" society. The discourse about the "religious" or "messianic" character of communism has long been a liberal banality and propagandistic cliché. But perhaps we can use this ambivalent play of analogies in our own discussion. If the October Revolution was an incarnation of the hopes of millions of impoverished people, then the "Judgment Day" of Stalinism that followed (beginning with the notorious show trials of the 1930s) did not lead to the establishment of heaven's reign on earth. The thesis of a kind of political atheism springs out of this experience: "There is no communism!" In post-Soviet society, political "faith and hope" gave way to apathy and political disenchantment, and not just with communism but with capitalism as well, which after a short period of consumerist temptation and fascination with global mass culture suddenly revealed itself as the selfsame merciless "hell" that Soviet propaganda had so fondly depicted. Of course, this doesn't affect the ruling elites, who enjoy their exorbitant profits.

DV: I beg to differ with you when it comes to the merciless "hell" of the current period. I detect a certain traditional rhetoric common to many leftists, a rhetoric that in my view is quite bogus. I think that if contemporary reality were really like this—

5 See Jacques Rancière's quite interesting analysis of emancipatory techniques in his book *The Nights of Labor. The Worker's Dream in Nineteenth-Century France* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989) in which he examines how French workers sacrificed sleep and non-working hours to make time for self-education, creativity, and political work.

if a critical mass of people had nothing to lose—then these people would organize themselves and demolish the existing order immediately. The problem is that capital has learned from centuries of class wars and national-liberation struggles, and so now it quite subtly regulates the disposition of the masses by always leaving them with the sense that any change might deprive them of what little they have now. We need to understand clearly that even workers in a wretched third-world sweatshop, who labor for miserly pay, are grateful to have those jobs because there is no other work available. We face a situation in which it is quite hard to radicalize people in the struggle for their rights. When we conscientiously analyze the situation, it always turns out that everyone has something to lose. But I agree with you that one of the main problems today is that people are losing the horizon for imagining a different life. The Bolsheviks, say, had a much easier time producing ideas capable of mobilizing the working class, who lived in inhumane conditions and were simultaneously open to a broad spectrum of messianic ideas about final justice, harmonious cooperative living, and egalitarian labor.

The symptomatology of hope

AP: I recall that during a bitter argument with certain disillusioned members of the post-Soviet art scene, you said something like, "Let's wait and see: history will put everything in its place!" As an artist, do you perceive this connection to the history writ large of aesthetic experiments and political struggle we touched on earlier in the form of hope? Doesn't it seem to you (I say this mostly in jest) that this postponed-until-the-future putting of everything in its place is somehow reminiscent of Judgment Day?

DV: I'll explain what I meant. It's probably the case that we—the last artists raised in the Soviet dissident school—are guilty of a

certain old-fashioned attachment to history. You find this in Ilya Kabakov's work, with his famous slogan "Not everyone will be admitted to the future," and his quite serious attitude to the history of art and thought as the most brilliant manifestation of the heights of the human spirit, something that many of us absorbed in childhood.

The seemingly endless stagnation of late socialism, when the viscosity of time left no chance for any sort of meaningful realization, forced us to think in terms of other temporal and historical categories. That is in part why our practices were always correlated not with the sad, gloomy "today" but were aimed at the future. And it was this future-directedness that produced such energy of struggle and rage—"We Shall Overcome." It is no wonder, by the way, that this song became the anthem of the 1989 Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia. Its lyrics, which were adapted from the refrain of a gospel song, are essentially a grammar for a subject-formation based on the cultivation of hope:

I do believe / deep in my heart / We shall be free / We are not afraid / We are not alone / The whole wide world around / We'll walk hand in hand / We shall overcome…

Perhaps this is why, in the early 1990s, when political economist and foreign policy analyst Francis Fukuyama's notorious hypothesis about the "end of history" began to be discussed widely, we were so stunned by it. It seemingly deprived us not simply of reference points, but of the very hope that meanings and truths would one day take their rightful place. For me, hope is primarily the feeling that many things are possible, that many things are under our control. Despite everything, we create the future today. Genuine hope arises from the clear sense that not everything is determined and there is always a

certain supply of freedom, of insubordination, that there are no such things as purely external circumstances. "Externality" does not come ready-made and immutable: it is the *space of struggle*, confrontation, and movement. Hence it is always the case that "all is not lost."

AP: This is quite important: to think of the situation not as static but emergent—that is, as something that is not closed, as something to be pried open. Many twentieth-century thinkers based their work on these premises. For example, in the 1970s Foucault conceived of the state of society as a shifting balance between the forces of power and resistance. Nothing is frozen; even the "stability" of the most reactionary order is just an ideological cover for millions of unseen clashes and conflicts. If we regard the term seriously, then hope is the subjective optics of a gaze shaped by this moment of emergence and dynamism in the present, not by the fantasies and pipe dreams of a desperate individual in search of consolation. This is a gaze founded on a view of society as a configuration of dynamic forces, not as a dead, petrified, and hopeless order that seems insurmountable. At *any* moment there exists a certain balance of power and the struggle against it, of constituent forces. The problem is that nowadays this struggle does not emerge onto the level of fundamental, "strong" schisms, contradictions, and subjects capable of radically changing society. Hence the importance of the capacity to distinguish hopeful symptoms: this makes it possible to plug into lines of struggle, to feel them out, and thus to work to strengthen them. If we look at society from the position of hope—that is, as a dynamic of forces, as becoming—then we are no longer hobbled by the melancholic, hopeless image of defeat.

DV: But I insist that defeat is not melancholy or hopeless! It is the desire to gather strength, learn lessons, and "give as good as one got." This is what produces the formative effect.

AP: Here I should clarify: I was talking about a banal *image*, the representation of defeat. You're suggesting that we rethink it as an active state, and I agree. Capitalist management aims to secure itself against threats by neutralizing previous techniques and subjects of resistance. So you are right that each time the desire arises to fight back, and to concentrate one's forces and act in a new way in order to accomplish this, one can find productive potential.

I would say that as a political optics, a point of view, hope is a *symptomatology*. That is, it is the subjective ability to see and distinguish signs, social symptoms that point to maturing lines of struggle. We can single out several types of such symptoms. For example, there are symptomatic events, which might include large-scale events such as revolutions. Philosopher Immanuel Kant's discussion of the French Revolution is well known: he regarded it as a "prognostic sign," referring to the history of progress and emancipation, which inspired enthusiasm and hope, moreover in subjects who were more likely to be in the position of observers (in other countries not affected by the revolutionary events). This same logic can be applied to the October Revolution, which at first provoked a rising of hopes for liberation throughout the world.

In our reactionary times, the logic of "progress" is far from obvious, although the revolutionary events of the past occupy an important place in our memory and thought. Therefore we should speak of symptoms smaller in scale. These are the symptomatic people who inspire hope, and if we speak of our own milieu, then we know many such people personally. Each particular activist "unit" is vital in our extremely reactionary post-Soviet conjuncture. It is not a question of the banal "role of the individual in history." These people or collectives, however small, bring something more than their own private identities.

These are "disinterested" subjectivities that emanate prognostic signs.[6] They refer us to the history writ large of the anti-capitalist struggle—its past, present, and future.

DV: Doesn't it seem to you that this continuity amongst leftist movements has been disrupted by the radical self-criticism occasioned by the experiences of "totalitarianism" in the twentieth century? This self-criticism leads to a rejection of hegemonic politics, which is suspected of being always on the verge of switching to a politics of domination and violence. Can we say, for example, that in the context of post-Soviet forms of struggle this continuity with history is being thought in a new way and without nostalgia?

AP: To answer this complicated question about continuity with history under present conditions, I would like to recall our recent discussions about the practice of "communal life seminars" (*obshchezhitiia*) as an example of this renewed continuity. These are the temporary experimental communities that members of the collective Chto Delat?/What is to be done? have recently been trying to create in order to combine the experiences of activism, theory, and political art (which, strictly speaking, is the task our group posed itself from the very beginning).[7] On the one hand, the communal seminars attempt to alleviate the abstractness of critical theory by rejecting formal academic

6 Badiou recently voiced the notion of the "disinterested" stance of the activist. This is not understood as a passive, contemplative mindset but as the absence of private, localized interest as the condition of radical subjectivation. Perhaps the place of hope as political affect can be imagined precisely here. Instead of private interest and a local, fixed identity defined by it, we need a transnational subjectivity guided not by local interests, but by hope. And this is not an abstract promise of a future without any guarantees of fulfillment, but a "real movement" in the present.

7 One such example was *Living Politically: A 48-Hour Communal Life Seminar*, which took place at the Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht in July 2010. In this as with all such communal seminars, the fundamental principle is that its participants constitute a temporary community for the duration of the event. By combining research, creative work, and daily living, they are transformed into a commune.

representation. On the other hand, they also attempt to inspire activists to eschew the anti-intellectualism common to many of them and to try and comprehend forms of political coordination in a new way. The figure of the artist is also important here: I would say that it is connected with what has been called the "art of political life," with sensitivity to the possibilities of living together.

We've only begun this experiment, of course, but it provokes some fairly interesting reflections. All three of these modes—activist, theoretical, and artistic—seem essential, whereas in the leftist tradition only the first two (theory and activist practice) have usually been taken into account. Using psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's terminology, we can relate activism to the register of the Real, and theory to the Symbolic register, while the artistic mode can be imagined as the register of the Imaginary. Each of the three modes links up differently with history, singling out different moments in it: activism has to do with the present; art (the Imaginary) with anticipation of the future; and theory with interpreting the past experience of struggle. This configuration also enables us to rethink hegemony as a politics in which knowledge, action, and imagination act in concert, and not simply as intellectual struggle, the war of position, and the forging of alliances.

Dritte Sache

DV: I would like to take off from your reflection that our reference points are people or collectives who surpass their own private identities. During Soviet times practically all individuals lived with consciousness that their life was not of great value compared to a larger narrative. This "grand narrative" could be communism, art, your professional or moral development, or defense of the Motherland from fascism. All these and other ideas and notions were unambiguously imagined as common

values whose significance surpassed the significance of a finite life inevitably doomed to death. Moreover, it goes without saying that all this was articulated from a thoroughly atheistic stance. It is worth recalling poet and playwright Bertolt Brecht's quite striking and simple description, in his book *Me-Ti*, of the existence of two people who love each other. This existence only acquires meaning and integrity when a third thing—*dritte Sache*—emerges between the two people. This third thing can only be some kind of cooperative action such as participation in a revolutionary struggle, the striving towards truth via the practices of knowledge and art, or something else that grows out of this relationship but renders it meaningful and overcomes its limitations. It is curious that Brecht did not include the raising of children in this list. Today, people are prepared to struggle for their hope that their children will be better off than they are. For this they are willing to sacrifice their own prosperity and career prospects so that their children have a chance to surpass their parents and have a better life. This cannot be reduced to competitiveness or the struggle for survival connected to "bare life." Here we can find a minimal guarantee of human dignity and even resistance. I think that this unconditional love and care is an important common cause, there is also a fundamental human quality in this projection of people within their own children, and we will hardly be able to understand anything about the contemporary world without taking this quality into account. Strictly speaking, all our speculations about education begin here, with the conditions in which our children are raised, with what we invest in that undertaking.

AP: I think that the *dritte Sache* is quite an important anthropological and political principle. It is definitely materialist: Brecht speaks not of abstract "ideas" that unite people, but of practices, causes, and things. This is especially important now, in

an age that is reactionary in many ways, because it enables us to see—as in your example about children—that in the behavior of people seemingly crushed by the unshakeable hegemony of contemporary capitalism we can detect the desire for a different, more dignified life.

DV: Within what is conventionally called "western civilization" there is, of course, the recognition of serious values outside the limited framework of individual existence. Once again, Badiou provides us with a supreme example of the critique of this kind of consciousness: *"Love teaches in fact that the individual as such is something vacuous and insignificant."*[8] But such opinions are rare exceptions. In the contemporary world, ideas like these have begun to be reassessed as a kind of archaic "rudiment," as a factor that suppresses the radiant ideas of personal freedom and pleasure.

And here we arrive at a definite political dead end. Yes, of course one can easily argue that "supreme values" are what should be overcome. In the form of the hegemonic western construction of subjectivity, the "ironclad logic of history" has already succeeded in deconstructing these values. But then what remains? If we disregard the details, what remains is exactly that very same end of history, which presumes that our society has found its supreme, final meaning in the model of hedonistic bourgeois self-consciousness. If you think about it, this conception of the subject as something consumed by its own personal life and pleasure is, strictly speaking, the portrait of the bourgeois egotistical subject that all radical thinkers from Karl Marx to our own time have criticized so furiously. From my point of view, it is exactly this conception that is *hopeless*. And

8 Alain Badiou, *The Meaning of Sarkozy*, trans. David Fernbach (London: Verso, 2008), p. 49.

today, to paraphrase playwright Anton Chekhov, we should engage not in squeezing out the slave within us drop by drop, but rather in destroying this very same petit-bourgeois subject within ourselves. This isn't a simple process insofar as we have still not entirely overcome the slave within ourselves. To do this, we need to undertake a radical revaluation of the entire concept of desire, to see that real desires arise where there is a place for "postponing" or delaying their fulfillment. I would say that capitalism is the destruction of all forms of sublimation. When it is consistently developed, it leads to a condition in which every desire has to be realized instantly, posthaste. Hence any form of non-realization generates near-childish hysteria. In its ideal form, capitalism is this monster of instant gratification. In this sense, the idea of hope might be interpreted as the constant demand for what cannot be realized right now. This means we should always demand more than we have. And even if we succeed at something, we should "think bigger" all the same.

AP: I welcome your ambitious theoretical passion! But here we're getting involved in the quite extensive and complicated philosophical debate about desire that arose in twentieth-century thought. I'm not certain that we can dot all the i's within the confines of this dialogue… But I like your intuition that desire has to be re-examined from the perspective of a new, non-repressive asceticism. On the one hand, desire is associated with prohibition and lack, which are conditions of desire. The paradox is that asceticism, usually understood as a system of prohibitions and rules, is ordinarily linked to repressive bourgeois culture. Hence one of the demands of 1968 was liberation from those constraints. As sociologists Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello proved in their well-known book *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, this critique of prohibitions, of critical mindedness itself, was successfully integrated into contemporary

hedonistic, innovative capitalism. Appeals to liberate desire were depoliticized and successfully realized instead on the economic level, having become part of the post-Fordist productive mechanism itself.

DV: This is an important observation: if we see everywhere the triumph of false desires which have no need for any prohibition, then probably our only hope is non-repressive asceticism! I say this not without a certain amount of bitter irony, as you understand.

AP: Today, it really is vital to rethink asceticism outside the hedonistic logic of the "liberation of desire" from prohibitions and as a means of politically transforming subjectivity.[9] For the activist subjectivity, hope is a way of controlling forces and energies. They are directed not toward the distant, abstract future, but toward the present, which is seen as implicated in history and the dynamic composition of society as a whole.

If we speak on a "fundamental" level, then the phenomenon of hope has to do with the human subject's anthropological structure itself, something about which many twentieth-century philosophers had a lot to say. Unlike animals, humans are not "programmed" in terms of strict rules and codes that govern their reactions to external, environmental stimuli. Humans are as it were dislodged from the structure of the world: they have no "place" of their own, a place that would belong to them according to the "natural" biological order. Hence they are not

9 In our day, many radical leftists appeal, rather, to "desubjectivation": "Become nobody, do nothing" (Tiqqun). We believe that despite its apparent tactical effectiveness in the contemporary society of the spectacle, this is a false path strategically. Contemporary capitalism's entire ideological apparatus is constructed on desubjectivation: by neutralizing subjectivity, capitalism generates the appearance that its own system is "objective." We need, rather, to activate new mechanisms of subjectivation.

attached to their own "niche"—that is, they have no determinate, fixed habitat. Their habitat is the entire world, and their relationship to it is not set by precise programs; it is always bound up with uncertainty, with the play of possibilities. This reminds me of the description of the proletarian in Marx and the subsequent tradition, which, of course, is produced in a political rather than ontological context. The proletarian is deprived of everything, but the whole world lies open to him or her. That is, the human subject is a kind of "proletarian" of the world. It is clear that this is a risky hypothesis. Of course, on another level, the sociological, a specific individual or class of people might occupy a dominant, exploitative position. People have something to lose. The individual might have property, and it might exterminate those same animals, which have their own natural, territorial belonging, their own "property." Even more, the individual is capable of having a more or less fixed "habitat" (established networks, circles of friends). But, at the possible risk of coining a paradox, I hold that it is precisely the *ontological proletarianization* of humans that enables us to speak with hope of history writ large as the movement towards a more just order. And hope (whose instantiations are the possibilities of one sort or another that people see in a situation) is the subjective form of this human condition. (Its negative form is fear or anxiety.)

Moreover, the anthropological structure I've outlined comes to the forefront precisely in the contemporary age. Theorist Paolo Virno thus argues it is this "human nature" itself that is the "raw material" for contemporary capitalism. Anthropological "invariants"—first and foremost, the human subject's potentiality and openness to the world—become the sociological traits of the post-Fordist workforce, expressed as permanent precarity, flexibility, and the demand for the capacity to function in unpredictable situations. Previous means for alleviating the

agonizing indeterminacy and instability of human behavior (via the ritual mechanisms and institutions of traditional society) are on the wane. Contemporary capitalism does not "alienate" human nature, but reveals it at the very heart of contemporary production, at the same time exposing it to the apparatus of exploitation and control.

A paradoxical hope

DV: In touching upon precarity, you've singled out a supremely vital trait of human beings—their ontological proletarianization. This is because precarization means precisely a form of borderline, unstable existence where nothing is guaranteed to the individual—it turns out that all of us have been ejected from settled social, class, gender, and national frameworks. Yet we ought to regard this condition primarily as a challenge, not as a threat against which we should all close ranks with the demand to bring everything back (that is, the guarantees of the social welfare state, which are based on a dubious compromise between the classes). Even if we confine ourselves to the pragmatic logic of the development of productive forces, it seems more important to me to demand decent pay for temporary contracts instead of trying to revive long-term or lifetime contracts for the "aristocracy" of immaterial labor.

That is to say that I'm trying to understand why flexibility and the demand for the capacity to function in unpredictable situations provokes such a panic not only amongst "simple people," but also amongst creative workers. As I see things, they should realize that precarity is a chance, that it is precisely the precondition of hope. We shouldn't demand "stability," but rather more openness to the new, the radicalization of the struggle to reappropriate the commons produced by the "general intellect." We remember perfectly well that hope for salvation appears where there is danger.

AP: I agree that contemporary capitalism spotlights our ontological proletarianization while also enabling critics of capitalism to speak of the hope of overcoming it. Of course this overcoming doesn't mean a return to some absolutely reliable, guaranteed order of nature itself. It is a matter of liberating the colossal innovative and creative energy that has its origins in the "eccentricity" of human beings, its dislodgement from the natural order. We need to lead it out from its subjugation to the accumulation and expansion of capital and direct it towards the needs of everyone, not just those of the ruling class. That is, we really do have to stop being afraid of uncertainty, which after all is the source of the capacities that make us human! However, this fear can disappear once and for all only in a non-capitalist society. Sociologically speaking, in our time the all-embracing "creative industries" constantly exploit the hopes associated with unpredictability, invention, innovation, and risk. Leftist politics really must also activate these hopes, not to invest them in personal careers, but in that *dritte Sache* of which you spoke.

DV: I'm appealing here, rather, to the positive, constituent element that in my view exists in precarization. I have in mind those pre-conditions for the commons in the form in which they are now being produced. But I'm afraid that we risk lapsing into an apology for the contemporary model of capitalism by linking it directly to hopes for renewal. Like many people, I've always been bothered by Marx's argument about the inevitability of industrial capitalist development on the road to the "bright future," which is bound up with the emergence of the industrial working class. Of course Marx condemns the incredibly cruel ways in which peasants and artisans were herded into the factories (so-called primitive accumulation). But from his theory it also follows that this was an inevitable stage of development. The repressive collectivization of the peasantry

in the USSR (a class that in many ways secured victory for the revolution in Russia) also fit into this logic of inevitability. And of course in Marx (as in Lenin) there was not even a hint of sentimentality towards the old way of life.

Can we project a similar position onto the current period? As I've already said, we have to take a paradoxical stance by, on the one hand, demanding that all working people be protected, while at the same time insisting on the historical necessity of being open to emerging innovations, instabilities, and new risks. It is right here that the main front of the struggle is located. It seems to me that a topic raised by theorists Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt in their latest book *Commonwealth*, when they speak of the forces of "altermodernity," wholly meshes with the logic of this paradox. It is a matter of striving to give up hope that a progressivist development of the means of production will inevitably lead to new forms of class conflict. I think that we need to reject such thinking, and the concept of altermodernity precisely shows the possibilities of thinking along these lines.

AP: That's quite an ambivalent claim… and I am not sure how to use Negri and Hardt's terminological experiments with altermodernity appropriately. From their text on these matters one can hardly extract more than appeals to quote "new values, new knowledges, and new practices" (understood as different both from capitalist modernity and conservative resistance to it), or a new "*dispositif* for the production of subjectivity," a notion that we already talked about in our context.[10] Yes, we all would agree on that! But how can we make a "real movement" from these values and dispositifs,

10 See the chapter "Modernity (and the Landscapes of Altermodernity)" in Antonio Hardt and Michael Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009).

which "abolishes the present state of things?" Could we imagine these hopes and values affirmed not in a purely discursive context or in some presupposed ironclad historical "logic," but in subjectively articulated struggles and resistances—in short, in a multitude of conflictual relations of *forces* of labor and capital?

Thinking through these complex questions, I recently revisited an old text by theorist Ernest Mandel called *Anticipation and Hope as Categories of Historical Materialism*, devoted to the memory of Bloch.[11] Written at the end of 1970s by an orthodox Marxist theoretician, it might appear archaic or trapped in the same developmetalist logic we discussed above. But Mandel clearly argues against any historical-fatalist interpretations of Marx's writing: "Capitalism does not lead to the inevitable victory of socialism, only to the dilemma of a socialist victory or a regression to barbarism." Indeed, Mandel discusses hope not as something teleological but as "survival instinct," as an "unconscious correlate of the compulsion to produce and reproduce material life to which humans are subjected." I think this materialist positioning of hope in the context not of sublime "values" but the basic productive needs of "survival" understood broadly in the present historical conjuncture is very close to the focus of our talk now. Again, this understanding does not presuppose, as it might seem, a reactive, weak position of precarious "victims"—and here I fully agree with you—but makes hope an active, vibrant part of our struggles, open to the new and unprecedented. We are all survivors in contemporary neoliberal "disaster capitalism" and hope is to be our "basic instinct" in resistance to contemporary barbarism.

11 Ernest Mandel, "Anticipation and Hope as Categories of Historical Materialism," in *Historical Materialism*, vol. 10, no. 4 (December 2002), pp. 245–259.

Simon Sheikh

Vectors of the Possible: Art Between Spaces of Experience and Horizons of Expectation

> The horizon is that line behind which a new space of experience will open, but which cannot yet be seen. The legibility of the future, despite possible prognosis confronts an absolute limit, for it cannot be experienced.
> – Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past*

> Every age adopts an image of itself – a certain horizon, however blurred and imprecise, which somehow unifies its whole experience.
> – Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*

It would seem self-evident to say that art is connected to the imaginary. But what does it mean to say that art imagines or is imaginative? Does artistic imagination have anything to do with *political* imaginaries—that is, ideas of the world and society, its past and present, but also its possible futures? Are there specific—immanent—features that create this connection, or rather do certain points of connection exist in terms of figures (understood as figures of speech as well as figuration within image production) and institutions (as speech acts as well as spatial formations in a given society)? Is the figure of the horizon precisely such a connection? Could the horizon, in this sense, be common to political imaginaries: from Lenin's pointing to the horizon to John F. Kennedy's metaphor of a new frontier; as well as artistic imagination: from classical landscape painting to postmodern installations and *Gesamtkunstwerke*?

In order to untangle these questions, we need first to understand what we mean by the imaginary. To delimit the imaginary to a specific usage, we may look to the work of Greek philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis. In his thinking, Castoriadis focused on human societies as symbolic political and social constructions, held together by specific social-historical imaginaries

and institutions. Societies are not created through natural rationalism or historical progressive determinism but *instituted* through creation, through imagination(s). Society and its institutional forms and norms are thus as much fictional as they are functional; society is an *imaginary* institution:

> That which holds society together is, of course, its institution, the whole complex of its particular institutions, what I call 'the institution of a society as a whole' – the word 'institution' being taken here in the broadest and most radical sense: norms, values, language, tools, procedures and methods of dealing with things and doing things, and, of course, the individual itself both in general and in the particular type and form (and their differentiations: e.g. man/woman) given to it by the society considered.[1]

These institutions and ways of instituting (meaning, subjectivity, legality, political and social relations, and so on) appear as a more or less coherent whole, as a unity, but can only do so through praxis and belief. This means, of course, that these social imaginaries can also be redefined through other practices or even collapse when no longer viewed as adequate, just, or true. Social change occurs through discontinuity rather than continuity, either in the form of radical innovation and creativity (such as Newtonian physics) or in the shape of symbolic and political revolutions—France in 1789, surely, and perhaps Eastern Europe in 1989—that can never be predicted or understood in terms of determinate causes and effects or seen as an inevitable historical sequence of events. Change emerges, then, through praxis and will, but without predeterminations. It reveals itself in the creation of other ways of instituting, in establishing another horizon. This work, whether artistic or political or both simultaneously, requires a radical break with the past in terms of language and symbolization and thus of ways of doing things; the task is not just saying the same things with new words, but rather the creation of a new language.

Although Castoriadis's conception of the imaginary society has ontological claims, in the sense that there can be no society that does not imagine itself, that is not instituted, this is by no means a tautological proposition. Castoriadis focused on the idea of an autonomous society, brought forward through radical imagination, in his political and revolutionary thinking. He defined autonomous societies as being in contrast to heteronymous ones: while all societies make their own imaginaries—institutions, laws, traditions, beliefs, behaviors, and so on—autonomous societies are those in which their members are aware of this fact and explicitly *self-institute.* In contrast, members of heteronymous societies attribute their imaginary order to something outside, to some extra-social authority, such as God, tradition, progress, historical necessity, and so on. Thus couldn't we argue that in today's world, the marriage of liberal democracy and free market capitalism is instituted as a fundamental and historically inevitable category? Does it not function as precisely this kind of society-defining authority, as we are constantly assured of the almost god-like immanence of the market and its "natural laws," despite liberalism's claim for rationality? How did this become our horizon? When did this narrative become dominant? Surely, as wholly implemented as it seems in the political and bureaucratic structures of our everyday lives, our spaces of experience, this horizon is of course also heavily contested, indeed detested, whether from anti-globalization, fundamentalist Islam, or other movements imagining another world beyond the current hegemonic frame.

1 Cornelius Castoriadis, *World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imagination* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 6.

These questions have to do with the imagination of possible futures stemming from a specific point in our recent past, namely the year 1989. The events of that year, the so-called end of real existing communism, have often been articulated as a triumph of the West, which led to the institution of an endless equilibrium of liberal democracy and global capital growth. Indeed, this claim was even formulated by political economist Francis Fukuyama and others as the "end of history," which of course also implies the impossibility of developing any new, or alternative, horizon. And yet history did not end—by contrast new conflicts and antagonisms arose immediately after 1989, both identitarian and economic. But rather than looking at a chain of events as empirical data to dispute the end of history claim, let us examine it as the curious ontological proposition it is, namely that our horizon, understood as our surroundings and sense of direction, is, actually, *horizonless*.

In this sense, the object that is the horizon is only present through its absence, its disappearance. It would seem to only exist in its negative form, despite claims for this situation's positive contents as a liberal-democratic endgame. In order to understand this object that is not one, we need, however, to leave the aesthetic and political usages of the figure aside for a moment, and look at the notion of the horizon within the philosophy of phenomenology. Philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty writes about what he calls the *object-horizon*, that which guarantees the identity of objects throughout exploration, and which places the gaze in relation to things in space. And to the spatial dimension, he crucially adds the temporal:

> Each moment of time calls all the others to witness; it shows by its advent 'how things were meant to turn out' and 'how it will all finish'; each present permanently underpins a point of time which calls for recognition from all the others, so that the object is seen at all times as it is seen from all directions and by the same means, namely the structure imposed by a horizon.[2]

Simply put, we can say that without this double horizon of "retention" and "protention" we are not able to see, to project, or to imagine. The idea of an end of history, then, can no longer be viewed as simply a naive, over-optimistic representation by the right, but something much more sinister, a falsification of our view of the world. It is a deliberate act of *depresentation*, the rhetorical removing of certain ideas from the spectrum of the not only the representable, but also the thinkable and unthinkable, once and for all exorcising the specter that is communism from the world, and with it all attempts at equality.

And this is where neoliberalism and neoconservatism converge, in a new, active understanding of conservatism not as the slowing down of inevitable progress, but rather turning back, peeling back the rights and benefits won by left social movements and political organizations throughout the twentieth century. To illustrate how the end of history doctrine acts as depresentation, just think about political rhetorics—from former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's infamous claim that there is no such thing as society, to former Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen's speech declaring that the end of the twentieth century had brought with it the end of a number of struggles or wars, such as the Cold War, the class war, and the war between the sexes. Not unlike Merleau-Ponty, the politicians are talking about a specific moment in history that consequentially limits the imaginaries of this situation, and limits the horizon of possibilities.

Indeed, as it has been argued by political theorist Nancy Fraser, among others, what can be termed the post-socialist

2 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenolgy of Perception* (London: Routledge, 1962), p. 69.

condition is characterized by the lack of any overarching project of social justice and redistribution: in other words, the lack of any discernable horizon.[3] But if the horizon, as we shall see, can be said to always stand in relation to the concept of experience, this lack would then also mean the canceling out of certain experiences, a depresentation of possible pasts as futures, which was, of course, exactly what was attempted. The so-called post-communist, or, in as it is known some quarters, post-political, must be viewed as *post-horizonal*, and therefore as a logical impossibility, even falsification of reality.

Additionally, the horizon is not only spatial, as we saw, but also temporal, and as such not only connects to possible future scenarios and ways of living and thinking, but also to real and imagined pasts in the form of residues and traditions, as well as possibilities lost and found. The horizon functions as a vector for probability, prognosis, and expectations. Writing at the same time as Fukuyama, in a book tellingly entitled *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, philosopher and theorist Ernesto Laclau described the horizon as a societal self-image that unifies experience, and as such a definition that disputes the ontological proposition of an end of history. But here the horizon is also a floating signifier, with different unifying images being produced in different historical periods, and, I suppose, geographical locations, in order to hold them together and give them direction: natural order for the Renaissance, reason for the Enlightenment, science of positivism, and, we could add, progress for modernity. However, the postmodern condition has placed such categories under critical scrutiny, even deconstruction, and all such images are seen as limited rather than limitless.

3 Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus – Critical reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition* (London: Routledge, 1997).

We thus arrive at the horizon as a limit concept, and this is to be understood in two ways. First, the very idea of a limitless horizon of progress, growth, and so on has been deeply questioned, or, as Laclau writes: "After decades, even centuries, of announcing the arrival of 'the new', it is as if we have reached a point of exhaustion, and mistrust the outcome of all experimentation."[4] The new is in this way a receding horizon, and the future no longer an infinite number of limitless advancements. Secondly, the very image of the horizon as a line necessarily presupposes a limit, something that quite literally can never be reached—as we move closer to the horizon, it also shifts, and moves correspondingly further away. So as an image, a unifying signifier, the horizon has impossibility as well as possibility built into it. It is something that we can decide to move towards, and that can thus give us direction, but which can never be surpassed: it is always out there. It may occur blurry at times, and our view can be blocked, but the horizon remains as that which rounds and grounds experience. There cannot be a society, an organization of the social and political, without the positing of a horizon. This is what we can call *the general condition of horizonality*. The term "horizonal" is to be understood here in the philosophical sense deriving from phenomenology, as opposed to the everyday usage of the adjective "horizontal." The horizontal is, strictly speaking, a geometric term, and we therefore tend to associate horizontality as something opposite from the horizon and the horizonal, namely with a lack of overview, of being on a singular plane. Perhaps this is indeed the situation we find ourselves in today—that we are horizontally situated, and cannot see the horizon?

4 Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (London: Verso, 1990), p. 3.

Simultaneously, horizontality rather than the horizon has long been one of the prime metaphors, if not imaginaries, of post-modern, contemporary art, both as a way of describing its basic features, as well as its politico-aesthetical aspirations. Just think about the many quotations of Deleuzian theory in art criticism and curating, such as the image of the rhizome, or the myriad discussions on relationality, as well as the ideas of art producing equal communities, where there are no claims for hierarchy, verticality, or transcendence, but plenty for presence, being, and openness—all of which are mainly horizontal metaphors. However, if the horizon is to be understood as a floating signifier that unifies experience, that creates a world-view, we can see how its placement is central to both art and politics, as an image of possible futures, goals, and aims. Positing the horizon as an image, not just a metaphor, implies aesthetics—not only the aesthetics of politics and political movements, but also the politics of aesthetics. Perhaps we can even argue for the figure of the horizon as the way in which art and politics could be connected?

An exhibition of art always sets up a horizon, a proposal of what can be imagined, and what cannot, and art therefore not only partakes in certain imaginaries, but it is also the producer of such imaginaries, and therefore potentially of other ways of imagining and imaging the world, as well as other possible worlds. Art has the capacity to thematize the very situating of the horizon, with its contingencies, histories, institutions, and struggles, as well as limits. Imaginaries can become visible precisely through how the horizon is staged—positioned, blurred, circumvented, and (re)constructed within artistic practices and, especially, current ways of exhibition-making. I am focusing on the idea of exhibition-making rather than singular works for a particular reason, since exhibitions are always an assemblage of objects and positions, placed in a spatial and

discursive relation to each other and its spectators, providing a horizontal line, if you will, that makes viewing possible and actual, as well as delimiting it, conditioning it. And as with the object-horizon, this staging is not only spatial, but also temporal: in terms of the time it takes to move through an exhibition, to see the various works (whether time-based or not); and more generally in terms of the free time available to the spectator and so on; as well as in terms of art-historical time, as each exhibition is placed on a timeline of other exhibitions, both in the given site and beyond it. Finally, the relation between horizontality and space/time divisions or continuums can be found in the imaging of art itself, whereas there in the classical age of art, always was a continuum of time and space within horizontality, nearness and distance indicating a movement in time, such as in landscape painting, modernist painting condensed time and fused it with space (just think of Cubism). Contemporary art has to some extent re-introduced time, not just in time-based works like video, but also through the spatialization of the subject that is installation practices, though with discontinuity rather than continuity. Seen in this light, the installation is not only an experiment in horizontality, but perhaps also a vehicle for horizonality, and the exhibition may function as a model for a future society.

In more ideological terms, we can say that where the horizon was posited as an image of the future, even a brighter future, in the Enlightenment and within the modernist project (and thus to the idea of movement and progress, long key terms within both modernist political thought and artistic practice), it is in the postmodern and post-communist, if you will, present day mostly seen as a limit—that which cannot be surpassed, that which cannot yet be experienced, but only imagined. For both aesthetics and politics, then, it becomes a matter of what horizon can be imagined as well as the ways in which to institute it:

how a horizon must be placed in order to be effectual, as nearby or faraway, unattainable? This all presupposes that the horizon is an absolute limit that cannot be surpassed, as such understood as an image in phenomenology translated into political practice, which is not historically true: political projects always project, naturally, but they also institute; that is they not only imagine how things could be, but also transform these imaginaries into actual social relations through institutions. As we know from history it is perfectly possible for a political project to reach, if not its conclusion, then some form of ending, closure, finishing. Otherwise we could not talk about any post-communist or post-political condition, regardless of how debatable such terms might be. In any case empires always end, and political movements dissolve as much when their goals are reached, and not only, if ever, when they are suppressed or defeated. What then is the relation between expectation and experience within the regime of horizontality?

Writing specifically in relation to historical time, conceptual historian Reinhart Koselleck has employed the terms "space of experience" and "horizon of expectation." As formal and meta-historical categories, they stand in an inverse relationship to each other. What one expects, both personally and politically, has to do with what one has experienced, and experience is always conditioned by what one expected. These are not mirror images, however, since the one can never be fully deduced from the other. The experience of an event, for example, be it a political event or a visit to an exhibition, is likely into change over time, while the event itself remains the same, and, conversely, with different experiences expectations and prognoses about the future are likely to change.

This has ramifications for our understanding of the horizon as a limit, both aesthetically and politically, and in their intersection. The horizon is an absolute limit, since what is on the other side cannot be experienced presently, only hypothetically and in the future, when it is no longer a horizon, but a history. The horizon is, in this view, not just that which cannot be overcome or surpassed, but also something that shifts in relation to experience. That has bearing on its position within both political imagining and artistic imagination: if a specific horizon of expectation, that is a society to come, is posited by a political project, it has to be related to the concrete, located space of experience and must be perceived as visible, not just in terms of vicinity, but in terms of imagination. It must suggest that that other world is possible from this real world. Similarly with the proposition made by an exhibition, a certain claim for art and society and their interrelation must have meaning within experience, even when positing something as phantasmagoric. At the same time, should a certain horizon be surpassed in terms of history, such as the so-called end of history, this will inevitably create a new space of experience. Indeed, this can be said to be one of the problems of historical communism, as for every utopian fulfillment: once the horizon has been reached, political goals achieved, such as emancipation, equality, etc., what will be the horizon of the new space of experience? In other words, what will be the horizon on the other side of this horizon? For the field of cultural production, and more narrowly the practice that is exhibition-making, this has several consequences. First of all, that we acknowledge an exhibition, however speculative, as not only positing a horizon, but always doing so in relation to a space of experience, both past and present. So, the space of experience is not only the exhibition itself and the concrete institution, but also past experiences with exhibitions in this space as well as in others, and, in addition, experiences with other institutional spaces that are not those of an art institution,

and finally experiences outside of this context altogether. Perhaps it is the lack of such considerations that provides some of the difficulties many of us have with exhibitions being political, not just about the political? Not to get caught up in a simplifying argument of institutional critique, but it goes without saying that a single exhibition or artistic gesture cannot easily or instantly undo institutions' ways of instituting subjectivity, without simultaneously transforming the institution itself.

But can aesthetic experience, like political events, create a rupture? Can it not only posit or represent a certain horizontal line, but also cross this line in some way? Can an exhibition be a passage to a new space of experience, where a new horizon becomes visible? Here we must return to the idea mentioned at the outset, that of *radical imagination*, which is where art has a crucial role to play in providing vectors of the possible, posing questions of possibility and vicinity, as well as making invisible limits visible within the ontology of the horizon. Art works and exhibitions can suggest and assess how a horizon must be placed in relation to both experience and expectation in order to be effectual: how far and how close. And like a political project, an aesthetic project can be a kind of praxis, and can go beyond an assessment of this world and how we must critique it, but also in fact posit other worlds as possible. As we know, in the current economy of experience, art is expected to deliver the unexpected, but as Castoriadis suggested, change does *not* occur through expectation and prognosis, but only in unforeseeable breaks with the present order. In other words, exhibitions must attempt to set up horizons, and not only in relation to existing horizons of the possible and impossible. Unlike political projects, artistic production does not necessarily follow a logic of cause and effect, of grounding the social, but rather one of speculation, interjecting a crucial conceptual *if*: "If I do this, then what," as artist Lee Lozano wrote

in one of her notebooks. As mentioned above, this suggests that the exhibition is (can be) a model for a society, not just something modeling itself on a (given) society.

A recent exhibition project in Brazil, curated by a group of young artists, bore the title *In the Shadow of the Future*, indicating that the future, as projected, casts shadows over our present. This is particularly pertinent in Brazil, a country that boasts a huge population under twenty-five and sees itself as a future global player. In the context of the project, the artist/curators asked what being the objects of projection and future hopes could mean, and placed this in relation to history, specifically to the history of art in Brazil. In this way they pointed to the fact that while artists of the modern period attempted to create a matrix for art and modernization in their works, there is no comparable artistic movement produced by artists today, only individual gestures undertaken mostly for career advancement. Does this rather defeatist position indicate a lack of imagination, even among those artists that literally embody the future? If this is so, we must turn the question upon ourselves, especially those of us from the West, who attempt to be critical of the project of the West and critical of the projection of the West as our *past-as-future*, to invoke philosopher Walter Benjamin's famous concept. Benjamin, a thinker who only partially wrote about horizons, wrote the following lines in his *The Arcades Project*: "The present, however, already stands to the recent past as the awakening stands to the dream. … Every epoch, in fact, not only dreams the one to follow but, in this dreaming, precipitates its awakening."[5]

5 Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknapp Harvard, 1999), p. 898.

Now, Benjamin's perhaps most sympathetic contemporary reader, critical theorist Susan Buck-Morss, has expanded on this notion in her seminal book on the two modernities and the post-communist condition after 1989, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*, where she wrote, in what could be our response to the young Brazilians today: "Benjamin insisted, 'We must wake up from the world of our parents.' But what can be demanded of a new generation, if its parents never dream at all?"[6]

This text, in the expanded and revised version appearing here, stems from a keynote lecture delivered at the 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress, Istanbul, 4–6 November 2010.

6 Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000), p. 209.

Hito Steyerl

In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment

A horizon is a device to suggest stability in an unstable situation. It projects a stable ground from which an observer looks out horizontally to a point in the far distance. The horizon is where sky and earth divide. A decisive difference is introduced in the field of vision, which includes and excludes certain elements from the frame. But as many contemporary philosophers have stated, groundlessness is a prevailing condition of the present. We cannot assume any stable ground on which to base metaphysical claims or political myths of foundation. At best, we are faced with temporary and contingent partial attempts at grounding.[1] But if there is no fixed ground for our social lives and philosophical aspirations, the consequence must be permanent or at least intermittent free fall for subjects and objects alike. But how can it be that we don't notice?

At present, a paradigm of horizontality in visual culture is increasingly supplemented by a paradigm of visual verticality: by aerial surveillance images, Google Earth views, drone perspectives, and 3-D nosedives into virtual abysses. An exploration of the politics of this abundant verticality thus seems to be vital in order to understand the role of the horizon today. That is because the consequences for the representation of horizon in any representation from above are clear: it all but disappears. It is pushed off frame. In a vertical perspective, there is no horizon. Instead, a ground in 2D fills the frame, and an elevated point of view implies that you are floating above it. The horizon—as a line introducing a constitutive difference into the field of vision—vanishes. But this also paradoxically means that it could be

1 Examples of so-called anti- and post-foundational philosophy are given in the preface of Oliver Marchart's introductory volume *Post-foundational Political Thought: Political Difference in Nancy, Lefort, Badiou and Laclau* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), pp. 1–10. Briefly speaking, such thought (as proffered by the philosophers under discussion) rejects the idea of a given and stable metaphysical ground and revolves around Heideggerian metaphors of abyss and ground, as well as the absence of ground. Especially Ernesto Laclau describes the experience of contingency and groundlessness as a possible experience of freedom.

anywhere, because as you are floating across the ground it might simply drift along without any anchoring point. But who says you will be floating in the first place? Because there is also another possibility of seeing something from above: in falling, not in floating. And in falling the horizon does not disappear but on the contrary, it multiplies.

Imagine you are falling. The horizon will start to swirl around you. It will become unmoored, start dancing, and break apart. In the state of free fall, the horizon quivers in a maze of collapsing lines. You may lose any feeling of above and below, of before and after, of yourself and your boundaries. Pilots have even reported that situations of free fall sometimes trigger feelings of inversion of self and spacecraft. While falling, people may feel themselves as things, while things may as well feel themselves as people. Perspective is twisted, and multiplied. New types of visuality arise. Free fall is a very interesting phenomenon. Paradoxically, while you are falling, you'll probably feel as if you were floating. It may actually feel like perfect stasis. As if history and time had ended and you couldn't even remember that time ever moved on. In part, this disorientation is due to the loss of a stable horizon. And with the loss of horizon also comes the departure of a stable paradigm of orientation, which has dominated concepts of subject and object, of time and space, throughout modernity.

A brief history of the horizon

But let's first take a step back and consider the traditional role of the horizon in creating a sense of orientation. Our conventional sense of orientation, and with it large parts of modern concepts of time and space, are based on a stable line: the line of the horizon. Its stability hinges on the stability of an observer, who is thought to be located on a ground of sorts—on a shoreline, or a boat—a ground that can be imagined as stable, even

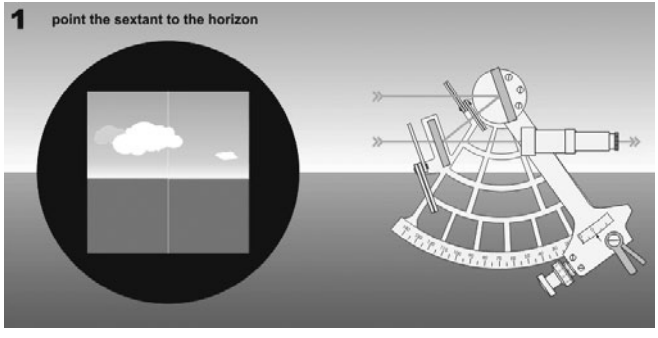
if it is in fact not. The horizon literally defined the limits of communication and understanding. Within it, things could be made visible. Beyond it was muteness and silence. But it also could be used for determining one's own location and relation to one's surroundings, destinations, or ambitions.

Early navigation consisted of gestures and bodily poses relating to the horizon. "In the early days, (Arab navigators) used one or two fingers width, a thumb and little finger on an outstretched arm or an arrow held at arm's length to sight the horizon at the lower end and Polaris at the upper."[2] The angle between the horizon and the Pole Star gave information about the altitude of one's position. Making this measurement was known as *sighting* the object or *shooting* the object. And this simple gesture immediately constructs a body, a position, a vector, a perspective, and a direction.

The horizon became an extremely important tool for establishing orientation especially in maritime navigation. It transformed an unstable observer swaying with the waves into an artificially stabilized point of view. Its instability was successively compensated by navigational devices, which integrated artificial horizons into their technology. Thus the first double horizon emerges: one real, the other fictional. One is unstable, while the other is artificially stabilized and abstracted. Of course, the ability to calculate position using the horizon gave a sense of orientation to seafarers, and thus also crucially enabled the spread of colonialism and the establishment of a capitalist global market.

2 Peter Ifland, "The History of the Sextant," online at: http://www.mat.uc.pt/~helios/Mestre/Novemb00/H61iflan.htm.

Diagram with instructions for use of a marine sextant at sea, source: Wikimedia Commons



Central perspective

But the horizon was also an important tool for constructing the optical paradigm, which came to define modernity, so-called central perspective. And this constructed an equally double observer position and also a double horizon. Already in 1028 Abu Ali al-Hasan al-Haitham (965–1040), called Alhazen, wrote a book on visual theory (*Kitab al-Manazir* [Book of Optics]). After 1200 it became available in Europe and spawned experiments in visual production between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, which led to the development of central perspective. Central perspective is established by constructing a horizon on which all horizontal parallels converge in a so-called vanishing point.

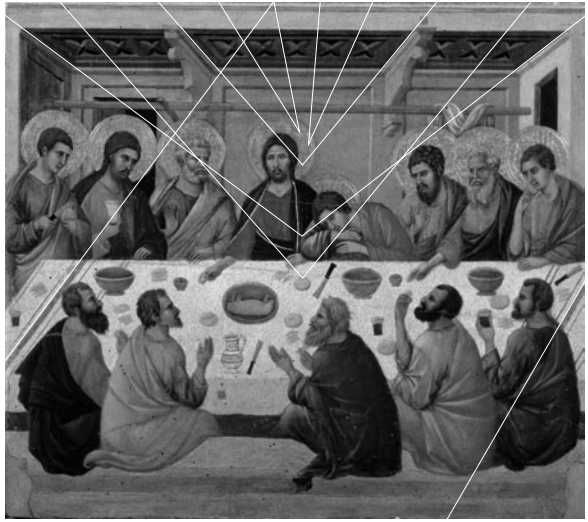
In Duccio di Buoninsegna's painting *The Last Supper* (1308–1311) several vanishing points can still be seen. The perspectives in this space do not coalesce on a horizon line, nor do they all intersect in one single vanishing point. There are in fact multiple horizons in this composition.

But in another painting, scene one of Paolo Uccello's *Miracle of the Desecrated Host* (1465–1469), made more than a hundred years later, the perspective is aligned to culminate in one single vanishing point, located on a virtual horizon defined by the eye line. Uccello was one of the most ardent experimenters in the development of central perspective.

Central perspective is based on several decisive fakes. Firstly, the curvature of the earth is typically disregarded. The horizon is conceived as an abstract flat line to which points on any horizontal plane converge. As art historian Erwin Panofsky argued, the construction of central perspective additionally declares the view of a one-eyed and immobile spectator as a norm—and itself as natural, scientific, and objective. Thus,

I Duccio di Buoninsegna, *The Last Supper*, 1308–1311, from the Passion Altarpiece, tempera on wood, Duomo, Siena, image: The Bridgeman Art Library, perspectival lines added

II Paolo Uccello, *Miracle of the Desecrated Host*, 1465–1469, panel 1, oil on canvas, image: © Bildarchiv Foto Marburg, perspectival lines added



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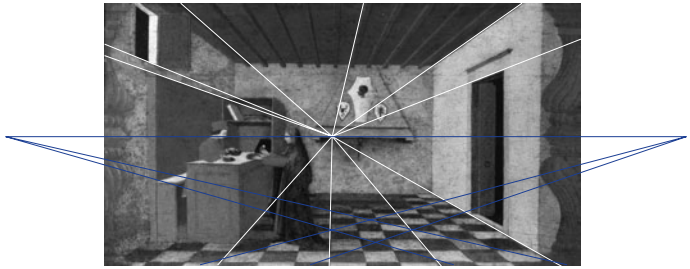

II

central perspective is based on an abstraction:[3] it does not correspond to any subjective perception. Instead, it computes a mathematical, flattened, infinite, continuous, and homogenous space, and declares it as reality. It creates the illusion of a quasi-natural view to the "outside," as if the image plane was a window opening onto the "real" world. This is also the literal meaning of *perspectiva*: to see through.

This space is calculable, navigable, and predictable. It allows for the calculation of risk within a future, which can be anticipated and thus managed. It therefore transforms not only space, but also introduces the notion of linear time, which allows mathematical prediction and thus linear progress. This is the second, temporal meaning of perspective: an outlook into a calculable future. As philosopher Walter Benjamin has argued, time becomes just as homogenous and empty as space.[4] And for all these calculations to be operated, we must still assume an observer on stable ground, one who looks out towards a vanishing point on a flat and actually quite artificial horizon.

But central perspective also performs an ambivalent operation concerning the viewer himself. As the whole paradigm converges in one of his eyes, he becomes central to the worldview established by central perspective. On the other hand, the importance of the spectator is also undermined by the assumption that his vision follows scientific laws. This gaze is assumed to be objective and subjected to natural laws—in other words,

3 Erwin Panofsky, "Die Perspektive als symbolische Form," in *Erwin Panofsky. Deutschsprachige Aufsätze II*, eds. Wolfgang Kemp, Martin Warnke, et al. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998), pp. 664–758; citation from p. 666 (author's own translation). For an English translation of the essay see Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, trans. Christopher S. Wood (Cambridge, Mass.: Zone Books and MIT Press, 1998).

4 Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 261.

both extremely objective and subjective. While empowering the subject and transforming it into the center of vision, the subject's own individuality is undermined because it is now subjected to so-called objective laws of representation. Needless to say this combined reinvention of the subject, time, and space was an additional toolkit for the global expanse of the capitalist global market and colonialism alike. Both in navigation and in representation the horizon played a major role in enabling western dominance (and the dominance of its concepts) and well as defining standards of representation, time, and space.

Let's look back to Uccello's work, the *Miracle of the Desecrated Host*, to find all these components expressed. The work consists of eight panels or "scenes." In the first one, a woman sells a host to a Jewish shopkeeper, who in the second panel tries to "desecrate" it, whatever that means. Another panel in the series shows how the shopkeeper actually ends up: burning at the stake. His wife and two small children share the same fate; they are all tied to a pillar on which parallel points converge as if it were a target mark. The date of this painting shortly prefigures the expulsion of Jews and Muslims from Spain, in the same year as colonialism starts with Christopher Columbus's expedition to the Dominican Republic.[5] In these paintings, central perspective becomes a matrix for racial and religious propaganda and related atrocities. A so-called scientific worldview thus helps to set standards for marking people as "Other" and thus legitimizing their conquest or domination over them.

5 Immanuel Wallerstein and Étienne Balibar, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London: Verso, 1991).

Central perspective destabilized

On the other hand, central perspective also carried within it the seeds of its own overcoming. Its scientific allure and objectivist attitude established a universal claim for representation, a link to veracity, which undermined particularist worldviews, even if halfheartedly and belatedly. It thus became hostage to the truth it had so confidently proclaimed. And a deep suspicion was planted alongside its claims for veracity from its very inception.

In the history of painting, one work in particular expresses the circumstances of the ensuing destabilization of the horizon: J.M.W. Turner's 1840 painting *Slave Ship (Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying, Typhoon Coming On)*. The scene in the painting represents a real incident. The captain of a slave ship had discovered that his insurance only covered slaves lost at sea, not those who were ill or died on board. Thus he ordered all dying and sick slaves to be thrown over board, where they drowned. Turner's painting captures the moment when the slaves are starting to go under.

In this painting, the horizon line, if distinguishable at all, is tilted, curved, and troubled. The observer has lost his stable position. No parallel lines can be found which could converge within a single vanishing point. The sun, which stills holds the center of the composition, is multiplied in reflections. The observer is upset, displaced, beside himself at the sight of the slaves, who in particular have lost a stable position and are not only sinking, but whose bodies have been reduced to fragments, limbs devoured by fish, mere shapes below the water surface. At the sight of these effects of colonialism and slavery, the central perspective—that position of mastery, control, and subjecthood—is abandoned and starts tumbling and tilting. With it goes the idea of space and time as systematic constructions.

J.M.W. Turner, *Slave Ship (Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying, Typhoon Coming On)*, 1840, oil on canvas, 90.8 x 122.6 cm, collection and © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

The idea of a calculable and predictable future shows a murderous backside in the shape of an insurance contract, which prevents economic loss by inspiring cold-blooded murder. Space dissolves into the mayhem of an unpredictable sea, into unstable and treacherous grounds.

Turner had already experimented earlier on with perspectives in motion. An anecdote has it that he had himself bonded to the mast of a ship during the crossing from Dover to Calais, explicitly in order to watch the changes of the horizon. In 1843 or 1844, he stuck his head out of the window of a moving train for exactly nine minutes. A painting resulted from it called *Rain, Steam, and Speed – The Great Western Railway* (1844). In it central perspective dissolves towards the background. There is no resolution, no vanishing point, no clear outlook into any past or future. More interesting, again, is the point of view of the spectator himself, which seems to be dangling in the air on the outer side of the rails of the railroad bridge. There is no clear ground under his assumed position. He might be suspended in the mist, floating as it were over an absent ground.

In both of Turner's paintings, the horizon is blurred and tilted, yet it isn't entirely absent. The paintings do not negate its existence altogether; they just make it inaccessible to the perception of the viewer. The question of horizon starts to float, so to speak. So not only do perspectives assume mobile points of view, and not only is communication disabled even within one common horizon. One could perhaps say that the downwards motion of the sinking slaves affects the point of view of the painter and tears it away from a position of certitude, and subjects it rather to gravity and motion and the pull of a bottomless sea.

Acceleration

During the twentieth century, further dismantling of central perspective in the most different areas starts to take hold. Cinema supplements photography with the articulation of different perspectives in time. Montage becomes a perfect device for destabilizing the perspective of the observer and breaking down the linearity of time. Painting abandons representation to a large extent, and central perspective is demolished in Cubism, collage, and different types of abstraction. In parallel, time and space are being re-imagined through relativity theory and quantum physics, and perception is reorganized by advances in warfare, advertisement, and the rise of the conveyor belt. With the invention of aviation, opportunities for falling, nosediving, and crashing increase. This is accompanied by the development of new perspectives and techniques of orientation, especially an increase in aerial views of all kinds.

Many of them demonstrate how a mobile point of view can be stabilized and reintegrated into a perspective of dominance. In artist Tullio Crali's painting *Nose Dive on the City* (1939), the point of view is extremely accelerated and the movement pointed downwards. This picture contains no horizon whatsoever—there is only a ground. In a way, I consider this to be the precursor of all contemporary vertical perspectives, all overviews, all drone and surveillance perspectives.

Crali was an Italian Futurist and a pilot, and Italian Futurists were in love with speed, aluminum, and warfare. A Futurist manifesto from 1929, *Perspectives of Flight*, stated: "The changing perspectives of flight constitute an absolutely new reality that has nothing in common with the reality traditionally constituted by a terrestrial perspective." It is impossible to detach this painting and the Futurists' glorification of aviation from the fact that Italy had actually been the first country to

Tullio Crali, *Nose Dive on the City*, 1939, oil on canvas, collection and © Museo di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto

bomb civilians from the air. In 1911 the Libyan Arab tribes opposed an Italian invasion and Italy bombed them, for the first time in history initiating an aerial strike on a civilian population. In 1935—four years before the painting was made—fascist Italian troops bombed Abyssinia with poison gas in an attempt to create a "new Roman Empire." This is the historical context of Crali's glorious fascist aerial painting. In it the vanishing point is the presumed point of impact. The temporal horizon of the picture is devastation and destruction.

The perspective of today

So what's the relation of this painting to the contemporary vertical perspectives as represented by the black-and-white video images broadcast by drones just before they strike? It's very simple: the pilot is now missing from the image. This is the perspective of the absent or post-pilot, so to speak. In the drone view there is no more pilot, no more subjective point of view. It is a remote-controlled perspective. A drone has no front windows; it is "blind." But it is capable of unleashing lethal firepower nevertheless. It polices the ground from a point of view that philosopher and political scientist Achille Mbembe has referred to in his work as the perspective of "necropower": a biopolitics which is imposed from the point of view of death.[6] And in this case we can see this very literally: the point of view of the Reaper drone is the point of view of death.

So where are the pilots now that they have evacuated the cockpits? They are not in Afghanistan or Iraq, where the drones are operating. They are actually in Nevada on an airbase, shooting at daytime and going home in the evenings, to their families:

6 Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics." *Public Culture*, vol. 15, no. 1 (Winter 2003), pp. 11–40.

> But at the end of each day, the Air Force crews who control the Predator and Reaper drones circling high above the battlefields in Afghanistan and Iraq stand up from their Naugahyde chairs, emerge from their cramped trailers on this remote Nevada air base and climb into their cars for the drive home, arriving in time to tuck their kids into bed. Call it combat as shift work, a new paradigm of commuter warfare that is blurring the historical understanding of what it means to go off to battle. And the strain of the daily whiplash transition between bombs and bedtime stories, coupled with the fast-increasing workload to meet relentlessly expanding demand, is leading to fatigue and burnout for the ground-based controllers who drive the drones.[7]

This type of telelabor also transforms the bodies of the pilots who are now called operators. While previously the physical prowess of pilots was an integral part of their public identity, it now loses its shine. Now, even near-sighted people are theoretically able to operate the drones. Their physical performance has become secondary and their own mobility is not a decisive factor anymore.

3-D Nosedives

The double body of the pilot also provides the plotline for the most famous recent blockbuster movie, which relentlessly exploits vertical perspective: James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009). The plot: a paralyzed soldier remote controls the body of a giant blue indigenous creature inhabiting another planet, who must resist in the context of a colonial war over raw materials. In *Avatar*, the body of the pilot is duplicated: on the one hand there is an actual disabled war veteran; on the other you have a very lively computer animated fantasy creature, which doesn't

7 Megan McCloskey, "Two Worlds of a Drone Pilot," excerpted from *Stars and Stripes*, posted 27 October 2009, online at: http://www.military.com/news/article/two-worlds-of-a-drone-pilot.html.

miss any possibility to throw himself into the void. So the movie can display stunning vertical nosedives into the abyss.

And 3-D cinema as a whole seems to exist for the main purpose of staging vertiginous flights into abysses. One could almost say that 3D and the construction of imaginary vertical worlds (prefigured in the logic of computer games) are essential to each other. As film scholar Thomas Elsaesser has convincingly argued, the 3D standard integrates military, surveillance, and entertainment applications and creates new hard- and software markets[8] by imposing a new visual and technological standard.

So where is the horizon in *Avatar*? Obviously there is no horizon to be seen in the nosedive sequences, as we are facing the ground. But even in shots in which we feel that there should be a horizon, there is none. One example is a flight sequence through floating mountains. Even though the camera looks at the scenery horizontally, no horizon can be seen, which adds to the eerie feeling of floating.

8 The following quote by Elsaesser can be seen as blueprint for this paper, whose inspiration derives from an informal conversation with the author: "This means that stereoscopic images and the 3-D movie are part of the new paradigm, which is turning our information society into a control society and our visual culture into a surveillance culture. The movie industry, civil society and the military sector are all united in this surveillance paradigm, which, as part of a historic process, seeks to replace 'monocular vision,' the way of seeing that has defined Western thought and action for the last 500 years. It is this means of seeing that gave rise to a wide range of innovations like panel painting, colonial seafaring and Cartesian philosophy, as well as the whole concept of projecting ideas, risks, chances and courses of action into the future. Flight simulators and other types of military technology are part of a new effort to introduce 3-D as the standard means of perception – but the development goes even further to include surveillance. This encompasses an entire catalog of movements and behaviors, all of which are intrinsically connected to the monitoring, steering and observation of ongoing processes, and which delegate or outsource what was once referred to as introspection, self-awareness and personal responsibility." Thomas Elsaesser, "The Dimension of depth and objects rushing towards us. Or: The tail that wags the dog. A discourse on digital 3-D cinema," online at: http://www.edit-frankfurt.de/en/magazine/ausgabe-12010/the-dimension-of-depth/the-dimesion-of-depth-and-objects-rushing-towards-us.html.

Timeless floating is also enacted by the recent fiction film *Enter the Void* (Gaspar Noé, 2010), in which a dronelike gaze endlessly drifts over Tokyo. Most of the film consists of a view from above, seen from the point of view of a dead American. His gaze penetrates any space; it moves without constraint, with unrestricted mobility, looking for a body in which to biologically reproduce itself and reincarnate: the protagonist basically wants to hijack a fetus. But the film is also very picky about this procedure, for example, mixed race fetuses get aborted in favor of white ones. Floating and biopolitical policing are mixed into a computer-animated obsession with superior bodies, remote control, and digital aerial vision. Is this the gaze of post-America—or rather a post-American, since he's dead—something which somehow died but is still forcefully hovering over an ideological ground, which is both created and maintained by special effects software? A worldview which lost its vitality, yet persists as an undead, but powerful tool to police the world and control its reproduction, both in terms of representation and biopolitics?

In another recent contemporary blockbuster, *Inception* (Christopher Nolan, 2010)—another sequence radicalizes the concept of the vertical perspective. The film is organized in vertical layers like a computer game and jumps between different "dream" levels, which are artificially constructed to create shared dreams. In one scene the veteran dream architect explains the principles of construction to his young and naive female assistant by folding the cityscape of Paris up to a 90-degree angle and then bending it even further until it forms a ceiling above their heads. The implications for the horizon are evident. Even when looking at scenery horizontally, there is no more horizon, just ground (or even multiple grounds). Wherever one looks, there is yet another ground. The ground replaces the horizon.

From horizontality to the vertiginous

To come back to my initial statement: a horizon is a device to suggest stability in an unstable situation. But what happens if the horizon is replaced by a ground? Actually, something quite similar happens. Many of the aerial views, 3-D nosedives, Google maps, and surveillance panoramas perform a similar ideological operation as central perspective performed concerning the construction of a flattened horizon and stable observer. *They do not actually represent a stable ground and a floating observer—but they establish them.* They establish the illusion of floating above a stable ground. The virtual ground retroactively creates the impression that the spectator is in control, assuming a perspective of overview and surveillance, safely floating up in the air.[9]

In a fascinating text, writer and architect Eyal Weizman analyzes verticality in political architecture.[10] He describes the spatial turn of power and surveillance: a vertical 3-D sovereignty. He argues that geopolitical power used to be distributed on a map-like 2-D plane, on which boundaries were drawn and defended. But at present, the distribution of power—his example is the Israeli occupation in Palestine, but there could be many others—has increasingly started to occupy the vertical dimension. Vertical sovereignty splits the space in vertical layers, separating not only airspace from ground, but also ground from underground, crust from subterrain, and splits airspace into different layers. Different strata of community are divided from each other on a y-axis, multiplying sites of conflict and violence. "Occupation of the skies therefore acquires a critical importance, since most of the policing is done from the air. Various other technologies are mobilized to this effect: sensors aboard unmanned air vehicles (UAVs), aerial reconnaissance jets, early warning Hawkeye planes, assault helicopters, an Earth-observation satellite, and techniques of 'hologrammatization'."[11]

But we need not look further than our own laptop screens to see the paradigm of verticality unfold. Crowdsourced surveillance web cams stream live feeds from the Mexican border to whoever wants to report illegal immigrants crossing it.[12] The elevated views show white shadows trying to wade through a river, while they are being watched by virtual volunteer informers. Forty-three thousand "Virtual Texas Deputies" from all over the world logged into the website within a month. The scheme is reportedly based on a crowdsourcing program established in Berkeley, originally set up to report signs of extraterrestrial life. And of course the live-feed pictures show no horizon either; instead they are a breeding ground for a massively mediated hostility. So the actual ground is far from being stable, it is extremely fragile and fragmented—at least for the ones who have to endure overhead surveillance.

9 This new normality has been described from different perspectives by Dieter Roelstraete, "(Jena Revisited) Ten Tentative Tenets," *e-flux journal*, no. 15 (2010), online at: http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/137, and Jennifer Allen, "That Eye, The Sky," *Frieze*, no. 132 (June–August 2010), online at: http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/that_eye_the_sky/.

10 Eyal Weizman, "The Politics of Verticality" (2002), online at: http://www.opendemocracy.net/ecology-politicsverticality/article_801.jsp.

11 Mbembe, "Necropolitics," p. 29.

12 As reported in Robert Mackey, "Thousands Sign Up for Virtual Border Patrol," *The New York Times*, 15.11.2010, online at: http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/03/26/thousands-sign-up-for-virtual-border-patrol/. "The Texas Border Sheriff's Coalition (TBSC) has instituted the Texas Virtual Border Watch Program to enlist the public's assistance in preventing crime along the Texas-Mexico border. This initiative provides real-time streaming video over a web-based network to enable the public to report suspicious activity to the appropriate law enforcement agency via e-mail. (…) NPR's John Burnett reported last month that 'more than 43,000 people have logged on' to BlueServo.net to spend some of their free time scanning streaming video of border hot spots and acting as what the Web site calls 'Virtual Texas Deputies'." Similar schemes work to locate celebrities or sex-offenders via cell phone applications. Thanks to Imri Kahn for pointing out this information.

Falling

Just as central perspective established an imaginary stable observer and horizon, so does the perspective from above establish an imaginary floating observer and an imaginary stable ground. The aerial view creates the idea that there is a stable ground in the first place—an idea, which in an increasingly precarious and fragmented world, is far from obvious. It shields us from the realization that in fact many of us might not be floating at all, but rather falling. Instead of floating, many of us might actually be in continuous free fall, in a condition where we no longer know whether we are subjects or objects, and extreme acceleration turns into a condition of stillness and stasis.

But if the views from above recreate societies as dropping urban abysses and splintered terrains of occupation, aerially surveilled and policed biopolitically, they also may—as central perspective did— carry the seeds of their own demise within them. This is because if we accept the multiplication and delinearization of horizons and perspectives, this may contribute to expressing the contemporary conditions of disruption and disorientation. Recent 3-D animation technologies incorporate multiple perspectives, which are deliberately manipulated to create multifocal and nonlinear perspectives.[13] Cinematic

13 These techniques are described in, among others: Manessh Agrawala, Denis Zorin, and Tamara Munzer, "Artistic multiprojection rendering," in "Proceedings of Eurographics Rendering Workshop 2000," *Eurographics*, pp. 125–136; Patrick Coleman and Karan Singh, "Ryan: rendering your animation nonlinearly projected," in *NPAR '04: Proceedings of the 3rd international symposium on Non-photorealistic animation and rendering* (New York: ACM Press, 2004), pp. 129–156; Andrew Glassner, "Digital cubism, part 2," *IEEE Computer Graphics and. Applications*, vol. 25, no. 4 (July 2004), pp. 84–95; Karan Singh, "A fresh perspective," in *Proceedings of Graphics Interface 2002*, pp. 17–24; Nisha Sudarsanam, Cindy Grimm, and Karan Singh, "Interactive manipulation of projections with a curved perspective," *Eurographics* Computer Graphics Forum, vol. 24 (2005), pp. 105–108; and Yonggao Yang, Jim X. Chen, and Mohsen Beheshti, "Nonlinear Perspective Projections and Magic Lenses: 3D view deformation," *IEEE Computer Graphics Applications*, vol. 25, no. 1 (January/February 2005), pp. 76–84.

space is twisted in any way imaginable, organized around heterogeneous, curved, and collaged perspectives.

The tyranny of the photographic lens, cursed by the promise of its indexical relation to reality, has given way to hyperreal representations—not of space as it is, but of space as we can make it—for better or worse. There is not even a need for expensive rendering. Simple green screen collage yields impossible cubist perspectives, implausible concatenations of times and spaces alike.

As cinema merges with graphic design practices, drawing, and collage, it gains independence from the prescribed focal dimensions, which have normalized and limited the realm of photographic vision. While it could be argued that montage was the first step of liberation from cinematic central perspective—and that it was thus ambivalent for most of its existence—only now can new and different sorts of spatial vision be created. Similar things can be said about multiscreen projections, which create a dynamic viewing space, dispersing perspective and possible points of view. The viewer is no longer unified by such a gaze, but disarticulated, drafted into the production of the content, overwhelmed, and dissociated. None of these projection spaces has a single unified horizon and many call for a multiple spectator, who has to be created and recreated by ever-new articulations of the crowd.[14]

In many of these manifestations of new visualities, what seemed like a helpless tumble towards an abyss actually turns out to be a new representational freedom. A fall towards the objects without reservation, embracing a world of forces and matter that lacks any original stability and sparks the sudden shock of

14 See also Hito Steyerl, "Is the Museum a factory?," *e-flux journal*, no. 7 (Summer 2009), online at: http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/71.

the open: a freedom, which is terrifying, utterly deterritorializing, and always already unknown. Falling means ruin and demise, as well as love and abandon, passion and surrender, decline and ludic indulgence. Falling is corruption as well as liberation,[15] a condition that turns people into things and the other way around. It takes place in an open we could endure or enjoy, embrace, or suffer, while abandoning ourselves, our desires, and our fears to the agonizing pleasures of gravity.

And the perspective of free fall also teaches us one last, important lesson. It reminds us to consider the perspective of verticality as a social issue: radicalized class war from above, intensified class hierarchies, jaw-dropping social inequalities, and new and old elites and oligarchies, which are trying to sell this off as the new perceptual normality. In free fall, very simply, we have to consider the dimension of above and below, up and down, rich and poor—and act against it.

This text is a revised version of a keynote lecture delivered during the 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress, Istanbul, 4–6 November 2010.

15 Taking a cue from Gil Leung's reflection, "After before now: Notes on In Free Fall," online at: http://www.picture-this.org.uk/library/essays1/2010/after-before-now-notes-on-in-free-fall.

Ultra-red
Organizing the Silence

A few years ago, rather than inviting people simply to listen to the sounds we had made, we began asking, "What did you hear?" This question produced a series of analytic reflections, beginning with a query of the terms of the question itself. A conversation results between the concrete experience of the moment, an encounter with a particular sound in a specific context, and various taxonomies of listening available in cultural and political theory. How does one listen? To what does one listen? And towards what does one listen? However, even before addressing the process of listening—what it means "to hear"—the listener must decipher the pronoun, in other words: "What did *you* hear?" Is it singular or plural? In the collective listening events we have organized over the past few years, working together situates the listening experience itself as a collective object of reflections that binds together those who participate. That is, the question "What did you hear?" establishes a venue and process whereby a group of people begin to hear themselves and their possible arrangement. As we think through this scene of listening, we have become more and more compelled by a politics that emerges through the process of answering the question, "What did you hear?," as opposed to a politics that points beyond the group to a distant horizon.

The Horizon

In sound, the horizon is typically figured as some form of silence, as in the limit—either phenomenological or epistemological—of perception. For the sound artist, the construction of silence can be defamiliarized with a simple intervention that asks the listener to attend to sounds that are beyond the threshold of intention as opposed to the threshold of hearing. In these instances, the command, "Listen!" is equivalent to a finger indicating a distant vanishing point. In Ultra-red's political and aesthetic inquiries we have discovered that the question "What did you hear?" proposes a different role for the artist than

finger pointing and, by association, a different relationship between the artist and those invited to describe what has been heard. We might describe that difference as one in which the horizon becomes less a fixed point toward which one gestures than a measure of movement that constructs and reconstructs thresholds of change. There is the horizon that we can see or hear at a distance. Then there is the horizon perceived after occupying a place that was itself the horizon for a previous moment.

After listening with many groups of people, Ultra-red has come to think of the two different notions of the horizon—the horizons of silence—as giving shape to different notions of politics. These conceptions enunciate different political practices. The first *represents* politics, perhaps in the form of a critique or through the construction of a visual or aural image of a new political configuration. The second notion *organizes* politics. While artists (or activists) may produce work that indicates a horizon, they may find that the horizon reciprocates the gesture, touches back and brings them into a social situation that they might change and be changed by.

We say horizon. We say silence. We could just as easily say that "the political" lacks resolution, escapes consensus, and evades agreements of tense, subject, gender, and number. As evidence of how profane discussions of the political have become within art, what artist would disagree with the statement that all art is political? But try to understand what is meant by "the political" and the statement (as well as its confident delivery) dissolves. The word appears empty of meaning or a repository for undifferentiated possibility.

Yet, something becomes possible in that indecisiveness. In light of this situation, we in Ultra-red might have a few things to say about what, or rather, how politics has come to mean in our practice. In what follows, we want to share a few reflections on how one such project shifted the very terms of the way we work. *SILENT|LISTEN* (2005–2006) began as an investigation into silence, fueled by an urgency to organize silence. Over time, the project became a practice of distinguishing between organizing the silence and collective listening—an investigation into organized listening. This distinction focuses us on the terms by which we are organized by our politics. For us, one such term remains the commitment to reconnecting notions of revolutionary change (i.e. anti-capitalism) with organizing.

The Investigation

Ultra-red has no single organized political affiliation. However, the individual members of Ultra-red are engaged with specific social movements such as anti-racism in Britain, the struggles of migration in Germany, community-based education in London and Los Angeles, and the struggles for housing and just community development in East Los Angeles. Our associations as activists, organizers, community-based researchers, and educators directly bear on the work of Ultra-red. At the same time, our collaboration does not make up the full extent of our participation in those social movements. For some of us, Ultra-red accounts for only a small part of the day-to-day labor of our politics.

Identifying particular social movements foregrounds some of the challenges at work within our own collective as we move from specific struggles, constituencies, and locations to the conditions determined by art discourses, audiences, and spaces. Transferring often deeply felt political experiences from one context to another foregrounds the terms by which those experiences move across boundaries of language, political histories, and geographies. Even in the tender solidarity between

the members of our collective, those concrete contingencies differently inflect what we as individuals mean by "the political." Furthermore, the participatory methods used within Ultra-red often register, explicitly and implicitly, specific political contexts. The consequences are enormous when we develop aesthetic procedures from methods tailored in the framework of struggles for liberation, justice, and life itself.

Among the politics whose echoes can be heard in Ultra-red is that of the AIDS crisis. From the very beginning of Ultra-red in 1994, the context of the group's experiments in field recordings was the Los Angeles AIDS activist scene—specifically the direct action of harm reduction and HIV prevention for injection drug users. The first Ultra-red compilation of electroacoustic recordings, *Second Nature* (1999), while focused on the policing of gay public sex, remained explicitly situated within the cultural analysis of the AIDS activist movement. That cultural analysis, codified in the first decade of the AIDS crisis, contained a militant gay liberationist critique of petit bourgeois panic around queer sexuality. Homophobia and its practices in government policies, public health, the media, and the institutions of religion and education were argued to be the true cause of an epidemic that, by 1987, had claimed the lives of 41,027 people in the United States alone.

Alongside others in the field, we registered the shift in focus that occurred in 2000 when the 13th International AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa delineated the global impact of the crisis. Bringing into focus the stark reality of a pandemic that had far surpassed all projections in terms of infections and deaths, the Durban Conference produced a new sense of urgency among activists in the United States. Insight into the impact of South Africa's AIDS crisis both within that country and for US activists, showed the limitations of a

distinctly American approach to AIDS activism solidified around the images and language of ACT UP—and an ambivalence emerged, rooted in the realization that North American activists had come late to the issue. On the other hand, rather than resting on the claims of progress toward ending the AIDS crisis, we confronted the brutal truth that the AIDS crisis had only just begun.

At the same time, the epidemic in the United States, as well as to a large extent in Canada, had by now become almost thoroughly managed by state and civil society administrative regimes. We were well aware of the global inequities that had produced an epidemic in the Global South exponentially larger than any in the North. Yet we, exhausted, grief stricken, and focused on sustaining hard-won processes of prevention and care, had conformed to rather than successfully challenged the race, gender, and class conditions that were at the foundation of the epidemic. The resonances between the shifting demographics of the epidemic in the Global North and Global South only heightened this ambivalence. In both settings, more women were being infected than ever before and the epidemic was increasingly one of poor people of color. In both settings, racism, as well as class and economic privilege protects those in power—protects them from the more dramatic effects of the crisis as well as inoculates them from any social accountability.

In many respects, these questions interrogated the very structure of the political. Given our dual-status as activist-artists, our questions followed us into the field of art. If the terms of the political change as a result of shifts in the affective ground of people living with and fighting against AIDS (and vice versa), then the role of the artist-activist must also change. Overwhelmed by our own ambivalence regarding AIDS activism at the time and unable to answer a growing list of questions

about the conditions for intervention, we set out to investigate rather than react to the situation. By claiming the investigation as an Ultra-red project, we located much of its public manifestations within art institutions. On the one hand, we chose to do so as a way of bringing resources to the inquiry that would not be tied to the specific over-identifications that exist in the HIV/AIDS non-profit sector. By which we mean those political economies where how someone performs their experiences of living with HIV, even when employed as case managers and peer educators, often has real consequences for access to care, life-saving treatment, and support for the larger needs that come from being poor in the United States. We hoped that the investigation would draw some attention to the conditions under which people feel authorized to speak—even subjected to repeat and perpetuate the very structures of oppression underlying the crisis.

On the other hand, we entered art institutions as a deliberate way of staging a return. We had clear memories of the dual focus of AIDS cultural analysis—critiquing the practices of representation that reproduced the conditions of the epidemic while at the same time challenging artists and cultural producers to commit themselves to direct participation in the fight against the roots of the crisis: homophobia, poverty, racism, sexism, and profiteering. Occupying the marbled galleries of the Baltimore Museum of Art or the civic contract of the Art Gallery of Ontario, we wanted to hear what remained of the echoes of that challenge. We wanted to divine what of a previous commitment to fighting AIDS still haunted, even tormented the museum.

The Silence

If Ultra-red elected to take an AIDS activist investigation out of the predictable spaces of the HIV/AIDS administrative regime

with its fluorescent-lit clinics and corporate-style boardrooms, then *SILENT|LISTEN* brought the aesthetic operations of those very spaces into the museum and gallery. To some extent, the tactic of dislocation began earlier in 2001, when Ultra-red had the idea of introducing artist and composer John Cage's 1955 composition for silence *4'33"* into contexts far removed from avant-garde music. Thus, at the beginning of an AIDS literacy workshop in Echo Park, Los Angeles, we announced that we would perform Cage's composition—"The most important piece of American 20th Century music"—proceeding to sit in restrained stillness while the workshop participants, working class Latino men living with HIV and AIDS, looked on in bemusement. At the passing of four and a half minutes, the workshop organizer announced, "Time." Then we asked, "What did you hear?" When Ultra-red was invited in 2005 by the Baltimore Museum of Art to take part in an exhibition called *Sound Politics*, we decided to use the invitation as an opportunity to expand our investigation, and bring together community work with the experience of performing Cage's *4'33"*, devising specific protocols for listening that developed as the project traveled to a number of venues.

The protocols were part performance script and part meeting agenda. They provided specific statements of explanation and process in some places and in others listed the sequence of speakers and phases of the process. The protocols were used to guide an investigative process organized as a sequence of steps facilitated by members of Ultra-red. In the first part of the protocols for *SILENT|LISTEN*, Ultra-red presented a version of Cage's *4'33"*. This was followed by a series of questions asked directly of the audience. In the second part of the event, Ultra-red performed an electroacoustic composition made from the recorded voices of a previous installment of *SILENT|LISTEN*. This piece, typically around six minutes in length, acted as a

prelude to a series of three or four statements from invited participants, offered as contributions to the record of the AIDS crisis in the United States or Canada. In the third and final part of the event, the proceedings were opened to anyone from the audience who wished to make a statement for the record.

Regardless whether the performance occurred in a grand gallery within a museum or a modestly apportioned university room, the audience always arrived to find a long table dressed with white table linens. The members of Ultra-red stood at the end of the table facing an audience seated in chairs arranged in rows that wrapped around the room. Sometimes we requested that the audience fill in the empty chairs in the first row of seats. The movement of bodies helped to break the stiff formality of the room—but not completely. Once the room settled, a member of the group would announce: "Four minutes and thirty-three seconds, composed by John Cage in 1952." The conclusion of *4'33"* would sometimes produce muffled laughter and a wave of movement as people adjusted in their seats. A member of Ultra-red would then stand and, with a wireless microphone in hand, begin to move through the audience. Directing the microphone to random audience members, he asked a series of questions. As he moved around the room, the questions mapped a terrain that steadily became more and more focused on the actual terms of the investigation: "Good evening, what did you hear? When was the last time you were in this space? What is the relationship between this space and the city of _____? When was the last time you talked about AIDS in this space?"

As time passed, the memory of the initial silence of *4'33"* became a receding landmark that both registered the shifts that had transpired and the potential shifts to come. Silence, therefore, became increasingly not a single horizon but a moving ground

with varying speeds, topographies, and ambiences for different participants. This fact became all the more pronounced as audience members experienced the silence of waiting differently according to their own process of becoming participants. In the immediate moment after *4'33"*, when invited to share what was heard, participants described how silence drew attention to the presence of others around them as well as amplified the signature resonances of the spaces in which we were gathered including the sounds of the city beyond the gallery.

Cage's by now over-determined *4'33"* almost always gets described as four and a half minutes of silence. The irony of the piece, however, is that at one of its earliest public performances at the chapel in Woodstock, New York, a torrential rainstorm, the open-air architecture of the chapel, and a rambunctious audience made for anything but a silent performance. If *4'33"* is less about silence than listening, less about absence than fullness, then it is also inextricable from the experience of listening in the presence of others. This, from our perspective, remains a crucial feature of *4'33"* that often eludes its commentators, leading one to doubt those claims that suggest it is first and foremost an idea and not a composition to be performed. What *4'33"* composes is not so much sounds but listening as an experience of collectivity in its raw potential. *4'33"* gives form to, and rehearses listening, leading us to a consideration about the nature of that collectivity gathered together for listening. As we learned from the numerous performances of *4'33"*, the question "What did you hear?" provoked a range of responses that underscored the variety and, in many instances, the competing frames of reference, political investments, and strategies of listening available within a group.

Some people found the nearly five minutes of silent-listening an opportunity for meditative repose. Others experienced it as

effortful and uncomfortable. Even among Ultra-red, *4'33"* produced different responses with a couple of us reporting, for example, anxiety over how the audience would react to such a long period of silence at the beginning of the event. These reflections produced an appreciation for the embodiment of collective listening, which includes both an awareness of the postures and protocols of listening as well as self-consciousness about how others register one's listening.

The discomfort and awkwardness of this collective silent-listening carried through to the invitation to then speak publicly in response to the question, "What did you hear?" In response to the question a small number of audience members, such as the uniformly art audience attending the performance at the Banff Center in Canada, offered well-rehearsed descriptions of Cage's work; they had heard all the unintended sounds in the room as if they were musical in the space and time of listening intentionally as if to music. Often those responses seemed delivered for our evaluation, as if the listening were a test. Other responses may have been more common but no less conventional. These ranged from "I heard nothing," "I don't know," and "I heard myself thinking," to references to the uneasiness of sitting in silence with others in a public space that usually clearly organizes the relationship between viewer/listener and object/performer. Others contributed to an inventory of sounds: shuffling feet, rustling clothes, heavy breathing, coughing, and stomach growls. Some turned the question on us: "I don't know. What did *you* hear?"

The questions that followed the initial "What did you hear?" began a process of situating the audience in relation to a set of concerns: "What is the relationship between this space and the city around us?" or "When was the last time you were in this space to talk about AIDS?" Regardless of whether we were in Pittsburgh or Baltimore, Toronto or Montreal, many in the audience responded by confessing that they had never been in that museum or gallery space before that day. In other words, many did not immediately understand the silence as experimental art let alone a canonical work of experimental art. It was just waiting with others, a position open to resonances far beyond the formalities and conditions of the art space. Many in the AIDS field are, for example, members of religious congregations familiar with the common experience of sitting in silence. Similarly, the receipt and delivery of medical and other services involves long periods of waiting. On another level, the silence acted as a reminder of the long years of struggle against AIDS and other oppressions that involved so many who have since died. These histories brought a near infinite set of references into the room ranging from patient anticipation to grief and frustration. In other words, the silence was filled with a search for meaning often based on the association between one experience and another.

The Statements

SILENT|LISTEN events occurred at one large table or a cluster of tables. The arrangement and dressing of these tables involved a careful calibration of aesthetic and functional considerations. We wanted the setting to be striking, even beautiful. Yet we were also interested in the tables' institutional valence as sites of authority, managerial efficiency, and analysis. As a result, they were simple, one might even say stark. The intersection between aesthetics and efficiency was also a consideration in the carefully composed protocols used to facilitate the event. The precisely scripted instructions to participants used repetition to produce what seemed to be a well-rehearsed performance as well as an efficiently run meeting. It was a combination rooted in the tropes of minimalism and conceptualism in which repetition, a reduced formal aesthetic, compressed statements, and the

fictions of the white cube's neutrality mirror the aesthetic operations of institutionalized racism, the structures that exploit and dehumanize the poor, and those apparatuses that manage capitalism's irresolvable social contradictions.

In each venue we used the folding tables and stackable chairs usually reserved for exhibition openings, educational programs, or workshops. The tablecloths came from commercial caterers and the microphones and other sound equipment, which always looked well used, were rented from local vendors. Despite their utilitarian veneer, we combined them with a formal rigor befitting the art space settings. For those who had worked in the AIDS field for a number of years, the settings recalled meeting spaces in any number of public health buildings, government offices, and community-based organizations. In these settings, the table is not understood as an ideological device. A table is simply a venue for the regularly scheduled and clearly organized meetings central to the sector's collective practice. A second association was to the cycle of conferences, symposia, and expert panels convened to address various facets of the crisis. These gatherings almost always took place in hotels or convention centers, university conference rooms, or government buildings, all of which shared a particular institutional aesthetic. However, estranged from their conventional settings and repurposed as mise-en-scène for an art event, the tables and meeting procedures brought to the fore a series of questions seldom asked in these other settings: Who speaks? Whose voice is amplified? What do we speak of and to whom? Who listens and to what end do they listen? Who has a place at the table? Who determines who has a place at the table? And on whose behalf do those seated at the table speak?

It would be possible to consider these questions an effective end-point for a political art practice. In the context of a gallery, the empty table represents a horizon of possibilities vulnerable to the vagaries of power. As artists we formulate questions others must struggle to answer—whose table is it and who decides when, how, and by whom it will be occupied? The image of politics is not, however, the totality of every aesthetic operation at work in the organization of politics. Vigilance around the aesthetics of administration can lead us to interrogate the conditions under which those in struggle organize themselves, conduct their inquiries into shared experience, question their own contradictions and the limits of their knowledge, and thereby produce their collectivity. The basic problem remains: the formal demands of organizing invoke cultural practices comparable in urgency and, perhaps on occasion, even surpassing that of an art whose point is critique or the orientation of the viewer to the horizon of possibility.

In the second part of *SILENT|LISTEN*, which followed the performance of *4'33"*, we invited representatives of local AIDS organizations to enter statements into the record of the crisis in North America. The record was an accumulation of recordings of these events. The procedure activated this by first announcing the playing of "the minutes" from the prior event; thus we gestured to a broader network of affiliations and the fact that the table had and still was accumulating a history. Questions of participation, authority, and possibility exist within history, for others have sat at similar tables and in doing so have constituted or organized the possibilities with which we are now in conversation. The manner with which participants delivered their statements as well as the contents brought into the room many of these tones and styles. Some speakers announced directly their nervousness at the fact that they come to a place and a public they did not know. They may also have informed us that their position in their organization does not usually entail speaking publicly. Someone else had that

responsibility. Some communicated their discomfort and anxiety through the waver in their voice. The organization's designated speakers demonstrated a smooth efficiency and easy familiarity developed over years spent moving from venue to venue and audience to audience sharing information about the crisis or mobilizing groups around one cause or another. Some spoke from clearly announced professional positions and delivered their statements in the appropriate bureaucratic vocabulary and well-disciplined voice. Others came unrehearsed and stumbled through statements assembled from the field's clichés and spontaneous propositions and analyses. A few shared personal stories, wept, sat in silence for a time overwhelmed by hearing themselves amplified, and encouraged us all to continue the struggle in the name of someone they had loved and admired.

As the statements accumulated and layered on each other, so the possibilities of the table became less and less abstract. The variations in positions and perspective elaborated divisions that had first emerged in response to the questions asked of the audience at the beginning of the event. As a whole, however, the rhythmic unfolding, the repeated invitations to speak, and the implied invitation to listen presented these possibilities as a response to the question: "When was the last time you were in this space to talk about AIDS?," to which almost every person in every venue responded, "never," or "I can't remember," or "I don't think I've ever spoken about AIDS in this space." The procedure broke that silence. It was a silence we reflected on during each pause within or between statements as we waited for the next person to take his or her place at the table. In the immediate future or immediate past of each statement, the intake of breathe before a statement or the exhale at its conclusion, we reflected on how the terms used by each speaker deepened our understanding of the silence and the manner of its interruption.

Those who spoke were all directly involved in AIDS work. They came from AIDS service organizations, groups established by people living with AIDS, and activist groups. Those who listened, however, represented a broader set of constituencies. Many who attended the event came from the organizations we visited. Some were people who had declined to make a statement but wished to be present for the event. Others were co-workers, family members, or friends of the speakers. The art venues recruited a large segment of each audience through their own networks. Thus, the audience included a contingent who had never attended an event of avant-garde music, let alone made regular visits to the museum or gallery that hosted the event. It also included another group well rehearsed in the conventions and investments of the museum but who were almost always at some distance from the AIDS sector.

The Public

The third part of *SILENT|LISTEN* opened up the table and the protocol to the audience, who were invited to occupy one of the empty chairs remaining at the table (there were always at least four empty chairs) and enter a statement into the record. In a number of performances this turn to the audience produced a clear break with and even resistance to the protocol. Thus, rather than waiting until seated at the table to speak or only speaking in turn, people spoke from the audience and engaged in conversation. In every performance an awkward silence followed our announcement that the table was open to other participants. To the differences mapped in the preceding parts of the event were now added the various processes of becoming participants. It became increasingly difficult to maintain the illusion of a homogeneous "public" addressed by us but with whom we were not in some sort of collaboration. The evacuation of this notion of a distant, silent public that passes autonomously through an art space was reminiscent of the

efforts by AIDS cultural analysts to deconstruct the notion of "the general public."

The founding assertion of AIDS cultural analysis is that the epidemic is not natural. Rather, for a virus to become an epidemic, the AIDS crisis resulted from structural inequality and the ideologies of heteronormativity, racism, poverty, and private profit. Those ideologies were reaffirmed each time the state, bio-medical establishment, religious institutions, the media, and so forth asked the question, "Is the public at risk from AIDS?" The question presumes that the term "public" excludes always already those affected by HIV. Thus, the public is defined in exclusion of queers, people of color, migrants, and the poor—the very people most at risk of HIV because of the inequities that organize bourgeois society. Since those populations exist outside of the public they have no legitimate claim to public health or any other means of social well-being. This is a crucial determinant of who has access to education, prevention, research, and life-saving treatment for HIV infection. Thus, it was the very representation of the public that produced the AIDS crisis. For AIDS activists, the public is always ideological. The public is always problematic.

The correlate in the art world is the usually un-interrogated bourgeois contingent to which the art world addresses itself and from which it claims its authority. The hegemony of this "public" is the core ideological practice of its key institutions. The failure to address the conditions that produce and sustain this hegemony perpetuates the divide between those who circulate within the art world and those who do not. This leaves little room to maneuver other than "audience development" initiatives based on liberal notions of inclusion. The authority of established notions of the public also determines the politics of institutions and the terms by which, for example, they relate to the city around them. Among the consequences of this structure are the divisions between those who are the subjects of the art world—its patrons, curators, intellectuals, and artists—and those who are its objects, requiring that the experiences of those who do not circulate within its spheres enter solely as representations. Others are spoken of or someone speaks on their behalf.

Given the heterogeneity of an audience whose members locate themselves and are located in different, even oppositional social positions, the artist/activist's demand to break the silence around oppression quickly falls back onto the person making the demand. Whose silence must be broken, whose silence must be disciplined, and what is made of the listening that silence conditions? The Brazilian radical educator Paulo Freire once argued that the culture of silence arose from both the theft of the voice of the poor as well as the complicity of the poor in their own oppression—an interpellation into the subjectivity of domination. Silence, therefore, and its culture, was the thing that had to be broken for liberation to be realized. However, much later in his life, Freire introduced into his writings a very different conception of silence. Thinking about the role of the teacher as one who facilitates the articulation and transformation of the desires of others, Freire referred to teaching as adopting a discipline of silence. Silence, therefore, is not just the culture that must be broken in order for liberation to occur. Silence is also the very condition for listening.

Ultra-red members Robert Sember (New York) and Dont Rhine (Los Angeles) prepared the initial drafts of this text. The final draft includes responses to comments and suggestions by other Ultra-red members.

Contributors

Nancy Adajania is a cultural theorist, art critic, and independent curator. She has written and lectured on extended sculpture, new media, and public art, and previously was editor-in-chief of *Art India* (2000–2003). Adajania's archive installation *In Aladdin's Cave* was exhibited in *Building Sight*, Watermans Arts Centre, London, 2007; and *On Difference #2: Grenzwertig*, Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart, 2006. Recent (co)-curatorial projects include: *Landscapes of where*, Galerie Mirchandani + Steinrueke, Bombay, 2009; *Chalo! India: A New Era of Indian Art*, Mori Museum, Tokyo, 2008; *Thermocline of Art: New Asian Waves*, ZKM, Karlsruhe, 2007; *Avatars of the Object: Sculptural Projections*, NCPA/Guild Art Gallery, Bombay, 2006; and *Zoom: Art in Contemporary India*, Culturgest, Lisbon, 2004. Recent publications include an edited monograph on the artist Shilpa Gupta (2010). In fall 2010, she participated in BAK's Research-in-Residence program (with Ranjit Hoskote). Adajania lives and works in Bombay.

Jodi Dean is Professor of Political Science at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, NY. Her research and writing focus on the contemporary space of politics. She is co-editor of the journal *Theory and Event*, and sits on the editorial boards of the *International Journal of Žižek Studies* and *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. Dean has authored and edited several books; recent publications include: *Blog Theory: Feedback and Capture in the Circuits of Drive* (2010); *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies* (2009); *Žižek's Politics* (2006); and *Publicity's Secret* (2002). She is the editor of *Reformatting Politics: Information Technology and Global Civil Society* (with Jon Anderson and Geert Lovink) (2006); and *Empire's New Clothes: Reading Hardt and Negri* (with Paul A. Passavant) (2004). Dean lives and works in Geneva, NY.

T.J. Demos is a writer and critic teaching in the Department of Art History at University College London, London. He is presently completing a new book, *Migrations: Contemporary Art and the Politics of Globalization*, which explores the relation of contemporary photography and video to mobility and statelessness. Demos's essays have appeared in *Artforum*, *Grey Room*, *October*, and *Texte zur Kunst*, among others, and in 2007 he published *The Exiles of Marcel Duchamp*. Recent catalog essays include: "Giardini: A Fairytale," *Steve McQueen*, British Pavilion, 53rd Venice Biennale (2009); and "The Politics of Sustainability: Contemporary Art and Ecology," *Radical Nature: Art and Architecture for a Changing Planet 1969–2009*, Barbican Art Gallery, London (2009). In 2010 he co-curated *Uneven Geographies: Art and Globalization* at Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham and during 2008–2009, he organized *Zones of Conflict: Rethinking Contemporary Art During Global Crisis*, comprising a series of research workshops in London and an exhibition in New York. Demos lives and works in London.

Sharon Hayes is an artist who investigates the formation of the individual or collective in relation to politics, history, and speech through artistic and research-based performance, installation, and video works. Recent exhibitions and performances include: FORMER WEST Research Exhibition *Vectors of the Possible*, BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, 2010; 4th Auckland Triennial, Auckland, 2010; Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2010; *Greater New York*, P.S.1. Contemporary Art Center, New York, 2010; *Invisible Publics*, Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art, Cairo, 2010; *Andrea Geyer | Sharon Hayes*, Göteborgs Konsthall, Gothenburg, 2010 and Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, St. Gallen, 2009; 11th Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul, 2009; *Sharon Hayes: The Future is Unthinkable*, Objectif Exhibitions, Antwerp, 2009; and *In the Near Future*, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, 2008. In 2011, she will have a solo exhibition at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid. Hayes lives and works in New York.

Ranjit Hoskote is a poet, cultural theorist, and independent curator. He has published and lectured on contemporary art, postcolonial and globalization-era cultural politics, transcultural practices, and emergent urban culture. Previously Hoskote was Associate Fellow at SARAI/Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi (2007–2009), and senior editor and art critic for *The Hindu* (2000—2007). His essays have appeared in numerous books and anthologies; recent collections of Hoskote's poetry include: *Vanishing Acts: New and Selected Poems 1985–2005* (2006) and *Die Ankunft der Vögel* (2006); and recent artist monographs include: *Zinny & Maidagan: Compartment/Das Abteil* (2010) and *Praneet Soi: Still, Life* (2009). Recent (co)-curatorial projects include: *Detour: Five Position Papers on the Republic*, Chemould Prescott Road, Bombay, 2009; and the 7th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, 2008. In fall 2010, he participated in BAK's Research-in-Residence program (with Nancy Adajania). Hoskote lives and works in Bombay.

Ernesto Laclau is a political theorist and Professor Emeritus of Government at the University of Essex, Essex, where he was director of the doctoral program in Ideology and Discourse Analysis for many years. Laclau is also Distinguished Professor of Humanities and Rhetorical Studies at Northwestern University, Evanston. Active in the new social movements of the 1960s, he developed, with Chantal Mouffe, a theory of radical democracy in their landmark book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985). Laclau is a member of the editorial boards of the journals *Journal of Political Ideologies*, *Latin American Perspectives*, and *Philosophy and Social Criticism*. His many books include: *On Populist Reason* (2005); *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality* (with Judith Butler and Slavoj Žižek) (2000); and *Emancipation(s)* (1996). Laclau lives and works in Buenos Aires and London.

Peter Osborne is Professor of Modern European Philosophy and director of the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy, Kingston University, London. He is an editor of the British journal *Radical Philosophy*. Osborne's books include: *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde* (1995/2011); *Marx* (2005); *Conceptual Art* (2002); and *Philosophy in Cultural Theory* (2000). He also edited the three-volume *Walter Benjamin: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory* (2005). Osborne's writing on contemporary art includes contributions to the journals *Afterall*, *Art History*, *October*, and *Oxford Art Journal*, and catalogs accompanying exhibitions including: *Matias Faldbakken: The Shock of Abstraction*, National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo and Ikon, Birmingham, 2009; *The Quick and the Dead*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 2009; and *Sol Lewitt's Sentences on Conceptual Art*, Office of Contemporary Art Norway, Oslo, 2009. He is currently completing a book on the philosophical aspects of contemporary art. Osborne lives and works in London.

Alexei Penzin is a theorist and researcher at the Institute of Philosophy, Moscow, and a member of the group Chto Delat?/ What is to be done?, a platform initiated in 2003 by a collective of artists, critics, philosophers, and writers with the goal of merging political theory, art, and activism. His major fields of interest are critically re-evaluated philosophical anthropology, contemporary interpretations of Marxist thought, Foucault, postcolonial studies, Soviet and post-Soviet culture and philosophy, and the interconnections of art and political praxis. Penzin regularly contributes to journals and other periodicals focusing on philosophy and the humanities, both in Russia and internationally. Currently he is working on a book on the cultural representations of sleep in the context of biopolitical regulations of life under late capitalism, provisionally entitled *Rex Exsomnis. Towards a political economy of sleep*. Penzin lives and works in Moscow.

Simon Sheikh is a freelance curator and critic who is currently undertaking doctoral research on the topic of exhibition-making and political imaginaries at the University of Lund, Lund. Connected to this research and his work as a FORMER WEST research fellow, he curated the FORMER WEST Research Exhibition *Vectors of the Possible* at BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht in 2010 and co-curated (with Maria Hlavajova) *On Horizons: Art and Political Imagination*, the 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress (Istanbul, 2010). Other curatorial projects include: *Capital (It Fails Us Now)*, UKS, Oslo, 2005 and Kunstihoone, Tallinn, 2006; and *Circa Berlin*, Nikolaj – Copenhagen Contemporary Art Center, Copenhagen, 2005. Sheikh's writings can be found in such periodicals as *Afterall*, *AnArchitectur*, *Open*, *Springerin*, and *Texte zur Kunst*. Recent publications include: *Capital (It Fails Us Now)* (2006); *In the Place of the Public Sphere?* (2005); *Knut Åsdam* (monograph) (2004); and the anthology *We are all Normal* (with Katya Sander) (2001). Sheikh lives and works in Berlin.

Hito Steyerl is a documentary filmmaker and author who holds a PhD in Philosophy. Her work, which examines issues such as globalization, feminism, and postcolonial critique comprises film, essays, and installations. She has lectured at Goldsmith's College, London and the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, among other institutions. Steyerl's films include: *After the Crash*, 2009; *Do you speak Spamsoc*, 2008; *Lovely Andrea*, 2007; and *November*, 2004. Recent exhibitions include: *Hito Steyerl*, Chisenhale Gallery, London, 2010; FORMER WEST Research Exhibition *Vectors of the Possible*, BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, 2010; *A History of Irritated Material*, Raven Row, London, 2010; *Im Moment des Verdachts* [In the Event of Suspicion], 2010, Bielefelder Kunstverein, Bielefeld, 2010; *Alles Anders?* [Everything Else?], Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, 2010; and *Hito Steyerl*, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (n.b.k.), Berlin, 2009. Steyerl lives and works in Berlin.

Ultra-red is an art collective that has since 1994 conducted sound-based investigations alongside social justice movements. In performances, recordings, exhibitions, and workshops, Ultra-red emphasize the organization of listening through the use of conceptually-derived performance protocols. Recent Ultra-red projects include: *Vogue'ology* (2010), which was shown in FORMER WEST Research Exhibition *Vectors of the Possible*, BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, 2010 and at Parsons The New School for Design (in partnership with the Vera List Center for the Study of Art and Politics), New York City, 2010; and *SILENT|LISTEN* (2005–2008), which explored the conditions of the AIDS crisis in the U.S. and Canada. For *Vogue'ology* and the text included in this reader, Ultra-red organize themselves as Robert Sember (New York) and Dont Rhine (Los Angeles).

Dmitry Vilensky is an artist, writer, and founding member of Chto Delat?/What is to be done?, a platform initiated in 2003 by a collective of artists, critics, philosophers, and writers with the goal of merging political theory, art, and activism. Vilensky is also an editor of the Chto Delat? newspaper. Chto Delat?'s recent exhibitions include: *Between Tragedy and Farce*, Smart Project Space, Amsterdam, 2011; *What is to be done?…The urgent need to struggle*, Galerie Nova, Zagreb and Institute of Contemporary Art, London, 2010; FORMER WEST Research Exhibitions *Vectors of the Possible*, BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, 2010 and *Principio Potosí*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2010 (the exhibition subsequently traveled to Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin and Museo National de Arte/Museo National de Ethnografia y Folklore, La Paz); 17th Biennale of Sydney, Sydney, 2010; and 11th Istanbul Biennale, Istanbul, 2009. Vilensky lives and works in St. Petersburg.

Related Projects Summary/ Credits

On Horizons: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art is linked to two projects in which the notion of a horizon was engaged with: *Vectors of the Possible,* FORMER WEST Research Exhibition and *On Horizons: Art and Political Imagination,* the 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress. Detailed information on both projects follows.

Vectors of the Possible
FORMER WEST Research Exhibition
BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht
12 September–28 November 2010

Vectors of the Possible, a group exhibition curated by Simon Sheikh, examined the notion of the horizon in art and politics and explored the ways in which art works can be said to set up certain horizons of possibility and impossibility, how art partakes in specific imaginaries, and how it can produce new ones, thus suggesting other ways of imagining the world. Counter to the post-1989 sense of resignation, curator Sheikh suggested that in the field of art, it is the horizon—as an "empty signifier," an ideal to strive towards, and a "vector of possibility"—that unites political struggles and gives them a direction. The art works in the exhibition can be seen as vectors, reckoning possibility and impossibility in (un)equal measures, but always detecting and indicating ways of seeing, and of being, in the world.

Participating artists: Matthew Buckingham (New York); Chto delat?/What is to be done? (St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Nizhny Novgorod); Freee (London and Sheffield); Sharon Hayes (New York); Runo Lagomarsino (Malmö) & Johan Tirén (Stockholm); Elske Rosenfeld (Berlin); Hito Steyerl (Berlin); and Ultra-red (New York and Los Angeles).

Vectors of the Possible was a research exhibition within the framework of the project FORMER WEST, an international contemporary art research, education, exhibition, and publishing project (2008–2013).

Curator: Simon Sheikh
Coordination: Marlies van Hak
Exhibition Installation:
Emile Miedema
BAK Team: Artistic Director: Maria Hlavajova; Executive Director: Arjan van Meeuwen; Project Manager, FORMER WEST: Wendel ten Arve; Curator: Cosmin Costinaş; Curator of Publications: Jill Winder; Research Curator, FORMER WEST: Vivian Rehberg; Project Coordinators: Marlies van Hak, Suzanne Tiemersma; Communication and Education: Flora Lysen; Financial-administrative Assistant: Ellen Philippen; Office Assistants: Marieke Kuik, Dorine Sneep; Intern: Nova Benway

Special thanks to: Julie Ault, Matthew Buckingham, Gertrud Sandqvist, and the Malmö Art Academy, Malmö; Annabel van Baren; Robert Fitzpatrick, Janice Guy and Fabiana Viso, Murray Guy, New York; Hans Kuzmich; Tanya Leighton Gallery, Berlin; Anders Michelsen; Yeliz Palak; Katya Sander; Cornelius Zinédine Sheikh-Sander; Feliz Solomon; and the participating artists.

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ONDERWIJS CULTUUR WETENSCHAP

Gemeente Utrecht

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On Horizons: Art and Political Imagination
2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress, Istanbul
4–6 November 2010

On Horizons: Art and Political Imagination, the 2nd FORMER WEST Research Congress, was part of a series of public forums aimed at rendering visible and furthering the artistic, curatorial, and academic research in which the project FORMER WEST is grounded. The Congress revolved around the theoretical notion of the "horizon" and its place within artistic production and political imagination today. If, as it is commonly assumed, the global political and cultural changes of 1989 left the world bereft of a sense of politics as striving towards a future—a horizon as it were—then we are left with the perpetual caretaking of the existing state of things. Given this apparent endgame of liberal democracy, how can we insist that it is possible to imagine and to realize another world, to posit the horizon anew? In this context, the project FORMER WEST functioned a proposition for speculating—in the field of contemporary art—about a possible horizon. During the course of the three-day Congress, a group of artists, curators, and scholars gathered in Istanbul to engage in a conversation about these issues.

04.11.2010
Positing the Horizon in Art, Philosophy, and Politics
With contributions by: Julie Ault (artist and writer, New York), Boris Buden (cultural critic and writer, Berlin), Maria Hlavajova (artistic director, BAK, Utrecht and FORMER WEST), Çağlar Keyder (sociologist, Istanbul/Binghamton), Peter Osborne (philosopher and writer, London), and Simon Sheikh (curator and critic, Berlin).

05.11.2010
Horizontality Enacted
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Reclaiming a Horizon—Art as Political Imagination
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