EFFORT

GOOD

CONTENTS

Geir Haraldseth

PREFACE

Collective Good is complicated. Especially when it comes to art, which has a history of individual men, and a few women, who have been singled out as heroes, and the occasional heroine. In contemporary society, the heroes are still here, but there is a greater understanding of the context in which an artwork is seen and distributed, an exhibition is compiled and mediated, or an artist is working in. This book highlights how one institution has dealt with the collective, as a starting point for thinking differently about the institution's function in society, and what possible good it can do.

Even though the topic is complicated, this book has just two halves. Our thick red friend tells the story of Rogaland Kunstsenter over the span of four years, through selected exhibitions, events and other programming that feed into this narrative. The list of exhibitions and events is not exhaustive; a selection has been made, which leaves the individual heroes and their solo exhibitions by the wayside for a moment. This programme has been loosely featured under the umbrella of Collective Good/ Collaborative Effort, an effort to examine collective artistic processes and to see how a contemporary art institution can work in order to achieve a collective good.

Our skinny green friend is an alien to the institution, an attempt to grasp some of the complexities in the discussion around the collective good by inviting authors to fill in some of the blanks outside the projects that happened at the Kunstsenter. Together these two volumes form a vision of the Kunstsenter and its contribution to different collectives, whether that be the artists' unions, which formed the Kunstsenter 40 years ago, the city of Stavanger, which hosts the Kunstsenter, or the region of Rogaland. And how does this institution fit in to the art world at large; a world that voraciously devours anything deemed valuable in its path and makes it part of its market?

Rogaland Kunstsenter was founded in 1978 as a collective vision by the artists in the region. The artists needed a space to show their work, meet, organise and network. This vision can be seen in light of the actions of 1974, when Norwegian artists united to secure a greater investment from the state to improve the artists' economies and their standing in society. Artists proved they were stronger together and the national artists' unions in Norway are still responsible for securing the financial privileges that the social democratic state offers its artists. Similar organisations to the Kunstsenter in Rogaland popped up at around the same time, and nowadays there are 15 kunstsenters all over Norway. This mirrored the emergence of artist-run spaces in Europe and North America in the 1960s and 1970s. Collective work has been the founding principle of the Kunstsenter, and it makes sense to retrace some steps from the counter cultural movements and the collective agency of the 1960s to today.

In this myriad of possible collaborations, forms and desires, the commissioned texts in this book, commissioned for the publication by my co-editor Michael Birchall, and one selection from previously published material, together with the documentation in the red book, provide a case study for this institution. Collective Good, Collaborative Efforts, the programme featured in these two volumes, and the volumes themselves, have been supported by the Arts Council Norway. Our supporters, Stavanger kommune and Rogaland Fylkeskommune, are greatly appreciated as we move through the years with new ideas and attempts to be seen, and also remain experimental and relevant. Stavanger kommune has also contributed generously to the making of this book. I would also like to thank the staff at the Kunstsenter, Torunn Larsen, Kristel Talv, and Lisa Hognestad, our interns, Anna Tuvike, Juste Druskiniene, Ananda Serné, and Alen Ksoll, and our partners BKFR and NKVN-R. The book is designed by Bjørnar Pedersen and Morteza Vaseghi, another exciting collaboration. This is a Collaborative Effort.

Michael Birchall

INTRODUCTION

One of the reasons why new models of collaborative practices have come to play such a significant cultural role is its revived engagement with questions, out of philosophy and ethnography, concerning the role of the representor in a world of abiding inequality between those represented and those doing the representing. As Hal Foster acknowledged in the 1990s, the artist-as-representor working in a given locale or community, easily internalises the role of the ethnographer[1] in a desire to explain what he or she sees and experiences, just as, by extension, the curator embedded in given site, as a socially transformative agent, is susceptible to going 'native', so to speak, by speaking in the language and idiolect of those with whom he or she is working. This can be observed in the practices at the Rogaland Kunstsenter and the Collective Good programme, whereby a range of social and collective practices manifested in a given locale over a four-year period. However, this is why the 'social turn' in art may have been re-imagined through various taxonomies, of relational art, post-relational art, community art, and participatory art, but the same questions surrounding the power-relations of representation have remained immanent to practice.

Hal Foster, drawing on Deleuze and Foucault's famous exchange on representation, argues that, irrespective of levels of participant engagement and autonomy, community-based artists may invariably (and inadvertently) aid the colonisation of difference, in benevolent and well-intentional gestures of democratisation. In other words, the targeting of marginalised groups leads to their becoming both subjects and co-producers of their own cultured self-appropriation in the name of their own self-affirmation. In the final reckoning, when the project 'returns' to the art world, community groups who have become involved in short and long-term projects have to contend with the abiding authorial privileges of the artist and his or her powers of representation. Hence, Foster is critical of the way artists position themselves as an outsider who has the 'institutional authority' to engage a local community in the production of the artist's self-representation. He warns that, 'The quasi-anthropological role setup for the artist can promote a presuming as much as a questioning of ethnographic authority, an evasion as often as an extension of institutional critique'.[2] Indeed, biennials and commissioning bodies reap financial benefits from collaborative projects – the projects value, or gentrify, deprived areas into 'unique' locales.[3] Foster alludes to Walter Benjamin's essay, 'The Author as Producer', which proposes collaborative forms of authorship out of the popular use of modern modes of technological reproduction (in particular the hand-held camera).[4] Foster, however, dismisses artists who try to facilitate collaboration-as-self-representation through such a participatory apparatus.

Thus, in the light of the debate between Deleuze and Foucault on representation and anti-representationalism in 1972,[5] there are still issues that need to be confronted about how and under what conditions the artist or curator speaks, in relation to the art practices of today. How might the socially engaged artist avoid or undermine the tendency of the artist-activist, the artist-collaborator and increasingly the socially engaged curator to seek to speak in the same manner as those they seek to represent? Throughout the essays presented in this publication these issues are questioned and debated, and can be read in relation to the Collective Good programme, particularly in how a collective range of practices can coexist in the context of a kunstsenter.

Grant Kester extends this form of argument with reference to Pierre Bourdieu. Under these conditions a 'problematic relationship... pertains between a given community and the 'delegate' who chooses or is chosen to speak on its behalf'. He goes on to say, 'This relationship is conceived in terms of a kind of political semiotics. The delegate is thus the signifier of a referential community, constituency, or party- in political negotiations the delegate 'stands for' the absent community (as Bourdieu writes the delegate functions 'as a sign in place of the totality of the group')'.[6] Bourdieu views this as challenging the naturalness of the signifying relationship between the delegate – in this case the artist – who chooses to speak on behalf of the community. Despite the social limitations of this notion of 'sociability', Bourriaud's Relational Aesthetics since the late 1990s has been adopted by the art world for any artwork that appears to include any social dimension. These practices, invariably, differ enormously from Bourriaud's initial theory, for example: off-site projects, pedagogical projects, neo-activist strategies and art/architecture collaborative groups.[7]

Art institutions – galleries, museums, kunsthalles – may be regarded as sites of viewing and consumption for the art going public, but increasingly these centres are becoming sites of production, in the form of collaborative practices. This is evident in the experimental summer school programme at Rogaland Kunstsenter, and through

1. Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: The Avant-garde at the End of the Century,* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1996).

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Walter Benjamin, 'The Author as Producer', *New Left Review,* no. 62, 1970, p. 83.

5. Michel Foucault, Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (Ithaca, NY : Cornell University Press).

6. Grant Kester, 'Aesthetic Evangelists: Conversion and Empowerment in Contemporary Community Art', *Afterimage*, Vol. 22, 1995, p. 5.

7. Johanna Billing, Maria Lind, and Lars Nilsson, *Taking the Matter into Common Hands* (London: Black Dog, 2007), p. 21.

8. Karsten Schubert, *The Curator's Egg: The Evolution of the Museum Concept from the French Revolution to the Present Day* (One-Off Press : London, 2000), p. 45.

9. Shannon Jackson, *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics* (Routledge: New York, 2011), p. 201.

10. Harry Weeks, 'A Dialogical Aesthetic?: On Form and Social Practice' in this publication, 2017.

11. Sholette, 'The Collective Bad' in this publication, 2017.

12. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 2000).

13. Billing, Lind and Nilsson, *Taking the Matter into Common Hands*, pp. 22–23.

the manifestation of the exhibition programme. The Kunstsenter becomes part of the production process, instead of merely exhibiting finalised works. This is how Alfred Barr considered the art museum in the 1930s as a 'laboratory, in its experiments, (where) the public is invited to participate'.[8] The new knowledge-worker may operate in a system that is beyond the factory model, yet, museums wish to replace this model as a site of activity, and ultimately production. It is in this field where we begin to see presentations of artist providing services to the local community; generating projects about the local context, and create opportunities for non-artists to learn.

Socially engaged artists may produce projects for their local communities in the form of practical services, such as libraries, baking courses, community gardens, and choirs. As an extension of this curators become part of this dialogue by inviting artists into their institutions to produce such projects, as they realise the generative effect they have on providing a service to the local community. Thus, the rationale for a summer school programme in Stavanger enabled a dialogue between the local artistic audience and visiting artists who would produce a series of projects and activities and encourage debate on contemporary art and art education. Although these practices may begin on a local level, it becomes necessary for curators to expand this into global concerns.[9] At the other end of the spectrum, the art market, the fairs, exhibits, and gallery shows that present the same sort of contemporary art, in places such as New York, London, Berlin and Zurich, has to some degree been able to capture some of the 'do-good' mentality within which socially engaged art operates. This takes the form of short-term events, one-off evenings or happenings that take place within galleries – or sometimes nearby – offering visitors a unique experience. Yet, these projects have little social value beyond the art world; they co-exist in the system of art as small pockets of activity to increase the galleries' stake in the art world.

The essays included in this publication capture four distinct areas in which collaborative practices are situated beyond Rogaland Kunstsenter: instructional practice (Harry Weeks), art activism (Gregory Sholette), artistic labour (Marc James Léger) and the relationship collaborative practices have with anthropology (Charlotte Bik Bandlien). These contributions form the basis of a conversation about collaboration, in extension of the Collective Good projects initiated at the Kunstsenter between 2013 and 2016.

The 'social turn in art' has enabled a variety of practices to emerge that are largely dependent on the project-based model, that is largely devoid of the art object. However, as Weeks observes, 'a recognisable and legible lexicon of material forms has now emerged to serve as signifiers of the social intentions: from the ubiquitous use of plywood, to the widespread orientation of projects around the garden and the kitchen.[10] Throughout his essay a dialogical aesthetic is traced and analysed, with particular emphasis on the institutionalisation of these practices. As discussed in the preface by Haraldseth, the methods and mechanisms for collaboration in art have existed largely since the 1960s with collectives such as Group Material. This is, in part, due to a shift in cultural production which has emerged out of public art, community art and latterly, relational aesthetics in the 1980s and 1990s. As Léger rightly points out, the recent art activism – social practice of the 2000s – corresponds to a new set of social, economic and political conditions of precarisation and flexibilisation, particularly with regards to the new models of privatisation of post-Fordist globalisation. Of particular note is the role of the artist who under these conditions becomes a model of flexible work in today's knowledge economy.

Unlike other areas of the cultural sector, it is predominantly in the visual arts where a preoccupation exist with artistic labour and in particular the autonomy of the figure of the artist. As Sholette observes, 'social practice art, which is dependent on the collapse of traditional artistic autonomy and the full-on aestheticisation of society, exists in an arena where it might have a 'utilitarian ethos that spurns individual acts of expression, or avant-garde efforts at shocking its audience, while favouring instead practices that involve cooperation, group conversation, and efforts to remedy social ailments.[11] Thus, Sholette considers the role of the activist-artist who may become involved in activities that challenge the technocratic functions of the art world, and beyond.

The final essay in this collection discusses the author's collaboration with the fashion label HAiKw/, who created a series of multi-faceted conceptual works at the intersection between art and fashion, at the Rogaland Kunstsenter in 2013. Bik Bandlien reflects on epistemological issues related to forms of 'interdisciplinary practice' at the intersection between art, design and anthropology, as it is in this arena where methodologies of co-production in collaborative practice are often challenged.

Consequently, collaborative practices and socially engaged art require that artists interact with others in order to produce tangible social outcomes. This has encouraged an ideology of 'problem solving', may manifest in exhibitions, long-term projects and residencies. Social engagement is defined by its willingness to relate to marginal or oppressed groups on the edge of society. Dialogue and interaction, therefore, are premised on learning from those with whom the artist in dialogue, as adopted by Paulo Freire.[12] This kind of creative interaction and participation is mediated through public institutions such as schools, community centres and housing projects. Ultimately these projects become internally structured around the needs of the community and the participating artists and curators.[13] In Stavanger this has led to the establishment of an Independent Study Programme benefitting the local community of artists, which can work in tandem with already existing programmes at the local art school, the university and the potential Bachelor Degree in Visual Art Practice.

Marc James Léger

GOOD.

Good. This is what says Grumpy Cat, an overexposed cat meme perhaps but nevertheless the way one might respond to the idea that art is not what it used to be in the postmodern eighties. The end of ideology and meta-narratives proposed by bungee jumping philosophers like Jean Baudrillard and Jean-François Lyotard reached their breaking point as global humanity returns to eighteenth-century levels of wealth inequality, perpetrates endless wars for regime change and faces mass species extinction. Welcome back the new world of leftist politicisation and its reactionary avoidances. In the art world, things have been shifting for the better since at least the late 1990s, largely in conjunction with the rise of new social movements, anti-globalisation protest and the more recent movements of the squares and occupations. Collaborative work, cooperation, participation and collectivisation have become recognised ways of working, if not the predominant zeitgeist in the progressive art word since the new millennium. The shift in cultural production has been from the public art, community art and relational aesthetics of the 1980s and 1990s to the more recent art activism, social practice art and socially engaged art of the 2000s.[1] This phase change corresponds roughly to the predominant social, political and economic conditions of precarisation and flexibilisation under the new privatisation regimes and information economy of post-Fordist globalisation. As Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello have argued in *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, the normal conditions of autonomy and mobility that most artists live with have become a model for the flex worker in today's culture and knowledge-based economy.[2] As new managerial techniques and just-in-time production come to regulate education, science and culture, social practice art and networked activism seek to both explain and resist the precarisation of life in the context of post-communism and post-welfare state capitalism.[3]

1. See for instance Carol Becker, *The Subversive Imagination: Artists, Society, and Social Responsibility* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Mary Jane Jacob, Michael Brenson and Eva M. Olson, *Culture in Action: A Public Art Program of Sculpture Chicago* Curated by Mary Jane Jacob (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995); Suzanne Lacy, ed. *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995); Grant Kester, *Art, Activism and Oppositionality: Essays from Afterimage* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); Nicolas Bourriau, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods (Paris: Les presses du réel, [1998] 2002); Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, MA Press, 2002); Grant Kester, *Conversation and Culture: Community + Communication in Modern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Gregory Sholette and Blake Stimson, eds. *Collectivism After Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination after 1945* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Grant Kester, *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012); Nato Thompson, *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art From 1991-2011* (New York/Cambridge: Creative Time Books/ MIT Press, 2012); Marc James Léger, *Brave New Avant Garde: Essays on Contemporary Art and Politics* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2012).

2. Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, [1999] 2005).

3. See for instance Gerald Raunig, Gene Ray and Ulf Wuggenig, eds. *Critique of Creativity: Precarity, Subjectivity and Resistance in the 'Creative Industries'* (London: MayFly Books, 2011); Marc James Léger, ed. *Culture and Contestation in the New Century* (Bristol: Intellect, 2011). See also Hans Abbing, *Why Are Artists Poor? The Exceptional Economy of the Arts* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002); *Precarious Reader* (London: Mute, 2005); Julieta Aranda, Brian Kuan Wood and Anton Vidokle, eds. *Are You Working Too Much? Post-Fordism, Precarity and the Labor of Art* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2011). See also the web site of W.A.G.E. (Working Artists and the Greater Economy) at www.wageforwork.com.

Of course, socially engaged art, with its focus on social justice, the critique of various forms of oppression and capitalist work conditions, is not the only kind of political art in existence, not to mention the only kind of art. Terry Smith, for instance, considers that socially engaged art is only one of three main tendencies in contemporary art, including relational practices as well as postcolonial trajectories.[4] One could also think, for instance, of the kinds of museum art discussed by critics and curators like Nicolas Bourriaud, Charles Esche and Peter Weibel, or the more obscure aspects of aesthetics discussed by philosophers like Alain Badiou and Jacques Rancière. As even Marxist aesthetics proposes, art and culture need not be reduced to questions of necessity and social reality. On the other hand, as the Canadian cultural theorist Imre Szeman argues, culture in the era of globalisation is undeniably connected to the neoliberal political project. Globalisation is not postmodernism but a new reality that has little to do with aesthetics. There is no 'globalist' cultural formation, he argues, in the way that there was a 'postmodernist' one. Rather, globalisation suspends the category of representation that was instrumental to the cultural studies project and compels us to see culture in relation to exchange relations, or to what Gene Ray refers to as UAC (Art Under Capitalism).[5] In light of this, and after the world-shaking 2008 banking crisis, artists Gregory Sholette and Oliver Ressler proposed in their exhibition and catalogue that 'it's the political economy, stupid', paradoxically calling on artists begin to disable capitalist 'econospeak'.[6] Their point is not that culture is reducible to economy, but that economy has become inescapable within the realm of the cultural superstructure. Marxist political economy is thus presented as a first line of defence against neoliberal austerity. The emphasis on social relations of production and mode of production, however, as proposed most forcefully by autonomist Marxism, does not solve all of our problems. Indeed, it is not obvious what kinds of genuine social emancipation can be invented under the conditions of the real subsumption of labour, wherein cultural production is indexed to biocapitalist integration and social control. It would seem clear enough that collective good and collaborative effort are preferable to their structural opposite: private vice and selfish laziness. Put this way, one might think that we are far from something like Paul Lafargue's semi-utopian *Right to Laziness* – or Karl Marx's promise of communism as a world where one can 'hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner' all the while being defined none of these insofar, as Marx says, 'I have a mind' – and closer to the bourgeois social and cultural reformism whose concerns have always been for the mindless indigent to lift themselves by their bootstraps as a mercenary force battling for the wealth of nations.[7] Such bourgeois and social democratic ideology have been materialised through the permanent threat of strikes and riots by the exploited classes.[8]

In the context of today's post-Fordist information and culture economy, the new spirit of capitalism is shadowed by the forms of collective action in which workers, the unemployed, the impoverished and the dispossessed represent the impossibility of social reproduction in conditions of capitalist crisis – or in other words, a kind of evil that must be disciplined and controlled, most often by being treated as individual maladaptation. With this in mind, the critique of the artist's withdrawal into the traditional habit of individual practice simply accepts as a *fait accompli* the disintegration of the 'institution art', as Peter Bürger defined it, but having done so now confronts the problem of its replacement by an even more demanding and exploitative neoliberal creative industry.[9] Not only do the new collectives and their concerns allow the art system to renew itself with projects, symposia and publications, but a more radical structural shift is introduced. As Lane Reyla puts it in *Your Everyday Art World*,

> ...the replacement of hierarchical, restrictive, and summarizing models of culture, whether spectacular or canonical, with new, more horizontal and networked models based on ever-extending databases and platforms enhanced by better connectivity, a change that has brought with it a new subject, no longer the individual as distilled essence of a centered culture, whether high culture's elitist snob or mass culture's brainwashed couch potato, but rather a more spread-out and decentered actor, what sociologists studying this new normative type like to call the 'omnivore'.[10]

For Reyla, the new managerial styles and technological infrastructures contribute to new art practices in which singular and isolated objects, events and artists are replaced by the connectivity and circulation of projects, residencies and commissions that are performative, externalised, collective, communicational, networked, flexibilised, etc., and that coincide with the neoliberalisation of institutions, museums, universities and bureaucracies. The class solidarity that could come from something like being in an artists' union in a communist state is exchanged for contracts that shift the risks of precarity from the collective to the individual/group.[11] The contradictions facing contemporary practices that seek to benefit society through collective efforts, lest they be nomadic autonomist spaces, are otherwise now similar to those imposed on trade unions whose fortunes have been tied to the vagaries of the capitalist revolutionising of the relations and forces of production. To say this is not merely to turn rightside-up the ideology of collectivism by emphasising the determinations of material practices. On the contrary, I think we need better and more complex conceptions of collectivism on a mass scale.

4. See Terry Smith's contribution to "Questionnaire on 'The Contemporary'," *October* no. 130 (Fall 2009), pp. 3–124. See also Terry Smith, *What Is Contemporary Art?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

5. Imre Szeman, "Imagining the Future: Globalization, Postmodernism and Criticism", *Frame: Tijdschrift voor Literatuurwetenschap* (Netherlands) 19:2 (2006), pp. 16–30. Gene Ray, "Avant-Gardes as Anti-Capitalist Vector", *Third Text* 21:3 (May 2007) 241–55.

6. Gregory Sholette and Oliver Ressler, eds. *It's the Political Economy, Stupid: The Global Financial Crisis in Art and Theory* (London: Pluto, 2013), p. 10.

7. Karl Marx, "The German Ideology" (1845), available at www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/.

8. On this subject, see Joshua Clover, *Riot. Strike. Riot: The New Era of Uprisings* (London: Verso, 2016). For a contrasting approach that proposes a communist party organisation of crowd potential, see Jodi Dean, *Crowds and Party* (London: Verso, 2016).

9. Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, [1974] 1984).

10. Lane Reyla, *Your Everyday Art World* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013) x.

11. On this subject, see Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt, *To Defend the Revolution Is to Defend Culture: The Cultural Policy of the Cuban Revolution* (Oakland: PM Press, 2015).

12. Brian Holmes, "Unleashing the Collective Phantoms", in *Unleashing the Collective Phantoms: Essays in Reverse Imagineering* (Williamsburg: Autonomedia, 2008), p. 26.

13. Karl Marx, "Co-operation", *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin Books, [1867] 1976), p. 453.

14. Mario Tronti cited in Nicholas Thoburn, *Deleuze, Marx and Politics* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 78. See also Sylvère Lotringer and Christian Marazzi, eds. *Autonomia: Post-Political Politics* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007).

15. For a critique of the autonomist notion of "capitalist communism", see Christian Fuchs, *Digital Labour and Karl Marx* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

16. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2000). For a critique of the abandonment of leftism by the generation of nouveaux philosophes in France, see Daniel Zamora and Michael C. Behrent, eds. *Foucault and Neoliberalism* (Cambridge: Polity, [2014] 2016).

17. Sven Lütticken, "Cultural Revolution: From Punk to the New Provotariat", *New Left Review* no. 87 (May/June 2014), p. 125.

18. See Marc James Léger, "Bruce Barber and the Parenthetical Suspension of Performance", in *Bruce Barber, Performance, [Performance] and Performers*, ed. Marc James Léger (Toronto: YYZ Books, 2007), p. 19.

A Collective Living and Work Context

How can we address both the success of the new social art practices as well as the challenges that we now face in terms of organisational logic, labour conditions and cybernetic control. If, in capitalist space, according to a détourned *Alien* film poster, no one hears you scream, the same is true for individuals as well as collectivities. The challenge for us, in today's market-driven sociality, in my view, is to keep in mind the best that comes from individual effort and leave out the worst that comes from romantic fetishisations of relationality and cooperation. Today's capitalism is in deep crisis insofar as it increasingly relies on non-wage labour at the same time that it searches for new areas to exploit. Beyond the exploitation of nature and labour, many would include the biogenetic substance of life itself. Such value production can be understood beyond wages but not beyond surplus-value creation and exploitation. Management gurus, who are now installed in government, art institutions and universities, downplay exploitation by presenting digital media production as a blurring of the lines between work and leisure and by associating mediated social activity with community, creativity, connectivity, sharing, cooperation, and participation and moreover, as inherently democratic and liberating. The question, then, according to Brian Holmes, is how can the millions of flex workers organise cooperation instead of intensified control?[12]

Marx long ago defined cooperation as one of the distinct features of efficiency in the capitalist mode of production.[13] While Marx held that the co-presence of cooperating workers puts pressure on capitalists to overcome increasing worker resistance, the conditions of cooperation alter considerably in the context of what autonomist theorists refer to as the 'social factory'. The concept of the social factory revolves around Marx's notion of the real subsumption of labour and the new modes of production since the postwar era. The basic premises of autonomist Marxism are derived from a chapter in Marx's 1858 *Grundrisse*, known as the 'Fragment on Machines', as well as from the 'missing 6th chapter' of *Capital* and from volumes two and three of *Capital*. Despairing of Italian communism and of social democracy's historical compromise with capitalism, *autonomia* returned to Marx and in particular to the missing chapter on 'real subsumption'. According to Marxist theory, the 'formal subsumption of labour' occurs when labour power is exchanged for wages and exploited for surplus value profit. The process of technological automation, overseen and enhanced by management techniques, leads to the 'real subsumption' of labour. As competition and automation reduce the valorisation process, rates of profit decline and more of the labour force is made redundant. On the one hand, beyond the money nexus, this freeing up of time is the realisation of human dreams of emancipation from toil and drudgery, but on the other hand, the pauperisation of the labour market creates a crisis in production since there is also a reduced ability to consume what is produced.

In order to compensate for this situation in which labour has been replaced by innovation, capitalism looks to the growth of the tertiary sector, with new services made available in education, culture, leisure, advertising, health, administration, social welfare, security, and so on – a new 'post-industrial' labour market that satisfies new needs and defines workers in terms of consumer identities rather than their place in the division of labour. The shift from formal to real subsumption is therefore conditioned by the development of machines, which destroys the individual's artisanal way of working and incorporates "cooperative" humanity as a whole into complex machines. In the capitalist mode of production, the worker's skill-based autonomy is replaced by management and planning, which consolidates the centrality of machine automation in both large-scale industry and the new service and information economies. Under real subsumption, all work is organised according to the needs and rhythms of capital, which come to define social relations. In 1962, the autonomist thinker Mario Tronti formalised the notion of the social factory, writing:

> At the highest level of capitalist development social relations become moments of the relations of production, and the whole society becomes an articulation of production. In short, all of society lives as a function of the factory and the factory extends its exclusive domination over all of society.[14]

Notwithstanding the ways in which the autonomists are said to have misinterpreted Marx's theory of the mass worker, it is a commonplace for autonomists to conclude that the social factory has no use for the individual worker.[15] It is easy enough to see how the post-Fordist machine causes people to turn to commons, collectivism, identity groups and gangsterism as ways to gain value within a system that programmatically undermines the worth of individual labour powers. The postwar recomposition of capital away from factory production and towards consumerism and advertising accompanied the rise of new class compositions, from lumpen youth subcultures, gender, racial and sexual minorities to non-communist workers, the unemployed and part-time flex workers. The means to control and harness the productivity of this new composition of social labour-power was through culture, communication and knowledge. In their 2000 text, *Empire*, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri drew on Foucault's work to describe communicative labour as a subjective and affective 'biopolitics' that is immanent to capitalist regimes of production, now designed as code, sign and information.[16] Labour is informationalised through communicative flows that are mediated by technologies and enmeshed in regimes of control. Capitalism is thus programmed directly into the brains and bodies of cooperating subjects.

19. John Roberts, *Revolutionary Time and the Avant-Garde* (London: Verso, 2015), p. 22.

20. See Paul Mason, *Why It's Kicking Off Everywhere: The New Global Revolution* (London: Verso, 2012) and Gregory Sholette, *Dark Matter: Art and Politics in the Age of Enterprise Culture* (London: Pluto Press, 2011).

21. Yates McKee, "~~DEBT~~: Occupy, Postcontemporary Art, and the Aesthetics of Debt Resistance", *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 112:4 (Fall 2013), p. 784–803.

22. McKee, "~~DEBT~~," 798. McKee's argument about Occupy Wall Street and its offshoots as an instance of the sublation of art into life is given detailed analysis in McKee, *Strike Art: Contemporary Art and the Post-Occupy Condition* (London: Verso, 2016). For a discussion of the art strike, see Stevphen Shukaitis, *The Composition of Movements to Come: Aesthetics and Cultural Labor after the Avant-Garde* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

23. For a genealogy of politicised art practice, see Gregory Sholette, "Art Out of Joint: Artists' Activism Before and After the Cultural Turn", (2015).

24. McKee, "~~DEBT~~", p. 793.

25. Ibid., p. 784.

26. On the question of organisation over activism, see Malcolm Gladwell, "Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted", *The New Yorker* (October 4, 2010), available at www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/10/04/small-change-malcolm-gladwell, and Astra Taylor, "Against Activism", *The Baffler* no. 30 (2016), available at www.thebaffler.com/salvos/against-activism. On the question of building leftist infrastructures, see Nato Thompson, *Seeing Power: Art and Activism in the 21st Century* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2015) and Geert Lovink, "Before Building the Avant-Garde of the Commons", *Open* (November 1, 2016), available at www.onlineopen.org/before-building-the-avant-garde-of-the-commons.

27. See for instance Jeffrey S. Juris, *Networking Futures: The Movements Against Corporate Globalization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Manuel Castells, *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012); Paul Gerbaudo, *Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism* (London: Pluto Press, 2012); Todd Wolfson, *Digital Rebellion: The Birth of the Cyber Left* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014); Nick Dyer-Witheford, *Cyber-Proletariat: Global Labour in the Digital Vortex* (London/Toronto: Pluto Press/Between the Lines, 2015); Geert Lovink, *Social Media Abyss: Critical Internet Cultures and the Force of Negation* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016).

The Art World Strikes Back

By the 2000s neoliberal and creative industries policies had transformed culture in such a way that artists and intellectuals began to reconceptualise their practices in terms of cultural entrepreneurialism. Reacting to neoconservative backlash, they put forward a new cultural politics of representation that struggled according to a mostly superstructural definition of culture. Today, this entrepreneurial model reaches a limit. Sven Lütticken gives as an example of this the culture of permanent auditioning and volunteering in which, in 2013, 1,600 people applied for a cloakroom job at the Rijksmuseum and 19,000 people applied for a few posts as attendants in the Prado.[17] I myself reported in 2007 that a job posting at the Art Gallery of Ontario required a community arts facilitator whose portfolio qualifications were practically unlimited but whose employment was to be part-time and temporary.[18] Such precarious contract and project work becomes the norm for people working in what John Roberts refers to as art's 'secondary economy'. Whereas the primary economy involves auction houses, museums and commercial galleries, according to Roberts the secondary economy represents the global political economy of art where the vast majority of artists today labour.[19] As with Paul Mason's idea of the 'jacobin with a laptop', or Gregory Sholette's notion of 'dark matter', the secondary economy is created by the rise of underemployment and the widespread availability of new technologies. A newly produced reserve army of educated, amateur, occasional and professional artists now has the potential of becoming the primary economy, mixing their allegiances between aesthetic values and radical political consciousness.[20]

Insofar as people refuse to identify along ideological lines as a class, but rather as a multitude or indignant crowd, revolutionary prospects are replaced by the current forms of collaboration and self-organization like Occupy Wall Street that are comprised of lumpenfreelancers, artists and intellectuals, and rely on a narrow class identification that, in Lütticken's estimation, organises itself as an assemblage or montage of temporarily connected 'sub-classes' and "ex-classes" who are prey to the overwhelming privatisation of economic capital in the hands of the upper class. Small and informal counter-institutions that are concerned with sustainable forms of interaction are nevertheless operating in a situation in which they exploit themselves to an even higher degree than in the past and act as innovators of an informational primitive accumulation.

One example of a tactical break from the inevitability of social factory exploitation is the 'postcontemporary' art of Strike Debt, as defined and described by the neo-anarchist activist and theorist Yates McKee.[21] In his analysis of what he terms the 'revolutionary struggle' of Strike Debt, McKee follows Peter Bürger's well-known formula that the goal of the historical avant-gardes was the sublation of art into life.[22] In Strike Debt gatherings, 'witness testimonies' and 'conversion narratives' describe the shared

experience of crippling student, credit card, health care and mortgage debt. Strike Debt builds an affective space of care against the predatory practices of Wall Street and large banks that is based on mutual concern and that raises the spectre of an 'invisible Army of Defaulters' which could act cohesively and against the corruption of moneyed interests, thereby prefiguring noncapitalist social bonds. McKee considers that the work of Strike Debt represents an altogether 'new' programme of politicised art.[23]

Given the fact that such activist work as Strike Debt is being produced on this side of the anti-globalisation movement and after 9/11, the war on terror and a widespread awareness of workerist concepts in the cultural field, one could refer to this kind of practice as not simply 'activist', but more complexly as 'post-political bio-activism'. The point of this kind of grassroots community art is to be effective in real life and to not waste time with too much concern for theory or art world consecration. This effort to escape art and theory into politics is in many ways, a strength, especially for the artists themselves. It is a weakness, however insofar as this kind of work is limited to what Marx and Engels defined in the nineteenth century as utopian socialism and Proudhonism. One might wonder where the vanguardism comes in exactly if the most effective tactic of Strike Debt has been to make socially progressive use of the secondary debt market, an idea put forward by the artist and organiser Thomas Gokey.[24] For McKee, however, the main innovative principle of postcontemporary art is not the Rolling Jubilee itself – the raising of funds as an example of 'microtopian' alternative economies – but the conceptualisation of the artist as an organiser, someone who facilitates assemblies, devises strategies and tactics, designs propaganda, stages performances, delivers workshops, cultivates alliances and administers media platforms.[25] None of these practices would, in, and of themselves, be considered artistically relevant if it was not for the fact that, in the case of both Occupy Wall Street and Strike Debt, a large number of organisers also happen to be artists, whose creativity is essential to the movement. Such artists may be supported by institutions, but they take their cues from the new forms of political subjectivity.

To Network or Not to Network

While the leftist cultural world has been trying to shift away from piecemeal activism and attempting to move towards greater organisational capacity, as exemplified by McKee's studies of Occupy Wall Street and Strike Debt, we have also heard a great deal about the creation of sustainable infrastructures, if not as an alternative to project work, then at least as an alternative to traditional trade unionism and political party organisation. The discussions on organisation as well as leadership have been highly conditioned by the new digital and networked tools of organisation.[26] Which seem to be a solution to the impasse of neoliberal deterritorialisation but also consistent with it.[27] Ignoring here the various proponents of techno-optimism, which more or less conform to the libertarian principles and Cold War logic that built the Internet in the first place, the more critical approaches, whether we are dealing with the work of Steven Shaviro, Tiziana Terranova, Galloway and Thacker, Jodi Dean, Evgeny Morozov, Franco Berardi or The Invisible Committee, find that life in the age of networks is not altogether a place of convivial social interaction.[28] Cybernetic capitalism sometimes proposes a capitalism from below, as in the 1975 *Ten Commandments for a New Economy*, for which collective intelligence would preserve biodiversity and multicultural difference, increasing complexity as well as containment. According to Tiqqun, the new 'third way' alliance between capitalism and socialism that was developed through cybernetics in the 1970s corresponds to the social regulation ethos of the anti-globalisation movement and biocapitalist protest, with its critique of authority and political representation. They write:

> Everywhere there is only horizontality of relations, and participation in projects that are to replace the dusty old hierarchical and bureaucratic authority, counter-power and decentralization that is supposed to defeat monopolies and secrecy. Thus the chains of social interdependence can extend and tighten, chains which are sometimes made of surveillance, and sometimes of delegation. Integration of civil society by the State, and integration of the State by civil society more and more work together like gears. It is thus that the *division of the labor of population management* necessary for the dynamics of cybernetic capitalism is organized – and the affirmation of a 'global citizenship' will, predictably, put the finishing touches on it.[29]

The 'cybernetic hypothesis' that seeks to do away with socialism now includes the direct and participatory democracy of citizens' movements, which replaces political programme – class struggle and critique of political economy – with ecology and political democratism.

Tiqqun makes the interesting statement that they themselves do not want more transparency, 'citizens more ideally coupled with their devices', but more opacity and intensity for a non-citizen, anti-social and anti-state politics. They do not want to resolve the social question by making cybernetics, 'the last possible socialism', into a communism for robots.[30] Counterposed to this is the possibility of communism as 'the end of' the cybernetic hypothesis. This cybernetic eschatology maybe says more than Tiqqun intends, against which they otherwise propose, not unlike Thacker and Galloway, experimenting alongside cybercapitalism with a panoply of tactics: random manipulation, interference fog, insinuation, redesigning protocols for experimentation, escaping representation, causing panic situations and inefficient collective behaviour,

28. Steven Shaviro, *Connected, or What It Means to Live in the Network Society* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Tiziana Terranova, *Network Cultures: Politics for the Information Age* (London: Pluto Press, 2004); Alexander R. Galloway and Eugene Thacker, *The Exploit: A Theory of Networks* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007); Jodi Dean, *Feedback and Capture in the Circuits of Drive* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010); Evgeny Morozov, *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011); Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, *The Uprising: On Poetry and Finance* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2012); The Invisible Committee, *To Our Friends*, trans. Robert Hurley (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), [2014] 2015).

29. Tiqqun, "The Cybernetic Hypothesis", *Tiqqun* no. 2 (2001), p. 39.

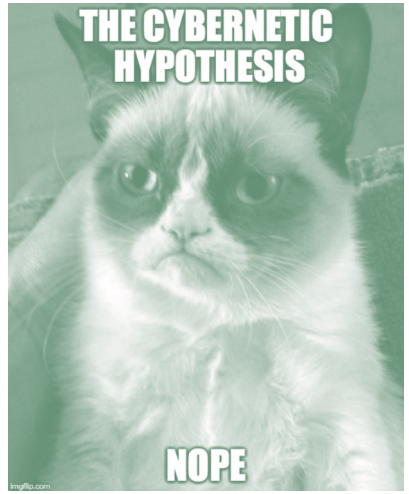
30. Ibid., pp. 42, 50 and 52.

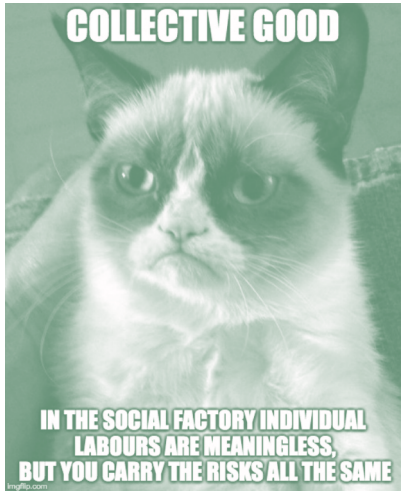
31. Slavoj Žižek, "The Left's Fidelity to Castro-ation", *In These Times* (November 29, 2016), available at www.inthesetimes.com/article/19677/the-left-fidelity-castration-slavoj-zizek-fidel-castro-cuba-che-communism.

32. See for instance Paul Mason, *Postcapitalism: A Guide to the Future* (London: Penguin, 2015) as well as Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams, *Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World without Work* (London: Verso, 2015).

producing a heterogeneous ensemble of noises, information spamming, bifurcation, non-conforming acts, secrecy as a means to modulate force, luddite sabotage, deliberate slowdown, encounters, extending background interference, establishing zones of opacity, spontaneous subversions and reaching critical mass.

Tiqqun's ecstatic politics of escape return us to Foucauldian notions of power and resistance, generating a creative chaos they believe will irreversibly disrupt cybernetic equilibrium from within. From a more mundane point of view, one can ask a simple question like whether or not a Bernie Sanders presidency would have been more of an interference to neoliberal hegemony than al-Qaeda or ISIS, who are just as often the beneficiaries of the Pentagon than its ostensible enemy. To consider the collective good, in my estimation, is to address the question of how the left might overcome the false choice between so-called Old Left communist parties and resistant networked anarchism. The recent death of Fidel Castro has caused Salvoj Žižek to speculate on what might be possible today for Cuba: to preserve the Communist party regime and make pragmatic concessions to free market capitalism; to follow the Chinese model and make the Communist party responsible for managing a free market system; or to abandon communism altogether.[31] The problem of the left, however, is not simply the problem of the last redoubts of communist party rule, but of all who suffer and resist the depredations of global capitalism. Some consider that capitalism's productive forces this time will lead to its own demise, as automation and gift economies create irrevocable changes to the way we do things.[32] Leftists say this cannot happen without greater class consciousness and political struggle, insisting that capitalism will inevitably seek ways to recoup surpluses that have been distributed and extend capitalist relations throughout the new spaces of the networked social factory. Artists and art institutions in these circumstances often have the function of humanising and culturalising capitalist transformation. In my view the least that artists and art institutions can do today is be less relational and benignly collaborative and get in touch with their inner Grumpy Cat. Whether as an individual or as a collectivity, and as clichéd as this sounds, this means to challenge the status quo with ideas and practices that can scale up, and prepare the revolutionary forces of tomorrow.





Charlotte Bik Bandlien

TOWARDS AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PRACTICE

HAIKING AS RESEARCH AND (POST-) ARTISTIC PRACTICE

This text's point of departure is the author's collaboration with the conceptual fashion label HAiKw/. An exploration of hybrid practices at the intersection of research and artistic practice constitutes the empirical backdrop for theoretical reflections on epistemological issues related to forms of interdisciplinarity at the intersection between art and anthropology. The collaboration also covers theory and practice, and ontological issues related to so-called post-artistic practices – towards an anthropological practice framed as (post-) artistic research.

HAiKw/ consists of Ida Falck Øien, Harald Lunde Helgesen and Siv Støldal, three Norwegian designers who, since establishing their label in 2011, have created multi-faceted conceptual works at the intersection between art and fashion.[1] The group draws on a diverse network of artists, scholars, producers, friends and family, who 'hitchhike' together, as temporary constellations of collaborative partners. 'HAiKing' in the text's subtitle should thus be understood as a metaphor for the author's participation in some of these temporary collaborative constellations with HAiKw/.

The title of this text points to the its aim to identify one possible anthropological practice, in the sense of one of several – namely, the author's own. The aim is neither to outline an anthropological practice that sets a precedent for academic anthropologists or for applied anthropology, nor for those anthropologists who work with art, but rather to point to a position with a distinct – a reconfiguration of artistic practice. The subtitle also alludes to the notion that this hitchhiking with HAiKw/ – lies at the intersection between research and artistic practice, where the collaborative constellation jointly can be said to conduct artistic research. It is further argued that these hybrid practices (in which both HAiKw/ and the author engage) can be understood both *through* anthropology and *as* anthropological practice, particularly in light of the post-artistic aspects of this practice.

The term 'post-artistic practice' points to range of tendencies in the contemporary art field that primarily relate to a renewed interest in, and new expressions of, avant-gardist attempts to integrate art and life. The concept of use or *usership*, is also central here, being reflected in many initiatives in recent years, for example 'Useless Uses' at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm,[2] 'Making Use: Life in Post-Artistic Times' at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw[3] and the 'Department of Usership' at Oslo National Academy of the Arts.[4] Key words for this direction are agency, effect in the everyday world and transgression.

With these key words in mind, it should be clear that the design field – in our case, the critical design field, where agency and effect in the world are integral – has clear links to post-artistic practices. HAiKw/ operates precisely at this intersection: within the field of autonomous art, but first and foremost beyond it, as goods, even consumer goods, and as a brand. Furthermore, the field of design includes anthropology as an integrated part of its theoretical framework, precisely because agency, effect in the world and transgressive practices are anthropology's speciality.

Over time, art discourse has also absorbed and appropriated anthropological perspectives, as a consequence of the 'material' turn in the field of art, the dominance of market logic, and post-artistic attempts, which enable new spaces of opportunity in the encounter between contemporary art and anthropology. Seeking to contribute to tracing such cross-pollinations and the frameworks and movements that are their preconditions, this text therefore gives a selected literary overview, where the evaluation of the literature's relevance is informed by the collaboration with HAiKw/.
The reflections presented result from a process of realisation that emerged in the dialectic between theory and practice, between an interdisciplinary theoretical orientation (i.e. contemporary art discourse) and an experience of degrees of overlap between 'lifeworlds' (*lebenswelten*) at the intersection between anthropology and contemporary art.

The fact that this article was originally published in a Norwegian journal for art history, is of course, not without significance, with regard to both its intentions and its possible reception. The original publishing context has affected the argumentation with respect to assumptions about preconditions and references. also previously been tested out on various actors in fields of relevance for contextualising the HAiKw/'s collaboration, both on academics as conference papers[5] – first amongst anthropologists[6] and thereafter amongst design historians[7] – in more practice-orientated fields – as part of international fashion discourse at the intersection with art[8] and in contemporary (post-) art discourse.[9]

1. www.haikwithus.com

2. www.kkh.se/event/useless-uses/

3. www.artmuseum.pl/en/wystawy/robiac-uzytek

4. www.cristin.no/app/projects/show.jsf?id=466377

5. Accepted paper for the workshop 'Mode mellan konst, kultur och kommers' [Fashion between art, culture and commerce] organised by the Division of Fashion Science at Lund University, September 2013,

6. At the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) with the title *Producing Anthropology*, during the session 'Practice, Process and Post-Rationalization: Notes on Making and the Temporality of Creativity', held in Washington DC, December 2014.

7. At the Design History Society's symposium 'Design History In Practice: Theory, Method and Materials', organised in collaboration with the Department of Philosophy, Classics, History of Art and Ideas, University of Oslo, June 2015.

8. International panel debate on fashion vs. art, as part of *Uncontaminated Oslo Fashion Art Festival*, Oslo, October 2015.

9. International panel debate on the concept of post-art, in connection with the exhibition Making Use (curated by an anthropologist and a sociologist), Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, April 2016.

10. 'Intention of the unintended' was presented by the philosopher Peter Osbourne as a characteristic artistic approach at the conference *Former West* in Istanbul, 2010.

11. 'Thick descriptions' was introduced by Clifford Geertz in his 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture' in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

12. George E. Marcus and Michael M.J. Fischer, Anthropology as Cultural Critique: *An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

13. James Clifford and George E. Marcus, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

Anthropology and Method

The HAiKw/collaboration came about through a shared interest in anthropological methods. The author's work as an anthropologist has gravitated towards exploring what an anthropological practice can be – or, more precisely, developing new methods for doing anthropology – most recently within art and design. HAiKw/'s members, for their part, utilise what they describe as 'quasi-anthropological and sociological methods' in their work.

So what exactly is anthropological methodology? Chiefly, it involves fieldwork and participative observation – being personally engaged in a socio-cultural 'field' in time and space – a qualitative approach developed to capture contemporary conditions. The demarcation of this field of study is developed simultaneously with the process of identifying which factors prove relevant and hence cannot be done in advance. The anthropological method is therefore abductive, characterised by a love of serendipity, or by an 'intention of the unintended',[10] as is also the case within several artistic traditions. The empirical material that is collected results from detailed field notes generating so-called 'thick descriptions'[11] – a combination of continuous reporting and interpretation. The term 'ethnography' points not only to this method, but also to a more finished textual presentation from a specific field.

This stage in the research process is what many people associate with anthropology – that is, anthropology understood as a mere descriptive discipline. Ethnography, however, only forms the starting point for cross-cultural comparison, which, in turn, gives birth to anthropology – perhaps best understood as philosophy with an empirical anchoring. Furthermore, the very purpose of anthropology is to enable cultural critique,[12] via researchers situating themselves within contexts completely different from their own, in order to generate reflexivity in the encounter with their own cultural configurations. While anthropology shares this goal with both critical theory and certain artistic traditions, it is nevertheless a matter of critique from two different angles, given that anthropology represents a 'bottom-up' perspective which emphasises the critical potential of examining life itself.

The interest that HAiK/w and the author share in anthropological methods is a reflection of what is known as the 'ethnographic turn' in contemporary art, on one hand, and what is known as the 'representation crisis' in anthropology on the other. This 'crisis' was a critical and self-reflective wave in the 1980s where scholars tried to get beyond the reductionist aspects of writing culture, as formulated in the seminal book Writing Culture,[13] which called for more transparency and new modes of conducting anthropological research. Contemporary art's dealings in ethnography, as reflected in Hal Foster's essay 'The Artist as Ethnographer'[14] is well-known, in contrast to the representation crisis in anthropology.

14. Hal Foster, 'The Artist as Ethnographer?' in *The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology*, eds. George E. Marcus and Fred R. Myers (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

15. Grace Lees-Maffei, 'The Production-Consumption-Mediation Paradigm', *Journal of Design History*, 22, no. 4 (2009), pp. 351–376.

16. Represented by theorists such as Daniel Miller, Arjun Appadurai, Pierre Bourdieu and Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood.

17. Lees-Maffei, 'The Production-Consumption-Mediation Paradigm'.

18. The social construction of value was the main theme in the author's thesis. See Charlotte Bik Bandlien, 'Producing Scarcity – An Investigation of the Retro Market' (thesis in social anthropology, University of Oslo, 2004).

19. Kjetil Fallan, *Design History: Understanding Theory and Method* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010).

20. Alison J. Clarke, ed., Design Anthropology: Object Culture in the 21st Century (Vienna: Springer, 2010).

21. Like 'for example' the cultural historian Ivan Gaskell, professor and curator at Bard, NYC, who approaches the field of material culture at the intersection between anthropology, art history and philosophy.

22. Michael Yonan, 'Toward a Fusion of Art History and Material Culture Studies', *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture*, 18, no. 2 (autumn–winter 2011), pp. 232–248.

23. The journal *Fashion Theory* was established in 1997. It addresses fashion at the intersection between sociology, art history, consumer theory and anthropology.

24. Design theory, of course, eventually also covers a much wider range of design than mere objects.

25. Paradoxically enough, another theoretical tradition focusing on materiality, namely architectural theory, has chosen to call a similar approach – that is, an interest in cultural aspects of the material – 'immaterial culture'. There is, however, little contact between these two traditions.

26. The disciplinary field includes history, art history, anthropology, archaeology and literary translation studies.

27. Aaron Glass, 'Report on "Materiality and Cultural Translation"', *Material World. A Hub for Thinking about Things* (website), (16 July 2010), upaginated. www.materialworldblog.

28. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception* (New York: Routledge, 2012 [1945]).

29. Paul Rabinow and George E. Marcus, *Designs for an Anthropology of the Contemporary* (Durham: Duke, 2008).

Design Theory and Material Culture

CultureWithin design research – which sprang from art history – anthropology was included in what is often termed the 'second wave', where production was replaced by consumption as the reigning paradigm.[15] With this, there came recognition of anthropology's substantial contribution to the field of consumer research.[16] Anthropology would also be of utmost significance to the 'third wave' – sometimes referred to as 'mediation of design'[17] – which sought to understand the social construction of value.[18] (There is, however, still untapped potential in integrating anthropological concepts with those developed in the fields of design studies and design theory – expansions of the discipline of design history[19] – that have tried to capture socio-cultural processes by expanding their own concepts – at least in anthropologists' eyes – out of shape.) Within the domain of what is known as 'design anthropology', the critical perspectives described by, for example, Alison J. Clarke are the most relevant in this context,[20] rather than the more applied, user-orientated approaches that are perhaps most often associated with this division of applied anthropology.

The design field needed analysis based on a synthesised theoretical approach precisely because agency and effect in the world were essential for understanding the object of study. These attempts at synthesis have also given birth to a series of terms such as 'critical cultural studies', 'social art history' and 'interdisciplinary aesthetics'[21] or 'the fusion of art history and material culture studies'[22] – all of which represent nuances of approaches with varying degrees of overlap. Fashion theory is a much newer discipline, established with interdisciplinarity as the starting point[23] – separate from the more object-orientated design theory.[24]

'There is the feeling that this is the moment in which understanding material culture, something central to humanity, its past and future, is being achieved at a level beyond anything that had previously been imagined', wrote the anthropologist Daniel Miller, perhaps the most central figure within so-called 'material culture studies',[25] in his euphoric blurb for the *Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies* when everyone viewed things as signs. The new goal for Miller et al. was to let things speak for themselves, as it were. At an interdisciplinary colloquium on materiality and cultural translation at Harvard in 2010,[26] it was concluded that the material (and visual) turn which characterised newer tendencies in the humanities and social sciences was fruitful on several levels:

> For art historians, the frameworks of material and visual culture not only enlarge the field of objects but also disrupt long-standing hierarchies of fine and applied arts and bring renewed attention to the material properties of works of art. For anthropologists, the renewal of interest in material culture

has led to new theorizations of the anthropology of art and visual anthropology, and supports work on consumption in contemporary societies and critical analyses of museum representation.[27]

The development of theory that expanded the interest in materiality and physicality eventually led towards the affective, and towards sensory and bodily dimensions of knowledge production, reflecting an interest in what Maurice Merleau-Ponty referred to as the 'pre-reflective'.[28] Those who engage in artistic practice relate to sensations, impulses and emotions in order to translate experiences and interpretations into their works, but what this, in fact, means epistemologically is by no means sufficiently explored.

The anthropologists Paul Rabinow and George E. Marcus, in *Designs for an Anthropology of the Contemporary*,[29] suggest that through tracing and appropriating the affective terrain which designers and artists traverse, anthropology's critical potential could be renewed by being more anticipatory, forward-leaning or speculative. (Speaking of this affective focus, it is also worth mentioning the design theorist Benjamin Bratton,[30] and his prediction that it will be necessary to reconfigure the entire aesthetic concept as it has been developed and understood so far, given that he believes the future will bring entirely new sensory experiences through what is [still] referred to as virtual reality.)

Theory and Practice

'Research by design' is a concept introduced in schools of architecture and design, pertaining to that which is referred to as artistic research within the art school sector; the development of what it can and should be is still in its infancy. There are numerous epistemological challenges at the intersection between theory and practice, and doing artistic research as a theorist makes the matter even more complicated. In her well-known essay 'What is a Theorist?', Irit Rogoff reflects on developments in the relationship between theory and practice. Her starting point is that earlier perceptions of one field 'serving' the other is now quite passé: 'The old boundaries between making and theorising, historicizing and displaying, criticising and affirming have long been eroded'.[31]

Both interdisciplinarity and artistic research (especially when conducted from the theory side) challenge the boundaries of what is accepted as valid research – boundaries administered and maintained through gatekeeping entities such as peer review, criteria committees and juries awarding grants and research funds, conferences, journals, exhibitions and so forth. To relate to one specific tradition can be the key to gaining influence and authority. Venturing into more hybrid perspectives, on the other hand, can be quite risky, as one could potentially fall between two (or several) chairs.[32]

30. www.bratton.info

31. Irit Rogoff, 'What is a Theorist?' in *The State of Art Criticism, eds*. James Elkins and Michael Newman (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 97–109.

32. Jennifer Allen, art historian, was the first to have asked 'and how do you cope with that?' when this author told about her hybrid practice – obviously familiar with how the academic sphere gives either zero or even minus points for participating in the more practice-oriented at parts of art discourse – and vice versa.

33. Arnd Schneider, 'Towards a New Hermeneutics of Art and Anthropology Collaborations», *EthnoScripts*, 17, no. 1, theme: 'Anthropology and Art' (2015), pp. 23–30.

34. Hal Foster, 'Trauma Studies and the Interdisciplinary' in *The Anxiety of Interdisciplinarity*, eds. Alex Coles and Alexia Defert (London: Black Dog Publishing, 1998), p. 162.

35. Johanna Billing et al., eds., *Taking the Matter into Common Hands: On Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2007).

36. ET functions as a para-site for the AAA's annual conference in 2013 in Chicago. The exhibition was organised by *Arts Incubator in Washington Park* – Theaster Gates's project for art in public space: www.arts.uchicago.edu/artsandpublicife/ai.

37. www.ethnographicterminalia.org

38. www.thnographicterminalia.org/chicago

39. Supported by OCA.

40. Ingun Grimstad Klepp and Mari Bjerck, 'A methodological approach to the materiality of clothing: Wardrobe Studies', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 17, no. 4 (2012), pp. 373–386.

41. 'Chakra-synchronisation', acupuncture treatment based on a healer's reading of what sort of 'repair' we needed, plus Reiki healing and a session of Tarot-card reading.

42. Schneider, 'Towards', p. 26.

43. Rogoff, 'What is a Theorist?', p. 99.

44. Arjun Appadurai, 'Introduction' in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 17.

45. In connection with the opening of part two of the project HAiKw/RKS, a seminar was held in order to contextualise the project in various ways and to shed light on the relation between art and fashionship. Fashion theorist Ida Eritsland, Geir Haraldseth from RKS and the article author participated with their contributions, along with HAiKw/, followed by a Q&A-session between the public and the project participants.

46. Joan Gibbons, 'Art Invades and Appropriates' in *Art and Advertising* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2005).

Rogoff writes well – and soothingly – in the cited essay, particularly about frustrations related to establishing the interdisciplinary field of 'visual culture' in the 1990s.

The anthropologist Arnd Schneider is interested in new forms of convergence between contemporary art and anthropology, especially those related to relational and dialogical artistic practice, and to the renewed sensory interest in both fields. Like Rogoff, Schneider acknowledges the discomfort of giving up safe frameworks, but also the potential reward. He stresses that developments in thinking (and science) usually come as a result of transgressing boundaries. One must, however, expect a lot of trial and error along the way, and lots of activities at the intersection between fields are indeed unsuccessful. In an interview in the book with the telling title *The Anxiety of Interdisciplinarity*, Hal Foster has argued for a 'bilingual' point of departure as an important step towards succeeding in this matter: 'Artists (and ethnographers) must elaborate the forms that they adopt through a critical reading of previous practices... To be interdisciplinary you need to be disciplinary first – to be grounded in one discipline, *preferably two*, to know the historicity of these discourses before you test them against each other'.[34]

Interdisciplinary Efforts

The collaboration with HAiKw/ has led to exploring different forms of interdisciplinarity; the designers did fieldwork, and the anthropological method was moved into the exhibition space as a performative element. The anthropologist designed both textile prints and 'research' models, while the designers analysed findings in the form of collections. But how successful are such role exchanges? And who is borrowing what from whom? In the now decade-old publication *Taking the Matter into Common Hands – On Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices*, it is stated that the aim of collaboration is to produce something that would not otherwise come into being. Put differently, enabling the otherwise impossible.[35] This ambition is somewhat large and small at the same time, therefore quite workable. All collaborations will necessarily give birth to something unique on some level, but one can still hope to achieve something more significant in the long term.

In the spring of 2013, HAiKw/ visited Rogaland Kunstsenter (hereafter HAiKw/RKS) as part of the programme, Collective Good/Collaborative Effort, which addressed collectivity and collaboration as artistic strategies. Four artists (Marianne Hurum, Anders Smebye, Anna Daniell and Ruben Steinum) and the undersigned anthropologist were invited by HAiKw/ to engage with the theme of repair. In autumn 2013, the collaboration continued in Chicago,[36] within the frame of Ethnographic Terminalia (hereafter HAiKw/ET) – an exhibition platform initiated by a curatorial collective of anthropologists who seek to challenge the boundaries between

anthropology and contemporary art.[37] This anthropologist was invited to participate with her artist collaboration for the exhibition 'Exhibition as Residency,[38] along with six other projects and our project Self Repair[39] was an expansion on the repair concept from HAiKw/RKS.

In HAiKw/RKS, the author was asked to develop the quasi-anthropological method for the planned experiments in Stavanger on the repair of clothing. In line with the material turn and the affective tendencies described above, a brand new methodology from the field of clothing research was employed – a methodology developed to capture the unarticulated, tactile and embodied aspects of people's relationships to their clothing. The operationalisation of the method was both performative and real at the same time, with, amongst other things, structured interviews held at the kunstsenter, where the public were invited to bring their own self-repaired garments for registration. Hurum made 'interview furniture' for this part of the project, as well as 'archiving furniture' for the collected data, which supported the performative dimension and added touches of caricatured staged research – referencing both the film Kitchen Stories, (2003) and zeitgeistly archival fetishism.

The ambition for HAiKw/ET was to attempt a more integrated project – inspired by the artist and 'apostate' anthropologist Susan Hiller (who has exhibited her works within the ET-platform) and to study similarities between anthropological and artistic methods – both in terms of using ourselves as 'apparatuses', through participative observation from anthropology, and through artistic interpretation. Over three very intensive days in Chicago, Falck Øien and the author subjected themselves to various alternative treatments. This 'fieldwork' was then 'transcribed' in the gallery with the aid of watercolour painting – inspired by amateurish art therapy – resulting in more or less abstract representations of the bodily experiences undergone.

Both projects – HAiKw/RKS and HAiKw/ET – were hybrid processes in which participants sought to integrate not only artistic and anthropological methods, but also ways of thinking about analysis and representation. HAiKw/RKS unfolded in the context of contemporary art, HAiKw/ET in the context of anthropology. Both projects were organised as exhibited processes, and both were collaborative. Both took the affective and tactile or neo-phenomenological perspective as a starting point, and both were so-called site-specific. While HAiKw/RKS could be seen as a kind of demonstration of the ethnographic turn in contemporary art, HAiKw/ET was closer to a demonstration of the crisis of representation in anthropology. And while HAiKw/RKS was interdisciplinary in the sense that anthropological methods were included in the (artistic) process, HAiKw/ET was more integrated in the sense that all aspects of the project were conducted in a parallel manner.

47. The concept 'critical design' was first used by Anthony Dunne in his book *Hertzian Tales: Electronic Products, Aesthetic Experience and Critical Design* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).

48. The field of visual culture also integrated critical theory into the art historical tool box in the 1990s, and, in the wake of this, we have seen many critical so-called 'cultural studies'.

49. Alex Coles and Catharine Rossi, eds., *The Italian AvantGarde: 1968–1976*, EP Vol. 1 (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2013).

50. Abo Rasul, *The Cocka Hola Company – Skandinavisk Misantropi* (Oslo: Cappelen, 2001), pp. 292–293: '...den jævla designen har liksom blitt en oppdrager nå plutselig, og de jævla fittedesignerne snakker om moral og kjærlighet og menneskelighet, og jeg vet da faen hva slags griseri de ikke snakker om, og det fører naturlig nok til det som er enda verre, og det er de jævla fittehuene som prøver å være progressive og si at designen har brukt opp funksjonen sin, at den har spilt ut rollen sin, og at de er interessert i ikke-objekter, hæ? Hæ? Fyfaen! IKKE-OBJEKTER! Designerne har fått en jævla misjon nå, plutselig, det er folks holdninger som betyr noe for dem nå plutselig, hæ, de progressive kølledesignerne skal plutselig designe folks holdninger og folks kjærlighet til omverden, hæ? Nå er det plutselig på tide å kaste fra seg de oppdragende objektene og faen hakkemeg femti år for sent begynne å snakke om idéer og konseptuelle oppgaver...'.

51. Benjamin Bratton has established a new field called Speculative Design, as part of the BA degree programme in Visual Arts at the University of California, San Diego.

52. DIS, 'The Present in Drag' in *The Present in Drag: 9th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art*, ed. Laura Schelussner ([Berlin]: Distanz, 2016), p. 57.

53. Maria Lind, 'Tensta Museum: Reports from New Sweden' in *Crafting Exhibitions*, Documents on Contemporary Crafts No. 3, ed. Andŕe Gali (Oslo and Stuttgart: Norwegian Crafts and Arnoldsche Art Publishers, 2015).

54. Jamer Hunt, 'Prototyping the Social: Temporality and Speculative Futures at the Intersection of Design and Culture' in *Design Anthropology: Object Culture in the 21st Century*, ed. A. Clarke (Vienna: Springer, 2010).

55. Bennett Simpson, 'Bernadette Corporation', in *Corporate Mentality*, ed. Alexandra Mir (New York: Sternberg Press, 2003), p. 153.

56. Stephen Wright, *Toward a Lexicon of Usership* (Eindhoven: Van Abbemuseum 2013), p. 3. Internett publication: www.museumarteutil.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Toward-a-lexicon-of-usership.pdf.

57. Synne Skjulstad, 'BRANDO: Branding and Advertising in Digital Domains', postdoctoral project, Institute for Media and Communication, University of Oslo, 2008, p. 11.

58. Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998).

The juggling of perspectives felt like a constant changing of spectacles, each with a different lens, while attempting to safeguard clear vision. But what is a valid path to insight? And what is it interesting to know something about? When and for whom and in what way? How important is it that collaborators see the same thing in the same way? To experience degrees of overlap involves both frustration and small steps of reconfiguration: of new 'life worlds' opening up.

In his article 'Towards a New Hermeneutics of Art and Anthropology', Arnd Schneider points to the expression 'speaking terms' – used by James Clifford in his discussion of the contact between French anthropology and the avant-garde in the 1920s and 1930s – and to Paul Ricour's perspectives on hermeneutics and appropriation that Schneider believes can be beneficial when discussing how contemporary art and anthropology have appropriated each other's methods. Schneider summarises Ricour as follows: ...its practice does not mean taking simple possession of the other. To the contrary, the term implies in the first instance to dispossess oneself of the narcissistic ego, in order to engender a new self-understanding, not a mere congeniality with the other.[42] Schneider claims that a successful integrated practice at the intersection between disciplines must be established carefully and dialectically from project to project. Only then can new epistemological horizons be possible.

This parallels Irit Rogoff's notion of criticality, in contrast to critique: Criticality as I perceive it is precisely in the operations of recognising the limitations of one's thought for one does not learn something new until one unlearns something old, otherwise one is simply adding information rather than rethinking a structure.[43]

Art and Design

HAiKw/ is also an intriguing case when understood as a hybrid practice of research and dissemination. How much of the intention is retained in the reception? (As with much conceptual fashion in the last 40 years, the ideological distribution does not necessarily overlap with the physical distribution.) And how does this affect how the project is perceived or classified as art or design? In the late 1980s anthropologist Arjun Appadurai compared works of art and designer labels in his seminal text on the social life of things as classes of 'culturally valued singularities'[44] sharing the same characteristics and functions. HAiKw/ can be seen as being both – simultaneously.[45] The contemporary condition also alters the boundaries and power balance between art and design, with contemporary art's renewed interest in effects-in-the-world. Symptomatically enough both *Artforum* and *Texte Zur Kunst* had fashion as their theme at the time this article was written.

59. Daniel Miller, *Stuff* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010).

60. Ina Blom, 'What Subject of Taste', *Texte Zur Kunst*, 75, theme: 'Taste' (September, 2009), p. 138.

61. Ilka Becker, 'Life Which Writes Itself: Retrospecting Art, Fashion, and Photography in Bernadette Corporation' in *Aesthetic Politics in Fashion*, ed. Elke Gaugele (Berlin and New York: Sternberg Press, 2014), p. 79.

62. Igor Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process', in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 83.

63. Marcel Mauss, *Gaven* (Oslo: Cappelen, 1995 [1925]).

64. Bandlien, 'Producing Scarcity', summary.

65. Isabelle Graw, 'The Value of the Art Commodity', *Texte Zur Kunst*, 88, theme: 'The Question of Value' (December, 2012), p. 52.

66. Isabella Graw, 'The Value of the Art Commodity', p. 56.

67. Ibid.

68. Alison Clarke, «Introduction», in *Design Anthropology: Object Culture in the 21st Century*, ed. Alison Clarke (Wien: Springer Verlag, 2010).

69. Peter J. Amdam, 'Something (Is) Slipping Away', in *Kunstkritikk* 1 (2012), p. 19.

70. Wright, 'Towards', p. 5.

HAiKw/ creates collections as part of larger and more comprehensive art projects, where all the components address the same theme, and the results go 'hitchhiking' through the fashion seasons, to galleries, buyers, fairs and other venues. HAiKw/ thus relates to a long tradition of artist collectives utilising commercial channels, examples being Bernadette Corporation, Group Material, General Idea and Art Club 2000. (The precursor of these was the appropriation art of the 1970s and 1980s, inspired by the avant-garde, which distributed art to the masses through the new commercial advertising channels, as described by, for example, Gibbons et al.[46])

Critical and Speculative Design

The term 'critical design' often appears in connection with projects at the intersection between art and design. The term was popularised by Dunne & Raby in the late 1990s[47] and represents an approach to design via critical theory.[48] (Design as critique, however, did not arise with the term; the Italian Radical Design-wave in the 1960s and 1970s exemplifies a design-critical approach to both reigning social values as well as to design ideologies.)[49] Critical design must not be confused with socially orientated design, though, as critical design, for its part, advocates that design has possibilities extending beyond merely solving problems. Critical design instead uses fictive design suggestions, in order to challenge ideas about social, cultural or political paradigms. The Norwegian artist Matias Faldbakken commented on this millennial phenomenonin his 2001 novel *Cocka Hola Company*:

> ...the fucking design has become an educator now all of a sudden, and the fucking designer-cunts talk about morals and love and humanity, and I don't fucking know what kind of smut they're not talking about, and it naturally leads to what's even worse, and that is that the fucking cunt-heads who are trying to be progressive and say that design has depleted its function, that it has played out its role, and that they're interested in non-objects, huh? Huh? What the fuck! NON-OBJECTS! Designers have a fucking mission, now all of a sudden, it's people's *attitudes* that matter to them, now all of a sudden, huh, the progressive designer-dicks are suddenly supposed to design people's *attitudes* and people's *love* for the surrounding world, huh? Now it's suddenly time to throw off the educational objects and fucking fifty years too late start talking about ideas and conceptual tasks...[50]

Well, critical design as a term has perhaps played out its role, and even Dunne & Raby are now trend-sensitively enough onto the term 'speculative design', in accordance with currents in contemporary art discourse, as is the aforementioned Bratton.[51] But, given that the distinction between art and design is currently quite unclear, the relevance of

71. Martin Braathen, *Alt er Arkitektur – Neoavantgarde og institusjonskritikk i Norge 1965–1970* (Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, 2010).

72. Andrew Blauvelt and Ellen Lupton, eds., *Graphic Design Now in Production* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2010).

73. Marco Pecorari, 'Zones-in-Between': the Ontology of a Fashion Praxis' in Couture *Graphique*, eds. José Teunissen, Hanna Van der Voet and Jan Brand (Houten: Terra Lannoo, 2013).

74. Wright, 'Towards', p. 13.

the *concept* of critical design is perhaps renewed – just think of the DIS collective as curators for the 9th Berlin Biennial. They proclaimed: 'Let's give a body to the problems of the present where they occur, so as to make them a matter of agency – not spectatorship'.[52] The curator Maria Lind[53] now regards the exhibition primarily as a space for experiments with social structures and art as a prototype for social models. She thus shares an affinity with the anthropologist Jamer Hunt,[54] who, in the article 'Prototyping the Social', situates anthropology's potential within the speculative perspectives in design, like Rabinow and Marcus.

1:1-Scale-Practice

It is useful to think about HAiKw/ within a 'both-and' interpretive framework, that is, with a kind of double ontology. This doubleness is perhaps most obviously found in the aforementioned artist collective Bernadette Corporation. Established in 1994 in the midst of the critical theory wave, they, in contrast to many of their contemporaries, chose a kind of imploding strategy for criticism: ...it made no sense for BC in the 1990s to follow the modernist model of critique from the outside as critique was the hottest commodity going: BC began modelling itself after the secret stars of business – the producers, agents and captains of the worldwide image machines.[55] The art writer and theorist Stephen has been developing a new vocabulary suitable for capturing the many post-artistic attempts that have emerged, and in fact written a lexicon presented as a 'hot-or-not' list of terms and concepts, which judges their relevance in light of these new movements. Amongst the relevant terms on his list are so-called 1:1 practices, explained as follows:

> Art and art-related practices that are oriented toward usership rather than spectatorship are characterised more than anything else by their scale of operations: they operate on the 1:1 scale. They are not scaled-down models – or artworld-assisted prototypes – of potentially useful things or services (...). Though 1:1 scale initiatives make use of representation in any number of ways, they are not themselves representations of anything. (...) 1:1 practices are both what they are, and propositions of what they are.[56]

This idea about being 'both-and', which is inherent in the 1:1-scale concept, brings to mind what anthropologists call integrated phenomena, where aspects usually thought of as separate are, in fact, not. (There are quite a few decent descriptive examples of this, also outside of anthropology. In Norway, for example, media scientist Synne Skjulstad, in her postdoctoral project 'BRANDO', dealt with multi-media representations at the

intersection between art, fashion, architecture and marketing[57] – and the problematics related to new forms of alliance that challenge the dialectic between criticality and commercialism.) Integrated phenomena are anthropology's forte, given that the anthropological conceptual apparatus is rooted in cultures with foreign (to so-called Western culture) classifications and configurations, which thus constitutes a great potential vis-à-vis the new forms of post-artistic transgressive attempts, represented by initiatives such as HAiKw/.

Kula Revisited

HAiKw/ may primarily represent a conceptual approach, but it undoubtedly also represents the network of people involved – both on the production side and on the consumer or 'usership' side of the collections. This has relevance far beyond the cultural-marker perspective, which was so symptomatic of the semiotic interpretation epoch, now long superseded by more holistic (i.e. anthropological) perspectives that emerged in the wake of the material turn. The 'kula'-exchange system in the Western Pacific (where shell-bracelets...) has become a well-known classic anthropological case far beyond the bounds of anthropology (where shell-bracelets and necklaces circulate between islands, their value closely related to the people who exchange them), and it is often used to point out that status and distinction are important universal aspects, relevant in all types of societies.

But the kula phenomenon also contains other dimensions that perhaps sound more musical to today's updated ears, for instance the idea that the object itself has a kind of personality, a power over and above the purely material (absolutely central to, amongst others, Alfred Gell's art theories). The key here is the integration between people and things, perhaps best explained by the aforementioned Miller, in his *Stuff* from 2010.59 Miller's goal was to produce a theory about things in a way that did not reduce them to representing social relations (the legacy from Durkheim and his successors); instead, Miller was interested in how things create people in a far more essentialist way than is normally associated with the idiom 'clothes make the man'.

Now that fashion has been through a late-1990s revival, where cultural-marking perspectives paradoxically enough gained a breath of renewed relevance along with a new round of logo-bonanza, with the HAiKw/-logo's 'it-factor' undoubtedly accelerating, the most interesting aspect is nonetheless the dialectics between people and things, as also pointed out by art historian Ina Blom in *Texte Zur Kunst*, on Elmgreen & Dragset's contribution to the Venice Bienniale in 2009: If modern society is a place where differences are to a large extent expressed by monumentalising ever more peculiar sensibilities, we may of course think that we know what we want with the objects

that make up these monuments. But this social portraiture project seems to put the question differently: Do we know what these objects want with us? And can we really know what it is that they do to us?[60]

The integration between people and things, a leitmotif in both anthropology and the theory of material culture, undoubtedly finds increasingly wider resonance and HAiKw/'s expressed fascination for a thing's potentially inherent agency is an example of this (can the 'Heal it' collection actually have healing capacity?).

Commodities, Gifts and Animism

of things, there is no way of getting around the basic concepts of *commodity* and *gift* – and *animism*. To begin with the first concept, Bernadette Corporation's work has been analysed with precision in light of the commodity concept: Their approach is to deconstruct the logic of the market, both subverting and expressing the forms of flexible adaption that are at stake. As Stephan Geene writes, BC is taking as a raw material what Karl Marx was trying to exorcise from commodity: its false pretense.[61]

The anthropologist Igor Kopytoff, renowned for his perspecive on the cultural biography of things, has claimed that commodities which absorb 'the other kind of worth, one that is nonmonetary and goes beyond exchange worth', can be what constitute 'the missing non-economic side of what Marx called commodity fetishism'.[62] Marcel Mauss's substantial 1925 contribution on the universal nature of the gift and the concept hau, about the social commitment – often delayed – to reciprocate for 'things' that are given, has proven to be key.[63]

The editor of *Texte Zur Kunst*, Isabelle Graw, in the issue 'The Question of Value' from 2012, sees works of art as commodities in the sense of precisely Marx and Mauss. She describes the art commodity as a synthesis between a commodity and a gift.[64] Graw also emphasises the transaction point as central: 'The difference of perspective between them notwithstanding, Mauss and Marx agree that the blending of persons and things is a distinguishing feature of exchange'.[65] Further, Graw links the dialectic between the commodity and the gift to animism – another favourite (anthropological) theme in the recent field of contemporary art:

> ...Both the Marxian commodity economy and the Maussian society exchange are moreover distinguished by the prominent involvement of animistic conceptions: they revolve around a good – be it the commodity, be it the gift – whose value consists in its being a hybrid of the animate and the inanimate.

So as Bruno Latour has emphasized, animism, far from being an extra-European mindset of ahistorical 'indigenous peoples', appears at the very center of modern thought.[66]

In contrast to the common perception of animism as both foreign and exotic, animism is in fact not (foreign and exotic) and Graw concludes as follows: 'Animism is not provocative; on the contrary, it is directly associated with the dimension of value...'[67]

Graw is quoted at length here not because this is news (in any case not to anthropologists) but because it is of significance that the perspectives are cemented as part of contemporary art discourse via *Texte Zur Kunst*. AsClarke has pointed out: '...anthropology was arguably the first discipline to take the consumption of things and the agency of artefacts seriously...'. This integration of anthropological perspectives in art discourse is of relevance for newer theoretical directions such as object-orientated ontology,[69] and, not least, post-artistic practices like HAiKw/.

Mutual Intentions

The encirclement of a distinct anthropological practice at the intersection of (post-) artistic research is an ongoing process. Wright's aforementioned lexicon of usership points to a concept that may prove interesting to investigate further. Wright claims that *intention* is a central (classificatory) premise for post-artistic practice: 'informed by artistic self-understanding, not framed as art'.[70] This brings to mind the 'everything is...'-wave that has washed over many of the design disciplines in recent decades (Everything is architecture! [71] Everything can be graphic design![72] Everything can be fashion![73]), in the wake of the art field that has long allowed itself such a discursive slippage. Everything can now apparently be anything. It is the approach, not the practice that is important.

Wright further refers to Marcel Duchamp and the idea of a 'coefficient of art' – that is, the discrepancy in every artistic suggestion that lies between the intention and the actual realisation of the idea. Wright thus defines post-artistic practice as a kind of un-expressed potential: 'It is a radically deontological conception of art – as socialised competence, rather than performed works'.[74] The challenge then is to identify the *anthropological* aspect of such a competence in light of a collective post-artistic practice, where different actors are involved in the same practice (or *not* involved according to Wright) – a form of post-disciplinary approach with mutual intentions.

Gregory Sholette

THE COLLECTIVE BAD

In as much as the Vendôme Column is a monument devoid of all artistic value, tending to perpetuate by its expression the ideas of war and conquest of the past imperial dynasty, which are reproved by a republican nation's sentiment, citizen Courbet expresses the wish that the National Defense government will authorize him to disassemble this column.

– Gustave Courbet, Paris, September 4th, 1870.

A few months after Courbet wrote these words, his wish was granted when the newly instated Executive Committee of the Paris Commune "deconstructed" this monument to war and patriarchy. Grainy photographs, taken in April 1871 show the toppled column in pieces with the massive statue of Napoleon, adorned in a laurel wreath and a toga, lying shattered on the ground. Unfortunately, when the Paris Commune was itself destroyed shortly afterwards, Courbet was arrested and charged with vandalising French property, though he escaped a death sentence. Executed by firing squads, other Communards fared worse. Nonetheless, such 'Bad deeds' have a long history amongst artists that continues today.

Seven months before the recent US presidential elections, a 190 KG marble tombstone appeared overnight in New York City's Central Park. Engraved directly below the marker's standard crucifix and decorative motif was written, 'TRUMP, DONALD J., 1946–', with no end date indicated. Carved into the bottom of the ersatz memorial was the ironic tribute, 'MADE AMERICA HATE AGAIN', Removed within a day, the guerrilla headstone fabricator was soon after targeted by Secret Service agents for investigation.[1]

1. What apparently spared the artist being charged with making criminal threats against a presidential candidate was the fact that his sculpture did not include a date of death.

2. "'I Already Bought You" Abuse and Exploitation of Female Migrant Domestic Workers in the United Arab Emirates,'Human Rights Watch, 2014. www.hrw.org/report/2014/10/22/i-already-bought-you/abuse-and-exploitation-female-migrant-domestic-workers-united

3. See the GLC Press Release 'Gulf Labor Responds to Guggenheim Breaking off Negotiations', online at: www.gulflabor.org/2016/gulf-labor-responds-to-guggenheim-breaking-off-negotiations/

4. Guggenheim Director Richard Armstrong cited by Hrag Vartanian, 'Guggenheim Breaks Off Negotiations with Gulf Labor Over Migrant Rights', Hyperallergic, April 17, 2016: hyperallergic.com/291594/guggenheim-breaks-off-negotiations-with-gulf-labor-over-migrant-rights/

5. Lovink, Garcia, The ABC of Tactical Media, op cite.

6. Groys made these comments 10 July 2009, at The Drawing Center, NYC, during a public lecture entitled 'Art and Power'.

7. Sholette, 'Some Call It Art: From Imaginary Autonomy to Autonomous Collectivity', originally published in the book *Duerfen Die Das?: Kunst als sozialer Raum: Art/Education/Cultural Work/Communities*, Stella Rollig and Eva Stürm eds, Verlag Turia & Kant, Wein, Austria, 2002 pp. 161–184, but available in English as a PDF at: gregorysholette.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/06_somecallit1.pdf (cited from pp. 17–18).

8. Tronti's concept (op cite) is discussed in Section One: Chapter Three.

9. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 1987.

10. Issie Lapowsky, 'How Trump Hacked This Election in 4 (Far Too Easy) Steps', WIRED, February 29, 2016: wired.com/2016/02/trump-hacked-election-4-far-easy-steps/

990 Km due West, a pair of graffiti writers known as the Raiz Up Collective were charged with Felony, Malicious Destruction of Property and Trespassing for climbing a water storage tower in Detroit and painting the words 'Free The Water', followed by a graphic clenched-fist black-power salute. The graffiti message was intended as a protest against widespread lead contamination of Flint Michigan's drinking water after its bankrupt city government drew supplies from nearby Lake Huron through corroded pipes in an economising measure.

In fact, so far, the 21st century is rich with bad deeds. From 2004, Critical Art Ensemble member Steve Kurtz spent almost two decades in a federal prison after the US Justice Department sought charges of bioterrorism against him for purchasing harmless bacteria that the artist planned to use to illuminate the hidden history of American biological weapons research. Following the 2008 financial collapse artist Dread Scott received a summons for 'disturbing the peace' after burning US dollars on Wall Street to protest capitalist economic policy. In February of 2012 the anarcho-feminist group Pussy Riot entered Moscow's Cathedral of Chris the Savior where they performed a 'Punk Prayer' calling for the elimination of Russian president Vladimir Putin. The group's 'bad deed' led to the arrest, trial, and incarceration of two band members who spent time in a Siberian prison on charges of hooliganism and undermining the 'moral foundations of the nation'. A year or so earlier, another Russian-based artists' collective known as Voina (War) fled underground when authorities issued arrest warrants for them after members flipped a patrol car over because "a child's ball had rolled underneath it". Previously they spray painted a monumental graffiti-style phallus in front of the FSB (former KGB) head-quarters in St. Petersburg. In another action, Voina's female members went about Moscow spontaneously kissing police officers (mostly females) on the lips. Back in New York in 2013, the performance artist Reverend Billy faced a potential year in prison for staging an environmental consciousness-raising art intervention inside the lobby of a JP Morgan Chase Bank. The performance involved several choral singers denouncing the bank's financial links to the petrochemical industry. They also happened to be dressed-up as giant 'Golden Toads', a species of amphibian recently made extinct by climate change. Allegedly, frightened employees called police, believing they were undergoing a bizarrely staged bank heist.

All of these bad artistic deeds – and certainly many others come to mind, including the infamous release of cockroaches at a MoMA trustee dinner to protest the US war in Viet Nam by activists associated with Guerrilla Art Action Group (GAAG), or the same group's unfulfilled (and doubtless sardonic) proposal to kidnap curators in another anti-war protest action– suggest an *e(s)thetic of defiance* in which lawbreaking become an ethical response to the normalisation of *unfreedom*. For, while it is not uncommon to learn that, in Russia, China, Turkey, Egypt, Iran, India, the Philippines or the United Arab

11. From an interview with Professor Cramer by Jeff Guo, 'A new theory for why Trump voters are so angry – that actually makes sense' *The Washington Post*, 8 Novemver 2016: www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/11/08/a-new-theory-for-why-trump-voters-are-so-angry-that-actually-makes-sense/?utm_term=.a3f6f84db393

12. See Gulf Labor statement on the Boycott and UAE Travel Restrictions, 9 March 2017: www.gulflabor.org/2017/gulf-labor-statement-on-boycott-and-uae-travel-restrictions/

13. Estimates provide in 'Building Trump's border wall', Aljazeera: www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2017/01/building-trump-border-wall-170126112204274.html

14. Gaach wrote down as much as he could recall about the experience, because no recording equipment was permitted during the examination, and shared his notes with the author via a google.doc. More about the event include Benjamin Sutton, 'Trump's Travel Ban Ensnares Artists and Authors', Hyperallergic, 12 March 2017: www.hyperallergic.com/363553/trumps-travel-ban-ensnares-artists-and-authors/

15. Cornel West, 'Goodbye, American neoliberalism. A new era is here', *The Guardian*, 17 November 2016: www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/17/american-neoliberalism-cornel-west-2016-election

Emirates (UAE) amongst other nations, artistic dissidents have run afoul of the law, following recent events in the UK and US, we are witnessing a combination of economic, civil and sometimes national security restraints transforming acts of protest into quasi-illegal, or even criminal behavior. The question I wish to raise with this essay is this: do such acts of protest and societal destruction not also serve the collective good? If so, do they then also qualify as an aesthetic practice, perhaps even a form of art?

Artist as Anti-Citizen

To call oneself an artist is to stake a particular claim to the word freedom. A claim equated, above all, with taking risks of a personal, social, economic and/or political nature. Artist's annoy, indulge, shock and invent. Sometimes their activities display an outright disregard for broader social consequences, thus compromising, or even subverting, the collective good. What does the public receive in exchange? Art is typically considered one of the most autonomous, unencumbered types of labour humans can engage, while nonetheless still remaining part of a given society, even if sometimes only marginally so. This is the role dissent ideally plays within the frame work of collective good, as an internal check on the danger of institutionalised *unfreedom*. If, however, under certain conditions the truest artistic acts amount to anti-social actions and lawbreaking, then in an unjust society we must conclude that aesthetics is likewise criminalised.

This is not a novel hypotheses. It has been a central theme within much anarchist theory, as well as artistic practice, from Mikhail Bakunin, who described destruction as a form of creative passion, to Hakim Bey's 'Temporary Autonomous Zones' where artistic sabotage serves neither state nor party but only: 'consciousness, attentiveness, awakeness'. Today, the premise is taking on a new urgency, first as a result of the politicisation that followed widespread unemployment and austerity measures in the aftermath of the 2008 financial collapse. The so-called Arab Spring, Movement of Squares and Occupy Wall Street are amongst the most visible aspects of this popular response. And second, even more acutely, thanks to the rise of Right-wing popular nationalism sweeping across the globe, but especially visible following the Brexit referendum and US presidential elections of November, 2016.

And then, there is the contemporary art world itself.

No longer a place of innocence – if ever it was – what once consisted of a smattering of wealthy collectors who nurtured an avant-garde community, and often possessed strongly liberal or sometimes even left-progressive political outlooks, is today a market surpassing 66 billion dollars in sales with ever-deeper ties to repressive state regimes, financial black markets, and nefarious corporate interests that run opposite the sentiments of most artists, as well as the collective good. At the same time,

the art world manages to remain a cultural apparatus that celebrates and rewards certain acts of protest, even as it also distances itself from others. Case in point. A few years ago, in 2011 the well-known Chinese artist Ai Weiwei was detained and then imprisoned by government authorities in Beijing airport. Acting with a surprisingly robust moral authority, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, working with the International Council of Museums, swiftly established an online petition to protest Ai's arrest. At the top of the list of signatories was the Guggenheim museum director, Richard Armstrong, followed by many, equally prestigious and powerful art world celebrities.

Perhaps due in part to this public shaming, Chinese authorities released Ai from detention only three months later. However, Armstrong and other Guggenheim museum administrators were simultaneously invested in developing a major new museum facility in Abu Dhabi, (UAE), one of several nations that operate under the Kafala system that deprives thousands of migrant workers basic human rights. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), the the UAE has 'a long record of violating the rights of domestic workers under international human rights and labour law by failing to adequately protect them against exploitation and abuse'.[2] Nonetheless, the Guggenheim Museum, including Armstrong, publicly rejected working with HRW and other human rights groups in order to guarantee their project meets the labor standards championed by Western nations.

In April 2016, Armstrong along with the Guggenheim trustees, walked away from six years of negotiation and public pressure aimed at making their proposed museum in Abu Dhabi a regional model of fair labour practices. A couple of months earlier, Gulf Labor Coalition (GLC) arranged to have members of the Building and Woodworkers' International, Human Rights Watch, International Trade Union Confederation, and Society for Labor and Development to meet with the museum's management and trustees in order to work together to create just working conditions to guide the construction of the UAE's new cultural facility.[3] GLC is an international group of artists seeking to ensure that migrant workers' rights are protected during the construction of museums on Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi (and, in full disclosure, I am a core member of GLC).[4] One of the reasons cited by Armstrong and the museum for discontinuing these deliberations GLC's alleged shift of demands over time, and the group's purported publicising of 'deliberate falsehoods' about the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. And yet substantial evidence exists underscoring GLC's claims that are underscored by the group's NGO partners. Therefore, a more likely source of Armstrong's chagrin is GLC's ability to humiliate the museum, thanks to the group's seven-year campaign combining a public boycott, a series of art projects focusing attention on unjust labour practices in the UAE, and a series of direct actions staged by the coalition's offshoot organisation Global Ultra Luxury Faction (GULF).

On numerous occasions throughout 2015, GULF staged a series of interventions targeting the Guggenheim's flagship Frank Lloyd Wright building on Manhattan's Fifth Avenue. These actions received mainstream media and art press coverage, stimulating several closed-door negotiating meetings between GLC members and the museum's administration. And yet, progress addressing human rights abuse in the Gulf continued to get bogged down. On1 May 2015, GULF decided to occupy the museum for several hours. Still, the administration did not budge. But, one week later, during the opening of the Venice Biennale GULF, together with SaLE Docs cultural space, orchestrated a marine landing onto the loading dock of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection. Before the end of the day, GLC was promised high-level discussions with the museum's trustees. Despite several hours of talks involving not only the artists' group, but members of several prominent NGOs with expertise in drafting workable labour contracts that met proper human rights standards, Armstrong and the trustees of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, abruptly withdrew from further participation. More than a year later, the situation remains unresolved.

Tactical Media and Artistic Dark Matter

The alt-globalisation or counter-globalisation movement of 1990s was, prior to Occupy Wall Street, the last significant moment when urban activism tightly meshed with creative, cultural dissent, in this case inspired by the Situationist *Détournement* and taking the form of Tactical Media (TM). As Geert Lovink and David Garcia elaborated, Tactical Media are what happens when:

> The cheap 'do it yourself' media, made possible by the revolution in consumer electronics and expanded forms of distribution (from public access cable to the internet) are exploited by groups and individuals who feel aggrieved by or excluded from the wider culture. Tactical media do not just report events, as they are never impartial they always participate and it is this that more than anything separates them from mainstream media.[5]

TM was born out of the theories and practices developed decades earlier by Walter Benjamin, John Heartfield, Bertolt Brecht, Guy Debord and in the 1980s by Michel De Certeau's breakthrough 1980 thesis, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. But it was also made possible thanks to the onward pace of capitalism's endless search for new ways to save time and labour costs. The internet is one example of this process. Not only did the internet allow tactical media practitioners to engage in new types of activist, or, better yet, hacktivist activity, these same networked infrastructures have also made all

sorts of previously hidden, isolated, fantastical and suppressed imaginative labour gain visibility, both to themselves and to others. Although, as recent political events indicate, that outcome has not always been progressive, which is a point I will return to below.

It is accurate to observe that today there exists an ever-more accessible and sophisticated technology for manufacturing, copying, documenting and distributing 'home-made' or informal art. This reality has dramatically ended the isolation of creative labour previously quarantined from high culture as naïve, romantic or amateur. It is now impossible to escape the spread of this informal, heterogeneous, art-like activity as it radiates from homes and offices, schools and streets, community centers and in cyberspace. As Boris Groys comments 'everyone is now on stage'.[6] This bottom-up artistic groundswell is typically made up of fantasies drawn from popular entertainment and comic books as well as personal trivia and sentimental nostalgia. Its form may can range from the whimsical to the banal, from the absurd to the obscene. It represents a qualitative shift that is unique to the last ten years. It is certainly and decisively post-Greenbergian and anti-formalist.[7]

However, as much as this previously hidden dark-matter creativity has emerged into visibility thanks, in part, to the very same networked communication technology required by post-Fordism and global financial markets – it is also being illuminated by the ravenous needs of capitalism itself. Confronted with falling profits from traditional manufacturing and the increasing use of automation as opposed to living labor, capital has turned to extracting every iota of potential value from what Mario Tronti once called the social factory.[8] Even if that quarrying that region has also uncovered the most shadowed, disobedient, fantastical and resentful affects of individuals and communities (think of the US Militia Movement and Alt-Right, the Golden Dawn of Greece or the National Front in France amongst many other previously shrouded communities of Nietzschean *Ressentimet*.[9] The potentially disruptive capacity of this new force was, for both better and for worse, emerging in the form of dark matter creativity. A networked form of resentment was, therefore, completely predictable once the visualising power of the Internet was conjoined with the monetisation of everyday life. And this dark matter force, in turn, would not only interrupt art world norms but also previously dominant models of business and politics. One outcome of this disruption is now all too conspicuous, and that is the result of the 2016 US presidential elections. However, before clarifying what by this, I must add one more link in the theoretical sequence started in 1934 by Benjamin with regards to the dangers of aestheticisating politics, as opposed to politicising art.

Hacking the USA

Marx and Engels famously compared the phenomenon of ideological misrecognition with the inverted images produced by the *camera obscura*, pointing out that religion, laws, and grand philosophical ideas are not the true foundation of society or the motivators of historical change but are instead generated by historically determined modes of material production. Today, we seem to have pushed past, or been pushed past, the threshold of such representational metaphors altogether, to arrive at a point where faith in ideas and in material production, as much as history, society, and the future, are in a state of conceptual free-fall. Art and life, as well as base and superstructure, have collided and, in the process, fulfilled a centuries-old avant-garde dream. But the dream is made flesh at a time of profound disenchantment with the world and its future advancement, exactly the opposite moment imaged by the early avant-garde in Soviet Russia. The 2016 US election results might be the strongest evidence of this undoing. What to make of a nuclear-armed nation electing (barely) a president who boasts (tweets) about his bad citizenship? The new president and his administration accomplished the most successful interventionist art project to date. Its aim was to erect greater barriers between people, further dismantle social programmes and services, and transform neoliberal global capitalism into a démodé form of *capitalist nationalism*. Goodbye art world, hello world.

The victorious 2016 US presidential candidate is said to have succeeded in his interventionist endeavour by hacking into mainstream news media's desire for spectacular content, thus literally tweeting his way into the White House.[10] Though his news tweets were frequently suspect, or even outright false, he managed to encircle his campaign with a digital barricade of sham pronouncements and dissembling headlines that proved impossible to puncture with traditional journalistic tools of investigative fact-finding. And there is every indication that this delusive creativity will continue to be disseminated in the years ahead. But this practice of hacking prevailing norms and protocols also extended to disrupting familiar structures of democratic representational politics. After first identifying organisational weaknesses in one of the two major US political parties, the candidate infiltrated his way inside, quashing attempts by traditional party members to prevent his insurgency.

In the corporate world, this would be described as a hostile takeover in which a predatory company or investor group acquires another target company by making attractive buyout offers to the targeted company's shareholders. In the world of politics, of course, the role of shareholder is less clear-cut, though we could say metaphorically that registered party members, as well as potential voters constitute the *ideological* investment base of a given political party. However, this analogy raises an obvious problem: the shareholder selling off her business stock is making a rational transaction

insofar as a specific quantity of investable capital is received in exchange for what is (presumably) an underperforming or lower-valued financial investment. In other words, the immediate benefit of the takeover to the shareholder is something tangible, as well as spendable, or bankable.

If this analogy has any virtue, therefore, it would seem that for the mostly white, middle-class 'shareholders' of the recently hacked American political party, the payoff would be best described as payback; that is to say, as ideological compensation for their diminishing economic mobility, collapsing social privilege and a general loss of control over their lives. According to political scientist Kathy Cramer – who has interviewed rural, white voters in the American Midwest for over a decade – a politics of resentment is the reason so many voted to elect a man with no political experience. And this resentment is, in turn grounded in the same voters imaginary a self-constructed identity based on 'the *perceptions* that people have about their reality', as opposed to facts or data, both of which belong to educated elites, the very people that the 2016 insurgent election was intended to punish.[11]

Another way to explain the mobilisation of resentment is to view it as part of a broader aestheticisation of politics, a process made all the more compelling by the flagrant mixing of verifiable truths with speculation, outright fiction and even menacing conspiratorial fantasies, bringing us to reflect on the growing field of social practice art, which is dependent on the collapse of traditional artistic autonomy and the full-on aestheticisation of society. Social practice art might best be described as having a utilitarian ethos that spurns individual acts of expression, or avant-garde efforts at shocking its audience, while favouring instead practices that involve cooperation, group conversation and efforts to remedy social ailments. There is an implicit hope that reason and dialogue will ultimately prevail over repression and disorder, not only when the artist is engaged with other artists or friends or community members but also when a project's participants include prison guards or the police. What then becomes of the desire to disobey, to dissent, or create trouble, all well-known staples of avant-garde art? Under what circumstances is such dissonance more than mere shock, and should it factor into any discussion about the ethos of social practice art?

Bad Deeds

When confronted with dissent, the initial impulse is that the state seeks an immediate return to normalcy. After the Paris Commune was crushed, the French government reconstructed the Vendôme Column and even forced poor Courbet to finance the project, a task he almost carried out before dying penniless at the age of 58. More recently, five members (thus far) of Gulf Labor Coalition have been placed on travel entry bans into the UAE as retribution by princely authorities for the group's activism on behalf

of migrant labourers.[12] These actions appear, in retrospect, to have anticipated things to come, as the Republican presidential candidate made good his campaign promises to greatly expand travel restrictions on people from certain nations, while building a 1,900 mile-long border wall (3,200 km) between the US and Mexico.[13] Since the elections Green Card holders and even some US citizens have been detained and questioned by custom agents. On Thursday, February 23, 2017 the artist Aaron Gach, (AKA 'Center for Tactical Magic'), was subjected to an hour-long interrogation upon re-entering the US in San Francisco from Belgium, where he had been invited to install an art project. The artist is an American-born citizen, who was travelling on a US passport and has no criminal convictions. Amongst the questions Gach was asked were 'How often do you travel for your art? How many times a year? Where else have you been in the last year? Also for art?' The assessor also asked why he goes by the name 'Center For Tactical Magic', instead of his own name. Ultimately, they insisted he unlock his smartphone for them to examine, which, reluctantly, Gach did, before finally being released.

Of course, many individuals have been treated just as badly, or considerably worse, by US border agents, and for many years before the new administration took office. Gach also acknowledges his privileges, writing that these kinds of interrogations place an 'unfair burden on people, especially if they are members of more vulnerable or targeted communities'. Suddenly, we have exited capitalism's thirty-seven year infatuation with globalisation and relatively open trade and travel barriers and now enter a world of reinforced frontiers and spreading borders, material as well as immaterial, the latter taking the form of omnipresent electronic surveillance. As activist and theorist Cornell West expressed immediately after the results were in, the neoliberal era in the US ended with a neofascist bang. The political triumph of Donald Trump shattered the establishments in the Democratic and Republican parties – both wedded to the rule of Big Money and to the reign of meretricious politicians.[15]

When unfreedom becomes law, injustice is transformed into a system of control. Still, when 'bad deeds' are carried out as in the name of art, might we describe this practice as a form of insurgent beauty that operates outside the reach of the art world's control. The desire to disobey, to dissent, to engage in social misconduct and political protest rests on the belief that when a society turns bad, acting 'badly' is a logical, even necessary response, and if law hampers freedom, then law breaking becomes freeing. Even a seriously playful act of disobedience can inspire hope, and, as we have seen, it can also stimulate state suppression. But if anarchist activist Emma Goldman once stated that, 'every society has the criminals it deserves', then perhaps it is time that we art activists and social practice artists take up the mantle of society's scoundrels, blackguards and criminals. After all, this may very well be exactly what the collective good today actually requires.

Harry Weeks

A DIALOGICAL AESTHETIC?: ON FORM AND SOCIAL PRACTICE

In his review of Marc James Léger's study of social practice, ***Brave New Avant Garde***, art historian Bill Roberts notes that activist and community-engaged practices have become 'the officially sanctioned art of the social-democratic left'.[1] The matter-of-factness of the claim does little to hide its deeply sardonic subtexts. In 2013, when the review was published, the barely hidden slight meant by the term 'social-democratic left' (particularly on the pages of the radical *Mute* magazine, and directed at an art world in thrall of various theoretical expressions of far-left politics) might have gone unnoticed. The political events of the intervening years, and the bifurcation of the left into liberal and radical factions, have, however, brought this undertone to the surface. Furthermore, the suggestion that this outwardly pluralist political demographic might be responsible for something as authoritarian as an 'officially sanctioned art' can be construed as nothing but knowing provocation. Nonetheless, the statement is truer now than it was written. Social practice is as ubiquitous in art school degree shows as it is in the Guggenheim or Tate, having emerged as the politically conscientious counterpoint to the hyper-commodification of art since the 1990s. And besides having become integrated into the mainstream institutions of contemporary art, it has developed its own institutional infrastructure. It has its Glastonbury in the form of the annual Creative Time Summit, a network of hospitable institutions affiliated with Tania Bruguera's Arte Útil movement, and a journal dedicated to its study in the Grant Kester-edited *Field*. The ideology of these endeavours differs wildly.

Across Kester's five (to date) editorials for *Field*, two overarching lines of argument regarding this institutionalisation of social practice have emerged. Firstly, he critiques the opportunistic espousal of a 'superficial concept of social engagement' on the part of galleries, museums and biennials eager not only to placate funding requirements but also to engineer a claim on one of the most substantial and sustained 'turns' in contemporary art history.[2] Secondly, he develops a more elaborate position on the responses of the fields of art history and art theory to social practice. These disciplines, it is argued, largely eschew detailed and nuanced engagement with practices and treat description as a 'merely incidental process'.[3] Instead they exhibit an overreliance on the crutch of 'theory', which serves as a 'master discourse' against which to measure a given practice, or of which art practices become simple material transpositions or illustrations.[4] What goes unsaid in Kester's analysis – and what I shall highlight in this text – is the extent to which the two arguments he makes are interrelated, in large part due to the interdependence of art's exhibitionary institutions, on the one hand, and its attendant written discourses on the other. A cycle emerges, in which art history and theory inform institutional practices and appetites, which in turn offer further content to be incorporated into the discourse. Tendencies become codified, and names are etched into an emergent canon as they get caught in this centrifugal process of institutionalisation.

One upshot of this, according to academic and curator Andrea Phillips, is 'the banalisation of community'.[5] She argues that while the community arts movements of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s were built upon complex, expansive and fluid understandings of community, the process of institutionalisation has rendered these down into a 'qualifiable and quantifiable community' that more readily lends itself to reference in funding applications and mission statements.[6] Here, I argue that this banalisation of community as conceptual content and framework for art practice has been accompanied by a parallel banalisation of form. A recognisable aesthetic of social practice has emerged, in which certain formal tropes and tendencies are prominent and recurrent. The signature materials of plywood and cardboard abound, the kitchen and the garden act as habitual sites. A colourway of community – spanning MDF beige, grass green and asphalt grey – serves as a visual signifier of the social intentions of a given project.

1. Bill Roberts, 'Good Old Avant-Garde', *Mute*, 7 May 2013, www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/good-old-avant-garde.

2. Grant H. Kester, 'FIELD Editorial 1', *Field*, no. 1 (2015), www.field-journal.com/issue-1/kester. The 'Guggenheim Social Practice' initiative, established in May 2016, is subjected to extensive scrutiny in Issue 4. Grant H. Kester, 'FIELD Editorial 4', *Field*, no. 4 (2016), www.field-journal.com/editorial/field-editorial-4.

3. Grant H. Kester, 'FIELD Editorial 3', *Field*, no. 3 (2016), www.field-journal.com/editorial/kester-3.

4. Grant H. Kester, 'The Device Laid Bare: On Some Limitations in Current Art Criticism', *E-Flux Journal*, no. 50 (December 2013), www.e-flux.com/journal/the-device-laid-bare-on-some-limitations-in-current-art-criticism/.

5. Andrea Phillips, 'Introduction: Community Arts? Learning from the Legacy of Artists', *Stages*, no. 5 (2016), www.biennial.com/journal/issue-5/introduction-community-arts-learning-from-the-legacy-of-artists-social-iniatives.

6. Ibid.

7. Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 2002), p. 9.

8. Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso Books, 2012), p. 1.

9. Kester, in one of his earliest forays into the field of social engagement, explicitly situated dialogical art in direct opposition to the mainstream concern with 'the formal appearance of physical objects'. Grant H. Kester, 'Dialogical Aesthetics: A Critical Framework for Littoral Art', Variant 9 (1999), www.variant.org.uk/9texts/KesterSupplement.html.

10. *Living as Form* was a large-scale survey of social practice in the 1990s and 2000s, including documentation of over 100 projects. It is arguably the most significant exhibition of social practice to date. Nato Thompson, ed., *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991–2011* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), p. 22.

11. Peter Osborne uses the terms 'artistic form' and 'social form' to designate a similar distinction. Peter Osborne, 'Crisis as Form' (Kingston University, London, 12 January 2017), www.backdoorbroadcasting.net/2017/01/peter-osborne-crisis-as-form/.

12. A less generous analogue of this can be found in Christopher Jones's appraisal of Mike Nelson's aborted 'pyramid' project in the Heygate housing estate in South London, in which he critiques art projects concerned with social housing as being primarily interested in the aesthetics of council housing over their lived reality. Christopher Jones, 'Pyramid Dead – The Artangel of History', *Mute*, 17 April 2014, www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/pyramid-dead-artangel-history.

13. François Matarasso, *Use or Ornament?: The Social Impact of Participation in the Arts* (Stroud: Comedia, 1997), p. iv.

14. See www.tate.org.uk/about/projects/tate-modern-community-garden

15. See www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk/learn/outdoors/artgarden/

Form and Social Practice

Although the social turn seemed to constitute a move away from formal concerns in ^art practice, favouring immateriality over objecthood and process over product, form has in fact played a central role in its theorisation. Nicolas Bourriaud referred to his concept of relational aesthetics as a 'theory of form',[7] while art historian Claire Bishop chose to use the term 'participatory art' in her 2012 book *Artificial Hells* because it: ...connotes the involvement of many people and avoids the ambiguities of 'social engagement', which might refer to a wide range of work, from *engagé* painting to interventionist actions in mass media.[8]

The distinction she draws here is precisely one between a cohesive set of practices united in their implication of the formal device of participation, and a field of formally diverse practices, linked by a shared concern with the social. Kester's theory of 'dialogical art' outwardly disavows form, and yet the practices he draws upon are selected on the basis of their shared use of particular *forms* of human interaction, namely conversation and dialogue.[9] As Creative Time curator Nato Thompson noted in the catalogue to his aptly titled 2011 exhibition *Living as Form*, 'people coming together possess forms as well'.[10]

What was less remarked upon by the key chroniclers of this boom period of social practice is the extent to which material and visual forms, rather than the more abstract 'living as form' – to borrow the title of Thompson's exhibition and catalogue – have become integral to social practice.[11] The seeds of this are evident from an early point in social practice's movement towards and into the institution. While Kester accentuates the immaterial social form of conversation in his studies of dialogical art, Rirkrit Tiravanija has famously listed 'lots of people' as a material in his practice since the early 1990s. The emphasis here shifts from the sociality of participants to their materiality, bodies in a room becoming a visual and material signifier of the social. Bruguera mixes the signifier (visual and material) and the signified (social) in her scrupulous listing of materials on her website. For *Tatlin's Whisper #5* (2008) she lists 'Mounted police, crowd control techniques, audience' as her materials. Whilst 'crowd control techniques' are the signified social relations at stake in the project, 'mounted police' and 'audience' serve as clearly decipherable signifiers of this social relation. Listing both alongside each other suggests a parity of significance between living-as-form and material and visual form designating living.

In recent years, the emphasis on the signifier over the signified has arguably become more prominent in social practice. Rick Lowe's *Project Row Houses* (1993-ongoing), and *Granby Four Streets* in Liverpool (2011-ongoing), for which art-architecture collective Assemble were awarded the Turner Prize in 2015, are

16. The relationship between signifier and signified here is by no means specious in and of itself. Art's engagements with community gardening have recently tended to be intertwined with a politics of the commons, informed by the work of post-Marxist Italian autonomists, in particular Silvia Federici. Referring to a pre-capitalist form of shared land ownership, the idea of the commons has gained renewed currency at this juncture, according to Federici, because it has 'offered a logical and historical alternative to both State and Private Property, the State and the Market'. Indeed, gardens have long been sites of interest to the community arts movement, and social practitioners of the 1990s and after have sustained this. Documenta 13, curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev was, in the words of T.J. Demos, 'overgrown with experimental planters and creatively landscaped areas'. Silvia Federici, 'Feminism and the Politics of the Common in the Age of Primitive Accumulation', in *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle* (Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 2012), p. 139.; T. J. Demos, 'Gardens Beyond Eden: Bio-Aesthetics, Eco-Futurism, and Dystopia at dOCUMENTA (13)', Brooklyn Rail, 4 October 2012, www.brooklynrail.org/2012/10/art/gardens-beyond-eden-bio-aesthetics-eco-futurism-and-dystopia-at-documenta-13.

17. Lesley Young, 'Our Game Our Party Our Work', *A Bulletin*, no. 4 (Autumn 2009), www.thesalfordrestorationoffice.org/Our%20Game%20Our%20Party%20Our%20Work.pdf.

18. Sonia Boyce, 'Community Arts: How Can We Bring the Legacy of Community Arts into the Present?' (Community Arts? Learning from the Legacy of Artists' Social Initiatives, The Black-E, Liverpool, 14 December 2015), www.vimeo.com/148862621.

two housing-orientated projects associated with very different moments in the history of the social turn. Lowe's project entailed the purchasing of a row of abandoned shotgun-style houses in Houston, Texas, which were then renovated through community mobilisation and volunteering. Financial support came from the use of some of the houses as various kinds of arts spaces, which could then attract arts funding. *Granby Four Streets* is similarly based upon the restoration of local vernacular architectural spaces (in this case, Victorian terraces), but the role played by art and aesthetics is altogether more integrated than in the case of *Project Row Houses*. Lowe demarcates spaces for art as sources of capital, both cultural and financial, in the service of the restoration of housing to the local community. Assemble, as befits their architectural origins, strategically aestheticise the housing itself. They renovate according to a carefully attuned design aesthetic typified by plywood furniture and terrazzo fixtures made from recycled rubble (what they term Granby Rock), in keeping with contemporary fashions for mid-century furnishing. The material form of the houses takes strategic precedent over the social relations they might connote.[12]

Assemble's 2015 Turner Prize installation at Tramway in Glasgow further developed this conscious foregrounding of material form. They constructed a replica of a terraced house in the cavernous post-industrial space of Tramway's main gallery, decorated and furnished not as a terraced house, but as a showroom containing purchasable design elements of the Granby houses. Granby Rock mantelpieces, bookends, lamps and tabletops could be bought, alongside fired-timber benches and stools. Each item held dual appeal firstly, as design objects appealing to prevalent bourgeois tastes; and secondly, as evidences of social good, authenticity and ethical production processes. The proceeds from sales were to be fed back into the project and the community. In sum, the installation was a gallery of material artefacts consciously designed to project and signify social engagement in the service of the continued funding of the project.

This is certainly an amplified example of the privileging of material form in social practice; however, it is representative of a wider and more gradual shift that has taken place over the past twenty or so years. During this period, the diverse and messy field of social practice has become increasingly rationalised, homogenous and formal. An aesthetic of social practice has emerged as certain material forms have increased in prominence and constituted a recognisable and legible lexicon of signifiers. Assemble's victory in the Turner Prize must not be seen as acknowledgment of their innovation of this aesthetic; but of the degree to which their work taps into and exploits an already emergent association between sociality and materiality.

19. Young, 'Our Game Our Party Our Work'.

20. This was entirely Bishop's intention. When a revised version of 'The Social Turn' was published in *Artificial Hells*, she prefaced it by acknowledging 'the shift between the polemic in Chapter 1 ['The Social Turn']' and the more nuanced remainder of the book. Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, 5.

21. Marc James Léger, 'Bill Roberts' Review of Brave New Avant Garde', *BLOG OF PUBLIC SECRETS*, 14 May 2013, www.legermj.typepad.com/blog/2013/05/bill-roberts-review-of-brave-new-avant-garde.html.

22. More in-depth discussion of the documentation of social practice can be found in Kirsten Lloyd, 'Social Documents: The Mediation of Social Relations in Lens-Based Contemporary Art' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2017).

23. See Rosalind Krauss, 'Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America', *October*, 3 (Spring 1977), p. 78.

24. Amelia Jones, '"Presence" in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation', *Art Journal*, 56, no. 4 (1997), p. 11.

25. As Dimitrakaki states, documentation is not an 'ideologically transparent operation'. Angela Dimitrakaki, 'Art, Globalisation and the Exhibition Form: What Is the Case, What Is the Challenge?', *Third Text*, 26, no. 3 (May 2012), p. 314.

An Aesthetic of Social Practice

The emergence of an aesthetic of social practice is heavily imbricated within the much-discussed institutionalisation of social practice that, at least in the UK, can largely be traced back to shifts in cultural policy enacted by New Labour in the wake of their election victory of 1997. Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport from 1997 to 2001, initiated a sea change in the way in which the arts were supported in the UK, informed by the mantra: 'start talking about what the arts can do for society, rather than what society can do for the arts'.[13] Increased funding and support for the arts would be contingent on the ability of institutions to demonstrate their efficacy in enhancing social cohesion, prompting urban regeneration and engaging local communities. This instrumentalism was administered and enforced by the implementation of New Public Management, bureaucratic structures borrowed from the private sector and engineered towards efficiency and answerability. The community arts tradition, having long endured outside of art's mainstream, was now welcomed into the fold by institutions who rapidly had to adapt to the new demands placed upon them, and saw community art (and its offspring: social practice) as an expedient means of meeting them. Funding may since have subsided, but the demands persist, and, accordingly, social practice's position within the institutional landscape of art has been consolidated.

This rather neat narrative is often used as something of a stick to beat institutions with – however this denies the exigencies of institutional sustainability in an environment in which under- or informally staffed institutions must rapidly and quantifiably demonstrate their participatory and engaged credentials. Institutional engagement strategies have thus tended to borrow from tried-and-tested formulae, and, crucially, they dip into, and thus perpetuate, the lexicon of formal signifiers that constitute the aesthetic of social practice outlined above. Gardens have been a notable example of this. To name but a few British examples, Tramway, Tate Modern, mima and the Whitworth have all, in recent years, launched community garden projects as part of their outreach and engagement programming. The reasoning behind each project is broadly similar. Tate Modern cites its garden as a 'resource for the local community',[14] while the Whitworth's garden – part of its 2016 renovation – is intended to create 'a nurturing sense of community'.[15] The formal device of the garden has become a widely recognisable signifier of community in mainstream arts institutions in the UK.[16]

Nonetheless, two factors conspire to sever the signifier of the garden from the signified of community. Firstly, institutional constraints tend to disallow the kind of sustained support and engagement that might allow the garden to truly entail a politics of community. Short-staffing, time pressures, the demand to multi-task, and the maintenance of some semblance of work-life balance on the part of staff play far greater roles in the banalisation of community in institutional contexts than the predominance of

26. Boris Groys, 'Art in the Age of Biopolitics: From Artwork to Art Documentation' in *Art Power* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), pp. 53–65.

27. Bishop discusses the relationship between social practice and 'the aesthetic regime' at length in *Artificial Hells*, pp. 26–30.

28. Reflexivity has long been a basic ethical and methodological consideration in the social sciences. Arguably, art's move into the social sphere demands a methodological rigour on the part of its attendant academic discourses that has yet to develop.

literature on the topic recognises. Secondly, the sheer ubiquity of a particularly recurrent form such as the garden creates an undifferentiated mass in which local and historical specificity is quashed. While the first point neutralises the signifying power of the garden at a phenomenological level, the second does so from a more conceptual perspective. In both cases the garden becomes a floating signifier, wrenched from its signified and presenting as the tokenistic and 'superficial' form of institutional social engagement critiqued by Kester, regardless of the often good intentions and political sophistication of the younger generation of art-workers who tend to serve as public engagement curators for larger institutions.

A similar fate has befallen the successful socially engaged artist, whose practice, become coveted by institutions seeking to emulate their participatory and collaborative successes elsewhere. In an essay on one of the mainstays of social practice Artur Żmijewski, curator Lesley Young quotes the artist self-identifying as an 'artist for hire',[17] whilst in a talk delivered as part of an event on the legacies of community arts organised by the Liverpool Biennial in 2015, Sonia Boyce wryly introduced herself as 'one of those artists who is parachuted in'.[18] Socially engaged practitioners, more so than any other flavour of artist, tend to become typecast and commissioned with a tighter and more instrumental brief. This places pressure on the artist to perform their role and reproduce their brand of practice for a new public. Young notes of Żmijewski that, while his practice has historically displayed considerable diversity, those projects which do not conform to his antagonistic reputation 'grab fewer headlines'.[19] Accordingly his work becomes increasingly funnelled down a narrow path as commission after commission serves to reinforce the Żmijewski brand.

Thus the forces of institutionalisation have pressured both institutional social engagement, and socially engaged practitioners towards the reproduction of recognisable forms of social practice. As artists circulate under the weight of expectation that they will do their thing, and institutions are hemmed in by the restraints of policy, funding and means, an aesthetic of social practice emerges, replete with its signature forms. However, whilst commentaries on this institutionalisation tend to direct their gaze towards exhibitionary institutions as solely responsible for any 'banalisation' that might occur, I would like to address the significant role that written discourses on social practice in the overlapping fields of art history and art theory have played.

Art History and the Documentation of Social Practice

The publication of Bourriaud's manifesto-like *Relational Aesthetics* in 1998 inaugurated a vibrant written discourse around the social turn in contemporary art. While Bourriaud's early readership were primarily members of the core art world – artists and the newly emergent curatoriat – Miwon Kwon's 2002 *One Place after Another: Site-specific*

Art and Locational Identity and Kester's *2004 Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* shifted the debate into more traditional academic contexts, signalling social practice as a viable subject for art-historical study. Despite this shift towards the academy – and its avowed tastes for description over prescription – the programmatic character of Bourriaud's text persisted, particularly in Kester's case. This programmatism was exacerbated by two decisive interventions into the discourse by Claire Bishop in the mid-2000s. 'Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics' (2004) attacked Bourriaud on the grounds of his supposedly apolitical fetishisation of human interaction as inherently democratic and 'good', while a similar, if more acerbic, critique was levelled at Kester and curator Maria Lind in 'The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents' (2006). Both articles roughly follow a similar, rather illuminating, structure. Bishop first summarises her target's argument through the discussion of a selection of artists cited in Bourriaud's original text (Rirkrit Tiravanija and Liam Gillick in the case of 'Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics'). She then presents her political disagreements with both the practices and the models of art to which they are yoked. Finally, she proffers some practices that, she claims, deal in similar currencies, whilst avoiding the political pitfalls she had previously delineated (Santiago Sierra and Thomas Hirschhorn).
The antagonism which sits at the heart of her argument also determines the form taken by her texts, and indeed has come to characterise the field of discourse as a whole.[20]

This antagonism has brought to the fore the programmatism of the discourse surrounding the social turn, which has been notable for its population by 'critic-champion[s] of a particular kind of art'.[21] Each advocates for their own brand of social practice, and calls upon a coterie of artists conforming to that brand to corroborate their claims, usually accompanied by a new name for the kind of practice at stake (dialogical art, relational art, participatory art, etc.). Kester's dialogical cabal of Suzanne Lacy, Park Fiction and WochenKlausur are pitted against Bishop's antagonistic 'bad-boys', Thomas Hirschhorn, Santiago Sierra and Artur Żmijewski. The upshot of this programmatic and prescriptive art history and art theory has been a compartmentalisation of the diverse field of social practice into coherent and homogenous clusters. The nuances of particular practices are lost as the aspect of each practice that unites it with others in its cluster becomes dominant. In a sense, Bishop, Bourriaud, Kester, et al. have become the 'master discourses' that Kester has himself been so critical of.

As noted above, each of these theorisations of the social turn is, to an extent, a theory of form, and thus this compartmentalisation and clustering is also formal. However, it is a particular (formal) quality of the book and the journal article, the predominant means of dissemination of these theories of art, that has been particularly significant in privileging material and visual form and thus contributing to the emergence of an aesthetic of social practice: that is, their reliance on photographic documentation

accompanying the body text.[22] As was the case with land art, performance art, body art and other ephemeral practices, social practice depends upon its documentation to allow exposure to the far greater 'secondary' audience that exists beyond those who encounter a work first-hand.[23] And, whilst not diminishing the reception of social practice through documentation, it would be disingenuous not to acknowledge that the experience is clearly different to first-hand phenomenological encounter.[24] There is a fundamental irreconcilability between durational, experiential, site-specific social practice and the image printed on the page of a book or in a PDF, and, just as with two-dimensional projections of the globe, distortions and compromises inevitably arise when the former is translated into the latter. The image freezes time, encloses space and reduces the complexity of the project down to a simple snapshot. Most significantly, the image re-presents an experiential practice, in which the visual may only be of cursory significance, entirely through visual means. As such, documentation is unable to convey social relations without recourse to the use of formal visual signifiers that the reader might easily decode as connoting this or that signified social relation.[25]

For this reason, significant attention is paid to the selection of images used to document a particular practice, and this selection process, schematically outlined here, passes through the hands of a number of actors on its way to publication. Firstly, the artist(s) themselves document their project, and from the vast array of documentary images taken, select a handful that will reside on their website as artefacts. Secondly, the artist, in collaboration with a curator, might use these images, alongside other corroborating documents, as the art documentation installation that has emerged as the archetypal mode of display for social practice within the white cube exhibition.[26] Finally, the writer, alongside their editor and publisher, will select images from a publicly available pool, or will ask the artist to supply images, that will illustrate a book or journal article. At each stage, there is a process of selective curating and refinement, through which the most visually concise and legible images will rise to the surface for use in publication. These demands lend themselves to the selection of images that feature recognisable forms that a readership, through the training process of reading other texts on the subject, and of seeing art documentation in gallery contexts, is capable of translating from signifier to signified. In the case of a book, the image deemed most concise and legible may even appear on the cover. It is the mounted police and audience of Bruguera's *Tatlin's Whisper #5* that adorn the cover of *Artificial Hells*. Social relations are only present through their signification.[27]

The most widely discussed stage in this process of documentation has been the moment of exhibition. Boris Groys' Art in the Age of Biopolitics: From Artwork to Art Documentation (2002) and Angela Dimitrakaki's Art, Globalisation and the Exhibition Form: What Is the Case, What Is the Challenge? (2012) pay significant attention to

permutations of the mediation of social practice through the exhibition form. However, whilst the exhibition opens up social practice to a considerably larger public than the 'primary' audience, this pales in comparison to size of the public who encounter social practice through its documentation and discussion in literature. Similarly, to disregard the documentation of social practice in books and journal articles would be to overlook the influence of this literature and its attendant documentation on exhibitionary practices. Books by Bishop, Bourriaud, Kester, et al. adorn the tables of curated reading rooms and gallery bookshops accompanying exhibitions of social practice worldwide, reflecting the extent to which a younger generation of discourse-aware socially engaged curators has been informed by the literature. Alongside *Artificial Hells* and *Conversation Pieces*, one might find the political philosophy of Bakhtin, Levinas, Mouffe, Nancy and Rancière, names etched into the art world's consciousness in no small part due to their citation by the 'critic-champions' of social practice. This influence can be felt in the academy too, where for over a decade Bishop, Bourriaud and Kester have been mainstays of art school syllabi, required reading for the aspirant social practitioner. This is a point little acknowledged in the literature itself, which has largely lacked reflexivity with regard to its own significant agency in the field and (implicitly) rests on a rather outmoded assumption of remove from its object of study.[28] It is precisely this agency, however, in combination with the programmatic character of the discourse and the necessary privileging of the visual through art documentation, that has ositioned art history and art theory as key players in the crystallisation of a formal aesthetic of social practice.

Conclusion

Returning to Kester's two arguments concerning the institutionalisation of art – that engagement is superficial, and that the discourse is guilty of an overreliance on the crutch of theory – it is now clearer how they interact, and how this interaction has resulted in a banalisation of form in the contexts of social practice. Conditions and tendencies specific to art's exhibitionary institutions (the exigencies of funding, policy and means) and it's attendant discourses (programmatism, antagonism and formal constraint) both tend towards the simplification of the broad and variegated field of social practice into more manageable and homogenous types. The tendency towards the use of art documentation, shared by both exhibitionary practice and the literature, inherently and necessarily reduces social signifieds to material and visual signifiers. In all cases, social practice becomes formalised. The cyclical relationship between exhibition and discourse – each informing the other in a perpetual back-forth-relationship – ensures that this formalisation is continually heightened to the extent that a recognisable set of signifiers predominates. Whilst Kester and Bourriaud used the abstract and pluralised term 'aesthetics' in their theories of social practice, it might now be more apt to speak of a singular aesthetic of social practice.

Three points must be taken from this. Firstly, the extent to which this aesthetic is coded and entangled into every moment in the production, exhibition, reception and exegesis of social practice means that it is particularly stubborn. It is difficult, if not impossible, to envisage how this aesthetic and the attendant danger of superficiality and tokenism might be transcended. Secondly, responsibility cannot be lain simply at the door of one or another of the many actors and factors contributing to the field of social practice, given that this aesthetic has emerged from their convergence and interrelation. Thus, squarely blaming instrumentalism or institutionalisation is insufficient, and art history and art theory must more adequately factor in their own embeddedness. Thirdly, and finally, the dangers of superficiality and tokenism must be virulently resisted, particularly given the political urgency of our current moment. In times of crisis it is inevitably those most marginalised communities that suffer first and most severely, and these have tended to be the communities receiving most benefit from the interventions of social practitioners. For art to continue to offer social benefit in times of utmost need, it must resist formalisation and reduction to an easily consumable aesthetic.

BIOS

Harry Weeks

Harry Weeks is a Teaching Fellow in History of Art at Edinburgh College of Art, The University of Edinburgh, where he is also Co-convener of The Global Contemporary Research Group. He was previously a Postdoctoral Fellow of the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of Edinburgh (2015-16). His PhD was awarded by The University of Edinburgh in 2014 for a thesis entitled '"A Unique Epochal Knot": Negotiations of Community in Contemporary Art', which examined how art practices since 1989 have contributed to a rethinking of the concept of community. He is currently working towards a book based on his doctoral research, tentatively titled 'Community and Art after Community Art'.

Marc James Léger

Marc James Léger is author of *Brave New Avant Garde* (2012), *Drive in Cinema* (2015) and the forthcoming *Don't Network: The Avant Garde after Networks*. He is editor of the two volumes of *The Idea of the Avant Garde – And What It Means Today*.

Michael Birchall

Michael Birchall is curator of public practice at Tate Liverpool and Senior Lecturer at Liverpool John Moores University in Exhibition Studies. Previously he has held curatorial appointments at The Western Front (Vancouver, Canada), The Walter Phillips Gallery at The Banff Centre (Canada), Künstlerhaus Stuttgart (Germany); and has lectured at Zurich University of the Arts. His writing has appeared in Corridor 8, Frieze, Frieze d/e, ARKEN Bulletin, On Curating, Modern Painters, C-Magazine, Art & the Public Sphere, and various catalogues and monologues.

Gregory Sholette

Gregory Sholette is a New York-based artist, writer and activist. His recent projects include the exhibition DARKER at Station Independent Projects NYC consisting of large ink wash drawings addressing current political conditions. He is active with Gulf Labor Coalition and was a co-founder of the collectives Political Art Documentation/ Distribution (PAD/D: 1980-1988), and REPOhistory (1989-2000). A former Mellon Fellow at the CUNY Center for the Humanities he is on the editorial board of FIELD, a new online journal focused on socially-engaged art criticism, and his most recent publications include Delirium and *Resistance: Activist Art and the Crisis of Capitalism*, (Pluto/U. Chicago Press 2017), and *Dark Matter: Art and Politics in an Age of Enterprise Culture* (Pluto Press: 2010). Sholette holds a PhD in History and Memory Studies from the University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2017), he is a graduate of the Whitney Independent Study Program in Critical Theory (1996), Graduate of University of California Sand Diego (1995), and The Cooper Union School of Art (1979), and teaches studio art and co-directs the new Social Practice Queens MFA concentration at Queens College CUNY, and is an associate of the Art, Design and the Public Domain program of Harvard University's Graduate School of Design.

Charlotte Bik Bandlien

Charlotte Bik Bandlien is an Oslo-based anthropologist, specialized in visual and material culture. Her work has been presented at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Theaster Gates' Arts Incubator in Chicago, the Material Culture hub at UCL, Parsons NYC, AAA and CAA among others. Her research is conducted through collaborative practice, curating and critique, and recent works include the artistic research project 'Department of Usership' (2015-16), a special issue on art and anthropology for the Norwegian art history journal (2016), and a catalogue text for the exhibition HAiK w/Torill Johannesen. Bandlien has previously held positions as strategic brand planner and as researcher, and is currently assistant professor of theory and methodology at Oslo National Academy of the Arts, Department of Design.

COLOPHON

Published by:
Rogaland Kunstsenter, Stavanger, Norway in 2017

Edited by
Michael Birchall and Geir Haraldseth

Designed by:
Bjørnar Pedersen and Morteza Vaseghi with Anna Mikkola

Printed by:
Livonia Print SIA, Latvia

Paper:
100g Galerie Art Silk

Type:
Titlest: Asfalt, courtesy of ABCDinamo
Body text: Neue Haas Grotesk

Translation of Charlotte Bik Bandlien's text by:
Arlyne Moi

Translation of texts in the red book by:
Elias Daniel Pittenger

ISBN 978-82-999281-1-3

This book is published with generous support from
Arts Council Norway and Stavanger kommune

Rogaland Kunstsenter receives generous support from
Rogaland Fylkeskommune and Stavanger kommune

ROGALAND
KUNSTSENTER

ROGALAND
FYLKESKOMMUNE

STAVANGER KOMMUNE

NORSK
KULTURFOND
Kulturrådet