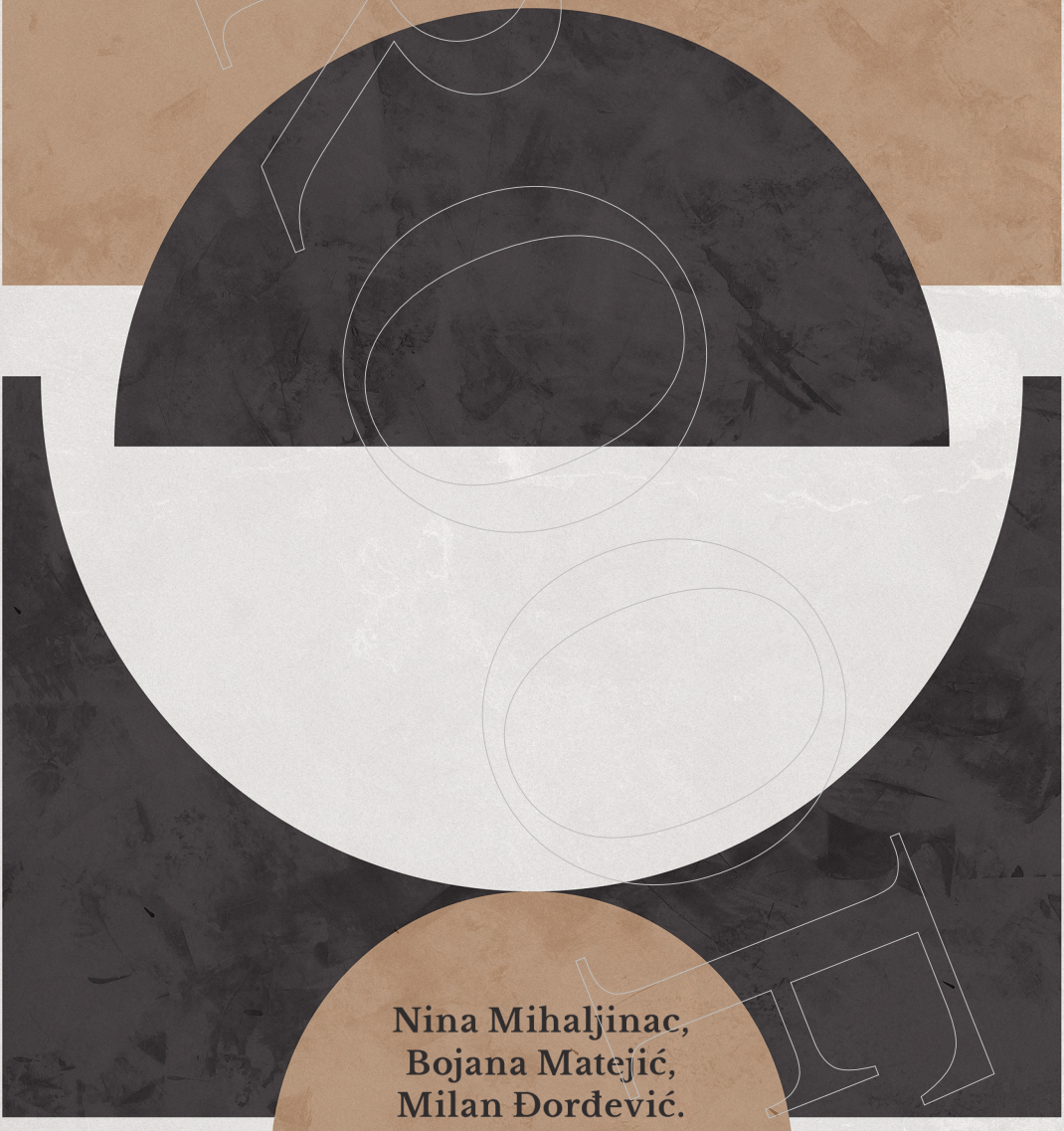
ANOTHER ARTWORLD:

PURSUING NEW ORGANISATIONAL MODES



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INTRODUCTION: THE RIGHT TO ANOTHER ARTWORLD: FROM ENTREPRENEURSHIP TO AUTONOMY[1]

Nina Mihaljinac, Bojana Matejić, Milan Đorđević

1 This publication is realized within the scientific project *Empowering Participation in Culture and Architecture: Activating Public Resources for and with Local Community* – EPICA (No. 7744648) supported by the Science Fund Republic of Serbia. The printing of the publication is supported by the Ministry of Culture and Information of Serbia.

This book contributes to a better understanding of the extent of inequality in the field of art, particularly in the visual arts, which have emerged as a critical area in which the world's increasingly pronounced social and class gap can be seen. In a capitalist society defined by austerity measures, privatisation, the growth of non-standard forms of employment and the obstruction of trade union self-organisation of employees, artistic work is seen exclusively through entrepreneurship and the art market. Many states' cultural policies have counted on the entrepreneurial potential of the cultural and creative sectors, which in practice can only flourish with massive state subsidies, which led to an almost complete lack of support for artists. So far, in underdeveloped countries such as Serbia, poor material conditions in which art work takes place were only discussed in the context of an underdeveloped art market – until the Covid-19 pandemic revealed that both in neoliberal capitalist countries and the capitalist periphery, art became the exclusive right of materially secure individuals. On the other hand, today, self-organisation in the Western world primarily, oscillates between the self and the group, self-imposed bureaucratisation and flexibilism, aestheticization and activism, as a result of local and international cultural policy programs (Stine and Karlsen, 2013).

These circumstances are so threatening that more and more artists and cultural professionals around the world are increasingly fighting for new organisational modes. It could be said that for that reason, the *fair pay* movement emerged. Numerous organizations and initiatives that advocate fair practice try to empower position of artists and cultural workers in negotiating better working conditions – such as, *Wagency* (W.A.G.E., USA), *Fair Practice Code* (Platform BK, the Netherlands), *Hyperunionization* (Art Workers Italia, Italy), *Paying Artists* (a-n/AIR, UK), *Trade union for creativity and culture ZASUK* (Slovenia), *Fair Arts Almanac* (SOTA, Belgium), ULUS Debate programme initiatives (The Association of Fine Artists of Serbia), etc. Following the UNESCO Brainstorming session report 2018, UNESCO launched a global consultation on the implemen-

tation of the *1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist* in 2022, stressing the urgency of improving the status of artists and cultural workers on policy level. There is rising pressure on cultural organizations to refrain from controversial funding – e.g. *BP of Not BP* protest at London's British Museum against its continuing sponsorship from the oil giant British Petroleum, or to confront colonial past by removal of monuments valorising white supremacist or colonial figures. These initiatives keep pace with larger social movements, from Black Lives Matter protests to the Indignados of Europe in the summer of 2011, the work of the NYC general assemblies prior to September, and the wave of home reclamation projects related to the housing policies and practices that have happened in late 2011. Our effort to produce these collections of papers represents another way to support this struggle. It is a result of our response to inequalities and strengthening the fight for the right to art; a right to another artworld.

The artworld is not an innocent, autonomous field, but a heteronomous, controlled space of knowledge production by the institutional dispositives (state apparatuses, funds, administrative measures, etc.). On one hand, neoliberalism puts pressure on public art institutions to make them apolitical institutions that ought to produce precarious creative individuals, technically and cognitively skilled, according to the needs of cognitive capitalism (co-optation of activity, knowledge production, virtuosity, immaterial labour, etc.). Knowledge becomes one of the main mediums of neoliberal financial investments, yet, at the same time, a battlefield of social transformation. On other hand, artistic practice is usually considered as an activity purportedly done ex nihilo, meaning that, it is not treated as work (Martin, 2016: 43). The humanist episteme on Art (Art History, Aesthetics, Philosophy of Art, etc.) advocate the dominant thesis that such labour is creative, non-utilitarian human activity, opposite of work, in service of human self-fulfilling and expressive needs in and of itself (Praznik, 2021: 17). This also serves as one of the hiding masks of the ne-

oliberal, post-political condition that blurs the extraction of surplus value out of, predominately, participatory, and collaborative modes of working. As Bojana Kunst writes, „people intervene all the time (…) academics participate in meaningless debates and so on" which is a hallmark of the reduction of politics to the expert management of social life (Kunst, 2015: 7).

In such global post-political condition many contemporary art discourses, from the global (Western) to the glocal, are based on a critical meta-language, pseudo-active models of art market, where art appears as „autonomous" field of freedom. At the same time, one faces a growing political powerlessness of art: "The art of today seems to be generated in this field in-between pseudo-activity and the quest for a real effect; it is profoundly marked by the loss of the event and the desire for a radical cut at the same time" (Kunst, 2015: 7). These circumstances go hand in hand with the *recombinant* phenomena that has taken a central role in politics and in the culture of the 1990s in the Western part of the World. According to Berardi, *recombinant* is based on alliance of cognitive labour and financial capital that has produce cultural effects based on identification of labour and enterprise. The consequence of such alliance is the entrepreneurial form in which financial capital and highly productive cognitive labour met. The main actors in such world are cognitive workers who invest their expertise (knowledge, skills, creativity, etc.) and find the means on the stock market to create enterprises. The result of such alliance is a reproduction of an army of self-employed cognitive entrepreneurs on the „free market". According to Berardi, what neoliberalism has supported is not the „free market", but monopoly that has robbed the mass of shareholders and cognitive labour. By producing its own negation, neoliberalism cooptated the productive power of the cognitive workers for the purpose of re-production of the semiocapitalism. The contemporary neoliberal condition generates the split between the financial accumulation and privatization of public knowledge and the inscription of the productive labour in the cognitive functions of society.

In such conditions, artistic work is no longer exceptional. Actually, this very exceptionality of Art is a construct of the modernist Fordist rhetoric. Contemporary artistic work predominately does not end in a material result (autonomous and remaining work) (especially when considering participatory practices), since it became linguistic and communicative. Yet, as Kunst maintains, Art preserves its exceptional place within the capital and economic speculations on artistic life. Therefore, many theoreticians strive to find new organisational modes. For instance, Franco Bifo Berardi offers a concept of „autonomy" that presupposes forms of social life that do not depend on the disciplinary regulations imposed by economic power, but also on the internal displacement, shifts, dissolutions, self-compositions of living society, struggle, withdrawal, sabotage, refusal of work. He sees the possible autonomy of *self-regulation* of the social body in its independence and its interaction with the disciplinary norm (Berardi, 2009: 75). The scrutinization of the relationship between art and the working and organisational modes thus becomes crucial.

Just because of that, we started dealing with the topic of various new organisational modes more intensively when we decided to organise an international conference entitled „ANOTHER ARTWORLD: Manifestations and Conditions of Equity in Visual Arts" at the UNESCO Chair for Cultural Policy and Management in cooperation with the New Media Department of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of the Arts in Belgrade and the Association of Fine Artists of Serbia. Held in December 2020 while the country was under lockdown, the conference initiated a conversation about democratic governance principles and decision-making models in the visual arts, a subject that had previously received little attention from the general public or from the scientific community. More than seventy scholars and practitioners discussed features of the democratic functioning of the contemporary visual arts system, the re-definition of it and the place of artists and cultural workers within it. The conference reconsidered historical and contemporary examples of practice that are contribut-

ing to the comprehensive decentralisation and democratisation of the visual arts field, in search of new models that might be effectively applied.

As editors, we come from a country in the Global South, so the problems we feel are far more pronounced than those of our colleagues from the Global North. However, we keep the memory and certain knowledge related to self-government in culture (self-governing period of the former SFR Yugoslavia). We, therefore, thought that it was a combination of experience of scientists and researchers who have memory and contact with the revolutionary achievements of self-government on one hand, and the experience of colleagues from developed Western countries on the other (although both groups feel the numerous upheavals brought about by the capitalist logic of action in culture) can provide really important guidelines for thinking about the future of the art world. Still, some questions remain: is it possible to reinvent critical potentialities of this knowledge production from the „spacial" geopolitical context in the present capitalist, post-Fordist circumstances? How to recontextualize and make this knowledge a powerful tool for the present and future transnational struggle movements?

That is why the book opens with a text by Lev Kreft, a colleague coming from Slovenia (one of the ex-Yugoslavian countries), who introduces two key concepts of the collection: democratisation and equity. This paper focuses on the period of Yugoslav self-government, which is characterised by the anti-capitalist struggle and cultural democracy. Two following texts help the understanding of two crucial principles of the cultural policy during the self-management period, but from the contemporary point of view: a critique of elitism in arts in the neoliberal period (written by feminist economist Gabriele Mihalich) and the value of collective action, as well as the possibilities of radical turn through radical imagination (written by Irena Ristić). This corpus is followed by the texts that show local practices of opposing neoliberalism in art (Cuba, Indonesia, Poland, Slovenia, Italy, etc.). Their authors (Annelies Van Assche, Pablo Müller, Ginevra Ludovici, Mateusz Sapija, Vito Vo-

jnic-Purcsár, Stephanie Dieckvoss, Mary Gatenby, Anna Battiston, Camille Prunet) mostly come from the countries of Western Europe, where more and more work is being done on re-examining Western democracy and introducing alternative models of artistic work and organization. The last text written by an artist Milica Lapčević "rethinks possibilities of social engagement of artists in contemporary society, in which labor in ancient coal mines under unfair conditions is replaced with new sort of invisible mining – that of digital data." The collection therefore covers numerous topics related to the issue of unfavourable working conditions and democratising the art world: self-organisation, precarity, access to art, possibilities of political action through art, and the question of the art market.

The first paper written by Lav Kreft *From Marx to Majstorović: Between Democratization of Culture and Cultural Democracy* discusses key notions of the entire book: equity and cultural democracy. In the context of modern Serbia, which has entered a post-transition phase and is suffering the terrible consequences of the development of capitalism - Majsorović's work served as the greatest inspiration in determining the topic and editing this book - precisely because he was a researcher and practitioner in the field of cultural policy who developed his concepts of culture, art and cultural policy during the Yugoslav self-government. This period of development of the former state is now in the sphere of interest of domestic researchers precisely because more and more work is being done to discover organizational models that will be alternative to the current capitalist system of the state system, including the cultural system. Lev Kreft's text analyzes the possibilities of political emancipation and de-westernization, considering the model of non-aligned policies and the Ljubljana period of self-government. The text is also important from the standpoint of the history of Yugoslavia and socialist ideas because it deals with the Cultural Action Congress in Kragujevac, as well as with the Praxis group who developed critical Marxism within the journal and international meetings of Marxists on the Croatian island of Korčula.

To better understand the key concept of the book – equity – a quote from Kreft's introductory text will be used, responding to frequent criticisms of self-management as an unsustainable model of functioning:

> „There is a fault in this system, indeed, but the transformation of cultural politics in Yugoslavia from the democratization of culture to cultural democracy is still worth studying because it is a unique case of realization, ideologization and radical criticism. Not in spite of but with the help of utopian imagination, the **promotion of equity instead of equality proved its non-utopian capacity for actualization**."
> (Kreft, 2022)

Theorizing the question of democratization and critique of neoliberalism continues in the work of Gabriele Michalitsch *Artwork or Cultural Commodity? Neoliberalism, De-Democratization, and Authoritarianism*. As an economist of left-wing political beliefs, Gabriele warns of the many negative consequences of the spread of capitalist logic in culture (elaborates on phenomena such as self-commodification, self-rationalization), assessing this system as repressive and authoritarian. Her brief critique of the relationship between the public and private sectors in the development of art and artistic practice is especially significant since, in the contemporary world of art, the positive participation of the private sector is almost unquestionable. In this regard, Gabriele notes that the work of art has ceased to be an agent of criticism and reflection and has become a marker of social rank, as well as an object of investment and speculation. The consequence of that transformation is democratization.

According to many theoreticians, practitioners and politicians - SELF-ORGANIZATION appears as a response to the problems created by the system of capitalism and representative democracy. One of the conditions for self-organization is the strengthening of collective creativity and radical imagination (Vigotsky). Text by Irena Ristić *Paths of radical imagination or How to make a collective?* ex-

plains these concepts and warns of potential pitfalls in the development of the collective, advocating the idea of the necessity of collective work, association and self-organization as a way to destroy models of capitalist, hierarchical governance. Ristić writes about testing the model of collective work, their growth and simultaneous performance, progressing towards new forms of collectivity, and maybe even collective autonomy. It is precisely art collectives that can be the driving force of social change, which is why our book is in the first place for artists and employees in the field of culture.

Introductory texts that map the most general themes and problems of inequality of the art world - as an illustration, and more thorough analysis – are followed by papers dealing with local art scenes or collectives – Slovenia, Belgium, Switzerland, Cuba, Indonesia, etc. They also analyze diverse factors influencing art field development: financing, education, and organization. The common goal of these texts is to find alternative models and solutions to identified problems such as commoning and self-organization. As Müller points out: Some actually postulate self-organization as a mode of action in response to the impact of neoliberal policies which is also felt in the art world (Müller, 2021).

The paper *The Contemporary Dance World and the Thin Line between Self-Realization and Self-Precarization* by Annelies Van Assche critically reflects the handbook on precarious work in the field of art "Become the ideal cultural worker in 86 steps (2016)", whose context is the performing arts scene in Slovenia. This text can be understood as a direct response to the statements presented in the text by Gabriela Mihalich; Annelies writes: „collective tactics and commoning practices project-based funding systems, for example, simply copy neoliberalism's competitive model artistic labour remains under the domination of a neoliberal paradigm, oscillating between poles of self-realization and self-precarization" (Van Assche, 2022).

Writing about self-organised practices in Switzerland, Pablo Müller's paper *The Self-organised Art Scene in Switzerland. In between Professionalization and Collabora-*

tive Agency, very thoroughly explains the notion of self-organisation (distinguishing it according to an ideological line from terms such as self-help and self-enterprize) and offers ideas and values that oppose the authoritarianism of the contemporary art world: collaboration, caring and sharing, polyphonic and dialogical work, diversity. The focus is put on financing, competitive bidding with donors and the issue of fair pay, so the paper advocates the idea of the possibility of operating beyond financial logic and cultivating a different approach to art.

The paper of Ginevra Ludovici also deals with self-organization under the title *Self-initiated institutions: the case of artists-run educational platforms.* It examines the role of artists in the so-called educational turn. Ginevra states that art schools and universities started to experience a major shift from experimentation toward the bureaucratization and standardization of knowledge-based production. She especially criticizes the Bologna process that reduces education merely to utilitarian purposes related to the access to the work environment and gives three examples of self-organised education initiatives – INSTAR (Tania Bruguera), Cuba, Silent University (Ahmet Ögüt), international, and GUDSKUL (Grafis Huru Hara, ruangrupa and Serrum), Jakarta. Ludovici writes about these initiatives: „Such long-term projects, moving away from vertical structures and teaching models, aim to put into action inclusive and democratic practices that also take current issues and the participants' needs into account. These are cases born in different contexts where forms of hegemonic cultural structures limit access to the public sphere" (2022). Furthermore, she states that „turning authorial voices – like the ones of the various initiators examined - into multi-layered, polyphonic voices show a commitment to extending the spaces of possibility for concrete action and share their social responsibilities".

While previous texts have considered the functioning of collectives and organizations, the paper authored by Mateusz Sapija deals with the possibilities of using an individual event such as an exhibition - ([S]election.pl. (Center for Con-

temporary Art, Warsawa, 2005) for the purpose of opening space for the introduction, implementation and promotion of radical democracy. The goal of this exhibition was the representation of the contemporary Polish art scene and several curators were invited. Artur Zmijewski and Pavel Althamer, among them, hijacked the exhibition in order to question the function of art and its position in contemporary society. The action tried to undermine the format of a traditional exhibition, which is why the paper elaborates notions and concepts such as participation, civic action and conversation, „collaborative", „participatory", „social practice", „dialogic", or „new genre public art", „emancipated public", „applied social arts", anti-exhibition. The special value of this paper lies in the fact that it was based on the personal conversation between Sapia and two curators.

Vító Vojnits-Purcsár in his text *Schlingensief´s Failed Chance for Direct Democracy, Failure as Chance. A Case Study*, offer a reflection on Christoph Schlingensief´s work in relationship with experiments with direct democracy dictum. He puts emphasis on the concept of the so-called *atonal democracy* which Schlingensief developed in the wake of atonal music of Arnold Schönberg. Atonality presupposes an aesthetic attitude and *political non-correctness*, which as a practice might be found in the Schligensief's action 7 days disposal for Graz - artists against human rights (Purcsár, 2022). This articulation of the rebellion in the socially engaged art he further explores on the examples of works by Russell Brand, Renzo Martens, etc. The particular contribution of this paper lies in the introducing of social antagonism in the current participatory turn in the contemporary art.

In their text Stephanie Dieckvoss and Mary Gatenby tackle the problem of the politics of financing of art between 2003 and 2020 in post-Saddam public and commercial art scenes in Iraq. This text offers a challenging insight into the influence of nongovernmental organization (NGOs) as market agents on artistic scene in the wake of Iraq invasion in 2003 by American, British, Australian and Polish forces. This research is based on the investigation of the

production of the so-called *war art* from the geographies that have beenaffected by the war in the last twenty years. It is an original contribution to the recent inquiries related to the NGO sector in the democratic transformations of the culture in Eastern and Southern part of the world.

In reference to various alternative models of social experimentation in the contemporary art world, Anna Battiston in her paper examines the politics and practice of commons in the Artist-run-spaces (new territories of the art) and self-run social centers. She tries to make a distinction between the neoliberal cooptation of these third places' cultural spaces (gentrification) – especially in the example of the development of the Italian Autonomy worker movement during 1970, wherein the model places like the CSOC (occupied social centers of the Italian matrix) that will be exported to different European countries – and its „real" political effects.

In the last theoretical text of this book art theorist, Camille Prunet opens the topic of criticism of neoliberal effects on the contemporary art and art market in the post humanist context of ecological crisis. She tackles the concept of third nature as a space of „what manages to live in the ruins of capitalism" (Prunet, 2022), based on the preference of mining thoughts, gestures, and representations from the "rubble of a depleted" capitalism. She sees this concept of a third nature as a powerful theoretical tool, of a struggle for new critical modes in the contemporary (art)world. A living community is a presupposition of the new modes of organizing on the post- and trans-humanist level – between plants, animals, viruses, tries, (non-)humans, creatures, rocks, etc. The matter of care, co-genesis of forms, sharing and balance, symbiopoietic thinking, according to Prunet, might produce new modes to counter the exploitative pressures of capitalism and the cynical violence of the art market.

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FROM MARX TO MAJSTOROVIĆ: BETWEEN DEMOCRATIZATION OF CULTURE AND CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

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To understand the relationship between equality and equity in the politics of culture of the socialist Yugoslavia from 1960s and 1970s, it is necessary to start with young Marx's criticism of political emancipation. The Hegelian reading of young Marx was very influential, and as it included liberal wing of the League of Communists it had a nearly hegemonic position in academia, but with a caveat: to use Marx's critical method in domestic political matters may be unwelcome, even dangerous. Cultural politics had three characteristics which are still of interest: self-management of culture which meant that fields of material production and of culture exchanged their goods outside market and through agreement of cultural producers and cultural recipients; non-alignment international politics which included struggle for de-Westernization of international culture; and democratization of culture through cultural action. These and other features of Yugoslav cultural politics needed theoretical/ideological support, and it emerged in many forms of different theories of culture and its revolutionary importance for socialism. Among these was one that transgressed its supportive use – that of Stevan Majstorović who introduced differentiation between democratization of culture from cultural democracy. It corresponds to the difference and tension between equality and equity concerning the right to culture.

Equality for Jews, equity for all human beings

The best definition of relationship and distance between equality and equity is that of Anatole France:

> La loi, dans un grand souci d'égalité, interdit aux riches comme aux pauvres de coucher sous les ponts, de mendier dans les rues et de voler du pain.[3]
>
> The law, in its majestic equality, forbids rich and poor alike to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal their bread.[4]

3 French version at: https://citations.ouest-france.fr/citation-anatole-france/loi-grand-souci-egalite-interdit-8725.html.

4 English translation at: https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/361132-the-law-in-its-majestic-equality-forbids-rich-and-poor.

If this witty and exact utterance needs philosophical confirmation, it can be given by Karl Marx in his (in) famous *On the Jewish Question* (1843). It is famous as one of the most dialectical exercises of young Marx before he turned from political philosophy to political economy and shifted his engagement from the German liberal movement to the international communist one. It is infamous because it uses dialectical turns to get from religion to politics and from religion and politics to everyday life in such unlashed and careless manner that many serious scholars found in it a germ of young Marx's resentment of his own Jewishness. I would not dare to enter that, but as it is in tight touch with understanding of equity and equality in their relatedness and remoteness, we need to offer a tiny accent.

The logic of clash between Bruno Bauer and Karl Marx goes centuries back and concerns reasons which gave the Inquisition such a powerful and dreadful social position at the beginning of modernity. Religious Jews were expelled from Spain because, after completing Reconquista, it should become a purely Christian state. As a sign of universal Christian tolerance, Jews who decided to stay were obliged to accept baptism. But to accept Christianity and respect all its rituals did not help. Marranos were hated both by Jews and by Christians. Suspected that they accepted Christianity in public but continuing to serve their own God in private (i.e., doing what Bruno Bauer much later proposed them to do if they want to have human rights of liberal state) they were subjected to inquisition. This was not because they were of Jewish religion but because they were not to be trusted as a nation: mediaeval ambiguous attitude converted into modern biological and cultural racism. To emancipate themselves from antisemitism, Jews had to treat themselves as a nation and to demand others to accept that – but this move is at the same time the beginning of modern antisemitism (Yovel, 2009).

Inquisitional situation repeated itself in 18th Century Germany as polemics between Johann Caspar Lavater and Moses Mendelssohn engaged many others. If a man is as enlightened as Mendelssohn, wrote Lavater in a public letter

as an introductory addition to his book, he should consider becoming Christian because of all rational reasons. Some of the Prussian theologians assumed as well that one cannot reach an enlightened stage if not entering through Christianity first. Liberal thinkers like Mendelssohn's friend Lessing did not agree, but what should Moses who was discussing rabbinic dilemmas with his friends from Berlin synagogue at the same time as he built a case for enlightenment with Christian public do? Was his entrance into enlightened public space, an extraordinary career for a Jew at the time, a mistake? He did not accept Lavater's proposal to discuss Jewish questions in terms of theology, albeit a rational one, and promoted tolerance as public value and public right instead (Altmann, 1974).

In dispute on the Jewish question after the French revolution Bruno Bauer copied the position of Lavater demanding that, to get citizen's and human rights, Jews have first to become Christians. In answer to that (not forgetting that his father Heinrich emancipated himself and later his whole family in a manner Bauer recommended) Marx introduced the difference between religious Jew (or sabbatical Jew), and commercial-financial Jew (or everyday Jew). While religious Jew is what common sense calls a Jew, everyday Jew of modernity is not a religious but money-inspired faith, and is what, again, common sense in its antisemitic manner has in mind when it calls somebody „a Jew". Believers of this faith, however, are not those who praise their God on Saturdays. This Jewishness belongs as much to Christians as to anybody else. "The Jews have emancipated themselves insofar as the Christians have become Jews" (Marx, 1844). This, of course, does not mean that everybody else has become a religious Jew but that Christians have adopted selfishness they deposited to Jews when Christians were forbidden to engage in pure financial gain. In the style of a dictionary, one should know that „Jew" and „Jewishness" (wrongly translated sometimes as Judaism) mean „practical Christian" and „selfish Christianity".

Christianity is the sublime thought of Judaism/ in German: *Judentum/,* Judaism is the common practical ap-

plication of Christianity, but this application could only become general after Christianity as a developed religion had completed theoretically the estrangement of man from himself and from nature (Ibid., 20).

The first part of Marx's polemics against Bauer attacks his claim that political emancipation demands that Jews convert into Christians. It argues that there is no need to forget one's religion to obtain equal rights:

> The state abolishes, in its own way, distinctions of birth, social rank, education, occupation, when it declares that birth, social rank, education, occupation, are nonpolitical distinctions, when it proclaims, without regard to these distinctions, that every member of the nation is an equal participant in national sovereignty, when it treats all elements of the real life of the nation from the standpoint of the state. Nevertheless, the state allows private property, education, occupation, to act in their way – i.e., as private property, as education, as occupation, and to exert the influence of their special nature. Far from abolishing these real distinctions, the state only exists on the presupposition of their existence; it feels itself to be a political state and asserts its universality only in opposition to these elements of its being (*Ibid.*, 16).

Political emancipation is a confirmation of real differences, not their abolishment. To get real emancipation, one should proceed beyond political emancipation. Political emancipation emancipates political state from civil society. The product is an abstract citizen on one side and selfish human on the other side, with both split sides losing their common human being – generic essence or species-activity (Marx in German: *Gattungswesen*) which exists in social relations between human beings and not in some kind of human individual essence. In such alienated doubling, this generic social relation is split and lost.

Is Marx an anti-Semite or not? His proceedings read that Jews have the same rights as everybody else, including

their religious equality, and, if to be a Jew means selfishness, Christians are as much Jews as religious Jews are. In the second German clash over equality in the modern state, Bruno Bauer is an anti-Semite who does not understand positioning of human freedoms and citizens' rights correctly because he wants to use the transition from German backwardness towards its updated state as an opportunity to get rid of (religious?) Jews in the same way as Spain and Portugal did after 1492. Just a moment later, when he left Germany in winter 1843 and started with (critique of) political economy, and after so-called *Paris Manuscripts* were put down, Marx expressed generic and estranged humanity without Bauer's vocabulary and particular religious question. In "Comments on James Mill" from his excerpt notes he explains the problem of selfishness, and consequently of equality and equity.

Mill very well expresses the essence of the matter in the form of a concept by characterizing money as the medium of exchange. The essence of money is not, in the first place, that property is alienated in it, but that the mediating activity or movement, the human, social act by which man's products mutually complement one another, is estranged from man and becomes the attribute of money, a material thing outside man. Since man alienates this mediating activity itself, he is active here only as a man who has lost himself and is dehumanized; the relation itself between things, man's operation with them, becomes the operation of an entity outside man and above man. Owing to this alien mediator – instead of man himself being the mediator for man – man regards his will, his activity, and his relation to other men as a power independent of him and them. His slavery, therefore, reaches its peak. It is clear that this mediator now becomes a real God, for the mediator is the real power over what it mediates to me. Its cult becomes an end in itself. Objects separated from this mediator have lost their value. Hence the objects only have value insofar as they represent the mediator, whereas originally it seemed that the mediator had value only insofar as it represented them. This reversal of the original relationship is inevitable. This mediator

is therefore the lost, estranged essence of private property, private property which has become alienated, external to itself, just as it is the alienated species-activity of man, the externalized mediation between man's production and man's production. All the qualities which arise in the course of this activity are, therefore, transferred to this mediator. Hence man becomes the poorer as man, i.e., separated from this mediator, the richer this mediator becomes (Marx, 1844b).

This is alienation explained to children: human community of manifold social relations which produce and confirm its humanity becomes a thing which mediates between humans. If that is so, then political emancipation does not touch this loss of species-activity (*Gattungswesen*). It confirms it and emancipates the state from it with inauguration of abstract *citoyen* and selfish *homme* lost in their split because citizen cannot emancipate human from its selfishness, and human cannot find solution for its emancipation in political abstraction. That is, at least, how majority academic Marxist and liberal political activists in Yugoslavia of the 1960s and 1970s understood it and expressed their negation of Stalinism. Beware: they did not step from "Eastern Marxism" to "Western Marxism". Both academic and political activist Marxists (most of them engaged on both sides) were involved in an on-going open discussion about socialist democracy and self-management. Democratization of culture and self-management in the field of non-market and non-profit production has been part of it.

Users and providers

Acceptance of the right to culture as human right after the Second World War had many different interpretations in different countries, and Yugoslavia was very particular here. Its cultural politics, its ideologies and theories of culture and cultural politics, have three specific moments to offer:

— Non-alignment cultural politics of de-Westernization of culture;

— Self-management of cultural field;
— Democratization of culture or cultural action.

Democratization of culture or cultural action was a very popular goal of governmental politics of culture in the 1960s and 1970s, especially in continental Europe on both sides of the Iron Curtain. The goal it contained was to spread fine art and high culture into all parts of society, overgrowing their seclusion to a minor part of the bourgeois class. Typical example was the program and policy of Andrê Malraux when he was French minister for culture (1958-1969). Democratic states of the Western Europe accepted as their duty to enlighten masses by enlisting them in the community of institutionalized culture (in Peter Bürger's sense). Socialist states of the Eastern Europe did the same thing to give masses socialist culture of their own but embraced (after early destruction of Proletkult concepts) enlightenment sort of cultural politics as well. The result was funny. All over Europe states invested respectful amounts of money into cultural institutions and projects without visible result because those who profited from such democratization of culture were its producers, and those who were already consumers of high culture and fine art beforehand. Masses had their own culture, and their culture went through general metamorphosis at the same time when ministries for culture developed their activities. The change of popular culture from the end of 1950s to the end of 1970's was overwhelming: instead of traditional class culture of peasantry and working class, popular cultural industry took its place including inter-mediate appearance of so-called subcultures and youth culture of the 1960s which, after short period of cultural subversion, subverted themselves into another special shelf in the shopping mall of the industry of culture. To disappearing borders between fine art and other cultural fields, we must now add new media with their global and total ability to include all and everybody into communication. These changes can be evaluated in two different ways as well. It is possible to conclude, in opposition to Bertolt Brecht, that the possibility of communication did not liberate equal opportunities or inaugurated democratic power in public space.

Quite the contrary, it put all individuals and communities under surveillance and introduced them into a space of sophisticated manipulation where information becomes a commodity and where nobody learns anything but trash. On the other hand, it is also possible to say that creative human forces together with desire for their liberation were falsely imprisoned in a secluded garden of fine and high culture. It is not popular and mass culture's fault that they cannot become a generally accepted way of life. Cultural industry, popular culture and new media of total communication and surveillance made clear that we cannot expect to arrive at freedom of human creativity without overthrowing the division of labour which would unleash and liberate individuals and communities beyond democratization of culture. Enlightenment program of democratization of culture may open, as much as conditions of contemporary „virtual culture", false pretensions of liberation and freedom of creativity of privileged few and declare that cultural equality means that all individuals and all communities have the same right to access what institutions of state or market produce as „culture for all". Accessibility of hegemonic culture to all those who do not need it planned to cover the global world with cultural commodities. Literally, it is part of the colonial system, and – that is what equality with the right to culture arrives at.

In socialist countries things were not much different. Lenin already put forward the need to educate and enlighten Russia and Soviet masses of peasants and workers from literacy to enjoyment of the traditional bourgeois culture and opposed the idea of developing new proletarian culture against bourgeois traditional "institution art" (*Institution Kunst* in Peter Bürger) (Bürger, 1974). Democratization of culture meant inclusion of masses into bourgeois culture, and into the culture of socialist realism which had to glorify socialist reality in the Soviet Union. The situation was relatively different with Eastern Europe occupied and controlled by the Soviet Union after the Second World War, and this difference reveals the Soviet cultural syndrome beyond just a choice between new proletarian or old bourgeois culture: both adoration and hatred first, towards Western culture, and second, towards

Russian cultural traditions. This ambiguity between modernization and barbarization treated occupied cultures as Western, more developed cultural territories while they were cut off from the European West and were (and still are) treated by the West as Eastern, namely, lesser cultures. Democratization of culture together with socialist realism had to deal with these different national cultural situations differently but could not resolve ambiguities and contradictions. Madina Tlostanova has it: "When Russia was facing its few Western colonies…it acted mostly as a not particularly confident colonizer with a strong inferiority complex" (Tlostanova, 2005: 15). Russia functioned at the same time as empire and a colony – an „empire-colony" (Ibid., 15.), and its approach to the East and South part of the empire was the opposite of the way it functioned on the Western side. Democratization of culture in these non-Slavic regions aimed at acceptance of Russian language and Russian culture, treating „domestic" language and culture as incapable of modernization and inclusion into the socialist progress. If we put Yugoslavia into this cross-cultural network, it looked condescendingly upon the socialist East and with anti-capitalist and anti-colonialist criticism upon the capitalist West, while accepting non-aligned countries as lesser partners. This specific feeling of greatness and importance had no tradition from before World War Two and no consequences for new countries which emerged after the fall of socialism and break-up of Yugoslavia, but it influenced cultural politics during the 1960s and 1970s. Despite feelings of lower or higher cultural self-esteem, Yugoslavia developed cultural pluri-universalism of its own concerning its multinational character and its involvement with post-colonial countries. In between East and West, it had open contacts and borders with both polarized blocks as a European member of non-alignment with a global political and cultural concept (Malta joined the movement after 1974 only, Cyprus was important member from the beginning), and invited non-Western developing post-colonial countries to build mutual cultural connections and demand together a new, more just global cultural order. One of the consequences was that international cultural exchange of Yugoslavia systematically included rep-

resentatives of post-colonial countries and cultures; another weas that it supported and even initiated proposals for new global cultural politics which would offer equal possibilities to non-Western cultures.

De-Westernization of culture

Representation of international culture in Yugoslavia during the 1960s and 1970s was something one could not experience anywhere else in the world at the time, because the country had open cultural relationships with the East, the West, and the Rest. The East, where cultural representatives from the Soviet Union and other countries of the Warsaw pact were controlled, but still allowed to travel to Yugoslavia to represent their countries and meet there with their Yugoslav and Western colleagues. The West, because Yugoslavia had open cultural borders to all Western countries, and to the Rest because Yugoslavia wanted to support the postcolonial quest for authentic cultural identity and equal attention in the international arena. To name just a few on-going institutions and events of that kind: systematic translation of literature from all around the world, including those from the Third World; representation of African, Asian and Latin American literature at Struga Poetry Evenings; cinema special weeks or TV programs introducing non-Western less known cinematographies; visual arts exhibitions with representatives from all-around the world like International Graphic Biennale of Ljubljana and art-for-world-peace collection of Slovenj Gradec; extremely rich and continuous presentations of new, avant-garde and revolutionary art from all-around the world in Student Cultural Center of Belgrade, and many others. Indeed, it was partly protocolary thing, accepted by the cultural field as political necessity and not as enrichment, but still, it was presented and supported. Multiculturality of the world was influential instead of just Western or just Eastern models. World culture is a field where peaceful coexistence found its place to create comparativeness of artistic variety and to refuse to function with just one and only *tertium comparationis*: hegemonic culture of the West. To oppose this kind of „inclusion" of lesser culture into global admiration, it comes handy to find those who are lower on the scale of hegemonic Western cul-

ture and patronize them with openness to their specific tribal and primitive ways. There was a moment of such attitude present in Yugoslav international cultural politics, but it was one of the moments. On the other side, there was at first, after the break with Eastern bloc, a tendency to promote in the West what West liked the most: a confirmation of otherness which insisted that popular ethnic art, supported by artificial means but long dead really in the West, still flourishes here in the Balkans, be it as folk dances or „naïve" peasants-painters. Soon after this first phase, however, the other approach which wanted to get approval that our culture is as Western as those on the other side of the Iron Curtain prevailed. Equality is hard to get under the regime of Western hierarchy. There are many ways to approach equality in culture, but with proposals to break up global information and communication order non-alignment cultural politics arrived quite near to the politics of global equity. The best and still actual case of equity proposal is the case of The New World Information and Communication Order which was an UNESCO initiative with Yugoslavia and some other non-aligned countries behind it, then and now more known as McBride's Commission Report.[5] The special value of this document is also that it reflects what was acceptable at the global scale and at what kind of consequences can one arrive starting from the position of universal rights, and what could be articulated only beyond and against global international consensus reached through Westphal world system which treats nation-states as persons in international space. Commission had 15 members[6], all journalists, politicians, and intellectuals of international reputation. Com-

5 Sean McBride, a legendary figure of Irish struggle for independence and for global human rights was president of the commission. Bogdan Osolnik was a member from Yugoslavia who from the first session onward insisted that the commission uses expression "New World Information and Communication Order" which slounded as post-colonial and non-aligned concept.

6 Elie Abel (USA), Hubert Beuve-Mery (France), Elebe Ma Ekonzo (Zaire), Gabriel Garcia Marquez (Colombia), Sergei Losev (USSR), Mochtar Lubis (Indonesia), Mustapha Masmoudi (Tunisia), Michio Nagai (Japan), Fred Isaac Akporuaro Omu (Nigeria), Bogdan Osolnik (Yugoslavia), Gamal EI Oteifi (Egypt), Johannes Pieter Pronk (Netherlands), Juan Somavia (Chile), Boobli George Verghese (India), Betty Zimmerman (Canada). The importance of its task for Yugoslavia, and importnace of Yugoslavia for its purpose is confirmed in the person of executive secretary Ašer-Bata Deleon from Yugoslavia. And to add something extraordinary: Osolnik and Deleon both died in 2020 at ninety-nine years old.

missions' report of its work which started in 1977 appeared in 1980 with long and meaningful title *Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow* - Many Voices One World - *Towards a new more just and more efficient world information and communication order*.[7] It was a rare example of a controversial product coming from the UN and UNESCO, and because of the support of so many different commission members from so different countries it was also an achievement adopted by McBride's clever diplomacy and political enthusiasm. New Order was introduced in Commissions' President Preface as "more justice, more equity, more reciprocity in information exchange, less dependence in communication flows, less downwards diffusion of messages, more self-reliance and cultural identity, more benefits for all mankind" (McBride, 1980). These goals were developed into a thoughtful structure divided into four parts (Communication and Society, Communication Today, Problems and Issues of Common Concern, Communication Tomorrow) thoroughly divided further into groups of chapters. It reads as a document of important and well-balanced messages which could emerge from a stable triad of the East, the West, and the non-aligned Rest at the end of the Seventies. Alas, it was forty years ago, and things have changed radically in terms of a less balanced and not bipolar and not even unipolar world, and in terms of the global information and communication regime radically changed by the whole bunch of new media and new ways and manners of communication and information management and control. It is surprising, therefore, to find so many rich and applicable thoughts and facts in this report. Before we mention some of them, one cannot abstain from comparing notes with Bertolt Brecht who criticized radio because it did allow only one-sided relationship between sender and receiver, asking why active position of receivers seems to be utopian proposal?! Reading Report, it is tempting to ask why, with

7 Report can be found in the UN Archives at http://www.un-documents.net/macbride-report.pdf. The Archive version's pagination gives first the number of parts in Latin numeration, and then the number of pages at the respective part. Archive version will be quoted as "Report – archive version".

all massive and global new media possibilities, the idea of new order in world information and communication regarding equity of all participants seems more utopian now than it did forty years ago?! The main problem, it seems, is despite all contemporary social networks, quite similar. The document states that "in order to be really free, information flows have to be two-way, not simply in one direction" (UNESCO report, 1981, III.6.). One-way flow is not a free flow, however smoothly it functions, and it is usually a vertical flow as well which comes from top downstairs proving that one-sidedness of information flow and communication which divides its participants into multitude of passive receivers and minority of active managers is a result of unfair division of communicative power. „Ideally, communication is a continual exchange between equals, or at least between respective responsive partners" (UNESCO report, 1981, III.11.). Already in 1980 it has been obvious that technology guaranteeing such ideal case is coming: „Yet, the advance of modern electronic systems now also offers the possibility of localized, inexpensive, flexible, and decentralized communication structures which facilitate broader public access and participation" (UNESCO report, 1981, III.11.). What prevents potentiality from becoming actuality? There is a certain limit of what can be articulated under international conditions and under UN rules of behavior, but the structure of document itself and its controversial criticism tells enough: bipolarity makes visible that sovereign power of the state and not less sovereign power of the market takes power from participants and concentrates it in hands of executioners of these two centers. Later in the Report, at the beginning of part III. (On the problems and issues of common concern), the first chapter treats flaws in communication flows, and names three kinds of flaws: one-way flow and vertical flow mentioned above, and market dominance. Among other consequences, to actualize the right

for information and communication cannot get real following some adaptations of the information field itself, or introduce some technical improvements: something must be changed in social and political and economic relations as well. But if both liberal democratic and socialist camps show such crucial flaws which are well visible in the Third World as well, how to make these broader circumstances more adapted for free flow of information and an open space of communication? The answer is hesitant and cautious: „It demands a change of outlook", it says, and that „Without a two-way flow between participants in the process, without the existence of multiple information sources permitting wider reflection, without more opportunity for each individual to reach decisions based on a broad awareness of divergent facts and viewpoints, without increased participation by readers, viewers and listeners in the decision-making and programming activities of the media – true democratization will not become a reality" (UNESCO report, 1981, III.26.). This proposal demands much more than just a change of outlook: such two-way communication among equals without hierarchical division of communication power from top downstairs which controls and manages people, would need a radical and universal political, cultural, economic and social change. Or, to say it bluntly: class society is not capable of this kind of communication. What the Report offers as a medicament is just an idealized image of the already existing reality of Party socialism and Market democracy.

Cultural self-management

To cross this limit and arrive at another structure of power relations in culture, in Yugoslavia self-managing communities of interest were introduced in all fields which were not oriented towards economic gain and market success but were in principle non-profit: education, science, health, social welfare, and culture. Media of information and communication were organized as associated labor organizations operating as market enterprises but incor-

porated into the system of control managed by so-called "subjective forces", i.e., political organizations united as collective members of the Socialist Alliance of Working People, and under assumption that The League of Communists has to actuate its leading role of political organization by convincing all the others (including trade unions, socialist youth, WWII veterans) to accept its views. How to convince? Using media for communication of its view as a truth, and using phone line between League headquarters and Socialist Alliance to announce what is to be accepted as reality. To introduce a quite elaborated system and its structures, it is enough for the occasion to present how the self-managing community of culture reached its decisions about financing the program, using the case of Ljubljana.

Ljubljana self-managing cultural community was founded before constitutional changes opened space for the founding of self-managing communities of interest – this kind of running ahead of law, starting just from ideological and political ideas about future institutional arrangements was not exceptional in self-management constant conceptual change. Its decision body was an assembly consisted of two corps, that of delegates representing working people with an interest in culture, and people working in the field of culture. To decide, both corps must agree. The most important annual process was approval of the program. First, proposals for the program were collected from cultural institutions, professional and amateur groups, and independent movements. Cultural body of Ljubljana consisted of numerous national institutions employing a great number of professionals. These were financed and decided upon half by half together with Slovenian self-managing cultural community as the highest self-managing institution (there was no cultural self-management community of interest on the federal level, an arrangement like that of the European Union – culture belonged to the nation-state). The Slovenian ministry of culture existed, but its most important function was to bring out legislation in the field of culture – it did not have a strong influence on the self-managing community. When all proposals were collected with their financial demands (always much higher than need-

ed really, and even higher than financial means community had at its disposal), they were printed as a draft proposal in a brochure together with all the other Ljubljana self-management communities, usually as a supplement of a newspaper. A draft budget proposal was added – understandably, most proposal for change aimed at this shortest document. This printed supplement of the major Ljubljana newspaper was distributed to workers of both corps to discuss, amend, and approve, and to elect delegates for the assembly. At the same time as collection of programs, a parallel process started in Ljubljana municipality which coordinated financial needs and means of all self-managing communities (culture, social work, science etc.) according to guidelines given by federal and Slovenian authorities for next year. Here, two conflicts had to be resolved: the municipality always wanted to assure less finances but tied to delegate higher burden of Ljubljana interests to communities, and communities all-together supported pressure to get more funds than the municipality wanted to coordinate. On the other side, communities of interest fought one against the other to get a better deal for oneself. Both struggles were in opposition to each other, and if an agreement was not reached on time (i.e., before the new fiscal year started), the pressure was growing. The reason for feeling pressure was that external political powers with the League of Communists as a leader demanded agreement on time, looking more for public image of harmonized society than for balanced relations between different sectors; and that temporary financing consisting of 90% of last year's budget was introduced if an agreement was not reached before new year started. It was not unusual for an assembly of the cultural community to finalize its session in-between Christmas and New Year's Eve. Under these circumstances, an agreement was finally reached, if not on time than quick enough after time passed. To go back to the initial stage when supplements were printed, with programs proposed by cultural institutions and financial framework decided upon, an annual draft program of Ljubljana culture became a proposal. It was self-understood that behind each of the cultural institutions there is self-managing council assembled of three parts: representa-

tives of institution's workers, representatives of founder of the cultural institution (usually and with few exceptions Republic of Slovenia, or Ljubljana Municipality), and representatives of public interest (usually specialist in particular field of culture who deserved trust of "subjective forces"). These councils confirmed programs in each of the institutions. Annual program of Ljubljana culture was ready to go to public discussion, criticism, and approval. It was organized in units of associated labor for workers, and in local communities for citizens – to cover both labor interest and inhabitants' interest. It was a complex and complicated process which under usual circumstances went on smoothly. There were some weaknesses and limitations. Main limitation was that the League of Communists as the leading subjective force could always intervene in the process. It did not intervene often because it was enough to show from time to time that it could. And the process was complicated, which means that its participants had an impression that it could be done in a much simpler way – without self-management, just through experts and politicians. These general weaknesses caused that the system was not whole-heartedly embraced by cultural professionals who did not like simple workers from the factories to decide, but much the same cold feelings were on the other side as well, as many workers and citizens understood this ritual as an empty ritual and a waste of time. Under such feelings, a need for simple democratization of culture instead of cultural democracy was slowly growing, and fine art as the best bourgeois tradition regained its power, nationalist approach to culture included. Still, it functioned much better than previous more statist way of decision-making, it opened a way to many cultural initiatives which would never get momentum and financial support in less democratic and less open system, and it proved to be able to solve many cultural disputes and artistic conflicts with better diplomacy than it is used by state bureaucrats.

Democracy against democratization

The contrariety between democratization of culture and cultural democracy got an expression in cultural ac-

tion movements. They were a combination of enlightenment understood as spreading fine art of fine middle class to all lower classes, of strengthening "people's culture" understood as amateur reproduction and simulation of fine culture, and proletarian culture as creative wave of both professionals and amateurs destroying bourgeois culture and installing something new instead of it in range from naïve painting (very popular in Yugoslavia, especially Hlebine school) to (neo)avant-garde. These tendencies were fighting between themselves to prevail but were also co-existing in their contempt for institutionalized professionalism. On high political level, all of them were embraced, one by one and another by another political official. The high point of democratization of culture came at the beginning of 1970s as an element of official response to students' and cultural movements of the 1968 which meant to catch their momentum into officially approved structure. These ambitions reached climax in the Serbian Cultural Action Congress in Kragujevac (Serbia, 1971). Nothing like that, at least not on that scale, happened in other republics. There were all those who had a political or cultural say in Serbia present, with national artistic elite in front, all-together two thousand participants, but congress became famous for introductory speech of Latinka Perović[8], secretary general of the Ligue of Communists of Serbia (Kragujevac was her birth town). It was about culture, but it was about general political direction as well. She gave impression (more than that was hardly possible under hegemony of socialist speech rules) of two main points: socialist liberal turn which included market orientation and artistic freedom (which was falsely understood as nationalist agenda she never had on

8 Latinka Perović (1933) was a career politician at the end of 1960's and beginning of 1970s, but lost her position of secretary general of the League of Communists of Serbia in 1972. After this, she engaged in the history of the proletarian movement and its intellectual leaders in Serbia. As a member of Serbian liberal triad with Marko Nikezić i Mirko Tepavac, she strongly opposed Milošević's nationalist politics and repressive regime at the end of the 1980s and throughout 1990s. For her position on Kosovo, she is one of "the traitors" of Serbian national interests according to the actual regime and its political and civil society supporters.

her mind), and generational turn which had retirement of Tito and his comrades in mind. Her (in)famous sentence was "It is not enough to bury the old gods; we need to create a world in which they will not be able to live."[9] This Rosa Luxemburg kind of parable triggered what was already preparing before the congress: liberal group of young Serbian politicians was removed for good. It did not open doors for rehabilitation of old-style communism but, as it became obvious during the 1980s, to nationalist neoliberalism. Congress staged all variations of democratization of culture, even the most violent one. Youth and student demonstrated on the place in front of the congress hall against commodification of art and culture which included kitsch and trash, pornography and very popular doctor novels, B-rate Hollywood movies and ideological propaganda hidden behind romantic comedies, and many other sorts of low-rate industrial cultural products. You still could not get McDonalds in Yugoslavia, but the whole repertoire of cultural McDonaldization was available. To show what has to be done against this kind of culture, they burned journals and books which should not be allowed to appear under socialism and its democratization of culture. "No democracy for kitsch and trash!" – this puritan slogan predisposes that some body is purifying cultural products before they are offered to people. Less radical than Serbian youth were Slovenian cultural puritans: they adopted legislation which meant higher taxes for cheap and immoral mass cultural products. And again, special body of tax censorship had to decide which products deserve higher taxes. Not unusually, youth subculture was sometimes classified as trash.

In this plural world of Yugoslav culture (we did not even mention differences in national cultures…), Stevan Majstorović (1921-1988) has its place among critical voices from the left. This means that he criticized Yugoslav society because it was promising but did not realize what it promised: radical workers self-management as the next step be-

9 See "Zaboravljeni kongres kulturne akcije", available at: https://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/57/srbija-danas/2574650/zaboravljeni-kongres-kulturne-akcije-.html

yond just political democracy. We find him as founder and editor of an extraordinary cultural journal *Danas* (Today) where some of the best older and upcoming young essayist and critical voices appeared (1961-1963) and where he was in charge not just of the journal but of maintaining "relationship" with Belgrade Party headquarters until this *liaison* broke, and journal was not allowed to exist further. One of the reasons for such temporary tolerance of liberal essayist journal was that Majstorović, who after the war studied law and then social sciences, had been a participant of the liberation war from the beginning in 1941 to the final days of 1945. This does not mean that he was untouchable, but it gave him some authority. Not enough for *Danas* to survive, but enough to endure interferences and pressure, soothe conflicts and keep quite discrepant collaborators together.[10] Majstorović's PhD was about culture and democracy (1975), and he published books on the topic.[11] He founded The Center for Studies in Cultural Development in 1967, the institution which grew into authority in the field and supported and is still supporting many projects in cultural politics. Ljiljana Rogač Mijatović[12] evaluates his contribution and its incorporation into Yugoslav position in the world:

In considering the development of the ideas and the works of Stevan Majstorović, as well as the establishment and work of the Centre, it is important to look at the international context of the so-called Yugoslav "opening" to the West, followed by the internationalization which had specific reflections in the field of culture and in the shaping of cultural policy. After a period of "agitprop" in Serbia,

10 For those who can understand Serbian, there is a talk on journal *Danas* and on Majstorović as editor at https://www.rts.rs/page/radio/sr/story/24/radio-beograd-2/3974742/drugi-danas-24-maj-1961---27-februar-1963.html with Milan Vlajčić who published his essays in the journal.

11 *The Rights to Culture* (1972, Serbian), *Culture and Democracy* (1978, Serbian) and In *Search of Identity* (1979), bul also *La politique actuelle en Yougoslavie: autogéstion et la culture and Cultural Policy in Yugoslavia: self-management and culture* (both UNESCO, 1980).

12 Ljiljana Rogač Mijatović is associate professor at the University of Art in Belgrade in the field of cultural management and general cultural studies.

as well as the entire Yugoslavia, the sixties brought about the development of the concept of democratization of culture after the model of Andre Malraux, within the system of "self-management" through "self-managing cultural communities" and a model of self-cultural development of the country (Rogač Mijatović, 2018: 2).

In the context of memorizing the history of research and scientific approach to cultural politics in Yugoslavia, Milena Dragićević Šešić[13] exposes that at the same time of 1960s, new approach to culture and criticism of cultural politics developed in Yugoslavia (with focuses in Zagreb and Belgrade). Stevan Majstorović was a driving force of these processes:

The greatest momentum in establishing cultural policy as a science was created by Stevan Majstorović, who managed to initiate the founding of the Institute for Studies in Cultural Development in 1967. As soon as in 1968, they launched the journal *Kultura*...to stimulate national authors to research and write but also to translate the most important world theorists – Leo Lowenthal, Pierre Bourdieu, Frederic Jameson, Ernst Bloch, Herbert Marcuse, Raymonde Moulin, Noam Chomsky, Edward Sapir, Robert Escarpit, Pierre Belleville, Lucien Goldmann, Bronislaw Malinowski, Michel Foucault, Ruth Benedict, Paul Ricoeur, Charles Snow, and many others (Dragićević Šešić, 2018: 3).

To add to this list, one must also mention that all important critical Marxists from the East were consulted as well, including duo Mária Márkus and András Hegedüs from Budapest School of Marxism. Among those who had a say in cultural politics third world representatives at UNESCO conferences were studied together with thinkers of coloniality like Franz Fanon, and Birmingham School of cultural studies was consulted for criticism of Frankfurt School cultural elitism and political pessimism. To create at least a minimum dis-

13 Milena Dragićević Šešić Professor and former rector of the University of Art, Founder of the UNESCO Chair in Cultural Policy and Management (Interculturalism and Mediation in the Balkans), professor of Cultural Policy & Cultural Management, Cultural Studies, Media Studies and other issues on culture.

tance from treating the self-management political system as an ideal for all, he took the journal *Marksizam u svetu.*

The geo-theoretical position of Yugoslavia reflects itself in *Culture and Democracy* as a colourful combination of Eastern and Western Marxists, cultural politics specialists from UNESCO conferences, sociologies of literature and art, ethnologists, philosophers, and others. The starting point which enables all these to perform together is young Marx's critique of alienated labour and its alternative which demands abolition of the division of labour, especially that between material and immaterial production. Majstorović was in touch with philosophers and sociologists from the journal *Praxis* who developed critical Marxism within journal and international meetings of Marxists at Croatian island Korčula, and after banishment of both journal and Korčula meetings still continued with their studies and influence. The group did not enlist itself with its Western or Eastern friends and network contacts. It did not want to become "a school" and did not reduce its scope of philosophical contacts to Marxist circles (among other philosophies there was Heidegger on Zagreb side and analytical Anglo-Saxon philosophy on Belgrade side, and residual traces of prior French existentialism on both sides, for instance). One of the common denominators was its title: *praxis*. Their aesthetic Marxism[14] went beyond aesthetics as philosophy of art into *aesthesis* as philosophy of the sensitive touch between being and the world. This touch has been put in relation to *praxis* interpreted as non-alienated labour, and therefore on its way to equate everyday life with *poiesis*. This does not mean that everybody is an artist. But it means insistence that any work which humanizes the world free of alienation/exploitation, is *poiesis*. To put *praxis, aisthesis* and *poiesis* into fruitful relationship, the division of labour on material and intellectual, or split on body and mind must be transcended. This approach includes distinction between equality (as in equal right to culture,

14 See my text "Aesthetic Marxism: Yugoslavia and After", available at: https://www.academia.edu/27468925/Aesthetic_Marxism_Yugoslavia_and_after.

or, as in Anatole France) which means that the state cannot be bothered with civil society conflicting and growing differences; and equity which means that these differences matter because to progress in vicinity of real freedom demands that they must be sublated[15], and that state's position of power over all social life has to be abandoned together with – political equality. Majstorović's dialectics between democratization of culture and cultural democracy engages these premises of aesthetic Marxism by quoting their roots in young Marx, and developing clear opposition between right to culture, which is an achievement, but still just a move towards equality and consequently hegemony of state over civil society, and hegemony of traditional fine art and bourgeois culture over contemporaneity of not so fine and not so bourgeois masses. Equality confirms existing social and cultural relations and strengthens hegemonic culture, spreading its influence by force or by seducing on the other side of its class limits with both means of state cultural politics and market oriented popular culture.

Equity offers people as individuals and communities an opportunity to create their own life and consequently their own culture as well. Here, a special position belongs to the working class which, more than politics of patronizing it with fine art, needs to become a self-managing force in the sphere of work and everyday life. To become creative means to stop being productive, because to be productive means according to critique of political economy to feed capital's selfish lust for profit, while to be creative means to give and to get individual and collective fulfilment as a gift, not as a commodity. Majstorović, however, does not want to become abstract humanist and aesthetic romantic. This is obvious when he criticises Adorno's and Marcuse's highbrow reflex against popular and for fine art and culture, but also when he analyses historical movement for proletarian culture and criticizes Lenin's and Trotsky's pure-

15 "Sublation" is a word which got its real use in English as a translation of Hegel's *Aufhebug*, and can't be understood as simple negation or denial. The difference is similar to that of "revolution" in Marx which can't be explained if we think only of armed fight for state power: revolution should stop destruction, not introduce it.

ly negative attitude towards it. One must have in mind, of course, that revolutionary Proletkult was not just another try at realization of Bogdanov's pre-war and pre-revolutionary idea discussed at the island of Capri but also Russian avant-garde's move to organize young Red Guards into militants of new anti-bourgeois culture on the move.

Final discussion

McBride starts his "Introduction" to the commission's report paraphrasing H. G. Wells who said that human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe. McBride converted this saying so that race goes on this time between communication and catastrophe. Pessimists might say today that communication has itself grew into catastrophe, all with control of communication and manipulation of truth. It is not Majstorović's or McBride's fault that they are intellectuals criticizing the way power is active in its governing network, and that any practical politician of left, center or right can claim that their ideas are far from practice. Intellectuals imagine their own position beyond practice, sure, but sometimes that is the only way to stick to *praxis* with *poiesis* in mind. Self-management or cultural democracy had its reality, or better, realization which could not get extended beyond general Party rule. It had its ideology as well, that of Kardelj, which tells about abolition of alienation of workers because they own their work and can control social channels through which results of their work drip into banks, into pensioners' funds, into hospitals, into universities, into sport and leisure facilities, into kindergartens, into cultural institutions and elsewhere. Beside half-hearted realization and high-flying ideologization, self-management was still an opportunity to develop new kinds of democratic relations on a greater scale, with millions of people engaged and during longer period than in any other social transformation case. Beside realization and ideologization, it was also a challenge to use social imagination to articulate concrete political proposals for further and more radical change (which were thorough-

ly denied by authorities) and to use Marxist argumentation for even more utopian projects. There is a fault in this system, indeed, but transformation of cultural politics in Yugoslavia from democratization of culture to cultural democracy is still worth studying because it is a unique case of realization, ideologization and radical criticism. Not in spite of but with the help of utopian imagination, promotion of equity instead of equality proved its non-utopian capacity for actualization.

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ARTWORK OR CULTURAL COMMODITY? NEOLIBERALISM DE-DEMOCRATISATION AND AUTHORITARIANISM

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Is there still art? Or has neoliberalism led to its absorption by the culture industry? In "Dialectic of Enlightenment", key work of the Frankfurt School first published in 1944, Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer develop the concept of culture industry. Culture industry refers not only to cultural products as commodities or the commodification of cultural production but to a mode of socialisation ("Vergesellschaftung"). Hence, the culture industry relates to commodification and administration characterising the way the individual is integrated into a capitalistic society. The culture industry includes all sorts of intellectual production and generates passivity and conformity, in particular by providing standardized schemes of perception, which inherently connect work and leisure and thus reproduce the cultural frame of the working and consuming individual. Art in contrast is, according to Adorno/Horkheimer, based on autonomy, offers reflection and critique of society and provides the chance of experience, which is blocked by the culture industry.

At the core of the dialectic of enlightenment, which implies its fall back into barbary, the culture industry serves as one of Adorno/Horkheimer's key elements in explaining the preconditions of fascism. Though Adorno/Horkheimer developed the differentiation between culture industry and art by reflecting on late capitalism and its forms of political and economic propaganda especially in the declining Weimar Republic, they found them reaffirmed during their years in US-exile and their reflections still seem of paramount relevance in today's neoliberal capitalism increasingly commodifying all spheres of human life. This neoliberal context leads, following Adorno/Horkheimer, to a profound questioning of art in contemporary society.

By briefly characterizing neoliberalism, it's social implications and theoretical foundations, this contribution gives an idea of how neoliberalism has undermined democracy and paved the way to authoritarianism and thus sketches the social and political context art and artists are currently situated in. It highlights the societal background changing the meaning of art and artists, which leads to the

introductory question of whether there is still art as an autonomous form of reflecting society and of critique as well as a potential source of experience.

Neoliberalism

The term neoliberalism signifies the current form of capitalism, following its fordistic period from the 1920s to the late 1970s. Fordist capitalism was closely tied to the Keynesian welfare state. Drawing on the experience of the "Great Depression" Keynesianism regards markets as profoundly unstable and therefore promotes state intervention as a mode of stabilization with the welfare state and, in particular, its mechanisms of redistribution ensuring economic demand and thus stabilising the macro economy. Neoliberalism means a profound break with this Keynesian model embodying the post-war class compromise by promoting the notion of a pure market and its self-regulation instead.
Certainly, there are varieties of neoliberalism, but they share core characteristics and a common theoretical basis. Liberalisation (minimizing market barriers), deregulation (extending corporations' scopes of action) and privatisation (transfer from public to private ownership and responsibility) as well as tax cuts (in particular on profits, wealth and inheritance) and cutbacks of social security constitute neoliberal core strategies. These strategies determine the neoliberal programme known as the "Washington Consensus" promoted by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and US Congress, which has been framing global economic policy since the 1980s. At the same time, the state was increasingly redefined following the model of the corporation with business criteria as the point of reference for state activities and the idea of state management replacing elected political leadership.

Neoliberal transformation

Neoliberal restructuring has led to a globalised economy dominated by the financial sector, concentration of capital and an increasing number of global monopolies and

oligopolies. While offshoring of production raised unemployment in many Western societies, deregulation of the labour market resulted in the erosion of standard employment and the widespread establishment of "atypical" and precarious work and self-employment characterising an emerging "gig economy". As a consequence, stagnating or even declining real wages, widening wage differentials and intensification of work as well as deteriorating work conditions have deepened the gap between labour and capital, also reflected by increasing profit rates and decreasing wage rates. Labour market deregulation combined with social cutbacks meant growing social insecurity on the one hand and increasing unpaid – primarily female – work in private households substituting public services, especially child care or care for the elderly, on the other. Finally, the concentration of wealth and growing poverty mark the widening social polarisation, closely linked to surging gender and "race" disparities.

Entrepreneurial self

At the same time, work was fundamentally redefined as the expression of an entrepreneurial self, as personal fulfilment and as a creative act that allows the individual to exercise and develop his/her capabilities. Work became more and more project-oriented, short term and flexible. Driven by the promise of economic success self-management and self-optimisation based on self-control and self-rationalisation became essential parts of the job, not only undermining the separation between work and leisure, but submitting the whole way of life to economic utilization. In this way, the capitalist relation of domination is shifted to the interior of the subject exposing not only the entire individual personality to exploitation but rendering the class antagonism invisible by transferring it into the individual.

Theoretical foundations

The entrepreneurial self as well as social polarisation are not merely by-products of neoliberal policies but

shaped by economic theories. Gary Becker, recipient of the "Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences" in 1992, for example, extends the model of economic decision-making – the calculation of costs and benefits – to all areas of human life, even to marriage or to the "production" of children in the family. Becker's human capital theory submits the subject to a cost-benefit calculation conceptualising the wage as a return on investment in human capital, which is derived not only from education or professional experience but also from physical and mental health – finally relating human capital to the whole way of life.

In contrast to Becker, some neoliberal theorists link the idea of universal competition explicitly to the elite and leadership. The Austrian economist Friedrich August von Hayek, who received the "Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences" in 1974, conceptualizes the market as a process of discovery closely connected to individual freedom, which is based on conformity as a prerequisite. His basic idea is that only individual freedom enables a few people – the most intelligent, skilled, talented, and creative – to make discoveries "trickling down" and leading to advantages for society as a whole. But freedom, according to Hayek, is permanently endangered by democracy, since "the tyranny of the majority" may lead to its restrictions.

Joseph Alois Schumpeter, another prominent neoliberal economist, developed the idea of the "pioneer entrepreneur" and his (sic!) innovations as crucial to economic development. In Schumpeter's view, the market is a process of "creative destruction" shaped by the pioneer entrepreneur as an economic leader and a "revolutionary of the market", who enforces innovations.

Neoliberal authoritarianism

While only some neoliberal theories are explicitly sceptical about democracy, all of them focus on competition as society's driving force. Competition as the guiding principle of society is closely related to the social darwinist notion of a fight for survival, a civilised form of the Hobbesian

war of all against all. The individual defined as a competitor presupposes assertiveness, strength, and toughness, but also flexibility and adaptability, which to some degree at least involves obedience in hierarchical contexts such as corporations. All of these attributes not only connotate masculinity but characterise the "authoritarian personality" as analysed by the Frankfurt school.

Authoritarianism is not limited to the neoliberal re-definition of the individual as a competitor. Competition also weakens collective bargaining as the mode of organising a democratic society. The consequences of the neoliberal transformation such as the increasing asymmetry between labour and capital, rising inequality, deepening societal divisions and social exclusion indicate a profound de-democratisation of society. Core democratic institutions like national parliaments are increasingly undermined by growing lobbying and informal decision-making as well as the transfer of power to European and international bodies. All these factors foster authoritarianism, in the economy, in society and in politics.

Neoliberal art

In this neoliberal context, it seems clear that the art world constitutes a specific market. Since markets rely on scarcity as a prerequisite, artistic production is necessarily limited quantitatively. This implies that economic success determines what art is and who has attributed the status of an artist. This presupposes artwork as a commodity, whereas a radical democratisation of art the way Joseph Beuys' famous dictum "Everyone is an artist" ("Jeder ist ein Künstler") had suggested in the 1970s becomes inconceivable.

Due to the concentration of private wealth, public resources for art acquisition lag far behind private collectors' means. Thus, private collectors, frequently from the financial sector, increasingly determine the demand and decide not only on the value of art but also on its form.

On the other hand, with self-commodification becoming a necessity the artist transforms into an entrepre-

neur aiming at creating him-/herself as a brand, since not only his/her position in the art world but his/her existence as an artist is determined by market success. This dependence is furthermore enforced by social insecurity due to extensive cut-backs of the welfare state, while the culture industry as a mode of socialisation ensures the artist's basic individual conformity regarding personal goals, desires and sense of life.

The artist herewith loses his/her autonomy and the artwork changes its function from, according to Adorno/Horkheimer, a source of reflection, critique and experience to a signifier of social rank as well as an object of investment and speculation. Private ownership of course implies exclusion of the public, so access to art is de-democratised and its function as a point of reference in public discourse is narrowed. – So once again: Is there still art?

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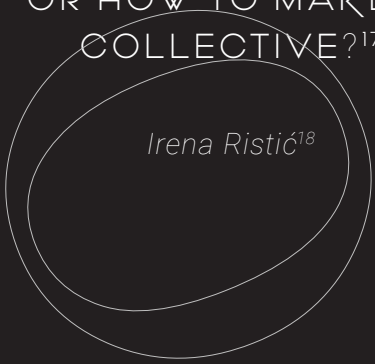
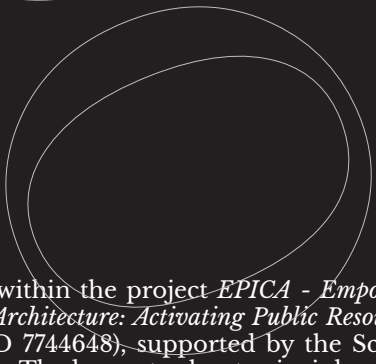
PATHS OF RADICAL IMAGINATION OR HOW TO MAKE A COLLECTIVE?[17]

Irena Ristić[18]





17 This study was created within the project *EPICA - Empowering Participation in Culture and Architecture: Activating Public Resources for and with Local Community* (ID 7744648), supported by the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia. The key note about principles of collective creativity was performed on the occasion of the conference opening *Another Artworld: Manifestations and Conditions of Equity in Visual Arts* (December 3-4th 2020), and then the lecture was specified for the *Small Arts Symposium* (September 9-11th 2021) in Slovenian Theatre Institute, Ljubljana. Study was published for the first time in *Amfiteatar* journal (SLOGI, December, 2022).

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Society is engaged in the ongoing process of self-creation, and its institutions are built through a form of social creativity, which Castoriadis (1997) calls radical imagination. This creativity is uncausal, emerges *ex nihilo*, and precedes distinctions of the "real" and the "fictive". However, it is conditioned by relations and originates in the dynamic field of imaginary meanings that guarantee the self-articulation of society. Radical imagination is inherent in humans, analogous to the social imaginary, and is a major driving force behind social flows. "There is no confrontation between the individual and society: the individual is a social creation", Castoriadis says (1997: 332), as she or he already makes an institution and creates meaning.

Opposite to the shield of heteronomy, Castoriadis (1992) advocates the project of individual and collective autonomy, which underlies a free society in which all citizens have equal opportunities to participate in its creation. The goal is "to remove the gap between states - an independent mechanism - and society, by creating a real political community, a social group that is able to govern itself" (Castoriadis, 2009: 27). However, the range of imaginary meanings in Western societies seems to be highly narrowed. The effects of radical imagination are recognized only in hints, as types of revolt, voices of dissent originating from micro-collectives, partly from the contemporary artists and cultural operators. They are systematically marginalized, although they persist in the questioning of imposed paradigm - they survive as a space of manifestation and production of sociability, as an open plateau of self-determination. At the same time, the commoning becomes a motor of superstruction and a stronghold of radical imagination that enables change. This analysis will focus on the artistic collectives, in which the practice of commoning, organized by egalitarian principles, becomes an alternative mode of social reproduction. Besides, artists engaged in commoning are frequently and intentionally involved in imaginative work. Their joint actions, in a non-institutional framework, provide an opportunity to examine the paths of radical imagination on two levels: firstly, by following the principles of collective creativity [a], which

operate through different forms of artistic and socio-cultural production, systematically targeting the development of social imaginaries; secondly, by creating a collective [b], based on imaginary constructs aimed at the production of sociability itself which are evolved and tested through practices. Of course, these are neither destination paths nor linear ones. The very creation of a collective is based on the prerogatives of collective creativity, as are the principles of joint work during the creative process conditioned by the structure and dynamics of the collective. This paper's primary goal is to explore the first path: the conditions of collective creativity as the basis to understand more extensive processes of creating a collective.

Concept of emergence

In many ways, collective creativity differs from individual creativity, primarily because it is based on emergence. This term might seem a bit vague, although it clearly defines the principles and outcomes of collective creativity. Early conceptualizations can be traced to classical social philosophy, followed by the evolution theory. Emergentism in psychology has its roots in nineteenth-century organicism: the theory that the organism, or let us say wholeness, is different from the sum of its parts and that depends on the structural arrangement and mutual relations, just as a society formed an integrated unity similar to a living organism.

After World War I, almost all presumptions of emergence had been formulated and described in the works of so-called "British emergentists" (Broad, 1925; McLaughlin, 1992; Morgan, 1933; Whitehead, 1926): Emergence is a process that occurs through time. When aggregates of basic entities attain a certain level of structural complexity, properties of higher-level entities emerge. However, they emerge only when the appropriate lower-level material conditions are present. What emerges are novel, unpredictable, and irreducible to properties of their lower-level parts, even though they are determined by those parts and some new

pattern of relatedness that operates by the new rules (Morgan, 1933; Sawyer, 2003). This new reality emerges from the previous stage's activities, resulting from the interaction of what is arisen and the environment in which the process takes place.

Consequently, the very creative synthesis within the collective action can be defined as the emergence of something novel and valuable toward society's needs (Sawyer, 2006: 33). Unfortunately, the sweet little myths about collaborative practices are proliferated during the last ten years, followed by the surplus of romanticization and the pursuit of the ideal without inquiring of the material conditions of emergence as the prerogative of joint work. They are worth unmasking.

Heterogenity

The first myth about joint work is that everything in the collective is nice and easy. It is not easy at all. Mainly nothing works, especially within artistic and activist practices. No collective is fully functional. As Stina Nyberg well noticed, it is not a matter of dynamics but of the starting point itself. "Assuming that a group is functional from its outsets (and only later falls into dysfunction)" is entirely wrong, like every sweet delusion which needs to be left behind: "every group is dysfunctional in its very formation" (Nyberg, 2019: 78). The risk is founded on the very ambition. Commoning based on the egalitarian model bears its problems which should not be diminished. Equality does not delete our differences and, despite all difficulties deriving from there, they are the resource and not the ballast. To have and to preserve them is the first requirement of collective creativity. Researchers agree on this: heterogeneous collectives are far more creative than homogenous ones. True, in the latter case, people recognize one another a bit more quickly, understand one another more easily, connect more strongly. Enthusiasm dominates, so joint work can bring particular pleasure but with modest reach and mostly minor actual performance. A complete homoge-

neity within a collective, no matter how much the resulting atmosphere is pleasant, reduces the scope of imaginative work directed to finding new ideas. Research processes are modest, and they end before they truly begin. Since critical thinking is reduced, initial ideas are quickly accepted even before some unusual and original ideas emerge at all. The absence of emergence gives way to a phenomenon called group thinking, resulting in premature consensus (Janis, 1982), and a completely negligible product of joint work.

Fortunately, completely uniform artistic and activist collectives are rare; however, there is another peripeteia. They derive precisely from the heterogenic structure, which is at the same time the prerequisite for collective creativity; therefore, we should be precise, but first and foremost, take care that diversity is the issue of quality as well as of level. When referring to clear and explicit features like age, appearance, skin color, or language, the effects of diversity can be powerful, especially while forming the structure: members more easily identify with like-minded, which may lead to temporary fragmentation seldom relevant for collective creativity. Far more important are the differences in implicit features, like education, values, aesthetic preferences or temperament, and specific personal characteristics. For the creative process, *cognitive diversity* is crucial (Milliken, Bartel, & Kurtzberg, 2003). Overlapping of different cognitive styles brings very intensive research and generative processes. Also, it brings more thorough elaboration and more rigorous evaluation. Somebody proposes an idea that has never occurred to somebody else. A myriad of associations, concepts, and imaginative constructs bursts out from different cognitive "pockets", arising from the combinatory function that is active already at the individual level. The encounter is, however, only the beginning. As cognitive style leads the persona along the beaten tracks in perception and procession of information and during the search of long-term memory, the scope of ideation at an individual level can be limited. In the collective process, the borders become porous. Namely, others' ideas lead towards exploration of personal memorial registries and activation of pre-

viously acquired knowledge in a slightly different way than usual. They lead to the flow of thought within the semantic domain and the generation of new ideas, which would never be achieved without a specific cognitive stimulation arising from the collective process. However, not everything is so smooth. The same as others' ideas can wake us up in a creative sense and "shake" the ossified cognitive patterns, same there can be noise, i.e., cognitive interference appearing when ideas of others disturb ideation at an individual level (Nijstad, Diehl, & Stroebe, 2003). Therefore, for emergent processes to happen and, therefore, for the collective to achieve something further, more complex, and creative than the sum of all individual contributions, cognitive stimulation must be stronger than the noise. However, before considering how these two forces are competing during the entire process, they first have to emerge.

Activity

For the emergence of cognitive stimulation during the process, the heterogenic structure is necessary though not sufficient. Diversity within the structure, and particularly differences in cognitive styles, are required. Therefore, the second condition of collective creativity is *active participation.* Those who participate in the process should openly express their opinions, ideas, and skepticism. Critical differences in the collective should be seen and heard. Active and symmetrical participation in the collaborative process is necessary, even if participation is, same as diversity, rather an issue of quality than quantity. Active participation makes dynamics increasingly complex. If people freely express their ideas and thoughts in a heterogenic structure, differences become emphasized. It is not always easy to understand one another or connect due to more collisions, lower cohesion, and identification. Different voices are confronting, not always agreeing, developing a dissonance!

Thus, we are arriving at the second myth about joint work: seemingly, it is aimed at consensus, longingly

and persistently, and such manner of decision-making is almost fetishized. That longing is partly justified and understandable and equally sentimental. In fact, joint work has no place for consensus. Only the *dissensus* counts. It occurs upon activation of differences in implicit features of those involved, so diversity is clearly expressed. Dissensus is vital: It brings far richer creative flows in collective, enables research and construction of realities that are only emerging, with extensive generative processes, more profound elaboration, more minor errors, and carefully considered decisions. Researchers who compared individual and collective creative processes confirmed that these decisions are more assertive and braver (Van Gundy, 1984). They require more time, of course, because the procedure is not concluded quickly nor is easily aspiring towards a "happy" ending, but towards an open system of dynamic meanings that enables the emergence of entirely authentic outcomes. At the same time, dissensus guarantees a more precise articulation of ideological position. It sharpens the politicalness of the collective, indeed due to animosity rather than closeness, while internal fights find their way of externalization in very practices, making dissensus the critical feature of artistic and activist action.

Only when the action potential of diversity in a collective is expressed can all advantages of plurality be noticed. However, diversity in action, which by dissensus realizes its whole meaning, also brings many conflicts (Jehn, Chadwick, & Thatcher, 1997). It is of no use to avoid them no matter how dangerous they can be - they are unavoidable. They threaten to undermine trust and feelings of psychological safety, work satisfaction decreases, and flows of thought become more rigid and narrow than when cooperation is expected (Carnevale & Probst, 1998). It is wrong, however, to observe all conflicts in the light of destructive outcomes. For example, task-focused conflicts are precisely the ones that encourage creative production (James, 1995) and lead to more original (Van Dyne & Saavedra, 1996) and complex outcomes (Gruenfeld, 1995). However, it is very disputable whether these constructive conflicts, which are

an immediate expression of dissensus, can be completely isolated from all others - the ones for which the researchers claim that they bring destructive consequences. Particularly delicate are those linked to personal deprivations, roles and responsibilities, or relations that arose beyond the creative frame (Jehn, 1997; Sheldon, 2005). There is no simple answer here, as conflicts are dynamic situations that escape control and require specific methodological procedures to be resolved.

On dissensus here, we speak in the context of the action itself, deriving first from the diversity of implicit features. However, without putting the very concept of diversity on a pedestal, particularly not when used as a means of ideological defocusing in neoliberal agendas, such was the case with the concept of cultural diversity. Besides, not every diversity in a collective is in service of creativity. Differences in status as foundations of subordination in hierarchic structures function per the principle of disparity and not variety, bringing nothing good to collective creativity (Curseu, Schruijer, & Boros, 2007). Neither makes the differences in the level and kind of motivation. Finally, expression of cognitive diversity through the intersection of different opinions guarantees plurality but sometimes overcomes the collectives' resources, leading to dissensus with a risk of a destructive outcome (Milliken & Martins, 1996: 403). Such situations mainly occur in a collision of values or political aspirations; therefore, ideological consistency can be critical when faced with a plurality requirement. Also, tensions arising from animosity are more substantial when affecting a higher number of people. The bigger the collective - the bigger the risk. At the same time and almost paradoxically, it has been proved that genuine plurality brings much more creative results, as there is no danger of so-called "tyranny of the majority" (Kitayama & Burnstein, 1994), "organizational silence" (Morrison & Milliken, 2000), and other demons of conformism that inhibit creative production.

However, in egalitarian collectives, other difficulties may emerge, no less detrimental for creative production. For example, the first joint work can experience the fall of

motivation and diffusion of responsibility due to the feeling that individual contribution will neither bring progress nor acknowledgment, leading to the phenomenon of social loafing, colloquially known as "free-riding" (Karau & Williams, 1983). Creativity is reduced because the processes are reduced to a smaller number of intersections, proportional to the shortage of active participation and actors' readiness to take over responsibilities and get involved in joint work. Moreover, same as active participation is a condition for mobilizing and using cognitive diversity, establishing a specific climate is crucial for active participation.

Climate

Climate is the third and perhaps the critical condition of collective creativity. It refers to the general atmosphere prevailing during work, primarily determined by the quality of interpersonal relations. If competition dominates the collective and fear of error frames the entire creative process, outcomes are by rule modest. Generative processes are inhibited due to increased anxiety and subsequent lack of spontaneity required as a catalyst of ideation. On the contrary, the situation is entirely different if relations are transparent, communication open, information available to everyone without latent forms of exercising power. Suppose a climate of *trust and mutual support* prevails, and spontaneous creative expression is encouraged in the personal and collective realm. In that case, we can have networking and strong connection based on psychological safety, resulting in cooperation and emergence, guaranteeing a high level of collective creativity (Ekvall, 1996; 1999).

The paradox is apparent. The question only arises: how to preserve trust in the dynamic dissensus-based production of meanings in situations of actual danger of conflict and even destruction? Of course, it is not easy, but a high level of trust and support is indeed an indispensable condition that must be recreated always and always again. The climate that enables active participation of all an ex-

pression of differences while focusing on task facilitates the emergence of dissensus, remaining under permanent risk that the dissensus will undermine it if by chance it gets out of control, and transforms into aggressive conflict and escalates to unimaginable proportions. Thereby, only a high level of trust which offers the feeling of safety to everyone, enables dissensus to appear and then be used and directed towards the flows of creative cooperation, finding the source in the joint imaginative construct.

Climate also defines the contents of imaginative work as it affects the development of two main dimensions of collective creativity - novelty and coherence. *Novelty* refers to expressing ideas that anybody in joint work can offer to respond to a heuristic task. *Coherence* means the level of connections and expresses the actors' readiness to take their cues from others' ideas or from arising joint construct. Both dimensions must be evident for the collective's creative process to progress and achieve good results. For ideas to be generated and then stimulate new and common ones, a certain level of spontaneity is required, playing the role of catalyst in the creative process and directly depending on climate within the collective, mutual trust, and support (Ristić, 2010). In doing so, the exchange of ideas can be very intensive as the novelty brought by one-someone-everyone brings cognitive stimulation to others. However, it may disturb the process by undermining the flows of imaginative work. New elements must be integrated into the function of the development of coherent and comprehensive joint creation. Upgrading on others' ideas and the mutual connection is necessary presumptions for cognitive stimulation in the process to prevail over disturbances and achieve a creative synthesis (Ristić, Škorc, & Mandić, 2016). Recent research also shows that the level of collective creativity varies depending on social sensitivity (Williams & Polman, 2015), and is conditioned by the strength of interpersonal reactivity, particularly by emphatic care, which is far more critical than the individual capacities of participants in the process (Ristić & Milošević, 2019).

It is easy to conclude: only when the feeling of trust and support is established, and people in the collective feel

safe, the complete get-together is possible to be achieved through creative cooperation in which every idea, no matter how novel, is an upgrade of the previous ones, relying on mutuality and searching for the path of integration in what is made together. Climate is, in fact, the one that provides the emergence of dissensus and, at the same time, "victory" of cognitive stimulation over any noise, with the rising of new meanings linked to and unified by the emerging imaginative construct. Furthermore, in feedback, the very arousal brought by the novelty together with interconnection within the process develop the sense of commonness, and even some kind of conspiracy, on which artists prone to collective practices gladly testify, recognizing in them the surrogate of family.

It is essential to underline that the climate here has a moderator role. It enables diversity through active participation to be expressed in dissensus and collective creativity to be achieved. Whether the dissensus shall result in a high level of novelty and connection in communing or inhibition of original ideas and their flow, with waste and decline in motivation, depends precisely on the climate created by the collective. In the broader realm, the relation between novelty and connectivity in collective action is an analogy and probably an expression of permanent dialectic tension between the need for independence, a tendency for spontaneity and lavish expression of the authenticity of everyone in the process, and need for structure, for connecting and communicating with others. The outcome remains indisputable that the quality of relations defines the achievement of emergence within creative cooperation, non-reducible to the set of singular contributions.

Towards Polyphony

Thus, we arrive at the third myth on joint work: collective does not delete singularity, insist the protagonists of contemporary practices encouraged by prominent authors. It does not, indeed. We realize ourselves through otherness, but that is not a given and undeniable starting

point but the space of potentiality in which decisive, first of all, internal battles are fought. Therefore, a realization of singularity in the collective process during imaginative work is one of the biggest challenges of practices themselves. An important role is played by the climate, which depends on how the collective is established. Furthermore, the collective is repeatedly reestablished in dialectic tensions between equality vs. hierarchy, emergence vs. stagnation, and polyphony, simultaneously sharpening ideological positions and practices.

In this transposition of imaginative work from the level of material to the level of social production, the tools of (self)reflection are decisive - the methodical procedures that offer the possibility of establishing a particular climate and serve to elaborate joint work. (Self)reflection is equally a guardian of equality and persistent steps forward. It enables accession of action in the function of corrective, gives vitality to practice, mobility, and dynamics, brings a procession of personal experiences related to external pressures, strengthens cohesion, and enables recognition and understanding of invisible forms of censorship. Obstruction of sociability, control of contents, and action that capitalist structure realizes through economic blackmail, and at the psychodynamic level through strong self-censorship can be defeated only with methodical procedure self-reflection. Personal experiences become common, concerns are transposed to aspirations, emphatic care is nurtured, and solidarity strengthened through permanent production of affective meaning, which guarantees the creation of a collective.

Moreover, when a high level of trust is established, it opens space for de-tabooization, reconsideration of own positions, awareness, and even dissensus, which underlines the necessary and always present need for exploration and re-politicization of action. Methods thus become a tool of meta-censorship and subvert systemic perpetuation. It is the processuality, evident in the dynamics of the social imaginary, that guarantees the community's openness to change. Provided that the imagination is not reduced

to reactive mental representations, this becomes the drive of practice: the material manifestation of certain relations, their testing in reality, their growth and simultaneous performance, progressing towards new forms of collectivity, and maybe even the collective autonomy.

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THE CONTEMPORARY DANCE WORLD AND THE THIN LINE BETWEEN SELF-REALIZATION AND SELF-PRECARIZATION

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Introduction

> *Be a revolutionary. Demand the impossible. Be transgressive and provocative. Be reliable. Be unpredictable. Always do one more thing than you can do. Always do more than you can. Always do more...* (Nika Arhar; Pia Brezavšček, Katja Čičigoj; Saška Rakef and Jasmina Založnik, 2016: 49).

This is how five Slovenian performing artists introduce their ironic handbook on how to "Become the ideal cultural worker in 86 steps" (2016). The text referred to here was published in the summer edition of the Maska journal in 2016, but is actually part of a performance called *Choreographing Calculation* by the same authors that premiered in 2012 at the CoFestival in Ljubljana, Slovenia. As a starting point of their performance, the group of young cultural workers was involved in an experiment to find a precise measure for the value of their work. Following a Marxist logic and some of the Italian autonomous workerist theories introduced by Paolo Virno (2004) and Maurizzio Lazzarato (1996), the artists sought to accurately calculate their hourly payment. In doing so, they encountered several – quite foreseeable – problems with regard to the measuring parameters, such as selecting which activities to include or not. Their experiment drove them to one of the main questions dealt with in cultural sociology, perhaps: does cultural work actually differ from other working spheres and how? As to claim their position as genuine workers, the artists changed into their working gear when at work for the duration of their experiment. That entailed, among other things, when going to the theater to watch a performance and having a drink afterwards in the foyer, when meeting gatekeepers such as art programmers, curators and editors, or when sitting at home writing project applications and doing research by binge-watching YouTube-videos on a certain topic. By wearing their grey overalls during these activities, they could better calculate the time devoted to

work. As such, the overall has become the costume a performing artist wears offstage to signal to the world that she is also working beyond that stage.

Unpacking what work goes into artistic, or cultural, work was also the point of departure within my ongoing research as a scholar who works at the intersection of dance and performance studies and cultural and labor sociology. Between 2014 and 2018, a quantitative as well as longitudinal qualitative research in the contemporary dance scene was conducted in the capitals Brussels and Berlin (see Van Assche, 2020). The study focused on the (mostly socio-economic) working conditions within the scene (= art world), the various working modes (= art-as-work), and the influence of these conditions and modes on performances (artwork). Although the project specifically inquired into contemporary dance, the majority of the findings can be generalized to the larger segment of performing artists who work autonomously on a project basis and who are thus not affiliated to one particular institution, or even to any worker performing immaterial labor. On that note, it merits mention here that this paper proceeds with using the notion of *autonomous* rather than *independent* work, since the vast majority of project workers remain dependent on a variety of institutions, ranging from funding bodies over production houses to theater venues. Differently put, a career in the performing arts, and in cultural work in general, tends to develop between institutions rather than within one. Therefore, the competences and requirements to uphold such an inter-organizational career drift between independent and dependent work. This is in fact already reflected in the different employment status the profession of performing artist holds in Belgium and Germany, which is that of employee in the former and self-employment in the latter.

In Europe, performing artists (not unlike many other cultural workers) are mostly hopping from one project to another, while they juggle with temporary contracts combined with hours and hours of unpaid labor. Needless to say, that this is an unstable and dicey position constantly balancing autonomy and precarity. This paper ex-

plores how socio-economic precarity is micro-managed by agents, specifically a sample of project-based contemporary dance artists active in the institutionalized dance scenes of Brussels and Berlin. For the remainder of this paper, a few of the 86 steps Arhar, Brezavšček, Čičigoj, Rakef and Založnik listed out in their lecture-performance are singled out to reflect on the ironically proposed imperatives that serve as a no-nonsense directive to success in the cultural sector. Informed by the empirical research, elaborating on the suggested steps will serve to unpack the specific work environment within which project-based and autonomous contemporary dance and performing artist maneuver throughout the European continent. The paper closes with a selection of hopeful examples of counter-actions that can be described as commoning practices.

The Field of Inquiry and Methodology

Both Brussels and Berlin have been European forerunners in terms of promoting contemporary dance and performance as an art form and continue to attract a high number of international dance and performance artists in the pursuit of their artistic careers (Laermans, 2015, Sabisch, 2017). The work environment for contemporary dance and performance artists in Ljubljana is not all that different from the studied capitals (Hensel, 2017, Kopač in Keil 2015: 249-255). While these environments may be institutionalized to a different degree, the mechanisms at the macro- and mesolevel function similarly: the majority of contemporary dance and performance artists work autonomously on a project basis and much of that work entails creating one's own job opportunities and the self-organization of one's activities. However, how that autonomous work is managed, may differ in terms of national social security policies as well as cultural policies. For example, to work freelance does not mean the same thing in every context: in the performing arts in Belgium, the term freelance work relates to project work legally framed by short-term contracts with employers, while in Germany and Slovenia this refers to self-employed work

on a flexible basis (for more details on Brussels and Berlin, see Van Assche, 2020: chapter 3.4, for Ljubljana see Vevar, 2014, on the Slovenian dance Precariat and the evolution of the freelance and self-employed status).

Although few official statistics are available on the specific figures of the dance population in Europe, it is widely known, for example, that many contemporary dance artists move back and forth between different places in Europe due to temporary residencies, international co-productions or when touring their pieces (Laermans ,2015; Van Assche,2020). In her outline of the evolution of the socio-economic position of dance artists in Europe since the 1990's, choreographer Petra Sabisch points to the problematic absence of studies that concentrate on dance as separate from theater as a major gap in research (Sabisch, 2017: 57). Within the fields of inquiry, this claim is confirmed by recent studies on artistic work in the performing arts in the Flemish context (Siongers et al 2016) and German-speaking context (Norz 2016), both of which refrain from distinguishing the dance profession within the performing arts. In an attempt to fill this gap, the mentioned research project set up an e-survey in Brussels and Berlin drawing on these empirical studies to get a more empirically grounded status quo on the local contemporary dance population. The survey was tested with several field inhabitants (dance practitioners as well as facilitators) to verify its viability in the two fields. The first survey was distributed within the Brussels dance scene in spring 2015 and the analysis was done on 94 valid forms. In 2016, the second survey was spread in Berlin, resulting in an analysis of 63 valid forms. For a more detailed overview of the research design and the survey findings in Brussels and Berlin, the descriptive reports can be consulted online (Van Assche and Laermans 2016 & 2017). All in all, as testify several pioneering scholars investigating the work of artists, assembling quantitative data always is a challenging assignment when entering the realm of (contingent) work in the arts (Throsby, 1994, Menger. 2001, Abbing, 2008). Taking this into account, the research design was based on self-selection and self-definition, which means that the results only

have an exploratory character. The ultimate goal was to employ the quantitative data as a tool to facilitate the selection of qualitative case study candidates for subsequent longitudinal ethnographic fieldwork to examine more in-depth the multidimensional precarity and more complex issues the survey findings revealed. In total, 52 semi-structured in-depth interviews with seven informants in Brussels and seven in Berlin were conducted over the course of 18 months (total: 3701 minutes of recording). The fieldwork also included participant observations in the studio and the analysis of logbooks kept by the informants that documented at least two weeks of activities in and outside the studio. The ins and outs of the methodological approach of the research project have been extensively documented elsewhere (Van Assche ,2020: chapter 3, Van Assche and Laermans, 2016 & 2017). While with the survey, strictly recorded data was collected to create an exploratory status quo, the essence of the qualitative approach was the continual interweaving of data collection and theory development. While mindful of the relatively small size of the sample, the longitudinal nature of the fieldwork exposed a high consistency in behavioral patterns, lending itself well for descriptive research of an underexplored field.

Although these European cities attract a high number of international contemporary dance artists and the conditions at the macro and meso level seem quite favorable at first sight, the contemporary dance profession in both Brussels and Berlin seen through the lens of the survey respondents and fieldwork informants is marked by a multifaceted precarity. In what follows, this paper offers a more profound look into the contemporary dance world within which dance and performance artists maneuver between projects and institutions and examines how this world functions at the intersection of the micro, meso and macro perspective. In engaging with the performance text on how to “Become the ideal cultural worker in 86 steps” (2016), this paper will provide insights into why project workers like contemporary dance and performance artists do what they do and keep doing it despite the lingering precarity.

The Logic around Self-Precarization

> 23. Be always ready to sacrifice.
> 24. Never sacrifice one working opportunity for another. You can always do both.
> 31. Be always ready to work. For free as well. It is better to work for free than not to work at all.
> (Arhar et al, 2016: 48)

Self-precarization, a notion coined by Isabell Lorey in 2006, has become a commonly used term in the last decade to describe the very prevalent phenomenon illustrated by these three steps. Contemporary dance artists—and this might very well be the case in most creative professions—seem to be willing to sacrifice material income for the sake of immaterial income, such as autonomy, the intrinsic pleasures coming with being creative, and opportunities for self-development (or the related and often interchangeably used notions of self-realization and self-actualization) (see esp. Lorey, 2009, Laermans, 2015). As an informant of the study attests, looking back at a former project:

> We did not get so much funding and I ended up making a really ambitious project that I really deeply love, but in the end, I fucking paid for it. I was so poor for months after. (Anonymous informant C, Berlin, 27 January 2017)

The desire to grow, to express the self and realize one's full potentials seem to be at the core of the willingness to work un(der)paid: several of the study's informants are quite happy to work together un(der)paid, because they want to explore the potential of the collaboration that promises to provide immaterial income. So aside from governmental socio-economic precarization, there seems to be such a thing as self-precarization (see esp. Lorey, 2009, Laermans, 2015). In addition, an informant explains during the study that while she is unable to pay herself as a choreographer, she feels lucky to work with 'people who are

willing to work with me for free-ish or for not suitable pay', well aware of the extent of exploitation and self-precarization from her side:

> I really didn't pay them very much at all, I gave them like [laughs] not very much at all. I feel bad. Uhm… But then we had a full production fund and I could pay them. I also didn't pay them very well. I worry about this, but I try. (Anonymous informant F, Berlin, 25 April 2017)

Notably, aside from self-precarization, we could thus also speak of a prevalent *mutual precarization* when dance artists collaborate and exploit each other driven by forms of income other than monetary.

Cultural Studies scholar Angela McRobbie refers to the phenomenon of self-precarization, without naming it as such, as 'willing self-exploitation' or 'self-romanticism' in her seminal book *Be Creative* (2016: 38). In her examination of freelance self-employment and short-term project work as entrepreneurship, she observes that the 'seemingly exciting compensation for work without protection is the personal reward of "being creative" ', because one's inner talents and abilities are being cultivated on a daily basis instead of being lost and unused (McRobbie, 2016: 35). 'Pleasure in work', in McRobbie's words, 'is a seductive offer made by capitalism' (2016, 105). Her main thesis stresses that this self-precarization in fact intersects with and is nurtured and managed by the prevailing governmental discourse and art school curriculum (McRobbie, 2016: 38). Although, the latter may be the case for her UK field of inquiry, my current research practices have exposed an enormous lack in preparing art students and future cultural workers in Belgium for what is in fact an entrepreneurial career path filled with temporary jobs in the likely absence of welfare protection and social security as it continues to be romanticized. Newcomers are often unaware of the precarious socio-economic position of artists when they enter the field, because the older generation remains silent al-

most as if speaking about it is taboo. Art educators, who are mostly mid- or end-career artists themselves, barely inform the new generation as they tend to present 'too rosy a picture regarding money, status, and private satisfaction', as art sociologist Hans Abbing once put it (2008: 120). This does not happen in art education alone, but as the authors Anne and Marine Rambach already pointed out in 2001, the presence of the 'precarious intellectuals' ('les intellos précaires' in the original French) is acknowledged in silent consensus as the (cultural and academic) sector has accepted the development of precarious work (2001: 284). Not only do they silence themselves, but their situation is continually normalized by others as well as by themselves, take McRobbie as an example. However, the question remains whether we should protest or embrace the entrepreneurial path the arts are taking?

The logic around self-precarization for that matter dates back to a much older artistic ethos of self-expression in relation to material gain, the well-known credo of art for art's sake. Originally published in 1980, cultural sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's *The Production of Belief: Contribution to an Economy of Symbolic Goods* (1993) distinguishes the accumulation of symbolic capital alongside the pursuit of a certain level of economic profit (or material gain). Simply put, when artists are poorly remunerated, different exchange rates between other currencies apply: 'if I do this, what do I gain from it in exchange?' One of these gains may well be self-realization, a core value in art making but also in life itself. As Bourdieu points out: artistic work 'always consists partly of *working on oneself* as an artist [his emphasis]' (109). Yet the line between self-realization and self-precarization is in fact very thin. In the experiment for *Choreographing Calculations*, the artists stumbled upon the following obstacles: 'If work is not financially awarded, but for instance done for the mere purpose of enriching a CV, can it also count as work? How can the mere potential profit of it be included in the measurement?' and 'Where is the border between leisure time and work? What can we do when work that takes all our time does not even pay a

living? What has the passion for our work have to do with it?' (Ekipa CoFestivala, 2012) As Bourdieu's title reveals, we are in fact very much dealing with a *symbolic* economy of the arts, where much of the work goes into accumulating symbolic capital, immaterial income that does not only serve as intrinsic and subjective job rewards but also as a ticket to the next job.

The Symbolic Economy of the Arts

> 61. When you are not working on a specific project, get ready for the next one. Read, watch, listen, talk, discuss, network, network, meet, discuss, network, read, watch, read, read, listen, network, network, network, network, meet, discuss, network.
> 62. Never go home after a show or a film. Even if you have a deadline hanging over you, use the opportunity to meet, network, discuss, network, talk, listen, network, network, network. Even when you don't know the people, get to know them. You can never know too many people.
> 63. Be always ready to network.
> 64. Socialize.
> (Arhar et al, 2016: 49)

Despite the macro- and mesoeconomic differences between Brussels and Berlin, I came to the conclusion that both capitals share a very similar symbolic economy powered by a social production system, in which artists follow a neoliberal work ethic constantly balancing autonomy and precarity, one that acutely affects the performing artist's art, labor and life (Van Assche, 2020: chapter 4). From these guidelines in the ironic handbook, I speculate that the situation is not all too different in Ljubljana. In both examined locales, the queried artists are occupied with a threefold chase (1) after direct and indirect project funding, (2) after gatekeepers that provide access to rehearsing infrastructure and presentation venues, and (3) after bureaucratic paperwork related to the mobile

and autonomous work environment (Van Assche, 2020: chapter 6). Mostly, they are thus preoccupied with accumulating economic, social and symbolic capital in order to be able to work. In doing so, they have developed quite a comparable habitus in which life and work depend on one another, much in line with neoliberal ideology. However, the entrepreneurial logic that is adhered to is not entirely and exclusively defined by neoliberal individualization: there is also a significant sociality associated with it in generating relationships through which networks are constituted, maintained and expanded (see also: Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005). Even though the informants in the study are generally not very fond of cultivating relationships through networking activities because it requires a lot of schmoozing and rubbing elbows, they do force themselves to stay after performances to the extent that it almost feels like an obligation. It is exactly in these meeting locales 'where a deal is made, in the bar after the show' (Anonymous informant A, Brussels, 20 May 2016). To put it simply, social capital may be informally converted into economic and professional capitals in such common meeting places. Most importantly, the study has shown that the most successful autonomously working performing artists have learned to ensure their employability by operating in accordance with this at once individualized and social logic, deploying neoliberal capitalism's exploitative demands to their advantage.

Survival of the Fittest?

In this context, the study has shown that contemporary dance artists are increasingly finding innovative ways, or tactics, to secure their future and join forces to share knowledge or to share practices of collaboration and self-organization. Like the 86 steps in the mentioned handbook, the study has also documented a variety of survival tactics (see esp. Van Assche, 2020: chapter 5). However, again like the 86 steps in the handbook, these were mostly tactics of *individual resilience*. Although the steps here were written down by a collective, they are very individualized steps. Likewise, the fieldwork has exposed only a few collective tactics that

are actually subversive and that could lead to structural change. This is partly so because the unfair and precarious working conditions contemporary dance artists specifically deal with are tied in with a more general point at issue affecting our society in late capitalism at large: the neoliberal imperative to always do more. Yet, since all responsibility lies on the shoulders of the neoliberal and post-Fordist worker herself, the power to 'do less' – as Bojana Kunst (2015) calls for – and to 'say no' to unfair conditions is rooted in the collective. Today, there is certainly urgency among artists, or a readiness, to confront the problem of precarity in the profession—as testify not only the myriad debates but also the many performances that specifically deal with this topic. To name a few besides the mentioned *Choreographing Calculations* (2012): *ELEANOR!* (2005) by Eleanor Bauer, *Product of Other Circumstances* (2009) by Xavier Le Roy, *Streamlined* (2014) by Igor Koruga, *Crisis Karaoke* (2016) by Jeremy Wade, *In The Forest There Is* (2017) by Deter | Müller | Martini, among many more. Yet, saying 'no' collectively is extremely challenging, because many artists are still willing to work despite the precarious conditions; at least within the study self-precarization is still found to be widespread. Steps 14 tot 16 in the handbook definitely illustrate this point:

> 14. Never say no to a project or a temporary working assignment.
> 15. Never say no to work.
> 16. Never say no.
> (Arhar et al, 2016: 48)

As a consequence of the directive to 'never say no', not only the quality of the artist's life but also the quality of the artistic process and perhaps even the product seem to decline. Subsequently, the immaterial compensations (such as recognition and artistic pleasure) and intrinsic motivations (such as self-development and self-realization) of the artist slowly fade away. More and more burnouts surface in a field that increasingly exposes itself as structurally precarious, in which precarity has a plural character (see also

'multiple precarization' by Diaz and Gielen, 2018: 170). In fact, as said, there seems to be a broader dynamic at work that pushes the artist toward always saying yes:

> 26. Always do one more thing than you can do.
> 27. When you are super busy and you think you can't possibly do one more thing, accept one more project or working assignment;
> 28. Always do one more thing than you can do.
> 29. Always do more than you can.
> 30. Always do more.
> (Arhar et al, 2016: 48)

These steps tie in with the connection between employability and potentiality. In their study on practices of employability within UK universities, Bogdan Costea, Kostas Amiridis, and Norman Crump argue that due to the principle of *potentiality* at heart of the recruitment of (ideal) future workers (and the project-based worker is always also a future worker), there exists an 'ethos of work which de-recognizes human limits, makes a false promise of absolute freedom, and thus becomes a tragic proposition from the individual' (2012, 25). In relation to the notion of *employability*, one's potentiality as a principle represents 'the human subject as capable of becoming always more than what one i's on the one hand, and 'work as a process of freeing up, liberating and mobilizing the subject's inner qualities always ready to be actualized' on the other hand (Costea et al. 2012, 31). The authors underline that the danger lies in the fact that work is seen as the place for the actualization of one's potentialities: if every individual ought to see themselves as always capable of more, then one is predetermined to engage in 'a tragic self-seeking journey always bound up with a looming prospect of failure to meet such expectations' (Costea et al. 2012, 35).

Exactly this seems to be at the core of a constant feeling of *insufficiency*. According to sociologist Ulrich Bröckling, this feeling of insufficiency for that matter epitomizes *The Entrepreneurial Self* (2016) and is chronic. As he puts it, 'the constant fear of not having done the right thing or not

enough of it, the feeling of insufficiency, is as much a part of the entrepreneurial self as mercantile skill or the courage to take risks' (2016, 36). Indeed, especially the need to *feel productive* recurs throughout the fieldwork and seems to be a coping tool to self-justify the validity of one's work, as an informant testifies in the process of making her own work after a long period of performing in the work for others:

> To be honest, the last two years, because it was going so well, I kind of coasted and that was a mistake. Or that wasn't a mistake, I just couldn't do more. I legit couldn't and of course, now, I'm like: you should've done more, you should've found ways to network more and invite more people to your pieces etcetera. (Anonymous informant D, Berlin, 13 February 2017)

The pressure among the informants to optimize their productivity and potential is high. However, the many unrewarded work efforts (be it material or immaterial) bring about a feeling of insufficiency that may lead to stress, anxiety, exhaustion and eventually burnout or depression. Hence, insufficiency ties in with potentiality and employability and constitutes the thread that interweaves self-precarization with self-realization.

> 20. Be at people's disposal as long as you still appear to be busy. If you do not appear to be busy, you will not be busy.
> 21. Always appear to be busy.
> 38. Be always ready to learn whatever.
> 39. Be always ready to learn.
> 40. Be always ready.
> 54. Be always ready.
> 60. Be always ready.
> 79. Do not plan to have children. Do not plan to have a husband/wife/regular partner. Do not plan to have a dog/cat/iguana/goldfish. Do not plan to go on holiday. Do not plan to get ill.
> (Arhar et al, 2016: 48-49)

As such, project-based cultural workers (who are always also future workers) are not only confronted with insecure future prospects, but also with a constant feeling of insufficiency. Therefore, they may come to combat burnouts or even depressions as they wear themselves out, as the study has shown: five out of all fourteen informants have addressed the topic of burnout spontaneously and have expressed explicitly that they have either suffered burnouts in the past or that they were on the verge of one during the period of the fieldwork. Nonetheless, some informants noted that it was still difficult for them to actually acknowledge their mental health situation as such, because—as an informant puts it—'you only technically have a burnout when you go to a doctor and they can prescribe you not to go to work, but it's not relevant unless you have a full-time job' (Anonymous informant B, Brussels, 20 September 2016).

If that seems to be the case, then a burning question remains: how long do contemporary dance artists endure this situation and why do they continue exercising the profession? While the study did not probe ex-dancers, these findings propose that when the exchange rate between material and immaterial currencies becomes weaker, there might indeed be an exit from the profession. Nonetheless, one could predict that artists generally remain loyal to their profession as long as the values that drive them compensate for the plural forms of precarity.

Collective Care and Action

Nevertheless, the time has come that artists are raising their voices more often and much louder each time. Most importantly, their voice is becoming increasingly collective, as demonstrate these final steps:

> 80.Always reflect upon your labor performance. Be critical. Be merciless. Be ambitious. Demand the impossible.
> 81. Always reflect.
> 82.Always reflect upon the socio-political situation surrounding you. And your labor performance.

> 83. Always reflect.
> 84. Always reflect upon the socio-political situation surrounding you and your own position within it. And your labor performance.
> 85. Always reflect.
> 86. You never know when you will be able to present your reflections at an international conference/festival or publish them in a magazine.
> (Arhar et al, 2016: 49)

Aside from collectively breaking the silence around this often-hushed situation, other collective tactics of sharing practices, exchanging means, and self-organization could possibly offer more structural forms of protection while well aware that this ties in precisely with neoliberal ideology. Yet, as such, rather than individually trying to resist these exploitative demands of neoliberalism, artists may collectively opt to deploy these to their advantage instead of letting them exploit themselves. In the context of creating a sharing economy, for example, the study detected an open-source platform for lateral exchange initiated under the name *Nobody's Business*[20]. The format consists of the self-organization of week-long sessions of sharing movement practices and knowledge within local dance communities on several locations. Sessions have taken place in Brussels and Berlin, but also elsewhere though not yet in Ljubljana. In so doing, the initiative aims to support each other within the dance community and to sustain the general development of the performing arts field through fostering the proliferation of information outside of the economies of dance workshops, dance classes, and the creation of dance productions (which are in fact all part of *a market*). In their mission statement the founders write:

> Nobody's Business is "Nobody's," as a deliberate negation of the individualism that contemporary neoliberal and hyper-capitalist economic realities impose upon our lives (Nobody's Business 2015, paragraph 2).

20 For more info, consult: https://nobodysbusiness.wordpress.com

In line with most *commoning* practices, participation is open and free of charge. In fact, the initiators even imagine granting the participants with a fee, after all they are working, aren't they? However, for now they only occasionally manage to get funding to organize these weeks, which usually covers expenses only. *Commoning practices* include all activities that are guided by the belief in *the commons* and circulate in or form alternative exchange economies based on mutual trust where knowledge, materials and infrastructure are seen as shared common good. As such they vouch for replacing money with social and peer-to-peer relationships.[21] This particular commoning initiative has thus set up an alternative exchange system for dance knowledge in favor of financial solidarity and collective care: open and unconditional access to dance practices and information. In the future, the initiators hope to expand their format across other disciplines.

In a similar vein, many queried dance artists imagine solidarity systems where one dance artist's gain (such as receiving funding) would facilitate the work of others too. One informant explicitly mentioned imagining an emergency fund for dance artists in the city generated by every dance artist who receives project funding and who donates a share of the funding to the emergency fund for those who did not manage to receive funding for their projects. In that respect, *State of the Arts – SOTA* is a Belgian open and mainly artist-run platform that aims to reimagine and actually change the shape of the art world today. In response to the sudden measures taken during the global pandemic, in which all activities of the performing arts were put on hold in March 2020 indefinitely without perspectives for relaunching the sector, the platform created an online person-to-person support tool *SOS RELIEF*[22]. This tool continues to connect people with financial stability with people who face precarity as they see their income prospects evaporate (in the first instance as a result of the crisis). *Givers* can donate directly to someone

21 For more insights into commoning in response to precarization, see Diaz and Gielen, 2018.

22 For more info, consult: https://state-of-the-arts.net/sosrelief/en/ (available in Dutch, French and English)

in need without requiring a motivation from the *receivers*, as such the tool facilitates direct unconditional financial solidarity. Givers as well as receivers need not be artists even. By February 2021, over 145,000 euros had been donated to 445 applicants, but still more than 250 people were waiting for relief for an amount of over 90,000 euros. In a way, this tool seems to respond to the emergency fund the mentioned informant of the study had in mind and has the potential to become a structural instrument.

In Ljubljana, Nomad Dance Advocacy Slovenia is an initiative of the transnational Nomad Dance Academy platform founded in 2012 for shaping better working conditions for contemporary dance in the entire Balkan region. In the Spring of 2019, the advocates organized a three-day conference #NORSE, an acronym standing for the Network of Residencies in South-East Europe. The aim of the event was to actively work on building, as the name implies, a functioning network of residency spaces (i.e. dance studios usually with lodging) throughout South-East Europe and as such, institutionalizing and decentralizing contemporary dance. In times when mobility has become imperative for the European dance and performance artists to uphold a professional career as mentioned above, regional artists may encounter more difficulties to keep up with the pace of the European dance sector due to the lack of systemic financing and infrastructure for dance in the South-East region of Europe. By putting decision-makers, cultural workers and professional dance and performance artists from fourteen cities in the same room, the conference's purpose was to conceive long-term support in South-East Europe as well as to exchange knowledge and experience with residency programs. Rather than to simply address existing issues, the event aspired to actually invent new modes of common management of residential programs between art institutions and non-governmental organizations on both local and international level. While the actual outcomes of this gathering are yet to be assessed, the organizers stated the collective objectives of the different work contexts clearly in the program:

> On the local level that means further support of existing and creation of new rehearsal and residential spaces in the cities and their networking with similar spaces in each country. On the international level we will look forward to create common coordination and management of the network of these spaces. (Alfirević et al. 2019)

While such direct and effective actions in the civil domain ought to be applauded, it still remains questionable whether they do not actually impede structural change in terms of governmental action? Self-organized initiatives, namely very much confirm the fact that many people, especially creative workers, will find their own creative solutions to problems. As an informant puts it: 'there's this reliance on creativity being also deployed in the practical side of the project, not only in the substantial side of the project, the core of it' (Anonymous informant E, Berlin, 3 March 2017). From the perspective of governing bodies, such creative action as SOS RELIEF may undermine the urgency to improve current conditions structurally. Decision-makers are well aware that artists are intrinsically and immaterially motivated and they can count on the fact that artists will find creative solutions to systemic problems, 'because they're artists and they can improvise and they're creative with the little that they have' (Anonymous informant E, Berlin, 3 March 2017). Regrettably, this strength risks to be turned into weakness all too easily. But on a more positive note, self-organized action in the civil domain may also instigate social cohesion and a collective support base to address a joint problem. As such, demonstrating their effectiveness publicly and collectively ought to influence institutional and governing bodies thereby generating structural effects after all (see also Dietachmair and Gielen, 2017).

Conclusion

The study has not uncovered many collective tactics and commoning practices, which seems to confirm the pre-

dominance of individual trajectories as reflected in the guidelines of the ironic handbook. This paper thus reveals a certain lack of community generated by the symbolic economy of arts: project-based funding systems, for example, simply copy neoliberalism's competitive model. It could perhaps be argued that passionate or unalienating work is inherently individualistic because one seeks self-realization, self-development or self-fulfillment, which is quite in line with the standard middle-class liberal ideals that made a breakthrough in Western society in the nineteenth century. Indeed, these findings confirm that artistic labor remains under the domination of a neoliberal paradigm, oscillating between poles of self-realization and self-precarization. Nonetheless, that logic would imply that sociality (i.e., a sense of community) can never truly exist in a field such as contemporary dance, because career paths revolve around personal development rather than the development of dance itself. Following dance sociologist Pierre-Emmanuel Sorignet who points out that dance careers are not merely hyper individualistic but also communal (2010: 279), one could refine that the intrinsic drive for self-development is for one present in myriad professions, if not in all, and may at least partly be grounded in the participation in a social context, in this case an artistic community. In the words of art sociologist Pierre-Michel Menger: 'each individual succeeds in fulfilling himself only by participating in a community in which the Self is realized in the activities of many selves' (2014: 98). Hence, the artist is essentially a social type, but the contemporary time and space dynamics coupled with autonomous and short-term project work are accompanied by a very entrapping individualized outlook. There is oftentimes too much at stake to make time for collective care that does not necessarily lead to paying next month's rent.

Although it is just a speculation, the current pandemic with its consequential production stop in the performing arts sector may have a positive side effect to that respect. Without the countless projects on the calendar and the overall absence of future prospects, more and more artists may not only have found the time to engage more dedicatedly in the ecosystem of

collective care, but they may have actually developed a nothing-to-lose attitude encouraging them to voice their concerns publicly and collectively. For example, mid-pandemic the lobby group *Voices of Dance* emerged as a platform intended for dance professionals and cultural workers in the Belgian dance world to share their thoughts, concerns and questions and organize their thinking around some form of representation in existing organizations that advocate for culture in government. Up until recently, official voices from the dance scene remained largely absent in the lobby groups around artistic labor due to the international character of the dance profession, in which the common working language is English. Since the official lobby groups operate and communicate are Dutch or French (which many dance professionals do not master), the specificities of the dance profession where rarely addressed in their advice to the government. Nonetheless, pointing to the shortcomings, requirements and needs inherent to contemporary dance became all the more urgent in the sectorial lockdown. The thin line between self-realization and self-precarization has been drawn thicker by the pandemic's call for self-care and collective care. The pandemic for that matter has not only made artistic precarity more visible than ever, but it has also exposed that the sector in fact has been suffering a long-term lingering illness. One can only hope that the lockdown has provided the necessary slowdown to actually work on treating the causes of that illness rather than cushioning the symptoms. Because if we would only attend to the coughs and the fever, the entire cultural sector might never get out of lockdown without permanent damages.

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THE SELF ORGANIZED ART SCENE IN SWITZERLAND. IN BETWEEN PROFESSIONALIZATION AND COLLABORATIVE AGENCY

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The self-organized art scene is highly developed in Switzerland (Mader & Müller, 2022).[24] Today every major Swiss city is home to numerous self-organized art initiatives.[25] They are organized nationally in an association[26] and raise their visibility on a local level by offering maps that include information on initiatives, by organizing their own festivals and other coordinated activities[27] and by being active in cultural politics (Charta, 2016). [28] The self-organized art initiatives we looked at in our comprehensive, four-year research project are not only extremely diverse in terms of attitudes and ideas about art, but also vary considerably in size, operational organization and conception. 2m2, a one-meter-by-one-meter lightbox installed on the facade of a house in Geneva, is just as much a part of the scene as the large-scale interdisciplinary project Transform in Bern that, in a long, multistage process, involved residents of the Bern-Holligen neighborhood in the selection of one of several proposed public artworks that was then realized there (Haenni & Krähenbühl, 2017). Some of the self-organized initiatives are not tied to a particular space, while for others the built space is an essential part of their activities. Le Foyer from Zurich, for example, is a flexible conversation format that can be realized at various locations, whereas for art spaces like SALTS in Birsfelden or Last Tango in Zurich the physical space is the focus of their activities. Pro-

24 The comprehensive, four-year research project on the subject which provided the data for this essay counted more than 700 self-organized art initiatives in Switzerland from 1950 to 2019.

25 The Zurich Art Space Guide, which lists self-organized initiatives in Zurich, puts the number of art spaces and other self-organized initiatives in the City of Zurich alone at 38 and 45, respectively, for 2020. See www.artspaceguide.ch. A similar overview of independent, non-commercial art spaces, A Roland for an Oliver, lists 38 such projects in Basel for 2019. See https://arolandforanoliver.ch/en.

26 The OffOff network is a union of independent art spaces in Switzerland that demand greater public policy recognition of their work. See https://offoff.ch

27 A biennial of independent art spaces has been taking place in Geneva since 2015. In Lucerne there is a once-a-year one-day event initiated by self-organized art spaces, in which galleries and art institutions now participate as well.

28 In 2012, the Swiss Federal Office of Culture announced a cut in funding for self-organized art spaces. The self-organized art scene responded by organizing actions and a petition.

jects tied to a particular space often involve a differentiated organization with division of labor, office hours and regular operations. Other projects, in turn, focus on providing a low-cost production infrastructure for artists rather than on exhibiting art, as illustrated by the numerous self-organized and cooperatively run studio houses (Atelierhaus Wuhrstrasse and Atelier- und Gewerbehaus Gleis 70 in Zurich, Bollag Ateliers in Basel, Ressources Urbaines and the Association le vélodrome in Geneva). Also, in appearance of such projects can vary considerably. Some self-organized art spaces, like OLM which is situated under a highway bridge, foster a provisional, ephemeral aesthetic, while others like SALTS have a slick appearance and seek to meet an international art standard. Diversity also characterizes the people involved in these projects. While most of those active in the self-organized art scene are artists, curators and cultural workers who have completed appropriate professional training, a considerable number of art spaces are initiated and run by non-professionals. They tend to be art enthusiasts who see running an art space as a way of expressing their love for art and coming into contact with artists (Leuenberger-Rüttimann, 2008, p. 27ff).

Some actually postulate self-organization as a mode of action in response to the impact of neoliberal policies which is also felt in the art world. Thus, a manifesto-like text titled "There is No Alternative: THE FUTURE IS (SELF-) ORGANIZED," and authored by Anthony Davis, Stephan Dillemuth, and Jakob Jakobsen criticizes the increasingly serious confusion between "self-help," "self-enterprise," and "self-organization" and, by way of contrast, asserts self-organization as an emancipative mode of agency (Davies, Dillemuth & Jakobsen, 2013, p. 28). Most thoughts on self-organization, however, are less alarmist in tone but do emphasize the by now undisputed importance of this sector of the art world (Docx & Gielen, 2015; Stine & Karlsen, 2013). The term "self-organization" is favored here because it is not, like "independent" or "alternative," based on differentiation from the established art world—an assumption that, as we will see, is hardly tenable for the self-organ-

ized art scene in Switzerland—nor is it limited to a certain group of actors, as in the case of "artist-run spaces" (Detterer & Nannucci, 2012). It allows us to theoretically grasp the entire spectrum of activities and centers on the aspect of self-determination, without interpreting it in an artistically and politically short-sighted way. Starting from the phenomenon's inherent diversity, we will first look at the structural conditions self-organized art initiatives in Switzerland face and then, in the second part, ask to what extent qualities other than those defining the art market and art institutions come into play in self-organized activities.

Structural Conditions in Switzerland

In Switzerland the self-organized art scene developed at the end of 1980s and saw significant growth in the 1990s. Confronted with its activities, cultural officials started to develop instruments in the 1990s to support such structures beyond established institutions. In an ongoing process of discussing modes of funding, formulating guidelines and developing evaluation criteria, funding opportunities were established (Mader, 2022). Along the federalist political structure in Switzerland run also the public funding opportunities for self-organized art spaces, namely on the municipal, cantonal and federal level. In addition, there are the possibilities of support through private foundations. Some funding agencies, both public and private, even have dedicated funds for self-organized art spaces.[29] The diverse funding opportunities reflect a cultural-political acknowledgment of self-organized activities in the visual arts in Switzerland. Yet even though there is a funding system established in Switzerland, the self-organized art initiatives work under precarious conditions (Gau & Schlieben, 2009). Generally, self-organized art spaces lack core funding: year after year, they have to raise the funds to cover their operating costs—including rent, insurance, electricity, water and

29 The City of Bern, the City and Canton of Zurich, the Pro Helvetia Cultural Foundation and the Fondation Nestlé pour l'Art, among others, have a funding program specifically for self-organized art spaces.

minor maintenance—as well as their programming. Given the exorbitant rents especially in the cities where most of the self-organized art space are located and, in general, the high living costs in Switzerland, the average amount of funding for one application ranging from CHF 5'000 to around CHF 15'000 is very little for an annual program. What further compounds the precarious position of self-organized ventures is the fact that many of the funding agencies explicitly disallow the use of the funds they provided for everyday operations; the funds are reserved for the program.[30] Although artists' fees and wages for any external work may also be included in the program funding—these primarily cover production costs, communication and the rental of technical equipment specifically required for an exhibition—room rental and other ongoing operation costs are explicitly not covered, to say nothing of remuneration for the operators.

Competition for the funds provided by the public sector and private foundations is fierce, not least because of the large number of self-organized art initiatives currently active.[31] Self-organized art spaces compete not only with their peers but also with smaller and medium-sized art institutions that are required to generate additional funds for their programs. For example, the partnerships of Fondation Nestlé pour l'Art, while potentially benefitting self-organized art spaces, are also open to Kunsthallen and smaller art museums, and the Ernst und Olga Gubler-Hablützel Stiftung, a foundation particularly active in the visual arts field, has also supported exhibitions at relatively established institutions such as Kunsthaus Glarus, Kunsthaus Langenthal and Kunsthalle St. Gallen—institutions that can rely on guaranteed if sometimes quite tight basic funding for their operations. They are required to acquire additional funds only for exhibitions and other program activities. For

30 The City of Zurich and the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, among others, explicitly exclude infrastructure and operating costs in their funding guidelines for an art space.

31 In 2021, the Zurich Art Space Guide recorded 80 self-organized art initiatives for the city of Zurich alone. See www.artspaceguide.ch (accessed October 8, 2021).

self-organized art initiatives, however, the funds raised are their main resource.

The money provided by private foundations and by cities, cantons and the federal government is the main source of funding for self-organized art initiatives. Private patrons and financially potent individuals hardly figure in this sector and cultural sponsoring is also non-existent due to the lack of cultural prestige. In addition to the funding money they can gain, self-organized projects are generally able to generate to a certain extent income of their own through association memberships, sales (including sales of artworks, merchandising and editions) and other activities (such as running a bar, organizing parties). This self-generated revenue helps cover operating costs. Yet even in cases where such income is a significant part of the budget and offers a certain stability, it is not enough to provide long-term sustainability, let alone minimal remuneration for those running the self-organized initiatives. The operators of self-organized art initiatives usually do their work for free or have to secure their livelihood through other activities. That is why Georg Rutishauser of the One's Own Room (OOR) collective, which runs a record store at Anwandstrasse 30 in Zurich and organizes events at various locations, talks about a type of cross-subsidization: "You work on the side for money and thus make it possible to work for your own project free of charge. The guest services, i. e. from people you invite, are paid for by the funding you receive. For your own work, the funding usually doesn't suffice."[32] If art initiatives generate too much revenue, this may be met with skepticism by funding bodies, particularly public ones, and lead to accusations of being commercial. Non-commerciality is the central requirement for funding self-organized art initiatives. Public authorities see it as their duty to promote art rather than provide Start-up promotion. In art funding, commerciality is often equated with the sale of art works rather than with profit orientation, that is the aim to gener-

32 G. Rutishauser on the occasion of the roundtable on economies of self-organized art initiatives, April 15, 2019, published in Mader & Müller 2022.

ate a profit on top of covering costs incurred. The producer gallery Alpineum, for instance, which sells artworks, was long excluded from funding and even after some funding was eventually provided, they could use the money only for events and exhibitions involving artists not part of the gallery program. Yet the gallery, which was founded by artists from Lucerne following the German model, simply wanted to create a cost-covering, jointly managed distribution structure for artists independent of commercial galleries, rather than seeking to make a profit.[33]

The funding system gradually established since the 1990s has profoundly changed the way self-organized art spaces work. In the 1980s, when there were no official support options, actors in the self-organized sector did not take such support into account when developing their projects, and instead "just did it."[34] Today, by contrast, writing funding applications has become a standard skill in the self-organized sector, involving competencies like self-promotion, strategic thinking and budgeting. At the beginning of each year, private foundations and public funding opportunities are researched. The most promising funding agencies are identified based on their funding priorities and guidelines. Submissions are scheduled, annual programs designed, budgets calculated, and application dossiers compiled. The funding bodies with their guidelines, requirements and formalized processes (application documents usually must include a project description, a budget, a detailed program and, in many cases, track records) have fostered a professionalization of the self-organized sector.

Furthermore, self-organized art initiatives are often interlinked with established art structures nowadays. With high-profile art galleries, private collectors, several public and private art institutions in every major city and

33 C. Kübler on the occasion of the roundtable on economies of self-organized art initiatives, April 15, 2019, published in Mader & Müller 2022.

34 This is how Andreas Niederhauser, who was involved in the art space Kunsthaus Oerlikon in Zurich (1986–1996), described the attitude. Others working in the self-organized art sector in the 1980s and early 1990s expressed a similar sentiment.

Art Basel, the world's biggest art fair, Switzerland boasts a differentiated, internationally networked and highly professionalized art scene. Le Foyer, for instance, hosted a conversation in 2011 between the artist Hannah Weinberger and Adam Szymczyk, the then director of the Kunsthalle Basel and later artistic director of documenta 14. And in 2021 Le Foyer organized two roundtables at the Schwarzescafé in Zurich, a space founded by the Luma Foundation, the internationally active foundation of private collector Maja Hofmann. Self-organized art spaces often coordinate their program with established players, an example being David Shrigley who in 2009 had a solo exhibition at Galerie Francesca Pia in Zurich. The opening of the exhibition concluded with a screening of his animation films at Corner College, a self-organized art space. This high permeability is also exemplified by individuals. Samuel Leuenberger, who runs the SALTS art space in Birsfelden, is also curator of the Parcours section at Art Basel. And for the artist Tobias Kasper, who is in charge of the Longtang art space in Zürich, running an art space is one of his many activities in the international art world.

Qualities of Self-Organized Practices

Self-organized art initiatives in Switzerland interact with a well-developed funding system and a differentiated art establishment. Given these conditions, which in turn affect and shape the self-organized art scene as illustrated by the tendency towards professionalization in this sector, one can hardly share the enthusiasm resonating through Anthony Davis, Stephan Dillemuth, and Jakob Jakobsen's text "There is No Alternative: THE FUTURE IS (SELF-) ORGANIZED," when they attribute an emancipatory power to self-organization. And when the London based advocacy group Common Practice[35] argues that small-scale arts

35 Common Practice is an advocacy group working for the recognition and fostering of the small-scale contemporary visual arts sector. The group's London-based founding members are Afterall, Chisenhale Gallery, Electra, Gasworks, LUX, Matt's Gallery, Mute Publishing, The Showroom and Studio Voltaire.

organizations (Thelwall, 2011)[36] operate beyond a financial logic and cultivate a different approach to art, this assessment is relativized with reference to the situation in Switzerland. Carla Cruz sums up this view as follows: "Small arts organizations are, and should be, different. They are different because they propose alternative ways of doing and making in the art worlds." (Cruz, 2016) Nonetheless, the self-organized art initiatives in Switzerland described above exhibit specific qualities, which could be seen to propose alternative ways of doing and being in the art worlds. However, these qualities ought to be seen in relation to the conditions self-organized art initiatives in Switzerland have to deal with and point to a tension self-organized practices have to navigate through. On the one hand, there is the need to find pragmatic solutions in the face of a precarious financial situation, while on the other artistic self-organization characterized by a collaborative culture involving mutual help and sharing as well as a variety of formats, aesthetic approaches and actors indicates a striving for self-determination and collaborative agency.

Collaboration

Most of the self-organized art initiatives in Switzerland are jointly run by multiple individuals.[37] Even art spaces essentially run by a single person are linked to a supporting group of individuals. As Daniel Suter, the main figure responsible for various art projects in Bern under the label Marks Blond Project R.f.z.K., explains, "You make an art space with a scene."[38] In the project Suter ran from 2004 to 2007 in a vacant kiosk at Länggasse in Bern, a

36 The small and medium-sized, institutional structures represented by Common Practice generated average annual revenues of 267,000 British pounds (approx. 330,000 Swiss Francs) in the period from 2006 to 2010. By comparison, the art initiatives that are the focus of this essay have average annual budgets of several tens of thousands of Swiss Francs, making them micro arts organizations.

37 Of the total of 717 self-organized art initiatives recorded in a database as part of our research project, 661 are run by more than one person.

38 D. Suter, November 27, 2015 (contact summary available at https://www.oralhistoryarchiv.ch).

momentum developed among the invited artists. They responded to each other with their artistic interventions. The art space effectively had a life of its own, Suter notes in retrospect. For Anna Frei as well creating a sociality is a priority for One's Own Room (OOR), the space she co-runs. Operating an art space offers the possibility "to bring an 'outside' into play, ..." and "to create socialites.... It's about an exchange, about creating relationalities."[39] In many cases, as these statements illustrate, the motivation for artistic self-organization is to create a structure that brings people together, promotes productive, process-open exchange, and enables collaborations. Individual interest is set aside in favor of the collaborative endeavor.

Polyphonic and Dialogical

There are pragmatic reasons for collaboration, since the organization and operation of self-organized art initiatives is usually carried out without pay. Accordingly, it is easier to divide the tasks among multiple people. After the departure of Sandro Fiechter, with whom he founded the art space Die Diele in Zurich in 2009, Livio Baumgartner described the challenge of managing the workload alone: "I realize that it is really just too much for me, with all the supervision. I usually help with setting up the exhibition as well, ..."[40] The collaboration that characterizes these art initiatives also in terms of operational organization and internal cooperation cannot be reduced to pragmatic solution finding in the face of structural underfunding. Different perspectives and ways of thinking come together in a group, creating a potential that cannot be achieved alone. Georg Rutishauser witnesses this at One's Own Room (OOR), the collective in which he is involved: "From the very beginning of the store, the idea was to bring together

39 A. Frei on the occasion of the roundtable on economies of self-organized art initiatives, April 15, 2019, published in Mader & Müller 2022.

40 G. Ruthishauser on the occasion of the roundtable on economies of self-organized art initiatives, April 15, 2019, published in Mader & Müller 2022.

people with different interests. If there are eight people who each have very specialized interests, then the overall result is still a specific program, but one with a certain breadth within that specificity. You cannot achieve this alone."[41] The decision of what to include in the record store is made not in an endless, collective discussion process with the aim of reaching a consensus within the group, but by allowing the people who work in the store to make their own choices and shape the store's selection through their expertise and specific interests. The collaboration in this case is based on mutual trust and generosity.

The dialogical occupies a special place in these collaborative structures. Due to the highly informal organization of most self-organized art initiatives (work processes are formalized only to a limited extent, employment contracts are rare and responsibilities in the group are hardly regulated and if, then based on oral agreement), there is a frequent need to clarify the way of working together as a group. The program, course of action and aspirations similarly tend to require an understanding between those involved, as the purposes and goals of the pursued undertakings, which are self-organized, are not defined externally, but rather intrinsically motivated by the wishes and ideas of the individuals involved. Barbara Fässler views the dialogical as almost methodical in the case of the ProjektRaum, which existed in Zurich from 1989 to 1997: being together, spending time together and talking to one another was central. "Sometimes we would develop program ideas in a group of ten people.[42] The artist George Steinmann who in the 1980s was involved at Kocherspital in Bern where cultural workers from various disciplines lived, organized exhibitions, carried out actions in public space and put on concerts, similarly believes that the dialogical was defining at the time; it was there that he became acquainted with the "dialogi-

41 G. Ruthishauser on the occasion of the roundtable on economies of self-organized art initiatives, April 15, 2019, published in Mader & Müller 2022.

42 B. Fässler, C. Schmid & H. Züllig, December 1, 2017 (contact summary available at https://www.oralhistoryarchiv.ch).

cal structures" that subsequently became an important aspect of artistic practice.[43]

Helping and Sharing

Without the unpaid assistance that these self-organized art initiatives can count on from friends, other self-organized projects and a wider group of supporters, such micro-organizations would hardly be conceivable. Contacts are arranged, information is exchanged and help is given in everyday practical matters. Someone bakes something small for the exhibition opening (cake for the fifth anniversary of OOR, quiches for the inaugural event at the art space Cherish in Geneva), the invited artists can stay overnight with someone from the group of supporters, and friends are mobilized when major repairs are needed.[44] If the necessary expertise is missing for a specific task (say, programming a website, legal issues or preparing annual accounts), the group of supporters is often called in. The task usually ends up being done as a favor or on favorable terms.[45] The art initiatives also frequently provide practical help among each other. For example, when Esther Eppstein launched her art project Message Salon in 1996, she could not only take furniture and various lamps from Kunsthaus Oerlikon, which terminated its activities at the time, but also the address file, giving her access to an already established network.[46]

Projects where several art initiatives come together, which happens not infrequently, similarly evince the kind of culture of mutual help and sharing practiced in this sector of art. In Lucerne in 2010, the art space o.T. Raum für aktuelle Kunst and sic! Raum für Kunst moved into a property to-

43 G. Steinmann, June 23, 2015 (contact summary available at https://www.oralhistoryarchiv.ch).

44 C. Quéloz, March 13,2018 (contact summary available at https://www.oralhistoryarchiv.ch).

45 L. Baumgartner, August 18, 2016 (contact summary available at https://www.oralhistoryarchiv.ch).

46 Martin Senn, October 29, 2015 ((contact summary available at https://www.oralhistoryarchiv.ch).

gether. In addition to exhibition spaces, the premises included a spacious outdoor area, cooking facilities, sanitary facilities and an office workstation with internet and printer, which was shared. o.T. Raum für aktuelle Kunst and sic! Raum für Kunst were by turns responsible for the exhibition program.[47] The joining of the two art spaces made it possible to provide a common basic infrastructure at low cost. And because the exhibitions were organized alternately, it also allowed them to increase the program activity and, as a result, generate greater external impact. The joint art space of Esther Eppstein (message salon), Jean-Claude Freymond-Guth (Freymond-Guth Fine Arts), Manuela Schlumpf and Adrian Ehrat (Wartesaal) and Benjamin Sommerhalder (Nieves Verlag) that moved into a property (and adopted the name of its previous occupant, Perla Mode) at the corner of Langstrasse-Brauerstrasse in Zurich in 2006, was likewise motivated not least by pragmatic considerations, as the rents in the city of Zurich are high and basic costs could be shared through joint use. Each of the projects involved had its own rooms in the multi-story building (Nieves, a small publishing house, could alternately use a presentation area on the ground floor) and larger events and exhibitions were held by turns in the largest space on the ground floor. The individuals involved in Perla Mode organized parties together on a regular basis. The proceeds from these were used for repair work, smaller purchases and other things related to the joint operations.

The Perla Mode also followed a pragmatic logic. A basic infrastructure could be provided and the bundling at one location brouht greater public attention. But the cooperation, according to Manuela Schlumpf, who was responsible for Wartesaal together with Adrian Ehrat, created further qualities that go beyond pragmatism only. She explains that the exchange of ideas was inspiring, but the people involved also supported one another when it came to day-to-day problems. Experiences and knowledge were shared.[48]

47 L. Fuchs & G. Widmer, September 30, 2015 (contact summary available at https://www.oralhistoryarchiv.ch).

48 M. Schlumpf in conversation with the author, May 17, 2021.

Diversity

What distinguishes the self-organized sector in art compared to art institutions and commercial galleries is diversity—diversity of objectives and aspirations, of artistic approaches, but also of the individuals working in this sector. As outlined at the beginning, in the self-organized sector there can be found incredible diversity. In addition to the aforementioned projects, ranging from large-scale festival-like projects such as Transform in Bern and discussion formats like Le Foyer to a light box attached to a house facade (2m2 in Geneva), there are also art activist approaches. The Fondation Krösus group in Zurich carried out actions in public space and squatted buildings at multiple locations that they transformed into large-scale Merzbau-like "collages" where actions, events and concerts took place. In 2002 the Krösus collektive briefly occupied the building in Zurich's old town where in 1916 the Dadaists had founded the Cabaret Voltaire, thereby pointing to the cultural significance of this site, which at the time was in danger of being snapped up by a private investor. Among the self-organized art initiatives there are also some where the boundaries between life, art and work are blurred, the Projekt @Home (1995-2001) in Basel being a case in point. As the artist Rainer Raisch, a friend of the initiators of @Home, remembers, "@Home was a living and studio experiment that grew out of the tradition of the *werkraum* concept. Between five and ten people lived under one roof in open rooms without doors."[49] They lived and ate together there on a daily basis. Every time a public event was taking place they created a new environment for it, as Dominik Ziliotis, a co-initiator of @Home, recounts.[50] Finally, the self-organized sector in Switzerland also includes a full-fledged self-publishing section with magazines, publishing houses and tiny publications as well as its own annual festival.[51]

49 See http://rainereisch.com/reportprojects/cd/cd/home.html (accessed August 9, 2017).

50 D. Ziliotis on the occasion of the roundtable on social practice, November 21, 2018, published in Mader & Müller 2022.

51 See *Wir publizieren. Redaktion, Gestaltung, Produktion und Distribution unabhängiger Magazinformate in der Schweiz seit 1960*, a research project of the University of the Arts Bern in cooperation with the University of the Arts Bremen, 2020. Project documentation and journal archive accessible at www.wir-publizieren.ch.

In addition to the widely varying ambitions and the aesthetic forms that artistic self-organization can take, there is also its permeability towards non-professionals, as Marina Leuenberger-Rüttimann has pointed out in her dissertation. Cabane H at Warteggpark in Heiden (Appenzell-Ausserrhoden), for example, is run by a support association consisting of local art lovers that hopes to contribute to a revitalization of culture in the rural community through art exhibitions. In a similar way, Aux Losanges, a space in the Grisons municipality of Tschiertschen where concerts and exhibitions take place, is a project of two art lovers seeking to express their passion for art and share it with the local audience.

Self-organized art initiatives in Switzerland are embedded in a well-developed funding system and a differentiated art establishment. That surrounding also affects and shapes the self-organized art scene as illustrated by the tendency towards professionalization in this sector. However, the self-organized art initiatives in Switzerland described above exhibit specific qualities, which could be seen to propose alternative ways of doing and being in the art worlds. On an organizational level these qualities are characterized by a collaborative culture involving mutual help and sharing. On an aesthetic level the variety of approaches, which often cross disciplines and genre boundaries, point to an aesthetic democratization, but also socially, when this sector also offers non-professionals the opportunity to participate actively in the art world. Overall, self-organized art initiatives in Switzerland, with all their strategic action, their increasing professionalism and pragmatic solution-finding, indicate a striving for self-determination and collaborative agency.

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SELF-INITIATED INSTITUTIONS: THE CASE OF ARTISTS RUN EDUCATIONALPLATFORMS

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Introduction

The last twenty years have witnessed the proliferation of educational[53] platforms initiated by contemporary artists. The inclusion of knowledge-based practices other than the typical object-making activity associated with this profession has been part of a gradual shift that is to some extent modifying the idea of the artist's role in the broader cultural and social field. Discursivity and participation are increasingly becoming specific components of the artistic practice, especially for what concerns socially engaged initiatives (Helguera, 2011), being dedicated not only to the production of objects but also to creating a sense of belonging, community, and empathy with the public.

In this context, artists have progressively become involved in projects that appropriate the tropes of education as both a method and a form (Bishop, 2012), starting to create their own educational platforms, consisting for example in reading groups, night schools, art residencies, research centers, public learning spaces, art schools in miniature and salons.

In general, such growing attention from the art sphere towards other forms of knowledge production and new in-

53 The term 'educational' is used here to indicate the wide spectrum of teaching and learning activities offered by these platforms, as well as to denote the type of infrastructure built for such activities. According to the Cambridge dictionary, education is "the process of teaching and learning, or the organizations such as schools where this process happens". The term is preferred to the more technical 'pedagogy', since the latter points out to "the study of the methods and activities of teaching". See: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/.
Furthermore, the term 'education' is chosen to avoid the semantic connotations linked to the term 'pedagogy', for long time conceptualized as a self-imposed and unidirectional knowledge transferal by the master to the students. In relation to this, philosopher Jacques Rancière describes the 'myth of pedagogy' which is "'the parable of a world divided into knowing minds and ignorant ones, the capable and the incapable, the intelligent and the stupid'" (Rancière, 1991). In this sense, the word 'education' is broad enough to encompass an interpersonal and horizontal space for both teachers and learners, who can simultaneously interchange their positions in the knowledge-production process. Therefore, when I speak of 'educational platforms initiated by contemporary artists' I intend all those platforms whose aim is to create spaces of possibilities for the emergence of these collaborative, dialogic and relational dynamics linked with knowledge production and dissemination.

stitutions of learning – many of which have been looking at experiments in radical pedagogy[54]– can be traced back to a moment in which the term "educational turn" started to circulate in the cultural field increasingly. This is the case of the year 2006, in which the transnational project ACADEMY[55] took place, and when the 6th edition of Manifesta, the European nomadic biennial, whose program of activities was conceived as a temporary school for the city of Nicosia, Cyprus, was canceled.[56]

Theorized by several scholars and cultural practitioners, such as Irit Rogoff (2008), as well as by Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson (2010), the educational turn describes a trend in contemporary art that has seen the appearance of different educational forms and structures, methods and

54 Radical pedagogy is still an ambiguous term in academic literature, since there is no consensus or unity on its actual definition (Fedotova & Nikolaeva, 2015). In this context, when I mention 'radical pedagogy' I refer to a kind of pedagogy committed to achieve real transformation in accordance with the views on the development of socio-political, ideological and economic spheres, as in the conceptualizations of a number of influential theorists on the topic, such as Paulo Freire (1970), Ira Shor (1992), Henry Giroux (1997) and Peter McLaren (1998).

55 ACADEMY was an international series of exhibitions and projects initiated by Siemens Arts Program in cooperation with the Kunstverein in Hamburg, the Department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths College in London, the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen (MuHKA), and the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven. The series aimed to prompt reflections on the potential of the academy within society through three exhibitions and projects, a lecture series, two symposia, as well as a workshop and a conference to which over 70 artists, artists groups, art theorists, and cultural producers have been invited. ACADEMY was curated by Bart De Baere and Dieter Roelstraete (MuHKA), Charles Esche and Kerstin Niemann (Van Abbemuseum), Irit Rogoff (Goldsmiths College), and Angelika Nollert (Siemens Arts Program).

56 Manifesta 6, a school modeled on pedagogical experiments such as Bauhaus and Black Mountain College, was canceled because of the increasing friction between the three curators and Nicosia for Art, the city-run nonprofit organization sponsoring the exhibition. The reason, according to an official statement by the mayor of Nicosia, was that the curatorial board insisted on establishing and operating an essential part of the school in the occupied part of Nicosia, that was ruled by Turkish Cipriot forces. After the cancellation of the event, Anton Vidokle – one of the three curators of the event together with Mai Abu ElDahab and Florian Waldvogel -, set up *unitednationsplaza*, an independent project in Berlin, consisting in a twelve-month discursive and performative program involving more than a hundred artists, writers, philosophers, and diverse audiences.

programs in curatorial and artistic practices. The initiatives related to the educational turn generally revolve around the notion of education, artistic and curatorial research, acquisition, production, and dissemination of knowledge. The emphasis is not on the work of art as an object but on its process and the use of pedagogical methods and discursive techniques within and outside exhibition contexts.

From an art-historical perspective, this turn in contemporary art can be considered an extension of the relational practices that characterized the 1990s, especially in the attempt to provide conviviality with content as a strategy to intervene in the social field concretely.

Moreover, it can be described as a response to the changing relationship between art and the academy, which resulted in the progressive transformation of art educational institutions as central nodes in the art market. Due to the growing influence of neoliberal policies on the traditional education system, in the last two decades, art schools and universities started to experience a major shift from experimentation towards the bureaucratization and standardization of knowledge-based production – of which the Bologna Process, launched in 1999, has represented one of the most critical examples for its purpose of unifying university programs and evaluative measures across the European Union.

Indeed, higher education has undergone a process of change driven by commercial logics that respond to the interests of private capital, applying normative standards of evaluation, which restrain the autonomous space of each individual university or academy, making their programs comparable, 'benchmarked' and structured according to the interests of big corporate employers (Dragićević Šešić & Jestrović, 2017). All of this has created as an effect for students to train according to their possibility to find placement in the job market, preventing them from developing a certain kind of critical thinking. Even the arts and humanities departments, which are the places where a certain degree of freedom can still be performed to embrace radical thinking in the teaching and learning process, suf-

fer from this situation. They are demanded to comply with standards of employability, visible in the narrowing down of the curricula and the acceptance of a larger number of students coming from different parts of the world to meet the requirements of internationalization and economic sustainability. Such widespread condition points out at the great difficulty that universities and academies have in organizing democracy and civil space[57](Gielen, 2017).

Prompted in part by these dynamics, the educational turn provided a critique of the idea of education as one-directional knowledge transmission and training, and the framing of education as a commercialized industry reduced merely to utilitarian purposes related to the access to the work environment (Graham, Graziano, & Kelly, 2016).

Many educational projects and schools born in the guise of the educational turn used as references seminal texts by Jacques Rancière – *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991) –, Paulo Freire – *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) – or Ivan Illich – *Deschooling Society* (1971) – to evoke other forms of knowledge production and new proto-institutions of learning (Graham, Graziano & Kelly, 2016).

Educational experiments in the form of an organization initiated by artists can also be inscribed in the tradition of institutional critique, particularly in what some theorists see as the 'third wave'[58], characterized by the so-called 'in-

57 The author, sociologist Pascal Gielen, draws upon the work of philosopher Michel De Certeau to mark a distinction between civic and civil space, which highlights the fluid and open nature of the latter, as opposed to the regulated and controlled one of the first: "the civic place is a place that is established or has taken root in policies, education programmes, regulations or laws. By contrast, the civil space, in the Certeausian sense, is a space that remains fluid; a place where positions still have to be taken up or created".

58 Institutional critique has been art-historically canonized as a genre of artistic practices growing in parallel to social developments, especially the civil rights and feminist movements earlier on, and postcolonial and queer politics later, as well as to theoretical critiques of the opposition between high and low culture. The 'third wave' of institutional critique, as theorized by Gerald Raunig and Gene Ray (2009), comes after the 'first wave' of the 1960-70s, associated with the work of artists Marcel Broodthaers, Hans Haacke, Daniel Buren, Michael Asher, and Robert Smithson, and the 'second wave' of the late 1980s and beginning of 1990s, linked to artists such as Andrea Fraser, Fred Wilson, Christian Phillip Müller, and Renée Green.

stituent practices', described as "the actualization of future in a present becoming" (Raunig & Ray, 2009). By focusing on the legacy of institutional critique without contextualizing it as a coherent genre or movement, this approach recognized in the actual scenario – more specifically, from the early 2000s onwards – a loose nexus of artistic manifestations taking on diverse forms and themes throughout time, yet unified by a critical and self-reflexive attitude in the process of constituting frameworks that prolong the fleeting moment of utopian possibility devised in the past experimentations. 'Instituent practices' encompass, on the one hand, the creation and recreation of an explicit plan, comprised of the legal, financial, and procedural rules that are typically set out by one person or a small group of founders; on the other, the management of interpersonal or infrastructural dynamics internal to the framework, or the relationship between the framework and external social dynamics, which evolve over time (Raunig, 2013). The result is an organization, a framework, an infrastructure, a container for instituting an emerging social vision, such in the case of these self-initiated educational platforms.

Indeed, in many cases, these platforms result from a self-organizing impulse and a critical engagement from within, conceived as an endeavor both to challenge preexisting modes of knowledge production and dissemination and create practical and viable alternatives (Thorne, 2017).

The contribution examines three diverse case-studies of educational institutions[59] initiated by contemporary artists, in order to highlight common features as well as divergent strategies and operating methods by analyzing their mission, organizational structure, level of activities, and sources of sustainability.

Such long-term projects, moving away from vertical structures and teaching models, aim to put into action in-

59 The term 'institution' is used here to mark a distinction with other terms, such as 'artistic initiative' or 'artistic intervention', properly to indicate the long-term commitment to the mission, the social purpose and the organizational structure behind such durational endeavors, which are intended to last in the future, as opposed to more short-term and ephemeral projects.

clusive and democratic practices that also take current issues and the participants' needs into account. These are cases born in different contexts where forms of hegemonic cultural structures limit access to the public sphere. Specifically, the text analyzes INSTAR (Tania Bruguera), Silent University (Ahmet Ögüt) and GUDSKUL (Grafis Huru Hara, ruangrupa and Serrum).

The Silent University

The Silent University is a knowledge exchange platform initiated by artist Ahmet Öğüt. The project started in London in 2012 in collaboration with Delfina Foundation and Tate Modern, and subsequently was hosted by The Showroom. In 2013, it was established in Stockholm in collaboration with Tensta Konsthall and Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund (ABF). In the following years, several branches were founded in different cities and countries. The first in Hamburg by the Stadtkuratorin in partnership with W3 – Werkstatt für internationale Kultur und Politik (2014), followed by Mülheim an der Ruhr by Impulse Theater Festival in coproduction with Ringlokschuppen and Urbane Künste Ruhr (2015), as the first Silent University outside of a big urban center. Further branches were established in Amman, Jordan, by Spring Sessions (2015), in Athens (2015), and, lastly, in Copenhagen (2019).

The Silent University is a solidarity school by and for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants who contribute to the program as teachers, consultants and researchers. By working together, participants develop lessons, discussions, events open to the public, as well as resource archives and publications. The project evolves through people's participation, co-existence, and interaction, whether they are part of the audience or collaborators or cooperate temporarily or long-term.

Since its inception, the Silent University has involved those who have had a professional life and academic training in their home countries but are unable to use their skills or professional training due to various reasons related to their status.

Drawing from the experience and traditions of Brazilian critical pedagogist Paulo Freire, the Mexican Zapatista Movement and the transnational Occupy Movement (Malzacher, Öğüt, & Tan, 2016), the work of the Silent University is about continuing the legacy of active communities, networks and NGOs in the constant endeavor to share knowledge and collectively reproduce it, building new modalities of being together and create communal meanings. As the abovementioned references, the Silent University stands in opposition to social and economic inequality dictated by neoliberal agendas and is committed to democratizing the public sphere by creating alternative conditions for underrepresented members of the society to have access to it.

Furthermore, the project adopts strategies from art practices by bringing together the knowledge of various disciplines in order not only to build solidarity but also to push beyond the border of artistic ethics and aesthetics. Hence, its presence in the contemporary art domain, as explained by its initiator: "Working with art institutions and established universities is one way to gain recognition. [...] We can use the facilities of those existing institutions as progressive tools. But to be able to truly do that, those institutions need to transform themselves". (Malzacher, Öğüt, & Tan, 2016)

The Silent University proposes a new institution beyond existing universities' restrictions, migration laws, and other bureaucratic or legal obstacles that many migrants face. At the same time, it adopts the same representative logic of a university - visible in its graphic identity and the communication channels - in the development of alternative structures of pedagogy that go beyond border policies, forms of normative education and the idea of race or ethnicity. The organization's goal is to challenge the notion of silence as a passive state and explore its powerful potential through various activities, including performances, writing sessions and group reflection. These explorations attempt to clarify the systemic failure and the loss of skills and knowledge experienced through the silencing process of people seeking asylum.

The project iterations each time present different challenges – in terms of autonomy, budgeting and networking – according to the places where the Silent University is enacted since each city and country have their own individual circumstances regarding available spaces, finance and institutions. For instance, while Stockholm, Hamburg and Mülheim have comparatively reliable institutional support, the Silent University in London has struggled from the beginning to attract a sustainable partner. On the other hand, in Athens and Amman, a bottom-up model without institutional involvement or budget was adopted, being both centers of migration. All the different discourses, the various networks of NGOs, art institutions and activists' initiatives, as well as the different characters of the cities and the people involved create very different Silent Universities.

In this regard, however, it is useful to describe in more detail the activities undertaken by the Silent University in one of those places, to give an idea of how the programming is shaped according to local issues and peculiarities. For instance, the Silent University in Mülheim an der Ruhr offers an exchange platform between migrants and the German society, but also among migrants themselves. It is organized in different sections aimed to diverse scopes: the Knowledge Exchange Area, which gives the opportunity for migrants to share their experiential and professional knowledge and to open up to a diverse public; the Information and Counseling Service, available in four languages, which consists of a dedicated service provided by a member of the Silent University staff that shares information on German laws/policies, issues on migration, economic activities, social/educational issues; the Translation and Interpretation Unit which makes available a pool of translators to facilitate the communication process; the Gender and Empowerment Section that encourages intergender activities that make it possible for men and women to work together through the activation of a dedicated platform; the Networking and Event Management Section, aimed at building spaces for exchange between different national (Essen, Duisburg, Dortmund) and international realities (Rome, Matera) through organized visits; the

Sector for Artistic and Cultural Exchange, which encourages the exchange of artistic and cultural diversity by setting up exhibitions of multicultural works of art and traditional artistic techniques, with the aim to share artistic traditions and knowledge.

Instituto de Artivismo Hannah Arendt (INSTAR)

Instituto de Artivismo Hannah Arendt (INSTAR) is an institution for civic literacy founded in 2015 by artist Tania Bruguera. Located in Havana, Cuba, the inauguration of the project coincided with the celebration of the anniversary of the Declaration of the Republic of Cuba[60] and was marked by a public action which consisted of 100 consecutive hours of reading and discussion of the book *The Origins of Totalitarianism* by philosopher Hannah Arendt.

INSTAR is not the first long-term project initiated by the artist, as Bruguera established and carried out *Catèdra Arte de Conducta* (Behavior Art Program) at Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana (2002-2009), a program focused on the discussion and analysis of art as an instrument of social transformation. In the following years, she has also been involved in the creation of *Immigrant Movement International* (2010-2015), a community agency providing social services to immigrants and transnational residents, and the *Migrant People Party* (2010-2015), a party of ideas, enacting a new form of mass political organization.

These installments represent a coherent field for Bruguera, an internationally noted artist and activist, who engages political and social issues through her work. She has helped promote the term 'artivism', which blends art and political action to protest and raise awareness of injustices, a word that she also used to define the name and the scope of INSTAR.

The institute was born out of the willingness to face the current crisis of representation in the arts and the aspiration of activism to be effective in Cuban society. It intends to provide a platform from which research can be carried

60 The Declaration of the Republic of Cuba took place on May 20, 1902.

out both in theory and practice to understand the role of art and its effectiveness as an agent of social change.

The position from which the institute departs is the condition of political repression experienced by Bruguera and the group of activists that are behind the organization, especially for what concerns the possibility to exert the freedom of expression in the public arena and building up alternative spaces for art within the Cuban society.[61]

Since its inception, which was financially supported by a crowdfunding campaign[62] launched by Bruguera, INSTAR has been conceived as a democratic and horizontal space, where decisions are made by consensus. Its mission is to work with Cuban citizenship, involving people of different educational levels and ages, from housewives to professionals, from activists to students. By inviting artists and activists from all over the world to cooperate with Cubans in the creation of peaceful instruments for the modification of public policy and civic literacy, the institute wants to create a safe space that protects and connects other organizations and people. In the words of Bruguera: "This project is about how people can lose their fear in a peaceful, constructive way. It is about creating bridges of trust where there is no fear of each other, to create a peaceful and considered response where there is violence,

61 Bruguera is well-known for her artistic practice rooted in issued related to the representation of Cuban history, as well as power and control mechanisms in her native country. From her early performances devoted to the homage of fellow Cuban artist Ana Mendieta (1948-1985), *Homage to Ana Mendieta* (1985-1996), to *The Burden of Guilt* (1997) in which she was narrating Cubans' resistance to the Spanish occupation, she removed her own body to stage delegated performances, such as *Tatlin's Whisper #6* (2009) at the Havana Biennial, where she put up a microphone and asked the audience to say what they wanted to say for one minute, as a way to use the artistic arena for people to exert their freedom of speech. She tried to reenact the same performance in Plaza de la Revolución (Revolution Square), Havana, in December 2014 but was arrested before the event took place. She was arrested again in 2018, in advance of a planned protest against a Cuban law (Decree 349) that would require artists to apply for government licenses to organize public and private exhibitions and performances.

62 The campaign, launched on Kickstarter, raised in total $114,048 thanks to the contribution of 915 donors. This information is made publicly available on the organization's website. See: https://artivismo.org/transparencia/.

to create a place where people from different political views can come together to build a better country."[63]

Structurally, INSTAR's level of activities is divided into three main areas: Think Tank, Do Thank, and Wish Tank. The Think Tank is conceived as a space to rethink politics and constitutional change. The work here addresses the Cuban context through direct references or examples that resonate with the social and political transformations taking place in the country. The Do Tank consists of a series of workshops, where case studies and ways to achieve active citizenship are discussed. The program aims to increase freedom of expression in the public sphere and social responsibility by developing a common language. This activity culminates in public exhibition events and projects. The Wish Tank is a residency program for artists, activists, political scientists, economists, urban planners, and other professional figures. During the residencies, participants organize a public event, working closely with local agents. The research topics must not exclusively concern Cuba, but they are selected for their proximity or reflection on the island's political developments.

In the last three years, due to the application of decrees 349 (2018), 373 (2019), and 370 (2020), with which the Cuban State restricts freedom of expression and creative independence, INSTAR has been active in denouncing the inequality of such measures while striving to keep up with its activities, being an independent space.

In 2022, INSTAR will contribute to the thematic framework of the upcoming documenta 15 as one of the 'lumbung' members, an international network of local, community-based organizations from the art and other cultural contexts.

GUDSKUL

Initiated by three artist collectives in Jakarta — ruangrupa, Serrum and Grafis Huru Hara, GUDSKUL is a public learning space and a platform for collective contemporary art studies.

63 See: https://artivismo.org/mission/

Since the early 2000s, all three collectives have actively immersed themselves in the contemporary art realm by practicing collaborative modes of working[64]. The contemporary art organization ruangrupa was established in 2000 by a group of Jakarta-based artists. As a non-profit, ruangrupa supports the development of visual art, both in an urban context and across the culture in general, through exhibitions, festivals, art laboratories, workshops, research projects and the publication of books, magazines and online journals. Serrum is a Jakarta-based art and pedagogy study group founded in 2006. The word 'serrum' comes from 'share' and 'room' and can be understood further as a 'sharing room'. Serrum approaches pedagogical, socio-cultural, and urban issues with artistic and educational methodologies. The collective's activities include art projects, exhibitions, workshops, creative discussions, and propaganda projects. Grafis Huru Hara (GHH) is a group of Jakarta-based graphic artists that started their collaboration in 2012. The collective focuses on explorative, experimental and educational methods of graphic arts as their primary medium. GHH's programs include exhibitions, workshops, and various publishing projects.

In 2015, the collectives formed Gudang Sarinah Ekosistem to practice an expanded understanding of collective values such as equality, sharing, solidarity, friendship and togetherness. They transformed into GUDSKUL in 2018. GUDSKUL is conceived as an ecosystem that consists of many elements: artists, curators, art writers, managers, researchers, musicians, directors, architects, cooks, designers, street artists and other professionals. The project, located in a large-scale art hub located in a former ware-

64 In order to understand the context in which these collectives first became active, it is important to look at the political changes that were under way in Indonesia in the late 1990s. The country's second-ever president, the military leader Suharto, stepped down in 1998 ending a 31-year rule following violent protests and riots. During his regime, which foreign commentators described as a dictatorship, to label an art space as 'alternative' would have signaled political dissent. But the period that ensued, the *reformasi*, ushered in a golden age of grassroots initiatives, local cultural production, and alternative media that was urgently needed to provide outlets for the previously denied youth-, and countercultures. It is this the social and political ground in which these groups established themselves.

house in the Southern part of Jakarta, houses a multitude of collectives with differing practices and artistic mediums: installation, archive, video, sound, performance, media art, public participation, printmaking, graphic design, education, among the others.

Such contemporary art ecosystem has been developed from a not-for-profit work model, with the aim of upholding their activity in a sustainable manner within a context marked by the lack of infrastructure support and opportunities for contemporary art discourse and practice. A large part of GUDSKUL's operational support comes from its constitutive collective, which in turn was given by donor institutions, sponsors, and independent funding from its business unit, apart from the funds given from the members out of their own volition.

Driven by the pragmatic need to share resources of space and equipment, as well as by the urge to democratize artistic and social participation through the engagement with broad communities, students and young artists, the collective follows the guiding principle of *lumbung*. The practice of *lumbung* – the Indonesian term for 'rice barn' - refers to a specific working model based on the communal surplus-grain warehouse intended for shared future use which is distributed according to jointly determined criteria. Following this notion, GUDSKUL has developed a specific methodology aimed at putting into practice propositions based on collectivity, resource building, and equal sharing. The organization has set a co-storehouse system where every resource is collected and shared in proportion to every collective need. The various resources come in many forms: money, program, equipment or even books. Those assets are pooled together for easier access and sharing for every member of the collective.

Lumbung is also the guiding principle of documenta 15, directed by one of the GUDSKUL collectives, ruangrupa, who brought the work done in Indonesia to the international platform of Kassel, Germany. The big event, scheduled for the summer of 2022, has been preceded by a series of activities that are preparing the road to the pro-

gramming in Kassel. The main idea behind the curatorial work for documenta is explained by the collective: "We want to create a globally oriented, collaborative and interdisciplinary art and culture platform that will remain effective beyond the 100 days of documenta fifteen. Our curatorial approach strives for a different kind of collaborative model of resource use—in economic terms but also with regard to ideas, knowledge, programs and innovations".[65]

In this regard, ruangrupa has set up the '*lumbung* members'[66], a growing international network of art initiatives rooted in local social structures adopting an experimental approach in terms of organizational praxis and economic sustainability. By connecting organizations that share the *lumbung* guideline, it seems clear that the collective is trying to use the international exposure provided by the biennial to let emerge a series of community-based realities active at a local level, which generally are not as visible as other more celebrated actors in the contemporary art scene.

Conclusions

The analysis of the three case-studies demonstrates a variety of approaches to the theme of self-institution by artists in the broad domain of education. The artists involved in initiating those educational platforms identified existing sensitive issues to address in their practice and established specific institutions that keep operating through time. In the Silent University case, the problem of accessibility for forced migrants and displaced people to the work

65 See documenta 15 website: https://documenta-fifteen.de/en/about/

66 Among the lumbung members there are a series of international realities, such as Britto Arts Trust (Dhaka, Bangladesh), FAFSWAG (Auckland, New Zealand), Fondation Festival sur le Niger (Ségou, Niger), GUDSKUL (Jakarta, Indonesia), INLAND (Spain), INSTAR (Havana, Cuba), Jatiwangi art Factory (West Java, Indonesia), Más Arte Más Acción (Chocó, Colombia), OFF-Biennale (Budapest, Hungary), Project Art Works (Hastings, UK), Question of Funding (Ramallah, Palestine), Trampoline House (Copenhagen, Denmark), Wajukuu Art Project (Nairobi, Kenya) and ZK/U – Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik (Berlin, Germany). For more details, see: https://documenta-fifteen.de/en/lumbung-members/?order=abc

environment they trained for, and, more in general, to the UE countries they emigrated to. For INSTAR, the possibility to create a common and safe space to share knowledge and cooperate in social change in the Cuban context. GUDSKUL, instead, by creating an open infrastructure for artistic collectives to come and work together, operates to meet the needs of a wide range of professionals engaged in the cultural field.

Furthermore, most of the examples point out the adoption of a bottom-up approach in the instituting process, visible in Bruguera's launch of a crowdfunding campaign to start INSTAR and in GUDSKUL's collective endeavor to build up their art ecosystem. An exception, in this sense, is the Silent University, which, since its inception in London, created a series of partnerships with established art institutions. Nevertheless, also in this case, the strategy implemented changed according to places and community of reference, as shown in Athens and Amman branches, where a bottom-up approach was preferred.

Even if every project refers to a particular target group and adopts specific strategies for their sustainability, they all denote how more and more artists are using their public role in discussing fundamental rights in our contemporary world. These new institutions can be recognized as attempts to broaden the public sphere in a historical moment in which access to it is limited to privileged actors by building up the conditions to favor an exchange, dialogue, and learning environment for different members of the society.

The intervention in the arts and the social sphere shows the 'double ontology' (Bishop, 2012) of the long-term projects. By addressing immediate participants and spectators, this feature makes them function both on a direct and symbolic level, thus allowing them to be effective in multiple domains, such as education, culture and social engagement. This kind of operation uses the visibility and legitimacy provided by the arts field as a trampoline to "redistribute the sensible" (Rancière, 2006) and to intervene into that.

Finally, these experiments in education provide new forms of action by extending the learning experience to non-conventional audiences and introducing radical ways of sharing knowledge in contexts dominated by hegemonic discourses and practices in the cultural sphere. They can be read as 'instituent practices' (Raunig & Ray, 2009) properly because of their active engagement in thematizing and problematizing social and political conditions while being, at the same time, involved in the actualization of new worlds and visions through a critical positioning and self-reflexive attitude (Raunig, 2013).

The very act of turning authorial voices - like the ones of the various initiators examined - into multi-layered, polyphonic voices show a commitment to extending the spaces of possibility for concrete action and share their social responsibilities. This is where lies the political potential of these educational practices: by widening the horizon in which a counter-narrative can take place, artists become agents not only in reshaping the discourse around contemporary art and culture but also in creating a more inclusive space for people to practice and rehearse forms of emancipation.

However, it is still difficult to assess the effectiveness of these institutions, whether they are consistently matching with their mission through their level of activities, since there are no or very few available data to understand if the set goals correspond to the actual outcome they work for. On the other side, the absence of measurements dedicated to such analysis can be read as a firm strategy to resist the standards and requirements put forth by dominant neoliberal policies and political agendas, and to navigate in the undecided and open-ended 'grey zone' that characterize the civil space (Gielen, 2017), a yet to be defined domain that allows the reframing and reorganization of ideas, thoughts and people, and in which artistic imagination can play a crucial role for its prefigurative capacities.

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AN EXHIBITION AS A SITE FOR RADICAL DEMOCRACY.

[s]election.pl

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[S]election.pl was organised by the Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) as part of *At the Very Centre of Attention*, a series of exhibitions by selected major artists, lasting a whole year and aiming to 'reveal the potential of Polish art scene' (Szabłowski, 2005), diagnose its condition, suggest new ways of its interpretation and help the public to manoeuvre it (Mazur and Banasiak, 2014). As underlined by Jarosław Suchan – programme's curator – the intention was to showcase the celebrated in the West, but non-yet-recognized in its own country, „great period of Polish art" (Kowalska, 2005). For the first iteration Katarzyna Kozyra, Artur Żmijewski and Paweł Althamer were approached. Their solo shows were intended to showcase the impact and phenomenon of Grzegorz Kowalski's studio from which all of them emerged. This „Polish year in Poland" was dissembled right at the start by Althamer and Żmijewski who decided to subvert the concept and return to their university experience.

The project evolved through multiplication: two artists invited by the CCA expanded their endeavour to other participants – being their former classmates – which sabotaged the institution's idea. In result, completely different stakeholders were involved – people who were not artists, others who were, but did not operate in the mainstream scene but rather on its margins, while others who were celebrated in the field, did not receive invitations. Instead of a blockbuster exhibition, an unforeseeable process has materialized. During its course, *[S]election.pl* was expanded to involve several parties: people with disabilities, children, hired prostitutes, and finally anybody – scouted to the project through a classified ad in *Gazeta Wyborcza* daily newspaper.

This essay will aim to assess *[S]election.pl* as a project operating between the art and political areas, as well as examine its outcomes and read them through the notion of an exhibition as a tool for (radical) democratisation. To do so, it employs literature and archival survey, as well as conversations with its authors, Paweł Althamer and Artur Żmijewski.

Institutional and art historical contexts of *[S]election.pl*

It is impossible to analyse *[S]election.pl* without looking at the changes which happened in the Polish artworld in the early 2000s, and what could be called a mainstream turn within it. While throughout the 1990s Polish artists were primarily exploring the relationship between art and socio-politics, the consequent years exposed this „social turn" as impactless. An on-going series of scandals, court cases against artists, acts of censorship, removing curators and directors, finally, physical attacks on art, resulted in a gradual change in the mindset of the art world which slid towards creating its image as professionalized and prospectful. Consequently, local institutions introduced to its rhetoric the notion of success, applied similarly to other aspects of neoliberal reality of now socio-politically-transformed Poland post-1989. Art world's stakeholders recognized that the emerging generation of artists and curators is not any more interested in clashing with reality – as their predecessors in the 1990s – but aims to describe their environment through a symbolic system allowing them to understand it (Banasiak, Mazur and Szabłowski, 2015). It was clear that this change requires individuals representing the „new reality", able to negotiate and debate it. Thus, a range of initiatives at that time should be approached as resulting from the pressure put on institutions, expected to produce a „young art" boom (which indeed materialized). However, every paradigm shift of that kind requires reference points. Kowalski's studio suited this role perfectly, as a time-space in which several personalities and ideas came together and emerged as an internationally recognized phenomenon. *The Common Space, Private Space* exercise was a myth within this myth, and consequently, a suitable subject for *At the Centre of Attention's* framework (Szabłowski, 2005).

As it comes to what may be termed as history of social and participatory practice in contemporary art and exhibition making, the roots of *[S]election.pl* may be identified in the work of Joseph Beuys spanning the late 1960s and

1970s. The ideas of Beuys – and consequently several ambitions of social practice – came to life as result of seeking an alternative to the repressive and chaotic socio-political structures of Western post-war societies, as well as a desire to improve the economic and socio-political relations through creative, holistic and spiritual forces (Gyorody, 2014). Interestingly for the analysis of *[S]election.pl*, Beuys saw the place for change at the school of art. He claimed: „We want something new – that comes out of art! So, we are starting that logically here in an art academy" (Stüttgen, 2008). Profoundly, Beuys gave the change-making role to the public. His major influence was a continuous confidence of artists, curators and institutions, that the relations among the public – whether they are temporary interactions, or long-lasting relationships in already existing communities – constitute the work of art. Developed in the late-1960s and early 1970s, his social sculpture theory – initially a proposal aiming to heal the society, rather than artistic initiative *per se* – centered around the entire „process of living" and could be enacted by anyone, in any place and any time. Progressively, social sculpture transformed into a seminal form of art focused not only on its performative nature, but also on pedagogic intentions, political content and diversity of audiences. It became a type of practice exploring individual subjectivity and potential for social change by materializing through a network of collaborators with diverse opinions, being focused more on political cause rather than in art. Particularly since 1990s, we may identify a numerous practices which relate to the social sculpture, as well as art-historical terms which identify work that incorporates participation, civic action and conversation, such as: „collaborative", „participatory", „social practice", „dialogic", or „new genre public art".

Particular conditions of early 2000s, with contemporary artistic and curatorial practices expected to bring social impact – and simultaneous lack of guidelines on how to achieve it and assess it – led to what was later conceptualized as the 'educational turn' in contemporary art practice. In this move towards education, several practi-

tioners recognized the functional role of art and pursued towards an idea that the limitation of their own field may be overpowered by a turn towards pedagogy. Within this framework, participation was the key aspect, while the aim was focused on developing the active role of the public, and what follows obtaining a productive engagement in which the traditional roles of the art world were challenged, and the spectatorship was bypassed. Creators (which can be an umbrella term for what includes the roles of artist, initiator and curator) like Althamer and Żmijewski saw the format of the school as most potent in transforming the audience from „passive" to „active", and what follows exploring the notion of the emancipated „public" as art world's democratized space. In many cases, especially when it comes to Żmijewski's explorations of the participatory format, the public was forced to articulate a position to both the project and its socio-political context. The rationale behind it was a claim that productive engagement is possible only if the spectatorship is sidestepped and conservative societal and institutional relations are challenged. In this way, those creators attempted to avoid the trap set for education and participation as art, that is turning into „pseudo-critical pose" – and consequently remaining as caterer to the top-down structure of the art world even if operating on the model of a „school" or a „gathering" – unless operating in a real socio-political sphere.

Between the art and political world

[S]election.pl came to life as a resultant of several ambitions and aims: to create utopian spaces, but also to destabilize existing norms. Paweł Althamer pointed at the will to go against the economic and institutional drive towards championing the „creative individuality" on one hand, while on the other, question the political turn towards the re-growth of nationalism, xenophobic patriotism and conservative traditionalism (Althamer, 2020). The artist seen the *Common Space, Private Space* exercise as a metaphor for the contemporary social reality – in which

individual attitudes are negotiated within public area – and a way to test the openness of the communities both within and outside of the art world.

„The game" – as Althamer and Żmijewski termed it (Althamer, 2020) – began in a white square room, made of four sliding panels (allowing to close everyone from all sides) and measuring 4.25 x 4.25 x 2.5 meters. Apart from the cubical, the project took over additional room and the building's tower. Initially, all participants were enclosed in the cube. From that point, a series of movements by different participants have followed: drawing a „door" on the room's wall, painting around it and cutting it out with a saw. Finally, Paweł Althamer, opened the project to the public by removing the room's door. Soon after, participants built a staircase leading from the street, through a window, directly to the project space, underlining the openness of the situation. Despite that, „observing a rigid, numb institutional course of action" – as recalled by Żmijewski (Żmijewski, 2006) – the CCA decided to commit to the initial set date of exhibition opening, which in fact was an opening of an already opened project.

The project's method departed from *Common Space, Private Space*, a now-canonical exercise laying fundamentals for the participatory character and occupying a central place in Kowalski's pedagogic method (Sienkiewicz, 2014). The exercise is based on non-verbal process of communicating through signs, signals and gestures depending on the situation and actions of other participants, in which students and teachers participate on equal grounds. At the beginning, every participant has their own private space located in the common space. The former serves as a private territory, while the later as a form of agora. In due course, both spaces are integrating, overlapping itself and ultimately, the agora takes over the private space. Initially, the exercise was executed in an enclave, forming a type of „reality bubble" (Żmijewski, 2006). Within the bubble, a small and closed group of participants operated in secure conditions, while the main rule was respecting the actions of previous participants. Those conditions could be compared to one of

a hothouse or practicing on a model. The exercise remained strictly academic and with no impact on reality. The „bubble" always had defined boundaries, with socio-political antagonisms being pushed outside. Althamer and Żmijewski broke the main principles of the exercise – the protection was removed and 'cataclysms' caused by intruders introduced – and consequently the loyalty aspect and the „accessed code" were broken. As revealed by *[S]election.pl*, destructive tendencies came back when the exercise was repeated in conditions closer to the reality – the initial „hothouse" was meant to help students to grow, but in reality-checked conditions, it became a mechanism of repression.

Since its start, *[S]election.pl* emerged as involving breaking and the conventions of art and exhibition production – it was a process constantly questioning terms such as „author", „artwork" and primarily, „the exhibition". The resulting effect was defined by critics in various ways: as delegated performance, act of institutional critique, but also as a statement towards the „unfairness of the art world" with its low-quality debates, corrupted choices and neoliberal drive towards productivity and profitability (Ronduda, 2013). This last set of aspects was particularly visible due to the presence of „former-artists", „wannabe artists", „unrecognised artists" and „nevery-gonna-be artists". The game with 'institutional consecration', allowed *[S]election.pl* to create particular type of collaboration and rebellion, acutely inspiring and putting the aspect of institutional critique to the front. By forcing the audience into the role of the contributor, the project complicated the notion of participation. It responded to the growing pressure on art institutions: to generate rising numbers of visitors and produce comprehensible exhibitions.

Żmijewski and Althamer rejected solo exhibitions as they did not agree to „to a division into the better, i.e., those who managed as artists, and those who dropped out, the worse" (Mytkowska, Kowalski and Żmijewski, 2011, p. 119). They decided to go back to the reality of Kowalski's studio, to the „primary indefinite", the state before the filtration which institutions apply towards artists and the time

before negotiation the worth of artists. As underlined by Althamer, this questioning of institutional celebration, revealed his will to seek creative solutions, instead of being limited to „writing complaints and lamenting" (Althamer, 2020). The project not only broke away from both exhibition requirements and institutional conventions, but also became a challenge to the very principle of institution's operation, an endeavour which almost dismantled its host from inside – forming an institutional critique assignment which occupied a space just between the pressures of the market and state (Płucienniczak, 2019). The aspect of contesting the art world customs and subverting the institution's dignity was particularly visible during the opening of the exhibition: both Althamer and Żmijewski appeared in purpose-made customs of creative directors; the visitors could partake in a balloon ride in order to see the opening from above; finally, the opening of the exhibition was a closure of the actual project as no further actions were conducted. In result, both artists challenged the institution by rejecting the hierarchy, shifting the political relations within it and ultimately horizontalizing them.

At large, the project emerged in response to a set of challenges: the CCA's will to contribute to the mainstream turn within the scene and position itself within it, as well as to the pivotal parliamentary election revealing a deep societal division and a slow rise of populist politics. On another layer, it was a heated public discussion muddied with populism which influenced *[S]election.pl*. The project's preparations coincided with the parliamentary and presidential elections after which the right-wing party Law and Justice took both wins and formed a coalition with the agrarian populist Self-Defense and the radical right League of Polish Families. In this way, the political forces always treated as alien by the art world, yet operating far from it, took a central spot both in the field of power and the public discourse. The 2005 election not only elevated to power a populist coalition, but also reconfigured societal divisions and Polish politics. During the campaign, Law and Justice rebranded the economic and political issues into a conflict between a

'social-solidaristic' and „liberal" Poland. The discourse the party have employed mimicked earlier conspiracy visions of Polish post-socialist transformation being taken over by the immoral and corrupt pact of the elites. As an outcome, Law and Justice united the rhetoric of its junior coalition partners: the anti-liberal economic narrative of Self-Defence party with the framework of socio-cultural „Christianity fortress" represented by League of Polish families, all embedded into the solidaristic-liberal divide, ultimately merging several conflicts into one meta-narrative – the battle between „Liberals" and „Socialists" (Pytlas, 2020).

Żmijewski responded to this socio-political condition – filled with insistent political and PR statements, campaign stunts and self-promotion – by stating that he intends for the art scene to reflect the ideological landscape which could be found in politics. He claimed „there is no conflict in art—instead we have statements and noble manifestos of goodness, kind help, and care. Art has become overly ethical" (Mytkowska, Kowalski and Żmijewski, 2011, p. 126).

Assumptions vs reality

Althamer was not reluctant to admit that he invited Żmijewski to the project because of his interest in working with conflicts (Althamer, 2020). He predicted that involving such partner would allow them to test the endurance of CCA's level of flexibility. Żmijewski emerged as an artist who took a discursive and clearly political position and began as exploring structural mechanisms, national chauvinism, traumatic legacy of World War II, or the societal exclusion of the handicapped. His earlier works however, were seen as „difficult to accept" due to their harshness. Concurrently, he established a method of arranging a social situation, introducing a group of people into it, testing how they behave and react when confronted. This practice – manifested in works such as *Them* (2007) or *Two Monuments* (2009) – was usually recorded by Żmijewski with a camera, while himself rarely participated in the event. This method was

closely associated with his critical stance towards the actual socio-political impact of contemporary art. The artist claimed that contemporary art „has no consequences" and remains as an „empty, theatrical gesture", which, although celebrated, remains with no outcome to the public located outside of the art world (Sowa, 2010). Large part of his criticism was directed towards art institutions, art criticism and curatorial practice which overshadowed contemporary art with ambitions to define the art world. All of this led the artist to the claim that the exhibitions – as a conservative format – no longer satisfy him (Sienkiewicz, 2012).

In 2007, Żmijewski published a proposal for „applied social arts", which motivated his own artistic practice and projects such as *[S]election.pl*, as well as determined the approach to larger curatorial projects, such as *Berlin Biennale* 7 in 2012 (Rejniak-Majewska, 2014). In the text, Żmijewski presented artists as „functionaries of emancipation", whose work must serve social change and whose art should „possess the power of politics but not its fear, opportunism, and cynicism" (Żmijewski, 2007). Simultaneously, Żmijewski pursued explorations of Kowalski's educational methodology outside of art institutions, through paracuratorial and private settings. During his DAAD residency in Berlin (2009), he involved a group of fellow artists in a range of exercises which led to inviting the group to Warsaw Academy of Fine Art's plein air in Dłużewo, Poland. Żmijewski arranged a „game" between the „Poles" – Academy's students – and „Germans" – artists from Berlin. Spread between eight days, exercise ended up with a failure filled with scepticism, leading to an impasse. In a tipping point, both groups negated the exercise, trying to decide who is the game's influencer. The group accused Żmijewski of exploiting the participants and aiming to commodify the game. In consequence, as admitted by Żmijewski, the situation got out of control and steered towards dangerous events, revealing the weakness of an exercise once employed in a non-controlled environment (Żmijewski, 2020).

In this context, the outcome of *[S]election.pl* predated further projects of Althamer and Żmijewski as an anti-ex-

hibition, or rather exhibition without any form. The viewers were not able to fully grasp what they should relate to. Many claimed that the process of communication between the artist and the audience needed some convention. The observers and participants brought up the radicalism of the situation dominated and manipulated by Althamer and Żmijewski, but also the hermetic quality of the project which materialized in an empty space filled with non-readable evidence, mostly in the form of shredded, overpainted paper. The reason for that could be the involvement of stakeholders with a different state of mind than the one projected by Kowalski in his initial exercise. Although inviting the 'intruders' aimed to confront the participants with reality, the final outcome became a spectacle, or rather a sequence of soloists – a stimulated social situation with all its unclarity, conflict, filth and absurdity. As described by Grzegorz Kowalski, the situation was „filled with scream". The one who spoke softly, was not heard anymore' (Kowalski, 2006).

The most significant part of the project started instantly after the institution's approval and finished before the actual exhibition was launched. Participants could come to the project space any day and do whatever they wanted, based on the agreed rules, or by breaking them. Both Althamer and Żmijewski agreed that the project could benefit from introducing additional groups – called by them as „elements" – which could accelerate and enrich it (Żmijewski, 2020). Those included Nowolipie Group – participants of the ceramic workshop for people suffering from sclerosis multiplex – with whom Althamer started a long-term collaboration, kindergarten pupils (which painted over walls and demounted one of the artefacts), school children, sex workers (who complained about lack of alcohol and examined the instituton's collection) or a gardener. As the actions with the 'elements' often ended up with destruction of artworks created by other participants, the agreement between the participants was broken. The initial exercise confronted unregulated reality.

In a moment pivotal to the project, a poster of Donald Tusk – then presidential election contestant – in a Wehr-

macht uniform appeared in the gallery space. It is unclear how exactly the poster – designed by Bartłomiej Kurzeja, alumni of Warsaw's Academy of Fine Arts, member of radical right party League of Polish Families, and acquaintance of Althamer – entered *[S]election.pl*.[68] It is known that at the time Kurzeja was circulating leaflets discrediting Tusk on the basis of his family ties to Nazism. At some point leaflets reached Althamer and Żmijewski whom decided to reproduce and exhibit them, willing to test the reaction of the group and the wider public (Althamer, 2020). The gesture caused a deep crisis among the group and immediate outcry of both the press and the mainstream audience. This moment not only provoked questions about the sense of participation and the limits of free speech, drawing a borderline between the participants and radical „elements", but also manifested the way of how populism – based on regressive fears – entered the public debate. Initial participants saw the poster as comprising the rules of the game. The visual message became a subject of disgust, not of discussion and interpretation. On another hand, it became a fulfilment of Żmijewski's goal: for the art scene to reflect the political and ideological landscape.

The project went through another crisis as result of the All Souls' Night event which Althamer and Żmijewski organised at the CCA. Under the influence of alcohol, narcotics, as well as „forces, ghosts and emotions which accompany this particular day" (Althamer, 2020), one of the participants engaged in demolishing the gallery space, while others entered in physical conflicts. The emotions revealed throughout the night turned from criticism into rampage. As recalled by Żmijewski: „Disgust, an aversion to everything we did, got the upper hand over our will to add on and build" (Żmijewski, 2006). During the night Żmijewski organised a burial and cremation of some of the already exhibited objects. He invited the „elements" once again in order to persuade the others that they should not be committed to their material creations and recognize the

68 Both Althamer and Żmijewski have slightly different memories of this event.

ephemerality of their actions. The act of „obliteration" executed by Żmijewski was in fact an act of selection and iconoclasm. Simultaneously, it was also a response to other participants who rejected the creation of „others" – the children or the handicapped – in which he wiped everything out. The artist himself commented on this by saying: 'It is interesting that after this destruction, the space started to be filled with actions, traces of people, as if the wound would heal itself very quickly and there would be no mark left. It is yet another proof that even if the destruction or intervention is massive, we can resist it' (Żmijewski, 2020). All those destructions were swept away by an action of two other participants who repainted the gallery space, with white paint. This gesture completed the project – it froze it in whiteness. Soon after, however, new visual statements appeared on this white void. In this way *[S]election.pl* managed to re-emerge. This – according to Żmijewski – was a proof for the project's resilience (Żmijewski, 2020).

The impact and lessons of *[S]election.pl*

Asked about the project's outcome, both artists speak about the value of the process itself, underlining that the communication and exchange, as well as the ability to compare the expectations and real experience, were the most important result of the 'game' which in itself is unpredictable. The exercise itself did not demand producing complete works from its participants. The focus was on establishing a chain of reactions to previous statements. In consequence, the aspect of value (whether intellectual or material), so precious in the artworld or art education, was side-lined, liberating the participants from the demands of contemporary art's eco-system and subverting its evaluation system (Żmijewski, 2020). The outcome of *[S]election.pl* was a recording of the process and artistic conversation – an intuitive snapshot of reality, not the works created throughout the project which were deprived of 'artistic immunity – anyone could modify or even destroy them. The essence of the project would not be achieved without

the public and participants as the course and execution of events was determined by people.

In consequence, it is difficult to identify a solid conclusion of *[S]election.pl*. Only definitive outcome presented to the public was the documentation. The authors, participants, and public which entered the project in its pre-exhibited stage, took from it the experience of artistic and social exchange, as well as a belief that conversation in this format is possible. The totality of *[S]election.pl* – with its blending of power hierarchies and the desire to reflect the wider socio-political paradigm – however, leads us towards considering this project as trialling the medium of an exhibition as a site for radical democracy. This proposal drew from Żmijewski's claim that artists should contribute to resolving societal problems, visible also when it comes to executing the democratic model in post-transformation Poland. In his understanding, artists „produce artefacts – social and cultural situations – which „infect" different areas of the societal system in the way that viruses infect living organisms. They „pollute" it or modify it. The infected system needs to adjust – heal or get healed" (Żmijewski, 2007). Consequently, in the case of *[S]election.pl*, and similarly to the practice of Beuys, Althamer and Żmijewski facilitated the process of communication and radical democratic exchange as artistic medium, rather than focusing on producing objects with a socio-political meaning. Significantly, and in the spirit of radical democracy, both creators gave the role of enacting change to the public and spontaneous collaborators drawn to the project via various means. Throughout the project, both of them worked on attracting the interest and sourcing contributions of groups located far from the art world. They used dialogue (even if pursued in antagonistic mode) aimed at encouraging creativity, in order to enact change. Finally, they hijacked the order of the art world in order to break socio-political and economic barriers, aiming to support those without access to institutions.

Żmijewski's practice at this point was clearly influenced by the philosophical work of Jacques Rancière, a thinker interested in the political potential of the people who as a common are able to generate their own strategies

of collaboration, education and resistance. This proposal and its rejection by liberal agenda stand closely to Chantal Mouffe's terms, in which the liberal thought characterised by individualist and rationalist approach is unable to acknowledge the pluralistic nature of the social realm for which the conflict is fundamental (Mouffe, 2007, p.7). Both thinkers recognize the pivotal role of art in the hegemonic struggle which characterizes the contemporary democratic order. As put by Rancière „the claim that the tradition of societal and cultural critical potential is exhausted, is fundamentally wrong" (Rancière, 2011, p. 41).

As employed by *[S]election.pl* this model occurred as revealing several flaws: particularly when it comes to the chauvinistic voice of Kurzeja, which put the effectiveness of non-filtered participation into the test. At this point, the fear of radical ideological difference, abolishment of hierarchies and non-controlled input of outsiders, finally, the fear of destruction dominated the situation and led to withdrawals. At the same time, it is worth considering this project as being unable to meet expectations due to the fact that its socio-political and institutional environment was already troubled. As an artistic, and simultaneously socio-political tool, *[S]election.pl* went further than many other attempts to redistribute institutional space: it confronted several obstacles and attempted to disseminate visibility, instead of merely „presenting the creativity" of the underrepresented. Simultaneously, the legacy of this project may open the discussion about participatory models of exhibitions and their potential to impact and reflect the socio-political realm with all its aspects, including those which are refused by mainstream politics. The outcome suggests also the radical democracy participation within the art world as a process-based exchange and mutual commitment, rather than a set of independent performances. Its most problematic aspects are located in non-linearity, randomness and unpredictability.

Despite having its ground in *Common Space, Private Space*, *[S]election.pl* was a fundamental modification of this pedagogic exercise, primarily when it comes to opening the game to external forces and players. *[S]election.pl* was meant

to correct „weaknesses of this exercise", seen by Żmijewski as eliminating the forces of reality and limiting the perspective to the viewpoint of a small group (Sienkiewicz, 2008). In case of *[S]election.pl* the reality of the exercise, turned disloyal to the initial expectations. Some of the participants – as according to Żmijewski – withdrew because they were not ready to confront an unpredictable reality (Żmijewski, 2006). They placed material value of their own (fetishized) creation over its semantic value. They left complaining about being overshadowed by guests and visitors. As commented by the author of the exercise, Grzegorz Kowalski, the aspect of destruction – whether it came to taming aggression or desire for destruction – was unwelcomed by some of its participants but cognitively highly beneficial (Kowalski, 2006). The rule of respecting and not destroying others' work was fundamental to the initial exercise. According to Żmijewski and Althamer, however, the rejection of destruction meant eliminating the risk. Furthermore, protecting the work led to no opportunity of learning how to deal with destruction, thus, restraining emotions which may come back uncontrollably. The will to destroy – even in isolated conditions – was still present but remained not understood. Althamer and Żmijewski decided to employ destruction in a senseless way, yet as it occurred, it did not destroy the game as whole, but became a part of it. In consequence, *[S]election.pl* pushed institutional and conceptual boundaries so far that it in fact tested the limits of CCA as an art institution on one hand, while on the other, it explored limits of delegated performance with its ability to bring tangible artistic and curatorial outcome. Yet, it was a revealing move when it comes to opening new perspectives, expressions and fields of interpretation.

The project can be seen as the realisation of Althamer's and Żmijewski's employment of art as an autonomous field of philosophy. As manifested by *[S]election.pl*, participatory practice may inform and enrich theoretical debates, serving as a ground for testing theoretical assumptions, enacting them in real action. As an area where effect may be quickly grasped and assessed – by the media, critics, audience or participants – it serves the role of a testing ground

– highly fertile when it comes to intellectual exchange and building social bonds, but also fragile to destruction, antagonisms and power negotiations, which are often difficult to receive and understand. It is clear that the exercise could not be directly translated to the political arena, yet its outcomes are noteworthy to those who may want to improve the way in which contemporary art engages with the social and political arena. Consequently, the project's legacy stands as a benchmark for artistic and curatorial engagement with an exhibition as a site for radical democratic exchange.

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SCHLINCENSIEF'S FAILED CHANCE FOR DIRECT DEMOCRACY, FAILURE AS CHANCE. A CASE STUDY

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The emergence of Christoph Schlingensief

The relevance of Christoph Schlingensief's art praxis and his rich film, theatre, television, opera, and subsequent projects even a decade after his death is gaining on importance. Artistically influenced by Wiener Aktionismus but also Joseph Beuys among others, he shared the view with Beuys that an artist's Curriculum vitae (in this case Lebenslauf=Werklauf) could be considered both as Poetry and Truth. Their total work of art (Gesamtkunstwerk) without this magical aspect would fail to sustain the necessary mythical source to prevail as a tool for interventions into mankind's future. Christoph Maria Schlingensief was born on October 24th 1960 in Oberhausen, an industrial city in Ruhr area, Germany. His father was a pharmacist and his mother a paediatric nurse, "a repeated running gag of the magical biography of Schlingensief" (Seeßlen, as cited in Schulz & Lochte, 1998). Similar poetical interventions into one's biography could also be found at Beuys. He grew up in a middle-class Catholic world, a child between the times who had to carry out the necessary revolt as a reflection of the previous generation. The heroic revolt of the 68ers, which had to unintentionally tip into the comic, was repeated in the revolt of comic provocations, which unintentionally turns into heroism (Excerpt from his biography written by Georg Seeßlen, as cited in Schulz & Lochte, 1998).

This partly resembles Karl Marx's famous quote: "Hegel says somewhere that great historic facts and personages recur twice. He forgot to add: 'Once as tragedy, and again as farce'" (Marx, 1914 [1852]). Partially because of Schlingensief's petit bourgeois family background and strong catholic upholding (he served at the altar for 16 years), he became sensitive to the social, political climate of afterwar Federal Republic of Germany and in the following West Germany. One of his most notable films regarding German unification/division is *The German Chainsaw Massacre – The First Hour of the Reunification* (in German: *Das deutsche Kettensägenmassaker*, also known as *Blackest Heart* in the United States, 1990), co-produced by G.

Hecker and H. Riesenfeld and written and directed by C. Schlingensief, with a plot in which a coming of social injustice and inequalities between former East and West Germany were envisioned for the decades to come. Schlingensief studied German studies, philosophy, and art history (1981–1983) at Ludwig Maximilians University of Munich. Later, he unsuccessfully applied twice to the University of Television and Film, Munich (*Hochschule für Fernsehen und Film München*, HFF Munich). These unfortunate events could be considered as crucial departure points of his career and a basis for new creative energy to make films, which in this form, under the umbrella of HFF Munich, would not have been possible. Another notable rejection anecdote is from his teenage years, when, at age 16, he presented his Super8 film *Mommy, We're Shooting a Movie* (1977) (in German, *Mensch, Mami, wir drehn'nen Film*) at the WDR (Television) in the children's editorial office. When the light went on – the mood was like in an ice cellar –an editor stood up and said: "I only know one thing when I see the film: you will never be able to love a human being in your life. Because you weren't interested in the people" (Schlingensief, 2012).

The traces of this type of formative experiences (traumas) remained throughout in his films and theatre presentations, but nevertheless Schlingensief was very effective in turning his personal "failures" into chances for some new forms of creativity represented in his artistic projects. His wife, Aino Laberenz, is active in the conservation and recontextualization of his rich heritage.

Rebellion against reality

After the second world war increasingly, there was a tendency to block out possibilities of all future wars. The traumatising effects of holocaust and the totalitarian system which created the conditions for it were topics for research and development of new system theories and control strategies using mass media. The Californian F-scale (1947) personality test developed by Theodor W. Adorno and others was among the first tools for detecting "authoritari-

an personalities". Later the use of cybernetics in mass data analysis and the spread of mass surveillance systems became the new reality. As American Sci-fi author Philip K. Dick, well known for his dystopic visions pointed out:

> Because today we live in a society in which spurious realities are manufactured by the media, by governments, by big corporations, by religious groups, political groups... So, I ask, in my writing, what is real? Because unceasingly we are bombarded with pseudo-realities manufactured by very sophisticated people using very sophisticated electronic mechanisms. I do not distrust their motives. I distrust their power. They have a lot of it. And it is an astonishing power: that of creating whole universes, universes of the mind. I ought to know. I do the same thing. (Dick, 1978 [1995])

It is easy to imagine that the speech Philip K. Dick gave ten years after the 1968 upheavals was mysteriously connected in its spirit to the revolts against reality, or, better to say, against the post-WWII political order in Europe. Schlingensief in mid nighties Germany saw the failures of expanding neo-liberal policies, as outsourcing the jobs to easter Europe, but also to China, reduction of the welfare state created a raise in unemployment numbers which had the potential for mass upheavals. This is exactly the point where his activism connected to the reality of everyday people with artistic means.[70]

Even more aptly on the relationship between art and reality, Theodor W. Adorno (2002 [1931]) wrote in his early essay, *Why Is the New Art So Hard to Understand?*

> The shock that accompanied the new artistic movements immediately before the war is the expression of

70 We did not say: we want the communist market, we only said: this reality is occupied by parties, churches, labour unions, the media, etc. This is System I. We want into System II. Because 'the way persists, even if the goal explodes' (Heiner Müller). Because in a world, where money is the only value that makes orientation possible, humanity cannot survive – said Heiner Müller also. (Schlingensief, 1998)

> the fact that the break between production and consumption became radical; that for this reason art no longer has the task of representing a reality that is preexisting for everyone in common, but rather of revealing, in its isolation, the very cracks that reality would like to cover over in order to exist in safety; and that, in doing so, it repels reality. (Adorno, 2002)

Challenging the status quo, testing what is real? What is democratic? What is art? These are some of the crucial questions in Schlingensief's works and some of them are rooted in the happenings of the sixties. Beuys approached the question of this *reality* as philosophical, spiritual truth, which is only accessible through intensely challenging what it means to be a human. "It is basically only the confrontation with the hidden truth of the world, which wants to enter the world as a tremendous force, but cannot, because consciousness is so entrenched"[71] ("Beuys über Beuys", 1985; translated by the author).

An important milestone into artistic confrontation with reality, or, better to say, war of images is to be found in the Documenta 5 Exhibition in Kassel (1972) with the title *Questioning Reality – Pictorial worlds today*. The commercialisation of images and the promotion of the values of consumer society based on the US model found its way into European societies, perhaps even more so in West Germany. Documenta 5 was partly addressing these tendencies, with countercultural artistic reaction. Documenta 5 was curated by Harald Szeemann but Bazon Brock also played a key role in the Exhibitions concept development. Brock's project, a realised visitor school "Action teaching", took place as an "audio-visual foreword" on the ground floor of the Fridericianum where visitors where visually-culturally prepared for the artworks to be seen. Brocks concept, to show what cannot be shown (in a parallel exhibition of concepts and artefacts that could not be realised), in order

71 „Es ist ja im Grunde genommen nur die Konfrontation mit der verdeckten Weltwahrheit, die als ungeheure Gewalt in die Welt rein will, aber nicht kann, weil sich das Bewusstsein so verschliesst".

to educate viewers on what is visible, and how it is related to the creative process, was and remained a vivid example of how the reception of contemporary art can be educated. Unfortunately, Brock also needed to give up the idea of a real parallel exhibition at Documenta 5, his parallel exhibition was rejected by supporting organisations, the City of Kassel and the State of Hesse, as well as by the German Federal Cultural Foundation as founders. The polemic, pluralistic approach to images which are not yet shown, but could be envisioned, reappeared few decades later in Schlingensief's work. On the topic of alternative images of reality, he enounced emotionally:

> One sees an image and thinks that is the world but forgets that there are actually many images of the world. That one also has within oneself many images, ideas, longings that couldn't be satisfied on which one continues to depend to the point where one could cry. Because one had to give them up. The human being consists not just of chemistry, but also of so much longing. (Forrest, 2015; Schlingensief, 2012).

Figure 1: Bazon Brock with Christoph Schlingensief, at a "Church of Fear" event, Frankfurt am Main, 2003

In Schlingensief's *ATTA ATTA – Die Kunst ist ausgebrochen,* "a mystery play" at the Volksbühne theater Berlin (2003), he endorsed Brock by inviting him among others into his rehearsal lectures accompanying the Attaism Seminar,

the First Attaist Congress with Péter Nádas, Frank-Patrick Steckel, Bazon Brock, Peter Sloterdijk, Peter Weibel, Boris Groys, and Thomas Hauschild. The First Attaist Congress took place between 02 December and 20 December 2002 at the Volksbühne theatre Berlin. Teresa Kovacs (2011), an expert on Schlingensief wrote about this project:

> The artist dealt with the question of the "weaponry of art" and made a comparison between the avant-garde artist, who aspires to immortality through art, and the Islamist suicide bombers. In doing so, he combined the two and staged a fundamentalist training camp for failed avant-gardists. (Kovacs, 2011)

A few years later, in his remarkable actionist speech held at *AREA7-Matthäusexpedition*, Burgtheater, Vienna, on 20 January 2006, Brock appreciated Schlingensief's installation, action. In his speech, besides many references to Beuys, and also to Thomas Mann, Brock pointed out:

> So, to speak, compared to the intentional rebarbarization claimed by Thomas Mann for modernity, i.e., wilful antihumanist gesture, for example of fascism, this is about a barbaric reintentionalization – a re-fulfilment of the meaning in the random, in the purely constellate, by rote, in the memorizing, in the courageous ness of the media. (Brock, 2006; translated by the author)

Brock went even as far as calling Schlingensief, with wit, "one of the Grand Masters of Syncretistic Constellative Art! He is only comparable to the great masters of Alexandria" (Brock, 2006; translated by the author).

Atonal democracy

The most notable reference to Attaism in Schligensief's work can be found in connection with the atonal music of Arnold Schönberg. Atonality as aesthetic attitude or even

political *non-correctness* could be widely found in Schlingensief's work. In his action 7 days disposal for Graz - artists against human rights[72], he introduced some key critical points of his political views: "Globalization and the end of the welfare state, the decomposition of belief and value systems, the total uncertainty require new reactions, new strategies, new virtues - perhaps the very old ones."[73] This continuous questioning of the status-quo of consumer or better to say information society through dissensual political attitude and artistic action based on humanist values were his methods questioning societal realities.
In Tara Forrests excellent book, *Realism as Protest: Kluge, Schlingensief, Haneke* (2015) we find the following passage:

> 'The world', he states, 'is asynchronous and I am atonal. [...] I have always worked atonally', while in his analysis of *Kunst und Gemüse, A. Hipler* (Art and Vegetables, A. Hipler), a production he staged at the Volksbühne in 2004, Schlingensief goes a step further, stating that Schönberg's music provided him with an important 'point of departure' and that his aim for the production was to develop a theatrical 'counterpart' to Schönberg's work. 'On the stage', he writes, there is a 'second music' that 'one can see but cannot hear'.

Recognisably, most of Schlingensief's theatre or film productions followed this logic of "surprise". His more political, direct democratic actions were also in line with this sort of messianic attitude, provoking and hoping for miracles and thus radical changes in society. The idea of society as "Social Organism" introduced by Beuys in relation to his concept of "Social Sculpture" (Soziale Plastik) envisioned that individuals could shape and form society through participation (labour) in cultural, political, and economic life. This idea was rooted partly in Rudolph Steiner's Social threefolding social theory (Soziale Dreigliederung). Nevertheless, since the

72 7 Tage Entsorgung für Graz - Künstler gegen Menschenrechte 4.-10.10.98, steirischer Herbst, Graz Obdachlosen-Pfahlsitzen und Aktionen mit Sandlern

73 https://www.schlingensief.com/projekt.php?id=t024

French Revolution and the promotion of its ideals – liberty in cultural life, equality in the sphere of rights, and fraternity in economic life – were rarely addressed by artists in this form. Beuys' "Office for Direct Democracy by Referendum" (1972) and "Free International University" (1973) were certainly inspirations for Schlingensief in his development of socially engaged art practices. As a recent reading of the Beuys biography by Hans Peter Riegel suggests, Beuys never really clarified how he related to the Nazi Regime (Riegel, 2013). It would be a far-fetched parallel that for Beuys or Schlingensief the usage of referendum (Volksabstimmung) in their actions would originate from the Nazi Era. Both protagonists received at some point the label of being Nazi. Schlingensief most notably for his Hamlet staging at Schauspielhaus Zürich (2001), as he coupled a group of six German neo-Nazis with the production who appear as "theatre squad in theatre" ("Schauspieltruppe im Schauspiel") as part of a resocialization program. In the case of Beuys, as Benjamin Buchloh put it: "the esthetic conservatism of Beuys is logically complemented by his politically retrograde, not to say reactionary, attitudes. Both are inscribed into a seemingly progressive and radical humanitarian program of esthetic and social evolution. The abstract universality of Beuys' vision has its equivalent in the privatistic and deeply subjective nature of his actual work. Any attempt on his side to join the two aspects results in curious sectarianism. The roots of Beuys' dilemma lie in the misconception that politics could become a matter of esthetics …"[74]

Where is the revolution?

In order to better understand the socio-political climate in which Schlingensief's ideas of revolt arose, it could be beneficial to remind us of certain tendencies in the late 20th-century Western European neo-liberal societies with a focus on West Germany, which also framed Schlingensief's imagination. As Thomas Piketty pointed out in his important

74 Buchloh, Benjamin: Beuys the Twilight of the Idol*, Artforum International*, January 1980, Vol. 18, No. 5

book, *Capital in the Twenty-first Century* (2014), after WWI and especially after WWII, as opposed to the destruction, also economic growth was generated, with the result of falling levels of inequality, and with almost half of the population being able to acquire some measure of wealth that gave reason for enthusiasm in the post-WWII western societies.

> This is part of the explanation for the great wave of enthusiasm that swept over Europe in the period 1945–1975. People felt that capitalism had been overcome and that inequality and class society had been relegated to the past. It also explains why Europeans had a hard time accepting that this seemingly ineluctable social progress ground to a halt after 1980, and why they are still wondering when the evil genie of capitalism will be put back in its bottle. (Piketty, 2014)

Certainly, the happenings of 1968 created the climate where the raised expectations, articulated in student revolts, remained mostly unfulfilled. As Max Horkheimer (1934) noted in *Dämmerung*: "A revolutionary career does not lead to banquets and honorary titles, interesting research and professorial wages. It leads to misery, disgrace, ingratitude, prison and into the unknown, illuminated by only an almost superhuman belief" (as cited in Kraushaar, 1998). Despite high expectations of students in the upheaval of the sixties, the chance for a real system change was altered. This historical "failure" later paved the way for the neo-liberal turn, beginning somewhere with the oil crisis (price rise) in the mid-70s. Certainly, it also has to do with different approaches on how economies and markets are regulated in capitalist countries. With the failure of Keynesian economics, governments increasingly focused on monetarist economics, resulting in long term cuts in social spending, deregulation of markets, and, over time, austerity measures. Roger Brown, the author of *The Inequality Crisis: The Facts and What We Can Do About It,* quotes a speech delivered at the 1976 Labour Party Conference by James Callaghan, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (1976–1979):

> We used to think that you could spend your way out of a recession and increase employment by cutting taxes and boosting government spending. I tell you in all candour that that option no longer exists, and in so far as it ever did exist, it only worked on each occasion since the war by injecting a bigger dose of inflation into the economy, followed by a higher level of unemployment as the next step. (Callaghan, as cited in Brown, 2017)

But as Brown also added: "the 'triumph of the market' was rendered complete by the implosion of the USSR and the collapse of Communism in the West in 1989–91" (Brown, 2019). I must add, I am not an economist, or an expert on financial politics or even sociology, but nevertheless it is still important to recall these economic processes since they contributed to the overall tendencies for the decades to come in western countries. This influenced not just the labor market but also the artistic production and practices. Rising unemployment became systematic for many western societies. In CHANCE 2000 (1998), Schlingensief started his first direct democratic grassroot movement, *The Political Party of Last Chance*, which was a participatory project taking part in the 1998 German elections. Every vote on the CHANCE 2000 party was guaranteed to be lost. A famous motto of the party was: "Vote for yourself!", which sought to mobilize all segments of society, including minorities which had no representation in the big political parties, among others, also the disadvantaged people, stepping in the direction of today's inclusion politics.

Figure 2: The CHANCE 2000 Election Flyer. Design: Katrin Schoof; Photo: Thomas Aurin

In order to thematise the issue of six million German unemployed, Schlingensief's action *Baden at Wolfgangsee* (in English, *Bathing in Lake Wolfgang*), a performance with friends at Helmut Kohl's holiday location, was organised on 2 August 1998 in St. Gilgen. Wolfgangsee became a vivid example of how the question of rising unemployment could be addressed by artistic means. He invited all the unemployed form Germany to take a bath in the Wolfgangsee lake, thus raising the level of water so it could flood the Chancellor Helmut Kohl's private summer house, making the question of unemployment unpleasant for the Chancellor. As Sarah Khan humorously concluded: "It was also about bathing in the mystery of Germany by submerging oneself in homeopathic amounts of Helmut Kohl's summer piss" (Khan, 2015). Schlingensief's comment, "Only Tom Peters'[75] parole: 'Failing as Chance' has come to honour. CHANCE 2000 failed gloriously with a result of only 0,1%" (Schlingensief, 1998), underlined this failure even more.

Figure 3: CHANCE 2000, Farewell Germany! (1998)

It is a sort of paradox that some of the 68ers' leading protagonists[76] later became part of the global elites and political establishment, with some even taking an active role

75 Thomas J. Peters (born November 7, 1942) is an American writer on business management practices, best known for his work *In Search of Excellence*, co-authored with Robert H. Waterman Jr.

76 Joschka Fischer, Javier Solana, and, to a much lesser extent, Daniel Cohn-Bendit.

in preserving the status quo in societies for the sake of major corporations and security organisations such as NATO. On the other hand, members of the student movement such as Rudi Dutschke or Joseph Beuys could not completely succeed in fitting into the newly developing neo-liberal system. Rudi Dutschke was shot in 1968 by a young anti-communist, J. Bachmann (first he survived, but died later in 1979 from a brain damage sustained during the assassination attempt), and Beuys, as being one of the founders of the German Green Party, did not receive any of the front list seats as a candidate for the German Bundestag in 1982 at the Federal Delegates' Conference. After this debacle, he ended his active political cooperation with the Green Party but still remained a member. Both these personalities served as an inspiration for Schlingensief's art.

A radio play, *Rocky Dutschke '68* (Schlingensief, 2020), satirically resembled the activities of Dutschke. And in the case of Beuys, as already mentioned his theory of Social Sculpture (Beuys, 1978) served as a key inspiration to Schlingensief's body of work.

His early performance, *Mein Filz, mein Fett, mein Hase, 48 Stunden Überleben für Deutschland* (in English, *My Felt, My Fat, My Bunny, 48 Hours Survival for Germany*) at Documenta X in 1997 paved the way into the Art World for this young Beuysianer. Much later, in 2009, another 1980 installation by Beuys, *Show Your Wound*, also served as an inspiration with the wound representing a section of a social organism that needs the heeling energies of art. He referred to this in his readymade-opera *Mea culpa* (2009) and the syncretistic requiem, fluxus-oratorium, *Die Kirche der Angst vor dem Fremden in mir* (in English, *A church of Fear vs. the Alien Within,* 2008). The intersection between personal and societal was one of Schlingesief's favourite topics in developing his projects. Schlingensief's last utopistic project, a total artwork (Gesamtkunstwerk), was developed in the best tradition of socially engaged art, in "the Opera Village Africa", Remdoogo,[77] located about 30

77 Remdoogo means "opera village" in Moré, the most widely spoken language in Burkina Faso.

km from Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. Beside Beuys's Social Sculpture theory, it was also inspired by Richard Wagner's opera house in Bayreuth. Schlingensief's not yet realized plan is to build a festival house in Africa that unites different worlds and times, where the rising black culture of Africa and the descending civilization of Europe are to unite into a game of delimitation but also of healing, education, and research. This project was endorsed by many politicians, intellectuals, international art professionals, as well as by the former Federal President of Germany, Horst Köhler.[78]

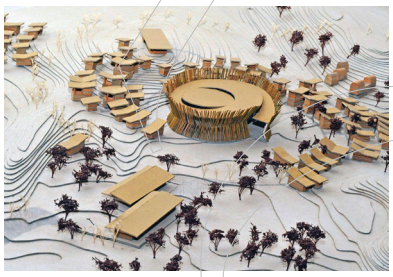

Figure 4: Opera Village Africa, future design

Figure 5: Opera Village Africa, actual stage of the project

A further representative case of rebellion against reality is Russell Brand, English comedian, actor, radio host, author, and activist who exemplifies the socially engaged activism with the goal of shaking up the usual political matrix. His activism resembles in many ways that of Schlingensief's. In his book titled *Revolution* (2014), he is prophesying the coming of a revolution. Of course, not in the sense of the French or Russian Revolutions. But certainly, in the way politics will be conducted, with a stronger emphasis on party politics. The 2016 US Elections exemplified these tendencies and the rising influence of social media platforms on election results. It is reasonable to conclude, that all

78 "The Operndorf is a project that arouses hope – hope that there can be a relationship between Europe and Africa, which is based on reciprocity and not on dominance. Hope that culture can contribute to the development of children and the development of a country. The Operndorf is a hope village." (Köhler, 2013)

around Europe people are turning away from big political parties (conservative, leftist, liberal, etc.) and orient themselves to non-mainstream political organisations, even if they are not socialist utopians as Brand would probably like to have them.

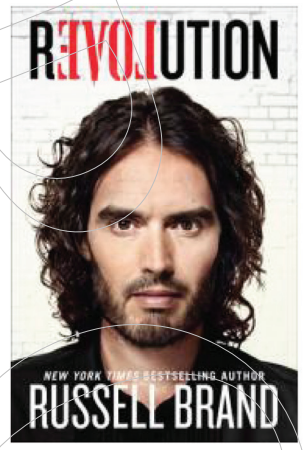

Figure 6: Russell Brand, Revolution.
Book cover, 2014

Another prominent representative of socially engaged artistic praxis is the Dutch artist, Renzo Martens. He is well known for his provocative project of poverty re-management of Congolese workers at a palm oil plantation in Africa. Martens founded the Institute for Human Activities in 2010. The stated goal of this research project is to "prove that artistic critique and artistic praxis on economic inequality can bypass it not just symbolically, but also in material terms" (Human Activities, n. d.). Since 2014, the Institute for Human Activities collaborates with the Cercle d'Art des Travailleurs de Plantation Congolaise (CATPC). This is another organisation started by Martens and the local workers, with the aim to generate artistic production by former workers of the Unilever palm oil plantation. The promotion of chocolate sculptures created by local Congolese artists resemble some key elements of Beuys's Social Sculpture theory. Most importantly, the possibility of involvement and formation of social processes. The marketing of these artistic goods is a process of cultural and value

exchanges on a global scale with a strong artistic critique on inequality. As Martens expressed in an interview:

> These people put so much power into the sculptures. They know about being on the losing end of capitalism, and they know how to make beautiful works about that. They ask, how can we charge chocolate with our thoughts so that it puts us on the global map and provides us with an income? (as cited in Boucher, 2016)

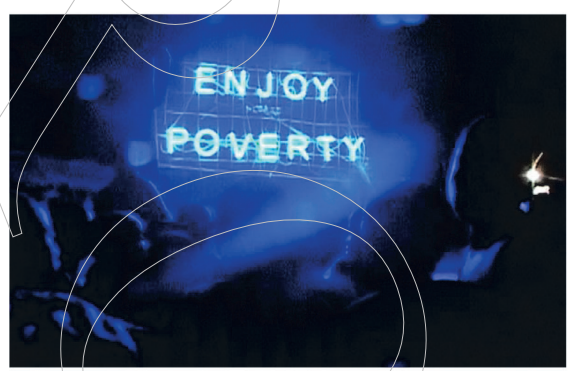

Figure 7: Episode III: Enjoy Poverty (2008) directed by Renzo Martens (creative documentary, approx. 90' and 52')

In his best-known documentary, *Episode III: Enjoy Poverty* (2008), Martens provocatively played with the idea to *materialise* poverty, thus turning it into a natural resource to be newly defined. The real help to local workers and unrealistic hopes of these same workers achieved a balance in this long-term artistic labour cooperation with local and international partners. The latest project by Martens on the former Unilever palm oil plantation in Lusanga, Democratic Republic of the Congo, is the starting of a western type of White Cube Gallery (2017). In the project manifesto we read: "With the establishment of the White Cube, the mechanisms through which plantations underwrite the art world are reversed. The white cube attracts the capital and visibility needed to invent a new ecological and economic model on site: the post-plantation" (Human Activities, n.d.).

Towards societal Change

Martens's White Cube and Schlingensief's Opera Village, both realised in Africa, are vivid examples of how artistic critique and artistic action can initiate social change. These socially engaged artistic projects are only some examples of how the different global challenges could be tackled and addressed by artistic means. The aim of engaged art history, among others, could be to reinterpret with a participative character the recent happenings of socially engaged art practices, reframing them to a deserved position in the contemporary art canon. Nevertheless, the direct democratic character of these artistic projects shows us, as Thomas Piketty (2014) similarly suggests, that a form of social federalism and participatory socialism could slow down the rising inequalities: "If democracy is someday to regain control of capitalism, it must start by recognizing that the concrete institutions in which democracy and capitalism are embodied need to be reinvented again and again." This exact democratic regain of control over basic processes in societies was one of the key goals of the aforementioned artists and their projects: the inventive, playful, creative approach to complex economic, political, legal issues created the conditions for change.

Even though some of these projects failed to a certain extent, the messianic attitude of these artists created hope for the hopeless. But as Schlingensief expressed his doubts on his personal failure:

> I got stuck in the ice at some point, I didn't get to the North Pole, I didn't reach the moon, I couldn't get my political views through, I didn't create mass movement, I didn't create art that would prevail. I didn't become who I wanted to be. (Schlingensief, 2012)

Certainly, we should not agree with him, his art prevails and hopefully will prevail for future generations.

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ART BUSINESS IN IRAQ: NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AS MARKET AGENTS 2003 - 2020

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Introduction

"I have all my character, I have my story to tell. I want my localization, my idea, to become a globalization"
- Jamal Penjweny (personal communication, July 1, 2020)

The development of the Iraqi art market between 2003 and 2020 provides an insight into the processes of cultural reconstruction in nations that have suffered from extended periods of conflict. International and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have had a large impact on the formation of a post-Saddam public and commercial art scenes in Iraq. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the role of international NGOs (INGOs) as market agents in the wake of the country's invasion in 2003 by American, British, Australian and Polish forces. NGOs are not generally classified as businesses because they are not geared towards profit, yet the pivotal role that many INGOs play in the art market as employers, commissioning agents and, in a few cases, as dealers, means that their function enters a commercial realm, placing them in the position of a market agent.[81] While this is a development which can be observed in various industries and markets, research into its impact on the structure of both the international and local art market, is missing. The role of a market agent is hereby understood as an actor in the art market who establishes networks and acquires works of art, but operates separately from auctioneers, dealers, or museum curators (Bracken & Turpin, 2021). The effect that INGOs have had on shaping Iraq's art scene over the past seventeen years has been extensive and reveals a wider trend concerning the increasing visibility of art from countries affected by war or conflict internationally.

81 An NGO is defined by the United Nations as a 'non-for-profit, voluntary citizens' group, which is organized on a local, national or international level to address issues in support of the public good' (APA, 2008).

The decision to focus on the role of INGOs, as opposed to local NGOs' work on the ground, is based on findings regarding the larger foothold that organisations based in the United Kingdom and the United States have in the art market. The market share for the United Kingdom and the United States is 20% and 44% respectively (McAndrew, 2020). As a result, NGOs operating out of the United Kingdom and United States have the potential to provide the widest reaching access to the international art market for artists that live and work in Iraq. The initial research for this project originated from a previous investigation into the production of war art internationally (Gatenby, 2020), which gave rise to seven semi-structured in-depth interviews with INGOs that have a direct role in exhibiting and distributing war art. The conversations formed the starting point for a series of semi-structured in-depth interviews with INGOs that have a connection to artistic production, academia or cultural preservation in Iraq. These interviews focused on INGOs that have a connection to artistic production, academia or cultural preservation in Iraq. They were conducted with the aim of discovering the nature of cultural INGOs' work in the primary art market, and ascertaining whether this work was influenced by external financial or political concerns. Consequently, the questions were framed around the individual INGOs' funding, partnerships and physical or digital arts programmes.

As the quantity of writings on the global art market has increased, it has become widely accepted that artworks exist within a larger economic and political framework (Adams, 2017; McNulty, 2013). Nevertheless, information on the cultural infrastructures in nations that are not key market players is still remarkably rare. Whilst auction sales data from Iraq is documented in ArtTactic's MENA Contemporary Art Auction 2019 report (Dewar, 2019), writing on the primary market is even more limited. Our research is therefore indebted to Nada Shabout's (2012) comprehensive writing on art making in Iraq and Hanan Toukan's (2010) reflections on contemporary cultural production in post-civil war Lebanon

which, whilst not geographically relevant, gave direction to the interviews conducted for this project. These interviews provide first-hand details of a facet of the Iraqi art scene that is otherwise underexplored. Writings on the art market in the Middle East are largely confined to what Mary Ann DeVlieg (2008) describes as the 'high-end Arab visual arts market recently discovered by Sotheby's […] and Christie's'. The type of art that is supported by the INGOs examined below does not fall into this category, and instead tends to be of lower financial value but includes conceptually ambitious work. With a focused study on the primary market and by framing the role of NGOs as market agents, it is hoped that this study enables the start of a conversation about the complexity of art production across the world within its often fragile economic, social and political conditions.

The Art Market in Iraq

The absence of a strong cultural infrastructure in Iraq in the first half of the 21st Century left a gap in the art market that has been filled by non-profit organisations. In order to understand the causes of this gap and the rise of the role of NGOs since 2003, it is worth briefly examining the 20th Century history of the Iraqi art market. Between 1940 and 1960 Baghdad was host to a flourishing 'Modernist' movement that is now referred to as the Iraqi art scene's golden age (Bahrani & Shabout, 2009). This golden age was characterized by the presence of commercial galleries, the founding of art schools such as the Baghdad College of Fine Arts and the formulation of a number of different artistic movements, including the Jum'at al Ruwwad (the Primitive Group) and Jama'et Baghdad lil Fen al-Hadith (The Baghdad Modern Art Group). The historian Hamit Bozarslan (2012) describes how over the following decades the arts sector continued 'to preserve some marginal, and thus autonomous, forms of expression' under the Baath party, prior to a tightening of state censorship of the arts by Saddam Hussein in the 1980s.

The art scene was already weakened by the cessation of state patronage in the 1990s (Shabout, 2012). However, it was the decade of sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council on Ba'athist Iraq between 1990 and 2003 that truly decimated the country's art scene and market. The sanctions limited international cultural exchange, but also access to the basic physical materials needed for artistic production. For this reason, when 'intense interest descended on Iraqi art, in search of an explicit art of dissent or resistance to Saddam' post-2003, it met with few results (Shabout, 2012). As a result of a combination of the cessation of state patronage, the effects of sanctions and the destruction of the country's physical infrastructure during the invasion, the art market in Iraq had become almost non-existent. The environment in Iraq today still limits the extent of artistic production. Adalet Garmiany the founder of ArtRole, a UK and Iraq registered NGO that works to promote cultural exchange between the Middle East and the rest of the world, describes how the struggles for utilities as basic as electricity and water means that the arts are not a top priority (personal communication, November 21, 2020).[82] Due to this lack of support and stability, it has been easy, but also necessary, for NGOs to step in as market agents. The rise of the NGO in Iraq's cultural sector is a trend that is consistent across nations impacted by conflict, such as Serbia and the Lebanon (Kern, 2015; "Serbia 1.1", 2019; Toukan, 2012), where they have acted as replacement 'infrastructures for the production, presentation, and circulation of novel artworks' (Toukan, 2012).

Case Studies

INGOs that work in Iraq's cultural sector can be divided into four key sections: cultural preservation, academic exchange, arts education and, lastly, support for the contemporary Iraqi art scene. The five INGOs exam-

82 All personal communication took the form of phone interviews conducted by Mary Gatenby.

ined in this paper all fall somewhere within these four categories (Table 1). Gulan is an organisation registered in London that aims to preserve the culture of Kurdistan through a combination of exhibitions, publications and digital archives, placing it firmly in the field of cultural preservation (http://www.gulan.org.uk). Although the Barakat Trust is similarly concerned with the conservation and documentation of cultural heritage, it does so through the promotion of academic exchange (https://barakat.org). The Barakat Trust was established in 1987 with the aim of preserving the heritage of the pre-1920 Islamic world through a combination of scholarships and grants. This type of academic support differs entirely from an organisation like SCOOP, a charity based in Ireland, that founded a programme in 2018 which provides arts and ICT education to young people in the Bajed Kandala refugee camp (https://scoopfoundation.org). ArtRole is a good example of an organisation in the fourth category. The charity's aim is both supporting Iraq's domestic art scene and increasing international cultural exchange. The organisation was registered in the United Kingdom in 2004, before registering in Iraq in 2010, and subsequently opening an office in Erbil. However, many organisations interviewed for this project such as the Iraqi American Reconciliation Project [IARP], a charity based in Minnesota that aims to promote 'reconciliation between Iraqis and Americans' (https://reconciliationproject.org), overlap in their support for practising artists that live and work in Iraq or Iraqi Kurdistan. ArtRole, Gulan and IARP have all held exhibitions of work by Iraqi artists internationally. Although these NGOs work within different sectors of Iraq's cultural scene, interviews with various organisation representatives have revealed a number of consistent findings pertaining to their role in creating visibility for Iraqi based artists. These findings will be divided into the following categories: distribution, funding, politics and digitalisation. Each of these sections will be examined in turn in order to establish the impact such organisations have on both Iraq's art scene

and its art market. This allows us to determine how each of these factors influence the five INGOs' role in Iraq's primary market and draw out trends which are relevant to analysis of art market developments in other conflict zones. When reviewing the work, funding and structure of the NGOs, it is worth noting certain facts about their scope and affiliations. Unlike ArtRole, Gulan, IARP and SCOOP, all of which were founded 2004 and 2009 in direct response to the conflict in Iraq, the Barakat Trust was established in 1987 and is focused on protecting Islamic cultural heritage internationally. For this reason, the Barakat Trust's funding is sourced from several of Saudi institutions such as The Tamer Group, and as a result, the politics and funding of the organisation, explored in detail later in the paper, are considerably different to the other case studies. Furthermore, Gulan and IARP are focused on producing content in the country in which they are based, as opposed to working directly in Iraq. Consequently, the organisations have a different emphasis politically and financially.

Organisation	Contact/ Position	Based	Aim	Category
ArtRole	Adalet Garmiany Founder	United Kingdom (2004) Iraq (2010)	'a contemporary arts organisation dedicated to building a cultural bridge between the Iraq – Middle East and rest of the world'	Contemporary Art
The Barakat Trust	Seif El Rashidi Director	United Kingdom	'Supporting and promoting the study and preservation of Islamic Art'	Academic Exchange
Gulan	Richard Wilding Creative Director	United Kingdom	'To help sustain the sense of Kurdish identity and to preserve the heritage of Kurdistan for the benefit of people of all cultures and identities'	Cultural Preservation
IARP	Kathy McKay Founding Executive Director	Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA	'Growing reconciliation and friendship between our communities and building a more peaceful world'	Contemporary Art
SCOOP	Calvin Sweeney Founder	Dublin, Ireland	'Give the young wwpeople of BK2 (Bajed Kandala Refugee Camp) a chance to learn new skills	Arts Education

Table 1: Case Studies.

Distribution

The fact that the INGOs researched for this project are registered in the United Kingdom, the United States and Ireland gives them access to gallery infrastructures in established markets, enabling them to act as market agents on behalf of artists based in Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan. INGOs provide artists with technical training and concrete distribution channels. In interviews with IARP, Gulan and ArtRole it was possible to see the impact of NGOs on how artists and artworks can gain visibility in established art market centres, particularly in Western democracies. Kathy McKay from IARP described how the NGO 'received hundreds of canvases from an artist's collective based in Karbala Iraq', who had taken the opportunity to 'send their canvases to Minnesota in suitcases' for a number of selling exhibitions (personal communication, June 4, 2020). Even when the visibility provided by NGOs does not have a commercial, sales-based outcome, such as Gulan's sponsorship of Jamal Penjweny to attend the 2013 Venice Biennale, it nevertheless has had a concrete impact on the Iraqi art market. Penjweny himself described the 55th Venice Biennale as a 'milestone for Iraqi artists' and their visibility on the international art scene (Bajaj, 2020). Without achieving international recognition and institutional validation, a step that is key in developing an artwork's reputation and value (McNulty, 2013), it is unlikely that artists who live and work in Iraq will achieve concrete results or see their work recognised in an international art market context, which in turn affects their local reputation. As a result, the fact that according to Penjweny, even today 'in Iraq there are not a lot of arts organisations, there are no residencies or that kind of thing' (personal communication July 1, 2020), makes it difficult for artists to take the first step on the road to institutional recognition without the support of INGOs. The involvement of INGOs in many facets of arts distribution on the commercial side is further illustrated by ArtRole's instrumental role in selecting artists for their display at the Istanbul Art Fair year on year, where they represent Iraq

with a stand for contemporary art (http://artrole.org/projects/istanbul-art-fair-2018/). Interviews with IARP, Gulan and Artrole have all revealed the involvement of NGOs in selling exhibitions, biennales and art fairs. Consequently, it can be seen that NGOs have a role in both commercial and curatorial international platforms.

The peculiar power of the NGO as a market agent in the Iraqi art market can be attributed to the absence of arts professionals living and working in Iraq, an absence that leaves a gap which is easily filled by arts focused INGOs. The murder of professional Iraqis post-invasion described by Charles Tripp (2010) in *The History of Iraq* contributed to a significant brain drain which included artists and arts professionals. Consequently, there is a conspicuous lack of professionals working in the curatorial or administrative field of the arts in Iraq. Garmiany drew attention to the fact that the majority of galleries and museums operating in Iraq today are run by artists because of a lack of 'curators in the field' (personal communication November 21, 2020), a description that echoes Jonathon Watkins' analysis of the Iraqi art scene when curating the Iraq Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale (Jeppesen, 2013; Ingram, 2019). Whilst there are spaces available and artists working in Iraq, the structures of a functioning art ecology have been almost entirely absent for an extended period. It is this element of distribution and market facilitation that NGOs are taking on, whether that is a large-scale LNGO such as the Ruya Foundation (https://ruyafoundation.org/en/), which provides access to a digital database of contemporary Iraqi artists' portfolios, or INGOs like Gulan, ArtRole or IARP. By providing artists with connections to exhibitions such as *The Road Through Kurdistan*, an exhibition hosted by Gulan, which included works by Iraqi-Kurdish based artists such as Osman Ahmed, Hemn Hamid and Rozhgar Mustafa[83] NGOs provide access to international visibility. Between 2003 and 2013, this international exposure was largely dominated by artists from the diaspora, prior to the break-through in the representation of Iraqi artists heralded by the 55th Venice Biennale. The fact

83 http://www.gulan.org.uk/portfolio-item/road-through-kurdistan/

that *Welcome to Iraq* only featured work by artists based on the ground in Iraq, provided a milestone that was able to demonstrate the diversity and activity of a local group of artists which are usually overlooked and often unable to gain international visibility.

Problems with security and accessibility meant that market agents such as galleries or art fairs turned to diasporic artists who were or are based in countries with stable systems of distribution in the form of galleries and dealers, as a proxi – representation of the contemporary Iraqi art scene. NGOs like Gulan or ArtRole, which have an office in Iraqi Kurdistan, provide solutions to this fundamental lack of accessibility and visibility from artists on the ground. However, it is a well-researched phenomenon that NGOs can stymie civil development and government action by removing the incentive for governments to act (Manji & O'Coill, 2002; Génot, 2010). In a similar way it could be argued that arts focused NGOs actually slow the development of a local art market by taking the place of arts professionals and removing the need for the growth of locally specific distribution systems. However, organisations such as the Barakat Trust have avoided this dilemma by providing access to programmes such as the International Training Programme for curators at the British Museum. The training programme allows curators from the Islamic world to gain exposure, create networks and participate in conferences, thus providing the kind of professional development that has been missing from the Iraqi art scene until today. Whilst Seif el Rashidi, a representative from The Barakat Trust did not lay claim to this kind of professional development having a direct economic impact, it is this kind of support that creates 'jobs and training opportunities' which in the future might well allow the arts and culture scene in Iraq to regain greater independence (personal communication November 6, 2020). Nevertheless, as long as the development of the Iraqi art market remains under the aegis of a number of NGOs, it is vital to analyse these organisations' sources of funding and political stance, in order to assess their independence.

Funding

A History of Iraq outlines how between 2003 and 2005 NGOs struggled to withstand the assaults of government agencies, partisan militias and repressive local authorities (Tripp, 2010). This description of the realities of operating in the region echoes Richard Wilding's and Garmiany's accounts of working in Iraq today, despite their nominally financially independent stance as INGOs (personal communication November 20, 2020; personal communication, November 21, 2020). Gulan's aim to promote Kurdish heritage and culture means that the position of the NGO is particularly delicate. The tense relationship between the Kurdish Regional Government and the surrounding countries necessitates the organization's constant demonstration that their concerns are purely cultural as opposed to political. This wariness of being seen to have an overtly political stance means that Gulan has avoided funding from organizations which very often have 'their own particular viewpoint, their own agenda' (personal communication November 20, 2020). As a result, Gulan's partnerships can be divided into two sections: co-operating with businesses that offer services instead of funding on the one hand, and receiving funding from British organizations that work in the region on the other. Gulan's partnership with ShaPost, a delivery service that works in Iraq and Kurdistan, enabled the shipment of the artists' works in Gulan's 2019 exhibition *Road Through Kurdistan* from Kurdistan to London free of charge. This partnership is a successful example of a type of informal and practical collaboration with local businesses that support the development of a local infrastructure. The organization's large-scale funding comes from British organizations, a good example of which is the UK Arts Council (http://www.gulan.org.uk/about-us/partnerships/).

A similar wariness was echoed by Garmiany, who stated that ArtRole avoids accepting funding from the authorities in Iraq in order to ensure that they do not have a 'direct influence' on the organisation's projects. He explicit-

ly stated that ArtRole is only able to host specific events because their funding came from 'international organizations, foundations, United Nations embassies' instead of local authorities (personal communication November 21, 2020). A similar partnership model based around in-kind donations can be found in Asia Oil's contribution of oil to use in the British sculptor Richard Wilson's installation *20:50*, which was displayed in Iraqi Kurdistan as part of ArtRole's 2009 *Post War Festival* (personal communication February 17, 2021). This avoidance of specific funding does not prevent political authorities from attempting to frustrate the realization of projects through, in the words of Garmiany, 'not giving us a space, not participating in our project, not sending the media, et cetera' (personal communication November 21, 2020). It is clear that the fight against repressive local authorities described by Tripp (2010) in the context of the early years under the Coalition Provisional Authority still continues today.

Whilst there is often very little choice for LNGOs other than co-operating with local authorities, INGOs are larger organizations that have the opportunity to receive funding from the country in which they are based. International funding for INGOs, however, is a fickle phenomenon, and donor interest in Iraq has steadily decreased in the last decades (Génot, 2010). The recent decision to drawdown American troops in Iraq is likely to deplete interest from American donors still further (Garamone, 2021). The extensive funding of the NGO sector which characterized the boom in NGOs in 2003 is a far cry from operating in Iraq post-2010. In addition, the precarious security situation in Iraq, with recent mass anti-government protests, and the kidnapping of key figures in the Iraqi art scene such as Hella Mewis, a Baghdad based curator who was abducted in July 2020 (Brown, 2020), have made it challenging to persuade international donors that projects led by arts focused NGOs will be successful. ArtRole has already faced difficulties convincing sponsors and partners that 'there is an opportunity, that there is a platform that can deliver' (personal communication November 21, 2020). The decrease in interest in

Iraq from international donors leaves the future of INGOs working in the country in question.

Politics

The role of INGOs in widening access to the international art scene and media for Iraqi artists is complicated by the NGO's status as an apolitical non-state actor (Fisher, 1997).[84] The politically neutral status of the NGO has an impact on the works that are featured in the organizations' programmes. This becomes increasingly significant as works enter international markets through the INGOs' exhibitions in the United States, the United Kingdom or Turkey. IARP, the Barakat Trust and ArtRole all described, to varying extents, attempting to avoid subject matter that would generate controversy or imply that the charity is taking a specific political stance. Wilding from Gulan mentions how the charity has chosen, in some cases, not to show work that is 'too outspoken in its criticism of any group, religion or ethnic grouping' (personal communication, November 20, 2020). This has led to backlashes from artists, who have accused the charity of censorship and political affiliation. In contrast, when speaking about *The Art of Conflict*, curated by Tricia Khutoretsky, McKay defined the parameters IARP set for the exhibition: 'grief and pain' were not censored, 'gore' was, a decision that was influenced by the desire to avoid offending 'donors who might have different opinions about war' (personal communication June 4, 2020). IARP's decisions to exclude certain works aimed to accommodate the political views of donors based in the United States, whereas Gulan's decision was to avoid taking a political stance that would be seen as 'too divisive' in Iraq (personal communication November 20, 2020). As a result, INGOs are caught between

84 In his text 'Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices' Fisher outlines how most of the literature on NGOs regards the organisations as 'apolitical tools that can be wielded to further a variety of slightly modified development goals' (Fisher, 1997, p.444), this description tallies with how the NGOs refer to themselves on their own websites, for example Gulan's statement that it has 'no political or religious agenda' (http://www.gulan.org.uk). This overtly de-politicised standpoint informs the NGOs art programmes.

the conflicting demands of two very different financial and political influences, which undermine their ability to champion politically challenging work.

Since 2005, Iraq's politics have been increasingly founded on a conflict between those who envision a secular future for Iraq, and those who support policy making founded on religious ideologies (Tripp, 2010). INGOs that are registered and funded in the West operate within a secular framework which seeks to ignore the religious sectarianism that divides Iraq. In the interview, Wilding shed light on how public suspicion of the arts as a secular, Western force has been manipulated by extremist groups who portray an interest in arts and culture as a specifically Western concern (personal communication December 1, 2020). Garmiany's descriptions of how the 'legacy of politics and imperialism,' has given rise to a 'lack of confidence and trust by people towards the West' provides a historical context to the suspicion of the work done by Western arts orientated INGOs (personal communication November 21, 2020). This wariness is grounded in the expectation that international organizations operate with a specific agenda, an assumption that is a direct result of Iraq's existing political and economic legacy. According to Shabout (2012), INGOs operate in Iraq with the blessing of the Iraqi government, however, this blessing is undoubtedly accompanied by a reluctance to undermine this relationship by commissioning politically inflammatory work. The work commissioned by NGOs that enters the market through art fairs, biennales and exhibitions has already been filtered with the aim of removing incendiary content, directly impacting which artists ultimately gain visibility and institutional recognition in the international art market.

Digitalisation

The significance of the digital realm in increasing the visibility of the work of INGOs can be seen in the programming and interview responses of all six organizations. The prevalence of digital exhibitions such as ArtRole's *Beyond*

Boundaries Art By Email (https://ysp.org.uk/exhibitions/beyond-boundaries-art-by-email) or online publications like Gulan's *Halabja: In the Golden Days* (http://www.gulan.org.uk/portfolio-item/halabja-in-the-golden-days/) echo Shabout's (2006) declaration that the 'only accessible market today is one that conforms to virtual reality', a statement that has been proven ever more true in the context of the global coronavirus pandemic. Digital platforms are uniquely effective distribution channels that allow artists to sidestep the issues that follow prolonged periods of conflict such as the destruction of physical infrastructures in the form of galleries, and a lack of accessibility for curators and dealers. Shabout's statement highlights two facets of the realities of operating in the Iraqi art scene. The first is the reluctance of curators and dealers to travel to countries which are unstable or dangerous. Interviews with Jonathon Watkins, curator of the Iraq Pavilion at the 2013 Venice Biennale, about his travels to Iraq and the issues he faced with regard to the 'security required for research – bullet-proof cars, soldiers, bomb-proof accommodation etc' (Macdonald, 2014) reveal why the gatekeepers of the market, such as curators and critics, rarely travel to Iraq or other conflict zones and therefore are heavily reliant on the digital footprint of an artist to make them aware of their work; or alternative gatekeepers such as NGOs. Digital platforms hosted by INGOs are as important as their work on the ground and their involvement in physical exhibitions for the development of Iraq's art market. The second issue that makes a digital market the only accessible market for artists in Iraq is the frequent refusal to grant Iraqi artists VISAs by various countries, a good example of which is the UK's refusal to grant VISAs to artists in ArtRole's exhibition *Contemporary Art Iraq.* The multitude of governmental barriers not only block the presentation of physical exhibitions but also prevent artists from engaging directly with audiences abroad. Digital showcases have therefore become the most successful way of accessing the international art market, for both LNGOs such as the Ruya Foundation or INGOs such as ArtRole; and subsequently for the artists promoted through them.

Conclusion

The exploration of these case studies around key areas such as distribution, funding, politics and digitalization, highlighting the important role of the INGO in the Iraqi art scene, has made it clear that these organizations hold a key role as market agents. The discussed Western based NGOs influence the production of art in conflict areas; they increase the visibility of work, aid international distribution, aim to secure artist visas and connect them to large gatekeeper institutions in the global art world. Thereby they provide vital services especially to non-diasporic artists. In 2020, in the wake of MOMA's PS1 Show *Theatre of Operations: The Gulf Wars 1991 – 2011*, various critics described how 'artists inside Iraq cannot participate in the global 'contemporary art' game' (Arango & Farago, 2019). This highlights even more the importance of the work of organizations like ArtRole or Gulan, which are highly significant in ensuring that artists gain visibility via physical and more recently especially digital channels.

As our study has shown, the role of the NGO is contested. It is influenced by numerous concerns that are inherent in the financial and political realities of operating in a nation that is still not beyond conflict. Consequently, the politics of funding that plague the NGO have an impact on which artists are exhibited and given this visibility. This of course raises ethical questions. Questions to which, as our analysis has shown, answers are not easy to find. Through examining the relationship between NGOs, the authorities in Iraq and donors in the United Kingdom or United States, we were able to show which artists achieve visibility and why. NGOs are a vital and powerful part of the art market in countries recovering from conflict and without their participation it would indeed be the case that relevant artists' voices would not be present in the contemporary art world. Diplomatic concerns have a historic role in shaping the art market, and the role of the NGO is a continuation of this trend. The condition of the NGO as a market agent is a microcosm of the problems facing numerous organizations in

the art market, not just in conflict zones, but internationally. It can only be hoped that further research continues to expand beyond the sections of the art market which are highly visible but also to focus on conditions of artists in these countries in the world riddled by often long periods of conflict as their voices need to be heard – now maybe more than ever before.

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CULTURAL THIRD PLACES BETWEEN AUTONOMY AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION: REAL ESTATE SPECULATION, CENTRIFICATION, OR CENTRES OF SOCIAL EXPERIENCE? A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Third places, *friches culturelles*, Artist-run-spaces, or more generally *New territories of the art* (Lextrait, 2001), these realities with multiple profiles, resulting from the historical model of the squat, seem today to arouse a particular interest from the cultural and political institutional system.

If, according to neoliberal hegemony, the current art system is mainly governed by capitalist principles and often reproduces the inequalities observable in other domains of the social field, we ask then ourselves whether cultural third places still represent the independent territory elaborating shared ways of life, of new political strategies and new models of mutualization, cooperation and integration? As places of interstices with always more subtle nuances between institutional circuit and search for autonomy, are these cultural third places still spaces where the dominant narrative can be questioned to favour an aesthetic, but also, a social and political experimentation?

The article presents a comparative analysis of two case studies: the Wonder/Frontin in Paris and the WTC in Brussels. Situated in the same geographical context, that of two Western European metropolises, Paris and Brussels, they share the same role within the dynamics of urbanization and gentrification of working-class neighborhoods. However, they present not only two different types of cultural third-places, with different ways of understanding the politics of the commons, different criteria of governance, and collective practice, but also different strategies of reaction to the context in which they find themselves instrumentalized. Through the example of two aesthetic productions, Mausolée Quad-Core by Pierre Gaignard and WTC à Love story by Lietje Bauwens and Wouter De Raeve, the comparison allows then to put forward the limits and strengths of the strategies of independence of two exemplary cases of the Western European context.

Third places, friches culturelles, new art territories, artist-run-spaces: a plurality of definitions, multiple profiles.

The re-appropriation of abandoned industrial buildings, often located at the outskirts of urban centers, by groups of artists or cultural projects is a phenomenon that first appeared in Europe and the United States with the counter-cultural struggles of the 1960s. Contemporary cultural third places present today a multitude of different profiles, however, they all share the same historical origin, that of the *squats*, and very often refer to the imaginary, both political and aesthetic, conveyed by this historical phenomenon. Occupations of empty premises by homeless people, self-run social centers, artists' independent places: the squat movements are multiform and their motivations are diverse. However, by going through history, an essential difference appears since their origin in the 19th century until today: political squat and artistic squat. In her book *Les squats* (2020), Cécile Péchu identifies two logics that would be at the origin of this: "classist" logic, which consists in claiming the right of the poor to housing, and "counter-cultural" logic, which aims at changing the life of the inhabitants of the occupied place, or of the district in which it is located, often accompanied by the theme of "liberated places". In turn, Florence Bouillon, in *Les Mondes du squat* (2009) makes a distinction between squats of activity (political, artistic) and squats of poverty.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the terms *squatter* and *squat* were used in the United States to describe the illegal occupation of land, with particular reference to undeveloped lands of the West. Cécile Pechu, in her book, traces the origin of political squats to the anti-property anarchist movements of the 19th century (Péchu, 2020). The illegal seizure of a building, therefore, was not only a response to the housing problem linked to poverty, but also the refusal of the dominant system and the setting up of a shared and autonomous way of life. Similarly, but much later, in the mid-1970s, with the evolution of the Ital-

ian worker movement and the development of the Autonomy movement, the model of places like the CSOC (occupied social centers of the Italian matrix) will be exported to different European countries.

As far as the artistic squats are concerned, their birth would correspond to the development of the values resulting from the movement of the counter-culture of the Sixties as freedom of expression and refusal of the traditional socio-cultural structures. These types of places put the question of creation at the center of their claims. Their objective is therefore to change lifestyles by creating alternative spaces for culture and encounter, while sharing with the more strictly political squats their community structure based on collective governance.

However, although political reflection has an important place in them, artistic squats do not necessarily seek to substitute themselves for the dominant power (as in the case of political squats, which were real cellules for a subversive and radical political organization), but they attempt especially to situate themselves outside the institutional system. Moreover, contrary to the political squat, the artistic squat is not constituted as a means to create an access to housing for the more popular classes (in France the actions of the political squats led to the creation of the Committee of the badly housed - CML in 1987, or to the association Right to the housing - DAL in 1990), but as an accomplishment in itself.

The term *third place* was developed by the American sociologist Ray Oldenburg in a book, *The Great Good Place* (1989). It refers to interstitial places situated between the domestic sphere, that of social reproduction, and the professional sphere, according to a distinction which is specific to any society based on a capitalist system. It is precisely from a will of overcoming this binary structuring of social life, proper to the counter-cultural squats of the 60s, that Oldenburg develops this notion. The term originally refers to spaces of work and conviviality within the city, such as co-working spaces, cafés, public parks or other shared urban gardens. These places, to which were succes-

sively added the fablab and the hacker spaces, developed significantly at the beginning of the 21st century**.** As such, they demonstrate a radical change in the world of work: the dissolution of the traditional corporate structure in favor of self-employment and self-entrepreneurship. It is in this context that we also see the emergence of what we will later call the creative class.

Another, no less determining, designation of these same places of urban interstice is that of cultural brownfields, in French, *friche culturelle.*[86] It refers more precisely to the territory they occupy, as re-appropriations, by groups of artists or cultural and creatives actors, of industrial buildings located in the marginal districts of the metropolises. Under the same labels we find *artist-run-spaces*, which refers to places of multimedia and multidisciplinary creation – and of housing occasionally – managed by creators themselves.

Within the framework of the official report on cultural brownfields commissioned in 2001 to Fabrice Lextrait, - former administrator of the Marseilles *friche* La Belle de Mai -, by Michel Duffour - Secretary of State for Heritage and Cultural Decentralization of France at the time -, third places are associated to the cultural dimension of rehabilitated urban territories, and identified as "intermediary places", or more specifically as "new laboratories of cultural action" (Lextrait, 2001). An additional and significative appellation is also "new territories of art", coined during the first French international symposium on the subject, and held at the Friche la Belle de Mai in Marseille in February 2002 (Lextrait and Kahn, 2005).

Under the general term of *third cultural places,* we will thus consider the multiplicity of cases corresponding

86 Many others significatives synonyms to the French term *friche culturelle* are employed in West Europe as: *kulturell umgenutzte Brache* (Block-Künzler, nd), *kulturell rehabilitierte Brache), indeterminate spaces* (Growth and Corijin, 2005), *freezones* (Urban Limited, 2004), *places of alternative culture* (Shaw, 2005), *kunstfabrik* (Barry and Hansen, 2008; Siebenhaar, 2005; Matthies, 2010), *alternatives Kulturzentrum* (Papenbrock, 2010; Marcolli, 2010), *espaces off* (Vivant, 2006). Cfr. Lauren Andres, Boris Grésillon, Cultural brownfields in *European cities: a new mainstream object for cultural and urban policies*, UCL, London: https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10090296/3/Andres_IJCP%20Revised%20II%20N-Anon.%20FINAL.pdf

to the normalised evolution - at different levels - of the artistic squats of the sixties, in which the instance of class, that the political squats dealt with, was already of secondary or equal importance in relation to the cultural one. In them, the problem of political commitment, as well as the relationship with the territory, will occupy a different place according to the particular cases taken into consideration, the discourses they carry and the symbolic horizons they convey.

Presenting itself as an "independent, free and experimental place", the Wonder is an artist-run-space, managed by the eponymous collective, which occupies disused buildings in the Parisian suburbs. After the Wonder battery factories in Saint-Ouen (93) from 2013 to 2016, the Liebert tower in Bagnolet (93) from 2016 to 2019, the Zenith building in Nanterre (92) from 2019 to 2020, the Wonder is now installed at the Fortin, a former printing plant located in Clichy (92). A "space of experimentation and emergence for artistic and political thought, available to artists" (Wonder, 2020), it has collective workshops, a set of shared machines, and 60 artist who work and live there: the 10 founding members, the tenants of the workshops, and the international artists in residence invited by the collective. It presents itself as a place of life, creation and exhibition.

The second case study is the occupation, by various exponents of what we will call "the creative class", of the World Trade Center in Brussels. Symbol of the modernist utopia of the "Manhattan Plan", conceived in the 1960s to transform the Northern Quarter of Brussels into an international business centre, the urban project implied the displacement of a large part of the population living in the territory. The project failed, leaving the towers and surrounding area largely abandoned until 2013, when a collective of artists occupied the 25th floor of the WTCI tower, followed in 2016 by several other creatives as well as a coalition of real estate developers, presenting themselves as promoters of a research laboratory for an innovative and inclusive new urban project.

Towards a strategy of the common: Wonder/Fortin and Pierre Gaignard's Quad-Core Mausoleum

Mausoleum Quad-Core is *a* documentary video-game, created by one of the founding members of the Wonder collective, Pierre Gaignard, in 2020. The installation is constituted as an interactive documentary narrative, taking the form of a library or a living data center. The work was created to "preserve the material and immaterial memory" of a part of the story of the collective, who inhabited, in 2016, the spaces of the Liebert tower in Bagnolet, in the northern suburbs of Paris. Within the framework of a temporary occupation lease, the artists invested and occupied the six office floors of the tower, the parking lot and the industrial hall belonging to the property developer Novaxia.

Figure 1: Wonder/Liebert, Screenshots on Unity,
final resolution of the 3D scan of Mausoleum Quad- Core

For three years, Pierre Gaignard has been trying to immortalize the history of this industrial cultural brownfields before its demolition. Through photogrammetry, the artist scans every inch of the building and its artists. The technical work remains unfinished: in this accumulation of images, the cloud points remain visible, as "a visual reconstruction that better resemble how one remembers a space" (Gaignard, 2020).

Sitting on the seat of a recovered motorcycle, the spectator can then let himself be carried by the voices of the phantoms that inhabit this 3D reconstruction, this immaterial and evanescent place. The voices of its former inhabitants fill the walls degraded by the digital imperfections and tell the story of "this futuristic mausoleum" and its ways of life. The narrative elements diffused in the video game come from the multimedia archives of the Wonder: "the whole has a slightly bluish color (that of the computer screens), it emanates a muffled sound, familiar of the zones close to the Parisian ring road, composed of the continuous flow of cars, ambulance sirens, the frenzy of a flea market and the metallic noises resulting from the activity of a nearby ironworks". The spectator moves in the game passing among these presences that - who - do not want to leave the place where their utopia has been consolidated.

This visual language evokes the symbolism carried by the Wonder project, based on the experimentation and the construction of a community based on its own systems of governance but also its myths, rituals and "its collective, free and experimental thought" (Gaignard, 2020). Thus, this piece allows us to open our reflection to a central element in the development of historical squats as cultural third places: *the commons*, a veritable *topos* of the contemporary narrative on cultural third places.

The notion of the *commons* enters economic theory thanks to the work of Elinor Ostrom, Nobel Prize in Economics in 2009, to become what the philosopher Christian Laval calls the "new political economy of the commons".

In his article *Quelle politique du commun? Les cas de l'Italie et de l'Espagne (2016)*, Pierre Sauvêtre distinguishes

two forms of political problematization of this notion: the economic-political strategy of the *commons* in the plural, and the political-institutional strategy of the *common,* in the singular.

The first refers mainly to the notion of the commons elaborated by Ostrom in her book *Governing the Commons. The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (1990) related to a system of specific resources (non-exclusive and rival goods as natural and digital ones) defined by economic criteria that would be "self-regulated through systems of shared rights and self-governed by communities of users, more efficiently than they would be by the market or by the state" (Sauvêtre, 2016). The author points out the problem that such a consideration of the commons poses within a capitalist economy. Indeed, without being accompanied by a more global and political consideration of the social systems of production as well as the relations of instrumentalization by the capitalist firms, this "sharing economy" drifts most often towards commercial logics (Weinstein, 2015).

The second political problematization of the *common* that Sauvêtre emphasises in his article is what he calls a political-institutional strategy. It differs from the first since it does not refer to the commons as a resource, but rather to the common as a practice.

It is in their book *Commun. Essai sur la révolution au XXIe siècle* (2015), that Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval refer to this same notion of the commons as a system of self-government, based on shared responsibility, co-participation and co-decision. In this sense, the commons would not so much be goods, but rather be systems of rules governing collective actions, modes of existence and activity of communities. "The management of the commons can only be done by practitioners, producers and users, who have the collective intelligence of practices." (Sauvêtre, 2016).

From the perspective of Oldenburg's third cultural places and the more institutionalized *friches culturelles*, the strategy of the commons is the first. It refers to a shared economy that has as its object what Ostrom, in the development of her research in collaboration with Charlotte Hess,

called "commons of knowledge": intellectual and cultural resources (Ostrom & Hess, 2007).

Differently, artists-run-spaces as the Wonder Fortin, for the most part, refer to the second strategy of the common presented by Sauvêtre, built on the necessity of setting up this modality of collective governance of the common, through a system of participatory democracy. They are precisely in line with the utopian communitarianism that characterized the artistic squats of the 60s and 70s.

In Mausoleum Quad-Core we see the shared resources, from spaces to machines, as well as the protagonists of this community of artists. The voices and noises that accompany the player's journey reactivate the collective's archives, tracing its history as a common legacy, an ephemeral heritage, from a material point of view, and a wealth of experimentation and strategies. A significant part of these archives refers to artistic events, such as their Operas. They are not only closely linked to the territorial and architectural reality of the place, but constitute real rituals in which the community builds and consolidates its identity. It is not just a question here of sharing resources, but of a collective daily routine, of which the works of art themselves become the product. In an art market that promotes individuality and individualism (promoting competition rather than collaboration), the collective does not shy away from recognizing and being recognized as a single whole, as a *unicum*, as a group. On the contrary, the prerequisite for joining the collective is to have an individual artistic practice that is solid enough not to get lost. The aesthetic discourse of the collective is nourished by these different and individual drives, in a process of perpetual renewal. The administrative and financial management of the association reflects its identity. It is completely horizontal and participatory: decisions are taken collectively and responsibilities are only shared collectively.

However, a fundamental question arises: which community are we identifying when this practice of the common takes place?

Which common, which community? WTC a Lover Story, by Lietje Bauwens and Wouter De Raeve

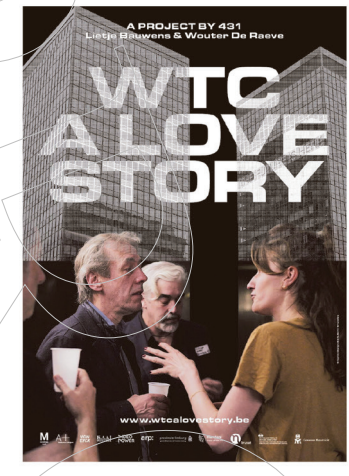

Figure 2: WTC A Love Story is a film made in 2020 by Lietje Bauwens and Wouter De Raeve.

It retraces the issues that characterised the history of the World Trade Centre towers in Brussels and, as another narrative *topos* of third places, it questions their role within the territory they occupy. The territory is never a given in itself, it is a product of a culture and social life; it is built through uses, sharing, conflicts. For Michel de Certeau, the territory as a *space* is a "practiced place" (Cherteau, 2017), the context in which social practices are manifested and interact. In this sense, a cultural third place inevitably interferes with a system of interactions, uses and practices, in which, not only the *brownfields* itself, but also the territory-space it occupies, take action. It can never rescind this territory, and reversely.

The case of the World Trade Center urban project is one of the clearest examples of the limits of a modernist conception of architecture and urbanism that characterised Europe in the second half of the 20th century. Initiated in 1967 by the real estate developer Charlies de Pauw, the project consisted of the construction of 3 towers in the north district of Brussels, in order to transform this work-

ing-class neighbourhood into a financial and administrative centre, similarly to the City of London or *La Défense* in Paris. To start the urban redevelopment work, 11000 people were expropriated. 654 million dollars were invested, and after the construction of the bases and the first two towers, the oil crisis jeopardised the progress of the project. The city that was supposed to reflect his modern and active stereotype was transformed into a ghost town, inhabited by a marginalised and precarious population.

It was in 2013 that a group of artists, including Alina Kneepkens and Anna Rispoli occupied the 25th floor of one of the towers. The occupation of spaces - even if framed by a temporary occupation lease stipulated by the new owner Befimmo, - came as a solution to the lack of financially accessible workplaces for a precarious creative class, the sharing of resources and self-organisation, as an answer to precariousness, and the proximity of different practices, as a resource for aesthetic experimentation. The open space was divided into studios by the artists, who paid the owner a total rent of 5000-6000€ per month. It is in 2015 that Lietje Bauwens and Wouter De Raeve joined the artists' collective.

In 2016 Up4North, a coalition founded by the neighbourhood's major owners, moved into WTC Tower I, with the purported goal of "transforming a neighbourhood originally conceived as a dense business district into a humane, hybrid, mixed-use neighbourhood through an inclusive management structure" (Up4North, 2018). This group was rapidly joined by other new occupants: the French architecture firm *Vraiment Vraiment*, the design collective 51N4E, and in 2017, the Campus Saint-Lucas Brussels of the KU Leuven Faculty of Architecture. However, despite the calmed inclusivity, only a marginal place is really given to the population living in the northern district and the Maximilian Park located at the bottom of the WTC II tower, next to the WTC I. "The future is here" read in 2018 a written sign on the windows of the WTC I tower. A future based on the sharing economy of commons (in the plural, this time), but commons to whom? A future for whom? What is the real relationship between this third place and its territory?

According to the studies conducted by ARCH - Action Research Collective for Hospitality, the creative inhabitants of the brownfield and the ones of the neighbourhood represent "two 'worlds' sharing a strong physical contiguity, while maintaining a mutual ignorance and a strong social distance." (ARCH, 2020). "In the World Trade Centre II tower, the National Office for Foreigners has been installed since 2015, and the line of refugees waiting to be received quickly turned into an encampment in Park Maximilian." (ARCH, 2020).

While creators occupied the tower to fill the lack of comfortable professional conditions, several citizens' groups mobilized in the territory, humanitarian hubs began to settle, to fill the lack of infrastructure capable of guaranteeing suitable reception conditions for people. Since then, the park became a point of reference for the international migration waves that pass-through Belgium, as well as a media center for actors interested in the issue of the "migration crisis". Sensitive to the issues surrounding them, part of the 25th floor artists, although aware of their comfortable situation and its ambivalence, decided to take advantage of it by trying to promote a critical reflection on the problem of instrumentalization, temporary occupation, inclusive urbanism and anti-squat law, appeared in Belgium at the end of 2017.

Productions, debates, critical projects have developed within the WTC throughout the last years, and it is through the media of film that 431, took part in the debate. Direct witnesses of the mutations in progress at WTC, they began filming as if they wanted to collect a documentation, and they realized that each actor, from the promoters to the creators, up to the activists, was playing a particular situated role within this socio-political scenario.

This is how the meta-theatre of which *WTC a love story* is built, begins to take shape: the artists call upon the different protagonists of this history-in-writing, and invite them to take part in the staging of themselves, interpreted by actors. During a series of interviews, each character is confronted with his interpreter. Fragments of these ex-

changes constitute the framework of the film, from which the moments of this fictional dialogue are interwoven. Some terms come back often, such as commons, social mix, inclusive city. But at what level this inclusiveness is really possible is difficult to establish: "we wanted to include migrants, but they are a too fragile public" says Marie Anaïs Bluteau of *Vraiment, Vraiment* during her filmed interview "we need migrants for our communication, to show that we are integrating people who are already in the neighbourhood" she continues. The artists filmed the real characters looking at themselves, interpreted by the actors. Sequences of the neighbourhood, its inhabitants and its buildings finally come to alternates this game of doubles, which became a powerful critical instrument by mirror effect.

In fact, the critical scope of the film is never based on a frontal confrontation, it is never a question of caricatures, but of dialogue: "we are not criticising them but we are involving them in the project, they are carrying it with us. This is different than a simple protest" says Lietje Bauwens. It is here that the aesthetic becomes political, by the screen which becomes a critical mirror. On the merry-go-round of interacting *social fields*, it is through fiction that the real becomes representation, creating a distance propitious for the development a critical look. It is by observing the place that each actor-character takes in the debate that we realise that some voices do not have the same place as others, that their perspective is lost, silenced.

Transient urbanism and symbolic values: from the suburbs to the creative city, or the depoliticisation of underground culture

First Saint Ouen, then Bagnolet, following Nanterre and today, Clichy, the Wonder collective has crossed, throughout its existence by temporary occupations, the same urban and social territories then the northern district of Brussels. When the collective settled in its first site, it does so illegally, and if episodes of support to the transitory

inhabitants of the district took place, this quickly became too complex to manage. The project became legal, and the collective acquired the premises of the tower of Bagnolet, by temporary occupation contract with the real estate developer Novaxia. It happened one year after the Baras collective of undocumented migrants, mainly Malians, who lived in the tower, was evicted by the police.

A close link with the territory, its aesthetics and its symbols, is nevertheless a central element in the artistic practice of the collective: "The neighbourhood has become a source of questioning and inspiration that stimulates us daily. We feel closer to the forms generated by the street than by the super-productions of the big Parisian galleries" (Idelon, 2019). However, if sometimes the two worlds (creators and neighbourhood residents, often a disadvantaged if not clearly marginalised population) meet, what does the presence of artists in the area really entail from a socio-political standpoint?

If throughout the 1970s artistic squats were still largely frowned upon by state, political or cultural institutions, the consecration of the new economic theory of the commons, within these same institutions, has radically changed the place that cultural third-places had in the collective imagination. As Mihály Csikszenmahalyi, in his *La créativité – Psychologie de la découverte et de l'invention,* puts it: "cultural brownfields no longer appear as squats based on an act of vandalism, but as an action of co-construction. The transgressive act engenders the creativity of collective action" (Mihály Csikszenmahalyi, 2006). In fact, during the 1980s, marked by the liberal turn, the various actors in the city, from public authorities to private owners, begin to evaluate the economic potential of the forms of alternative culture. Evictions and direct confrontations then gave way to mobilisations in favour of artistic squats and to negotiations.

The progressive normalisation of squats and brownfields not only fills a gap in the state's ambitions for cultural democratisation and social economy, but also allows both the state and the private owners of real estate to control them, and thus limit their potentially subversive impact.

There are today two main instruments of this normalisation: precarious contracts and temporary occupation agreements on one hand, calls for projects and public (or private) subsidies on the other. As they are contracts, these agreements establish the conditions under which these occupations must be carried out, not only in terms of the duration of use of the premises but also in term of the activities that will take place there. Any risky activity, or possibly too militant, would be easily stopped.

At the WTC in Brussels, a team of security guards' controls who enters and leaves the building. At the Wonder, the artists have negotiated a free rent in exchange for the positive spin-offs that the promoter will get from their occupation from a marketing and preservation point of view. They receive a subsidy (*Schéma d'orientation et de développement des arts visuels en Ile-de-France - SODAVI*) of 5000€ per year from the Regional directorates of cultural affairs (DRAC), which they use to house guest artists in residence. The rest of the operating budget comes from their own resources, as for example the public events, even if they are often conducted in partnership with institutional realities such as "Dirty Pepax" organised in 2017 as part of the Palais de Tokyo's "Lundis du Pavillon".

However, this attitude of openness and trust on the part of public and private authorities does not involve all types of squats: a real differential management of "illegalisms" takes place (Aguilera, 2012). If at first the legalisation of artistic squats remains an exception, today it is widely spread. Becoming, in the common perception, rather *third places* than squat (the terminological differentiation would then depend on this change in context), they are considered benevolent, animators of the city, and they are very often supported by media, citizens, and politicians. Defending them becomes a symbol of openness on the part of public authorities. It is however not as easy for those who are considered as disruptive squats, political squats or squats of poverty.

Control is not the only objective of the dominant powers. According to several studies (Andres & Grésillon, 2011), the interest of public authorities in cultural third places,

which we will thus consider as the legalised evolution of art squats, is to be read in relation to an awareness of the power of attractiveness of what we will call "creative cities", and its use within the policies and strategies of urban development and real estate market. We owe to Richard Florida (2002), the thesis that demonstrates how the creative class - capable of generating a multicultural and dynamic atmosphere within suburban or marginal urban neighbourhoods, and attracting a population normally distant from it - is responsible for the subsequent expulsion of populations considered disturbing, and the increase in land prices.

Several real estate developers (Novaxia makes its mark on the market by creating its own office dedicated to third places and temporary urbanism), start-ups (Plateaux Urbain, Souckmachines in Paris, Communa or Up4North in Brussels, project like Erafriche, and even university courses like Yes we camp in Paris) are specialising in the management of cultural third places: a real strategy of urban marketing and normalization is set up. The objective of Up4North in Brussels and of the Grand Paris territorial planning project is to participate in the creation of a competitive and globalised metropolis, innovative, "eco-responsible" and "inclusive". In these issues, the negative symbolic value of the suburb's changes into a positive symbol: the creative city is able to attract investors, real estate developers, and a population richer not only in symbolic but also economic capital.

"We always try to stay ahead of the freedom that this type of place gives us" argue Nelson Pernisco, one of the founding members of Wonder in Paris "We are not held back by the market, the state, the city council, or the developers we work with. We are not accountable to anyone. (...) There is no contradiction between the fact that the Wonder seeks to invent its own language and the fact that some of us work with institutions. The *In* and the *Off* need each other to feed themselves. We are squarely in the centre of alternative production. Where things exist feverishly and poetically. When the mainstream machine is left with only certainties" (Idelon, 2019).

Moreover, if the common imaginary of the squat is always associated with precise aesthetic registers, today these are not only recuperated and exhibited in the places of the *In*, but often trivialised and transformed into ornaments. "The almost generalized emphasis on the 'squat' imaginary, via the recuperation and DIY scenography, as well as through the rhetoric of the alternative and the collaborative in the communication of these festive places, also participates in this standardization of cultural sites. (...) In these cultural brownfields, the entrepreneurs go as far as recuperating the name, the political imaginary, the old tags of these spaces to transform them into market value" (Correia, 2018). It is not only at an aesthetic level that this interpenetration of dominant and alternative culture takes place. The subversive character that was proper to counter-cultural artistic squats, in the cultural third places is reduced to an aesthetic value, a purely perceptive and representational form.

In France, from the 2000s onwards, with the rise of forms of urban government based on the quest for guarantees and profitability constraints, massive squat eviction practices were put in place, with major penalties from 2003 onwards. In Belgium, where the concern for the right to housing still had a significant place in the face of private property, an anti-squat law was passed in 2017. These policies of repression against illegal places, accompanied by the multiplication of solutions such as temporary occupations and calls for subventions, have greatly dissuaded artists from organizing their projects around illegal and autonomous occupations. The mechanisms of physical and symbolic repression led by the dominant powers and ideologies are more and more violent. Alongside police violence, which is increasingly important in working-class neighbourhoods, we are witnessing a progressive development of the violence that Julien Talpin, in his book *Bâillonner les quartiers. Comment l'État réprime les mobilisations populaires* (2020), refers to as a *soft repression*: cuts in subsidies to associations and collectives with a militant profile, difficulty in accessing premises to meet, and even "disqualification of

activists and refusal of consultation, fines and sometimes lawsuits against certain collectives" (Talpin, 2020).

Moreover, the relationship of the cultural third places with the inhabitants of the territories which they occupy, become more complex today through an increased social distinction. The militant creators are more and more perceived by this population as stemming from a too distant social reality. In the context of reports on the state of the relationship between culture and the social and solidarity economy (Latarjet, 2017), third places are often presented as the contexts where a truly inclusive economic theory of the commons (in the plural) is possible. However, the example of our case studies demonstrates the opposite. These third places, are charged today with an aesthetic and market value rather than a social and political one. As such, they symbolically and factually exclude the most precarious inhabitants of popular districts (Correia, 2018).

Alongside this, the negative symbolism of popular neighbourhoods (some of them brought together under the new label *Districts of republican reconquest* - QRR[87]) is consolidated: **"**Qualified as 'scum', 'delinquents' and more recently as 'communitarians' or 'terrorists', the activists of the neighbourhoods consequently appear as a threat to the Republic" (Talpin, 2020). It is precisely this symbolic value that allows for the implementation and justification of different systems of repression. And third places participate, indirectly but considerably, in the mechanisms of this repression in action: "We temporarily authorize occupations of cultural brownfields by private actors but in parallel, as soon as there is an informal occupation of the public space (...) the police are systematically sent" (Correia, 2018).

Within the popular suburbs, the "creative class" takes then the place of the militant collectives, while participating in the growth of a negative representation of mo-

87 The scheme of Quartier de reconquête républicaine (QRR) was announced in February 2018 by Interior Minister Gérard Collomb, and came into force at the start of the 2018 academic year in fifteen neighbourhoods, then continues until the end of 2020 in forty-five other selected neighbourhoods. https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Actualites/Police-de-securite-du-quotidien/Lancement-des-Quartiers-de-Reconquete-Republicaine

bilizations and critical thought, making the symbolic and financial cost of the political engagement heavier. Moreover, the current precariousness generates a dependence, on the part of the associative structures aspiring to autonomy, to the subsidies of the public authorities, which limits their fields of action: a mechanism that "contributes to delegitimize other forms of intervention in the public debate - less deliberative - and in doing so to divide the opponents". (Talpin, 2020).

Solutions and strategies

The institutionalization of the cultural third places limits then considerably the political scope which they could have within popular districts, as well as the conditions of a connivance of struggles between precarious and racialized inhabitants, militants and actors of the cultural world. Two distinct tendencies appear "in this artistic world *off*, some become radicalized by becoming *off of the off*, while others ambition to enter the *in*. It is not the question of revolutionizing the society any more, but only the artistic practice" (Vivant, 2006). However, the actors of the third places become more and more conscious of the instrumentalization to which they are subjected. Their existence is divided between the search for strategies to exist in the official art world, and the will to integrate the dynamics of a territory to go towards a more democratic and inclusive transformation of the city and of the art world.

Indeed, these *non-places* (Augé, 1992), by their ontological essence and their historical structure, possess a considerable potential for the experimentation and the implementation of a social and political transformation. Subtracted from the accelerated normalization process that we have described, they can still represent the autonomous laboratories of social experiences, where "the politics of the commons (seek) to pose an alternative to the competitive and productivist logic" (Bazin, 2018). Third places can be places of popular centralization, the context of elaboration of resistance dynamics and creatives forms of struggle.

Other interstitial places can give the example, if we think of the *counter-spaces* (Bazin, 2018) of communalisms and ZAD - zones à défendre.

With this in mind, and in response to the questions posed by WTC in Love Story, 431 (Lietje Bauwens and Wouter De Raeve) conceived Permanent in 2020, in collaboration with the artists from the Level 5 collective. Based on the observation that securing a permanent place out of the real estate speculation is a necessary element for the establishment of autonomy, e con l'obiettivo di servirsi del capitale economico e simbolico del proprio statuto di artisti per invertire il rapporto di strumentalizzazione, the project seeks to build new regimes of solidarity and inclusion within the city. His objective is to formulate common tools to ensure, not only permanently affordable work spaces for artists, but also accessible housing for people of limited means who do not have artistic and cultural capital. Still in progress, this research foresees a collaboration between several creative collectives and public institution public institutions engaged in social issues, such as the the non-profit CLTB - Community Land Trust of Brussels[88] in order to indicate them as exemplary for potential anti-speculation, mixed-use and socially equitable urban development.

However, in the course of 2021, 431 disassociated itself from the Permanent project, which now counts VUB/ Cosmopolis and the Globe Aroma collective among its collaborators: « Permanent is more and more losing its track. "Lietje and I have not been part of it for the last period, and in the meantime, it has, (...) evolved into a tool for an artistic community to secure its own space, in spite of others, while

88 Only mildly known in France, where it exists under the name "organisme de foncier solidaire" (OFS) since 2016, the Community Land Trust is an equitable and sustainable model of community development. Often constituted as a non-profit private law company, the CLT only operates in the field of land and the beneficiary would then be a community, both tenant of the land and owner of the housing. In a territory of varying size, the CLT's role is to acquire plots of land, whether contiguos or not, to develop them itself or to have them built and to hand over the use of the land through renewable and transferable 99-year leases. This device, classified in the system known as "socialization of the ground", must allow the modest households to reach property rights.

not understanding the impact of their presence in a poor neighbourhood. On top of that begin supported massively by the government who is not shying away from their gentrification ambitions". The question of Brussels' northern district is subsequently presented by the artists of 431 in the exhibition *Le cartier Nord, une constellation d'histoires*, which took place on 10 and 11 September at the Kaaitheater in Brussels. In the context of the latter, the artists presented the history and current affairs of the Nord district, putting forward the development of projects intended for the district. They also include Permanent, which currently reflects, together with the Region, on the possibility of occupying the site of the Heliport, the former fire station. It would seem that the critical attitude towards the question of gentrification, and thus the needs of the local population, is ultimately overshadowed by the artists' interest in acquiring better working conditions.

As for Wonder/Frontin, "The transitional logic favoured by the property developers who support us, once again puts the project at an impasse" affirms the collective in its newsletter of 28 June 2021. Indeed, French property promoters, aware of the huge demand for space from artists, are increasingly restricting the length of their contracts: "Novaxia no longer signs contracts longer than one year", states Pierre Gaignard. On 11 June, the collective launched a forum in the Liberation newspaper « Urgence dans le Grand Paris: où vont travailler les artistes?" explaining the precariousness of the artists' working conditions (the Wonder studios have the particularity of covering very large media, and therefore complex, expensive and difficult to transport machinery), the impossibility of creating a link with the territory in such a short space of time, and the costs and difficulties of travel. As if to justify their right to a permanent place of work (and life, let's not forget the community dimension, which is fundamental to the Wonder project), the collective claims not only its ability to organise itself autonomously, but also the place it has managed to create for itself within the official art world, and the recognition it now enjoys within the institutional system: "With the appreciation we have

gained, particularly at the institutional level, we no longer have to prove our ability to manage venues, organise events, instil an artistic dynamic and unite a large audience around our project" (Liberation, 2021).

As for the solutions provided by the association, esso evoked "ownership of use, emphyteutic leases (...) the creation of a SCIC or an endowment fund, the affiliation with a real estate company, the various financial arrangements for raising funds or obtaining loans... Today, our efforts are focused on identifying vacant land in the long term (empty parcels and buildings, for sale, or under construction with the integration of a cultural project) and therefore on putting us in concrete contact with potential public or private owners (local authorities, public institutions, developers, etc.)"[89].

Conclusions

In light of the current process of domestication of underground culture, developing new strategies of resistance becomes then *la conditio sine qua non* for the alternative not to become a mere "object, spectacle, guignol" (Barthes, 1957).

One of the characteristics of capitalism is that it continually updates its structure and strategies. Some of its new forms have been described by Luc Boltanski and Arnaud Esquerre in their book *Enrichissement. Une critique de la marchandise* (2017). In fact, the criticisms formulated by the political and artistic movements of the 1960s (and in particular, what the authors call the "critique artiste", carried out by some famous authors of the 1960s and 1970s such as Jean Baudrillard, Guy Debord or Henri Lefebvre), which as we have seen are partly at the origin of the birth of the artistic squats, have not only been carefully taken into account by Capitalism itself, but have been completely absorbed by it.

In recent decades Capitalism has thus profoundly changed its form, progressively thinning the frontiers between productive work and private life, a phenomenon that

89 Newsletter du Wonder du 28 juin 2021.

has led, among other things, to the development of what we have identified in this article as third places, and finally engulfing the political scope of the *off* places (a term borrowed from Vavin), rendering them not only ineffective but also turning them into a new strategy of profit production.

At the same time, a further phenomenon of recent decades is that the borders between public cultural institutions and private institutions, such as business foundations, have become increasingly porous, favouring the market strategies of new art patrons such as the big capitalist brands and financial powers. Where public cultural institutions, such as museums, are increasingly becoming businesses, and between the market and the state, the existence of third places, in which artistic production can keep alive its critical significance in the world, becomes all the more necessary. However, as we have seen, the precariousness of the creative class and its progressive dependence on the subsidy system only contributes to the "domestication of art".

Where the cultural institution is the vehicle through which the dominant powers act on society, it seems impossible to imagine an art world capable of producing real alternatives to the mechanisms of domination implemented by the latter. The reality of artist-run-spaces, if it no longer represents the real *off*, is in constant tension between the constraints of the *in* and the impulses of the *off*. Despite the search for alternative practices, the artist needs the recognition of the *in* in order to exist. At a time when the frontiers between these two realities are increasingly thin, the only possible solution is to search for new strategies, capable of creating real zones of autonomy, in which, among other things, inclusiveness and solidarity of intent between the creative classes and the marginalized classes is possible.

Indeed, Despite the historical differentiation between political squats and artistic squats (of which we have spoken in the first chapter of this article) the latter associated the question, albeit central, of creation, to the search for a social and political autonomy, considered a *conditio sine qua non* not only for a real freedom of artistic expression but also for a concrete formal experimentation. But what

forms can this search for autonomy take today? New strategies of domination (those that have succeeded in engulfing the revolutionary thrusts of counter-culture) call for new strategies of independence and autonomy. What they are remains a work in progress, not only to be studied but also to be experimented.

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COLLABORATE WITH THE LIVING, AN ARTISTIC APPROACH TO DISCUSS A MARKET-BASED SYSTEM

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The current context of the pandemic has been thought by many artists as an opportunity to reconsider the balance of power in the world. The obvious deregulation of the art market is part of the problem and the crisis – both health and financial – has been seen as an opportunity to change course. The essayist Annie Le Brun (2018) notes that art market strategies result today in the creation of "brand artists" like Jeff Koons, Anish Kapoor or Damian Hirst supported by famous "real" brands. According to the author, the financialization of art and the generalized anesthetization constitute a major political issue as they move people away from any reaction and dazzle, creating a form of aesthetic and political neutralization. The artist Hito Steyerl makes similar observations concerning the financialization in her video works, demonstrating regularly the collusion between finance and the art world[91]. The market-oriented rationale of a part of the art world results in a capitalist system based on overexploitation, and therefore inequality – not only in terms of wealth but also in terms of ecological balance as the virus remembers us. This has political consequences.

In an ecological perspective, taking notice of neoliberal capitalist strategies, the anthropologist Anna Tsing analyses in *The Mushroom at the End of the World* the harvest phenomenon of Matsutake in Oregon, the most valuable mushroom in the world. According to her observations, symbiotic intricacies arise from the "tangles" generated by the ruins of the neoliberal capitalism. As she observes strong ecological disturbances, consequences of the overexploitation of the forest, Tsing identifies three types of nature. The first nature names the ecological relationships (including human ones), the second nature refers to capitalist transformations of the environment and she proposes a 'third nature' as what manages to live in the ruins of capitalism. For several years, this idea of third nature interests' theoreticians and artists[92] who

91 For instance, in the video *Is the Museum a Battlefield*? (2012) in which she questions links between museums and the arms industry.

92 Among the most interesting theoreticians, we can mention Isabelle Stengers, Donna Haraway, Timothy Morton, Bruno Latour, Vinciane Despret, and artists like Susan Schuppli, Art Orienté objet, Mark Dion, Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Verena Paravel.

reject a defeatist collapsology and prefer mining thoughts, gestures and representations from the rubble of a depleted and breathless capitalism. The health and ecological crisis confirm this feeling of reaching the end of an economic system based on the overexploitation of natural resources and on inequalities. This idea of a third nature could be seen as a theoretical mean to consider facing a powerful art market and its inequalities.

If it is clear that heavy exploitation of nature is a direct consequence of neoliberal capitalism, male dominance appears to be equally important in this equation. In March 2020, in South-West of France, a group of eight women artists decided to show their artworks sharing a same interest in ecological thought and political criticism. Inspired by ecofeminist thoughts, their work related the heedless exploitation of women to the one of nature and, by analogy, the male dominance to domination over nature. The group show entitled *Sauvageonnes! Fabrique des imaginaires et agirs écoféministes [Wild Woman! Factory of ecofeminist imaginaries and actions]* and initially expected from March 7 to March 25, 2020, only opened few days in the artistic and cultural space Mix'Art Myrys[93] before the first lockdown in France. The group show was finally rescheduled in September 2020. Among the eight artists, three of them work more specifically with living organisms. In the frame of this exhibition, Lia Giraud, Mado Rodrigues and Diane Trouillet decided to raise or cultivate organisms, questioning the collaboration with organic entities and, by doing so, the specific role of care endorsed by women. In the context of the sudden lockdown, these three artists had to make a choice: exfiltrate or not the living entities shown in the exhibition, as constituent parts of their works. Their different responses constitute a new version of their original artistic project as their decisions were definitive in one way or another.

The works of these artists refer to an ecological thought claiming the complexity of interactions and questioning the dominant scientific paradigm which considers

93 Group show with Annlor Codina, Kämy Dobï, Lia Giraud, Lucce, Mathilde Murat, Mado Rodrigues, Diane Trouillet, Alexia Venot.

the living world as ontologically stable and reproducible through their research objects. Scientific research is also fully supported by a financial world which prefers stability to uncertainty. To the contrary, these artistic approaches activate the idea of a symbiopoiesis. This term is borrowed from biologist Scott Gilbert and his colleagues who use it to refer to "the ability of cells of a species to assist the normal development of the body of a species" (quoted by Tsing, 2018). In the field of art, this definition opens to the idea of a co-genesis of forms, recalling the holobionts, complex ecosystems shaped by interactions between beings. In that way, the matter of care and maintenance which is at the core of these artworks allows the artists to indirectly respond to the issues of both financial and gender equity in the art world. Actually, living artworks are not well received on the art market because of the fragility of the pieces which doesn't allow speculation. So how does the pandemic context give opportunity to the artists to make visible the complexities of our relationships less or more knotted, less or more balanced between living beings (including humans) in reaction against a neoliberal way of thinking based on the exploitation of others? Starting from the notions of care, sharing and balance, this paper aims to draw different links between ecology, feminism, art market and the question of the scale, from local to global, from small to large.

Taking Care of Living Artworks in Lockdown. Local and Global.

The exhibition was designed in the alternative cultural place Mix'Art Myrys for an ecofeminist and multidisciplinary festival. Located on the outskirts of Toulouse, Mix'Art Myrys is an alternative artistic place which has had to permanently close its doors since January 20, 2021, following a much-discussed administrative closure by municipal decree reported in various newspaper articles. This third-place questions the institutionalization of art (often linked to the art market) with a collective management.

It welcomes different art-based practices (music, theatre, visual art, street art, VJing...) and thereby a heterogeneous audience. By organising the group show in an alternative place, the frame of the exhibition itself implies this horizontal organization and attention for balanced relationships between the different protagonists. The collective spirit of the project was central with no curator and no hierarchy, tasks and fees shared equally between the artists. Taking into account everyone's workload was a sort of prerequisite to then collaborate with living organisms, in an ecological perspective. The notion of third nature is activated here, in this third place, with a desire to collaborate together to generate and cross forms, knowledge and practices. The way to counter the ruins of capitalism consists of a symbiopoietic thinking, a confidence in the capacity of ecological and natural systems to build new collaborations and forms. During lockdown, the artists chose in a collective spirit to post on a Tumblr[94] which was an alternative that allowed to show the works on a more global scale and maintained the link between the artists themselves. The global scale does not rhyme here with business or speculation; on the contrary, the Internet was used to reconnect local to global and to highlight and promote this type of local artistic initiatives. The micro-blog was set up on March 22, after an "exfiltration operation" organized a few days before by the artists wearing maximum protection gears. This photographed operation was willingly a bit theatrical and ironic: we no longer know whether it is the virus or the living organisms used to create the artworks that deserve these precautions. The online diffusion of the exhibition allowed them to communicate widely, since the reopening was uncertain for a long time, and aimed to make perceptibly the new modalities of relationships engaged with their living works in such a context. Whereas the world seemed to close in on itself, the choice to publish online was a clear desire to keep in touch, to communicate to a broad audience and to question the fragility of life in a technological world. If

94 Retrieved from: https://sauvageonnes.tumblr.com/post/ 614819107567796224/exfiltrations-du-vivant-sauvageonnes

capitalism knows perfectly how to digest and absorb every contestation, the artistic hacking or alteration is also possible as the artists remind us. And the context of the exhibition, with the self-organization, the participatory practices and the mixed audience of the space encouraged this type of initiative. It is therefore very logical that the exhibition is set up in this space with this specific artistic approach of creating a place equally open to different forms of life – from local to global.

The works of Lia Giraud, Mado Rodrigues and Diane Trouillet resonate with common questions, especially from their posture as female artists working with living organisms. Although this is tempting, it is not a question of folding the analysis back to an artist-woman-mother status, but of questioning the role of care historically dedicated to women and which is here explicitly explored by these artists. Following the announcement of confinement, they had to quickly make the decision to come and collect their living works or to abandon them in the exhibition space. Diane Trouillet thus left her installation, composed of a drawing engraved with a laser on bacterial paper and a bioreactor in which a strain of SCOBY[95] polymerizing bacterial cellulose grew. According to this artist, the question of maintenance and care, central to her work, loses its meaning outside the exhibition. On the question of the maintenance of works of art, Samuel Bianchini and Emanuele Quinz indicate in a paper that "to maintain is [...] to take care of the links between different elements which operate together, to preserve relations of cooperation for at the same time ensuring an active and relative presence between these elements, a co-presence including those which maintain" (2019). Diane Trouillet didn't want to care for these pieces in a confined studio whereas it would radically have changed the artist's initial intention, which was to accompany the evolving condition of the SCOBY strain and bacterial paper. Diane Trouillet therefore finally decided to take only mother strains home. From these living materials, the artist has developed a practice of biohacking the kitchen, changing

95 Acronym for Symbiotic Culture of Bacteria and Yeast.

her kitchen into a laboratory during the lockdown. She has developed new mycelial structures and worked on prebiotic and probiotic strains that contribute to anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant barriers and which strengthen natural immunity. According to some scientific studies, our microbiota is indirectly able to fight against viral attacks. In the context of a pandemic, this shift from the kitchen to the laboratory was an opportunity to question our interdependencies with these living microorganisms while letting time take its course. Diane Trouillet thus presented on the Tumblr a new project which was the documentation of an ongoing process, and this documentation was also the one of a lockdown: how does an artist lives at home with living organisms of her work? How does she manage with the daily routine of the family when the kitchen becomes the studio/laboratory? This simple change was the occasion to reconnect the studio to more local and day-to-day issues and to consider the living material in all its specific features. This type of project, where the time is simultaneously and paradoxically long and short, is obviously not of interest for the art market and speculators, and the artist's attitude runs counter to a market-led process.

On the other approach, within the framework of a collective project entitled *Le temps de l'autre, traces temporaires d'un soin* [*The time of the other, temporary traces of a treatment*], Lia Giraud, Mado Rodrigues and Alexia Venot chose to exfiltrate the silkworms (Bombyx Mori) who were at the heart of this artwork. The project involved "collective mothering of silkworms", to use a technical term in sericulture. Five hundred silkworms and a thousand eggs, which were originally planned for mothering in the exhibition with the participation of the public, have been moved to one of the artists, Mado Rodrigues. All of these silkworms were sorted by stage of development, then placed one by one in boxes, before being taken away. The collective online journal was used to document the different stages of life and death of the Bombyx Mori, and especially to report on their extreme dependence on human care. The project evolved as the silkworms live and die with no interruption

for this artist during the whole lockdown. A few days after the creation of Tumblr, Mado Rodrigues published a post entitled: "Confined with 1000 silkworms." In her note, the artist explains that "more than 500 silkworms live together on a stainless-steel tray, kept at a good temperature thanks to an electric heating mat. About 1,000 eggs, which had not yet hatched, also came out of the exhibit space and were confined to my living room. Mothering then continues, experiencing an even stronger proximity to insects than that envisaged for the exhibition." The artist then takes stock of what awaits her, in particular the difficulty of feeding this living community, entirely dependent on it, and sufficiently fit to devour in a limited time all the mulberry paste that was left to it. Where to get this food quickly in full containment, while the movement of goods and people is hampered by the spread of the virus? She tried to find some mulberry trees around her place in order to feed the worms, which took her quite a long time and was not really successful. All the time passed in the care of these insects totally escapes from the art market as there is nothing to value. The micro-blog, however, shows the creative process offered to the audience. The choice made by the artists is clearly to share their work for free to the largest public but, more than that, the gesture offers to escape from global aesthetization of the world taking us back to the origin of the artistic process. Care and sharing are not just a posture, they imply strong political and artistic meanings, because being troubled and moved by artworks were supposed to turn our backs on the cynical violence of the art market.

On the blog, we enter as the public into a space where the work is woven into the privacy of the artist who has to deal with it. The choices, the doubts, the constraints, the fatigue of living together with a living work is clearly bringing to light. We quickly perceive that there is no relationship to idealize in sharing between living beings, as Mado Rodrigues wrote on the Tumblr: "Every day I see dead caterpillars that I pick up before throwing them away [...]. I tried to keep them in a box, but the smell, the smell of their decomposition was terrible. I ended up throwing

them in the trash, every morning it's my routine: feed the living and dump the dead. Sort and count. [...] Lockdown changed the game, I collected 500 silkworms in my living room, I ran out of food for them, and now I see them die every day." Still, in this online journal, we learn that the thousand worms, once the brooding was done, were sent by post on March 24 to the artist Lia Giraud, in order to share the constraints of mothering. With the delivery difficulties linked to the pandemic, the silkworms were finally delivered dead to Lia Giraud on April 2: "Despite [the] care [of Mado Rodrigues], not a caterpillar is still alive and in the balance sheet daily human lives of COVID are added to that of 1,000 invisible victims." Following this event, Lia Giraud created a short commemorative video posted online, *Stèle pour 1000 Bombyx [Stele for 1,000 Bombyx]*. These elements don't strictly speaking constitute an online exhibition, but are more like an extension of it, making accessible to a broader audience aspect of the works that are generally not visible: the phases of experimentation with living things, care and maintenance. These images and all these notes thus introduce us to a daily life constrained by living works and, in resonance, by the pandemic. In these two approaches, social media used to defuse these artistic experiments constitute a way to subvert the global aestheticization and discuss the financialization of the art world. Moreover, the notions of care and maintenance allow insisting on how to collaborate with and between living beings in a non-exploitation way. The female artists implicitly deliver this idea that they can use the female inheritance of care and maintenance to question the male dominance that led to the neoliberal capitalism and its consequences.

Symbiopoiesis: Political Issues of the Collaboration Between Living Beings.

According to biologists Scott Gilbert and David Epel, "nature could select 'relationships' much more than individuals or genomes" (quoted by Tsing, 2015). It would then no longer be a question to consider the individual or the

genome as a relatively closed and stable entity, but on the contrary to consider exchanges as constitutive of all life – which implies that they can make it evolve and threaten it. The question is therefore no longer that of the border and preservation, but that of the selection and regulation of exchanges. The idea of symbiopoiesis – that is to say living together under the model of the holobiont, on the basis of cohabitation in symbiosis – seems from this point of view to respond to this model of thought which values a complexity to analyze and thought. This ecological thought doesn't coincide with full stability nor in immediate readability, and willfully doesn't fit the financial world. In that sense, symbiopoiesis is opposed to autopoiesis, which refers to a history of relationships between living beings based solely on the idea of exploitation. The current health context invites us to remember that symbiopoiesis is everywhere in the living world. What is a virus: it is a type of microbe, a microorganism that transits clandestinely into other living organisms, taking with its residues from both sides, which can incidentally cause species to evolve by the traces it leaves in passing. The ecological and holonbiotic thinking activated in these works, both biologically speaking and by analogy, appears to be here a form of response to the pressure of the market on artistic production and a response to the aestheticization of life.

While feeding the Bombyx Mori, which extended its demands over the entire temporal surface of Mado Rodrigues' confinement, Lia Giraud continued an embroidery work started in March with silkworm thread. The embroideries, two in number called *Brooding* and *Feeding*, refer to the mothering and feeding phases. The act of embroidering, a repetitive and daily exercise, is intended to echo the brooding and feeding carried out by Mado Rodrigues, a few hundred kilometers away from Lia Giraud. In this way, the two artists interwoven their confined time. The important choice of the Bombyx as collaborators of the works also extends a questioning of the notion of care and femininity. The history of the 'education' of silkworms in the Cévennes in France from the thirteenth century, and more intensely

in the eighteenth century, explains this rapprochement between care, femininity and silkworms. Silkworm breeding has been the subject of the most complete domestication that we know of; the related speeches and behaviors reveal a mothering relationship. The anthropologist Françoise Clavairolle writes that "the incubator places the ties [knotted handkerchiefs] directly in contact with their body so that it transmits its own heat to the seed [silkworm eggs]" (1994). They can thus be positioned near the thigh or the breast of the sericulturist (at this stage, women are more often called upon). The Bombyx dependence on humans has long been known and its constraints involve a physical commitment from the sericulturists, who mother these worms, feed them and educate them, according to their own vocabulary. Here, the identity of a woman plays a role in the relationship with the non-living other because there is a connection with the activities of procreation and maternity of the woman. By investing in embroidery, Lia Giraud is resuming an activity historically devoted to women by associating it with that of sericulture: "In homage to the women who, traditionally, made their weaving thread by unwinding the silk cocoons, I attempted a homemade! The "recipe" is to heat the cocoons in water to melt the sericin, the protein produced by Bombyx Mori that allows the threads to stick together. Without this binder, the cocoon naturally unwinds in water. Several threads must be twisted together to form a sufficiently thick embroidery thread." In this sense, the embroideries constitute traces of a symbiopoietic work with the silkworms, resonating from a distance with the work of nourishment of Mado Rodrigues.

The question of the care devolved to women, in an implicit relationship to their reproductive capacity, and the question of time are also central elements in the living work of Diane Trouillet. In *Habiter le Trouble... [Staying with the Trouble...]*[96], she has chosen bacterial paper as an evolving medium for its laser engraving. The time of the work is identified with that of the variable cycle of life. This backlit

96 The title refers to Donna Haraway's book *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (2016).

paper shows a laser-engraved drawing showing a woman carrying a foetus – recalling in particular the anatomical waxes of the Specola Museum in Florence. The women's reproductive work rendered invisible is questioned by the artist: "Reproductive work, care is often invisible, free, sacrificed to the necessities of production. But if the workers produce the goods, who produces the workers?"[97] The work highlights the issues of procreation, between reproduction and production, which Donna Haraway was able to address in her *Cyborg Manifesto*: "In the traditions of 'Western' science and politics — the tradition of racist, male-dominant capitalism; the tradition of progress; the tradition of the appropriation of nature as a resource for the productions of culture; the tradition of reproduction of the self from the reflections of the other — the relation between organism and machine has been a border war. The stakes in the border war have been the territories of production, reproduction, and imagination" (1991). The author describes the issues of both male domination and the privatisation of the living which results from neoliberal capitalist spirit: the exploitation of nature, including childbearing capacity for women. In Diane Trouillet's work, the collaboration with living things, here strains of SCOBY, for the September exhibition involved the artist re-culturing a replica of the first drawing to cultivate the bacterial paper. By working on an associated afterimage, the question of the survival of certain representations of the living that our gaze takes with it echoes this viral movement carrying with it traces of its successive passages in various organisms.

Collaboration with bacteria and yeast brings trouble in relationships between living beings; the discomfort that can arise from these relationships is not evacuated and is not reducible to the sole issue of care. By questioning the historical role of procreation and care devolved on women – and that the pandemic has highly brought to light by the mobilization of medical workers – Diane Trouillet underlines a strong stake in the ethical relationship with living beings with voluntarily modest means. Yeast and bacteria,

97 Artist's personal notes.

which are common and unspectacular organic materials, allow her to assert a posture of modesty and voluntary withdrawal that allows ecological complexities to be expressed. Her artistic gesture refuses to impose domination on her living works, insisting on the processual dimension where symbiopoietic thought is more clearly affirmed.

The two projects also indirectly deal with the issues of the privatization of living things (including the air). Art is threatened by financialization and aesthetization but, here, the use of living elements is also a means to reveal the capitalist will to exploit the living world as a whole. One can only imagine if every element of the living world is capable of being patented, and this is the actual will of many companies. So these works are not only built on the deregulation of the art market, they also find their breath from the toxic effort to privatize the living. By considering these artistic approaches from an ecological perspective, it is a question of considering their complexities from the issues of the inequity due to financialization of the art to that of male domination, passing after that of the overexploitation of nature.

Breath

In her paper on Bombyx, Françoise Clavairolle indicates that nineteenth-century scientists were concerned about the quality of the air breathed by worms, recommending good ventilation: "In the silkworm, the air should never stagnate. The movement, the agitation, the dynamics of the air ensure the regeneration of the atmosphere. For the magnanière, one of the essential tasks is to ensure that it is continuously stirred and renewed by an external contribution because the stagnant air exerts pressure on the organism of the worm, thwarts the internal flows and quickly causes asphyxia" (1994). Air quality is therefore necessary for the proper development of the silkworm, which will later become a butterfly. The renewed atmosphere prevents the proliferation of bacteria and viruses that circulate by air, as the current pandemic reminds us. But the breath here is not only concerning the silk worms. The health crisis

of the Covid-19 highlights that the regeneration of oxygen is needed in each aspect of our life. Art is also concerned by the necessary renewal of the air: how not see that the pressure of the art market creates a lack of oxygen? The market-oriented processes of globalization bring breathless projects which evoke the ruin which can be observed in the capitalist exploitation of forests. The administrative closure of Mix'art Myrys, which arrived conveniently after the lockdown, highlights a way of thinking that does not value the alternative artistic places as resources, as "breath places". The artistic approaches of the three women artists reveal how the use of living beings in art could be a way to discuss a capitalist male-dominated and anthropocentric world. Without opposing male and female, economy and art (which are not necessarily conflicting), their ongoing projects propose to take care, to collaborate, to develop empathy in an ecological thought. The move that the collaboration with the living imposes to the artists and to the public constitutes a deep vital breath.

Showing on the Internet the process of emergence of forms and the plasticity of living things in times of confinement certainly does not take into account these permanent gas exchanges that shape the world, and in that way, it underlines the lack of oxygen of the art world. By default, in a time of lockdown, it offers another temporality than that of the exhibition to capture the stakes of this project developed together. Symbiopoietic action then appears as the acceptance of a permanent negotiation where artists are likely to lose control of their productions. They voluntarily adopt a posture of care, dialogue and sometimes even withdrawal with other living beings to question at the same time their status as an artist and woman. The requirement of relationships between living beings is thus clearly reflected in the constraints emerging from these artistic practices and reveals the importance of taking into account the maintenance, care and elements as little visible as the air in these living works in order to grasp the complexity of the ecological interactions from which they originate and which they in turn produce.

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PROOF

FROM ORE TO DATA MINES: AN ARTIST´S NOTE ON ARTIST´S LABOUR

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In this essay, socially susceptive observations of artist (Vincent Van Gogh) written in his diaries from the late XIX century are compared with expression of activist intentions in his art works, as a starting point for rethinking possibilities of social engagement of artists in contemporary society, in which labor in ancient coal mines under unfair conditions is replaced with new sort of invisible mining – that of digital data. Pervasive omnipresence of digital technology gave rise to a number of new professions which are perceived as employment chance for the majority, while distance of observation necessary for artistic articulation of social differences might be lost, since, becoming a subject of observation and part of statistic of data analysts, artist might be deprived of independent position of collecting and disseminating random contents. Equation of distribution channels for artistically articulated content with any other sort of the content online, brings up the question about future chances of art to bring forward its messages and to reach audience, no matter how publicly engaged or esthetically advanced its subject matter might be.

In Van Gogh´s letters, one can observe a significant compatibility between the written statements and drawings describing the period in his life between 1878 and 1880, spent in Petit-Wasmes, in the Borinage mining area of Belgium, where he was gradually leaving the vocation of priest, devoting himself to visual arts: difficult and socially disadvantaged position of miners; the routine of their daily work in deep coal pits under inhumane conditions; struggle to survive, social misery and suffering are precisely described in several of his letters, as well as in sketches and drawings dominated by the visual expression and studies of figures broken under difficult circumstances. Drawing as a medium, according to Van Gogh's stances, radically shortens the distance between reality and the depiction of it:

> Life is the same as drawing: sometimes one has to act quickly and resolutely, tackle things with will power, take care that the broad outlines appear with lightning speed. It's no use hesitating or doubting, and the

> hand may not tremble and the eye may not wander but must remain fixed on one's purpose. (Vincent van Gogh, 1882)

Art works in motives and approach in Van Gogh's later years will also remain associated with the memories of this period of his sojourn in the mining area which supplied the region of Europe with over one million and two hundred thousand tons of coal per year. Returning to the realization of the silent black-and-white documentary film "Poverty in Borinage" (1934), realized together with Henri Stork, one of the founders of the Dutch Film League (Cavalcanti, Clair, Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Vertov), Dutch film director Joris Ivens, in his memoir *Film without Borders* (2002, European Foundation) recounts:

> Somehow I could understand why after living in Borinage Van Gogh stopped preaching and begin to paint. My first impression of the district was its dark and colourless uniformity - no bright thing, no happy thing. Black, dusty - no whites. The latest tone is grey. Even nature seems saddened by districts misery (Nielsen, 2020: 84).

Equipped with only one kerosene lamp and a 35mm compact "Kinamo"camera, Stork and Ivens spent three weeks in Borinage, occasionally hiding from police and mine management in order to record the aftermath of a 14-week strike, eviction of women and children from poor apartments, starvation, early morning routine of gathering slag on dusty heaps as cheap, low quality heating fuel for miners' families and finally a procession of miners carrying large portrait of Karl Marx, as an expression of their firm decisiveness towards political and social struggle for change.

These were the conditions under which one of the key references of the classic political documentary was created, a strong convincing testimony to the class struggle and rebellion against social differences.

In the essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* Walter Benjamin brings up Ivens and Stork's film, comparing it to Vertov's *Three Poems about Lenin*, as one of few films that have the potential to initiate further social engagement and activism versus trivial commercial film productions:

> We don't deny that in some cases today's films can also promote revolutionary criticism of social conditions, even of the distribution of property. (Benjamin, 1935: 12)

As for contemporary protocols of sharing information on line, it can be easily found out that only one integral version of the film *Poverty in Borinage* is available on the Internet today on the address Marxist.org, while all other online versions of the same film are censored, i.e. shortened for the peaceful procession scene of strikers carrying a portrait of the political philosopher Karl Marx, just as if this piece of historical credibility is particularly undesirable for new generations of spectators. It is not difficult to conclude that with exclusion of this scene, content of the film is reduced to a fragmentary social mosaic without core culmination point.

The very assumption of content control at beginning of development of World Wide Web caused great discomfort and concern for all those devoted to the democratic development of societies in off line reality. However, in course of time, with the influence of various state and social actors, the "creation" of content has become a "natural" part of the process of on-line communication, towards new mediascape that though providing content actually collects information about its consumers in more extreme amount than former radio, television and printed media.

Considering the contemporary perception of Vincent van Gogh's work, richly colorfully accentuated landscapes and portraits from later stages of his art work were certainly more favorable to audiences and collectors - compared to socially engaged viewpoint at the very beginning of his

commitment to art that later, at various stages, also occasionally appeared as a weft in his artworks and ideas. This apolitical assimilation of artists to the taste of wealthy audiences took place not only through the choice of individual works, but also through the creation of a mythologized narrative according to which Van Gogh as - "exile from society" "tormented by his own sensibility" "gave the world his vision of nature", vision above all aesthetically beautiful and depoliticized.

As Lucy Lippard stated in her book *Get the message?: A Decade in Art for Social change* the way of reception and evaluation of art works conceived in the late XVIII and XIX century as eternal, immortal, apolitical and esthetically conditioned, outside the course of regular political and social engagement, lasted without critical re-examination and with occasional exceptions until the 1960s.

> Experience that I've had with other than art audiences has convinced me that the taste of the man and woman in the street is not restricted to ballerinas and luncheonette sunsets, but is as varied in taste, background, associations, as is that of the current art audience (...) Probably more so, since the current audience tends to wait and be told what to like by the experts. Political art doesn't have to have political subject matter to have political effect, so long as political awareness is a motivation. (Lippard, 1984: 33)

Those artists with an image of themselves as the daring agents of an aesthetic catharsis would do well to listen to a 1939 statement by Rene Magritte, himself soon to become the darling of the bourgeois collectors:

> The very special value accorded to art by the bourgeoisie brutally unmasks the vanity of its aesthetic concepts under the pressure of class interests totally foreign to cultural preoccupations. (Magritte and Scutenaire, 1970: 156).

Today, we are amidst the information revolution, which is, just like the industrial, more than a century ago, changing the paradigm of both the social and cultural context and whose real consequences are still in the domain of parametric evaluations and analysis. Judging by the strategic positioning, the former mining district Borinage is still relevant today, maybe more than a century ago - after the highest unemployment rate in Europe in the 1960s, which was the result of closing of the mines, today, at a distance of 2.5 miles from former Van Gogh dwelling place in Petit-Wasmes and 5.6 miles from the nineteenth century coalmines is the largest European datacenter of the mega corporation Google, based on 1.6 billion euros investments. The statement of Belgian government that "artificial intelligence and the digital economy are central to Belgium's development strategy" was published in media on the occasion of the inauguration of new investments plan of expansion of the Google branch in Borinage by the end of 2021.

Although the terms *data mining* and *knowledge discovery* are used interchangeably, they both imply the core idea behind Google analytics and foundations of world wide web that is "digging through tons of data" by semi-automatic or automatic analysis to uncover patterns and relationships, contained within the activity and history. These patterns can then be seen as a kind of summary of the input data, and may be used in further analysis, or other purposes, such as machine learning and predictive analytics.

According to the author Jared Dean and his book *Big Data, Data Mining, and Machine Learning: Value Creation for Business Leaders and Practitioners* the average American office worker in 2012 generated approximately 5 gigabytes of data per day consisting of email, downloaded movies, streamed audio, Excel spreadsheets and similar, including the data generated as information moves throughout the Internet. Much of this generated data is not seen directly by users but stored about them, such as traffic camera footage, GPS coordinates from cell phones, or toll transactions through automated E-ZPass lanes. It is not too difficult to estimate amount of data traces accumulated since 2012 until today, as well

as amount of its modifications through social networks and overall transfer of businesses and banking online. All these mentioned data can be defined as heaps of traces one has left somewhere online but also could be considered (through activities of usage, utilization and orientation, communication and consumption) part of the spectrum of "individualism" or "individuality". We can ask ourselves if the above-mentioned data "that one has left somewhere on line" can be considered as expression and manifestations of individual in correlation with the newly established *digital public space,* or technologically conditioned set of functioning and participations in a one-way process of taking decisions, navigating and expressing publicly views through comments, tweets, blogs, posts and number of other on-line activities.From the perspective of "stripping of the individual and the exhaustion of the integrity of the individual" through active data mining, could also mean deprivation of an individual of manifestations of individual that are a necessary starting point for political awareness, leading to concrete political or social action in reality, especially taking into account predictability calculations.

Important implication of this process is the separation of data from sources and, through complex mathematical analyzes, the development of increasingly complex analysis and inference instruments that in themselves form a corpus, in final instance, independent from reality and the ways results might be conditioned.

Hence the filtration that more than century ago, occurred in separating the ore from the earth (within coal mines) appears nowadays as separation of the data from its human source. In the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, Karl Marx discusses the worker related to the *product of labour* as to an *alien* object.

> For on this premise, it is clear that the more the worker spends himself, the more powerful becomes the alien world of objects which he creates over and against himself, the poorer he himself – his inner world – becomes, the less belongs to him as his own. It is the same in religion. The more man puts into God, the

> less he retains in himself. The worker puts his life into the object; but now his life no longer belongs to him but to the object. Hence, the greater this activity, the more the worker lacks objects. Whatever the product of his labour is, he is not. Therefore, the greater this product, the less is he himself. The *alienation* of the worker in his product means not only that his labor becomes an object, an *external* existence, but that it exists *outside him*, independently, as something alien to him, and that it becomes a power on its own confronting him. It means that the life which he has conferred on the object confronts him as something hostile and alien. (Karl Marx, 1844)

Can this lead to the conclusion that the total corpus of an individual's potential, published online, is transformed into data that ceases to be socially reactive within the structure of the Internet? This question might be rooted also in the fact that violation of privacy, one of the first and foremost problems of data mining remains unresolved despite privacy preserving data mining (PPDM) has gained a great development in recent years.

> In principle, the data provider can realize a perfect protection of his privacy by revealing no sensitive data to others, but this may kill the functionality of data mining. (...) However, in the context of data mining, the data provider usually has no awareness of how his data are used. Lacking of ways to monitor the behaviours of data collector and data miner, data providers learn about the invasion of their privacy mainly from media exposure. (XU, JIANG, WANG, YUAN, REN, 2014)

We are already witnessing many aspects of the development of the data mining today. Formatting concepts: communication, solidarity, friendship and loyalty through unconvincing manifestations of personal identity - such as "like" "share" and "follow"; corporate, branded responses to our sensory, mental and even spiritual needs in the form

of appropriate products, travel rituals and campaigns, combining of surveillance and monitoring that turns the locality into a location and "freedom of movement" of humans and goods into data statistics. In technologically highly developed societies, control systems, elimination of unpredictable, unknown and unexpected phenomena and elements, as well as improvement of data analysis are inextricably linked.

While most of the aspects of individual as artistic already can be parametrically measured, the only inviolable, autonomous space that might remain is defined as- data mining problems such as "unexpected behavior discovery". Albeit data mining explores the "nerve system" of human activity, tendency of art to detect and comprehend the world could potentially be connected to issues unsolved within data mining results such as improbable, incomplete, erroneous and noisy. If we reffer to notorious rebel against all sophisticated systems of control of whatsoever sort, writer William S. Burroughs, some of his thoughts resonate with matter more closely:

> The first and most important thing an individual can do is to become an individual again, decontrol himself, train himself as to what is going on and win back as much independent ground for himself as possible. (Burroughs, 1998: 76)

To which individual these thoughts refer nowadays, it is not easy to determine. While one century ago, focus of an artist was pointed on states of affair of his fellow man, or on objects, procedures and gestures that could redefine field of artistic work and advance its impact on the society, at present both artist and his subjects are equalized surveillance targets. Hence, once existing ore is nowadays- human communication capability and its inevitability. Distances between subjects of art, artistic observation and communication of the art work with audience are diminished, from which it arises that engagement of artist or his activist position became less influential (when mediated within surveilled communication channels) and expositional to the unforeseen extent. Apprehension of this

new position from critical perspective might become a first step of reconsidering of transformative aspects of art in the curent global state of affairs.

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BIOGRAPHIES

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Pablo Müller is a Research Associate at Lucerne School of Art and Design and teaches at the Campus Lucerne. He studied fine arts at Lucerne School of Art and Design and Zurich University of the Arts and philosophy, art history, gender studies and history at the universities of Basel, Freiburg i. Br. and Bern. He has been writing in art magazines and daily newspapers (including Kunstbulletin, WOZ Die Wochenzeitung, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Jungle World) regularly since 2008 and is Co-publisher of the online art magazine Brand-New-Life (brand-new-life.org). At Leuphana University in Lüneburg he is doing a PhD on Agency in Art Criticism. Taking the example of the art magazine 'Texte zur Kunst' (working title) (supervised by Prof. Beate Söntgen). His research interests include art and economics, institutions of art, art magazines, art criticism, self-organisation in visual arts, artistic research and its methods. Latest publications: Selforganisation in Visual Arts, (with Rachel Mader), will be published in 2021; "Shaping the Avant-Garde: The Reception of Soviet Constructivism by the American Art Journal 'October'." In: The Oxford Handbook of

Communist Visual Cultures, 2020; The Future Is Unwritten. Position und Politik kunstkritischer Praxis (with Ines Kleesattel), 2018;"Situierte Kunstkritik. Über die redaktionelle Arbeit im October-Sonderheft 'AIDS. Cultural Analysis/ Cultural Activism". In: The Future Is Unwritten, 2018; „Gesellschaftlich engagierte Kunstkritik. Ein Gespräch mit Grant Keste". In: The Future Is Unwritten, 2018.

Ginevra Ludovici (Rome, 1992) is an independent curator and a Ph.D. candidate at the IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca. Graduated in Economics and Management from Bocconi University and in Contemporary Arts History at Ca 'Foscari University, in 2019 she attended CAMPO - course for curators of the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo and co-founded the curatorial collective CampoBase. She has carried out several collaborations with national and international institutions, including Carpe Diem Arte and Pesquisa (Lisbon), ASK Research Center - Art, Science, Knowledge (Milan), MoMA - The Museum of Modern Art (New York), Pushkin Museum (Venice) and MACTE – Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Termoli. She deepened her research and training at UNIDEE Academy (Biella), PACT Zollverein (Essen), V-A-C Foundation (Venice), BAK (Utrecht), SixtyEight Art Institute (Copenhagen), MACBA (Barcelona) and MADRE (Naples). She has published in academic and sector journals, such as PARSE – Platform for artistic research Sweden, NERO editions, e-flux, roots§routes and Made in Mind, and presented her research at The University of Arts Belgrade, The Lisbon Consortium, The UK Association for Art History and Birkbeck University. Her curatorial activity is rooted in collaborative practices, and it develops parallel to her academic research, which focuses on radical pedagogy programs and processes of self-institutionalization in the arts. Since 2021 she has been coordinating, together with her colleague Francesca Leonardi and Prof. Linda Bertelli, a reading group focused on decolonial studies and practices at the IMT Alti Studi Lucca School. In 2022 she conducted a visiting research period at HDK – Valand, Academy of Art and Design, at the University of Gothenburg (Sweden).

Bojana Matejić (1984) is an Assistant Professor in Discursive Practices in Art and Media at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade, New Media Department and Guest Lecturer at the interdisciplinary programme Theory of Art at the University of Arts in Belgrade. She holds (B.A) (2006) and master's studies (M.A) in the field of Fine Arts from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade (2008), as well as (M.A) (2009) and doctoral dissertation (Ph.D) (2015) in Art Sciences from the University of Arts in Belgrade. In 2019, she conducted her postdoctoral research in Global Art History at the University of Leipzig in Germany. She has published with Routledge, Palgrave Macmillan, Orion Art, etc. She is the leader of *Participatory Practices and Contemporary Art* (PI5) project as part of the *Empowering Participation in Culture and Architecture. Activating Public Resources for and with Community* (EPICA) research scientific project supported by the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia since 2021. The focus of her research are theories of emancipation in contemporary art and aesthetics, bio- and necropolitical theories of art and media, and transcultural relations in contemporary art and theory media. She works in the intersection between theory, activism, art and sciences.

Mateusz Sapija is an Independent Curator and Researcher, and Associate Curator of Asakusa, Tokyo. He graduated from UCL Qatar MA in Museum Studies and the Goldsmiths College MFA Curating. Currently, he works on a PhD in History of Art at the University of Edinburgh, titled The Rise of Post-Democracy in Contemporary European Art and works as a Tutor in History of Art at the Edinburgh College of Art. He worked with leading art institutions – from public and private galleries (Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; Centre for Contemporary Art, Warsaw; Raster Gallery, Warsaw), perennial exhibitions (Sharjah Biennale 12, documenta 14), to independent art spaces (Asakusa, Tokyo) – being engaged in variety of roles related mostly to curating and public programming. His work has been recognised by selections to several fellowships and residencies: DAAD Short Term Research Grant, Qattan Foundation

Critical Research and Writing Residency (Ramallah, Palestine), KulturKontakt Artist-in-Residence programme (Vienna, Austria), Asakusa Curatorial Residency (Tokyo, Japan), NEON Curatorial Exchange (Athens, Greece), Samos Curatorial Fellowship (Samos, Greece) and the 4th Moscow Curatorial Summer School (Moscow, Russia).

Vító Vojnits-Purcsár was born in 1971 in Subotica/Szabadka, Yugoslavia. After initial education in Electrotechnical and Information Technology and spending some working years in this field a slow but decisive shift happened toward contemporary art. He graduated from the Hungarian University of Fine Arts, Bachelor, Fine Art Theoretician. Master course followed as Expert in Contemporary Art Theory and Curatorial Studies MA. Coaching visual artists, curating exhibitions, searching for intersection points between art, technology, and society in a broader context in the tradition of socially engaged art are some of his fields of interest and activity. Currently, he is researching new artistic tools based on recent technological developments. He is active as a curator and an art critic.

Stephanie Dieckvoss is a German art historian based in London. She currently works as an independent lecturer, writer, researcher, and journalist specialising in contemporary art markets. She lectures at Central Saint Martins and Sotheby's Institute of Art, and is the London art market correspondent for the German financial newspaper Handelsblatt. She is a working on an AHRC funded PhD on uses of space in alternative art fairs in the 1990s. Previously, Stephanie worked for over 15 years in commercial art galleries and art fairs across Europe and the USA and has a wealth of experience in cultural management in both the public and private sector. As an academic she was course director for the MA Art Business at Kingston School of Art from 2017 to December 2021. From 2013 to 2017 she was stage 1 leader at Central Saint Martin's BA Culture, Criticism, and Curation. Stephanie holds MAs in Art History from the University of Hamburg and the Cour-

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Mary Gatenby currently works as a Cataloguer of Modern British & Irish Art at Bonhams. Prior to joining Bonhams, Mary studied Fine Art at Oxford University, before undertaking an MA Art Market and Appraisal at Kingston School of Art from 2019 - 2020, where her research focused on the relationship between the art market and war art. She continued in this field on the Courtauld Institute of Art's course, *Documentary Reborn* 2020-2021, where she focused on the documentation of the Iraq War.

Anna Battiston is a doctoral student at the University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne in cotutelle with the IUAV University of Venice. Her research focuses on the relationship between aesthetics and politics in Italian art of the 1960s and she has worked on the relationship between art and feminism in the works of Carol Rama, Marisa Merz, Giosetta Fioroni and Carla Accardi. After graduating in Aesthetics and Art History at the Ca' Foscari University in Venice, she joined the Professional Master in Exhibition Sciences and Techniques at the University of Paris 1 Panthéon - Sorbonne. Since 2018 she has been teaching History of Contemporary Art at the University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne and since 2020 she has been an associate ATER in the HiCSA laboratory - cultural and social history of art at the University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. Member of the board of the inter-university doctoral research collective in History of Contemporary Art 19-20, she is the founder of the international transdisciplinary collective Marcovaldo. She conceives various curatorial projects with a particular interest in young creation, the relationship between music and art, politics and aesthetics, gender and feminism, and she collaborates with several Italian and French journals specialized in Contemporary Art.

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Milica Lapčević is an Artist and Journalist in culture whose research include photography, film, video, theory of arts, art criticism, essays and poetry. She completed MA studies in painting on Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade and attended post-graduate studies at the Royal Academy (Kongl. Konsthogskolan), Stockholm, Sweden, at the Department of Video and new media. She exhibited internationally at group exhibitions and festivals in Europe and USA. She is also a co-founder of ArtTerror association (since 1989), and Kinetik Collective(since 2019) as a platform for cooperation in field of video and experimental film. ArtTerror association video production have been shown at, among others, PS.1 The Kitchen (New York), Moderna Museet, City Museum, Fylkingen (Stockholm), Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), Bauhaus (Dessau), WRO (Wroclaw), City Gallery (Ljubljana), Pasadena Museum of American Art (Pasadena), ICA (San Francisco) and others. She was the author and editor of radio programs about culture on RTV Studio B from 2001., participant in media projects and conferences in Serbia, Austria, Sweden and Italy. She has organized and curated seven international exhibitions in Belgrade, co-edited three books and published great number of articles, as well as an essay contribution to art books, fostering in her work independent ideas and practices that include integrative approach to art and interdisciplinary research.

Nina Mihaljinac is an Assistant Professor of Cultural Policy and Management at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade and the programme director of the UNESCO Chair in Cultural Policy and Management, University of

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Philosophy / Art

"If you are participating in the (visual) art world(s), ask yourself the question: Who needs an (arts) organisation? This may be the book for you. Questioning the structures of art creation in capitalist realism as a context, the authors of the twelve chapters of this book are helping us with the interrogation of existing and the quest for new organisational models in the arts."

Dr Aleksandar Brkić
Programme Director
MA Arts Administration and Cultural Policy
Institute for Creative and Cultural Entrepreneurship (ICCE)
Goldsmiths, University of London

ANOTHER ARTWORLD: PURSUING NEW ORGANISATIONAL MODES

Nina Mihaljinac, Bojana Matejić, Milan Đorđević (eds.)

The twelve chapters of Another Artworld: Pursuing New Organisational Modes embody a critical analysis of artistic creation and its public in the contemporary art world while exploring ways to overcome the de facto dictum of entrepreneurship in the global art markets. These essays, written by scholars with a variety of specializations in the artworld, question existing governance principles and decision-making models in the visual arts. They also question the humanist thesis that artistic labor is a non-utilitarian human activity, the opposite of work, in service only of self-fulfillment and personal, expressive needs (i.e., art for art's sake). The anomalous social manipulation of the Covid-19 pandemic revealed that both in neoliberal capitalist countries and on their geopolitical periphery, *art has become the elite priviledge of materially secure individuals rather than the common heritage and birthright of all citizens.*

Essays by:
Annelies Van Assche, Anna Battiston, Stephanie Dieckvoss, Milan Đordević, Mary Gatenby, Lev Kreft, Milica Lapčević, Ginevra Ludovici, Bojana Matejić, Gabriele Michalitsch, Nina Mihaljinac, Pablo Müller, Camille Prunet, Irena Ristić, Mateusz Sapija, Vito Vojnits-Purcsár

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