

Curating, our word processors tell us, is a spelling mistake. This spelling mistake is our qualification. The growth of curating programmes in art colleges and associated institutions, is an interesting development, one which may encourage the independent practice to be increasingly supported as well as possibly having significant impact upon broader cultural production. Red now, but for how much longer?

A Fine Red Line is a curatorial miscellany, a collection of visual and written contributions by a number of contemporary artists and emerging curators. The contributions correspond to nine questions formulated by the editors which define the sections of the book. Is curating caring? Does new media mean new democracy? Does 'community' objectify? What fiction? Is there a new mysticism in the art assemblage? Where does performance start and end? A single code of ethics for a global art system? Do community art projects provoke change? Is curating still caring?

A Fine Red Line A Curatorial Miscellany



IM press

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A Curatorial Miscellany

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Introduction

A Fine Red Line

If contemporary art can be interpreted as a series of formal enquiries then perhaps contemporary curating might be understood as the formulation of questions which either frame or follow on from these enquiries. During a series of workshops on MFA Curating in the Department of Art, Goldsmiths, University of London, a number of ideas began to emerge. Here, a group of six people formed an editorial team, one that wished to stop, compress and then extend these ideas both to artists and peers whose practices seemed relevant and whose responses seemed unpredictable at this particular point in contemporary art (history). And so began, *A Fine Red Line*.

A Fine Red Line is a curatorial miscellany, a collection of visual and written contributions by a number of contemporary artists and emerging curators. The contributions correspond to nine questions formulated by the editors which were developed within the critical framework provided through a year long series of workshops and lectures on the curating programme. These questions are short and potentially provocative, intending to accommodate different opinions, angles and practices. Just as no two artworks are the same, neither are these responses but it is hoped that their combination creates interesting chemistry, a new set of questions or course of enquiry.

The title reflects both the editorial concept and content. Given the diverse perspectives and responsibilities of 'the curator', the fine line between both practical and theoretical concerns must surely be the only constant of this continually emerging creative practice. Accordingly, this 'miscellany' is categorically not intended as a curatorial guide, for how could one possibly exist? As art and its parameters continue to develop and change, so to do all our fine lines and under these unsteady conditions, even the bravest cartographer would surely refuse to venture.

The line is not only fine, but also red: 'curating', our word processors tell us, is a spelling mistake. This spelling mistake is our qualification. The growth of curating programmes in art colleges and associated institutions is an interesting development, one which

may encourage independent practice to be increasingly supported as well as possibly having significant impact upon broader cultural production. Red now, but for how much longer?

The title reflects both the editorial concept and content. Given the diverse perspectives and responsibilities of 'the curator', the fine line between both practical and theoretical concerns must surely be the only constant of this continually emerging creative practice

Ultimately, these questions would be rhetorical but for the considered and important contributions of the artists, curators and writers, and it is with huge gratitude that the editorial team would like to thank Louisa Adam, Rosa Barba & David Maljkovic, Stephanie Bertrand, Carol Bove, Steven Claydon, Mary Cork, Mario García Torres, Haizea Barcenilla, Rahile Haque, Emily Jacir, Christine Kunze Takengny, Marlena Kudlicka, Guillaume Paris, Alexandre Singh, Caterina Riva, Cally Spooner, Stephanie Sykes, Raymond Taudin Chabot, Jeffrey Vallance and Tarek Zaki. Equally, we would like to extend our gratitude to Dr. Andrew Renton and Lisa Le Feuvre, whose professional advice has been invaluable, and to Dr. Andrea Phillips, without whose critical ideas, ceaseless attention, provocation and support the motivation to produce this publication would have undoubtedly been less fuelled. Finally, the editorial team would also like to thank those project spaces, artists and individuals who have supported the fundraising process, as well as the ongoing and generous advice of its board.

— The editorial team

Is curating caring?



John Stezaker
Cinema 2 II, 2005

Collage
Courtesy The Approach Gallery

Searching for a curatorial position. Alain Badiou's thesis on art.

Rahila Haque

The curator holds no distinct position or occupation. In this respect the curator operates in and around a variety of concerns. As a central concept to discuss the curator one can refer to Alain Badiou's discussion of art. Here, Badiou is concerned with the relationship between artistic configurations and philosophy, and how education might circulate between them. He argues that in the realm of the immanent and singular artwork, art and philosophy must be united, especially in order to uphold pedagogy.¹ One may, in departing from Badiou's description, see the curatorial role as an intersection. Furthermore, one could suggest that the curator provides the conditioning necessary for the possibility of Badiou's new schemata for art; the schemata allowing art to be simultaneously singular and immanent.

In *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, Badiou highlights the three main historical schemata that have thus far 'saturated' our understanding of the relationship between art and philosophy, leaving them disparate. These are named as didactic, romantic and classical; each schema exploring a different relation between art and truth. In the didactic schema art is semblance, all truth is external to it and it must be kept 'under surveillance' by philosophy. In the romantic schema, art is truth incarnate; philosophy is remote in comparison and needs art to display its absolute. In the classical schema, art's purpose is not truth but 'public service', forming an object of transference for the viewer, with philosophy maintaining the position of truth as it is beyond this act of resembling. For Badiou, there must be a new schema to resolve these separations between art and philosophy.

Alain Badiou claims art as a truth procedure; a form of thought in itself – this is the basis of his new schemata for art, and new understanding of the link between art, philosophy and 'the pedagogical theme.'² Art is not simply presentation, art is representation; immanent. In addition, the truth that art represents can only be found in art, making it singular. Art's truth is also the very feature making it pedagogical, because the purpose of education for Badiou is ultimately 'to arrange the forms of knowledge in such a way that some truth may come to pierce a hole in them.'³ The role of philosophy in this equation is to expose truth rather than symbolise it.

It should be clarified that Badiou's discussion of art as truth is not referring to the individual artwork, but to 'artistic configuration'. The artwork is finite for Badiou, and thereby denotes only one component part in a truth procedure. The artistic configuration instead comprises a multitude of singular works and presents the opportunity to think truth in Badiouian terms, that is as infinite with the ability to traverse time and place.

Therefore if art is truth in and of itself, is inherently pedagogical by nature, and philosophy may articulate this, where can the curatorial role be discussed in this equation?

Returning to his three concerns, the three necessary elements that surround the artwork itself, the curator would seem to navigate them with ease. For surely, in terms of the artistic configuration, the curator attempts to reveal, create and be a part of them. Through and during this activity, the curator might also summon philosophical attributes in order to support or validate these actions. Even though, according to Badiou, art should not require philosophy's assistance to be understood (due to its singularity), it might be argued that curators require philosophy so that they might substantiate their position.

In the same vein, education, although identified as a feature of art itself, becomes that which the curator extracts, particularly in a contemporary understanding of how institutions function and provide. Simultaneously philosophical and pedagogical concerns may present themselves within a curatorial strategy. This maintains the link that Badiou places so much importance on, whilst affirming the singularity of the artwork.

From this point, the danger becomes, as Badiou highlights at the end of his chapter on 'Art and Philosophy', the difficulty of distinguishing truths from opinion. He gives philosophy this task of identifying a distinction, and it is here that the curatorial role becomes a negative attribute in the schema. Through intervention into artistic configurations, one might say the curator attempts to create artificial reconfigurations as truth, which externalise truth from the artwork. This is the creation of semblance, as configurations are solely made from singular artworks and truth is only internal to them and their inquiry. Consequently, philosophy's task becomes all the more complicated in distinguishing artistic truth as curatorial opinion imposes itself.

1 'Immanence: Art is rigorously coextensive with the truths that it generates. Singularity: These truths are given nowhere else than in art.'
Alain Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, Alberto Toscano (transl.), California: Stanford University Press, 2005, p. 9

2 For Alain Badiou, a truth procedure is a form of thought which carries the consequences of disruption into a situation of established knowledge, and deploys that which was previously unable to exist.

3 Idem 1, p. 9

4 Alain Badiou, *15 Theses on Contemporary Art* (Dec 2003), online transcript available at <http://www.lacan.com/iss ue22.htm>

From Alain Badiou's *15 Theses on Contemporary Art* (2003):

9. The only maxim of contemporary art is: do not be imperial. This also means: do not be democratic, if democracy implies conformity with the idea of political liberty.

11. The abstraction of non-imperial art is not concerned with any particular public or audience...

15. It is better to do nothing than to contribute to the invention of formal ways of rendering visible that which Empire already recognises as existent.⁴

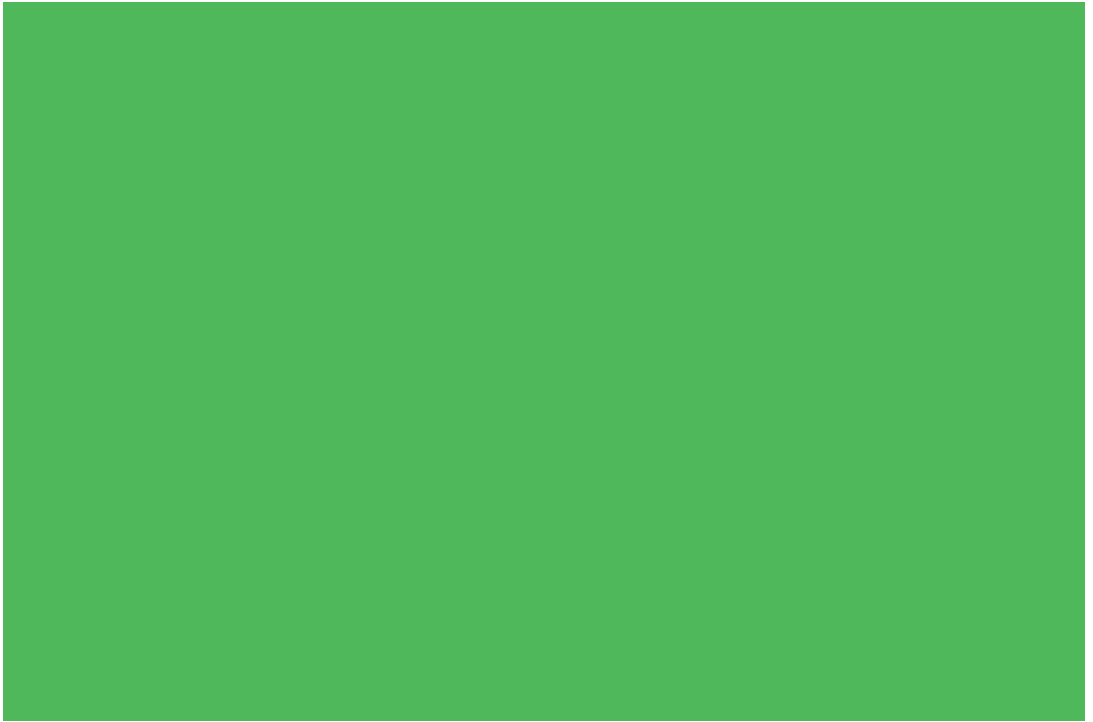
The curator presents a role for the new schema that helps retain the relation between art, philosophy and education; paradoxically, the curator threatens the understanding of art as truth procedure through those 'empirical' gestures of curating; being concerned with a public or an audience, and realising 'formal ways of rendering visible'. Ultimately in this Badiouian system, the curator belongs in the realm of opinion, of imperial democracy. It begins to become apparent that Badiou's new schema may not allow discussion of curating as a practice or occupation in the realm of truth.

Therefore, the curator is a tool drawing forth philosophy and emphasising the pedagogical function of art so that it is seen as its own truth, a singular language. Curating's own struggle for a language becomes the problem exposed, as so often it falls into the realm of service fulfilment or opinion, and itself holds no authority as education.

To use Alain Badiou's theses on art, and to attempt to fulfil his new schema, the curator's position seems to be a natural recourse. However, it forces the acceptance that through conditioning, the curatorial role is necessarily one of opinion, not truth, and in this very process reveals art as at once immanent and singular. Far from seeing this as a sacrifice for the curator, it allows a grounding from which to discuss curating itself; to develop as contemporary practice does, from a practice of semblance, opinion and service to being capable of forming its own configurations, and thereby its own truth and education. However, it will be a difficult if not impossible task, as the curatorial position constantly strives for that ideology between truth and opinion.

Curating's own struggle for a language becomes the problem exposed, as so often it falls into the realm of service fulfilment or opinion, and itself holds no authority as education

Does
'community'
objectify?



Emily Jacir

Crossing Surda (a record of going to and from work) 8, 2002

C-print mounted on aluminum

Courtesy Alexander and Bonin, New York

An investigation of the 'Fictitious Institute', as a temporary creative community within the 'Harbour of Ideas', Andrejsala, Riga, Latvia.

Louisa Adam

Andrejsala is an area in the heart of the harbour district in the city of Riga, the capital of Latvia, a country that has seen great political change in recent years. The early 1990s brought the end of Soviet rule, membership of the World Trade Organisation came in 1999 and the country was welcomed into the European Union in 2004. The national move towards globalisation is reflected in local development programmes such as the one underway in Andrejsala, a rundown district where funds have recently become available for redevelopment. The development programme has commissioned the renowned Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas and his Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA). It has also invited the global design and engineering firm, OVE ARUP & Partners and the contemporary landscape architecture organisation, Inside Outside, to complete the master plan of the Riga Port City project. The development company Daunrigas Attistibas Uzņemums aims for 'the development of Riga centre towards the river Daugava to establish a multifunctional and high-quality urban territory in the area cleared from port operations.'¹

Amongst the projects to be generated by the development programme is an Institute for Contemporary Art. In the meantime, before the institution is created, the site will be available for exhibitions and other cultural events. One of the interesting things about Andrejsala as an exhibition site is the fact that its developers avoid referring to the buildings to be renovated here as 'buildings' and instead use the term 'objects'.² In English the word 'object' refers to any material thing that can be seen or touched whereas in contemporary art discourse, the word has specific connotations; the 'art object' is an object that is considered to be of artistic value. Now, all material things – including buildings – are objects and it is therefore legitimate to refer to buildings as 'objects'. However, more information is conveyed by the term 'building' than the term 'object'; the use of the word 'building' telling us what type of object we are talking about. Given that we often expect the use of language to provide us maximum information it would seem unusual for someone to refer to a building as an 'object', unless they had some special purpose in doing so. I propose that the developers' intention in performing the linguistic abstraction from 'building' to 'object' is to effect an associative

abstraction of the buildings from their previous functions – as customs houses for trade and exchange, engineering workshops, transformer buildings for power, etc. – and reposition them (the buildings) as association-free entities offering all other participants a 'blank canvas' upon which to work.

'Harbour of Ideas' is the title of the development project in Andrejsala given by the team of developers. This is a gesture. If this title, figuratively speaking, signals the reframing of the space, the temporal and spatial comings and goings of cultural and economic activity, then this is in correlation with the policies formulated by the developers for the urban fabric in this specific area:

The plan of Riga Port City is mainly a tool, which does not dictate and does not create a predictable and explicit aggregate of applications... It should make one sufficiently convinced about the features of a newly developed city part, in order to arouse the interest of the target audience. The main goal is that the plan should simultaneously be indefinite and definite.³

1 www.jau.lv/eng/index_new.php

The formulation of zones is also significant as:

The [formulation of six] zones subdivide the site more subtly into quarters with varied urban characters or 'feel'. The atmosphere of each zone is created through an amalgamation of a local identity, derived from the adjacent areas or from the zone's former use; and an international identity referring to universally known urban and dock typologies. This hybrid identity serves to create quarters that appeal to both locals and international users.⁴

2 www.andrejsala.lv/162/103/

3 Riga Port City Plan, www.andrejsala.lv

4 Ibid.

5 www.andrejsala.lv/100

6 Pierre Huyghe and Philippe Parreno, *AnnLee in Anzenzone*, (2000), Liam Gillick and Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, *AnnLee You Proposes* (2001)

The above offers evidence for what is being 'performed by' the ideologies 'written for' this public space, before the institution is established in the wider European cultural context. Therefore, is it not only an affect of the edifice as perceived and experienced at street level, but also the surrounding cultural ideology?⁵ A projection of contemporary art can be observed on site in the reflexive and temporary project *Trajectory 4* (2007), which used an imaginary ideal institution for contemporary art as a frame of reference. It has been developed in response to the urban planning scheme and in association with the Latvian Museum of Contemporary Art, planned to occupy one of the larger buildings in Zone E: Riga Soho, and estimated

7 Completed by Jaunrigas Attistibas Uzņēmums in cooperation with Analitisko Petijumu un Strategiju Laboratorija, Richard Florida, cited from 'Lifestyles and Values of Rigans in 2020' (www.andrejsala.lv/117/597)

8 Ibid.

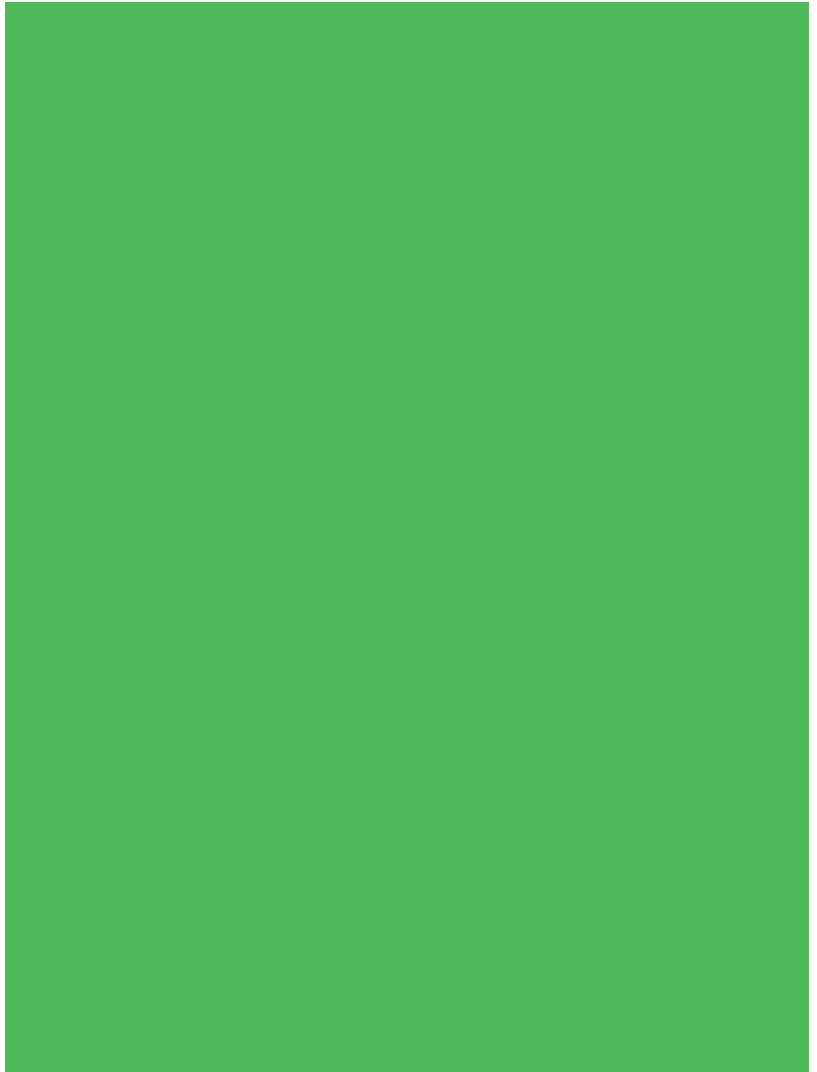
to open in 2011. Another project on site includes an exhibition called 'Fictitious Institute' (2007) which was generated by the already established Latvian Contemporary Centre Arts (LCCA), its purpose to play out the area's 'transforming vectors' through an appropriate institutional critique of this situation. As suggested when exhibiting parts of the extensive *No Ghost Just a Shell* (1999-2003) project, the 'objects' are now 'shells'.⁶

As a result of the recent cultural activity, these customs houses are now given a different status. They are advertised as being 'unique' by the developers, who are positioning them at the centre of a creative community. Therefore, it can be argued that, structurally speaking, these 'objects' are integral to the re-conceptualisation of space. The developers have now categorised this new 'creative community', who temporarily occupy these buildings in South End, as 'Islanders'.⁷ The stated aim of the developers allowing a creative community on site was to mitigate any adverse socio-economic change that the development might cause. This implies that the developers believe that a *creative community* will secure a *creative industry*, which in turn will support economic development. This is where the tension between the ideas and the ideals resides. It is inferred that the participants of this community are situated within a system of cultural production, in which anything can be temporarily experienced. By their affiliation with contemporary art practices and institutions, the Harbour of Ideas' developers imply that creative activity directly correlates to a higher level of economic development through innovation, in anticipation of the incoming creative industry. This is an introduction of the new 'creative classes', workers who they claim 'can be classified into super-creative core professions... the creative class is the basis for economic growth in various cities around the world', a categorisation based on economic rather than artistic productivity, as one of many stipulations for the place.⁸

If the understanding of this code is part of what it means to be a member or citizen identifying with the community or culture within which affiliation occurs, then, in order to investigate this mode of language, the tensions between the ideas and ideals are considered to be the 'objects' harboured

To contextualise this interplay between place and rhetoric, and to make a response to the questions raised around the 'staging' exemplified above, I would ask whether curating critical contemporary art in this area might 'perform' a renegotiation of the existing rhetoric of the context. For instance, in the form of trope, it might be possible to address how the conventions of figurative language constitute a rhetorical and artificial code. If the understanding of this code is part of what it means to be a member or citizen identifying with the community or culture within which affiliation occurs, then, in order to investigate this abstract mode of language, the tensions between the ideas and ideals may be considered the 'objects' harboured.

Does
new media
mean new
democracy?



Guillaume Paris

Wolf, 2003

Wolf: goat fur, polyurathene foam, synthetic
jaws and eyes

Wrapping: silkscreen polypropelene, silk bow

Rotating pedestal: wood, resin, motor

Courtesy the artist

New media, it is often argued, is potentially more democratic than traditional media, allowing works to be more widely distributed to larger audiences. As an artist working in both traditional (Wölf!, 2003) and digital media (*Transcendental Abstractions* (*Trust in Me*), 2003), as well as teaching New Media (at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris), do you feel that there might be some truth in this argument?

Yes and no...

I might qualify that answer by questioning some of the assumptions made in the original question:

a) Does wide distribution imply more democracy? (ie is mass media democratic?)

b) In correlation to the above: should not the emphasis be on production rather than diffusion? (In which case, new media is potentially more democratic in that it implies an easier access to the means of production – for video, music and photography especially.)

c) Is 'new media' to be understood as synonymous to internet contents (which can be widely distributed)? In that case, the means of diffusion is new, but not the contents per se. It is in this respect more democratic (though still limited to people with computers and internet connections).

d) As such, new media can hardly be compared to 'traditional media' such as sculpture but to other means of diffusion such as television (which is not democratic in terms of production).

e) Finally, should art be (more) democratic?

— Guillaume Paris

From Paradox, Revolt

**Haizea Barcenilla in collaboration
with Raymond Taudin Chabot**

à deux is a curatorial project in which the curator establishes a dialogue with an artist about a common interest. Both artist and curator use the subject of discussion as a starting point, from which they will make an artwork and a written work, independently, and without the intention of illustrating or describing one another's opinion.

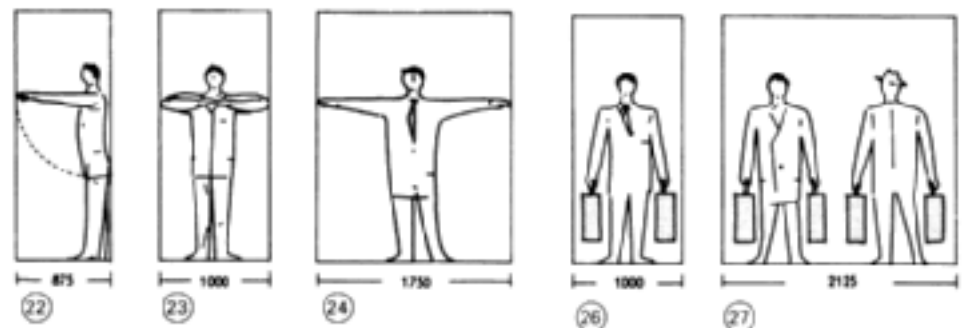
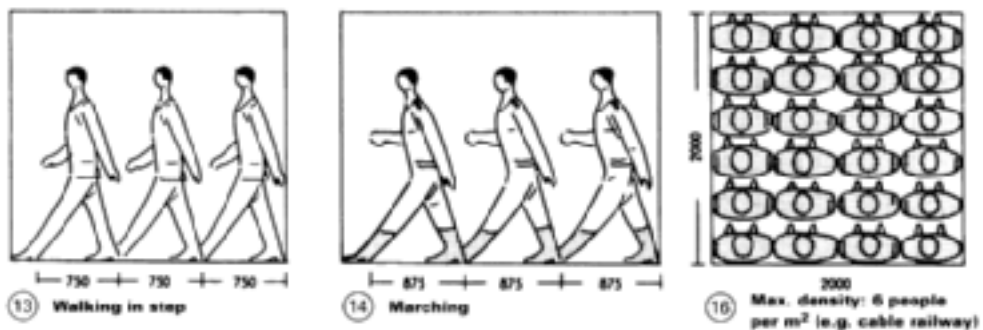
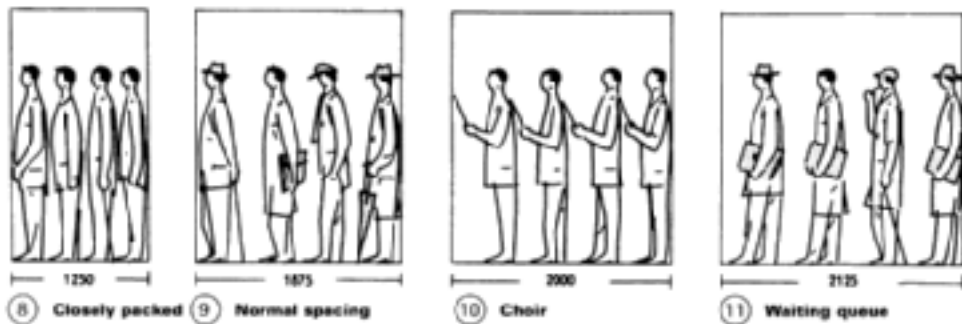
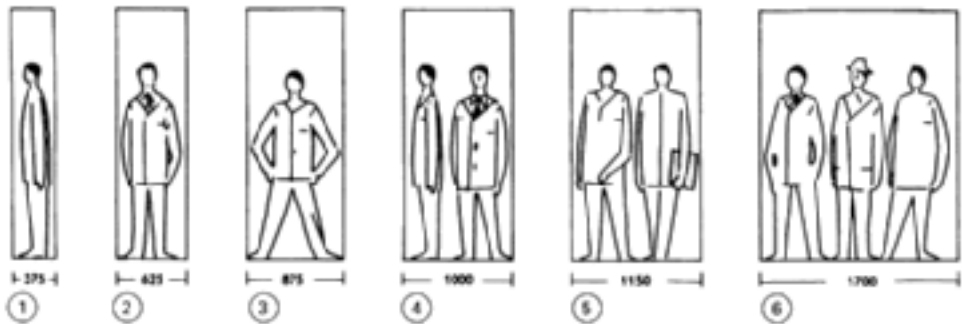
The misuse or abuse of the word 'democracy' might be a basic, if unfortunate, assumption within contemporary culture. It is a term used by all political parties, whether they be left or right wing and regardless of how extreme their policies. It is very often mentioned in talk shows, reality shows and the media. It is open to many interpretations and applicable to any general subject. We could argue that it is one of the most polysemous words of our time, even for those of us who operate in the visual arts and are so fond of openly interpretable words and discourses. Ironically though, the word has a very specific background, implying the classical Athenian organisation of the polis. Nonetheless, time goes by and words travel, their meaning changing from one context to the other. The problem with the term 'democracy' now is that it seems to have got lost in its travels.

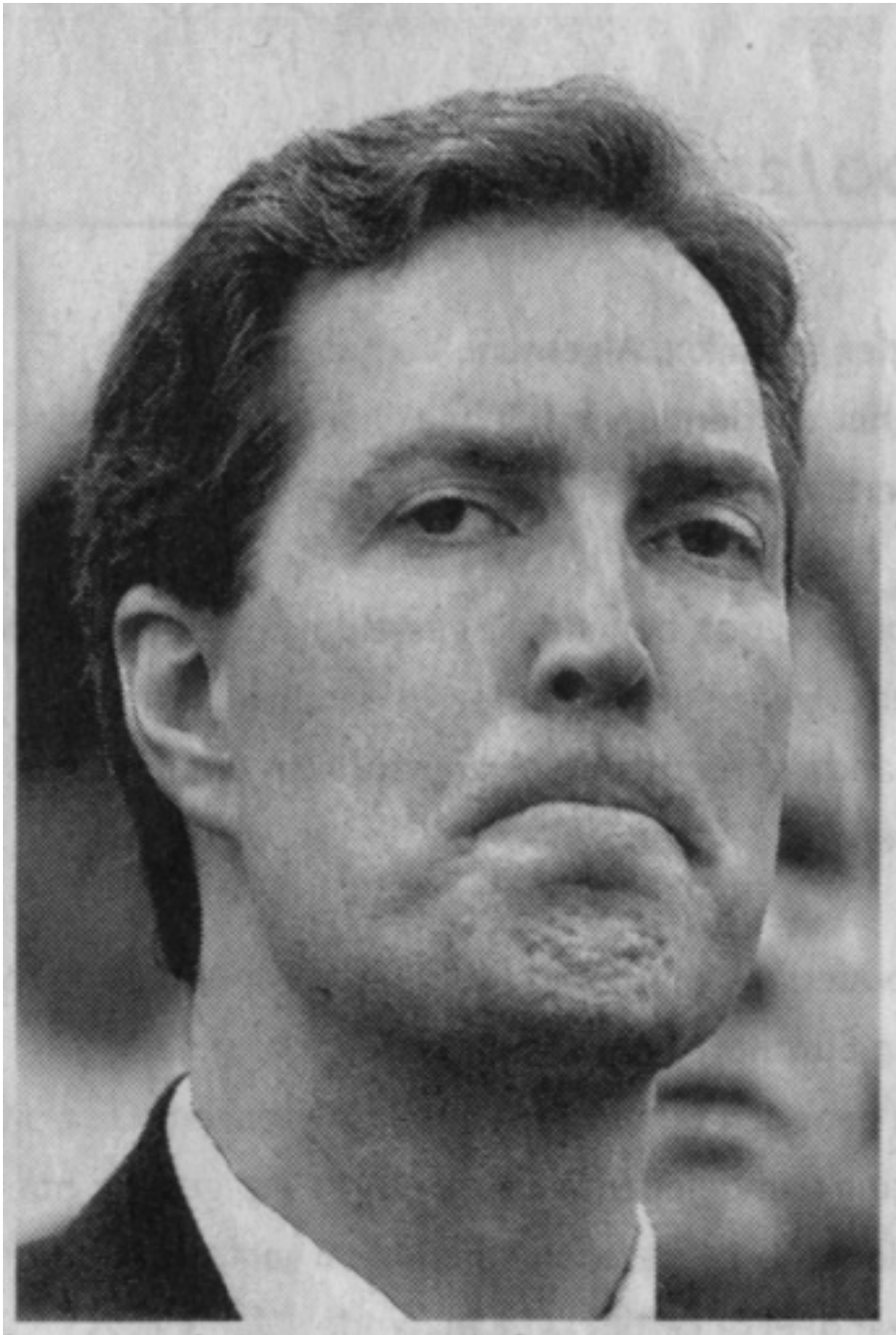
In brief, the problem may be closely related to the broader neo-liberal value system in which we manoeuvre, which not only seeks to justify, but also to promote the individualistic attitudes that are fundamental to consumer culture. At the same time, this very system operates by diffusing a general sense of satisfaction amongst the population, a feeling of vital participation and necessary inclusion. This promise is, as we know, completely false. Instead, we live in an oligarchy that administers a series of normalised disruptions; some forms of protest amid the accepted and necessary otherness of 'how-everything-works', making us believe that there exists a shared and equal freedom. Revolt is restricted, sometimes unconsciously staged by its participants. Revolt does not function the way it did some decades ago.

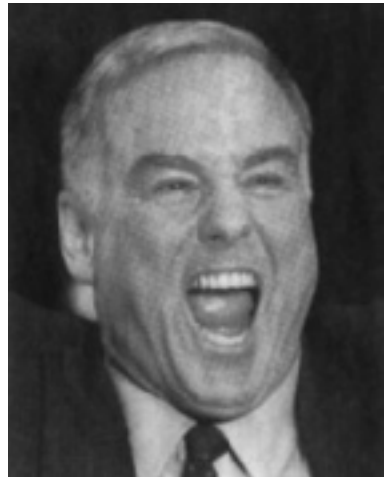
This does not mean that revolt has become impossible, and that there is no viable escape from the current system; it instead implies the necessity of critically analysing forms of revolt and researching new modes of resistance. This situation arises from a basic paradox at the root of neo-liberal thinking: the discourse it affects is opposite to its actual ways of operating. This paradox is evident in this current system, which, although based on a strong sense of individualism, also tries to make this same individual feel part of something. Neo-liberal discourse is closely connected to that of community, both terms claiming that the presence of a united group of people sharing common interests is a norm rather than a possibility. Any heterogeneous group may therefore be bound together by the (potentially) hypocritical use of the word 'democracy'.

Perhaps it is this essential paradox that is pushing contemporary thinkers towards a new form of revolt, of resistance, of politics, that departs from discourses about the individual. Starting from this paradox is a potentially dangerous position which might itself risk being consumed by the Debordian 'spectacle'. It could however be the only feasible way forward now

for moving people, add +10% to widths







that organised revolts become more subtly and increasingly controlled by global corporate and political organisations. Working against from within.

Previous pages:
Untitled, 2008
Raymond Taudin Chabot
Collage
Courtesy the artist

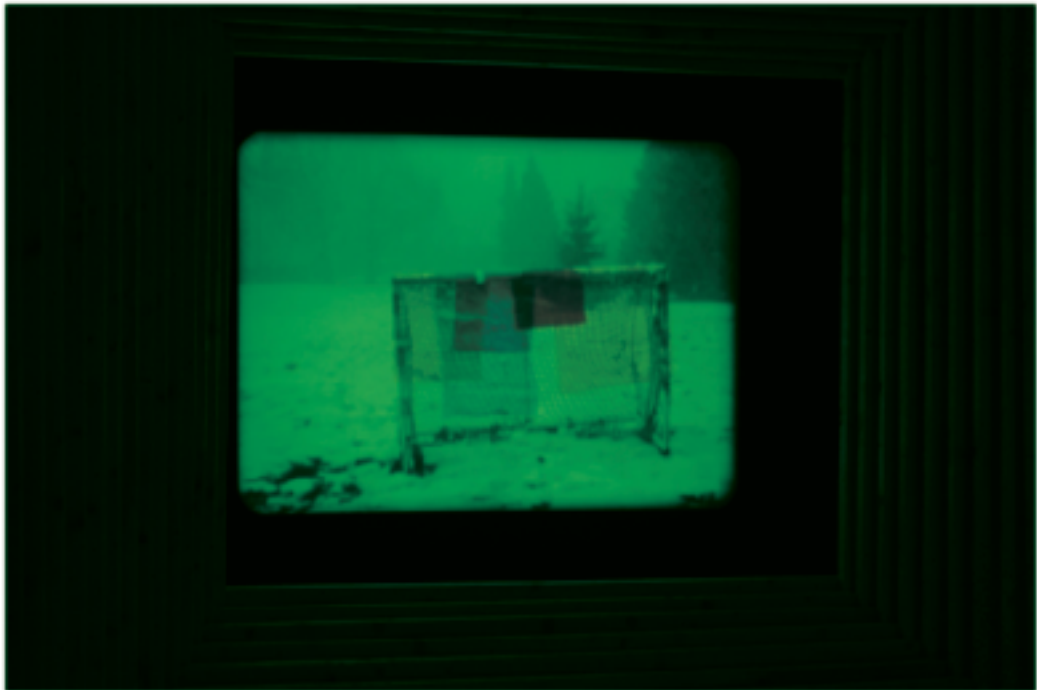
The arts, in the meantime, reflect these discussions to some degree. Some practices still explore or utilise the notion of community, which despite appearing genuine, risk becoming nothing more than a neo-liberal tool. Some others try to dismember ideas of politics, society or exchange systems, while looking attentively at the developments in social and economic theory. Ideas about tackling emancipation grow stronger, although the debates about the various ways of implementing them are as yet unresolved. Disagreement has power, and as Rancière has stated, the arts are still appropriating this strength.¹ The only clear point is that any seemingly easy way around does not reflect the complexity of this current paradoxical situation.

1 Jacques Rancière,
Disagreement; Julie Rose
(transl.), Minnesota:
University of Minnesota
Press, 1998

Neo-liberal discourse is closely connected to that of community, both terms claiming that the presence of a united group of people sharing common interests is a norm rather than a possibility.

Haizea Barcenilla

What fiction?



Rosa Barba and David Maljkovic
Handed Over, 2008

Installation at Project Arts Centre, Dublin
16mm loop and built installation, 6'37"
Courtesy the artists and Project Arts Centre, Dublin

Can you briefly explain the significance of using fictional (or literary) devices within your work?

I am curious about how they looked... I see cities sometimes with buildings made from ground floors that people built and then didn't like anymore. Then they destroyed them again, leaving the sharp iron beams and concrete behind. There are many floors like that and stairs that lead to nowhere. Interweaving alleys joining those houses in an absurd labyrinth.

I don't remember what they looked like anymore, it was a long time ago. I did not put a fixative, a transparent finish coat on them so they disappeared. It could be they disappeared because the forms are afraid of aging.

— Rosa Barba and
David Maljkovic

How does the use of fiction in contemporary art allow artists to address the documentary?

Mary Cork

Fiction's capacity to either undermine or accentuate an artist's political voice can be examined in a number of ways. The role of fiction in contemporary art, defined here as the invention or fabrication of images or ideas rather than the intended expression of 'fact', often manifests through an artist's use of literary devices or styles such as allegory or irony. Writer and curator Mark Nash proposes, in his article *Reality in the Age of Aesthetics* that the turn towards the documentary in contemporary art now has to acknowledge the inherent fictionalisation within such practice.¹ Similarly, this essay specifically looks at how contemporary artists who rely heavily on tools of *fiction* rather than *documentation* as an act of social analysis, attempt to conduct a more thorough examination of the document itself, of 'reality'. Nash cites French philosopher Jacques Rancière to support his argument about the role of fiction in both the documentation of social reality and its simultaneous aestheticisation, stating 'the fiction of the aesthetic age defined models for connecting the presentation of facts and forms of intelligibility that blurred the border between the logic of facts and the logic of fiction... Writing history and writing stories come under the same regime of truth'.²

Beyond any overt political intentions, the use of fictional devices might also be considered a symbolic surrender of the artist, a loud admonishment that, 'fuck it, I just want to have fun'. Between these two tendencies however, the use of allegory and irony in contemporary art practice might point towards the difficulty of making work in a more complicated cultural climate where an artist needs to find an acceptable way to be political whilst also maintaining an aloof association with its surrounding conditions. In reaction to the almost absurdly utopian 'realism' intended by the genre of documentary, be it in contemporary art or in other fields, artists now seem to embrace their inability to accurately reflect life by introducing various fictional devices and styles within their artwork whilst simultaneously presenting it in documentary style.

Artists creating something overtly fictional allow themselves to manipulate factual information in order to construct indirect or subjective observations of reality. Fictional devices, when used to inform a critique of 'truth' (what we believe to be fact), can

perhaps permit uninhibited creativity for an artist rather than the restrictions of more direct methods of representation. But what remains of those artists who maintain an unwavering devotion to presenting 'fact' through documentation? And how is this ongoing tendency reconciled with the idea that fiction is sometimes a more effective way of creating examples of 'truth'?

Artist and social archivist Jeremy Deller presents documentation of oft-unrecorded parts of our society, motivated by what seems to be a sense of social responsibility. Although Deller's work might intend to act as a liaison between the individuals that he sees as under-represented and those he judges adequately represented, it might be interpreted as being more concerned with the aesthetic construction of social realities than its actual documentation. Deller uses fictional devices as soon as he begins to arrange his documents for viewing. *The Battle of Orgreave Archive (An Injury to One is an Injury to All)* (2004), *Social Parade* (2004), and *Speak to the Earth and It Will Tell You* (2007) all purport to document the frequently unnoticed 'other' parts of the whole, in whatever social or political situation. One might identify the role of fiction within Deller's work upon the realisation that despite his efforts to uncover a broader point of view, the final work is still only a partial representation of a particular event or community.

Creating allegory from an archive, The Atlas Group was established by Walid Raad in 1999 as a research project and archive of pseudo-political information. By creating a fictional group and their collective research documents, Raad attempts to expose an alternative history of Lebanon since the civil war, shedding light on areas he might not otherwise have accessed through official documentation. In this way, allegorical devices offer a means to be critical without being dogmatic, and without claiming to present any unequivocal truth.

While the term 'fantasy', a form of imaginative fiction set in seemingly foreign or alien environments, is commonly used in literature and popular entertainment, it is often only positively received in contemporary art discourse when used in an ironic way; as an unabashed embrace of one's inner geek or as a reflection of art's non-exemption from popular culture. Intention is the only factor that separates this use of fantasy in art from the kind that one might find in a comic book. In his installation *The Index* at the 2007 Venice Biennale, David Altmejd transformed the Canadian pavilion into the forested tomb of a slain giant. Chimeras of real and mythical creatures formed from rough-hewn modeling clay, prosthetic eyeballs, and other random man-made bits, lay amongst stuffed birds perched on pine trees, all creating an experience that not only encouraged fantasy but that also intended to document the influence of fantasy in contemporary culture. *The Index*

1 Mark Nash, 'Reality in the Age of Aesthetics', *Frieze*, issue 114; April 2008

2 Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, Gabriel Rockhill (transl.), London: Continuum, 2004, p. 38

blends symbols of fantasy from various points in time, presenting its non-linear history with which any viewer, regardless of their demographic, could make personal associations and for which they might even feel nostalgic.

Beyond any overt political intentions, the use of fictional devices might also be considered a symbolic surrender of the artist, a loud admonishment that 'fuck it, I just want to have fun'

What often entertains us, both in and beyond contemporary art, is a version of reality with fictional elements laid bare. This tendency is perhaps revealed by the popularity of reality television. In *the return of the real / gercegin geri donusu* (2005), Phil Collins exposes the fiction found in reality television by using its own methods to expose the inherent fictional perversions of voyeuristic entertainment in his video work. Collins presents former participants of reality-television in a reality-television format, but here the work offers them a platform to speak about how they have been exploited by this particular genre. Similarly, David Shrigley's succinct piece of work entitled *I'm Dead* (2007), a stuffed kitten standing upright, holding a plywood sign with the words 'I'm Dead' painted on it, reveals a double emphasis. In *I'm Dead*, the kitten's ability to tell the viewer of its own inanimate state is complete fallacy. In the same vein, *the return of the real* employs the mechanisms of reality entertainment to expose its failings as a document. Here, the sculpture reveals how its parts have been manipulated in order to remain in a constant state of animation, showing the viewer its perpetual transition between idea and object. Shrigley and Collins both remind the viewer that understanding how artworks represent reality requires an identification of the fiction that they perpetuate.

Understanding how artworks represent reality requires an identification of the fiction that they perpetuate

Fictional devices, as described above, seem to have innate transformative qualities when made visible in the artwork, often gluing together disparate objects or pieces of information, and (depending on how they are used) infinitely changing their content. One has only to consider how the many ideas that we now believe to be true were once subject to ridicule for being beyond the boundaries of fact to understand how much the *fictionalisation* of reality is responsible for the *clarification* of reality. While Nash maintains that the turn towards documentary as a starting point for critical artistic practice isn't new, he does assert that the boundaries of fact and fiction are no longer a concern of artists working with documentation. Looking at the practices of artists like Raad, Collins and Shrigley shows us that this turn could also be examined through artistic practices not immediately associated with the documentary, ones that rely heavily on fictional devices as a point of critical departure. Looking at artists who use fiction as an artistic basis for their work, offers a reconfiguration of the documentary which is accessed from an alternative entry point, revealing that reality is inevitably affected and changed by individual creative influence.

Where does
performance
start and
end?



Mario García Torres
A Brief History Of Jimmie Johnson's Legacy, 2006

Still from video
Courtesy the artist and Jan Mot, Brussels

Where does performance start
and end?

*It starts and ends whenever the
knowledge of its existence starts
and ends.*

— Mario García Torres

Where does performance start and end?

Caterina Riva

'My work doesn't start and finish'...

— Tino Seghal

*I am at Stansted airport about to take a plane.
Time is running out, another deadline is approaching.*

1.

In his essay accompanying Art Sheffield 08, an annual city-wide contemporary art event, the curator Jan Verwoert introduces the idea that we (implying members of the tertiary sector) no longer work, we perform. Consistent with the theory that leisure and business are inextricably bound and that we now work 24/7, he produced this aforementioned text while engaged in a different art event, in this case a publication workshop in Geneva, where he wrote under pressure and within a tight timeframe, in what we might here call a performative writing exercise.

2.

A few weeks ago, I attended a lecture-performance presented by French artist Benoit Maire at the Royal College of Art, in London. Here, he had a suitcase from which he extracted different kinds of props while reading passages from different texts in broken English: one photocopied from a book on metaphysics, another on conceptual art and a third on the role of the object. As he was doing this, he assigned the audience a number of tasks such as typing on a creaky typewriter, helping unpack wood panels, or playing a pre-arranged Kasparov chess game. These tasks gradually helped the creation of a loose pattern of semi-voluntary interactions. Maire was building 'spatio-temporal variables' which, he stated at the end of the exercise, he was creating so that these situations might continue to exist without him.

3.

I recently took part in the reinvention of an Allan Kaprow happening, *Scales* (1971) at Tate Modern, where fifteen volunteers loosely followed the original Kaprow score up and down different flights of stairs throughout the building. This involved carrying

a concrete block up each staircase, placing one on each existing step, then walking up them and starting again, as a group. This somewhat modular way of proceeding repeatedly disturbed the flux of visitors moving through the museum.

4.

Mathieu Copeland is a curator known for organising shows with almost nothing in the exhibition space. He claims to have an objection to 'things', idiosyncratically eradicating the existence of material commodities from many of his exhibitions. In late 2007, for example, he curated *A Choreographed Exhibition* at Kunsthalle St. Gallen, which consisted of a series of choreographed exercises performed by a group of dancers, instructed by several artists' scores.

5.

Tino Seghal's performances explore the boundaries of the dematerialised artwork and his titles always relate to an object. After studying courses in economics and then choreography, Seghal began to create performances without objects in galleries, museums, fairs and biennials. *This objective of that object* (2005), for instance, was staged at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London where visitors were confronted by a group of what he refers to as interpreters, who chanted, 'The objective of this work is to become the object of a discussion'. Seghal, who rejects the use of the term 'performance' as a description of his work, maintains that his interest lies in processes of commodification.¹

If we live in a society of productivity, creativity, performativity, how is all this reflected in art? What debates are opened up through these kinds of practices? These are some of the questions that I was asked to address by one of this publication's editors, Nazli Gurlek. To expand the question, Gurlek pointed out a passage from an interview with artist Mario García Torres:

In the realm of economy, competition and collaboration go hand in hand, so I can see re-enactment as a way of merging social capitals. But perhaps the most important moment is the fact that repetition basically functions as a producer of change and thus difference as what is re-created never coincides with what it intends to represent. So at the end the re-enactment or repetition is simply a sort of creative way of co-producing reality.²

1 '[My work] is produced and it is material, but the difference is that it materialises itself in the human body and not in a material object. I don't make photographic or filmic reproductions of my work, because it exists as a situation, and therefore substituting it with some material object like a photo or video doesn't seem like an adequate documentation. Also, my works take a form that exists over time – as they can be shown over and over again – so they're not dependent on any kind of documentation to stand in for them... I criticise the mode of production inherent to a material object, but not the fact that it can be bought or sold.'

Tom Griffin, 'Interview with Tino Seghal', Artforum, May 2005, p. 125

2 Raimundas Malasauskas in an interview with Mario Garcia Torres, in <http://janmot.com/newspaper/todayisjustacopy1.php>

3 'A polymorphous self-employed autonomous worker[er] has emerged as the dominant form (of contractual relationship), a kind of "intellectual worker" who is him or herself an entrepreneur, inserted within a market that is constantly shifting and within networks that are changeable in time and space.'

Lazzarato, Maurizio, *Material Labour*, Colilli, Paul and Emery, Ed (transl.)

<http://www.generation-online.org/c/fcimmateriallabour3.htm>

In the previous paragraphs I have given five examples of different artistic (Maire, Seghal, Kaprow, García Torres) and curatorial (Verwoert, Copeland) attempts to explore art production that mirrors shifting political and economic conditions. These examples also aim to chart an evolution from the first experiments in performance in the 1960s, which were considered political in their attempts to counteract the force of the contemporary art market, to performance art in its current state. The movement that I am exploring is a tendency amongst contemporary artists, who are addressing the dematerialisation of the object of art whilst re-appropriating historical models of performance art practices. These approaches are then applied to a totally new set of social and economic conditions, in order to highlight this pervasive new mode of labour.

The line I am drawing joins the commodification of performance, the object of our discourse, to the materialisation of the immaterial. The two points are connected by the concept of Immaterial Labour, developed by sociologist Maurizio Lazzarato, which he defines as, 'the labour that produces the informational and cultural content of the commodity'. Immaterial labour, as opposed to a more historical Fordist model, is a term applied to new creative process of working in which the worker, now a 'subject', is capable of making choices and decisions which continually effect their working conditions in an ongoing 'process of valorisation'. This new form of labour requires a different process of communication not only between workers, or 'subjects' but also between consumers and 'subjects', which creates an ever-expanding social network. This network itself evolves and attains its own economic worth, not in the form of commodity but rather as Lazzarato terms it 'capital relation'.³

I have come to the conclusion that there is no longer a distinction between work and leisure, nor any spatial boundary between performance and work, as life itself becomes increasingly commodified in an inexhaustible cycle of mobility and exploitation.

This text was written at the beginning of April 2008 between London, Berlin, Milan, Como and Zurich on a number of planes and trains. Special thanks to Nazli Gurlek and Isobel Harbison.

There is no longer a distinction between work and leisure, nor any spatial boundary between performance and work, as life itself becomes increasingly commodified in an inexhaustible cycle of mobility and exploitation

**A single
code of
ethics for
a global
art system?**



Alexandre Singh
The Economist-Esthetic Moon, 2006

Collage on pressure treated plywood
Courtesy the artist and Monitor Gallery, Rome

In reference to *The Economist*, does the global art world, arguably united by the global art market, suppose a single or universal code of ethics?

The Bible, The Quran, the Pentateuch are all texts that unite the believers in their orthodoxy. They are the received wisdom of Him translated through the human scribes that put pen to papyrus. Those individual efforts have through time been subsumed into the whole. Over the millennia their words have been amalgamated, edited and refined until all trace of their authorship is lost. What we have left is simply the universal wisdom. The 'they', in 'they say'.

The efforts of the individual writers of The Economist are also subsumed into the whole. Writing anonymously, their articles are never signed; we know them only from the occasional internal references made to 'your correspondent'. The Economist was envisioned from the beginning as a proponent of free trade and liberal economic thinking. It applauds the loosening of trade and workplace restrictions whilst criticising tyrants, not just for their inhumanity, but just as importantly for their economic mismanagement. Robert Mugabe is seen to have brutalised the Zimbabwean people more effectively through land seizures and hyperinflation than through the arrest and torture of troublesome individuals.

Well-funded education and health systems are not portrayed in the magazine as inherent rights due to the citizen but as the fundamental basis for a prosperous society. Capital and information must be allowed to cross borders so that tanks may not. Politically speaking, The

Economist is the centre of the centre. If there was an overarching global ethical consensus, you would find it expressed in those pages.

The art world is prone to wringing its hands over its relationship to power and authority. Has it lost its avant-garde status? Did it ever really have one? Is it the simple reflection of the values of the global community? I would say that it shares the most fundamental principles of the global financial community in that it values most highly the unrestricted exchange of capital and information, the freedom of the institution from political interference whilst abhorring cartels and top down cultural interference.

For it is not so much in the content of Santiago Serra or Ai Wei ei that the artworld finds concern, but rather in the cultural interventionism of politicians such as Boris Johnson and Gianni Alemmano or in the Tate's purchase of a piece by one of their own trustees, Chris Ofili. But I think above all, to behave ethically in the artworld, is to honour the fiscal contract. Hence the dialogue of Paul McCarthy's video Painter, 1995:

Painter: You haven't been to my studio in... almost a year. Where have you been? I have really... How much money do you owe me now? Why haven't you paid me the money you owe me? You made a lot of money that I'm supposed to get paid and I never got paid any of that kind of money...

To which his gallerist replies, with a classic articulation of the laws of supply and demand, 'There's more artists in this city than just you.'

— Alexandre Singh

Documenta, a truly global exhibition?

Christine Kunze Takengny

The rapid change from the 'invisibility'¹ of African, Asian and Latin American artists in the Western art system towards an almost 'excessive visibility' has become evident in current international art events such as *Documenta*.² The exhibition, which takes place every five years in Kassel, Germany, has claimed to be a 'world art' exhibition since its inauguration in 1955, despite only managing to include 'non-western' artists for the first time in its ninth appearance in 1992. Ten years later, *Documenta 11*'s curator, the Nigerian-born, US-based, Okwui Enwezor, approached 'global art' from a post-colonial perspective by inviting numerous artists to contribute from the so-called periphery. Furthermore, Enwezor attempted to de-territorialise *Documenta* by orchestrating four preliminary symposia or platforms which took place across four continents, in Vienna, New Delhi, Lagos and St. Lucia in the lead up to the actual exhibition, or 'Platform 5' of *Documenta 11*, in Kassel.

Most recently, the curators of *Documenta 12*, Roger M. Buergel and Ruth Noack, have included an even higher percentage of artists from formerly under-represented countries than their predecessors. A magazine project accompanying the exhibition included contributions by writers from all over the world, making *Documenta 12* appear to be a truly global exhibition.

So, can *Documenta 12* function as what cultural theorist Homi K. Bhabha described as the 'third space', a utopian space where cultural differences are successfully negotiated, eurocentric perspectives eliminated, borders opened and racial discrimination eradicated?³ Or are ethics in a global art world that is based on a capitalist economy, as Alain Badiou claims, 'compatible with the self-satisfied egoism of the affluent West, with advertising, and with service rendered to the powers that be'?⁴

Buergel and Noack's 'ethics of co-existence'⁵ between Western and 'Non-Western' art in *Documenta 12* is based on a concept called 'The Migration of Form', which traces similarities between art from different cultures and periods under the criteria of common forms. Educated as a curator in the 'Post-Magiciens-Era'⁶, it seems almost natural to take the specific socio-economic,

geographical and biographical context of cultural production into account when representing artistic practices from other cultures within a Western institutional framework. Therefore I want to explore if it is ethical to present global art under a universal concept of formal resemblances, a method implemented by *Documenta 12*'s curators.

A key example of Buergel and Noack's implementation of the 'Migration of Form' is a sequence in *Documenta*'s Neue Galerie. Here, a traditional wedding hanging from Mali was presented next to abstract drawings by Indian artist Nasreen Mohamedi, which were hung in close proximity to a stripe painting by North-American painter Agnes Martin. While juxtaposing the Malian fabric, which one would expect to be displayed in an ethnographic, rather than a fine art museum, with Martin's painting influenced by North American modernism, might be deemed visually impressive, it might also be understood as a critique of the old institutional hierarchies between fine art and ethnology. However, within the formal-aesthetic context of *Documenta 12*, it appears potentially reductive to interpret the Malian fabric with its codes of indigenous signs as yet another version of linear abstraction of twentieth-century western modernism. In addition, we gain no information about which cultural influences have inspired the linear drawings by Mohamedi. As a result, Buergel and Noack's approach seems to have been caught in a similar Eurocentric trap to the heavily criticised 1984 MoMA-exhibition *Primitivism in 20th Century Art*, which claimed universal affinities between tribal and modern art without considering the different political and social conditions of art production.

Intending that all art works communicate autonomously and be approached equally and without prejudice, the curators of *Documenta 12* provided no biographical information about the artists in the exhibition. This well-meant but somewhat superficial curatorial gesture turned out to be counter-productive, exemplified by a text about Bill Kouélany in the *Documenta 12* catalogue. A colonial mindset, that suggests that African culture can be best understood by how it relates to Western culture, is evident when Patricia Solini describes Kouélany as an artist from the Congo, who, with the obsession of an autodidact, appropriates Western philosophy in order to reach a transparent density in her artwork.⁷

Elsewhere, in *Documenta 12*'s Museum Schloss Wilhelmshöhe the juxtaposition of Kerry James Marshall's series *The Lost Boys* (1993) with the 17th Century oil painting *Hydaspes and Persina facing the image of Andromeda* by Danish painter Karel van Mander III is equally unsuccessful. This painting shows the dark-skinned Hydaspes, King of Ethiopia, with his wife Persina who, according to myth gave birth to a white daughter. To

1 Until two decades ago 'Non-Western' art was generally classified by Western art institutions as 'pre-modern' or 'tribal'.

2 Fisher, Jean, *Global Visions. Towards a New Internationalism in the Visual Arts*, London: Kala Press in association with INIVA; 1994

3 Bhabha, Homi K, *The Location of Culture*, London: Routledge; 1994

4 Badiou, Alain, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, London: Verso; 2003, p. 7

5 Holert, Tom, *Failure of Will*, Artforum; September 2007, p. 412

6 Kravagna, Christian, *Postkoloniale Blicke, Hubertus Butin. DuMonts Begrifflexikon zur Zeitgenössischen Kunst*, Köln, Du Mont; 2002, p. 251. Magiciens de la Terre (Centre Pompidou, 1989) was the first show in Europe that included contemporary art from all over the world and lay the foundation for a critical analysis of the ideologies and cultural hierarchies behind cross-cultural exhibitions.

So, can Documenta 12 function as what cultural theorist Homi K. Bhabha described as the 'third space', a utopian space where cultural differences are successfully negotiated, eurocentric perspectives eliminated, borders opened and racial discrimination eradicated?

present Marshall's paintings of black Americans next to Mander's painting might be interpreted as a gross misunderstanding of the African-American artist's work. Marshall deals with the legacies of the African diaspora in the US and his main concern is to give 'the other' an adequate presence in art history and in art museums. In this sequence, the attempt of the curators to compensate for historical exclusions of 'black art' leads to an unconvincing rhetoric of essential inclusion based on skin colour, therefore repeating colonial binaries such as black/white and self/other.

Buergel and Noack's 'Migration of Form' methodology might have been intended as a commentary on the impossibility of national and cultural borders, and an attempt to carry forward their predecessors' socio-political and conceptual approaches towards global art, while enhancing a stronger aesthetic dimension, arguably lacking in *Documenta 10* and *11*. However, the result of *Documenta 12*'s 'ethics of co-existence'⁸ falls back into outdated modernist visions of art as a universal language, promoted in the 1950s under the principles of the established western order by authors such as André Malraux. Similar to Malraux's *Museum without Walls*, which stressed an ethics of common form between what was then termed 'world art', rather than judgement on the basis of particular historical or geographic points and the singularity of the solitary art work, *Documenta 12* reduces complex cultural relations in favour of an eurocentric curatorial gaze on global art, borne from the desire of Western thought to stage the world according to its own values.⁹

Even if it seems that the art world today is truly global, events like *Documenta 12* are far from being a 'third space' because the concept of global art is so closely related to the old hegemonic frame of western modernism and to the logic of late-capitalism. The expansion of the art market and the spectacle of multiculturalism constantly create a demand for exotic art works from all over the world, therefore 'non-western' artists are still encouraged to fetishise ethnic and national identities and to protect their cultural 'brand', thereby re-affirming existing cultural hierarchies.¹⁰ One might conclude by asking whether a truly global art world with common ethics based on cultural equality can really be imagined without simultaneous and dramatic shifts in international economical and political power relations.

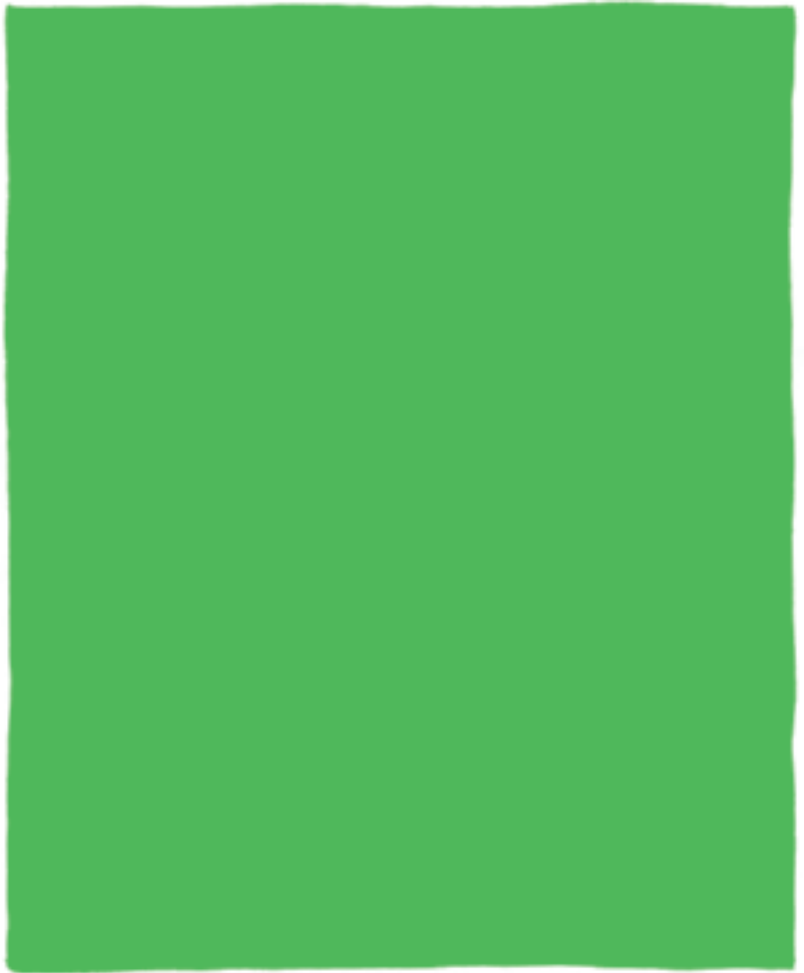
7 Patricia Solini, *Documenta 12*, Catalogue, Kassel; 2007, p. 272

8 Tom Holert, 'Failure of Will', *Artforum*, September; 2007, p. 412

9 André Malraux, *The Museum without Walls*, St Albans, Herts: Paladin; 1974, pp. 130-131

10 Rasheed Aareen, 'The Western Grip', *Documenta Magazine* No 1-3, Kassel: Reader; 2007, p. 134

Do
community
art projects
provoke
change?



Jeffrey Vallance
Polynesian Butt Plug, 2006

Graphite on paper
Courtesy the artist and Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles

Polynesian Butt Plug Lore

Before I tell the lurid tale of the Polynesian Butt Plug, I must first give some background on my relationship with Polynesian culture.

In the late '50s, my father built a Polynesian-style patio in our California backyard and decorated it with Tiki kitsch. I grew up in this fake Polynesian environment, and I took it all for granted – this was reality. Inspired by my parents' imitation-Polynesian decor, I became interested in the real Polynesian gods and myths. In 1982, I started making drawings and paintings of Tikis, and, in 1983, I began a series of voyages to the South Pacific in search of the true origins and myths of Tiki. In the spirit of the artists who travelled with Captain Cook on his voyages, every day I made sketches of what I saw on the various islands. While travelling throughout the South Seas, I heard wild stories about the fairytale-like Kingdom of Tonga, where huge King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV, the last reigning monarch of Polynesia, lived in a tiny palace. In 1985, I travelled to Tonga to have an audience with the King. I'd heard that the King wanted swim fins, and not just any flippers would do, as he has truly king-sized feet. When I met with the King, I presented him with a pair of the world's largest swim fins. The King placed his ham-size hands in the flippers' orifices and smiled broadly, saying, 'Ah, these will fit nicely.'

In 2006, my friend Dave Shulman wrote a story called 'The Extrasensory Polynesian Butt Plug Mystery' for L.A. Weekly. The story

was inspired, in part, by my voyages to the South Pacific and an odd ESP experience Dave and I had shared: In 1980, Dave found a display of 'Polynesian Butt Plugs' in a porno store, and he'd mused on the origin of these curious objects. In 1986, I had just recently returned from an expedition and I was telling Dave about my Polynesian adventures, when he interjected, 'Oh, hey, that reminds me. About six years ago, I was in this...' And I said '...porno store?' Dave was taken aback by my random extrasensory abilities, until I explained that I have psychic ancestors on both sides of my family tree. Later, Dave asked me to make an illustration for his story, so I made a drawing similar to the travel-journal style of my '83 expedition. In 2008, Dave had an art exhibition based on his stories (and other ephemera) at Track 16 Gallery in Santa Monica, California. For the exhibition, an actual Polynesian Butt Plug (mata'usi 'umosi) was constructed, based on ornamentation found on ancient Tongan war clubs.

I deal with issues of 'real' verses 'fake', and blur the lines of both. I feel satisfied when a work becomes akin to urban legend. I am especially pleased when something I created as art crosses over into historic 'fact' and fuses with the realm of legend and lore.

— Jeffrey Vallance

The Lonely Community

**Stephanie Sykes in collaboration
with Tarek Zaki and Marlena Kudlicka**

Traditional understandings of community-based or participatory art practices are generally premised upon philanthropic intent, often assuming that these projects are created for the greater good. These understandings often suggest forms of public participation and might be commonly associated with discourse at the centre of socially engaged practices such as 'relational aesthetics', a movement identified by French curator Nicholas Bourriaud. Socially engaged projects that fall into such categorisation tend to focus on the set of relations and conditions that bring people together, where the convergence of many is a central priority of an individual artist's work.

The problems generated by these ideas are aptly addressed by Jalal Toufic who asks, 'Isn't it the case that virtually all those who want to give voice to the "voiceless" are bad listeners?'¹ Perhaps the problem lies in the term 'community', the standard implication of which can be misleading and narrow. Communities consist of people linked together by something shared, be it geography, politics, systems of belief or common interests. However, contemporary developments such as web-based communities or current states of geo-political unrest confuse notions of citizenship and destabilise this simplistic definition.

In his *Imagined Communities* anthropologist Benedict Anderson examines the theory of imagined communities and argues that it is impossible for members of a community to confirm their participation through face-to-face interaction.² Instead, their level of inclusion is determined by their assumed role within the community, which is strengthened by various rituals in which they imagine others also engage. Therefore, it might be argued that this drive of the imagined often informs people's actual roles within a community.

Anderson's theory offers a paradigmatic shift, suggesting that the act of participating in communities is in fact a solitary experience, despite the term's communal connotations. Take, for example, the proliferation of Internet facilitated networks, such as Second Life and Facebook, in which participants operate individually in order to engage within the cyber community. Though a person may digitally interface with hundreds of people online, they are physically





Previous pages:
*Tarek and Marlena by
Marlena and Tarek, New
York 2008*
Tarek Zaki and Marlena
Kudlicka, 2008
Courtesy the artists

isolated from those whom they address and, in fact, only interact with their inanimate computers.

If Anderson's claims hold true, community-based practices no longer rely on public interaction or altruism. Instead, within the framework of this broadened formulation, these practices explore the psychology of the individuals whose imagined identification posits them within various new communities, irrespective of previous qualifiers based on geography, politics, belief systems, etc., often revealing patterns of transition, seclusion, displacement and renewal. Taking into account the nomadic movements of the individual – both psychological and physical – communities must now be perceived as unfixed cells that find themselves constantly shifting, converging and digressing.

In response to this notion of the unfixed community, artists Tarek Zaki and Marlena Kudlicka present *Tarek and Marlena by Marlena and Tarek New York 2008*. Zaki and Kudlicka, from Egypt and Poland respectively, both recently relocated to New York to participate in an artists' residency, submerging themselves within the quotidian routines of a foreign place. Their artistic collaboration was prompted by the displacement they encountered when trying to create work in an alien environment, through which Zaki has found that, 'isolation as a way to exist in the community'. This isolation, which surfaces in the aesthetic of the duo's work, serves as the shared element that provides the foundation for their new, exclusive network.

1 Walid Raad, *Jalal Toufic Introduction*, 31 January 2007, www.unitednationsplaza.org/readingroom.html

2 Benjamin Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, New York: Verso Books, 2006

*Taking into account
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Stephanie Sykes

Is curating still caring?



Steven Claydon
A & not A, 2008

Installation view at Gallery Dennis Kimmerich
Courtesy Gallery Dennis Kimmerich, Düsseldorf

Is curating still caring?

The conundrum of the deployment of things in space is manifold, an arena where resonances, materials, climates of intent and political machinations clot, transmogrify and cannibalise. This incestuous realm precludes any purely custodial stewardship on behalf of the curator and suggests a more Machiavellian role. There is a subtle whiff of sulphur associated with the semi-fictional nature of enforced contextualisation, approximate with the conjurer, storyteller or the spinner of yarns, eons away from the scientific 'clean slate' or denuded environment illusion that the institution or white cube struggles to maintain. The inherent pit-falls and subsequent reclassification of curated things could be attributed to a kind of evolution of taxonomy. A depressing eventuality where the benign 'thing' is played out, and is described only by its mutable curated context, intimidated into groupings by the promise of cultural kudos or fiscal gain. The politics of coercion have a habit of teaming up with the best intentions in the world.

— Steven Claydon

The Task of the Translator¹

Cally Spooner

'Here it can be demonstrated that no translation would be possible if in its ultimate essence it strove for likeness to the original. For in its afterlife – which could not be called that if it were not a transformation and a renewal of something living – the original undergoes a change.'²

The mode of Translation is not restricted to the relocation of words or text from one language into another. In mathematics, specifically in Euclidean geometry, translation moves a point, or body in a constant direction, from one point in space to another, so that every point of the body moves in the same direction and over the same distance, without any rotation, reflection, or change in size. One may also state that the works of (say) a playwright have been 'translated' into a ballet, or a book may likewise be translated into a script and then performed as a film.

Translation is not Interpretation. Interpretation and its derivative, Explanation, gather details and observations. Their aim is to deliver their findings in a presentation of Knowledge. To this end, the artwork becomes material evidence in the Interpreter's presentation. It operates as a prop for his theories, ideas, arguments and beliefs. Work becomes a signifier waiting to be ordered and a tool for the Interpreter to present *his own ideas*.

Translation could be defined as the rendition of one thing, executed or performed by something or someone else. It is the formal or technical process of moving something from *one condition to another*, and in consequence Translation can be identified as a *vehicle for the delivery of ideas*.

Translation is meaningless alone, and owes its existence to a preceding referent. This could be termed an 'Original Work' and every act of translation is bound to the genealogy of such an Original. Translation is then, a method for communicating something beyond itself and effectively is a mode of re-presentation. Like all modes of communication and presentation, Translation relies on specific material to enable its actualisation, and in the case of translation this material, without fail, *belongs to someone else*.

The arrival of such material brings with it responsibilities. This can be appreciated through the etymology of *Translation* – a word which shares the same linguistic roots as the verb *Transfer* and the activity of *transferal*. These in turn are derived from the Latin *Transfere*, which splits into two original root terms: *trans*, meaning across and *ferre*, meaning *to bear*. What we might then hold to be true of Translation is that it is an activity that moves, carries or bears an Original. It *bears* this *across* one condition, and into another. In the case of cultural works, the activity of Translation could be termed: ‘Bearing a Work’.

‘Bearing a work’ is a delicate action, with a dual responsibility. Firstly, the ‘bearer’, or the Translator has responsibility to remain intimately engaged with that which is carried. But secondly, he must ensure that the Original, when delivered, remains unaltered. The bearer must leave no effect on that which he transfers.

The safe arrival of the Original is paramount. This means that the act of ‘bearing’, must be performed without leaving any traces of the bearer behind and his task is to translate an original without his own intentions, agenda and language effecting the translation in any way. This means that the bearer’s concerns and personal intentions must remain elusive, while the he simultaneously remains intimately engaged with the original that is borne.

However, the production of an excellent translation, one which respects this complex dual responsibility, is a complete impossibility, though this is not due to an incompatibility which forces us to choose one responsibly over the other. Quite the contrary, in the case of excellent translation, a clear duality is impossible because remaining intimately and responsibility engaged with an Original, means *leaving an effect on the work*.

The responsible presentation of an Original, does not equate the re-presentation of the Original precisely as it is. While a translator understands that fidelity to the original referent is the essence of his activity, a *good* Translator recognises that fidelity is not the like-for-like replication of an Original, and its intended meaning. Re-presenting the Original accurately amounts to nothing more than the ‘transmission of information’.³ And so, rather than re-presenting work *as it is*, the Translator must dig deeply into the Original, and discover its *Intentions*.

Fidelity to anything at all is always achieved through a relationship of understanding and in the case of translation this understanding is developed between the Translator and the intentions of the Original. A good translator understands that these intentions, (combined with the final ‘product’), are parts of an individual’s *effort*. Developing this effort, probing the attempt and extending the trail of enquiry, is the task of the translator and rather than re-presenting an

1 Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* in *Illuminations*, Harry Zorn (transl.), London: Pimlico, 1999, p. 70

2 Idem 1, p. 73

3 Idem 1, p. 70

4 Susan Sontag, *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*, New York: Picador, 2001, p. 8

5 Idem 4, p. 10

6 Idem 4, p. 14

7 Idem 1, p. 81

8 Idem 1, p.81

Original work, the translator must first grapple with the Original's history and Creator. He might then be in a position to deliver his rendering of the *resonance* of the Original's intentions.

Translation bears the Original work by moving this work across and beyond its existing condition, into another condition, where its meaning, form and resonance can renew and evolve. This may be the task of the Translator, but should never be regarded as a 'philistine refusal' to let a work sit still, a trait of the Interpreter.⁴

The Interpreter aims to build a tower on top of an artwork, the Translator climbs into the Original, and mines

For Susan Sontag, Interpretation is an activity based on the 'dubious theory' that art is an article for use.⁵ Subscribing to this theory results in the disruption and violation of artworks, through a persistent poking and prodding at the work's potential. The Interpreter manhandles the artwork, and distorts it with his own intentions and theories. By insisting that the work really is something else (that X is Y and Y is Z), the Interpreter refuses to let the work be.

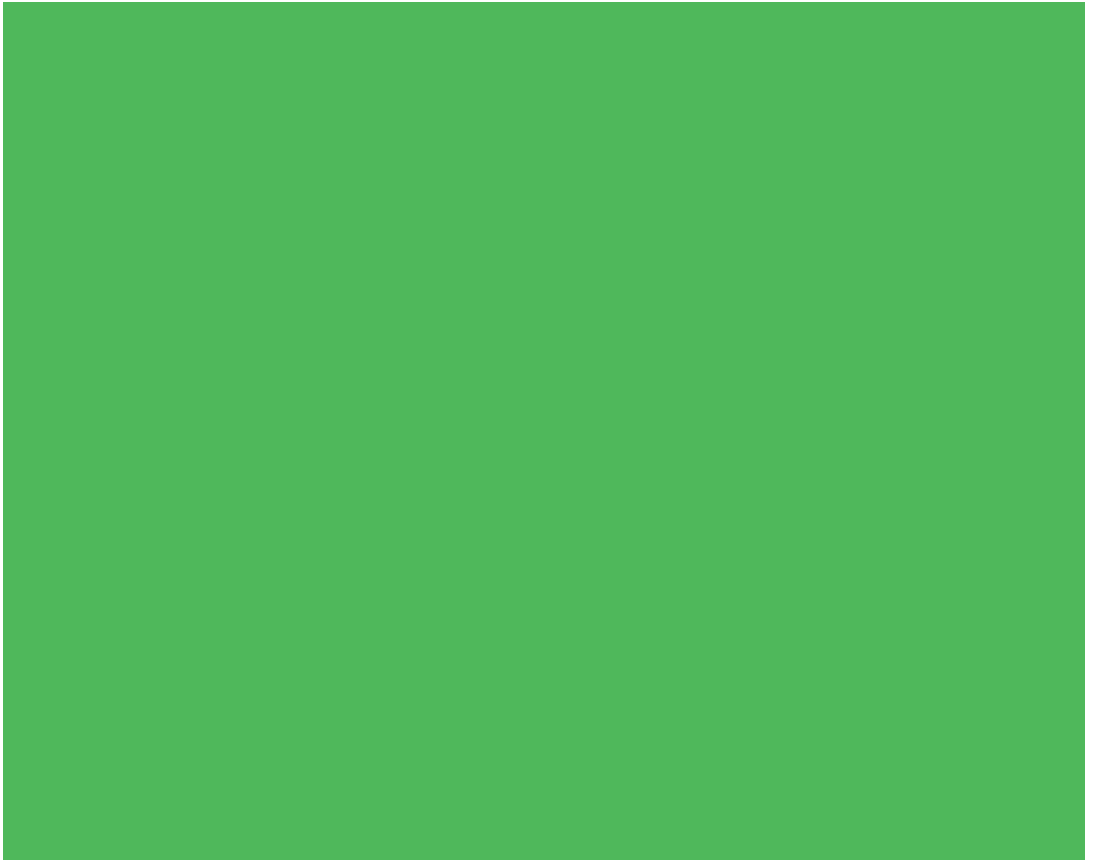
Unlike the Interpreter, the Translator adds nothing to the Original. Instead, Translation simply 'cuts back content, so that we can see the thing at all'.⁶ In doing so, translation abandons all superfluous and overworked interpretations and reveals the parts of this Work that are overlooked. Any renewal and development of the Original comes from these new delicate discoveries and the Translator's task is to give these discoveries *form* and *visibility*. Crucially, these elements are always already contained within the Original work. They are never brought in from elsewhere. And so, while the Interpreter aims to build a tower on top of an artwork, the Translator climbs into the Original, and mines.

Good translation does not speak about the Original Work. Instead, the translator enables the work to speak, and knows that by enabling this, he is also speaking, through the work

Good translation does not speak about the Original Work. Instead, the translator enables the work to speak, and knows that by enabling this, he is also speaking, *through* the work. This becomes possible when the Translator adopts the same methods and modes of operation as the Original, finally producing a translation 'by lovingly incorporating the originals mode of signification' into the mode of translation.⁷

By developing an understanding of an Original's intentions, leading the translation with these intentions and adopting the modes and methods of application that eventually manifested these, the Translator can render a fruitful translation. By pushing from the inside out (not interpreting from the outside up) and by responsibly bearing a work, (though never transmitting information about it), any effect on the work, even the most radical evolution of the form, medium or meaning of an Original, is not only acceptable, but in certain cases, is called for.⁸ Responding to this call, struggling with the complexities of the task, and finally creating *sense* and *form* from a relationship with the Original, is the ultimate gesture of care. It is the Task of the Translator.

Is there
a new
mysticism
in the art
assemblage?



Carol Bove
Das Energi, 2006

Wood and metal shelves, books, a pamphlet,
bronze, a peacock feather, mirror
Courtesy the artist and Julia Stoschek Collection,
Düsseldorf
Photographed by Ivo Farber

Is there a new mysticism in the
art assemblage?

*As a viewer, you can only supply
to an artwork what you already
possess. Which is not to say that you
can't be thrilled by new discoveries
revealed through looking, you just
need to be prepared for them.*

*Ecstatic communion can be
prompted by works of art, or more
generally, through esthetic
experience, but it's also available to
mystics anywhere.*

*Alan Watts described
mysticism as 'democracy in the
kingdom of God', which I like, but
the word God is very distracting.
The word mysticism is distracting
too. These words have a bad
reputation lately. The people
I encounter tend to be very
suspicious of them, calling them
authoritarian and flaky,
respectively. But I suspect they
would report having the same types
of heightened experiences I associate
with mysticism if it were presented a
little differently.*

— Carol Bove

Relative autonomy

Stephanie Bertrand

I

By definition, mystical objects are objects that allow for one to enter into a direct communion with the divine. They possess cult value on account of their use in magical or religious rituals to call the god into presence. In defining the origin of the work of art, Heidegger writes: 'When a work is brought into a collection or placed in an exhibition we say also that it is 'set up'. But this setting up differs essentially from setting up in the sense of erecting a building, raising a statue, presenting a tragedy at a holy festival. Such setting up is erecting in the sense of dedication and praise. Here 'setting up' no longer means bare placing. To dedicate means to consecrate, in the sense that in setting up the work the holy is opened up as holy and the god is invoked in the openness of his presence.'¹ According to Heidegger, it is only through their exhibition that works of art acquire a mystical quality.

II

Following the dematerialisation of the artwork during the 1960s and 70s and a wave of relational practices, there is an apparent mysticism that shrouds post-conceptual discreet art objects.² This mysticism heralds the return of an apparent aura of the work of art, which provisionally disappeared with technical reproduction. This post-conceptual aura differs from the aura that Walter Benjamin describes in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*.³ Benjamin's aura refers to artworks' enduring presence in time and space, which binds historical testimony with the authority of the object. It emerges from artworks' cult value as opposed to their exhibition value, which is tied to artworks' increased visibility through technical reproduction rather than to their presence or 'being-there'.

Contemporary discreet art objects possess neither the capacity to convey historical testimony, nor the authority of purely singular objects. They are paradoxical objects, at once singular and heterogeneous. As Jacques Rancière states, 'The aesthetic regime asserts the absolute singularity of art, and at the same time, destroys any pragmatic criterion for isolating this singularity.' The mere presence of these discreet objects, independently of the context in which they are displayed, is not enough to conjure up the aura of authority, which comes from a historical enduringness grounded in tradition.

If post-conceptual discreet art objects first appear as mystical, it is because they have the capacity to come in and out of states: from decorative luxury commodity to unique critical proposal, depending on the context in which they are presented. A contemporary discreet object shown individually in a white cube will fail to deliver the singular mystical truth expected from it. Its sheer presence cannot convey such revelation. While discreet objects may be created as autonomous pieces, their singularity is precarious since any unique criterion for isolating this singularity has been abolished. When framed as singular objects on the pretense that they are art, they rely on the aesthetic theology of art for art's sake in order to produce a now impossible cult value. These objects cannot reveal themselves as unique artworks: they have no absolute autonomy. Taken on their own, they appear as purely heterogeneous objects placed in the middle of a heathen temple of art from which the god has fled.

III

The new mystical aura that seems to emanate from post-conceptual discreet art objects is the product of a different kind of presence in time and space than the historically determined presence that Benjamin describes. It emerges from artworks' exhibition value rather than their cult value. It is not the god's presence that gives artworks their apparent aura. The latter is derived from their presentness: their full self-revelation as paradoxical objects.

Presentness is a term originally coined by Michael Fried. In *Art and Objecthood*, Fried contrasts artworks' presence with presentness.⁵ He associates presence with a certain type of art – notably minimalist art – which he terms literalist art. The presence that Fried attributes to literalist art is also characteristic of all things non-art. Literalist art conflates non-art with objecthood in order to achieve theatrical presence: a relation between viewer and work that is played out in time and space. The presence of literalist art is that of the object *en situation*. It is inscribed in duration and requires immersion in the scene through experience. By contrast to the presence of objecthood, Fried advocates for artworks' instantaneous presentness: 'at every moment the work itself is wholly manifest' and concludes his essay with the phrase: 'presentness is grace', ascribing a divine quality to artworks' full revelation.⁶

IV

In the wake of literalist practices, 'relationality' becomes the defining condition of post-conceptual art, permeating the spaces in which it is displayed. This condition is often staged as a contextual extension of dialectical opposition, a mode of criticality that dominates modern and contemporary practices. It involves creating a clash between heterogeneous elements to reveal the truth hidden behind normalised appearances.

If post-conceptual discrete art objects first appear as mystical, it is because they have the capacity to come in and out of states: from decorative luxury commodity to unique critical proposal, depending on the context in which they are presented

Regardless of where they are presented, post-conceptual discreet objects are always *mis en situation* whenever they are exhibited. They are understood in relation to the other works in the show or the spaces where they are presented. If placed on their own, they will be read in opposition to the context of display since they cannot assert their autonomous presence through cult value and are required to perform critically. However, while Benjamin writes: 'when the age of mechanical reproduction separated art from its basis in cult, the semblance of its autonomy disappeared forever', it is only the semblance of artworks' absolute autonomy which was irremediably lost.⁷ Within the relational age, the semblance of discreet art objects' relative autonomy is what allows them to make a viable return.⁸ Beyond the aesthetic theology of art for art's sake, it is what ultimately ensures contemporary discreet objects' ontological status as art.

'Relationality', as an *a priori* condition of the post-conceptual era, must be accounted for when staging artworks' full manifestation. Given artworks' necessary *mis en situation*, theatricality becomes the means through which they acquire a semblance of relative autonomy. This autonomous appearance is responsible for the works' contemporary aura, which is derived from exhibition value (artworks' absolute visibility). To appear thus, artworks must be wrenched from the demands of contextual display through an excess of contextualisation – a double negative canceling out the relationality of the situation in which they are always already presented. By countering artworks' relational position within an exhibition, the works will appear in the terms of presentness, which is no longer a property of the object, as Fried initially formulated it, but is now a condition that arises from a situation – an ultimate *mis en contexte*.

The new mystical aura is not a constant. It is not tied to art objects through the authority of tradition. Nor is it the glow of desirable consumer goods. It is the aura of that which cannot be grasped while being fully given. It arises from the simultaneous appearance of artworks' contradictory states of being – singularity and heterogeneity. Like religious idols, discreet art objects possess a paradoxical nature, which it is not, as with the former, revealed through functionality, but through context. Discreet art objects, when lent a semblance of autonomy, stand on their own as objects and as something else too, instead of as objects in relation to something else. The dialectical opposition through which these works gain in criticality no longer operates solely at the level of their content, nor in terms of their relation with the viewer or the display context; it is now rooted in the artwork's very being.

V

To perceive discreet art objects fully revealed does not involve contemplation, which requires time and attention, nor entail a process of completion. The viewer can neither be absorbed by these artworks, nor absorb them. The new discreet art objects bask in the glowing semblance of their own relative autonomy, acquired through a mode of theatricality that thwarts theatre. They are to be taken in at a glance, in the flash of an instant, as they flicker into full presentness like an image on a cinema screen.

The new mystical aura is the product of our cinematic culture – the full exhibition of elements that cannot be grasped together but that resist easy dismissal as a heterogeneous combination though the magic of montage. Discreet objects' conflicting states of being are compressed and revealed instantly, rather than being drawn out in time, whence they would alternatively appear as the varying presences of the object *en contexte*. This aura produces the awe of shock, in an age accustomed to shock. Its horror inspires the Oedipal blindness that can only come from the full disclosure of an impossible truth of being, freed from the contextual Reason of cause-effect, and delivered, like an oracle, before its theatrical denouement in due time.

1 Martin Heidegger, *The Origin of the Work of Art in Poetry, Language, Thought*, Albert Hofstadter (transl.), New York: Harper and Row, 2001, p. 42

2 'Discreet art objects' here refers to object-base works (as opposed to time-based works) which are not designed to directly affect or involve the viewer in any particular way, be it sensorial, spatio-temporal, relational, etc.

3 Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction in Illuminations*, Harry Zorn (transl.), London: Pimlico, 1999, p. 211-244

4 Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, Gabriel Rockhill (transl.), London: Continuum, 2004, p. 23

5 Michael Fried, 'Art and Objecthood' in *Artforum*, Volume V, No. 1, Summer 1967, pp. 12-23

6 Idem 5; pp. 22-3

7 Idem 3; p. 220

8 Autonomy is not here understood as pure aesthetic experience devoid of socio-historical referents but instead used to designate artworks' capacity to convey critical meaning outside of a specific mechanism of display.



AA Bronson
*The Boutique from the 1984 Miss General Idea
Pavilion, 1980*

Galvanised metal and plexiglass, containing
various General Idea multiples, prints, posters,
and publications
Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Gift of Sandra
Simpson 1998

© 1980 General Idea. Photo: courtesy AA Bronson

We consider all the various types of activities that we are involved in as art. For many years we never bothered to distinguish between the gallery and other situations because, in fact, we never utilised the gallery situation all that much early on. There is a General Idea text from the mid-seventies that refers to the gallery's relationship to art being very much like the garage's relationship to the car: we use the gallery to tinker with and repair the work, but the real function of our art is out on the road, in a way - it's within the current of the culture.

— AA Bronson in conversation
with Joshua Dexter,
first published in the
Journal of Contemporary Art,
issue 4.1, 1991

Contributors' biographies

Louisa Adam

(b. 1980, Edinburgh, UK) is an artist and curator based in London who has been engaged in debates on contemporary art in public places since graduating from the Glasgow School of Art in 2003. Adam worked for Art in Partnership, a public art commissioning agency, from 2005-6. Adam was co-curator in *IM projects*, London (2007) and is currently assistant curator of *Curating Architecture*.

Yannis Arvanitis

(b.1980, Athens, Greece) is an architect and curator based between Athens and London. His practice deals with immaterial systems which affect spatial and cultural production. He has worked on architectural and artistic projects such as *Paradigmata – 9th Venice Architecture Biennale*, participated in *4th European Biennial of Landscape Architecture, Barcelona*, *Action Architecture, 7th Sao Paolo Biennial of Architecture* and *11th Biennial of young artists from Europe and Mediterranean*, Athens and co-curated *IM Magazine*, London (2007) and *11.472*, Bargehouse Gallery, London (2007). Arvanitis has written for a number of art catalogues and magazines including *Destroy Athens – 1st Athens Biennial* and is currently co-editor of www.floatermagazine.com and assistant curator of *Curating Architecture*, Goldsmiths, University of London.

Rosa Barba

(b.1972, Agrigento, Italy), currently based in Berlin, and **David Maljkovic** (b. 1973, Rijeka, Croatia), currently based in Zagreb have both been making film installations collaboratively since 2006, alongside their individual practices. Recent solo exhibitions of their work together include *Handed Over*, The Bakery, Annet Gelink Gallery (Amsterdam, 2008) and Project Art Centre curated by Tessa Giblin (Dublin, 2008), and *Its gonna happen* Croynielsen (Berlin, 2006).

Haizea Barcenilla

(b.1981, San Sebastian, Spain) is a curator and writer based in London and Bilbao who has previously worked at the Louvre and the Guggenheim Bilbao. She recently curated *Équilibre Instable* at the CAPC Centre d'Art Contemporain in Bordeaux and co-curated *Between Mirrors and Windows* at the London Art Fair (2007), *Curating Fictions*, a series of talks at the Whitechapel Gallery, London (2007/2008) and *Calypso* at the Sala Rekalde, Bilbao (2008). She writes regularly for *Berria* (ES) and *Mugalari* (ES) cultural magazines. She collaborates with Ana García for the Damas collective, which received the Abisal Curatorial Award for the project *Copyzine*.

Stephanie Bertrand

(b.1979, Montreal, Canada) is a curator and writer based in London and Thessaloniki. She has worked at the Canadian Center for Architecture and was a judge and curator for the 2007 edition of the *Celeste Art Prize*. She currently researches and writes for the Artist Pension Trust, London Office and is assistant curator of *Curating Architecture*. She has contributed to numerous exhibition catalogues, notably *Calypso* at Sala Rekalde, Bilbao (2008). Recent curatorial projects include *Radio Gaga* as part of Art Athina 2008 and the group exhibition *Fire red gas blue ghost green signs* at The Sassoon Gallery, London (2008).

Carol Bove

(b.1971, Geneva, Switzerland) is currently based in New York. Recent solo exhibitions include *Maccarone Inc*, New York (2007), The Blanton Museum of Art, Austin (2006), Kunsthalle, Zurich (2004), Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2004), HOTEL, London (2004) and Art Kunstverein, Hamburg (2003). Selected recent group exhibitions include *Whitney Biennial*, Whitney Museum of Modern Art, New York (2008), *Strange Events Permit Themselves the Luxury of Occurring*, Camden Arts Centre, London (2007), *Unmonumental: The Object in the 21st Century*, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (2007), *Every Revolution is a Roll of the Dice*, Ballroom (Marfa, 2007); *Archeologies of the Future*, Sala Rekalde, Bilbao (2007), *Draft Deceit*, Kunsternes Hus, Oslo (2006), *Greater New York*, P.S.1, New York (2005), *Model Modernisms*, Artists Space, New York (2005) and *Icestorm*, Kunstverein, Munich (2005).

AA Bronson

(b. Vancouver, 1946) lives and works in Toronto and New York. Recent solo exhibitions include *AA Bronson's School for Young Shamans*, John Connelly Presents, New York (2008), *Sex + Death*, Galerie Frederic Giroux, Paris (2007), *AA Bronson*Healer*, Vera List Center for Art & Politics, New School, New York (2005), *AA Bronson: The Quick and the Dead*, The Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, Vancouver (2004), *AA Bronson*, IKON Gallery, Birmingham (2003), *The Hanged Man*, Toronto (2002) and *AA Bronson 1969-2001*, Vienna Secession, Vienna (2000). AA Bronson collaborated with Felix Partz and Jorge Zontal in the artists group General Idea from 1969 to 1994. *General Idea Editions 1968-1995*, a recent retrospective, has toured to institutions worldwide including Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, and Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, Seville

(2007); Munich Kunstverein, Berlin Kunstwerke, and Kunsthalle Zurich (2006), Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, and Luckman Art Gallery, Los Angeles (2005); and Museum London, London (2004).

Steven Claydon

(b.1969, London, UK) currently lives and works in London. Claydon is an artist and curator who has exhibited his work internationally as well as organising a number of collaborative projects and exhibitions. Recent solo exhibitions have been held at HOTEL London (2008), Independent Project Space Bourneville, Birmingham (2008), *a & not a*, Gallery, Dennis Kimmerich, Düsseldorf (2008), *New Valkonia*, David Kordansky (Los Angeles, 2007), *Courtesy Of The Neighbourhood Watch*, White Columns, New York (2006), *The Glidged Baum*, Art Statement, Art Basel 37, Basel (2006). Recent group shows include *In Geneva No One Can Hear You Scream*, Blondeau Fine Art Services, Geneva (2008), *Nueva Dimension*, *Hats Plus* organised by Dick Evans, London (2007), *Old School*, Hauser and Wirth, London, travelling to Zwirner and Wirth, New York, (2007), *Sympathy For The Devil*, *Art and Rock and Roll Since 1967*, Museum Of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2007). Curatorial projects include, *Strange Events Permit Themselves the Luxury of Occurring*, Camden Arts Centre, London (2007/8) and *Nibs*, Hoxton Distillery, London (2003).

Mary Cork

(b.1980, Cambridge, UK) is an artist and curator based in London. She has previously worked as Director of Glasshouse Gallery (Memphis, USA), and as judge and curator for the 2007 edition of the *Celeste Art Prize* and is currently co-director of *Fall-In-Theatre*, a roving production that has to date produced two events and one publication. As an artist, she has recently exhibited in *The Jargon of Landscape* at the Wallis Gallery (London,

2008). She is also founder and director of *Guest*, a curatorial project space that will open in London in 2009.

Mario García Torres

(b.1975, Monclova, Mexico) is currently based in Los Angeles. Recent solo exhibitions have taken place at the Kunsthalle, Zurich (2008), White Cube, London (2008), Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2007), Kadist Art Foundation, Paris (2007), Jan Mot, Brussels (2004-6) and Galería de Arte Mexicano, México City (2003). Recent group exhibitions include *Other than Yourself. An Investigation between Inner and Outer Space*, Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna (2008), *I Desired What You Were, I Need What You Are*, Maze Gallery, Turin (2008), *You & Me, Sometimes...*, Lehmann Maupin, New York (2008), *Think with the Senses – Feel with the Mind*, 52nd Biennale di Venezia, Venice, (2007), *Uncertain States of America*, Moscow Biennial, Moscow (2007), *Escultura Social*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2007), *Whenever it Start it is the Right Time*, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt (2007), *Night at the Museum or What Betty Boop Saw*, Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (2007), *Neo-Con. Contemporary Returns to Conceptual Art*, apexart, New York and British School, Rome (2006), *Black Market Worlds*, 9th Baltic Triennale, CAC, Vilnius (2005) and ICA, London (2005), *Missunderstandings*, Galeria de Arte Mexicano, Mexico City (2005), and *I still believe in Miracles / Drawing Space*, Convent du Cordeliers and ARC Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (2005). García Torres was the recipient of the 2007 Cartier Award at Frieze Art Fair.

Ilaria Gianni

(b.1979, Rome, Italy) is a curator and writer based in London and Rome. She has curated a number of exhibitions, including *I desired what you were, I need what you are*, Maze

Gallery, Turin 2008), *Here Once again. Where Art and Cinema Interact*, SNUMOA and Loop Gallery, Seoul (2008), *IM Magazine*, London (2007) and *Step in Step out*, Adriano Olivetti Foundation, Rome (2006-7) and worked as assistant curator of IUAV at *Manifesta 7*, Trentino Alto-Adige, Sudtiro, Italy (2008) and *NowHere Europe* (51st Venice Biennale). She is a regular contributor to *NERO magazine* (IT) and *Arte e Critica* (IT) and has also written for *Flash Art* (IT), *Circa* (IRL), *Lo Specchio+* (IT). She is currently co-curator of the Award for Italian Young Artists *Pagine Bianche d'Autore*, and assistant professor at the University IUAV of Venice.

Nazli Gurlek

Nazli Gurlek (b.1981, Istanbul, Turkey) is a curator based between Istanbul and London. She has recently curated a number of projects including *Rhymes of an Hour* at Loop 08 (Barcelona, 2008), *Multiple Intimacy* as a parallel event to the 10th Biennial (Istanbul, 2007), *Between Mirrors and Windows* (London, 2007) and *IM Magazine* (London, 2007). She worked as assistant curator at Yapi Kredi Centre for Art and Culture in Istanbul in 2004. She collaborated with the curatorial department of Tate Modern in 2007 for the *Global Cities* exhibition, with Galleria d'Arte Moderna of Bologna - Italy in 2006 as assistant on a series of solo shows such as Ryan Gander, Paolo Chiasera and the sound-art collective Building Transmissions, with Platform Garanti in 2005.

Rahila Haque

(b.1984, Kent, UK) is based in London. She is currently co-curator with Susan Gladwin of an ongoing project investigating the possibilities of curatorial practice within the realm of contemporary music production. She has co-curated the series of talks *Curating Fictions* at Whitechapel Gallery, London (2007/2008) and *the angle between two walls* at MOT International (London, 2008).

Isobel Harbison

(b.1981, Dublin, Ireland) is a curator and writer based in London. Recent curatorial projects include *Aspen 11* at Neue Alte Brücke Gallery, Frankfurt (2007), and *Scott Head Screenings*, an ongoing showcase of artists' film and video established in 2007. She has contributed to a number of magazines, including *Untitled*, *Art Review*, *Velvet* (UK), *Circa Magazine*, *The Irish Arts Review* (IRL), and *Arte e Critica* (IT) and has also written for recent publications produced by the ICA, London and Mother's Tankstation gallery, Dublin. Harbison is currently an Associate Researcher at the Graduate School of Creative Arts and Media (GRADCAM), Dublin.

Emily Jacir

(b.1970, Bethlehem, Palestine) lives and works between Ramallah and New York. Her work spans a diverse range of media and strategies including film, photography, performance, video, writing and sound. Awards in 2007 include a Golden Lion at the *52nd Venice Biennale* for her work *Material for a film* and a Prince Claus Award. She is currently a finalist for the 2008 Hugo Boss Prize. In 2003, *belongings* was published by O.K Books, a monograph on a selection of Jacir's work from 1998 - 2003. Her second monograph (2008) is published by Verlag Fur Moderne Kunst Nurnberg. She conceived of and co-curated the first Palestine International Video Festival in Ramallah in 2002. Recently she curated a selection of shorts; *Palestinian Revolution Cinema* (1968 - 1982) which went on tour in 2007. She is currently a full-time professor at the International Academy of Art Palestine in Ramallah. Recent solo exhibitions include Villa Merkel, Esslingen, Germany (2007-08); Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland (2007).

Christine Kunze Takengny

(b.1973, Cologne, Germany) is a curator based in London. She worked at Künstlerhaus Stuttgart and *Documenta 11*. Her recently curated shows include *Gold&Delicious* at The Appletree, London (2008), *Weickmann's Wunderkammer, Hommage mit Georges Adéagbo, Candida Höfer und Matthias Beckmann at the Ulmer Museum* (Germany, 2007), *18. Triennale Ulmer Kunst* at the Ulmer Museum (2006) and the lecture series *Curating Fictions* at the Whitechapel Gallery, London (2007/2008).

Rosa Lleó

(b.1980, Barcelona, Spain) is a curator and writer based in London. Lleó previously worked at the Exhibitions Department of the Centre of Contemporary Culture of Barcelona (CCCB) and currently writes for the newspaper *La Vanguardia* and the magazines *Suite* (ES) and *Clark* (F). Especially interested in art publishing, recent curatorial projects include *Between Mirrors and Windows*, London (2007), *Aspen 11* at Neue Alte Brücke Gallery (Frankfurt, 2007), *IM Magazine*, London, (2007) and *Anywhere out of this world*, Barcelona, (2008).

Guillaume Paris

(b.1966, Ivory Coast) currently lives and works in Paris and London. Recent solo exhibitions include *Miracle, Mystery and Authority*, Galerie Nelson-Freeman, Paris (2008), *Spitting Distance [with Mick Finch]*, Five Years, London (2008), *Farce & Crime*, Galerie de Multiple, Paris (2008), *Paved with Good Intentions*, Paradise Row, London (2007), *Guillaume Paris*, Artists' Studio, London (2006), *Guillaume Paris*, Il Filatoio, Centro sperimentale per le Arti Contemporanee, Caraglio (2003) and *Guillaume Paris*, Musashino Arts University, Tokyo (2003). Selected group exhibitions include *Land Art, in hArt an der grenze*, Hussigny, Luxemburg / France, *Outing [with Art Orienté objet]*, Ecole Supérieure des

Beaux-arts, Valenciennes (2006) *We Are the Children – part 1*, Museum of Modern Art, Rhode Island School of Art and Design, Providence (2004), *Priceless*, Galerie Nelson, Paris (2003), *H.U.M.A.N.W.O.R.L.D. / We Are the World*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2003) and the *Sharjah International Biennial 6*, Sharjah Art Museum, United Arab Emirates (2003). Paris is currently Professor in New Media- Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts in Paris (ENSBA).

Caterina Riva

(b.1980, Varese, Italy) is a curator and writer based in London and in Milan. She is co-director of FormContent, a curatorial project space which was founded in 2007 in London's East End. She has curated a number of exhibitions, among the latest group shows, *I will not throw rocks* at FormContent, London (2007) and *Art cannot be untaught* at la rada Locarno, Switzerland (2008). She has been the coordinator of the Advanced Course in Visual Arts for Fondazione Ratti in Como, Italy, since 2004. She is a regular contributor to *Mousse* (IT) and has been writing for *Flash Art* (IT), *Kunstbulletin* (CH) and *Brown* (IT).

Alexandre Singh

(b. 1980, Bordeaux, France) is currently based in New York. Recent solo shows have been held at the Jack Hanley Gallery, San Francisco, (2008), Monitor Gallery Rome, (2008) and also include *Hello Meth Lab in the Sun*, Ballroom, Marfa, (2008), *UNCLEHEAD*, Museu da Electricidade, Fundacao EDP, Lisbon (2008) and *The Marque of The Third Stripe*, White Columns, New York (2007). Selected group exhibitions include *Art Cannot Be Untaught*, La Rada, Locarno (2008), *Of this Tale, I cannot guarantee a single word*, Royal College of Art London (2008), *A New High in Getting Low*, Artnews Projects Berlin (2008) and John Connelly Presents, New York (2008), *East International*, Norwich (2007), *9 or 10 works*

I used to like, in no order, Monitor, Rome (2007), *The First Antechamber*, Projects Arts Centre, Dublin (2007), *Temporary Measures*, Associates, London (2007) and *Romantic Detachment*, PS1, New York (2004).

Cally Spooner

(b. 1983, Bracknell, UK) is based in London. She is currently the co-director of the roving production *Fall-In-Theatre* and will be delivering her curated touring exhibition, *A Lecture On Translation*, as an infinite series of performance lectures from June 2008. She writes regularly and collaboratively. Her work develops modes of presentation that keep artwork, performances, archival material and exhibitions in a state of flux. To enable this, she often places visual art into the context of live performance.

John Stezaker

(b. 1949, Worcester, UK) is currently based in London. Recent solo exhibitions have taken place at The Approach W1, London (2007), Karsten Schubert and The Approach, London (2007), The Rubell Family Collection, Miami (2007), Stills Gallery, Edinburgh (2007), Project Room, Yvon Lambert, Paris (2007), Kunstverein Muenchen, Munich (2005), Galerie Dennis Kimmerich, Düsseldorf (2006) and Richard Telles Fine Art, Los Angeles (2006). Recent group exhibitions include *Collage: The Unmonumental Picture*, New Museum, New York (2008), *Martian Museum of Terrestrial Art*, Barbican Art Gallery, London (2008), *Strange Events Permit Themselves the Luxury of Occurring: selected by artist Steven Claydon*, Camden Arts Centre, London (2007), *Tate Triennial 2006 - New British Art*, Tate Britain, London (2006).

Stephanie Sykes

(b. 1981, Los Angeles, USA) is an editor and curator based in London and Dubai. Sykes has fundraised for a number of non-profit and cultural institutions, including The Los Angeles Free Clinic, the Peggy Guggenheim Collection

and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). She is currently the Communications Manager for *Art Dubai* and is curating the visual response for the publication of Art Dubai's *Global Art Forum: 2*, which will be published in October 2008.

Raymond Taudin Chabot

(b. 1974, The Hague) is currently based in London and Amsterdam. Recent group exhibitions include *Discovery of Slowness*, Centre of Contemporary Arts M'ars, Moscow (2008) and National Centre of Photography, St Petersburg (2007), *Pages*, Photography Museum, Rotterdam, (2008) and Dorottya Gallery, Budapest (2008), *Passage*, Brussels and Mechelen, (2008), *Inter-View*, Gallery The Space, Seoul (2007), *Fact&Fiction*, Arti et Amicitiae, Amsterdam (2007), *Shaking Smooth Places* Paris, (2006) and *Travelling without Moving* Budapest, (2004); and solo shows such as *That Place*, 2x2 Projects (Amsterdam, 2008), *Limbo*, Bureau Leeuwarden, Fries Museum, Leeuwarden (2006) and *Disposition*, Carl Berg Projects, Amsterdam (2006). Taudin Chabot has taught audio-visual studies at AKI, Enschede since 2002.

Gaia Tedone

(b. 1982, Bari, Italy) is a curator based in London and Milan. She assisted on both *Pierre Huyghe* and *Fischli & Weiss* exhibitions at the Tate Modern in 2006. Since then she has co-curated a number of independent projects, including the exhibition *Between Mirrors and Windows*, London (2007), the publication project *IM Magazine*, London (2007), the programme of talks at Whitechapel Gallery *Curating Fictions*, London (2007/2008) and the art screening *Every Story is a Travel Story* at the Candid Arts Trust, London (2008).

Jeffrey Vallance

(b.1955, California, USA) has presented solo exhibitions at museums and galleries around the world, including Dakar, Reykjavik, Zürich, Milan, Paris, Mexico City, Stockholm, London, and Athens. Critics have described his work as 'an indefinable cross-pollination of many disciplines'. Examples of previous research trips and projects include burying a piece of meat (chicken) at a pet cemetery in California, having an audience with the King of Tonga, meeting with the President of Iceland, creating a Richard Nixon Museum, and travelling to the Vatican, Turin, and Milan, Italy to study Christian relics. Vallance has published four books: *Blinky, the Friendly Hen*, *The World of Jeffrey Vallance: Collected Writings 1978-1994*, *Thomas Kinkade: Heaven on Earth*, and *My Life with Dick*. His new book, *Relics and Reliquaries*, will be released in 2008.

Tarek Zaki

(b. 1975, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia) and **Marlena Kudlicka** (b. 1973, Poland) are currently artists-in-residence at ISCP in New York. Cairo-based Zaki has exhibited in Liverpool, Dubai, New York, Cairo, Beirut, Kladno and Amsterdam, while New York and Poland-based Kudlicka has shown in New York, Berlin, Stuttgart, Santander, Bulgaria and Poland. *Tarek and Marlena by Marlena and Tarek New York 2008* is their first collaboration.

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