

# ART WORK

---

A NATIONAL CONVERSATION ABOUT  
ART, LABOR, AND ECONOMICS

---

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

**FREE**

TAKE A COPY. MAKE AN EXHIBITION.  
HOST A DISCUSSION IN YOUR TOWN.

# ART WORK

## *A National Conversation About Art, Labor, and Economics*

---

- 3 **This Is Our Real Job**  
*Temporary Services*
- 4 **Art Versus Work**  
*Julia Bryan-Wilson*
- 6 **Two Diagrams: The Business of Art and The Non-Profit Art Practice**  
*Lize Mogel*
- 7 **The Boom is Over. Long Live the Art!**  
*Holland Cotter*
- 8 **Personal Economy**  
*Anonymous*
- 9 **OurGoods.org**  
*Jen Abrams, Louise Ma, Carl Tashian, Rich Watts, Caroline Woolard*
- 10 **Organize! What the Artists' Union of the 1930s Can Teach Us Today**  
*Nicolas Lampert*
- 11 **Small Business as Artistic Medium**  
*Robin Hewlett*
- 12 **Selected Moments in the History of Economic Art**  
*Compiled and written about by Temporary Services*
- 14 **Send Me Your Money, By Chris Burden, recorded live on KPFK Radio, Los Angeles, March 21, 1979.**  
*Transcribed by Temporary Services*
- 18 **State of the Union**  
*Gregory Sholette*
- 19 **Thoughts on Standardizing Fair Artists' Lecture Fees**  
*Harrell Fletcher*
- 20 **Report on The City From Below**  
*Scott Berzofsky and John Duda For The City From Below Organizers*
- 21 **Micro Granting from the Bottom Up**  
*InCUBATE*
- 22 **Think Big, Act Small**  
*Linda Frye Burnham*
- 23 **A Field Guide for the Future: Introducing the Institute for Applied Aesthetics**  
*Chris Kennedy*
- Personal Economy**  
*Tim Kerr*
- 24 **Personal Economy**  
*Anonymous*
- Under the Gun**  
*Nato Thompson*
- Menu: Funding Emerging Art with Sustainable Tactics**  
*FEAST*
- 25 **Justseeds: Collectivism in a Culture Machine**  
*Dan S. Wang*
- Probably not Peaches**  
*Nance Klehm*
- 26 **Impractical Laborers, Unite!**  
*ILSSA Co-Operators*
- Personal Economy**  
*Anonymous*
- 27 **Epeios, a Sculptor**  
*Written by Cooley Windsor  
Illustrated by Futurefarmers*
- 28 **The U.C. Strike**  
**At Last, the Shit Hits the Fan in California**  
*Brian Holmes*
- 29 **Lost South**  
*Adam Trowbridge and Jessica Westbrook*
- Personal Economy**  
*Anonymous*
- 30 **We Patch Flats. Detroit.**  
*Compiled by Nick Tobier  
With contributions by Lolita Hernandez, Stacy Malasky, Nate Mullen, and Aaron Timlin*
- 31 **Personal Economy**  
*Anonymous*
- A Letter from W.A.G.E**  
*W.A.G.E.*
- 32 **Lansing and Three Fires Territory: Toward an Activist-based Indigenous Neo-Regionalism**  
*Dylan A.T. Miner*
- 33 **Watch Where You Are Putting That Pencil**  
*Anthony Elms*
- 34 **Seven Years of Chaos**  
*Carolina Caycedo*
- 35 **License Action (Jan. 17 - 18, 1981)**  
*Guerrilla Art Action Group*
- 36 **Global Mega-Merger Announced with We Can Run the Economy Campaign**  
*16 Beaver Group*
- Red Lines & Death Vows: Mortgage Politics in the 20th Century**  
*Damon Rich*
- 37 **Personal Economy**  
*Anonymous*
- W&N**  
*W&N*
- Teaching Artist Union Membership Card**  
*Teaching Artist Union*
- 38 **Money Drawings**  
*Harold Jefferies*
- How Do You Respond to the Economic Depressions of the World?**  
*Marc Herbst and Christina Ulke for the Journal of Aesthetics & Protest Editorial Collective*
- This Newspaper is an Exhibition**  
*Temporary Services*
- 39 **Distribution of This Paper**  
*Temporary Services*

# THIS IS OUR REAL JOB

## Temporary Services

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

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

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

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

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

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

like the Federal Arts Program was completely dismantled.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# ART VERSUS WORK

Julia Bryan-Wilson

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Julia Bryan-Wilson is Associate Professor of Contemporary Art History and Director of the Ph.D. Program in Visual Studies at the University of California, Irvine. She is also an art critic whose writing focuses on collaborative, feminist, and queer art.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>16</sup> Rose, “ABC Art,” 66.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

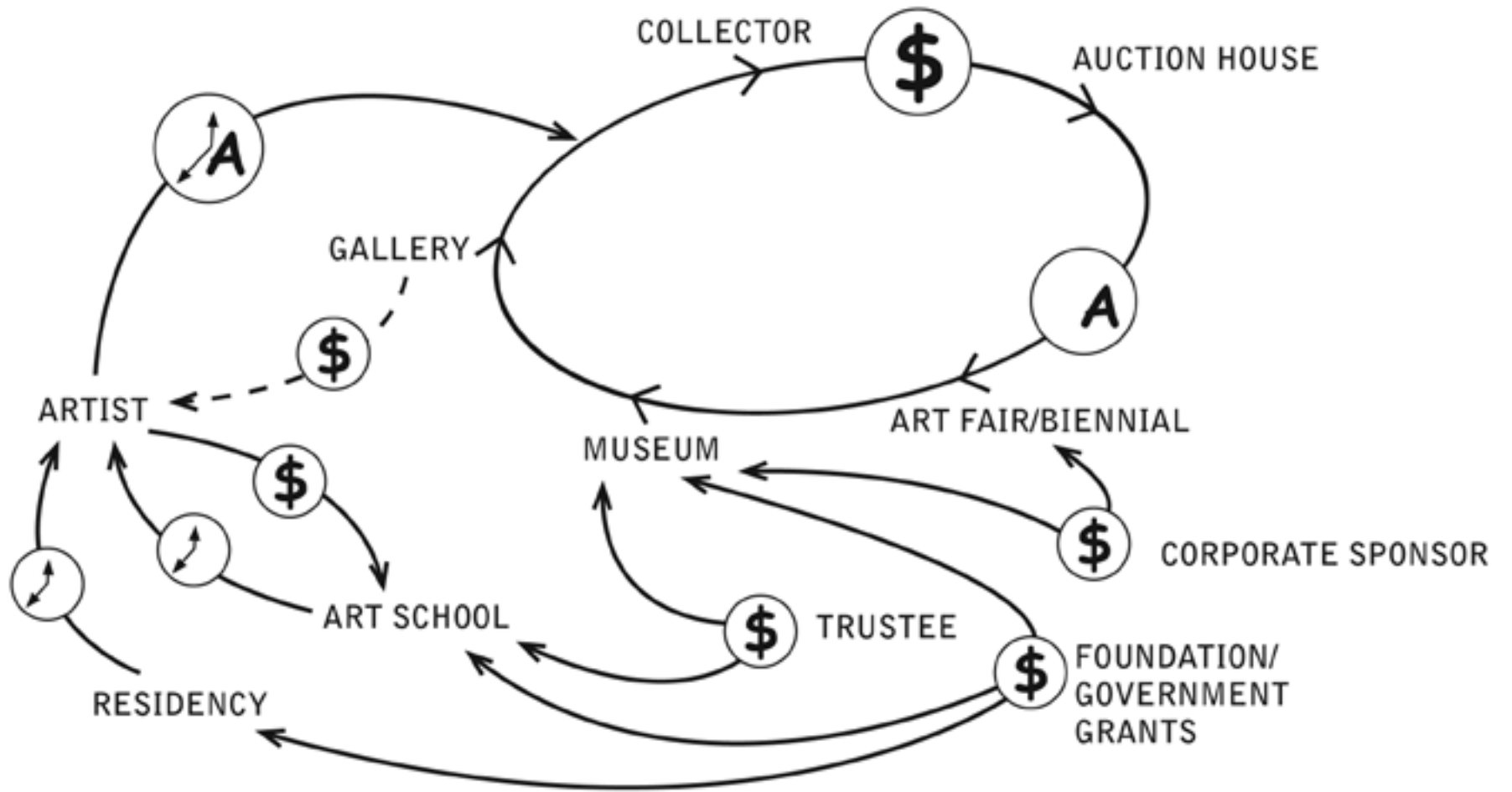
<sup>27</sup> Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, trans. Charles Levin (St. Louis, MO: Telos Press, 1981).

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

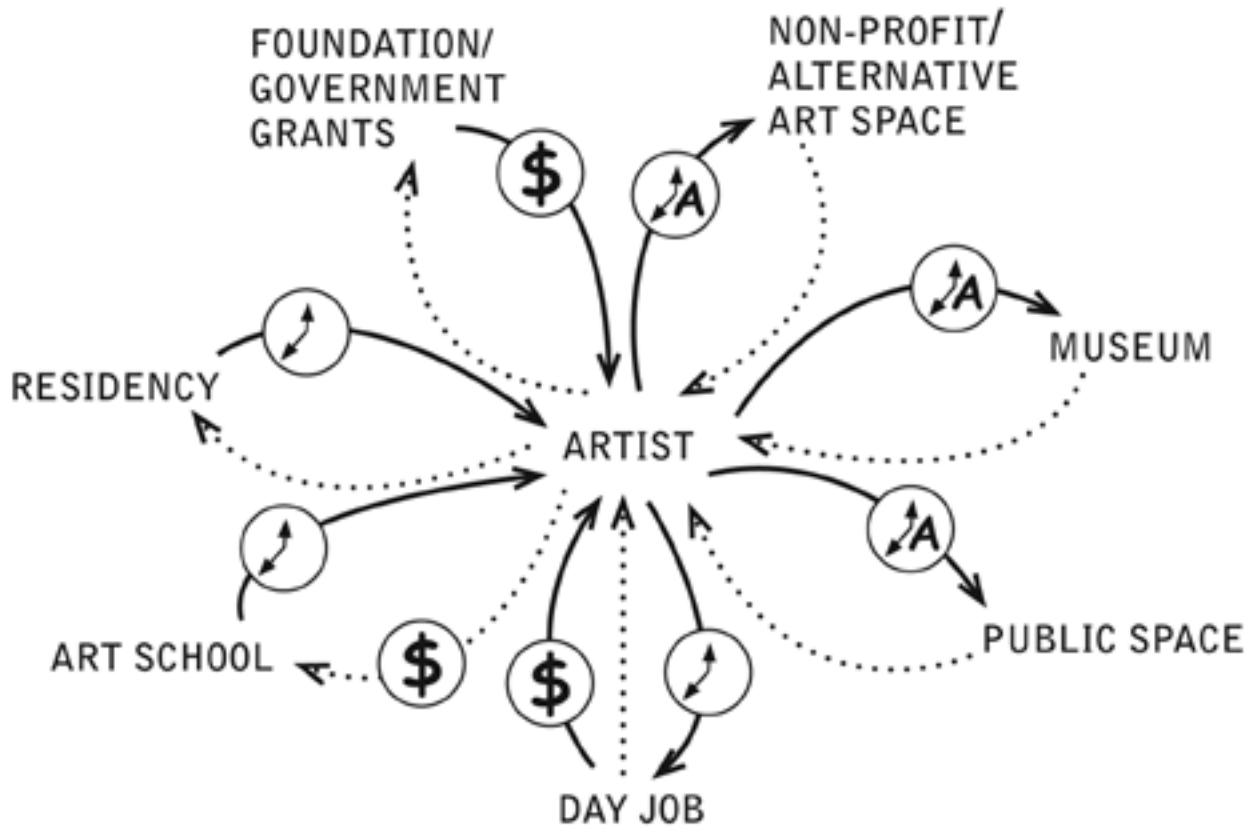
<sup>29</sup> U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, *Work in America: A Report of a Special Task Force to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1973); Lafayette Harter and John Keltner, eds., *Labor in America: The Union and Employer Responses to the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

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

THE BUSINESS OF ART



NON-PROFIT ART PRACTICE



KEY	
	ART PRODUCTION
	ART COMMODITY
	TIME
	MONEY
	CULTURAL VALUE

# THE BOOM THAT WAS IS NO MORE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Such changes would require new ways of thinking and

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

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

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

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

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

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

Right. Exactly. Crazy.

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

## PERSONAL ECONOMY by Anonymous

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# OURGOODS.ORG IS WHERE INDEPENDENT PROJECTS GET DONE.

What do you do?

**I'm an artist / designer / cultural producer.**

Is that how you pay your bills?

**No. My job ≠ my work.**

Do you love your independent projects?

**Yes, this work defines me.**

How do you get this real work done?

**... by bartering skills, spaces, and objects  
with members of OurGoods.org.**

*What is OurGoods?* OurGoods is a network of artists, designers, and cultural producers who want to barter skills, spaces, and objects. OurGoods is a place where you have the agency to decide what your objects and services are worth. **OurGoods is an infrastructure for mutualism.**

*How does it work?* **OurGoods facilitates the barter of skills, spaces, and art objects.** Organize your projects with what you have and what you need. OurGoods matches you with barter partners, tracks accountability, and helps the business of independent work. You can find collaborators, see emerging interests, or just execute your project without cash.

*What will you get?* You will be part of a new model for valuing creative work. You will see what people are working on right now. You will find people who actually appreciate your labor. You will develop strong working relationships. You will get more independent work done.

Together, we are incredibly powerful.

Go to [OurGoods.org](http://OurGoods.org) to sign up for the public release. We are in the alpha stage in NYC, but we are looking for regional partners anywhere with a community of interest.

Email us: [hello@OurGoods.org](mailto:hello@OurGoods.org)

-----  
I HAVE

&

-----  
I NEED

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

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

Nicolas Lampert

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



the Federal Government to reinstate the funding.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SMALL BUSINESS AS ARTISTIC MEDIUM

Robin Hewlett

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

# SELECTED MOMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF ECONOMIC ART

Compiled and written about by Temporary Services

## 1924 – Marcel Duchamp issues Monte Carlo Gambling Bond

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Marlborough, Massachusetts.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

newspapers and as an art event in the art community.

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

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

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

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

The cover of this book is reproduced on page 16.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## OPINIONS OF WORKING PEOPLE CONCERNING THE ARTS



by  
DON CELENDER

### 1979 – *The Real Estate Show*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Q. How did the Guerrilla Girls start?

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



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

Q. What did you do?

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

Q. Why are you anonymous?

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

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

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

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

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

## 1993 – Haha opens FLOOD in a Chicago storefront

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

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

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

## 1997 – Conrad Bakker initiates Untitled Project

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

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

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

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

intervention.

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

## 2000 – @TMark starts Mutual Funds

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

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

## 2007 – Collective Foundation issues three Collective Grants

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

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

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

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

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

# ARTISTS TODAY CAN PRODUCE THEIR OWN COLLECTIVE SECURITY

## STATE OF THE UNION

Gregory Sholette

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

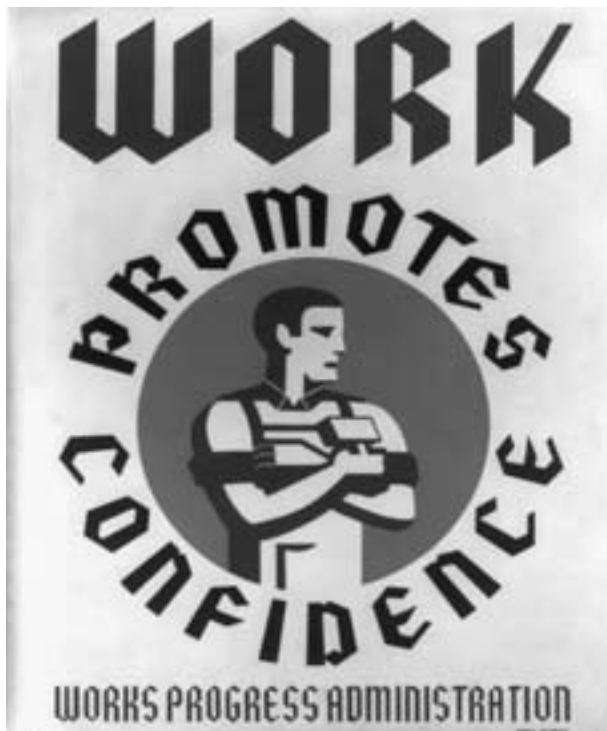
Yet despite this alleged upgrade in status, the majority of artists continue to lead a precarious existence, especially in those countries where the state has ceased to mediate between the well-being of the working population and the needs of the corporate sector. Widespread de-regulation has certainly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

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

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

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

© *Artforum*, April 2008, "State of the Union," by Gregory Sholette



## THOUGHTS ON STANDARDIZING FAIR ARTISTS' LECTURE FEES

Harrell Fletcher

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

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

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

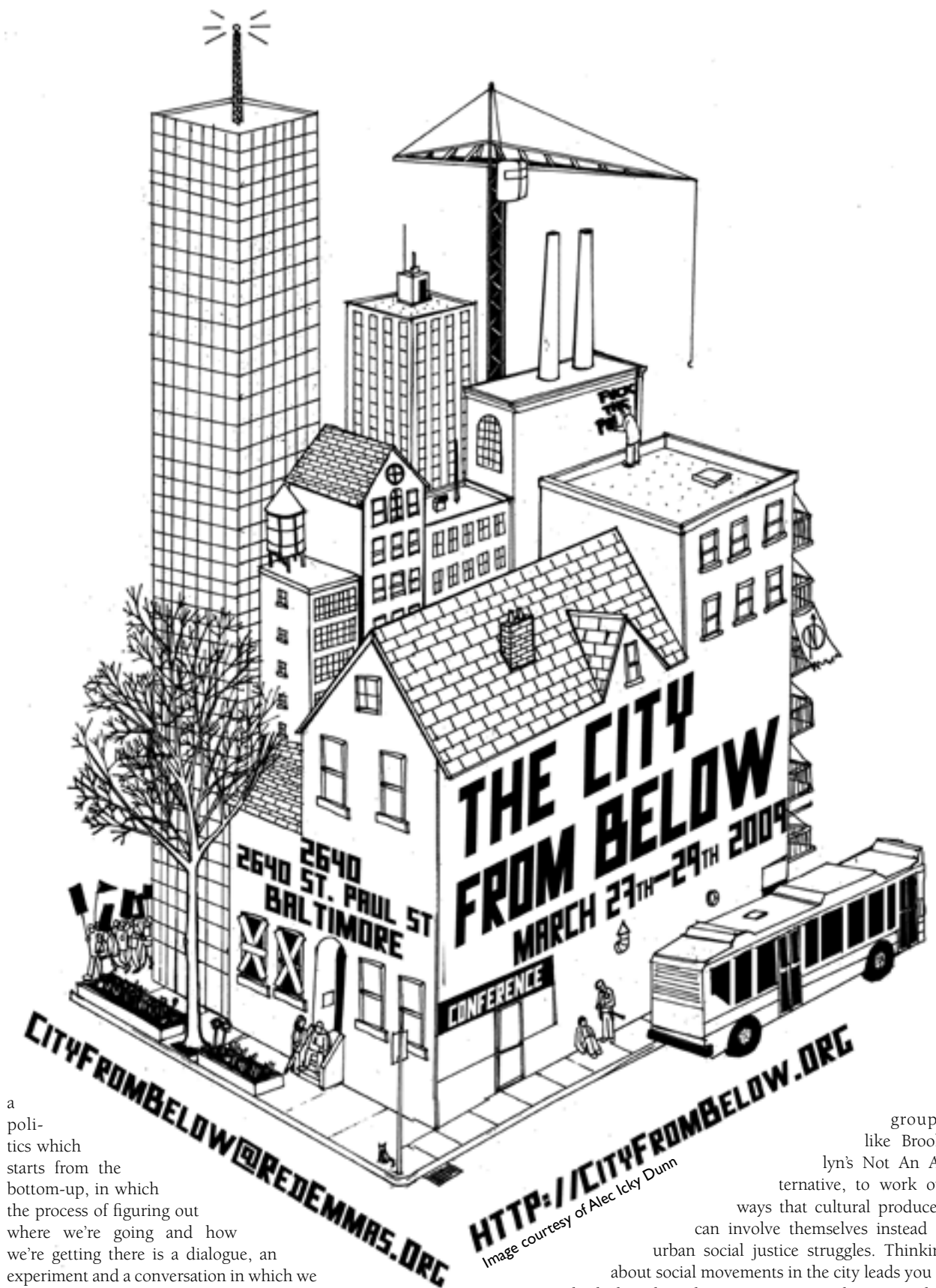
# REPORT ON THE CITY FROM BELOW

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Image courtesy of Alec Icky Dumm

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

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

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

---

## MICRO GRANTING FROM THE BOTTOM UP

### InCUBATE

#### Who We Are

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

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

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

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



#### Projects We Do

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

Chris Kennedy

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

### An Idea for the Future

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Research for the Future:

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

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

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

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

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

## PERSONAL ECONOMY

by Tim Kerr

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

# PERSONAL ECONOMY

by Anonymous

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## UNDER THE GUN

Nato Thompson

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

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

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



# JUSTSEEDS: COLLECTIVISM IN A CULTURE MACHINE

Dan S. Wang

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

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

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

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

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

The machine creates culture, the experiment creates a culture.

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



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

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

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

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

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

# PROBABLY NOT PEACHES

Nance Klehm

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## IMPRACTICAL LABORERS, UNITE!

### ILSSA Co-Operators

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

– Raymond Williams, 1962

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

– Richard Sennett, 2008

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Uniting Hands & Minds: about ILSSA

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

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

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

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

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

AS MANY HOURS AS IT TAKES!

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

# PERSONAL ECONOMY

## by Anonymous

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

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

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

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

# EPEIOS, A SCULPTOR



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

YOU LOOSE YOURSELF WHEN YOUR MAKING SOMETHING

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

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

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

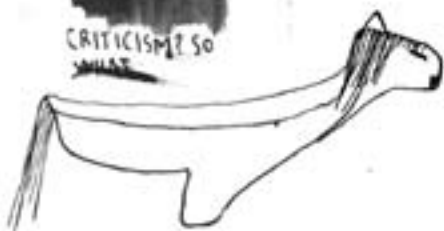
The horse's eyes I made myself from the bronze  
shield of Deokos, a local who died early in the battle  
and had no family to claim it. The armory hated me  
using metal and wouldn't furnish anything good. I  
cast the bronze on the fire, + tin with it + silver + set  
it upon the anvil + laid hold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

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

ILLUSTRATED BY

FUTURE FARMERS

CRITICISM? SO  
WHAT?



HORSESHIP - AN ADAPTATION OF NICOLE WITKE'S USE ART STUDENT

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Brian Holmes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Links:

<http://researchanddestroy.wordpress.com>

<http://ucwalkout.ning.com>

<http://ucfacultywalkout.com>

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

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

<http://occupyca.wordpress.com>

<http://reoccupied.wordpress.com>

## LOST SOUTH

Adam Trowbridge and  
Jessica Westbrook

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

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

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

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

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

# PERSONAL ECONOMY

by *Anonymous*

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

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

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

# WE PATCH FLATS. DETROIT.

Compiled by Nick Tobier

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

## NATE MULLEN

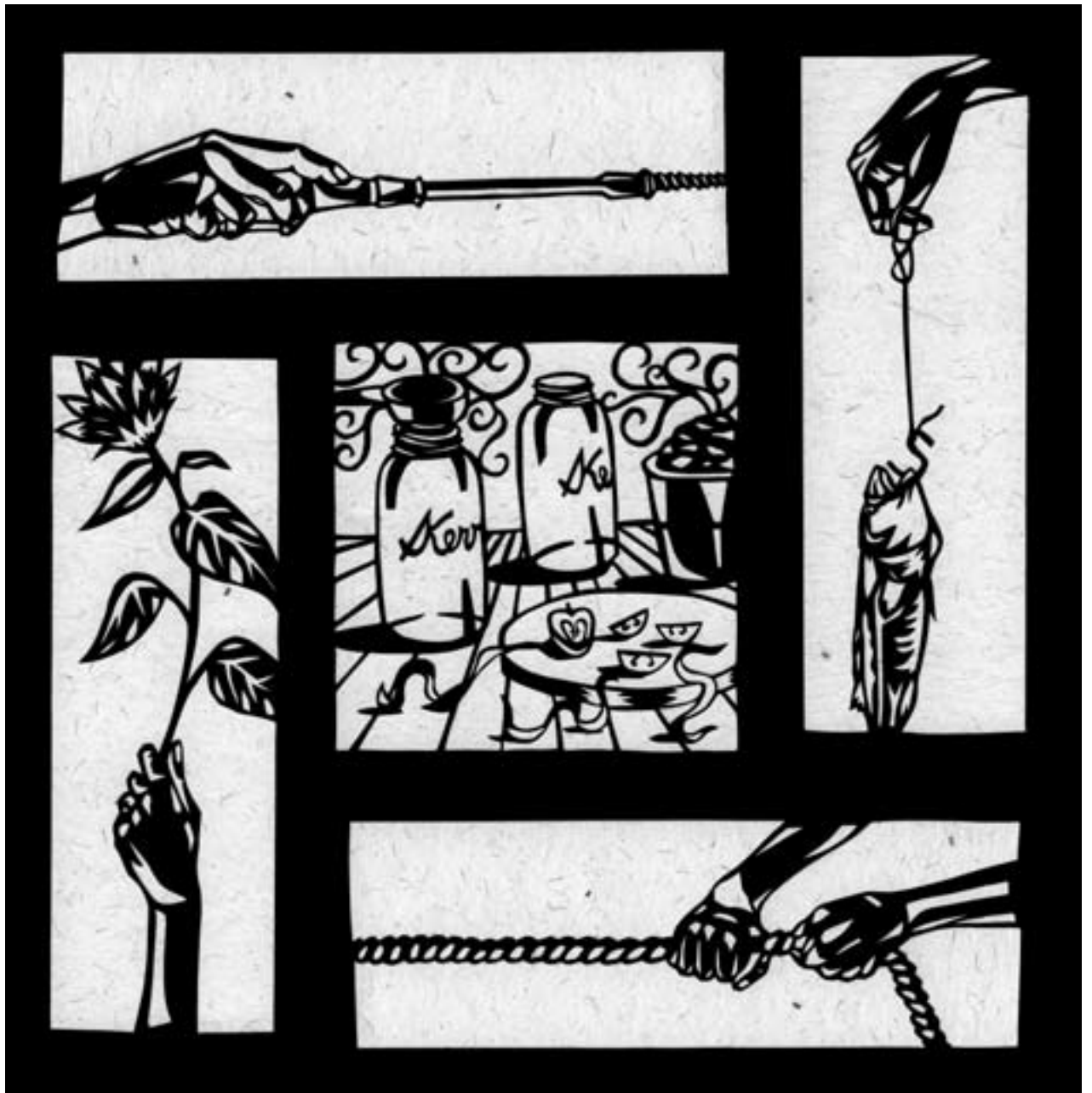
Detroit doesn't have opportunities that people are handing out, but rather raw materials that could possibly yield major rewards. To live in this city is a daily struggle with the failing city government, educational system and inadequate access to basic resources. To succeed you have to take things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

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

## AARON TIMLIN

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

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



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

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

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

## STACEY MALASKY

Image above: Hands, 2009

## LOLITA HERNANDEZ

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

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

#### NICK TOBIER

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

Who's Howard?

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

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

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

## PERSONAL ECONOMY

by Anonymous

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

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

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

# W A G E

FIGHTING TO GET PAID FOR MAKING THE WORLD MORE INTERESTING/[WWW.WAGEFORWORK.COM](http://WWW.WAGEFORWORK.COM)

[DATE HERE]

Dear [ARTS ADMINISTRATOR NAME HERE]:

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME(S) HERE]

W.A.G.E.

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

Dylan A.T. Miner

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

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

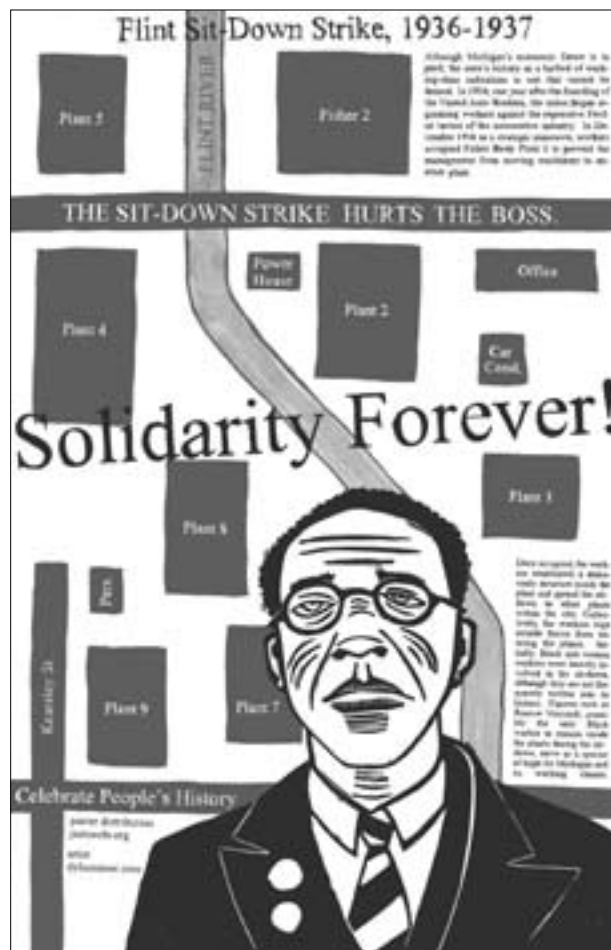
As a member of Justseeds, a decentralized artists' collective of approximately twenty print-based artists, my art-making practice is one that operates, by and large, outside of the dominant gallery system. While I do not eschew participation in the gallery system, my interest in galleries is connected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

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

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

While mainstream art institutions face economic

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

## WATCH WHERE YOU ARE PUTTING THAT PENCIL

Anthony Elms

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

## SEVEN YEARS OF CHAOS

Carolina Caycedo

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### From Object To Subject

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

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

And closed frontiers.

For this is how we all see it now.

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

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





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

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

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

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

#### Communication Strategies

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

the city.

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### FAQ

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

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

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

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

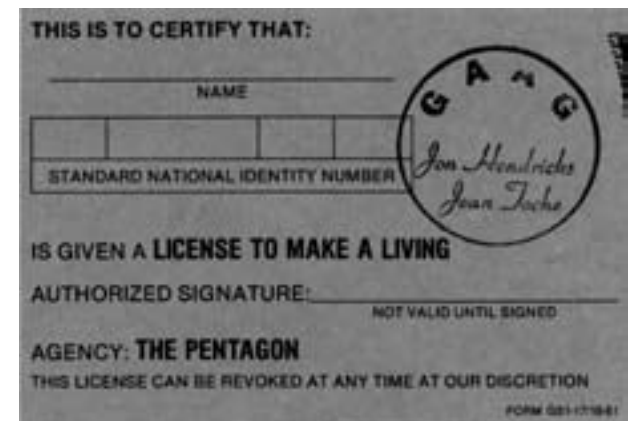
The weirdest barter I did? Follow someone for a week, in exchange for a couple of exquisite bottles of wine. The requester asked me to follow his brother's fiancé previous to their marriage. It was like penetrating this woman's privacy without her asking. I felt close to her, but she didn't know. After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

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

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

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

*Isabela, September 2009.*



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

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

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

See page 12 for more on GAAG.

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

16 Beaver Group

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

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

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

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

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

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

Included here is also a selection of FAQ:

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

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

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

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

Q: How am I already part of the economy?

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

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

TKO (sorry for the sports metaphors)?

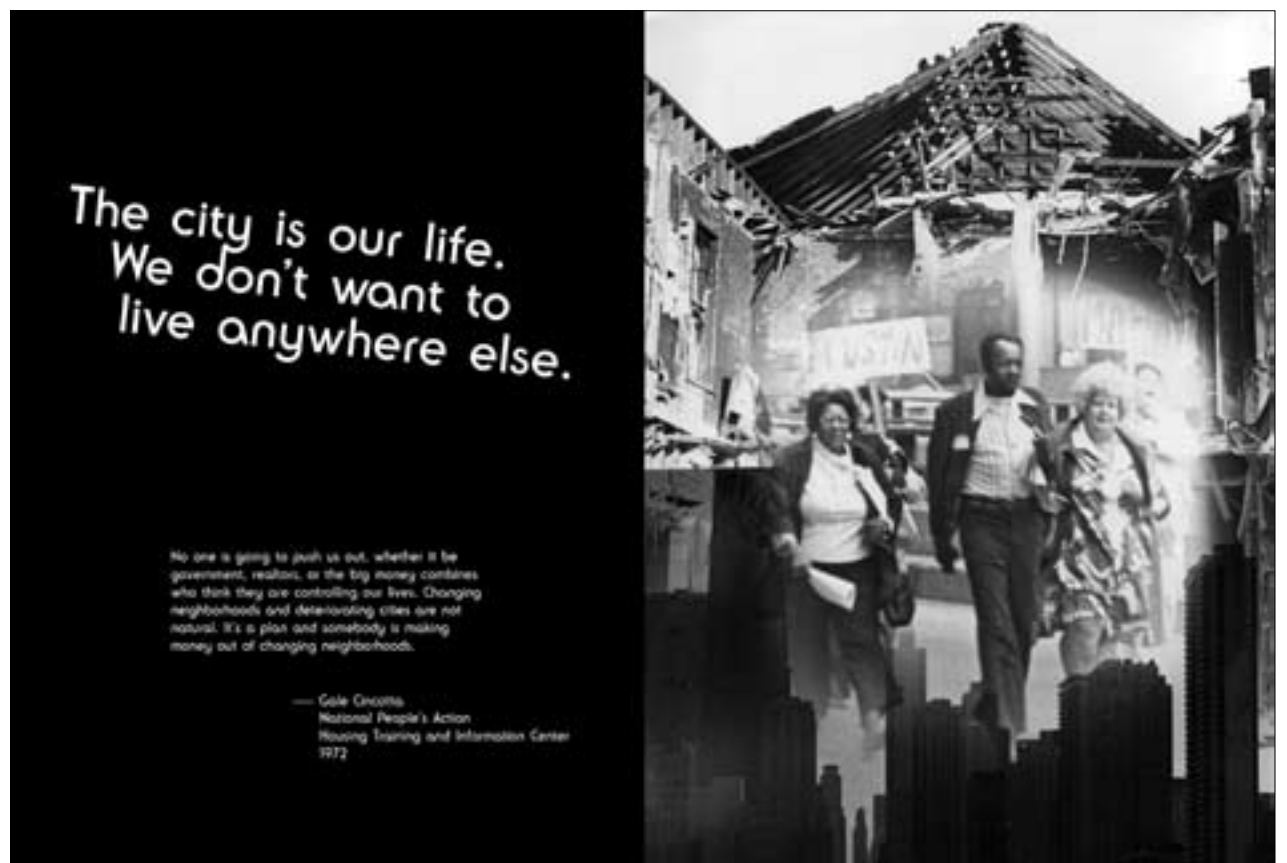
A: We feel collective experiments are necessary. Oikos from which the word economy comes was associated for the Greeks with the home. And it begins with the home and finds its way to the polis, the city, the politics. Corporate media may be talking up recovery, but when so many are still losing their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

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

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

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

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



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

# PERSONAL ECONOMY

by Anonymous

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## W&N

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

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

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

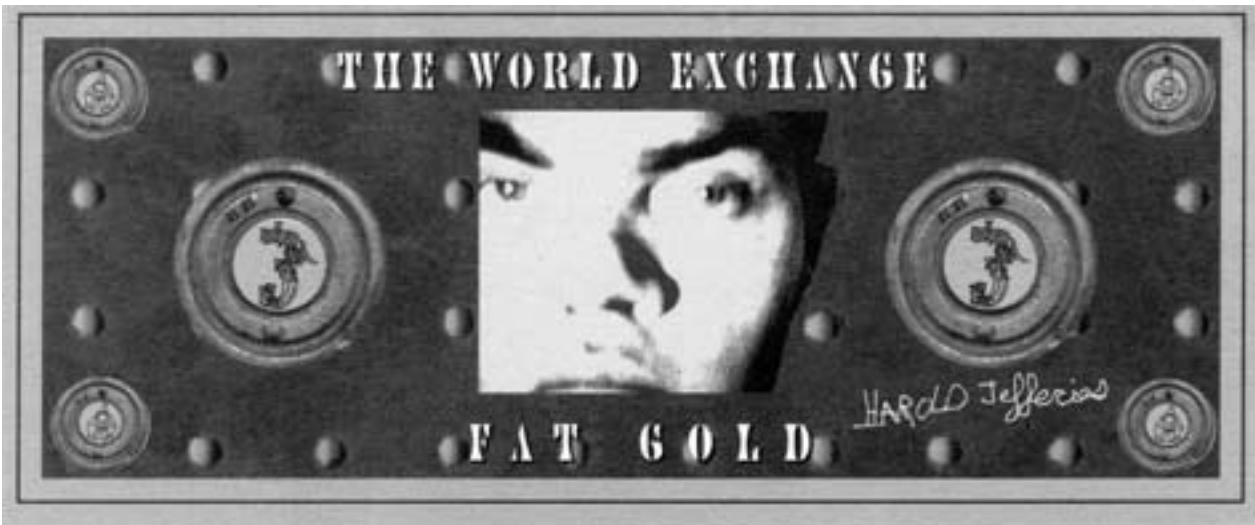
In the four years that we've been working we have sold four artworks. The money obtained from one of these sales served to pay for our webspace on the Internet, to fix up the basement and for the CHA (Center of Horrible Arts) that, while it lasted, was dedicated to independent music and art. The other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

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## THIS NEWSPAPER IS AN EXHIBITION

### Temporary Services

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

## DISTRIBUTION OF THIS PAPER

### Temporary Services

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

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

either monetary or time constraints.

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

**ALABAMA** – Birmingham, Gordo, York  
**ALASKA** – Anchorage  
**ARIZONA** – Tempe  
**ARKANSAS** – Need more contacts  
**CALIFORNIA** – Berkeley, Irvine, Los Angeles, Oakland, Pasadena, Riverside, Santa Barbara, San Diego/La Jolla, San Francisco  
**COLORADO** – Boulder, Colorado Springs, Denver  
**CONNECTICUT** – Bridgeport  
**DELAWARE** – Need more contacts  
**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA** – Washington  
**FLORIDA** – Bradenton, Miami, Tampa Bay  
**GEORGIA** – Athens, Atlanta, Decatur, Savannah  
**HAWAII** – Honolulu  
**IDAHO** – Sun Valley  
**ILLINOIS** – Bloomington/Normal, Champaign/Urbana, Carbondale, Chicago, East St. Louis  
**INDIANA** – Fort Wayne, Greencastle, Indianapolis, Lafayette/West Lafayette  
**IOWA** – Iowa City  
**KANSAS** – Lawrence  
**KENTUCKY** – Louisville  
**LOUISIANA** – Need more contacts  
**MAINE** – Need more contacts  
**MARYLAND** – Baltimore  
**MASSACHUSETTS** – Boston, Cambridge, Somerville  
**MICHIGAN** – Ann Arbor, Detroit, East Lansing, Grand Rapids  
**MINNESOTA** – Minneapolis/St. Paul  
**MISSISSIPPI** – Need more contacts  
**MISSOURI** – Kansas City, St. Louis  
**MONTANA** – Missoula  
**NEBRASKA** – Lincoln  
**NEVADA** – Need more contacts  
**NEW HAMPSHIRE** – Need more contacts  
**NEW JERSEY** – Newark  
**NEW MEXICO** – Albuquerque, Taos  
**NEW YORK** – Cortland, New York, Rochester, Syracuse, Troy  
**NORTH CAROLINA** – Asheville, Raleigh  
**NORTH DAKOTA** – Need more contacts  
**OHIO** – Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus  
**OKLAHOMA** – Need more contacts  
**OREGON** – Portland  
**PENNSYLVANIA** – Braddock, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh  
**PUERTO RICO** – Isabela, San Juan  
**RHODE ISLAND** – Providence  
**SOUTH CAROLINA** – Need more contacts  
**SOUTH DAKOTA** – Need more contacts  
**TENNESSEE** – Chattanooga, Knoxville, Memphis, Nashville  
**TEXAS** – Austin, Dallas, Houston  
**UTAH** – Ephraim, Provo  
**VERMONT** – Bennington  
**VIRGINIA** – Richmond  
**WASHINGTON** – Seattle  
**WEST VIRGINIA** – Need more contacts  
**WISCONSIN** – Ashland, Eau Claire, Green Bay, Madison, Milwaukee, Viroqua  
**WYOMING** – Need more contacts

**DENMARK** – Copenhagen  
**ENGLAND** – London  
**GREECE** – Athens  
**THE NETHERLANDS** – Amsterdam  
**SCOTLAND** – Aberdeen

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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

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

We would like to give special thanks to the following people for sharing their contacts with us in many parts of the country: Ryan Griffis, Robin Hewlett, Tim Ivison, Gene Ray, Matthew Rana, Scott Rigby, Sarah Ross, Paul Sargent, Gregory Sholette, Daniel Tucker, Rebecca Uchill, Dan S. Wang, and Kate Watson.

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

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

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

Major support for SPACES is provided by The Cleveland Foundation; Cuyahoga Arts and Culture; The George Gund Foundation; Donna and Stewart Kohl; Kulas Foundation; Toby Devan Lewis; National Endowment for the Arts; Nimoy Foundation; and the Ohio Arts Council.

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

**Temporary Services**  
 P.O. Box 121012  
 Chicago, IL 60612  
[www.temporarieservices.org](http://www.temporarieservices.org)  
[servers@temporarieservices.org](mailto:servers@temporarieservices.org)

**Half Letter Press**  
 P.O. Box 12588  
 Chicago, IL 60612  
[www.halfletterpress.com](http://www.halfletterpress.com)  
[publishers@halfletterpress.com](mailto:publishers@halfletterpress.com)  
 Facebook: Half Letter Press / Twitter: halfletter

**Art Work**  
[www.artandwork.us](http://www.artandwork.us)



2220 Superior Viaduct  
 Cleveland, OH 44113  
[www.SPACESgallery.org](http://www.SPACESgallery.org)  
[info@SPACESgallery.org](mailto:info@SPACESgallery.org)  
 216-621-2314  
 Facebook: SPACES / Twitter: spacesgallery

**ART  
WORKERS  
WON'T  
KISS  
ASS**