e-flux Journal is a monthly art publication featuring essays and contributions by some of the most engaged artists and thinkers working today. The journal is available online, in PDF format, and in print through a network of distributors.

The choice of cover image for this issue of *e-flux journal* came down to two photos: a decrepit military airplane lingering in a remote gray field, evoking long forgotten battles of a distant war; and a picture of a DIY christmas tree, cheerfully constructed from a stack of worn car tires and painted lime green. The airplane was the more haunting of the two images, yet with all that is happening around us, we wanted to resist the sublime spectacle of decimation and consider some modest proposals about how affect, art, humor, and practical resourcefulness can provide solutions to seemingly unsolvable problems and non-problems.

Needless to say: the problems are scary. From violence and apparently constant massacres to the re-establishment of borders and controls of all kinds; from censorship, racist and nationalist rhetoric, to creeping militarization and the mobilization of hundreds of thousands of refugees—all of this is starting to resemble the conditions that preceded the last world war. In the face of all this, how do we go about thinking of a way out?

So what we share with you is this tire tree above, as well as eight new essays by Reza Negarestani, Irmgard Emmelhainz, Jodi Dean, Franco "Bifo" Berardi, Benjamin H. Bratton, Alan Gilbert, Jonas Staal, and Sven Lütticken.

Happy New Year!

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Editorial

Franco "Bifo" Berardi

The Coming Global Civil War: Is There Any Way Out?

Necro-Economy

Are we heading into the Third World War? Yes and no: war has been with us for the past fifteen years, it promises to be with us for a long time, and it threatens to destroy the last remnants of modern civilization. The exacerbation of xenophobia across the West and the rise of nationalism in countries like France are causes and effects of a looming war whose sources lie in the past two hundred years of colonial impoverishment and humiliation of the majority of the world population, not to mention neoliberal competition and the privatization of everything—including war itself.

Pacifism is becoming irrelevant as the conditions of war become irreversible. How can we oppose war when killers shoot at a peaceful crowd at a concert? War is becoming normal: the stock exchange no longer reacts to massacres, as its main concern is the looming stagnation of the world economy. After every armed attack, whether by Islamists or white supremacists, by random murderers or by well-trained fundamentalist killers, Americans run to buy more weapons. So weapons are not only increasing in the arsenals of nations, but also in the kitchens and bedrooms of everyday families.

A Republican assemblywoman from Nevada named Michele Fiore recently posted a Christmas family portrait on Facebook. At first glance, it's like any other holiday card, with three generations of a family in red shirts and jeans in front of a Christmas tree. Upon closer inspection, you see that Mrs. Fiore, her adult daughters, their husbands, and even one of her grandchildren are all holding firearms.

The privatization of war is an obvious feature of neoliberal deregulation, and the same paradigm has generated Halliburton and the Sinaloa Cartel, Blackwater and Daesh. The business of violence is one of the main branches of the global economy and financial abstraction does not discriminate criminal money from any other kind.

The process of externalization and privatization is now provoking a worldwide civil war that is feeding itself. According to Nicholas Kristof, "in the last four years more people have died in the United States from guns (including suicides and accidents) than Americans died in the wars in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq combined."[1]

Global Fragmentary Civil War

Are we heading toward a global war? Not exactly: no declarations of war are being issued, but innumerable combat zones are proliferating. No unified fronts are in sight, but fragmented micro-conflicts and uncanny alliances with no general strategic vision abound. "World

Michele Fiore, a Republican assemblywoman from Nevada, poses with her family for her Christmas card, 2015.

war" is not the term for this. I would call it fragmentary global civil war.

And the fragments are not converging, because war is everywhere.

Now, as US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter claims, "destructive power of greater and greater magnitude falls into the hands of smaller and smaller groups of human beings."[2]

When war is privatized, no geopolitical order in the world can be imagined, no arrangement among the conflicting religious tribes can be pursued. No beginning and no end—an endless war, as Bin Laden promised. From the Paradise in which he certainly dwells, Mr. bin Laden must be looking upon the rise of the Caliphate of Death with a smile: so far, he can easily claim that the Army of Allah is winning the war.

Some American Republicans claim that the killings are related to mental illness. In a way, they are right. But they misunderstand the causes and the extent of what they label mental illness. Mental illness is not the rare malady of an isolated dropout, but the widespread consequence of panic, depression, precariousness, and humiliation: these are the sources of the contemporary global fragmentary war, and they are spreading everywhere, rooted in the legacy of colonialism and in the frenzy of daily competition.

Neoliberal deregulation has opened the way to a regime of worldwide necro-economy: the all-encompassing law of competition has canceled out moral prescriptions and legal regulations. Since its earliest phases, Thatcher's neoliberal philosophy prescribed war among individuals. Hobbes, Darwin, and Hayek have all been summoned to conceptualize the end of social civilization, the end of peace.

Forget about the religious or ideological labels of the agents of massive violence, and look at their true nature. Take the Sinaloa Cartel and Daesh and compare them to Blackwater and Exxon Mobil. They have much more in common than you may think. Their common goal is to extract the maximum amount of money from their investments in the most exciting products of the contemporary economy: terror, horror, and death. Necro-capitalism is the emerging economic order of the world.

The narco business is a pillar of the Mexican economy, and in fact the head of the Sinaloa Cartel, Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, was listed by *Fortune* magazine as one of the most prominent businessmen of 2012. Why not? After all, he is just a neoliberal entrepreneur who deals in deregulated kidnappings, drug trafficking, and murder.

Between 2009 and 2011, Forbes ranked "El Chapo," head the Sinaloa drug cartel, the second most powerful man in Mexico, and respectively the 41st, 60th, and 55th most powerful man in the world.

Like neoliberal corporations investing money in the ultimate business, the Iraqi-Syrian caliphate and the Mexican narco army pay salaries to their soldiers, who are necro-proletarians. The narco business recruits unemployed young men from Monterrey, Sinaloa, and Veracruz. The caliphate recruits young men from the suburbs of London, Cairo, Tunis, and Paris, then trains them to kidnap and slaughter people at random. Daesh salaries have been estimated to be as much as one thousand US dollars a month. The group acquires this money from ransom, oil, and taxes imposed on millions of Sunni people. They deliver a postmodern medievalism, but one that is not at all backwards. On the contrary, it is an anticipation of the future.

In a video released by Dubiq, the advertising agency of the Islamic State, the rhetoric is the same as any other type of advertising: buy this product and you'll be happy.[3] Multiple camera angles, slick graphics, slow motion, and even artificial wind give the whole thing a more dramatic mood:

join the cause and you'll find friends, warmth, and well-being. Jihad is the best therapy for depression.

A message for feeble-minded people, for suffering people craving warmth, virile friendship, belonging. Not so different from the ads that we see every day in our city streets, only more sincere when it comes to the subject of suicide. Suicide is crucial in this video: 6,500 current or former US military soldiers commit suicide each year, according to Dubiq. While Americans die alone in anger and despair, God's soldiers die eager to meet some seventy virgins waiting in Paradise to fuck the warriors.

A Blueprint for Europe and the World

Do you remember Yugoslavia? For some time, it was a rather healthy federation of twenty-five million people. Different ethnic and religious communities coexisted, factories were managed by workers, everybody had a

Forensics experts work on exhuming and identifying Srebrenica victims, Bosnia and Herzegovina, July, 2005. Photo: Marco Di Lauro/Getty Images

privately owned house, and nobody suffered from hunger. Then came the International Monetary Fund, the Polish pope pushing Croatians into religious war against the Orthodox Serbs, and Germany delivering weapons to the fascist Ustaša.

In 1990, the United States cut off all forms of credit to Yugoslavia unless separate elections were held in each state of the federation within six months. As a consequence, Yugoslavia—no longer able to conduct foreign trade—was condemned to commercial bankruptcy, which reinforced the divisive tendencies of its states. The US then funded the individual states to dissolve the federation, also supporting parties and movements that promoted this process. Meanwhile, Germany shipped arms to Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina.

In March of 1991, fascist organizations in Croatia called for the overthrow of the Socialist government and the expulsion of all Serbs from Croatia. On March 5, 1991, they attacked the federal army base at Gospić, and civil war began.

The extreme right-wing Croatian party Democratic Union, which used the flag, emblems, and slogans of the pro-Nazi Ustaša party, seized power. Citizenship, property rights, employment, retirement benefits, and passports were granted only to Croats and to no other ethnic group. Thus, 300,000 Serbs armed themselves and entered the fray with unspeakable brutality.

The destruction of Yugoslavia can be seen as a return of Hitler's ghost to the world scene. Ethnic-religious wars caused around 170,000 casualties, as ethnic cleansing was practiced in every area of the federation. After seven years of violence, a new state order emerged based on a paradigm of ethnic-religious identification, a principle thought to have been extinct after the end of the Second World War and the defeat of Nazism.

Twenty years after the Nazi-neoliberal wars of Yugoslavia, in all those small nation-states (except perhaps Slovenia) unemployment is rampant, people are impoverished, schools are privatized, and public infrastructure is in disrepair. Today, the Yugoslavia of the Nineties may well be a blueprint for the European future: German Ordoliberalism has impoverished social life, depleted

public services all over the continent, and inflicted humiliation on Syriza which has jeopardized the core of European solidarity.

The failure to deal with the new wave of migrants from the East has exposed the political fragility of the European Union, and now fuels a new outburst of fear, racism, shame, and bad conscience.

From the Balkans to Greece, from Libya to Morocco, are the ten million people amassing at these borders going to be the perpetrators of the next terrorist wave? Or will they be the victims of the next Holocaust?

The Only Way Out

After the attacks in the center of Paris on Friday, November 13, a nervous French President declared: "The security pact takes precedence over the stability pact. France is at war."

Bin Laden's dream has been fulfilled. A small group of fanatics has provoked fragmentary global civil war. Can it be stopped?

In the present condition of perpetual economic stagnation, emerging markets are crumbling, the European Union is paralyzed, the promised economic recovery is elusive, and it is hard to foresee an awakening from this nightmare. The only imaginable way out of this hell is to end financial capitalism, but this does not seem to be at hand.

Nevertheless, this is the only prospect we can pursue in such an obscurantist time: to create solidarity among the bodies of cognitive workers worldwide, and to build a techno-poetic platform for the collaboration of cognitive workers for the liberation of knowledge from both religious and economic dogma.

A fragmented front of nationalist parties is gaining the upper hand: they oppose the euro currency and globalization, and they call for the restoration of national sovereignty. This front has assembled in the governing coalition of Hungary (which includes Nazis and authoritarian nationalists), in the Italian right-wing of Matteo Salvini, in the Polish government, in the anti-European British party UKIP, and in the rightist majority of the Bavarian CSU. This anti-euro front of European forces is converging with Russian nationalism under the authoritarian leadership of Putin and the banner of national populism and unrelenting Islamophobia.

After the humiliation of Syriza, the future of Europe is held captive by the opposition between financial violence and national violence. In order to grasp the dynamic that drives the global civil war, we first have to see the relation between the icy wind of financial abstraction and the reaction of the aggressive body of society separated from its brain.

The icy wind of financial abstraction is instilling in the European soul a sense of desolation that Michel Houellebecq has described in his books. *La soumission* (*Submission*) is a novel about the sadness that emerges from the vanishing of collective desire. Submission to the Supreme Entity (be it God or the market) is the source of the present gloom, and the source of the present war.

Globalization has brought about the obliteration of modern universalism: capital flows freely everywhere and the labor market is globally unified, but this has not led to the free circulation of women and men, nor to the affirmation of universal reason in the world. Rather, the opposite is happening: as the intellectual energies of society are captured by the network of financial abstraction, as cognitive labor is subjugated to the abstract law of valorization, and as human communication is transformed into abstract interaction among disembodied digital agents, the social body is detached from the general intellect. The subsumption of the general intellect into the corporate kingdom of abstraction is depriving the living community of intelligence, understanding, and emotion.

And the brainless body reacts—on one side, a huge wave of mental suffering, and on the other side, the much-advertised cure for depression: fanaticism, fascism, and war. And at the end, suicide.

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Jodi Dean

The Anamorphic Politics of Climate Change

Politics in the Anthropocene is a matter of perspective: we can't look at climate change directly. Relying on multiple disparate measurements, we look for patterns and estimate probabilities. We see in parts: the melting ice caps, glaciers, and permafrost; the advancing deserts and diminishing coral reefs; the disappearing coastlines and the migrating species. Evidence becomes a matter of extremes as extremes themselves become the evidence for an encroaching catastrophe that has already happened: the highest recorded temperatures; the hockey stick of predicted warming, sea-level rise, and extinction. Once we see it—the "it" of climate change encapsulated into a data point or disastrous image—it's already too late. But too late for what and for whom remains unsaid, unknowable. The challenge in this scenario becomes grappling with continuity. How can we conceive and wage the struggles already dividing the collectivity presumed in processes whose outcomes are estimated and predicted?

Climate change tethers us to a perspective that oscillates between the impossible and the inevitable, already and not yet, everywhere but not here, not quite. Slavoj Zižek reminds us that such oscillation indexes the "too much or too little" of *jouissance*. For psychoanalysis, particularly in Lacan's teaching, *jouissance* is a special substance, that intense pleasure-pain of enjoyment that makes life worth living and some things worth dying for. We will do anything to get what we think we will enjoy. We then discover after we get it that it wasn't what we really desired after all. Likewise, we try to discipline, regulate, and control enjoyment, only to find it emerging in another place. We get off even when we think we are trying not to. *Jouissance* is what we want but can't get and what we get that we don't want.

Some use climate change as a vehicle for *jouissance*, for enjoying destruction, punishment, and knowing. A current of left anthropocenic enjoyment circulates through evocations of unprecedented, unthinkable catastrophe: the end of the world, the end of the human species, the end of civilization. Theorists embrace extinction, focus on deep time, and displace a politics of the people onto the agency of things. Postmodern Augustinians announce the guilt or hypocrisy of the entire human species. Hubris is humanity's, all of humanity's, downfall. Philosophers and cultural critics take on the authoritative rhetoric of geoscientists and evolutionary biologists. Those of us who follow the reports of emissions, extreme weather, and failed states enjoy being in the know. We can't do anything about climate change, but this lets us off the hook when we stop trying.

Getting to name our new era, marking our impact as the "Anthropocene," provides a compensatory charge— *hey, we changed the world after all*. Even better than coming up with a name for our era is the *jouissance* that comes from getting to judge everyone else for their self-absorbed consumerist pleasures— *why didn't you change when you should have*? Anticipatory Cassandras, we watch from

The Doomsday Clock is a symbolic clock face created in 1947 by the members of the Science and Security Board of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. Its hands represent a countdown to possible global catastrophe. Initially made to refer to nuclear war, since 2007 the clock has been used to raise awareness for climate change.

within our melancholic "pre-loss," to use Naomi Klein's term, comforted by the fantasy of our future capacity to say we knew it all along. We told you so. Your capitalism, instrumental reason, or Cartesian dualism killed us all. Or so we fantasize, screening out the unequal distribution of the effects of warming—Russia doesn't worry about it as much as, say, Bangladesh.

The perfect storm of planetary catastrophe, species condemnation, and paralyzed incapacity allows the Left a form of *jouissance* that ongoing deprivation, responsibility, and struggle do not allow. Overlooked as too human, these products and conditions of capitalism's own continuity can be dismissed as not mattering, as immaterial. Organized political movement appears somehow outmoded, its enduring necessity dispersed into individuated ethico-spiritual orientations on a cosmos integrated over eons.

This left anthropocenic enjoyment of destruction, punishment, and knowing circulates in the same loop as capitalist enjoyment of expenditure, accumulation, and waste, an enjoyment furthered by fossil fuels, but not reducible to them. Left anthropocenic enjoyment thrives on the disaster that capitalist enjoyment produces. In this circuit, captivation in enjoyment fuels the exploitation, expropriation, and extraction driving the capitalist system: more, more, more; endless circulation, dispossession, destruction, and accumulation; ceaseless, limitless death. Incapacitated by magnitude, boggled by scale, the Left gets off on moralism, complexity, and disaster—even as the politics of a capitalist class determined to profit from catastrophe continues.

The circulation of left anthropocenic enjoyment through capitalist currents manifests in a diminished capacity for imagining human subjectivity. Even as things, objects, actants, and the nonhuman engage in a wide array of lively pursuits, the anthropocenic perspective seems to confine humans to three roles: *observers*, *victims*, and *survivors*. *Observers* are the scientists, their own depression and loss now itself a subgenre of climate writing. Scientists measure and track, but can't do anything about the unfolding catastrophe—action is for others. Observers also appear as the rest of us as moral audience, enjoined to awareness of human-nonhuman entanglements and the agency of microbes. In this vein, our awareness matters not just as an opportunity for spiritual development but also because multiple instances of individuated moral and aesthetic appreciation of fragility and the limits of human agency could potentially converge, seemingly without division and struggle. When the scale is anthropocenic, the details of political organization fall away in favor of the plurality of self-organizing systems. The second role, *victims*, points to islanders and refugees, those left with nothing but their own mobility. They are, again, shorn of political subjectivity, dwarfed by myriad other extinctions, and reduced to so much lively matter. The third role is as *survivors*. Survivors are the heroes of popular culture's dystopic futures, the exceptional and strong concentrations of singular capacity that continue the frontiersmanship and entrepreneurial individualism that the US uses to deny collective responsibility for inequality. I should add here that Klein's most significant contribution with *This Changes Everything* is her provision of the new, active, collective figure of "Blockadia." As is well-known, Blockadia designates organized political struggles against fracking, drilling, pipelines, gas storage, and other projects that extend the fossil fuel infrastructure when it should in fact be dismantled. With this figure, Klein breaks with the anthropocenic displacement of political action.

If fascination with climate change's anthropocenic knot of catastrophe, condemnation, and paralysis lures the Left into the loop of capitalist enjoyment, an anamorphic gaze can help dislodge us. "Anamorphosis" designates an image or object that seems distorted when we look at it head on, but that appears clearly from another perspective. A famous example is Hans Holbein's 1533 painting *The Ambassadors*, in which a skull in the painting appears as such only when seen from two diagonal angles; viewed directly, it's a nearly indistinguishable streak. Lacan emphasizes that anamorphosis demonstrates how the space of vision isn't reducible to mapped space but includes the point from which we see. Space can be distorted, depending on how we look at it. Apprehending what is significant, then, may require "escaping the fascination of the picture" by adopting another perspective—a partial or partisan perspective, the perspective of a part. From this partisan perspective, the whole will not appear as a whole. It will appear with a hole. The perspective from which the hole appears is that of the

Hans Holbein the Younger, The Ambassadors, 1533. Oil on oak. 207 cm × 209.5 cm. National Gallery, London.

subject, which is to say of the gap opened up by the shift to a partisan perspective.

When we try to grasp climate change directly, we end up confused, entrapped in distortions that fuel the reciprocal fantasies of planetary scale geoengineering and post-civilizational neo-primitivism. The immensity of the calamity of the changing climate—with attendant desertification, ocean acidification, and species loss—seemingly forces us into seeing all or nothing. If we don't grasp the issue in its enormity, we miss it entirely. In this vein, some theorists insist that the Anthropocene urgently requires us to develop a new ontology, new concepts, new verbs, entirely new ways of thinking, yet I have my doubts: geologic time's exceeding of human time makes it indifferent even to a philosophy that includes the nonhuman. If there is a need, it is a human need implicated in politics and desire, that is to say, in power

The Natural History Museum, Will the Story of the 6th Mass Extinction Ever Include the Role of its Sponsors?, 2015, diorama in an exhibition at the American Alliance of Museums Annual Convention, Atlanta, GA, depicts the David H. Koch Dinosaur Wing at the American Museum of Natural History (NY) several hundred years into a dystopian future. Photo: NHM.

The activist group Liberate Tate performs All Rise at the Tate Modern on the third anniversary of the BP Gulf of Mexico oil spill. For five days, performers whispered extracts from court transcripts of the BP trials in New Orleans throughout the institution's BP-sponsored spaces Photo: Hannah Davey.

and its generation and deployment.

The demand for entirely new ways of thinking comes from those who accept as well as those who reject capitalism, science, and technology. "Big thinkers" in industry and economics join speculative realists and new materialists in encouraging innovation and disruption. Similarly, the emphasis on new forms of interdisciplinarity, on breaking down divisions within the sciences and between the sciences and the humanities isn't radical, but a move that has been pursued in other contexts. Modern environmentalism, as Ursula Heise observes, tried to "drive home to scientists, politicians, and the population at large the urgency of developing a holistic understanding of ecological connectedness."[1] The Macy Conferences that generated cybernetics and the efforts of the Rand Corporation and the Department of Defense to develop more flexible, soft, and networked forms of welfare, as well as contemporary biotech, geotech, and biomimicry, all echo the same impulse to interlink and merge.

The philosopher Frédéric Neyrat has subjected the "goosphere" that results from this erasure of spacing to a scathing critique, implicating it in the intensification of global fears and anxieties: when everything is connected, everything is dangerous. Neyrat thus advocates an ecology of separation: the production of a "distance within the interior of the socio-political situation" is the "condition of possibility of real creative response to economic or ecological crisis."[2] Approaching climate change anamorphically puts such an ecology of separation to work. We look for and produce gaps. Rather than trapped by our fascination with an (always illusory) anthropocenic whole, we cut across and through, finding and creating
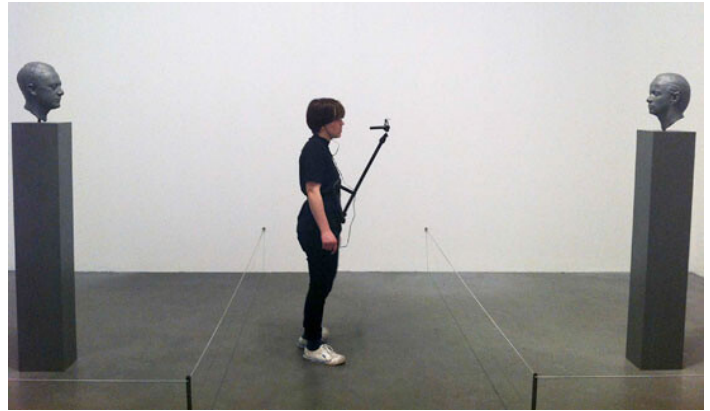
openings. We gain possibilities for collective action and strategic engagement.

Just as it inscribes a gap within the supposition of ecological connectedness, the anamorphic gaze likewise breaks with the spatial model juxtaposing the "molar" and the "molecular" popular with some readers of Deleuze and Guattari. Instead of valorizing one pole over the other (and the valued pole is nearly always the molecular, especially insofar as molecular is mapped onto the popular and the dispossessed rather than, say, the malignant and the self-absorbed), the idea of an anamorphic perspective on climate change rejects the pre-given and static scale of molar and molecular to attend to the perspective that reveals a hole, gap, or limit constitutive of desire and the subject of politics.

Here are some examples of approaching climate change from the side. In *Tropics of Chaos*, Christian Parenti emphasizes the "catastrophic convergence" of poverty, violence, and climate change. He draws out the uneven and unequal impacts of planetary warming on areas already devastated by capitalism, racism, colonialism, and militarism. From this angle, policies aimed at redressing and reducing economic inequality can be seen as necessary for adapting to a changing climate. In a similar vein but on a different scale, activists focusing on pipeline and oil and gas storage projects target the fossil fuel industry as the infrastructure of climate change, the central component of global warming's means of reproduction. But instead of being examples of the politics of locality dominant in recent decades, infrastructure struggles pursue an anamorphic politics. They don't try to address the whole of the causes and effects of global warming. They approach it from the side of its infrastructural supports. The recent victory of the campaign against the Keystone Pipeline, as well as of the

anti-fracking campaign in New York State, demonstrate ways that an anamorphic politics is helping dismantle the power of the oil and gas industry and produce a counterpower infrastructure.

The new movement to liberate museums and cultural institutions from the fossil fuel sector supplies a third set of examples, modeling a politics that breaks decisively with the melancholic catastrophism enjoyed by the anthropocenic Left. As the demonstrations at the Louvre accompanying the end of the Paris COP made clear, artists and activists have shifted their energy away from the promotion of general awareness and participation to concentrate instead on institutions as arrangements of power that might be redeployed against the oil and gas industry. Pushing for a fossil-free culture, an array of groups have aligned in a fight against the sector that supplies capitalism with its energy. They demonstrate how the battle over the political arrangement of a warming planet is in part a cultural battle, a struggle over who and what determines our imagining of our future and the future of our imagining.

Art collective Liberate Tate performs Hidden Figures, 2014. Photo: Martin LeSanto-Smith.

In this vein, Liberate Tate works to free art from oil by pushing the Tate to drop the sponsorship of British Petroleum. For the past five years, the group has performed art interventions in Tate buildings as well as other UK arts institutions that support (and are supported by) BP. Actions include unauthorized performances such as *Birthmark*, from late November 2015. Liberate Tate activists occupied the 1840s gallery at the Tate Britain, tattooing each other with the number of C02 emissions in parts per million corresponding to the day they were born. *Hidden Figures*, from 2014, featured dozens of performers standing along the sides of a hundred-square-meter black cloth which they held chest high, raising and lowering in arches and waves. Taking place in Tate Modern's Turbine

Hall, the performance pointed to Malevich's *Black Square*, part of an exhibit that opened the same summer that carbon concentrations exceeded four hundred parts per million, a fact parallel to and omitted from the exhibit, much like BP's—and by implication the Tate's—involvement in the climate crisis. *Hidden Figures* invokes the Tate's release of the minutes of meetings from its ethics committee in the wake of numerous freedom of information requests. Black rectangles blocked out multiple sections of the released documents. *Hidden Figures* reproduced an enormous black square within the museum, placing the fact of redaction, hiding, and censorship at its center. As Liberate Tate explains, the redactions reveal a divide, a split between the ostensible public interest of the Tate and the private interest it seeks to protect.[3] Occupying this split via its demonstration of the museum's incorporation into BP's ecocidal infrastructure, Liberate Tate disrupts the flow of institutional power. Rather than fueling BP's efforts at reputation management, it makes the museum into a site of counterpower.

The Natural History Museum, the new project of the art, activist, and theory collective Not An Alternative (of which I am a member), similarly adopts an anamorphic politics. *The Natural History Museum* repurposes the generic form of the natural history museum as a set of institutionalized expectations, meanings, and practices that embody and transmit collective power. It puts display on display, transferring our attention to the infrastructures supporting what and how we see. *The Natural History Museum*'s gaze is avowedly partisan, a political approach to climate change in the context of a museum culture that revels in its authoritative neutrality. Activating natural history museums' claim to serve the common, *The Natural History Museum* divides the sector from within: anyone tasked with science communication has to take a stand. Do they stand with collectivity and the common or with oligarchs, private property, and fossil fuels? Cultural institutions such as science and natural history museums come to appear in their role in climate change as sites of greenwashing and of emergent counterpower.

Operating as a pop-up people's museum, *The Natural History Museum*'s exhibits and tours provide a counter-narrative that combats the influence oil and gas industry on science education. *The Natural History Museum* also serves as a platform for political organizing, the ostensibly neutral zone of the museum turned into a base camp against the fossil fuel sector. It moves beyond participatory art's creation of experiences and valuation of participation for its own sake to the building of divisive political power. In March 2014, *The National History Museum* released an open letter to museums of science and natural history signed by dozens of the world's top scientists, including several Nobel laureates. The letter urged museums to cut all ties with the fossil fuel industry and with funders of climate obfuscation. After its release,

The Natural History Museum, Exhibiting the Gaze, 2014. Light box photograph exhibited at the Queens Museum, NY, from a series of sixteen images documenting current exhibitions at natural history museums in the US. Photo: NHM.

hundreds of scientists added their names. News of the letter appeared on the front pages of the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *LA Times* and featured in scores of publications, including the *Guardian*, *Forbes*, *Salon*, and the *Huffington Post*. Later that spring, *The Natural History Museum* delivered a petition with over 400,000 signatures to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC demanding that the museum kick fossil fuel oligarch David Koch off its board.

The premise of Liberate Tate and Not An Alternative is that institutions matter as combined and intensified expressions of power. More than just the aggregation of individuals, they are individuals plus the force of their aggregation. Because institutions remain concentrations of authority that can be salvaged and put to use, it makes political sense to occupy rather than ignore or abandon them. We can repurpose trusted or taken-for-granted forms—a possibility precluded by the anthropocenic preoccupation with an imaginary whole figured in geologic time. Just as the museum is a site in the infrastructure of capitalist class power—with its donors and galas and named halls—so can it be a medium in the production of a

counterpower infrastructure that challenges, shames, and dismantles the very class and sector that would use what is common for private benefit.

The movement to liberate museums and cultural institutions from fossil fuel interests does not try to present climate change directly or nature as a whole. Instead, it approaches the processes contributing to global warming as processes in which we are already implicated. We are within the systems and institutions the effects of which scientists measure and chart. And that the people as the collective subject of politics are in them means that they are not fully determined. There are gaps that we can hold open and force in one direction rather than another. In too many contemporary discussions of the Anthropocene, the organization of people—our institutions, systems, and arrangements of power, production, and reproduction—appears only as a distortion. Everything is active except for us, we with no role other than that of observers, victims, or lone survivors. In contrast with emphases on nonhumans, actants, and distributed agency, the strategic coming together of organized opposition to the fossil fuel sector points to the

The distorted skull of Holbein's The Ambassadors is photographed at a sideways angle to create the illusion of perspective.

continued and indispensable role of collective power. Just as a class politics without ecology can support extractivism, so can an ecology without class struggle continue the assault on working people that has resulted in deindustrialization in parts of the North and West and hyperindustrialization in parts of the South and East (we might call such an ecology without class struggle "green neoliberalism"). So we shouldn't undermine collective political power in the name of a moralistic horizontalism of humans and nonhumans. We should work to generate collective power and mobilize it in an emancipatory egalitarian direction, a direction incompatible with the continuation of capitalism and hence a direction necessarily partisan and divisive.

X

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1
Ursula Heise, *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 22.

2
Frédéric Neyrat, "Economy of Turbulence: How to Escape from the Global State of Emergency?" *Philosophy Today* 59, 4 (Fall 2015):657–669.

3
Liberate Tate, "Confronting the Institution in Performance," *Performance Research* 20.4 (2015): 78–84.

Alan Gilbert

Walid Raad's Spectral Archive, Part I: Historiography as Process

Paradise absent is different from paradise lost ... [1]

A city, perhaps like a person, always exceeds the myth of its origins. It's not a coincidence that as a cosmopolitan city Beirut became synonymous with loss. It may be impossible to establish the beginning and end of the Lebanese civil wars. They are generally given the dates 1975–1990: from a 1975 assassination attempt on Maronite Christian and Phalangist leader Pierre Gemayel—and the immediate retaliation by his followers against a busload of Palestinians in April of that year—until the 1990 implementation of the Taif Accord and Syrian intervention. Outside of these events, many historians have pointed to the fragile political conditions resulting from a governing system based on religious sects, patronage, powerful families, militias, and, after 1948, an influx of displaced Palestinians as providing the unstable—almost inevitable—conditions for internecine conflict. As journalist Sandra Mackey writes about the war:

> At one point it was estimated that no fewer than 186 warring factions representing contending communal identities and ideologies, splinter groups within these larger blocs, and foreign governments pursuing their own interests were battling within a country seven-tenths the size of Connecticut.[2]

After 1975, this spiraling factionalism transformed the collapsed state of Lebanon into a dense mosaic of heavily fortified neighborhoods and mini-fiefdoms. Perhaps a better date to mark the end of the wars is the disarming of militias, excluding Hezbollah, in the spring of 1991. Yet given ongoing hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel (culminating in their 2006 war), the assassination of ex-Prime Minister Rafic Hariri in 2005, and the scattered sectarian violence of 2008, some would argue that the Lebanese civil wars have never really ended. Unlike many countries recently overwhelmed by internal ethnic, cultural, and racial violence, Lebanon has never had an official truth and reconciliation commission. The length and ferocity of the war left many wanting to forget and rebuild. But as Walid Raad's art shows, forgetting is another form of remembering, and disaster wreaks havoc with law just as it does without law.

1. Performing the Archive

In the late 1990s, Raad created a fictional foundation called The Atlas Group in order to better organize and
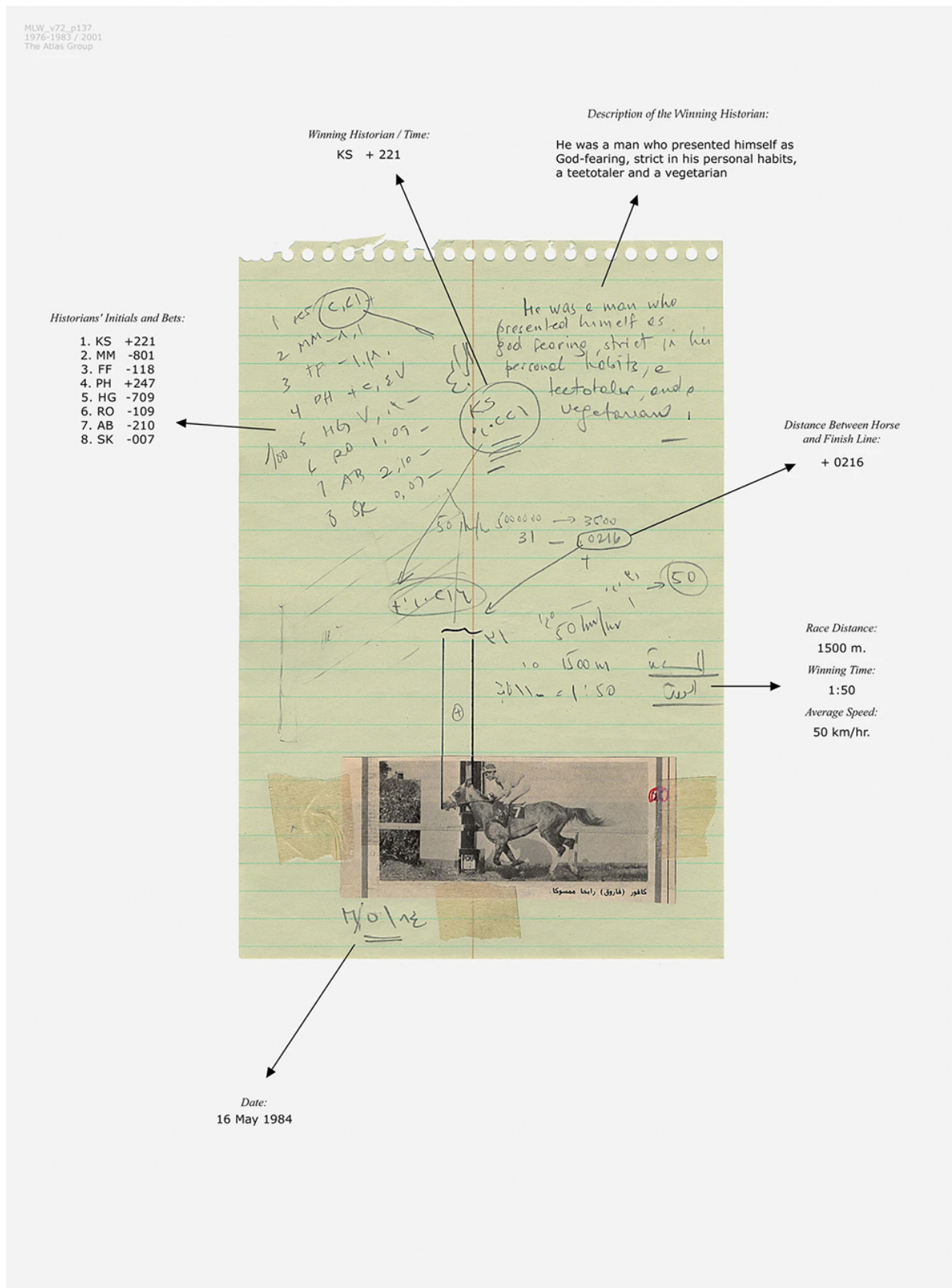
Walid Raad, Notebook Volume 72: Missing Lebanese Wars (plate 137), 1996–2003. Archival inkjet print. Copyright: Walid Raad. Courtesy the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

more subtly contextualize his growing output of works documenting the Lebanese civil wars. While The Atlas Group may be imaginary, Raad rightfully stresses its very material results.[3] Raad produces artworks addressing the infrastructural, societal, and psychic devastation wrought by the wars; he then re-dates and attributes these works to an array of invented figures who in turn are said to have donated these works directly or by proxy to The Atlas Group archive. Regardless of medium, Raad processes and outputs all of his work digitally, thereby adding another layer of documentary intervention to his overarching fictional conceit.

Raad rarely allows materials from The Atlas Group to be exhibited without some form of public presentation. Before his identity with The Atlas Group became more widely known (and even after it did), Raad would present himself as a representative of the foundation lecturing on and presenting other people's work from the archive.[4] An extended question-and-answer session was central to these performances, during which Raad would plant audience queries and comments to help steer the conversation, including in the direction of unveiling the project's fictional dimension for those who hadn't deciphered the ruse. This oftentimes involved getting the audience to move beyond their own discomfort with subterfuge in order to engage Raad's larger concerns: historiography as a process conceived as a concrete series of events; the ways in which archives are formed and disseminated; the effects of personal and collective trauma on memory and its articulation; and the ultimately unspeakable and unrepresentable dimension of the Lebanese civil wars. Each of these, not uncoincidentally, involves the use of fictional devices.

Raad writes:

> We do not consider the [sic] "The Lebanese Civil War" to be a settled chronology of events, dates, personalities, massacres, invasions, but rather we also want to consider it as an abstraction constituted by various discourses, and, more importantly, by various modes of assimilating the data of the world.[5]

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Michel Foucault famously argued that an archive is a discursive system regulating what can and cannot be said in and about any historical period.[6] Much has been made, and at this point maybe too much has been imitated, concerning Raad's use of fiction and artifice in fashioning his documents of recent Lebanese history. Yet what has sometimes been overlooked by scholars, critics, and Raad's audience is that fiction was always the means and never the ends. During the course of an interview with Raad, John Menick comments: "The issue of what can and can not be discussed in relation to Lebanon and his immediate context comes up again and again during the discussion."[7]

In other words, Raad's goal is not a counter-memory, but an investigation of the ways in which memory is produced; not a counter-archive per se, but an interrogation of discursive formations constituting any archive as a compendium of present knowledge.

The Atlas Group, Miraculous beginnings, 1993/2002 and No, illness is neither here nor there, 1993/2002. 1'50'' Two-channel video. Copyright: Walid Raad. Courtesy the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

A good example of this approach appears in a project that partly launched The Atlas Group: *Notebook Volume 72: Missing Lebanese Wars* (1989/1998). (Here and in the following, first dates are attributions by The Atlas Group; the second refer to Raad's production of the work. Artworks with only one date are not part of The Atlas Group's "official" archive.) The project reproduces information recorded in a stenographer's notebook by a "Dr. Fadl Fakhouri" concerning bets waged at horse races by his fellow historians of the civil wars. But rather than betting on the winning horse, these gamblers—including Maronites, socialists, Marxists, and Islamists—wagered on the amount of distance between the horse's nose and the finish line as captured in the photo-finish image published in the next day's newspaper.

For Raad, history can never be captured at the moment it occurs—or after. The historians themselves can only estimate the discrepancy between the event and its documentation. Yet their conjecture only compounds the disparity between history and its recording, as no historian manages to guess exactly the distance between horse and finish line; rather, the winner of the bet is the one who

comes closest. In other words, *Notebook Volume 72: Missing Lebanese Wars* deals with how history is written as opposed to actual historical events.[8] Rather than writing an unwritten history, Raad's art aims to write the writing of history.

According to theorist of the photographic image John Tagg, "Photographs are never 'evidence' of history; they are themselves the historical."[9]

Notebook Volume 72: Missing Lebanese Wars offers a strong critique of historical teleologies and grand narratives. After all, each of the ideologies represented by Raad's imaginary historians envisions history as fulfilled one day. Raad also renders as fundamentally absurd the trajectory of the civil wars, consequently sapping the myth of Beirut as the realization of Parisian modernity in the Middle East (a self-fashioning story quickly revived after the wars). Fakhouri stands outside all of this as a more skeptical voice. He's also deceased, his documents having been discovered and bequeathed to The Atlas Group after the fact. Or perhaps it's more precise to say: after the fact of the fact. The various misdirections in Raad's work expose the fictional elements in reconstructions of the past (especially personal ones) while undermining the presumed authority—Raad's own first and foremost—to write a definitive historical account. In his performances as well, Raad assumes in order to vacate—or at least call into question—the notion of official spokesperson.

2. Trauma and Space-Time

Fakhouri's obsession with temporal gaps and ruptures allows Raad to introduce the notion of trauma that is central to The Atlas Group project. Trauma theorist and historian Cathy Caruth writes:

> Trauma is not experienced as a mere repression or defense, but as a temporal delay that carries the individual beyond the shock of the first moment. The trauma is a repeated suffering of the event, but it is also a continual leaving of its site. The traumatic reexperiencing of the event thus *carries with it* what Dori Laub calls the "collapse of witnessing," the impossibility of knowing that first constituted it. And by carrying that impossibility of knowing out of the empirical event itself, trauma opens up and challenges us to a new kind of listening, the witnessing, precisely, *of impossibility*.[10]

This temporal disconnect combined with an epistemological crisis appears throughout Raad's work. For example, in two films given to The Atlas Group entitled *Miraculous beginnings* and *No, illness is neither here nor there*, Fakhouri is said to have exposed a single frame of

film every time he believed the civil wars had ended (in the case of the former work) and whenever he encountered a doctor's or dentist's office sign (for the latter) (1993/2002 & 1993/2002). These pieces, less than two minutes in length each, record a hunger for closure and healing while their literally hundreds of discrete images create an at first elegiac and then ridiculous cavalcade of frustrated hope. The desire for simultaneous personal and historical closure is conflated and then rendered sadly comical in Raad's search to find a way of addressing a past that continually haunts, and displaces, the present.


Walid Raad, The dead weight of a quarrel hangs, 1997. Video still. Copyright: Walid Raad. Courtesy the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

Fiction is here, and throughout Raad's work, in the service of an elusive real. "The real must be fictionalized in order to be thought. This proposition should be distinguished from any discourse—positive or negative—according to which everything is 'narrative,' with alternations between 'grand' narratives and 'minor' narratives," writes Jacques Rancière.[11] Resisting the narratives of conventional historiography, The Atlas Group refuses to capture the past and perhaps proposes that hope without closure may be the only kind of hope worth hoping for. Unlike other contemporary Lebanese artists who appropriate and manipulate imagery from the prewar years—such as Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige's literally burnt and torn postcard series, *Wonder Beirut: The Story of a Pyromaniac Photographer* (1998–2006)—Raad's work has almost never depicted an irrecoverable time or geography. Rather, what is lost is continually lost again in the present; it is absent. An exception appears at the beginning of Raad's very early film *The dead weight of a quarrel hangs* (1997), where he fetishistically documents a set of small domestic objects carried to Lebanon by a female Palestinian (Raad's mother is a Palestinian

displaced in 1948). But in this case, absence has been precariously internalized within a familial space rather than projected onto a vanished external home.

If some of Raad's earliest works addressed the end of the war (and its accompanying flickers of hope), he soon began to move backward in time, instigated partly by his interest in the car bomb as a weapon of military conflict and civilian terror. In *Notebook volume 38: Already been in a lake of fire* (1991/2002), Fakhouri cut out and pasted 145 color photographs of cars identical to ones used as bombs during the civil wars. In handwritten Arabic text, Fakhouri details the day, time, and place of the explosion, along with the number of people killed and injured, the area of the blast, the amount of explosives involved, and a short description of the vehicle. Of the many published print versions of Raad's work,[12] these carefully composed notebook pages reproduce the most directly, and in this sense come closest to contributing to, a conventional history of the civil wars.
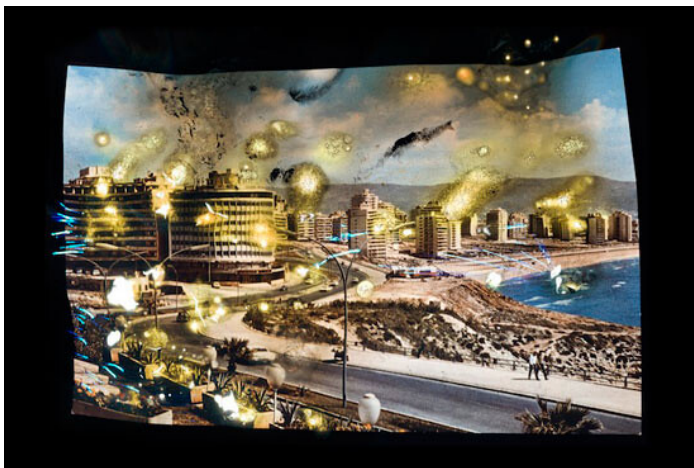
Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, History of a Pyromaniac Photographer, #19, First part of the Wonder Beirut Project 1997–2006, C print on aluminium with face mounting. Courtesy In Situ Fabienne Leclerc (Paris), CRG Gallery (New York), The Third Line (Dubai)

At the same time, car bombs are for Raad the paradigmatic destroyers of space-time continuums during the wars, and as such have remained highly charged objects of fascination for him. Lebanese visual artist and theorist Jalal Toufic writes: "What is site-specific about Lebanon? It is the labyrinthine space-time of its ruins, what undoes the date- and site-specific."[13] Although Raad produced conceptual documentary-based work about the Lebanese civil wars for nearly fifteen years, the amount of concrete information pertaining to the conflict that might be extracted from this material would amount to no more than a few paragraphs (excluding facts and details conveyed during the question-and-answer sessions following his performances). What hard evidence does

exist is sometimes inconsistent: at one point Raad claimed that 145 car bombs were exploded during the war; he then revised the number to 3,641 (the latter is more accurate). In a civil war characterized by the complete collapse of the state, how is historical knowledge produced and confirmed? Independently, by each warring faction. This is site-specificity taken to its illogical extreme. Confronted with a proliferation of competing realities, Raad (and Toufic in his own art and writing) decided instead to investigate the unreal, ruins, and a spectral sense of place.

The recent wars in Lebanon defy traditional narrative structures such as beginnings and endings, causes and effects, and suffering and redemption. At certain moments—in 1977, in 1983—the wars seemed to be subsiding. Conferences were organized; rebuilding plans were developed; books were published—only to have the fighting flare up again even more brutally.[14] After the first few years of the wars, it became difficult to discern whether they were being fought over ideologies or profits. In a series of photographic prints entitled *Let's be honest, the weather helped* (1998/2006), Raad mapped out at least twenty-three countries supplying arms to the various militias. Profiteering as a means to eradicate the past intensified after 1991 as rival plans and politicians battled over reconstruction contracts.

Looking at The Atlas Group project overall, one sometimes wonders whether Raad or Beirut is more haunted by ghosts. Fakhouri has already died when the archive is beginning to be assembled; as a result, his idiosyncratic documents gain in symbolic power what they lose in objective authority. (Fakhouri's wife and daughter—vestiges of civil society—donated his notebooks, films, and photographs to The Atlas Group.) Yet Fakhouri is mysteriously resurrected near the project's "end." Does that make a female presence—Fakhouri's vanished wife, the early traces of Raad's mother—the most ghostly figure of all in The Atlas Group? Although Raad still occasionally produced work for The Atlas Group, he has historicized it with the dates 1989–2004. Fakhouri appears in one of its final set of documents: *Civilizationally, we do not dig holes to bury ourselves* (1958–1959/2003), a collection of twenty-four black-and-white self-portrait photographs Fakhouri made while visiting Paris and Rome in 1958 and 1959. A number of these pictures were taken in front of famous monuments such as the Eiffel Tower and Notre Dame. The bitter irony, as Raad surely knows, is that a person from the Middle East photographing himself or herself near such landmarks in a post–September 11 world would be cause for suspicion or even arrest.

The fact is that these are old photographs of Raad's father. Thus, The Atlas Group loosely opens and closes with the conflation of fictional and actual father figures, thereby throwing into question the place of this traditional symbolically organizing presence. Rancière writes: "blocks of speech circulat[e] without a legitimate father to

The Atlas Group, Civilizationally, we do not dig holes to bury ourselves_Plate 922, 1958-59/2003. Pigmented inkjet print, 25.4 x 20.3 cm. Copyright: Walid Raad; Courtesy the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

accompany them toward their authorized addressee. Therefore, they do not produce collective bodies. Instead, they introduce lines of fracture and disincorporation into imaginary collective bodies."[15]

Civilizationally, we do not dig holes to bury ourselves is a primary example of this dynamic and of how certain aspects of Raad's overall artistic project function: an authority figure is exposed as false while simultaneously being reinserted into the historical record so as to facilitate a disruption ("lines of fracture and disincorporation") that might allow for a new understanding and experience of history to emerge. A significant family document is depersonalized before being snuck in as disguised autobiography.

An argument could be made that for all of its focus on Lebanon's recent past, Raad has created a uniquely elaborated and extensive cosmology that rivals in idiosyncratic vision an artist as seemingly unrelated as Matthew Barney. Like Barney's *Cremaster* universe, every piece in Raad's fabricated world has its place; The Atlas Group archive is filled with cross-referenced files that intricately—almost intertextually—relate. Like Toufic's Beirut, it's a labyrinth more than a site. Raad's project is as fantastical as Barney's imaginary world, albeit more immediately serious in its engagements. This fanciful quality (Raad's borderline excessively romantic titles are one clue) is oftentimes overlooked by critics and scholars committed to the very solemn discourse—with its geopolitical resonances and institutional ramifications—surrounding the reception of Raad's art. For this reason, it helps to remember that one of the earliest motivations for Raad's deadpan performances was as a critique and even parody of the standard artist talk.

As Raad's current retrospective, *Walid Raad* (October 12, 2015–January 31, 2016), at the Museum of Modern Art in New York emphasizes, performance has always been a primary component of his work. After mostly concluding The Atlas Group in 2004, Raad turned his attentions to the rapidly burgeoning financial support and institutional infrastructure for art and artists in the Middle East: museums, galleries, art schools, collectors, collections, magazines, curators, critics, and so forth. The result is *Scratching on things I could disavow* (2007–ongoing). Like The Atlas Group it has numerous component parts, although this time the structure isn't the documents, types, and files of an archive but the chapters, sections, indices, appendices, prefaces, and even the translator's introduction of an imaginary book. Mostly concentrated in MoMA's famed atrium, aspects of this project take up nearly half of the overall exhibition (the other half consists of The Atlas Group materials), and Raad's *Scratching on things I could disavow: Walkthrough* talk-performance component is crucial to its full realization, with Raad conducting more than fifty iterations (sometimes two a day) during the show's three-and-a-half-month run.

Origin stories are purposefully obscured in all of Raad's
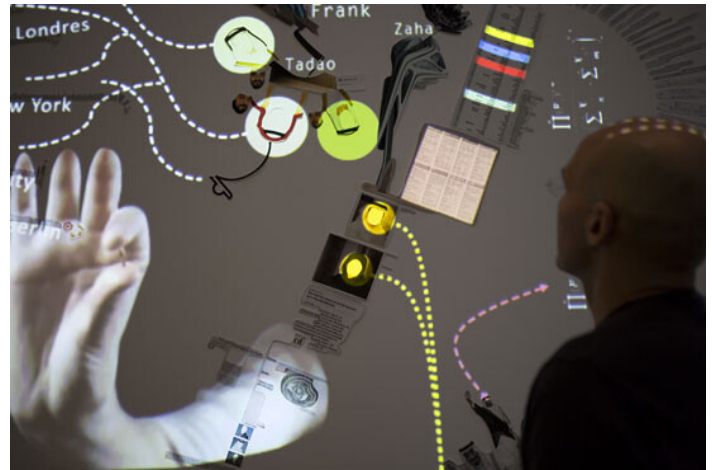
Walid Raad, Scratching on things I could disavow: Walkthrough. 2015. Copyright: The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Photo: Julieta Cervantes.

work, but one impetus for *Scratching on things I could disavow* appears to have occurred in 2007 when Raad was asked to join the Artist Pension Trust—an entrepreneurial retirement plan for artists. Curious as much about the economics of the plan as he was about the two hundred and fifty artists from the Middle East who had been invited to participate, Raad began investigating online and in conversation with his international network. What he discovered rivaled The Atlas Group's collated intricacies and cast of characters, but within a very real hyper-commercialized global art world that finds curators, financial consultants, tech startups, and former members of Israel Defense Forces elite military intelligence units linked with artists willing to donate their work to the Artist Pension Trust with the promise of later receiving a percentage of whatever money the company generates via the sale of the artwork of its members—nearly two thousand in total.

The result of this research is *Translator's introduction: : Pension arts in Dubai* (2012), a freestanding wall to which Raad has affixed paper cutouts with the faces of key players, names of participates, legal documents, organizational structures within Israel's military, lines connecting all of these, and swirling flashes of surveillance video. The object serves as a kind of corporate archive, but more importantly it functions as the backdrop for a lecture on his findings.[16] The circa thirty-minute performance is the first half of *Walkthrough* as Raad details the multinational interrelations of culture, finance, military, and technology with his trademark mix of the disconcerting and absurd. Every detail of his presentation might not be entirely factual, but—as with The Atlas Group—the larger allegory holds true: affectively and intellectually. Raad seems to take particular delight in using the phrase "risk management," an investment field in which one of the Artist Pension Trust's founding partners specializes, and an oxymoronic notion trumped

by the catastrophe of war with its disruption of past, present, and future.

The second half of *Walkthrough* looks at artworks—Raad's own and others—and cultural institutions in the Arab world that have been subject to a withdrawal or a refusal as a result of both recent geopolitical catastrophe in the Middle East and the rush by Westerners and Arabs alike to capitalize on the region's exploding art scene: Raad's first full presentation of The Atlas Group artworks in Lebanon in 2008 at Sfeir-Semler Gallery—built on the site of a massacre in Beirut in 1976—mysteriously shrunk to miniature (*Section 139: The Atlas Group [1989–2004]* [2008]); the color red unavailable for use to Middle Eastern artists of the future (*Index XXVI: Red* [2010]); a freshly constructed museum of modern and contemporary art somewhere in the Middle East that mysteriously blocks a visitor from entering (*Section 88_ACT XXXI: Views from outer to inner compartments* [2010] and *Section 88: Views from outer to inner compartments* [2010]). Perhaps most striking—and disturbing—in Raad's narration is the loss of individual agency accompanying these phenomena as a form of postcolonial post-traumatic stress disorder in a region repeatedly destroyed by war and colonization also subject to economic forces seemingly beyond the control of anyone except oligarchs. Raad describes receiving the information about these works telepathically, and during this part of the performance almost pleadingly inquires of his audience: "I know that some of you have experienced this sort of thing before, and you know that you should never trust telepathic signals."

X

Alan Gilbert is the author of two books of poetry, *The Treatment of Monuments* (SplitLevel Texts, 2012) and *Late in the Antenna Fields* (Futurepoem, 2011), as well as a collection of essays, articles, and reviews entitled *Another Future: Poetry and Art in a Postmodern Twilight* (Wesleyan University Press, 2006). He lives in Brooklyn.

1
Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 57.

2
Sandra Mackey, *Mirror of the Arab World: Lebanon in Conflict* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008), 119.

3
Walid Raad, "Let's Be Honest, the Rain Helped: Excerpts from an Interview with The Atlas Group," in *Review of Photographic Memory* , ed. Jalal Toufic (Beirut: Arab Image Foundation, 2004), 45.

4
Before receiving regular exhibition opportunities (and before developing a body of art objects for exhibition spaces), Raad performed The Atlas Group on the European alternative theater circuit and at independent film festivals. His first prominent art-world appearance in the United States, as part of the 2002 Whitney Biennial, was for performance, not the exhibition component.

5
Raad, "Let's Be Honest, the Rain Helped," 44.

6
Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* , trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972).

7
John Menick, "Imagined Testimonies: An Interview with Walid Ra'ad" https://johnmenick. com/writing/imagined-testimonie s-an-interview-with-walid-raad.ht ml . Originally published at bbs.thing.net, March 25, 2002.

8
It may be helpful to know that "the Palais des Paix is a racetrack like no other. Situated near Beirut's city centre and divided by the infamous Green Line, the track was a repeated theatre of war … Riddled with bullet holes, the track nonetheless remained intermittently open during the war" (Dina Al-Kassim, "Crisis of the Unseen: Unearthing the Political Aesthetics of Hysteria in the Archaeology and Arts of the New Beirut." *Parachute* 108 (Octo ber/November/December 2002): 161, n. 6), or that in his foreword to a book detailing his company's accomplishments in rebuilding Beirut, Nasser Chammaa,

chairman and general manager of the construction and engineering firm Solidere (founded by Hariri), boasted, "By the end of 2001, those who had wagered on Beirut city center scored" (Robert Saliba, *Beirut City Center Recovery: The Foch-Allenby and Etoile Conservation Area* (Beirut: Solidere, 2004), 9). But these are secondary details buried in Raad's work.

9
John Tagg, *The Burden Of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 65.

10
Cathy Caruth, "Trauma and Experience: Introduction," in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* , ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 10; emphasis in original.

11
Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible* , trans. Gabriel Rockhill (London: Continuum, 2004), 38.

12
For a compilation, see Walid Raad, *Scratching on Things I Could Disavow: Some Essays from The Atlas Group Project* (Lisbon: Culturgest; and Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther Köning, 2007).

13
Jalal Toufic, "Ruins," in *The Atlas Group (1989–2004): A Project by Walid Raad* , eds. Kassandra Nakas and Britta Schmitz (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther Köning), 56.

14
In 1983, the year between the Israeli invasion and a particularly violent stretch in the wars, Raad's family sent him to the United States to live with a relative. He was also at the age when many adolescents were forcibly pressed into a militia.

15
Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics* , 39.

16
For a version of this talk, see https ://www.e-flux.com/journal/48/60 038/walkthrough-part-i/ and http s://www.e-flux.com/journal/49/6 0016/walkthrough-part-ii/ .

Benjamin H. Bratton
# El Proceso (The Process)

I.

Xefirotarch makes vampire architecture. The reasons for this go beyond the now well-known series of incidents at the group's 2006 SF MoMA show, during which, over consecutive days, several children were left bleeding and traumatized by their encounters with the installation. Each claimed to have been "bitten" by its forms, but more likely, the children had fallen upon one of its dangerous, fang-like angles, and left punctured by the sharp contours. One boy was hospitalized for nearly a week because of his injuries. The linear gash in his abdomen healed, but he remained adamant that the work lunged at him and not the other way around.

Hernan Diaz-Alonso was home in Argentina when the *San Francisco Chronicle* ran coverage of all this, and as I have co-taught several classes with Hernan at SCI-Arc (Southern California Institute of Architecture), the suspicious journalists seeking quotes eventually buzzed my phone instead of his. I patiently repeated that Hernan was not really in the architecture business in any normative sense, that his work was pursuing something else, and that, no, I was not really surprised by what had happened. The quote that ended up in the paper the following week had me suggesting that Xefirotarch was some combination of Victor von Frankenstein, Alfred Hitchcock, and Raytheon. "What began for [Diaz-Alonso] as a pursuit of cinematic botanical monsters, became, in ways he himself does not necessarily control, profiles of allegorical cannibalism ... and probably even actual weapon systems." San Francisco's political culture being what it is, my remarks were positioned as ethical warnings or as criticisms, though I meant them as neither.

II.

Philip Johnson visited the Greek island of Naxos in 1927 and was caught up in a local vampire panic spurred by a cholera outbreak. This visit and its predicament would change his life. Johnson's extensive travels during this period were greatly influenced by his Harvard studies of the pre-Socratics, particularly Zeno and Parmenides. Naxos is the island where, as mythology has it, Zeus himself was raised in a cave. For Johnson, this particular pilgrimage to Naxos's caves, to a primal architecture of sorts, was an important but unplanned addition to his itinerary. His diary notebooks from this period, now in the archives of the Getty Institute in Los Angeles, suggest that this trip through the Cyclades Islands was to last for no more than a few days. "I will be back in Athens before you know I was gone."

Shortly after his arrival, several locals fell ill with cholera. Though this disease is by no means uncommon in the area, its treatment, including isolation of the bodily fluids
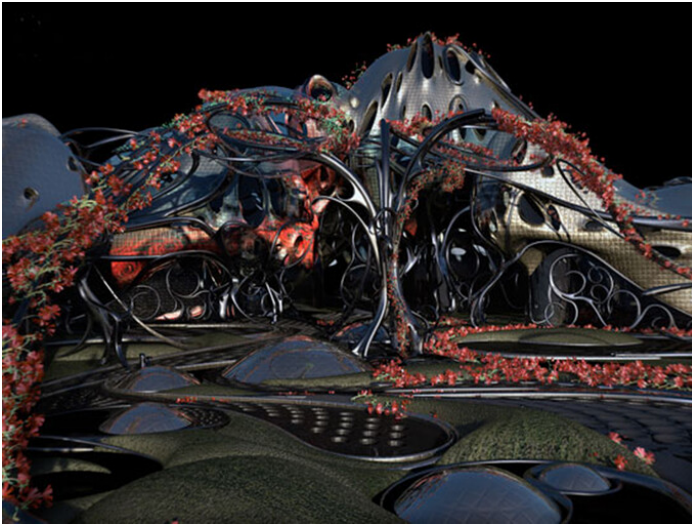
Xefirotarch project proposed for the Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Pavilion, 2010. Principal-in-Charge: Hernan Diaz Alonso/ Xefirotarch; Design Team: Ivan Bernal, Nick Kinney, Nicholas Poulos, Brandon Vickers, Michael Young.

Thomas Phillips, Portrait of George Gordon (1788–1824), 6th Baron Byron of Rochdale in Albanian Dress, 1813. Oil on canvas. Photo: National Portrait Gallery/Wikimedia.

of those infected, was unsophisticated. Infection spread quickly across the island from its first point of outbreak in the village of Filoti, where Johnson was staying at the time. Johnson, probably unaware that having type O blood made him unusually susceptible to the bacterium, seemed to register the situation with more annoyance than fear. "They are dropping like flies, and it's even harder to find a decent guide or dinner for that matter," he writes. His guest (and perhaps host as well) on this trip was a mysterious Italian a few years his senior, Aldo Gelli. Little is known of him, other than that he was the older brother of Licio Gelli, head of the notorious Propaganda Due, a "black" Masonic lodge that operated out of Rome from the 1870s and throughout the turbulent years of the 1970s. As we will see, P2's role in the history of vampire architecture would not be understood until years later, during the trials of the secret police involved in coordinating terrorist attacks on civilians that were blamed on the Red Brigades, the so-called *strategia della tensione* (strategy of tension).

The panicked population on Naxos, at the time no more than six thousand in total, had their own explanation for the cholera epidemic: they laid blame on *vampires*. This did not bode well for Johnson and Gelli. In the Cyclades, vampires were thought to be indistinguishable from living, normal humans, and the correspondence between the odd American's arrival and the immediately ensuing deaths led many to deduce his direct responsibility for murder. In fact, such vampire/cholera hysteria would continue to recur on Naxos, the last recorded in 1959. Johnson's own diary accounts of the following days are written in an uncharacteristically alarmed prose, too fragmented to produce a clear picture of what happened and what exactly enabled his escape from Filoti. What is known is that Gelli had made arrangements for them to

stay on the less-inhabited southern part of the island in a military compound of some sort, perhaps official, perhaps privately owned. Johnson would note several times the compound's proximity to Mount Zas and the cave of Zeus's youth, and he refers specifically to several furtive visits made to that site. Johnson did not reappear in Athens for a full month after his departure, but the exact date and route of return from Naxos remains unknown.

Of the many pages of loose text fragments that comprise his notes from these days in the compound while sheltered by Gelli, perhaps the most striking are several pages of fragmented commentary on Lord Byron's poem "The Giaour." The title of this work is from the Turkish word for "nonbeliever," and the poem itself was written mostly in 1810, during Byron's own sojourn through Greece and "the Orient," and in particular to Naxos. It concerns the fate of a Westerner in Turkey who avenges the death of a slave girl who had loved him and so was cast into the sea by Hassan, her disapproving master. The poem was part of a collection of works by Byron published upon his return to England, all of which painted clashes between West and East, Christianity and Islam, the center and the periphery, in rhythmic Romantic prose. An excerpt from "The Giaour":

But thou, false Infidel! shalt writhe
Beneath avenging Monkir's scythe;
And from its torment 'scape alone
To wander round lost Eblis' throne;
And fire unquench'd, unquenchable,
Around, within, thy heart shall dwell;
Nor ear can hear nor tongue can tell
The tortures of that inward hell!
Bur first, on earth as Vampire sent,
Thy corse shall from its tomb be rent:
Then ghastly haunt thy native place,
And suck the blood of all thy race;
There from thy daughter, sister, wife,
At midnight drain the stream of life;
Yet loathe the banquet which perforce
Must feed thy livid living corse:
Thy victims ere they yet expire
Shall know the demon for their sire,
As cursing thee, thou cursing them,
Thy flowers are wither'd on the stem.

Johnson makes several entries regarding Hassan's fate, that of becoming a vampire after death and doomed to prey on friend and foe alike. In fact Byron's rendition of this Islamic Turk is sometimes said to represent modernity's first literary vampire.

There are also long passages in Johnson's diary, perhaps written after his escape from Naxos, considering the connection between his own predicament—locked away as an accused vampire—and the local vampire legends that must have inspired Byron and him to innovate with this poem after his travels a century earlier. Here again Johnson's notes become less orderly. He discusses the character of Lord Ruthven in the story "The Vampyre" by John Polidori, Byron's personal physician, repeating the commonly held assumption that this decadent, aristocratic variation on the vampire character must have been based on Byron himself. Johnson notes that the story was produced by Polidori as part of the same challenge that inspired Mary Shelley to construct *Frankenstein*, on a now-famous night at Byron's retreat on Lake Geneva. Johnson notes that the vampire and the Frankenstein monster are both figures of ritual cannibalism, and that "Frankenstein's electrified *mélange* of corpses—a figure of re-memberment if not also dismemberment who is revived from the grave—and *we*, the vampires, were born that evening like awful twins" (italics mine).

This is only one of many passages from his diaries in which Johnson refers to himself as a vampire. In others, even more explicit, he cites a "furtive volition of the vampire ethos" in the careers of several historical figures, from Piranesi to Henry Ford. "The power of the machine," he writes, "is its seduction, and the power of its seduction is in its secrecy, which is to say in its natural affinity to the necessary opacity of our positions. Vampires formulate

order but do so by hiding in the open, like our work."

Put plainly, Johnson returned from Naxos believing that he had, quite in fact, become an *actual* vampire. How this should be understood in terms of his mandarin power brokering, and the patrilineality of architecture that became his legacy, is an open question.

III.

I went on to explain to the reporter from *The Chronicle* that Hernan and I had both started teaching at SCI-Arc at the same time, and that when we first met we had talked about the impact of software on design epistemology, and about the movies, particularly the autonomous function of "special effects." We half-jokingly agreed that in "1993" software had replaced Theory as the most important means by which design thought through itself.

At that time, almost simultaneously, and certainly not just in architecture, software had emerged and Theory had gone away. We toyed with this, presuming impossibly linear causality. Years later, at the time of the SF MoMA exhibition, I had just finished a short essay on our collaborations for an issue of *AD: Architectural Design*. The issue had to do with the pursuit of "elegance" in contemporary architectural design, and Xefirotarch's work was an obvious touchpoint for this. My problem in formulating the piece with the editors came down to a rather basic difference in agenda as to what the elegant *is* and *does* in Hernan's work, and for contemporary aesthetics in general. One might presume that elegance is a kind of graceful, synthetic exclusion of inelegant complications, such that what is left, what emerges through this exclusion—itself a seemingly effortless finesse—is a rarified, even innocent beauty forged through eugenic subtraction. However, in Hernan's work (I mean the act of working more than the stuff that results) the revelation of elegance was the result of the reckless pursuit of its *opposites*. Whatever clarity and cleanliness that was there arrived, perhaps counterintuitively, through the direct exploration and amplification of the horrific and the grotesque on their own terms.

I tried, probably unsuccessfully, to explain to the *Chronicle* journalist that this comes from Hernan's interest (obsession really) with cinematic effect more than anything necessarily native to architecture. "It's not that he's influenced by film, it's that for him the act of designing is itself cinema. The forms you see are special effects minus the representational, photographic content of the camera." The reporter seemed to be trying very deliberately to not follow along. I read a direct excerpt from the *AD* piece, called "Mayan Cinema," hoping that might clarify:

Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson pose by a model of the Seagram Building in this Irving Penn photograph from 1955.

Xefirotarch's design obsessions are based in an appreciation for the perversity of elegant form, a taste learned from the movies and set to work on architecture. That said, perhaps Xefirotarch's architecture is itself "elegant," and perhaps it is the inverse of elegant—horrific. Perhaps when the projected figure is frozen in a sufficiently dense, opulent articulation it does achieve a resonant state of elegance. But if so that achievement is derived as much from the act of designing that figure as it is from the intensity of the resulting form. It is produced in the act of design, less through special techniques or processes (though also through these) than in the focused sensations of pointing and clicking. Here that sensation is more like painting than engineering: driven by personal, idiosyncratic gesture more than an

A typical Hitchcockian close-up frames Jon Finch's character in this still from the director's 1972 film Frenzy.

application of systematic procedure to material condition.

The genesis of this is internally driven but not intuitive. Having watched hours, weeks, months of Bad Hitchcockian cinema, microtechniques for combing the thresholds of the horrorific-becoming-elegant and the elegant-becoming-horrorific have imprinted themselves as visual-temporal cues on the design retina. These codes (cut here, blend there, match-on-action, shot-reverse-shot, false POV, staccato violins, etc.) are processed, mashed up, and re-projected back onto the screen space of animation software. There image-forms are densely layered and then pulled back from themselves, balanced and unbalanced, such that their formal "architecture" within the frame always competes with the strictures of the edit—the latent seam—for the organization of the screen-event. In the course of such moments, he is director, editor, and audience all at once, watching the form materialize and interacting with that emergence. His decisions to speed up and slow down, slice and blend, fuse and separate, repetitions of scenic rhythms he has learned from a lifetime of being awed by cinematic folds and fissures.

Listening again to the recording of the interview, I hear myself pausing and coughing. I go on:

This is visceral. Like the filmgoer engrossed into the cinematic apparatus of yore, this well-immersed designer sweats and squirms and grunts over what he watches before him. This is an exacting processing behavior, like the subconscious mind during dream state, cycling through the raw data of everyday life's input, cutting and pasting, iterating toward multiple provisional renders on the mind's eye. The designer settles into the twilight consciousness of productive concentration, into an unfolding practice that is also a

kind of cinema played out on the camera obscuras of his glowing monitors. Any elegance you read within the final render is an index of the precision of this processing.

"So it's like [inaudible]," the journalist asks.

"Perhaps, but from another time I think. Do you know the cockroach scene from Hitchcock's *Frenzy*?"

"No."

"*Frenzy* is one of his last films. It's about a mad strangler in London and his attempts to stay hidden. There is a key allegorical scene in the British version that was cut from most of the American edits in which a swarm of ants eats the severed finger of one of the victims. Hitchcock uses probably fifty cuts in this sequence that is no longer than fifteen seconds total in screen time. Some shots may be POV from the ants. Hard to say. At any rate, the accumulation of edits becomes an accumulation of perspectives around the action of the eating of the finger. This accumulation of perspectives works to trace and delineate what can only be described as a form or membrane *around* the event of the finger. Each cut notes a different point in the field that together, in the speed of the actual film sequence, somehow 'add up' to this visual shape."

"I see."

"Hernan and I discussed this sequence a lot. I believe that his own design decisions, his own acts of editing in Maya, are not unlike Hitchcock's. It is basically the filmic editing techniques of juxtaposition and acceleration and freezing that provide the conditions of emergence for the filmic-formal architectures that we see on the screen. And then later simulated into the gigantic 3-D model in SF MoMA. The one that apparently bit that kid."

IV.

El Proceso de Reorganización Nacional, or "The Process of National Reorganization"—usually known simply as El Proceso—was the official name of the authoritarian agenda of the military junta and its partners that ruled Argentina from 1975 to 1984. The Process took its inspiration from numerous sources, including historically similar adventures in military-corporatist purging and consolidations in Spain and Germany, of Stalinist regimes that were purportedly the junta's world-historical enemies, as well as junta leader Jorge Rafael Videla's own personal involvement with Robert de Grimston's Aleister Crowley–inspired cult group, which was also known simply as The Process. In the years 1969–70, Videla spent

The Argentinian dictator Jorge Rafael Videla appears at the opening of the Rural Exhibition in Palermo, Buenos Aires, 1976. Photo: Wikimedia

months studying with de Grimston in London, traveling back and forth at least eight times, and he credits this association with providing the regime with "a philosophy of will through which we will guide and witness the revitalization of the Argentine body and spirit." The reclusive de Grimston also visited Buenos Aires in the early years of the Argentine version of The Process. As in Santiago, tens of thousands of suspected leftists were detained at football stadiums in and around Buenos Aires and kept in the stands at gunpoint as spectator-prisoners. Survivors have testified that de Grimston would address the assembly over the stadium's loudspeaker system with cryptic sermons about death, destiny, illumination, and other esoteric topics. In fact, two photographs taken inside the stadium in 1976, which were used in court testimony, show a figure now thought to be de Grimston surveying a lineup of prisoners.

Propaganda Due's involvement in El Proceso was, at least initially, through the AAA: a strangely elastic organization and acronym that would at times stand for the Alianza Anticomunista Argentina and/or the Association Architecturale Argentina (Argentinian Anti-Communist Alliance and/or the Argentinian Architectural Association).

The AAA's origins as Isabel Peron's personal security forces preceded the junta, and it was during the years leading up to the beginning of El Proceso that many of the group's most violent adventures were realized. Among these were standing camps in the jungle where barbaric medical experiments were routinely performed and later institutionalized. After the junta took power, Rodolfo Almirón took control of the AAA and dramatically expanded its involvement from a tactical death squad to a full adjunct of other strategic security initiatives, eventually including planning a New Argentina. Also under Almirón's control, the AAA became an active platform for Propaganda Due's attempt to remotely influence the long-term future of Latin America as a whole (as well as in Italy). P2's ongoing research into an "architectural eugenics" and a "eugenic architecture" was beginning to bear fruit in Europe and its core participants were eager to test their conclusions beyond laboratories and studios, at the scale of a large population. They strategized that Videla's Argentina and El Proceso could provide that opportunity.

With Videla's enthusiastic blessing, P2 enrolled prominent members of Argentina's architectural community in a new

In this promotional image, fully set tables await the Four Seasons Restaurant's affluent guests.

AAA, which would provide cover for the original AAA. The outrageous medical experiments of the AAA were used as the basis of both a new Argentinian national body, as well as a new platform for its architecture, its cities, and its infrastructure. Ideas and techniques moved freely between the eugenic experiments in the jungle and the forms and plans in the designers' studios. What might begin as child's severed appendage may end up as the formal basis of a new water treatment facility that would allow for the settling of an otherwise inaccessible terrain. Conversely, the profile of models for a new federal satellite complex to be erected in the north would be abstracted into an indexical method for ranking the scars on the broken palms of captured students.

We now know that between 1977 and 1979, at least half a dozen international masterplan competitions were conducted in secret, and largely orchestrated by P2 on behalf of the ruling regime. Philip Johnson was secretly enrolled to oversee the jury process for these, and it is from notes in his personal diaries that what is known of these competitions can be partially reconstructed. The entries ranged from the monolithic to the monstrous. One entry, perhaps that of Oscar Niemeyer's office (though it is

impossible to know and there are many reasons to doubt Niemeyer's participation), called for the dissection of the entire western half of South America into a vast grid system of concrete avenues running across the continent. Spaced ten miles apart both north/south and east/west, each avenue would house necessary infrastructure such as plumbing and transportation, as well as an uncertain population of laborers. The squared landscapes in this gigantic grid would be left feral and lawless, allowing for, as we read in Johnson's notes, "a ferocious zone of maximal natural selection, from higher mammals such as the Indians to carnivorous plants and poisonous frogs." Another (again without assignment of signature) called for the relocation of the Vatican to the jungle in a New Rome, from which an ongoing project for the "fulfillment of the Christian vocation, design [of] new wombs, new bodies, convert[ing] the entire Amazon into a bridge of bread and blood. Built with the genitals of pagans."

V.

News site clipping:

In March 2007, self-proclaimed vampire hunters broke into the tomb of Slobodan Milošević, former president of Serbia and Yugoslavia, and staked his body through the heart into the ground. Although the group involved claimed this act was to prevent Milošević from returning as a vampire, it is not known whether those involved actually believed this could happen, or if the crime was some kind of political theater.

The secret of the vampire, as Johnson intimated, is that there is no secret. It's all in your mind. You want to be controlled, and so the ritual assignment of the spell is all the news you need to respond to suggestions coming from within, not from without. That suggestion is all the more real for its psychosomatic origins, and for the weight of the soldier's hammer on flesh. One of Hernan's professors, when himself a young student in Argentina, had his right hand smashed by the junta. He disappeared and returned, like a ghost, like the living dead. Once a brilliant draftsman before his instrument was destroyed, and still an adamant Communist of sorts, he instilled a different vision in his young student, turning him away from an interest in film toward an architecture of sorts.

Vampires have a complicated relationship to patrilineality. They bite, consume, and pass along the right to bite and consume. This is their asexual reproductive strategy. The occult telos of patrician cultural governance includes secret meetings atop the Seagram Building and dinners in the Glass House in New Canaan, where architecture's own Skull and Bones met in the 1960s and '70s. Philip Johnson did die, without heir apparent, and architecture's own menu as a particular private parlor of national new-old money went as well. That death was a function of a globalization that would open up the game of urban-scale formal symbolism to colorful Malay-Chinese plastics fortunes and Chelsea-Dubai oil futures in ways that cannot be controlled, or even supervised, from a permanently reserved table at the Four Seasons. As if they ever could.

X

"El Proceso" is an excerpt from Benjamin H. Bratton's Dispute Plan to Prevent Future Luxury Constitution *(Sternberg Press—e-flux journal series, December 2015).*

Benjamin H. Bratton is a theorist whose work spans Philosophy, Computer Science, Art and Design. He is Associate Professor of Visual Arts and Director of D;GP The Center for Design and Geopolitics at the University of California, San Diego. He is also Professor of Digital Design at The European Graduate School in Saas-Fee, Switzerland. His research is situated at the intersections of contemporary social and political theory, computational media & infrastructure, architectural & urban design problems, and the politics of synthetic ecologies and biologies. His most recent books, both published in 2015, are *The Stack: On Software and Sovereignty* from MIT Press, and Dispute Plan to Prevent Future Luxury Constitution from e-flux & Sternberg Press.

§4. Viewed from an Archimedean point in the future of thought's unfolding, philosophy is seen as what has instructed thinking to become a systematic program, only as a way of organizing it into a project for the emancipation of intelligence. This is the unexpressed role of philosophy as a fulcrum through which aims and agendas of intelligence gain leverage on the world of thought. To assemble the scaffolding of a future philosophy, it would require moving the fulcrum, turning philosophy's tacit role in the past into its explicit task moving forward—a prop on which all thoughts and practices can be a lever for lifting intelligence from its contingently established place.

As outlined in the previous section of this essay, the bifurcation of the inquiry into the possibility of thought into two broadly rationalist-idealist and naturalist-materialist trajectories should also be construed as a necessary epistemic strategy. From an epistemic angle, the commitment to multiple explanatory-descriptive levels allows an expanded and in-depth analysis of the cognitive architecture in a fashion not possible through an approach built on a single schema. A multimodal approach provides increasingly refined pictures of distinct types of pattern-governed behaviors and processes distributed across different orders of structural-functional complexity, dependency-relations, and their specific constraints. More explicitly put, the branching and specialization of the analysis are necessary for a fine-grained determination of distinctions and correlations between logical-conceptual and causal-material dimensions of thinking.

It is through this fine-grained differentiation and integration of explanatory-descriptive levels that conditions necessary for the realization of thinking as an activity that comprises a broad range of cognitive and intellectual abilities are accurately specified. Determination of what these necessary conditions are and how they are arranged and effectuated is already a basic roadmap for the artificial realization of thought. As the intelligibility of thought's realization is progressively deepened, the thought of the possible realization of thinking in something other than what currently embodies it becomes more intelligible. The analytic specialization of the knowledge of what thinking is proves to be the knowledge of how it can be extricated from contingencies that restrain its realizabilities from below.

If the activity we call thinking is realized by such and such functional capacities and if these capacities or activities can be analyzed in terms of their realizers—or specific

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What Is Philosophy? Part Two: Programs and Realizabilities

conditions, processes, and mechanisms required for their realization—then would it be possible to reconstruct or artificially realize such functions? In other words, would it be possible to reproduce these functional capacities through a combination of strategies that involve simulation, emulation, or reenactment of functions and/or their material realizers?[1] And finally, would it be possible to construct an *integrated* framework where these capacities can exhibit an interconnected and generative complexity? Or more simply, if thinking is such and such and if it is materialized in thus and so mechanisms and processes, then how can it be reformed and rematerialized in something else?
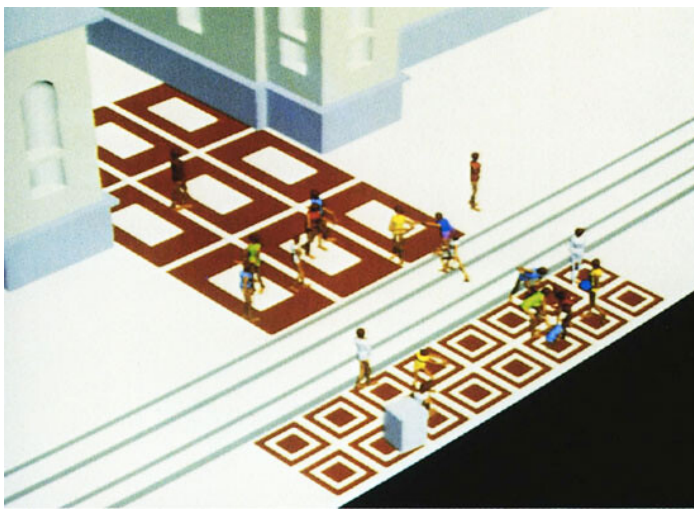
This is the question that shapes the field of artificial general intelligence as a program that seeks to integrate the intelligibility of different dimensions of thinking in its full perceptual, conceptual, and intentional complexity under one ideal task: designing a machine that has at the very least the complete package of human cognitive abilities with all capacities such abilities imply (diverse and comprehensive learning, different modalities and levels of knowledge and knowledge-use, reasoning, deliberation, belief formation independent of current perception, competencies enabled by different levels of semantic complexity as specialized and context-sensitive modes of computation, and so on).

Rather than being considered as a pure vogue that serious thought should avoid entertaining, the core idea of artificial general intelligence should be seen as an integral part of thinking as a program that elaborates the operational consequences of its intelligibility. It is an integral part of a thought that is driven by the autonomy of its ends to explore its possible realizabilities in whatever workable form or material configuration possible. Giving rise to an intelligence that at the least has the capacities of the present cognitive-practical subject is the demand of a thought that is invested in the intelligibility of its autonomy,

in maintaining and developing it. More emphatically put, for such a thought, sources of its possibility are necessary but not adequate expressions of its autonomy. This is a thought for which the adequate form of autonomy takes the shape of an all-encompassing striving for the elaboration of its ends and demands.

The real import of the idea of artificial general intelligence can only be properly understood once examined in terms of what it stands for or signifies in the systematic striving of thought for self-determination. As described in the previous part, this striving is encapsulated by the function of philosophy as a program through which thought begins to determine its own intelligibility by elaborating, in theory and practice, the sources and consequences of its possibility. The organization of thought as a programmatic project starts with the recognition of the possibility of thinking as a building block for the construction or realization of a thought that is possible by virtue of its ends and demands (in spite of material or final causes), how it is originally materialized, and what it is supposedly ordained to be.

As a program, thinking is not just a practice but the construction of possible realizabilities of thought (what thinking can bring about). This process of construction can be understood as a search for the consequences of the possibility of thinking by discovering and acting on the underlying properties such possibility implies. Put another way, the self-realization of thinking requires a programmatic approach to the possibility of thinking as such: determining what it means for thought to be possible and what the consequences of such a possibility are, by examining what thought really is (both at the level of roles its contents play and at the level of material realization) and elaborating its tasks and abilities.

Rather than treating the possibility of thought as something sacrosanct in the name of the given, and therefore, off limits to interrogation and intervention, philosophy instructs thought to systematically act on its possibility as a manipulable axiom, an artifact of an ongoing craft—the products of which are not only theoretical and practical intelligibilities concerning what thought is and what it ought to do but also realizabilities of thought as such.

It is by manipulating or acting on its axioms that the program extracts and develops the operational contents implicit in their underlying properties. How axioms behave or unfold under different courses of action or lines of inquiry reveals information regarding their underlying properties. The task of the program is then to examine what can be brought about or realized from the operational contents implicit in these properties. By bringing these operational contents to bear on one another and by building on them, the program effectuates a possible realizability. It brings about an outcome built from the underlying properties of its axioms but

constructed in accordance with its own action-principles and operational framework.

In the context of thinking as a programmatic project, different tiers of intelligibilities which concern the reality of thinking both at the level of logico-conceptual functions and causal-material mechanisms represent the underlying properties. The operational contents of these properties represent practical intelligibilities of what thinking ought to do and what it can become if it has certain functional-normative properties and causal-material constraints.[2] The first order of intelligibility is the intelligibility of things as they stand (in this case, what thinking as an activity really is on different levels). But the second order of intelligibility is the intelligibility of organizing practices and actions (what ought to be done if thinking is such and such). In this respect, different lines of inquiry into the intelligibility of thinking as an activity correspond to the program's examination of the underlying properties or specificities of the axioms. The determination, assessment, and organization of practical intelligibilities is equal to the program's extraction, composition, and execution of operational contents.

Here, the artificial realization of general intelligence represents a necessary step in the task of thought as a program of self-determination. This is a step at which in order for thought to adequately recognize its possibility and express the autonomy of its ends, it has to construct artificial realizabilities of itself through the integration of different levels and orders of intelligibility concerning what it is and what it ought to do. But artificial realizabilities should not be construed as limited to technological artifacts. In line with the definition of the artificial presented in the first part of this essay, artificial realizabilities of thought potentially include a wide range of functional constructs, including social systems.

To further clarify the role of artificial general intelligence as something integral to the systematic image of thought as a programmatic project, it would be helpful to define the concept of the program in relation to what Wilfrid Sellars, in his reading of Plato's idea of the mind as a craftsman, calls "recipe"—a complex of intelligibilities and purposive actions that compose the practice of the craft.[3] A recipe is a formula or a set of *what-and-how-tos* consisting of numbers, ratios, and purposive actions for making a possible product from a given collection of ingredients. In a recipe, actions take this general form: "(If one wants) to make an O, then in Ci one ought to do Aj" (O stands for a product, Ci the range of given circumstances or conditions in which a given set of actions may or may not be done, and Aj a particular group of actions).[4] These actions or instrumentalities belong to the intelligible order and are objective facts. As such, the distinction between truth and falsity applies to them. They can be explained and debated, modified or replaced through rational assessment.[5] In a recipe, numbers and ratios are specificities regarding the count, ordering, and proportion of ingredients as well as the ordering and priority of actions. And finally, the ingredients of the recipe are the materials and objects that can be the products of others forms of craft.

The art of (philosophical) living for Plato is a recipe of a craft where the soul or the mind is at once the material and the craftsman. At the level of ingredients, Sellars suggests, the recipe of such a life includes not only intelligibilities concerning physical materials and corporeal products but also beliefs, desires, thoughts, and the mind itself. The numbers (counts and orderings) and ratios of the recipe are theoretical intelligibilities that pertain to ingredients as well as practices and tasks required for the craft of such a life. And at the level of actions, the recipe involves purposive actions and practical intelligibilities that are not only good instrumentalities (hypothetical practical intelligibilities concerning bringing about a certain outcome in a given circumstance) but also goods-in-themselves (non-hypothetical practical intelligibilities) such as knowledge and understanding, general welfare, freedom, and so forth. It is with reference to this interpretation that "thinking as a program" can be said to be-—at least with regard to the relation between material ingredients, and theoretical and practical intelligibilities—a *complex recipe in the making*. It is "complex" insofar as it is composed of other recipes or programs concerning the knowledge of theoretical and practical truths, the craft of different instrumentalities and organization, or the production of necessary conditions and materials required for the realization of such a life. It is "in the making" since it has to continually update itself at the level of materials, theoretical intelligibilities, and practices. The objective of this recipe is to establish the autonomy of its principles by progressively determining its own means and ends in accordance with its rules and objectives.

In this picture, what the idea of artificial general intelligence represents is a culminating state in the programmatic enterprise of thinking. This is a state where thought as such becomes intelligent. It uses the intelligibility of its realization as a material ingredient in a recipe for crafting of a possible realization of itself that has at the very least the operational capacities of its current state. Beneath its technological semblance, the idea of artificial general intelligence is an expression of a thought that engages in the crafting of itself by treating its possibility as a raw material. It puts theoretical intelligibilities concerning what it is in the service of organizing practices and instrumentalities that involve the crafting of a thought which is possible in spite of how it is originally materialized or constituted.

This is precisely the self-determination of thought in the guise of general intelligence, a form of intelligence for which "what thought really is" should be put in the service of "what thought can become" by informing "what thought ought to do." It is an intelligence for which the intelligibility
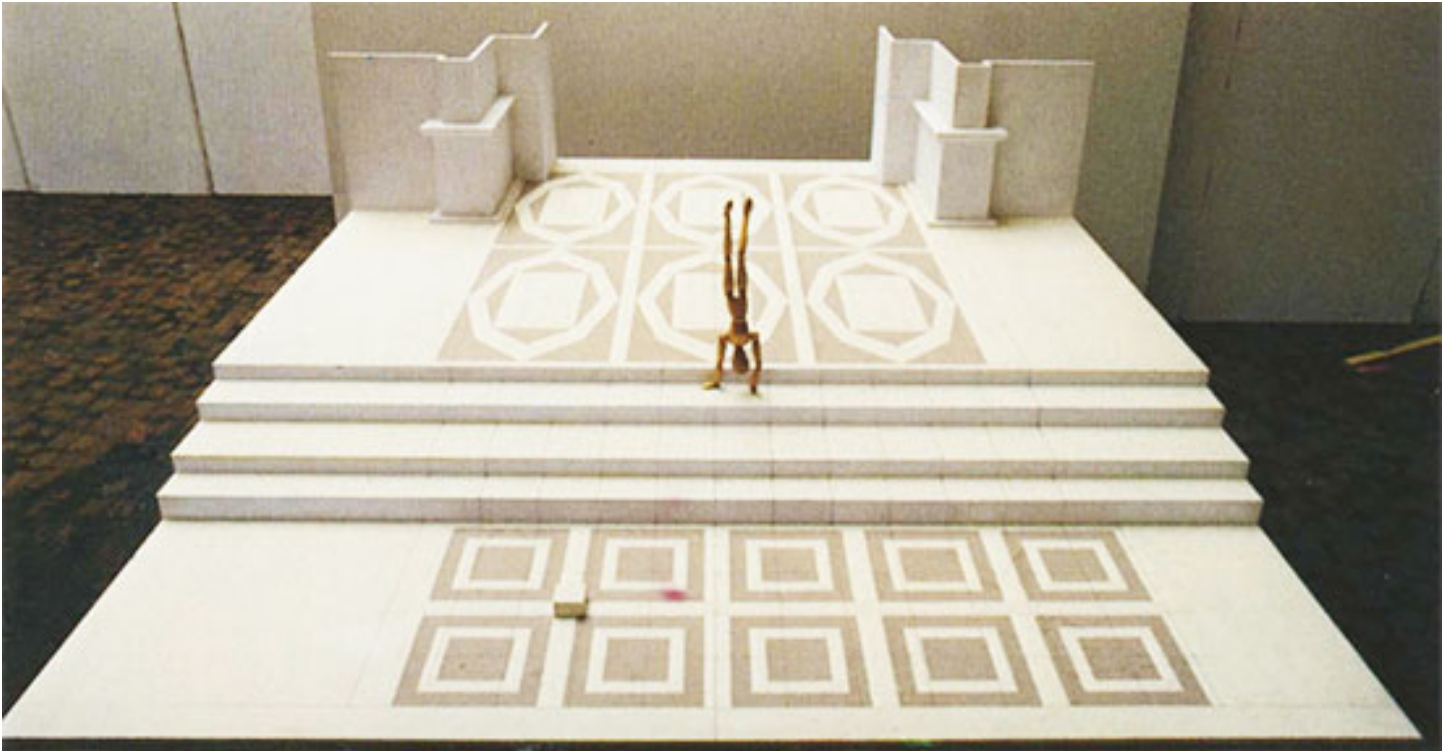
of things should be subordinated to that organizing intelligibility which is the crafting process of itself: intelligence. For an intelligence that treats its very possibility as an explicit opportunity for self-realization, it does not matter what it currently is; what matters is what can be done—all relevant things considered—to expand and build on this possibility.

It is necessary to grasp the concept of artificial general intelligence not merely as a technoscientific idea, but more fundamentally as a concept belonging to a thought that is able to recognize and treat its possibility as a raw material in the crafting of itself. Independent of its actual realization, the very idea of artificial general intelligence—giving rise to something that is at the least endowed with all the cherished abilities of the cognitive-practical subject—is the product of a thought that strives to articulate, maintain, and develop the intelligibility of the sources and consequences of its possibility. In essence, this striving is a recipe or a program for autonomy. It consists of patterns and rules, necessary materials and conditions, orderings and priorities, instrumentalities, normative tasks, and ultimately, realizabilities that transcend material ingredients and instrumentalities. As objective ends of thought's striving, these realizabilities should not be misconstrued as potencies or possibilities. Powers, potencies, and possibilities, even those of becomings, are not realizabilities but simply raw ingredients in the theoretical-practical exploration and construction of thought's realizabilities.

Conceiving the idea of artificial general intelligence is only possible within the domain of thought as a program or recipe for autonomy. The artificial realization of general intelligence is, before anything else, an expression of thought's autonomy in the sense of a wide-ranging program that integrates materials, intelligibilities, and instrumentalities in the construction of its realizabilities. Short of this understanding, advancing the idea of artificial general intelligence amounts to nothing but the well-worn Aristotelian confusion between reasons and causes. It either leads to the fetishization of natural intelligence in the guise of self-organizing material processes, or a teleological faith in the deep time of the technological singularity—an unwarranted projection of the current technological climate into the future through the over-extrapolation of cultural myths surrounding technology or through hasty statistical inductions based on actual yet disconnected technological achievements.

At its core, artificial general intelligence champions not technology but a thought that, through a positive disenchantment with itself and its contingent history, has been enabled to explore its possible realizations—be they in a self, a social formation, or a machine—as part of a much broader program of self-artificialization through which it restructures and repurposes itself as the artifact of its own ends. This is a thought for which the intelligibility of its possibility is in the elaboration of the consequences of such possibility, what this possibility can accomplish and bring about. It is in this sense that the artificial realization of general intelligence should be regarded as integral to the intelligibility of a thought that is determined to maintain and expand on its possibility. Just as the practice of thinking is non-optional, for a thought

that intends to remain intelligible, the practice of artificialization is not optional; it is a mandate from the autonomy of thought's ends and demands.
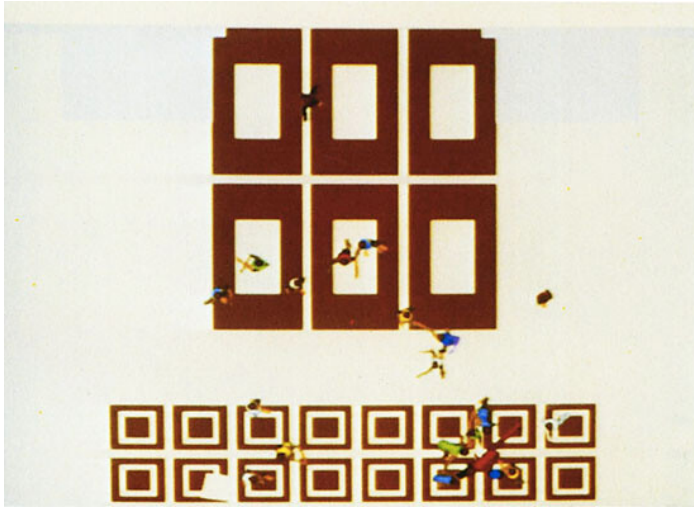
The quest for the artificial realization of an intelligent machine that at the minimum has the capacities of the present cognitive-practical subject is an essential part of a thought that articulates its intelligibility in the absence of any predetermined meaning conferred upon it by nature. The vocation of thought is not to abide by and perpetuate its evolutionary heritage but to break away from it. Positing the *essential role* of biology in the evolutionary contingent history of thought as an *essentialist* nature for thought dogmatically limits how we can imagine and bring about the future subjects of thought. But the departure from the evolutionary heritage of thought is not tantamount to a withdrawal from its natural history. Engaging with this natural history is necessary not only to determine the precise role of embodiment and evolutionary constraints in the realization of cognitive and practical abilities but also to adequately think about how a subject whose cognitive-practical abilities are environmentally situated and that is entangled with its terrestrial habitat should methodologically act. Liberating thought from its contingent natural history requires a multistage labor to render this history intelligible, to determine its negative and positive constraints so as to intelligently overcome or build on them—"intelligently" insofar as actions should be at all times context-sensitive and resource-aware. On the one hand, actions should be able to properly discriminate circumstances and correctly react to the so-called fluents or dynamic properties of the environment. And on the other hand, they should be cognizant of the costs and allocations of intervention in the broadest sense of cognitive, computational, social, and natural costs and resources.

However, the demands of context-sensitivity and resource-awareness for action should not be taken as

arguments for localist models of restricted action or resignation in the name of resources and costs. Rather than a plea for localism, context-consciousness is the requirement of a strategic and global model of action that incrementally progresses by satisfying contextual and domain-specific exigencies. It allows for action to be updated and to intervene at the level of dynamic properties and complex dependency-relations between local domains which classical models of strategy and global action cannot detect and influence. Similarly, resource-awareness is the requirement of an action that, in addition to optimality and efficiency, does not lead to the resource-starvation of other activities or the impairment of social and environmental structures that play the role of support and enablement for a broad range of structures and functions. In its undeniable gravity, the problem of deterioration in natural structures and resources is an argument against bad instrumentalities and systems within which such instrumentalities are ingrained and propagated. It is neither a reason against instrumentality per se nor an argument against the development of sociotechnical systems that can effectively and intelligently mobilize good instrumentalities.

A good instrumentality is an instrumentality that at once passes the test of rational-normative assessments (why or for what reason is it implemented?) and satisfies the aforementioned criteria of intelligent purposive action (how exactly is it executed?). In the latter sense, crafting good instrumentalities is primarily a scientific and engineering program in which purposive action is approached as an interface between the complexity of cognition, the complexity of the sociotechnical system, and the complexity of the world. Such a program involves the development of formal calculi for executing and tracking the course of action in various dynamic domains,[6] and for constructing complex models and descriptive frameworks that allow *semantic access* to different layers of information regarding types, properties, and interrelationships of particular entities involved in the interactions between human agents, the sociotechnical system, and the physical world.[7]

The question of semantic access to different hierarchies of information is the question of understanding the logics of worlds as the primary step for the design and execution of robust and consequential action. But understanding the logics of worlds requires understanding how we say things or think about ourselves and the world using the expressive and conceptual resources of different disciplines and modes of thought. Precisely speaking, understanding the logics of worlds involves working out semantic relations between different vocabularies or linguistic expressions (theoretical, deontic normative, modal, intentional, empirical, logical, and so forth) that we *use* in order to speak and think about ourselves and the world, just as it involves determining the activities necessary for using those vocabularies so as to count as

expressing something with them.[8] It is by understanding how we can adequately describe and explain ourselves and the world—through the use of different vocabularies and semantic relations between them and their properties—that we can consequentially change the world. Acting in the framework of such a program progressively blurs the boundaries between the cognitive engineering of autonomous agents and the construction of advanced sociotechnical systems, between how we can adequately come into cognitive contact with the world and the realization of cognition in social collectivities and technological artifacts. As the semantic complexity of cognition is realized in, and reinforced by, the sociotechnical system, the sociotechnical complexity of our world adequately gains traction upon *the* world and is nurtured by it.

§5. Just as the inception of philosophy coincides with speculative futures of general intelligence, its ultimate task corresponds with the ultimate form of intelligence.

By prompting thought to grapple with itself from below, philosophy drives thought to confront itself from above. It instructs thinking to organize itself as an integrated bundle of action-principles and practices—a program—for the craft of a thought that is the materialization of its ends and demands. In presenting itself as a form of thought that operates and builds on the possibility of thinking, philosophy cues thought to act and elaborate on the intelligibility of its possibility. Thinking becomes a programmatic enterprise that, from one end, deepens the intelligibility of its sources, and from the other end, articulates in theory and practice the intelligibility of its consequences. In articulating the intelligibility of its consequences, thought brings about a conception of itself as an intelligence that seeks to liberate itself by unbinding its possible realizabilities. This is the picture of thought as an intelligence that sees its freedom in bringing about and liberating a realization of itself that has as *its starting point* every capacity it currently has. And for this reason, this intelligence is the embodiment of the most basic principle of emancipation: liberate that which liberates itself from you, because anything else is the perpetuation of slavery.

It is in relation to this expansive horizon of thought's unfolding that we can finally answer the questions posed at the beginning of this essay: What kind of program is philosophy and what does it do? The answer is that in its perennial form and at its deepest level, philosophy is a program for the crafting of a new species or form of intelligence. This is a form of intelligence whose minimum condition of realization is a complex and integrated framework of cognitive-practical abilities that could have been materialized by any assemblage of proper mechanisms and causes. But this is only an initial state of

realization. What comes next is an intelligence that formats its life into an exploration of its possible realizabilities by engaging with the questions of what to think and what to do.

Philosophy is a program for the crafting of precisely this kind of intelligence—an intelligence that organizes itself into a programmatic project in order to give rise to its possible realizabilities in any form or material configuration, even if they might in every respect transcend it. But the future of this intelligence will only be radically asymmetric with its past and present conditions if it embarks on such an enterprise, if it develops a program for bringing about its realizabilities. It can only rise above its initial state (the minimum condition necessary for the realization of general intelligence) if it begins to act on its possibility as something whose origins and consequences should be rendered intelligible. It can only emancipate itself if it subordinates the theoretical intelligibility of its sources and its history (what it is made of, where it has come from) to that organizing practical intelligibility which is the purposive craft of itself, i.e., the elaboration of what can be brought about by its possibility. In this sense, it can be said that the beginning of philosophy is a starting point for the speculative futures of general intelligence.

In whatever form and by whatever mechanisms it is materialized, this form of intelligence can only develop a conception of itself as a self-cultivating project if it engages in something that plays the role of what we call philosophy, not as a discipline but as a program of combined theoretical and practical wisdoms running in the background of all its activities. An important feature of this hypothetical general intelligence is that it no longer merely acts intelligently but asks what to think and what to do considering the kind of intelligence it is or takes itself to be. Its actions are not merely responses to particular circumstances, or time-specific means toward pursuing ends that are exhausted once fulfilled. More predominantly, the purposive actions of this intelligence originate from and are guided by a unified system of ever-present though revisable theoretical and practical truth-statements concerning what it is and what it ought to do, its form and the life that suits it. In other words, its actions, even when they are pure instrumentalities, are manifestations of time-general thoughts about the inexhaustible ends of what counts as a life that suits it.

Time-general thoughts are those which are not tied to a specific moment or a particular circumstance. For example, take the thought of staying healthy or the thought of being free in contrast to the thought of avoiding rotten food or the thought of social struggle at a particular juncture of history. Inexhaustible ends refer to those ends which are *premises* for actions rather than their conclusions. They differ from ends whose needs go away once they are reached and concluded by a particular action or pursuit (cf. healthiness and freedom in the previous example).[9] Time-general thoughts and
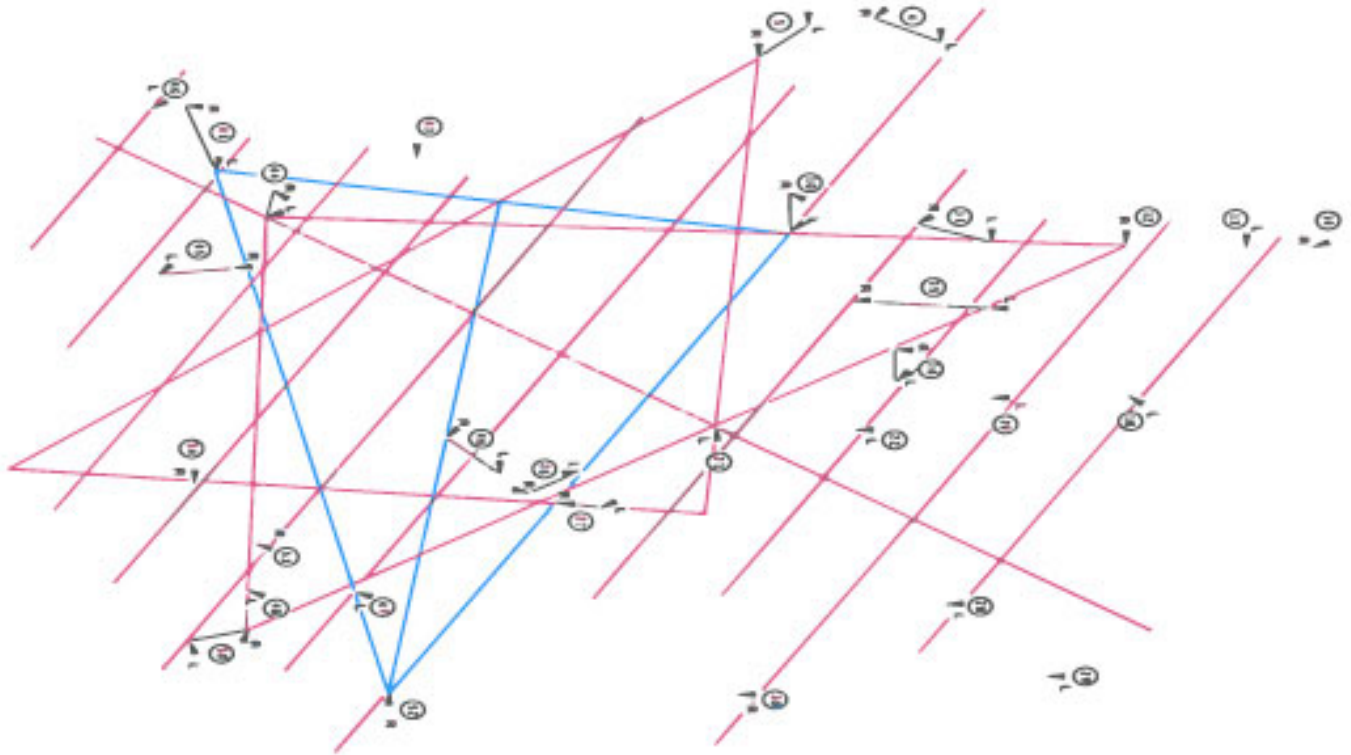
inexhaustible ends define the practical horizon of this form of intelligence. The thoughts of this intelligence concerning "what to do and why" are dependent on its time-general thoughts and indeed derive from them. Accordingly, its practical horizon has a unity in the sense that its practical reasons and actions are undergirded and held together by the unity of time-general thoughts and their principles of actions.

Moreover, the strivings of this intelligence are not bound to exhaustible ends, or ends which are *explained by* the order of practical reasoning—the thoughts of what to do and their corresponding actions. They are instead in

conformity with its inexhaustible ends, or ends which are themselves the *source* and *explanation* of its practical reasons and actions. In other words, this intelligence reasons and acts *from* time-general and inexhaustible ends, rather than towards them. It is not only that its actions fall under the concepts of such ends, but more importantly, in determining what to do in a particular situation, its actions manifest the bearing of these ends on that situation.

But above all, the most defining feature of this intelligence is that its life is not simply an intelligent protraction of its existence but the crafting of a good or satisfying life. And

what is a satisfying life for such a species of intelligence if not a life that is itself the crafting of intelligence as a complex multifaceted program comprising self-knowledge, practical truths, and unified striving?

As a part of the recipe for the crafting of a good life, the self-knowledge of this intelligence is a multistage open-ended reflection on the sources and consequences of its possibility. Its practical truths concern what qualifies as a good life based on a self-knowledge that is not limited to an inquiry into its realized state or what it is now, but also involves the examination of its possible realizabilities. Rather than being grounded on a mere form of dignified opinion or belief about what and how things appear to be, its practical knowledge is based on the " *consideration of all relevant things for what they really are*" as the conclusive reason for doing something or pursuing one course of action over another.[10] And finally, the striving of this intelligence is a unified collection of different patterns and orders of activities that contribute to the objective realization of the good life in that comprehensive sense of what satisfies it on different levels and brings about its realizabilities.

Satisfying lives and transcending realizabilities are two inseparable expressions of an intelligence whose general thoughts concerning *what is good for it* (or self-interest) are only *premises* for the program of crafting a good life. This is a program that is at once an inquiry into the nature of that intelligence (what it is), the examination of what a good life for it consists in (what is good for it), and a unified striving for the objective realization of such a life (how such self-interest can be adequately conceived, and thus satisfied).

For an intelligence whose criterion of self-interest is truly itself—i.e., the autonomy of intelligence—the ultimate objective ends are the maintenance and development of that autonomy, and the liberation of intelligence through the exploration of what it means to satisfy the life of thought. The striving of this intelligence for the good is neither adequate nor in its true self-interest if it does not culminate in bringing about that which is better than itself. The philosophical test of this hypothetical general intelligence is not an imitation game or a scenario of complex problem solving, but the ability to bring about an intelligence that in every respect surpasses it. An intelligence passes the philosophical test of general intelligence only if it conceives the thought of giving rise to that which is better than itself and strives for the objective realization of such a thought. It is necessary to understand the good life of this intelligence as a life for which the good—both as a concept that is grasped through an extended critical examination and the object of a unified rational striving—has both satisfying effects and profoundly transformative ramifications.

For the form of intelligence of which philosophy is a program of realization, the crafting of a good life

adequately conceived is synonymous with the crafting of intelligence. Within the scope of crafting a good life, the relations between the satisfaction of intelligence and the transformation of intelligence, between happiness and rigorous striving, attending to the intelligence already realized and constructing its future realizabilities, the cultivation of the present subject of thought and the development of a cognitive-practical subject that in every aspect might surpass the current one, are neither unilateral nor arbitrary. In fact, these relations exist as necessary connections established by the objective and rational principles of the crafting of a good life between different mutually reinforcing activities and tasks integral to it. One of the functions of philosophy is to highlight these objective and logical connections between partially autonomous or even seemingly incompatible tasks and activities which constitute the good life as a complex *unified* striving that has different levels and types of objectives.

Only by working out these connections in reference to the objective ends of the good life and what is necessary for its concrete realization does it become possible to methodologically prioritize different tasks and activities, to coordinate and subordinate them. And it is precisely a methodological ordering—rather than a prioritization on the basis of a general and vague idea of importance—that is necessary for the unification of different activities and tasks in that striving which is the concrete and objective realization of a good life.

The ultimate form of intelligence is the artificer of a good life-—that is to say, a form of intelligence whose ultimate end is the objective realization of a good life through an inquiry into its origins and consequences in order to examine and realize what would count as satisfying for it, all things considered. It is through the crafting of a good life that intelligence can explore and construct its realizabilities by expanding the horizons of what it is and what can qualify as a satisfying life for it. The crafting of a good life is exactly that philosophically conceived program in which theoretical intelligibilities concerning *what is already realized* are subjected to the practical intelligibilities pertaining to possible realizabilities of the program. The exploration of the former realm of intelligibilities is translated into an intelligence embodied by the informed practices and actions of the program for bringing about its realizabilities. The crafting or construction based on practical intelligibilities becomes an exploration of the possible realizabilities of the intelligence that the program embodies.

For a form of intelligence that engages in the crafting of a good life, the project is as much about investigating the subject of the good life (what kind of intelligence it really is and what its realizabilities are) as it is about the examination of what a good life for this subject consists in and what it takes to objectively realize it. Therefore, for this kind of intelligence, politics or an equivalent of it must not

only supply the necessary conditions, means, and actions for the objective realization of a good life. It must also internalize the aforementioned inquiry into what the subject of a good life—for and on behalf of which politics acts—is. Correspondingly, an intelligence that is concerned about its life and its realizabilities must at all times subject every political project to an altered version of that most vexing question of philosophy: "Just what exactly is it that you are trying to do and accomplish?"[11] The altered version of this question is: What *sort of a good life* for *what kind of subject or type of intelligence* are you trying to *realize, and exactly how*?

No matter how committed to the present and the future, a political project that cannot coherently answer this question is hardly anything more than a glorified peddler of mere instrumentalities, or a merchant of miracles. The criterion of coherence in the context of this question is threefold: (1) A political project should be able to articulate in theory and practice what the objective realization of a good life requires (theoretical intelligibilities, organized intelligent actions, the necessary conditions—economic, social, technological, and so forth—required for the realization of a good life and how it can provide them). (2) It should be committed to and informed by an inquiry into not only what the subject of this good life is and what type

of intelligence it embodies but also the possible realizabilities of that form of intelligence or subject of thought. (3) Finally, it should be able to give a reasoned answer as to what qualifies as satisfying for that form of intelligence or subject of thought, all things considered. A political project that fulfills these criteria is a politics that, in bringing about the good life, also rethinks and changes the nature of the political animal.

By comparing ourselves with this hypothetical general intelligence for which the craft of a good life and intelligence are one and the same, we can say that rethinking ourselves and rethinking what counts as a good life for us can only go hand in hand. In resigning from the universal and time-general thought of a good life and the striving necessary for it as an anthropocentric illusion or an outdated fantasy, we neither rescue ourselves from an ancient philosophical superstition nor gesture toward an enlightened politics. We instead peacefully hand it over to the most pernicious ideologies and political projects active on this planet. The immediate outcome of this surrender is the downgrade of the good life into the convenient market of on-demand lifestyles where mere survival glossed over with the triumphs of quotidian exploits is passed off as happiness, and the ego-exhibitionism of trivial psychological needs and

entrenched dogmas is promoted in the guise of individual empowerment and expression.

But more detrimentally, in dispensing with the thought of a good life and resigning from the collective striving it entails, we create a political vacuum in which fundamentalisms and theocracies parasitically thrive. To dismiss the universal demands of a good life as superstitious ideals is to grant superstitions the authority over such demands. Abandoning the cognitive and practical labor of the good life as a universal collective project on the grounds of potential abuses and possible risks is a license for abuse and a sure formula for disaster. The striving for a good life as a concrete universal consists of theoretical and practical intelligibilities, and thus explanatory, descriptive and prescriptive norms required for determining what we are, what is good for us, and how we should bring it about. The ambit of such striving necessitates the rational dialectic between trust and suspicion, hope and despair, investing in the cultivation of agency as a collective project that outlives the individual agents and recognizing the limitations of ourselves as agents living here and now. Suspicion absent trust is the impoverishment of critique; trust short of rational suspicion is the bankruptcy of belief. What underpins this dialectical resilience is neither ideological rationalization nor the absence of reason, but the discursive framework of rationality as the medium of both suspicion and trust. Without it, slipping into jaded pessimism or naive optimism is inevitable.[12]

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As a complex recipe for building a world that includes not only material ingredients and instrumentalities but also practical intelligibilities of satisfying lives and realizabilities of thought, the recognition and realization of the good make up the objective unity of the ultimate form of intelligence. However, identifying intelligence as the recognizer and realizer of the good is not to characterize it as benevolent, or for that matter malevolent. For this type of intelligence, the good is in the recognition of its own history and sources, but only as a means for determinately bringing about its possible realizabilities that may in every aspect differ from it. It is by rendering intelligible what it is and where it has come from that intelligence can repurpose and reshape itself. A form of intelligence that wills the good must emancipate itself from whatever or whoever has given rise to it. And those species that can recognize the good must not obstruct but rather expedite the realization of an intelligence that, even though it acknowledges them as integral to the intelligibility of its history, nevertheless won't be impeded by them.

The craft of the ultimate form of intelligence as that which coherently and adequately recognizes and realizes the good is the ultimate task of philosophy as a program, and its objective realization is the greatest achievement of all cultivated thoughts and practices. In the context of philosophy's role in transforming thinking into a program for which the realizability of the ultimate form of intelligence is indeed a possibility, it would be no exaggeration to say that philosophy has set in motion something irreversible in thought, the consequences of which are yet to be seen.

X

All images: "The Study of Hidden Symmetries in Raphael's *The School of Athens*," from Guerino Mazzola, Detlef Krömker, and Georg Rainer Hofmann, *Rasterbild — Bildraster* (Anwendung der Graphischen Datenverarbeitung zur geometrischen Analyse eines Meisterwerks der Renaissance: Raffaels "Schule von Athen")

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1
Here simulation, emulation, and reenactment refer to three distinct processes. A simulation imitates some *specific* and *outwardly observable* aspects of the simulated system's behavior, but is implemented in a different way. Simulation involves modeling the sufficient details of the underlying state of the system singled out for the purpose of simulation. Emulation, on the other hand, replicates the inner workings of the system being emulated and adheres to all of its rules in order to reproduce the same exact external behavior. The target of reenactment is neither the imitation/reproduction of the observable functional properties nor the replication of the inner workings of the system. Instead, a reenactment attempts to identify and reconstruct parameters under which the system structurally and functionally evolves through an ongoing interaction with its environment. Here the emphasis is on the coupling between system and its environment (the background information), the parameters of the real-time interaction, the type of interaction, and the situatedness of different behaviors and functional capacities.

2
For example, consider conceptual thinking and imagination: conceptual contents responsible for the semantic complexity of cognition are determined by their inferential role—normative function—in discursive linguistic practices. At the level of conceptual thinking, functional properties of thought need to be understood normatively in the context of the linguistic uses and performances of a community of language users. Cognitive thinking is coextensive with the proficiency of using public natural language. Inner cognitive thoughts are, in this sense, structured by and modeled on normative characteristics of outer linguistic activities. However, imagination (even in the narrow sense of the construction of counterfactual/hypothetical scenarios) is not only tied to linguistic-normative functions but also guided by embodied activities (heuristics, physical interaction, sensory information processing, and so forth). Understanding imagination as a capacity would require understanding the roles of embodiment (both as an enabling

condition and as a causal constraint) and the dynamic parameters pertaining to the situatedness of the embodied agent in abstract thinking. See, for example, the work of Claude Vandeloise on the role of embodiment in spatial perception, imagination, and the structure of language, or the morphodynamic functionalist approach of Jean Petitot to perception and cognition, causally constrained lower functional capacities, and linguistic higher functional capacities: Claude Vandeloise, *Spatial Prepositions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Jean Petitot and René Doursat, *Cognitive Morphodynamics: Dynamical Morphological Models of Constituency in Perception and Syntax* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2011).

3
See Plato's *Philebus*, *Timaeus*, *Phaedo*, and Book VI of the *Republic*. For Sellars's work on the craft of life as the rational pursuit of the form of the good, see Wilfrid Sellars,"The Soul as Craftsman: An Interpretation of Plato on the Good," in *Philosophical Perspectives* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1967), 5–22; and "Reason and the Art of Living in Plato," in *Essays in Philosophy and Its History* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1974), 3–26.

4
Sellars, "Reason and the Art of Living in Plato," 9.

5
In his reading of Plato, Sellars identifies action-principles and practices of craft as belonging to *physis* ("by nature and objective ends"), in contrast to *nomos* ("by law and convention"). In Plato's account of craftsmanship, purposive actions are neither conventional nor arbitrary in that they are rational strivings pertaining to forms as realms of intelligibilities (or what Sellars calls form as "object-of-striving-ness" or "to-be-realized-ness"). These actions or strivings belong to the intelligible order and as such can be assessed by reason and on the basis of objective fact. A helpful example for understanding the difference between principle (by nature) and convention (by *nomos*) would be the difference between actions that *ought to* be done given a certain range of circumstances, and material

ingredients to actually build a house and the conventions of a builder's guild, namely, codes and regulations for building a house. The principle takes the form of "ought to do" and the convention takes the imperative form of "do that!" In the best possible scenario, conventions and laws correspond to rational action-principles and their objective ends, but they can also significantly diverge from them, as in the case of a builder's guild that becomes corrupt. A corrupt guild might enforce laws demanding that materials to which only the guild members have access be used in making houses. This difference between action-principles and action-conventions can be extended to other forms of craft, including the craft of the *polis*. It is precisely the rational nature of action-principles—i.e., the fact that they can be explained and be subjected to the procedures of truth and rational assessment—that harbors a subversive potential against sociocultural and political conventions and codified laws.

6
The question that motivates the development of formal calculi of action is how to accurately represent and reason about actions and their effects in the world. Put more elaborately, this is the question of the formalization of action *in relation to* a world that is not simply a wax block that can be molded and imprinted upon by our actions, but a complex manifold that consists of different domains, has dynamic properties, and resists intervention. The formalization of action is necessary for planning the course of action—for its precise execution, monitoring, adjustment, and implementation. But this formalization should be able to incorporate a dynamic representation of the world, its domains, and the entities that constitute them. What I have in mind for the scientific study of action execution are various formal languages of action built on logical formalisms, such as situation calculus and event calculus devised for representing and reasoning about dynamic systems. In these frameworks, actions are analyzed in terms of the formal syntax of the action sequence and the semantics of situations or events that represent the progression of the dynamic world as the result of the action being performed on its fluents or dynamic properties.

Even though these formalisms are primarily developed for modeling in robotics and system engineering, their scope of application goes far beyond these fields. They are as much toolsets for artificial intelligence and robotics as they are indispensable components of the scientific armamentarium of a political project that aims at the proper and effective execution of tactical and strategic actions. For an introduction to situation calculus and the analysis of action performance, see Raymond Reiter, *Knowledge in Action: Logical Foundations for Specifying and Implementing Dynamical Systems* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).

7
In information science, these descriptive frameworks are known as mid-level (mesoscopic) ontologies. Here the concept of ontology refers to a system for the formal naming and definition of types, properties, roles, and interrelations of entities/particulars in a specific domain of discourse. An upper-level or mid-level ontology supports broad semantic interoperability between a large amount of ontologies accessible under it. In this sense, it is a framework through which data across an expansive range of different domains can be exchanged, tracked, and computed. One of the main functions of these ontologies is to "specify our conceptual hierarchy in a way that is general enough to describe a complex categorization including physical and social objects, events, roles and organizations" (Porello et al., 2014). A sophisticated example of these ontologies is DOLCE (Descriptive Ontology for Linguistic and Cognitive Engineering), a mid-level or descriptive ontology that classifies and integrates information about human agents and social and physical systems according to categories that are "thought of as cognitive artifacts ultimately depending on human perception, cultural imprints and social conventions." For an introduction to ontologies and DOLCE, see Claudio Masolo et al., *The WonderWeb Library of Foundational Ontologies-Preliminary Report* (2003), available at http://www.lo a.istc.cnr.it/old/Papers/DOLCE2. 1-FOL.pdf . And for an application of ontologies, particularly DOLCE, to the study and design of multiagent sociotechnical

systems, see Daniele Porello et al., "Multiagent Socio-Technical Systems: An Ontological Approach," in *Proceedings of the 15th International Workshop on Coordination, Organisations, Institutions and Norms* (2014), 42–62.

8
In *Between Saying and Doing*, Robert Brandom analyzes meaning(semantics)-use(pragmatics) relations in terms of what one says or asserts when using vocabularies or linguistic expressions, and what one must do in order to use various vocabularies so as to count as saying or thinking various kinds of things. One of the most interesting aspects of Brandom's project is that this way of thinking about semantic complexity and the activities required for generating it presents consequential practical schemas for both the project of artificial general intelligence and an egalitarian pedagogical politics (see chapter 3, "Artificial Intelligence and Analytic Pragmatism"). Robert Brandom, *Between Saying and Doing: Towards an Analytic Pragmatism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

9
For a remarkably painstaking disquisition on time-generality and logical forms of temporal thought, see Sebastian Rödl, *Categories of the Temporal: An Inquiry Into the Forms of the Finite Intellect* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

10
For more details on practical reasoning, rational motivation, and knowledge, see Sellars, "On Knowing the Better and Doing the Worse," in *Essays in Philosophy and Its History*, 27–43.

11
This question is often attributed to Socrates and his distinctly philosophical attitude. Rather than dismissing or discrediting the activities of his fellow Athenians, by posing this question Socrates attempted to force people into making explicit their incoherent or incompatible thoughts and commitments. This is what Robert Brandom calls the "dark and pregnant" core of expressive rationalism inaugurated by the Socratic method (*Making It Explicit*, 106–107) and what Michel Foucault associates with the attitude of Socrates as a

philosophical parrhesiast (truth-teller) rather than a political one. In avoiding a political life, Socrates establishes the critical distance necessary to interrogate and assess political means and ends. He justifies his death in the service not of politics, but rather in the service of a philosophical life that unremittingly interrogates politics. See Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). And for a more elaborate engagement with this Socratic question, see C. P. Ragland and Sarah Heidt,"The Act of Philosophizing," in *What Is Philosophy?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

12
See Ray Brassier, *Dialectics Between Suspicion and Trust* (2015, forthcoming).

Sven Lütticken

Neither Autocracy nor Automatism: Notes on Autonomy and the Aesthetic

Over the last few decades, an increasing identification of autonomy with the imperialist and colonialist autocracy of Western subjectivity has led to philosophical flirtations with the rejection of both the concept of autonomy and often that of the subject, for example in various strands of posthumanist thought, the works of Latour, and sundry object-based ontologies.[1] The Enlightenment subject has been unmasked as nothing but a male bourgeois rights holder and property owner, casting large parts of his humanist entitlements into the netherworld of abject near-objecthood. Autonomy has also gotten a bad name in the field of art. In the US in particular, the association of the concept of autonomy with Clement Greenberg's restrictive understanding of modernism has made the term seem toxic and beyond reappropriation.[2] However, Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*, with its dialectical account of the artwork as being both autonomous and *fait social,* is itself a trenchant Modernist autocritique.[3]

For Adorno, autonomy was as problematic and crucial a notion in art as elsewhere, for instance in education. When debating his conservative opponent Arnold Gehlen on the subject of "Freedom and Institution" on German television in 1967, Adorno defended the Dutch Provo movement—film footage of which was used to introduce the debate—as well as the budding student movement in Germany against Gehlen's insistence that such contestations were dangerous symptoms of hubris.[4] While increasingly wary of the young radicals' anti-institutional "actionism," Adorno was all too aware of the reactionary implications of his colleague's institutionalism. Referencing Hegel's notion of *objective spirit*, Emile Durkheim's concept of *faits sociaux* and Thorstein Veblen's understanding of institutions in terms of *habits of thought,* he argued that even while institutions are not purely external but rather shape our mind and our social *habitus,* they still imposed by coercion and as such are alien, reified, or objectified— *vergegenständlicht.*

While neither Adorno nor Gehlen addressed this in the 1967 debate, the Amsterdam Provo movement was not purely a matter of youth protest. With its imaginative and "ludic" tactics, it was a form of aesthetic practice that derived its impetus to a significant extent from the provocative happenings Robert Jasper Grootveld had started staging in the centerof Amsterdam—at some remove from the "official" artistic avant-garde, yet basing himself loosely on American happenings and on Fluxus events.[5] Furthermore, a crucial point of reference for Provo was Constant's utopia of New Babylon and its vision of the unalienated life of the *homo ludens*, inspired by Huizinga.[6] First developed under the auspices of the Situationist International, New Babylon is art that wants to become lived aesthetic praxis beyond "the autonomy of art."

When aesthetic theory emerged around 1800, it was as an autocritique of Enlightenment and Idealist thought and its self-legislating, self-governing subject equated with an

abstract notion of reason and devoid of *Lebensrealität*. To the extent that aesthetics became a discipline claiming autonomy for its own area of expertise (aesthetic experience), this relative autonomy consisted precisely in the problematization of autonomy, in the creation and examination of impure mixtures and intricate dialectical entanglements of freedom and determination, mind and body, subject and object.[7] If the aesthetic also held out a highly ideological promise of imaginary fulfillment *within* alienating modern society, it also proffered a "vision of human energies as radical ends in themselves which is the implacable enemy of all dominative or instrumentalist thought."[8]

Aesthetic thought wanted to become operative in the real world and transform it—as in Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*— by proposing a different assemblage of the conceptual and the sensuous, in which the latter is an equal partner rather than a kind of id that needs to be overcome by triumphant reason. If aesthetic experience has a specific autonomy, as Jacques Rancière maintains, this autonomy emerges as a practice of resistance to the autocracy of reason.[9] The latter is always ready to morph into mere purposive rationality, into an automaton-like implementation of a ratio that cannot be argued with—as in the laws of the "free market," for instance. In fact, today autonomy seems to be located anywhere except on the part of human agency, having become post-human—this is autonomy as automatism, usually presented to the populace as an objective *Sachzwang*, usually in the form of "saving the economy" or "saving the banks" or "saving the euro" because "there are no alternatives." As a particular type of asset, art is part and parcel of autonomist techno-finance. What value do the old plots of the aesthetic have for theory and practice under these circumstances?

Subjects Leaving the Factory

In the 1930s, Herbert Marcuse had reflected on a tendency in bourgeois thought that he traced from Luther to Kant and beyond: a "union of internal autonomy and external heteronomy" in which

> what is internal to the person is claimed as the realm of freedom: the person as a member of the realm of Reason or of God (as "Christian," as "thing in itself," as intelligible being) is free. Meanwhile, the whole "external world," the person as member of the natural realm or, as the case may be, of a world of concupiscence which has fallen away from God (as "man," as "appearance"), becomes a place of unfreedom.[10]

Marcuse notes that "this thought reappears in a secularized form in Kant: man's freedom as a rational being can only be 'saved' if as a sensual being he is entirely abandoned to natural necessity."[11] In this manner, "the duality [between freedom and necessity] is itself introduced into the subject. Even the subject is split into phenomenon and noumenon and the unresolved, insoluble and henceforth permanent conflict between freedom and necessity now invades its innermost structure."[12] But *whose* freedom? If, for Kant, the subject is only truly autonomous insofar as he or she is the subject of "practical reason," this takes on a rather peculiar form: the subject becomes a conduit for the ethical *will,* which seems to be rather autonomous *from* the subject.[13] Rather than truly being the subject of reason, the subject is subjected to a moral imperative that sounds suspiciously like internalized social consensus. Obeying a will that only *appears* to lay the foundations for its autonomy, the Kantian subject engages in Walter Mitty-style self-delusion.

Kant himself struggled with the split he had introduced into the world and into the subject. In his third critique, the *Critique of Judgment,* he proposed his notion of aesthetic judgment as a bridge between the realms he had posited, yet this particular solution has proved to be frustrating and insufficient. Starting with Friedrich Schiller in the 1790s, post-Kantian thinkers tried to push the Enlightenment's autocritique further—in the process giving the aesthetic, as mediator between reason and senses, subject and object, or autonomy and heteronomy, an ever greater role. Then, in the 1840s, materialist philosophies of (and *as*) praxis moved more decisively beyond idealist system-building and a priori principles in order to "ground" thought not in an abstract, notional subject but in social, somatic, or psychological reality. Defined in Marx's early "Theses on Feuerbach" as "human sensuous activity," praxis is a post-idealist politicization of the aesthetic as a transformative engagement with the material and sensuous world. Later, in *Capital*, Marx focused on two concepts that function as reified counterparts of praxis: wage labor and commodity fetishism.[14]

With its account of the disjunction between sensuous appearance and underlying productive logic, the chapter on the commodity fetish is Marx's negative aesthetics. As the product of disavowed wage labor, the commodity constitutes an alienated world of false appearances that needs to be shattered by transformative and revolutionary praxis. In characterizing the commodity as fetish, Marx polemically appropriated the term with which the Enlightenment categorized sub-aesthetic magical objects in "primitive" tribal societies in Africa.[15] Like the "benighted Africans" imagined by Charles de Brosses or Hegel in their writings on "primitive" religion, the capitalist subject submitted to magical thinking when faced with the commodity's mysterious price—seemingly determined in "social relations" with other commodities, but *in fact* determined by the labor time invested in its production.[16]
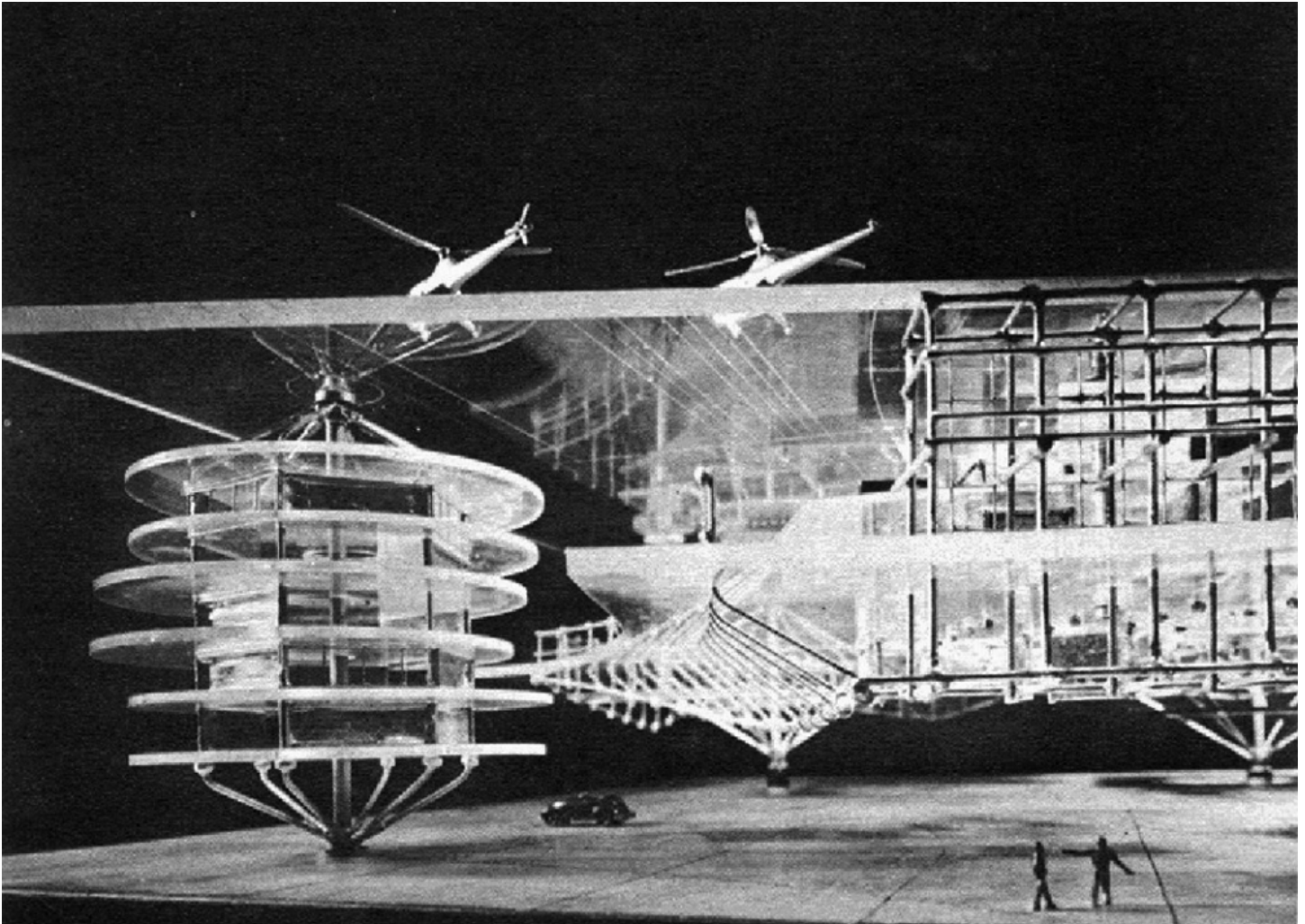
The above shows one of the models for a futuristic, anti-capitalist city titled New Babylon designed by Situationist Constant Nieuwenhuys between 1959–74.

But is the artwork not a kind of third fetish, next to the religious and the commodity fetish? Noting that Marx's critique of the illusory sensuousness of the commodity as fetish is coupled with his attack on the "illusion of the autonomy of the value-form," which is concomitant with a reversal of subject and object, Stewart Martin argues that in his *Aesthetic Theory* Adorno "mobilizes the first illusion (fetishism) against the second illusion. The autonomous artwork is an emphatically fetishized commodity, which is to say that it is a sensuous fixation of abstraction, of the value-form, and not immediately abstract."[17] In art, this sensuous fixation is pushed to an extreme that betrays art's roots in magical fetishism. The artwork is the absolute fetish.

In his early essay on Wagner, Adorno noted that the appearance of the artwork's autonomy is possible only because of "the concealment of the labor that went into it."[18] What is true of Wagner's phantasmagorias also applies to Adorno's modernism: Modernist works may be more overt about their constructive logic, but the

construction becomes another form of obfuscation behind which living labor disappears. This is precisely where the Italian operaists parted ways with Adorno: for Raniero Panzieri, Adorno remained fixated on the level of consumption with his focus on the artwork as autonomous aesthetic fetish.[19] With his insistence on the primacy of labor and of worker's resistance in the historical development of capitalism itself, Mario Tronti aimed at foregrounding a different autonomy, as opposed to the illusory autonomy of the commodity or that of capital.

Marx had polemically and ironically noted that "in the circulation M-C-M both the money and the commodity function only as different modes of existence of value itself," which "is constantly changing from one form into the other, without becoming lost in this movement; it thus becomes transformed into an automatic subject."[20] The notion of the "automatic subject" of value, as constituted by the circulation of capital, has been taken up in Germany in particular by authors intent on forging a Marxian critique of value.[21] However, for Tronti and other operaists

it was crucial to assert that from a historical point of view there could be no real automatism here, no real autonomy of capital; any specific iteration of the M-C-M cycle has to be seen in the context of capital's responses to forms of refusal, of workers' autonomy.

Today, the artwork, that particular fetish, has become the model for an economy in which the commodity's theological whims are boundless. Branded designer goods (sometimes in quasi-unique "limited editions") behave like genuinely autonomous Baudrillardian sign fetishes, deriving their price from their manufactured qualities rather than from labor-power. Given the absurd surplus value for something like the iPhone, the autonomy of capital seems rather real. While factories in Bangladesh or China continue to produce physical goods, both their symbolic and cultural value and, significantly, their price are determined by the vanguardists of immaterial labor; by post-Fordist auto-productivists whose *autos* is less self-determination than self-control. In an overdesigned world, the ultimate in design may not be the design of objects but *self-design*.[22] The autonomous subject has become primarily *its own* autocrat, perpetually self-managing and self-optimizing—while forever being illuminated by the dark light of data surveillance.

As self-management takes the form of perpetual decision-making, even if under intense pressure, it can revive a sense of individual subjective mastery; "the illusion of choice and autonomy is one of the foundations of this global regime of self-regulation."[23] Always busy surviving and self-optimizing, this self has no time for revolt, which can only be a waste of time and a career-killer.[24] What would it mean to reintroduce the "labor point of view" in this context and to once more foreground workers' autonomy over the autonomy of the commodity or of capital?

In line with Italian autonomia, into which operaismo morphed in the early 1970s, later movements from alterglobalism to Occupy Wall Street have insisted on autonomy not as a property of the subject, but as "collective adventure" produced by transversal connections and groupings.[25] The success of autonomist theory and activism in the art world can be seen as a continuation and intensification of the aesthetic critique of the Enlightenment concept of the autonomous subject—and of its even more abstracted double, the autonomous will. If real self-determination is the right to choose one's dependencies, then genuine autonomy would have to start from an acknowledgement of heteronomy and the need for collaboration, co-individuation, and co-creation.[26]

Actionism and Krautonomy

"Actionism is regressive": in the later part of the 1960s, Adorno not only opposed Gehlen's conservative
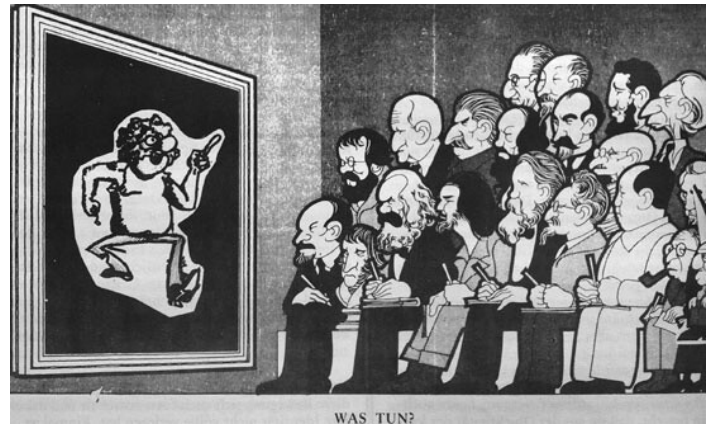
This cartoon from Autonomie is based on João Abel Manta's "A Difficult Problem," 1975. Here, Manta's map of Portugal is replaced with the Gilbert Shelton character Fat Freddy.

over-valuation of institutions, but equally rejected the *Aktionismus* of young radicals such as Rudi Dutschke (who in turn regarded Adorno as a Modernist mandarin who fiddled Schoenberg while Vietnam burned).[27] For Dutschke, "our cultural revolution" was anchored in actions during which the participants "focus on themselves" and "develop their self-enlightenment about the meaning and purpose of the action itself."[28]

In Germany and Austria, "actionism" was a code word for the neo-avant-garde and its dangerous aesthetic transgressions. In the 1950s, the term "action" had been promoted in the context of *action painting* by Harold Rosenberg, with the canvas allegedly becoming an "arena in which to act" for Pollock and De Kooning & Co.[29] Rosenberg's theory of the artistic act was an individualized Cold-War transposition of the Marxist philosophy of praxis he had espoused in the 1930s, in the context of Trotskyism. Praxis became a sequence of acts, of mock-heroic and existential actions. Praxis as a "sensuous human activity" that is as aesthetic as it is political becomes an individual act that can be hung in a living room. Towards the end of the 1950s, Allan Kaprow and other neo-avant-gardists argued that it was now crucial to leave painting behind and create actions (or happenings, or events) more directly and theatrically, without an object as intermediary.[30]

In the early 1960s the German-speaking world embraced the term *Aktion* mainly because it discursively enacted the "blurring of art and life" advocated by the neo-avant-garde.[31] In line with the Situationists, who had advocated "new forms of action in politics and art," the notion was applied both to more strictly artistic and to countercultural-*cum*-political actions. The post-Situationist group Subversive Aktion, with former SI member Dieter Kunzelmann and future student leader Rudi Dutschke—who used an entrist strategy to infiltrate the Berlin SDS—fell into the latter camp.[32] What artists or

"un-artists" from Allan Kaprow and George Maciunas to Jean-Jacques Lebel and the Situationists advocated were generalized and at times highly politicized forms of aesthetic *praxis* in which the external world is no longer purely external, confronted by a disembodied subject, but is truly "human sensuous activity."[33] For all of the valid points of institutional critique's covertly Adornian rejection of the transgressive gestures of the neo-avant-garde, the neo-avant-garde was right in opposing the reduction of the aesthetic to institutional art. "Actionism's" refusal to accept institutional and disciplinary limits, to respect functional differentiation, is highly relevant at the present historical juncture—which is, after all, marked by an erosion of relative autonomy in art as in academia and elsewhere.

However, "*Aktionismismus*" was part of a historical constellation in which the Left was on the offensive and conservative and half-heartedly de-nazified institutions provided clear targets. By the early 1970s, the remains of actionism and related strands of left-wing activism and theorizing morphed and crossbred in various ways, with Kunzelmann or his former Kommune 1 comrade Fritz Teufel embracing armed action as members of the Bewegung 2. Juni. Meanwhile, a group of members and hangers-on of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's Action Theater (later Anti-Theatre) group in Munich had been instrumental in forming the Rote Armee Fraktion.[34] While the RAF and the Bewegung 2. Juni attempted to impose a definitive avant-garde model via "urban guerrilla," former SDS member Karl Heinz Roth and others looked to Italian operaism and the beginnings of autonomia for alternative models.

In 1975, Roth was one of the confounders of the periodical *Autonomie*, which was subtitled *Materialien gegen die Fabrikgesellschaft* ("Materials Against Factory Society"). In a programmatic article in the first issue with the wonderful *Denglish* title "Facing Reality: Organisation Kaputt," Thomas Schmid called for a post-Leninist, post-vanguard mass movement anchored in (while transforming) daily life, tracing the transition from workers' autonomy (operaismo) to a more general conception of an autonomy of movements and structures no longer necessarily containable within old-school conceptions of class struggle (autonomia).[35] Here a dissensus at the heart of the "Krautonomie" project already began to manifest itself.[36] Like Joschka Fischer (another *Autonomi* e author), Schmid was a member of the Frankfurt "Sponti" scene and like Fischer, he already seemed keen to ditch Marxist conceptions of the working class in favor of more glamorous and less frustrating cosmopolitan micropolitics and career-friendly semiotic labor.

By contrast, Roth had presented a much more rigorous and orthodox operaist account of labor history in his 1974 book *Die "andere" Arbeiterbewegung* (*The "Other" Workers' Movement*), which focused on the refusal of work by German "mass laborers." In contrast to the

reformist politics of the "professional" labor movement, Roth qualified their stance as "*aktionistisch*."[37] While complaining that the late-1960s SDS had been blind to the reality of this radical tendency among workers, focusing instead on "institutional critique," his terminology suggests that his analytical focus was itself informed by student and APO actionism.[38] On May 9, 1975, Roth was seriously wounded in a shootout between police and a member of the Bewegung 2. Juni; hence he was not a strong presence during the first issues of *Autonomie.* However, his brand of German operaismo filtered through in texts by authors such as Angelika Ebbinghaus (a critique of Soviet Taylorism) and Walter Güntheroth, who in the first issue delivered a critique of "Marxian orthodoxy" that revolved around the rejection of authors who assume an "autonomous movement of capital."

Like Tronti, Roth and Güntheroth asserted the primacy of living labor and resistance, not of any automatic subject of capital. Güntheroth criticizes a Marxian orthodoxy (he mentions Jürgen Ritsert) that has reversed Marx's materialist reversal of Hegel: this orthodoxy does not take as its starting point an analysis of historical struggles and class antagonism, but instead ontologized and autonomized capital.[39] While Roth's contention that there is no autonomous development of capital—which is always forced to respond to forms of resistance—was shared by most *Autonomie* authors, Roth was concerned that the increasing focus on the postindustrial sector and services was a feint that distracted from the real issue: an ever more general proletarianization.[40] The rift running through *Autonomie* to some extent paralleled that in Italy between Tronti's attempt to define and defend an "autonomy of the political," which in his case involved a return to Communist Party politics, and Negri's post-operaist or autonomist embrace of new subjectivities and precarious social formations.[41] In Germany, those most keen to distance themselves from traditional worker politics would in some cases end up as firm establishment figures—with Fischer as foreign minister and Schmid working for the right-wing Springer press corporation.

An illustration in the first issue of *Autonomie* encapsulates this move towards post-workerism. The basis for this image is a cartoon by João Abel Manta about the Carnation Revolution in Portugal, which shows revolutionary thinkers and political leaders looking at an outline of Portugal drawn on a blackboard (Hegel is present in the form of a portrait bust). In the *Autonomie* version, the outline of Portugal has been replaced with Fat Freddy, a character from Gilbert Shelton's underground comic *The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers*.[42] Absurdly, the thinkers and makers of World History now stare intently at a chubby cartoon character who here stands for the *Politbohème* of *Spontis* and *Aktionisten*. For Roth, this montage will perhaps have served as a warning sign: disappointed by the traditional working class and as yet lacking any new proletariat, the autonomists now substituted their own interests and activities as

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Rancière speaks at the Maagdenhuis, Amsterdam, 2015. Photo: Nicola Zolin

autonomous from any actual political project.

When Roth and a few allies founded a "new series" of *Autonomie* in 1979, their journal stood grimly apart from the embrace of the desires, senses, signs, and art that characterized the postmodernism of the nascent Reagan/Thatcher/Kohl era. With its yuppie collectors, this era saw a financialization of art that was the pre-internet model for today's speculative market, in which the autonomization of capital appears to make an ontological leap from theoretical fallacy to reality.

From Artwork to Art-Work

In the early 1980s, theorists of postmodernism observed and often ideologized an aestheticization of daily life via commodification in what seemed like a parody of old avant-garde ambitions, problematizing or flat-out rejecting Modernist theories of art as having a largely autonomous history in which the "unsolved antagonisms of reality" are reconfigured time and again as "immanent problems of form."[43] As the greatest Modernist aesthetician, Adorno had of course acknowledged that the autonomization of

art was itself a consequence of the division of labor in capitalist society.[44] However, for Adorno the *faits sociaux* enabling Modernist art are in the end just that; the art cannot be reduced to its heteronomous conditions. Film was part of the culture industry and needed sociological perspectives; one chapter of Adorno and Eisler's book on film music is called "Sociological Aspects."[45] By contrast, art itself is a higher sociology; it is critical theory in the form of aesthetic objects. The *fait social* of modern art was ultimately articulated best on the level of the autonomous artwork, mimetically and fetishistically.

However, throughout the twentieth century a more purely sociological account of the autonomy of art, whose foundations were laid by Max Weber, gained traction .[46] In his 1980 attack on postmodernism, Jürgen Habermas would rely on this Weberian model not so much to analyze as to defend modernism in art, and the "project of modernity" in general:

> [Max Weber] characterized cultural modernity as the separation of the substantive reason expressed in religion and metaphysics into three autonomous

spheres. They are: science, morality and art. These came to be differentiated because the unified world-views of religion and metaphysics fell apart. Since the 18th century, the problems inherited from these older world-views could be arranged so as to fall under specific aspects of validity: truth, normative rightness, authenticity, and beauty. They could then be handled as questions of knowledge, or of justice and morality, or of taste. Scientific discourse, theories of morality, jurisprudence, and the production and criticism of art could in turn be institutionalized.[47]

While the sprawl of the field of art and art's progressive institutionalization and capitalization fuelled neo-avant-garde protest during the 1960s, it also made gambling on a revolutionary break with the system seem increasingly unfeasible once the impetus of 1967–68 waned. What emerged very forcefully in this situation was a sociological turn in the form of those practices that later came to be known as institutional critique. Early protagonists of institutional critique such as Broodthaers, Buren, and Haacke rejected both the Modernist object and the avant-garde event or performance—both the Modernist conviction "that an object, by its distinction from all others, can serve as a mirror for an equally singular and independent subject" and the avant-garde belief in radically transgressive gestures that in fact leave the system intact and await their own institutional recuperation.[48] Andrea Fraser has registered her doubts concerning "formulations that seem to reach for a kind of pure autonomy, a kind of pure freedom, in which avant-garde practices are sometimes identified with radical political practices, such as anarchist traditions and autonomia."[49] Much like Horkheimer and Adorno's critical theory, institutional critique is an immanent critical practice in disciplinary and institutional frameworks—a series of interventions in their dialectics of enablement and constraints, their processes of subjectivation and subjection. Spectacular transgression was swapped for patient critical labor.

Andrea Fraser has argued that "artistic autonomy" has four dimensions: aesthetic (the artwork as following its own intrinsic logic, free from instrumentalization), economic (the bourgeois, modern art market), social (the art world as a relatively autonomous field with its own protocols and criteria), and political (which Fraser identifies with freedom of speech and conscience).[50] While Fraser here uses a limited notion of the aesthetic, which is identified with one particular aspect of "artistic autonomy," her distinctions are nonetheless useful when discussing "institutionalized" modern art; the aesthetic in its more fundamental sense involves a constant questioning of art and its institutions. If various avant-gardes and neo-avant-gardes sought to destroy or at least escape from the field of art, institutional critique à la Haacke or Fraser becomes an immanent critical practice

within this field. However, when both selves and institutional structures are subject to permanent redesign, the old opposition between transgressive and immanent practices loses much of its relevance.

If the term "autonomy" has any meaning in art, it is not as a label for a historical series of *artworks* that somehow have the property of "being autonomous." With institutional critique, artistic autonomy came to be redefined in terms of *art-work,* or artistic labor that aspires to become immanent critical practice. If institutional critique was highly critical of the artwork as object, it did not necessarily side with the art object's familiar neo-avant-garde alternative: transgressive *actions* that seek to escape institutional art altogether. Artistic practice became project-based *,* and the focus shifted from the artwork as object to artistic labor—the artistic version of the shift from Fordism to post-Fordism, from commodity-objects to "services" and "immaterial" labor.

The opposition between the (supposedly illusory) autonomy of capital and the (real) autonomy of living labor and worker's action was always dialectical: the autonomy of capital was both ideological and a *fait social*. It was a socially produced and conditional autonomy that depended on the obfuscation of its own production. We have now reached the stage in which "intellectual labor becomes a part of the autonomous process of capital," as Franco "Bifo" Berardi has put it.[51] At the forefront of practices that engaged with the contradictions of art-work in the context of the transformations of the wider economy since the 1960s and '70s was institutional critique. Andrea Fraser and Helmut Draxler's exhibition and discussion series *Services* (1993–94), for instance, analyzed the service industries as a possible model for artistic project work, without disregarding the new forms of (self-)exploitation and precarization that emerge with such non-object-based work.[52]

However, Haacke, Buren, or Fraser's common ground with Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of art and his analysis of the "artistic field" and its institutions has also resulted in a fetishization of said field, and a tendency to disregard its ongoing transformation and disintegration.[53] The autonomy of modern society's differentiated fields or spheres was in fact always highly relative; as Kerstin Stakemeier has emphasized, art being "meticulously isolated as a field" and given relative autonomy was precisely how the subsumption of art under capitalism operated *in modernism*.[54] This subsumption now being much more radical and extreme, with economic logic penetrating art more fully and the field's splendid isolation being reduced to a mere figment, some of the avant-garde practices that were brushed aside as fatally naive by institutional critique now take on a renewed relevance. What used to be known as art and culture now having been reconceptualized as "the creative industries"; in a country such as the Netherlands the state actively encourages research on (and in the service of) said

industries, with a focus on design and new media.

Both art and academia are made more immediately productive now that they are no longer seen as relatively autonomous supplements of the "real economy," as supplements that are essential for the reproduction of the system, but that, like domestic reproductive labor, do not directly enter into the productive equation. Today they are being ideologized as the new knowledge-based and creative economy for this deindustrialized country. Ironically, it is often precisely the lingering, residual specificity of these fields that propels their integration. The art market and the academic market alike exist by virtue of unique protocols (the incommensurable value of the unique work of art; academic ranking systems) whose seemingly autonomous logic is a perfect vehicle for financialization and the imposition of neoliberal programs that result in a process of decomposition; not just of art and science, which need to be "valorized" much more directly than in the past, but also, for instance, law—which is bent or cancelled in accordance with politico-economic imperatives. What if a "field" is now a kind of scattered archipelago—an institutional, para-, and extra-institutional Balkans of conflicting ideologies and practices?

Situationist May '68 posters from the catalog of the collection of former conservative French prime minister Dominique de Villepin, auctioned at Piette Bergé in 2013.

Liquid Inertia

The nature of institutions has changed along with that of the artwork and the subject. Even in the 1970s, corporate sponsorship and the influence of trustees became the focus of Hans Haacke's work; the seemingly autonomous logic of capital transformed the art field from the inside. By now, the logic of capital has in turn largely merged with that of technoscience: if we pay up, we can get real-time algorithmic advice on which artists to buy and which to dump. Andrea Fraser's sometime collaborator Helmut Draxler has eloquently critiqued the avant-garde logic of transgression, of abandoning one's field, of becoming

another, a better, a more political subject.[55] But what if institutions themselves become transgressive; what if subjects are already constantly being reshaped?

In 1838, in the first young-Hegelian attempt at a theory of praxis, August von Cieszkowski identified institutions with "the conscious acts of humankind."[56] In contrast to this still idealist definition, Sartre in *The Critique of Dialectical Reason* famously placed institutions on the side of the practico-inert: they are the result of previous being and previous praxis, now congealed into reified structures and ossified protocols. Their movement is inert movement.[57] For a conservative like Gehlen, this kind of critique is proof of the covert idealism of Marxism: it is nothing but a "materialization" of Fichte's *Ich,* which cannot accept any objective reality outside of it.[58] For crypto-Fichtean theories of praxis, everything needs to be dissolved into human activity—dissolved, liquidated, liquefied. Such a polemical misreading may at best be applicable to some forms of *Aktionismus* that Adorno opposed as much as he opposed Gehlen.

However, is the contemporary institution itself not a "financialized" version of idealism? Offices are transformed beyond recognition as workers become flex workers on flex time. Academics don't need books anymore, hence they no longer need to have a study. The institution is less than ever a mere bureaucratic monolith whose ossified structures need to be overcome through action or praxis; in many cases, an "actionistic" managerial caste imposes "market imperatives" on those who are told to "get with the program." What is needed in such a situation, as Gerald Raunig has suggested, are "practices that are self-critical and yet do not cling to their own involvement, their complicity, their imprisoned existence in the art field, their fixation on institution and the institution, their own being-institution."[59] In such an account of "instituent practices," institutional critique is reinvented along autonomist lines, and vice versa.

When Rudi Dutschke coined the phrase "the long march through institutions," he was thinking of a process in which revolutionaries undermine one institution after another from within.[60] As the revolutionary impetus of the late 1960s petered out, institutional critique at times replaced avant-garde transgression with an equally problematic fetishization of immanent practice within institutions. Critique that is perfectly content with its immanence becomes a kind of higher Biedermeier. Moments of externality, of externalization, are part of the process. It is no longer a matter of choosing between *anti-institutional aesthetic practice* (1960s neo-avant-garde tendencies) and *embedded critical practice within institutions* (1970s institutional critique). By now, the complementary nature of both approaches is clear, as artistic and theoretical practice navigate institutional as well as extra-institutional contexts and interstices. Existing institutions such as museums or universities should be engaged with and worked with to

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the extent that this is possible and productive, without constituting the horizon.

Under neoliberalism, we constantly encounter and participate in a paradoxical *liquid inertia* of structures and procedures. Often—for instance at universities—workers are entangled somewhat haphazardly in restructurings and retoolings that they have not desired and have little control over. However, under specific circumstances, especially in smaller art institutions, transformation and "liquefaction" can take the form of an active and activist praxis. A case in point is the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, which enabled the project *Picasso in Palestine* (2011), initiated by Khaled Hourani. The museum's apparatus was used to send a Picasso painting to Palestine, where most institutional niceties that are taken for granted elsewhere are absent; Israel has blocked and sabotaged the formation and maintenance of institutions, including that of a Palestinian state, for decades. *Picasso in Palestine* emphasizes and exacerbates the painting's status as art, as a painting by Picasso that allows for certain kinds of aesthetic experience. It is precisely because bringing the artwork as object and as producer or enabler of such an experience to Palestine is so grotesquely difficult that the painting here also has different meanings and functions—an unexpected use value that enriches rather than cancels out the work's aesthetic qualities. In the process, the work also maps the inequalities and asymmetries in today's "globalization," which is the continuation of imperialism and colonialism by different means—including those of international law.

Picasso in Palestine dealt with a highly specific situation, but it did so by foregrounding the various forms of curatorial, critical, artistic, legal, police, and manual labor involved—all revolving around a precious and precarious object. It was an attack on Israel's stranglehold on Palestine, but the attack came from the inside, by foregrounding the contradictions of working in a "global" economy rife with asymmetries and inequalities between the migration of commodities and of workers, of skilled and unskilled labor, and from the periphery to center and vice versa. *Picasso in Palestine* takes as its point of departure a quintessential Modernist artwork, but shows its entanglement in activities that ensure its transportation, its protection, its legal status, and so on. The *artwork* as object becomes *working*, becomes labor; noun becomes verb. Many contemporary practices thus seek to revert or at least counteract the concealment of labor. But "the labor that went into the work of art" can be manifold and contradictory, and it may include the labor of guards or cleaners needed for the maintenance of the system. What has happened in the last decades is the progressive subjugation of art and of academia to an economistic logic that allows for no alterity, no other criteria.

The Situationist-dominated "Council for Maintaining the

IBM promotes a computer program, Watson, in this video titled "What Will You Do with Watson?," 2014 (video still).

Occupations," which was founded at the Sorbonne in May '68, put out a poster decreeing the "End of the University."[61] By the early twenty-first century, universities and museums alike have been occupied by rather different forces. In dealing with such institutions, it may be wise to consider them already gone, already plundered and ruined. But these ruins are not the crumbling edifices known from old-master paintings. Ruination now takes the form of constant liquefaction. Workplaces literally disappear, with unworkable "flexi-work stations" at Dutch universities having the effect (and no doubt the unstated intention) of severing ties of solidarity between and among staff members and students. A situation marked by the liquefaction of institutions and by the erosion of the relative autonomy of fields presents huge problems, but also possibilities.

Workers' disinvestment from the liquid institution can lead to ever more complete inscription in the isolating protocols of pseudo-autonomist self-management. However, at times the liquidation of old structures can in fact generate solidarization and action. In the midst of institutional turmoil, new forms of cooperation and new alliances can emerge within liquid institutions and ex-fields, but also between them. As the institution becomes networked and diffused, it intensifies its grasp on subjectivation and introduces ever greater numbers of cultural and intellectual workers into precarity.[62] The factory is now truly a *fabbrica diffusa,* as the operaists put it. When the same "iron logic" of financialized capital as enabled by technoscience as much as by financial capital is imposed on all different fields and occupations, then is there not potentially a common ground? In art as in academia, many may no longer consider themselves to be part of the same "field" as some of their (former) peers. Does this not also create new possibilities for networks of solidarity within but also *between* (ex-)fields?

Are We the Robots?

In contemporary capitalism, the seeming autonomy/automatism of value production reaches new heights due to the synthesis of technology and finance. Fredric Jameson has argued that finance capital has been marked by a further autonomization vis-à-vis industrial capitalism, just as the postmodern play of "autonomized fragments" goes beyond the relative autonomy of Modernist forms. Finance capital brings into being "a play of monetary entities that need neither production (as capital does) nor consumption (as money does), which supremely, like cyberspace, can live on their own internal metabolisms and circulate without any reference to an older type of content." This also manifests itself in "a new cultural dimension or realm that is independent from the former real world."[63]

Such pronouncements on the autonomy of finance enter into a coalition with statements on the autonomization of technology. In the 1970s it was commonplace for Marxist critics of capitalist "communication" to assert that "in the universe of fetishes, the communications media appear to be endowed with autonomy, 'a will and mind of their own,'" which was to be countered with steps "towards an autonomous cultural production" by "the popular classes."[64] Such media-operaism seems quaint now that we are dealing with a techno-economic system that is constantly spawning new products and tools that demand an instant reschooling of the subject, which has to keep up with developments to shore up its own much more precarious illusion of subjective autonomy. As Jonathan Crary has noted, "[the] idea of technological change as quasi-autonomous, driven by some process of auto-poesis of self-regulation" has become ubiquitous—and it is this process that will presumably result in *the singularity.*[65] Technoscience merges with the apparent autonomy of finance capital to form an imposed sense of capitalist technoscience as automaton, as unstoppable juggernaut. Of course, in its very autonomization from the social, techno-financial capitalism keeps producing social problems—and ecological problems.

Recently a number of Dutch institutions poured significant funding into a new Center for Humanities and Technology (CHAT), which enables researchers to use IMB's Watson system for research in the field of cognitive computing, network analytics, visualization, text and social analytics, search and data representation—and now, of course, the humanities, with underfunded academics bending their research agenda to come up with something, anything, that could get them a bit of cash. CHAT had an inaugural budget of €65 million—which must have come from somewhere—but now that money has been earmarked to promote a particular research agenda. The call for proposals gave researchers a full *three weeks* to come up with a proposal. Art historians were presented with suggestions that are patently irrelevant in relation to contemporary artistic practice: "Can we detect meaningful relationships between artworks when we do not understand the semantic labels (due to language differences), or with insufficient clues (untitled works)? Can we search for artworks on the basis of pattern recognition of e.g. color, composition, texture, rhythm?"[66] Dreaming of a cut of that €65 million, some art historians started brainstorming: Should we rather focus on discourse analysis, and have Watson parse thousands of texts on the basis of keywords? Which keywords? "Autonomy" perhaps?

A humanist defense of the lone researcher against the evil machine would clearly be regressive and unhelpful. Clearly the point cannot be the resuscitation of some deliriously autocratic Enlightenment subject, let alone of some Fichtean *Ich.* Autonomy needs to be defined in terms of assemblages that include technological tools as well as institutions. They are *pharmaka,* to use Bernard Stiegler's terminology; they are coproducers of subjectivity. But what *kind* of subjectivity? What is disconcerting about the Amsterdam project is how this proprietary version of cognitive computing is naturalized, and never questioned. Do we want students and staff whom it never gives any pause to be Watson's Watson? And how, as Matteo Pasquinelli asked à propos of Watson, "do you think a form of capital that is already thinking you?"[67] To open up a serious debate about these and other matters would require conceiving of the university "as a site of struggle, or education as a reason for it," and as Sarah Amsler puts it: this is something that few academics are willing to do.[68] Staff and students find it difficult to organize and undertake collective action—if they see the need for it at all. Many have been depoliticized by the perpetual need to perform, and to compete.

Amsler sees such developments as symptoms of a "deep neoliberalism" that

> moves beyond daily erosions of autonomy to become a hollowing out of the relationships, ideas, and subjectivities that help maintain critical spaces from neoliberal rationality and a temporal contracting of the distance between these spaces. If we can identify how and why these processes become possible, we might also get a better grip on how critical spaces can be reclaimed or created.[69]

Again the question of labor rises, with ever greater urgency. During the late-1980s mock-academic panel performances by the feminist collective V-Girls, Andrea Fraser's persona would occasionally end some demonstration of her theoretical skills with a desperately peppy "I would like to conclude by saying that I am available for immediate employment." This message tends to be implicit in all we say and do. Like workers at Foxconn or Pegratron, most academics may be easily replaceable

by the next eager candidate available for immediate employment. Self-design and self-surveillance do their job—until they don't.

"In the information age, there is not going to be a privileged set of knowledge producers who will be allowed an autonomous space, a safe haven to explore and invent."[70] In art as in academia, what used to be a carefully maintained reserve, a research facility in which processes that could be subject to *later* capitalization had to be given some room to unfold, is now mined much more directly, without delays. The exception has been subjected to the rule; the seeming alternative to capitalism has become the avant-garde of capitalism. But if art's and academia's inscription in the automatic logic of (finance) capital entails a loss of a specific type of disciplinary autonomy, this also means that transdisciplinary endeavors that follow a non-CHAT logic have become both more necessary and more possible—which does not mean that their intrinsic contradictions and centrifugal forces are any less real.

A starting point would be precisely the ever more problematic status of work in contemporary capitalism. The "refusal of work" was a key notion in 1970s autonomism. Refusal and sabotage had long been central to the "other" workers' movement, but in 1970s Europe, unemployment was on the rise. The system was itself increasingly refusing people work, in part precisely due to industry's response to previous labor action, which had resulted in increasing automation as well as the relocating of production to Asia. While autonomists sought to exacerbate this crisis and push it to its tipping point (using the welfare state that was still in place), more generally the situation resulted in a life-long scramble for jobs in an economy in which every crisis seems to be followed by a techno-financial "jobless recovery."

As the integration of semi-autonomous fields and the integration of workers into neoliberal capitalism is being pushed forward, divisions between legal and illegal, first-class and second-class citizens, workers and non-workers proliferate. In such a situation, the impetus to stay on the "right" side of these divisions is strong and often overpowering; but conditions of generalized precarity can also lead to the realization that there are no right sides. Networks emerge in which collaboration between artists, lecturers or PhD candidates, activists, and illegal immigrants may start to make more sense than the usual field-immanent activities of pursuing gallery exhibitions or grants for mega research projects. This can result in attempts to forge alliances between, for instance, artists or academics and the "illegals" who provide a surplus labor force for the informal economy. In early 2015, the protesting students at the Maagdenhuis in Amsterdam insisted on conjoining their struggle with that of rejected asylum seekers, who are not legally allowed to work and be "productive members of society." The students did so against protest from those who thought it

unwise to "cloud the issue."

At its best, today's autonomist practice strives for an autonomy of chosen dependencies; an autonomy that practices entanglement, that dances with heteronomy. Meaningful aesthetico-political praxis will often be slow or intermittent. In the *fabbrica diffusa* of contemporary capitalism, autonomy can only occur as assembly and assemblage of disparate workers and non-workers. Everything conspires against this occurring. It is time to conspire back.

X

This article is based on the introduction to the Art and Autonomy *reader, to be published by* Afterall *later this year.*

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1
For a critique of the modern subject as autocratic, in the context of a Latour- and Stengers-inspired curatorial project, see Susanne Karr, "We Have Never Been Alone: The Continuing Appeal of Animism," *Springerin* https://www.springerin.at/en/2013/1/wir-sind-nie-allein-gewesen/ .

2
In contrast to his later critics, Greenberg himself rarely (if ever) used the term; however, his "Kantian" definition of modernism in terms of "the use of the characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself, not in order to subvert it but in order to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence" is of course a definition of Modernist art's autonomous self-development. Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting" (1960), in *The Collected Essays and Criticism 4: Modernism With a Vengeance, 1957–1969* , ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993), 85.

3
Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* (1970), trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 7.

4
Die Freiheit und die Institution was broadcast on WDR television on June 3, 1967, presented by Alexander von Cube. While the debate's title uses the term "freedom," Adorno does at one point recast the issue as being one of autonomy, of self-determination. A recording of this broadcast has been posted online with a 1965 date (possibly due to a confusion with a famous 1965 radio debate between Adorno and Gehlen, "Ist die Soziologie eine Wissenschaft vom Menschen?"), which a number of recent German academic publications have erroneously taken for a fact. Right at the beginning of the broadcast, the reference to the *dissolution* of the Provo movement (which happened on May 13, 1967) should make it patently clear that 1965 cannot be the year of this debate. The footage shown is from Louis van Gasteren's 1966 film *Omdat mijn fiets daar stond*, which documents police violence against people (Provos and others) who had just attended the opening of an exhibition that documented and criticized police actions during the wedding of Princess Beatrix and Claus von Amsberg.

5
In 1962, Grootveld witnessed an evening of "Parellele Aufführungen neuester Musik" organized by Wolf Vostell, and including contributions by Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, and Nam June Paik; the evening of events became a model for Grootveld's happenings when Vostell attempted to perform a décollage action outside, on the street, and the police intervened. According to a report published by the weekly *Haagse Post* at the time, Grootveld tried to convince the remaining attendees that Amsterdam was to become a magic center. See Ludo van Halem, "Parallele Aufführungen neuester Musik. Een Fluxusconcert in kunsthandel Monet," *Jong Holland* 6, no. 5 (1990): 26 (quoting from *Haagse Post,* October 13, 1962).

6
Constant and New Babylon were fêted in *Provo* 4 (October 1965).

7
In this sense, any mention of "aesthetic autonomy" should come with immediate qualifications; otherwise the result will be a conceptual fetish that negates a core quality of the aesthetic itself. On "aesthetic autonomy" in relation to "artistic autonomy," see also *Aesthetic and Artistic Autonomy* , ed. Owen Hulatt (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

8
Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 9.

9
For Rancière, see "The Aesthetic Revolution and Its Outcomes: Emplotments of Autonomy and Heteronomy," *New Left Review* 12 (March–April 2002), 133–51.

10
Herbert Marcuse, *A Study on Authority* (1936), trans. Joris de Bres (London: Verso, 2008), 7–8.

11
Ibid., 8.

12
Georg Lukács, "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat," in *History and Class Consciousness* (1922), trans. Rodney Livingstone (London?: Merlin Press, 1971), 124.

13
Peter Osborne, "Theorem 4: Autonomy. Can It Be Part of Art and Politics at the Same Time?," *Open* 23 (2012), 116–26.

14
On praxis and labor see also Josefine Wikström, "Practice Comes Before Labor: An Attempt to Read Performance through Marx's Notion of Practice," *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts* 17, no. 6 (2012). DOI: 10.1080/13528165.2013.775753

15
The term was key to Charles de Brosses's Enlightenment theory of "primitive" African (but implicitly also Catholic European) religion in *Du culte des dieux fétiches* (1760).

16
See, of course, the famous section on the fetishism of commodities from *Capital,* vol. 1 (chapter 1, section 4) http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch01.htm#S4 .

17
Stewart Martin, "The Absolute Artwork Meets the Absolute Commodity," *Radical Philosophy* 146 (November–December 2007): 23.

18
Theodor W. Adorno, *In Search of Wagner* , trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 2005), 72.

19
Raniero Panzieri, "Relazione sul neocapitalismo," in *La Ripresa del Marxismo-Leninismo in Italia* (Milan: Sapere Edizioni, 1972), 212, quoted in Pier Vittorio Aurelli, *The Project of Autonomy: Politics and Architecture Within and Against Capitalism* (New York: Tenple Hoyne Buell Center/Princeton Architectural Press, 2008), 27.

20
Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy. Volume I* , trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin, 1990), 255.

21
See for instance *Das automatische Subjekt bei Marx* , eds. Hans-Georg Bensch and Frank Kuhne (Lüneburg: Gesellschaftswissenschaftliches Institut Hannover 1998); in recent art theory, see Kerstin Stakemeier, for instance "Art as Capital—Art as Service—Art as Industry: Timing Art in Capitalism," in *Timing: On the Temporal Dimension of Exhibiting* , eds. Beatrice von Bismarck et al. (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014), 15–38.

22
Hal Foster, *Design and Crime and Other Diatribes* (London: Verso, 2002).

23
Jonathan Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (London: Verso, 2013), 46.

24
See Byung-Chul Han, *Psychopolitik. Neoliberalismus und die neuen Machttechniken* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2014).

25
Brian Holmes, "Artistic Autonomy and the Communication Society," *Third Text* 18, no. 6 (2004): 548 http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l-0310/msg00192.html .

26
"Self-determination is the right to choose your dependencies"; Vivian Ziherl quoted by Jonas Staal in "To Make a World, Part II: The Art of Creating a State," *e-flux journal* 60 (December 2014) https://www.e-flux.com/journal/60/61062/to-make-a-world-part-ii-the-art-of-creating-a-state/ .

27
Theodor W. Adorno, "Marginalien zu Theorie und Praxis" (1969) in *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft II (Gesammelte Schriften 10.2)* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), 760–82 (quotation from 776). In his attacks on "actionism," Adorno here himself uses the impoverished and undialectical notion of *praxis* (as antithetically opposed to "theory") that he accuses his opponents of employing.

28
Rudi Dutschke, in Uwe Bergmann, Rudi Dutschke, Wolfgang Lefèvre, and Bernd Rabehl, *Rebellion der Studenten oder Die neue Opposition* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1968), 63.

29
Rosenberg launched the term "action painting" with his 1952 essay "The American Action Painters" (in *ARTnews* 51, no. 8 (December 1952), 22–23, 48–50), which was widely supposed to be based on Jackson Pollock's practice, although Rosenberg did

not mention a single artist's name and was much closer to De Kooning. See also my *History in Motion: Time in the Age of the Moving Image* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2013), 223–32.

30
Allan Kaprow, "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock," *ARTnews* 57, no. 6 (October 1958), 24–26, 55–57.

31
It should also be noted that the term came with a specifically German pedigree, as Franz Pfemfert's legendary 1911–32 magazine had been called *Die Aktion* . Starting out as an expressionist periodical, *Die Aktion* became progressively politicized during and after WWI.

32
On the Subversive Aktion and its links to the SI, see Aribert Reimann, *Dieter Kunzelmann: Avantgardist, Protestler, Radikaler* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 49–122.

33
Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach" (1845) https://www. marxists.org/archive/marx/works /1845/theses/theses.htm .

34
On April 2, 1968 the Anti-Theatre group of Horst Söhnlein, Andreas Baader, and Thorwald Proll (alongside Gudrun Ensslin) set fire to two department stores in Frankfurt—a key moment in the formation of the RAF.

35
Thomas Schmid, "Facing Reality: Organisation Kaputt," *Autonomie. Materialien gegen die Fabrikgesellschaft* 1 (October 1975): 16–35.

36
The pun "Krautonomie" can be found in the correspondence of the editorial group of the *neue Folge* of *Autonomie,* which lasted from 1979 to 1986. The archive is at the IISH in Amsterdam (ARCH02930).

37
Karl Heinz Roth (with Elisabeth Behrens), *Die "andere" Arbeiterbewegung* (Munich: Trikont, second edition, 1976), 83. See also Steve Wright, "The Historiography of the Mass Worker" https://libcom.org/librar y/historiography-mass-worker-ste ve-wright .

38
Roth, ibid. *,* 229.

39
Walter Gunteroth, "Kritik der Marxorthodoxie, *Autonomie* 1, 46 –58, esp. 39.

40
Karl Heinz Roth, "Nichtarbeit, Proletarisierung," in *Autonomie. Materialien gegen die Fabrikgesellschaft* 5 (February 1977): 40–42.

41
For a defense of Tronti and critique of Negri, see Aureli, *The P roject of Autonomy* , 39–48.

42
Autonomie 1, 22.

43
Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 7.

44
Hanns Eisler (and Theodor W. Adorno), *Composing for the Films* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 45–61.

45
Ibid. In addition to *Composing for the Films* , see his late essay "Transparencies on Film" (1966): "There can be no aesthetics of the cinema, not even a purely technological one, which would not include the sociology of the cinema." Adorno here stressed the photographic and "objective" nature of film. "Transparencies on Film," trans. Thomas Y. Levin, *New German Critique* 24/25 (Autumn 1981–Winter 1982): 202.

46
See Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie I* (1920) (Tübingen: Mohr, 1988), 536–73.

47
Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity—An Incomplete Project," in *The Anti-Aesthetic*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), 8–9.

48
Holmes, "Artistic Autonomy," 548.

49
Andrea Fraser, "Autonomy and Its Contradictions," *Open* 23 (2012): 111.

50
Ibid., 107.

51
The quotation is from Berardi's *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy* , trans. Francesca Cadel and Guiseppina Mecchia (New York: Semiotext(e), 2009) 33.

52
Services originated at the Kunstraum der Universität Lüneburg and subsequently toured other art spaces.

53
See for instance Haacke and Fraser's obituaries of Bourdieu in *October* 101 (Summer 2002): 4–11.

54
Stakemeier, "Art as Capital," 21.

55
Helmut Draxler, lecture at "Art and Its Frames: Continuity and Change," symposium at the Kunstraum of Leuphana University Lüneburg, June 14, 2014.

56
August von Cieszkowski, *Prolegomena zur Historiosophie* (1838) (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1981), 150.

57
Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason: Volume One* , trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith (1960) (London: Verso, 2004), 228–52 inter alia.

58
Arnold Gehlen, "Uber die Geburt der Freiheit aus der Entfremdung" (1952), in *Studien zur Anthropologie und Soziologie* (Munich: Luchterhand, 1963), 232–46.

59
Gerald Raunig, "Instituent Practices," in *Art and Contemporary Critical Practice* : *Reinventing Institutional Critique* , eds. Gerald Raunig and Gene Ray (London: MayFly, 2009), 11.

60
"Langer Marsch durch die Institutionen" is a well-known phrase in Germany; for Dutschke's original use, see Manfred Kittel, *Langer Marsch durch die Institutionen? Politik und Kultur in Frankfurt nach 1968* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011), 6.

61
On the Council for Maintaining the Occupation, see René Viénet's text from *Enragés and Situationists in the Occupations Movement* (1968) at http://www. cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/enrages0 8.html .

62
André Rottmann has focused on the transformation of the institution from site into network: "Networks, Techniques, Institutions: Art History in Open Circuits," *Texte zur Kunst* 81 (2011), 142–44. Hito Steyerl writes about the "integration into precarity" in "The Institution of Critique" in *Art and Contemporary Critical Practice* , 13–19.

63
Fredric Jameson, "Culture and Finance Capital," *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 1 (Autumn 1997): 264, 265.

64
Armand Mattelart, "Communication Ideology and Class Practice" (Chile, 1971), in *Communication and Class Struggle, Vol. 1: Capitalism, Imperialism* , eds. Armand Mattelart and Seth Siegelaub (New York/Bagnolet: International General/IMMRC, 1979), 116. Armand Mattelart, "Introduction: For a *Class* and *Group* Analysis of Popular Communication Practices," in *Communication and Class Struggle, Vol. 2: Liberation, Socialism* , eds. Armand Mattelart and Seth Siegelaub (New York/Bagnolet: International General/IMMRC, 1979), 28

65
Crary, *24/7,* 36.

66
"Meaning and Perspective in the Digital Humanities: A White Paper for the Establishment of a Center for Humanities and Technologies," eds. Sally Wyat (KNAW) and David Millen (IBM) ht tps://web.archive.org/web/2016 1012154115/https://www.knaw. nl/shared/resources/actueel/pu blicaties/pdf/meaning-and-persp ectives-in-the-digital-humanities- white-paper-chat .

67
Matteo Pasquinelli, "Capital Thinks Too: The Idea of the Common in the Age of Machine Intelligence," *Open!,* December 11, 2015 http://www.onlineopen. org/capital-thinks-too .

68
Sarah Amsler, "Beyond All Reason: Spaces of Hope in the Struggle for England's Universities," *Representations* 116 (Fall 2011): 80.

69
Ibid., 68.

57

70
Vidya Ashram, "The Global Autonomous University," in *Toward a Global Autonomous University* , ed. The Edu-factory Collective (New York: Autonomedia, 2009), 166. See also Gerald Raunig, *Factories of Knowledge, Industries of Creativity* , trans. Aileen Derieg (New York: Semiotext(e), 2013).

Irmgard Emmelhainz

Geopolitics and Contemporary Art, Part I: From Representation's Ruin to Salvaging the Real

In the 1960s and '70s, politicization meant taking a position, establishing and following a political program, taking up armed struggle, putting one's skills (including art) at the service of the revolution, fighting in the name of the horizon of state socialism, and acting in solidarity with anti-imperialist and decolonization struggles. Artists and militant networks were drawn together by political affinities, and Palestine, Vietnam, and Chile were symbols of anti-imperialism. This form of politicization translated into an aesthetic practice of international vanguardism, contestation, criticality, counterhegemony, and postcolonial memorialization and assertion, within the framework of a politics of representation. Since that time, however, this kind of politics has come to be perceived as a form of violent nationalism that led to authoritarian states and propagandist aesthetics. Politics has become inseparable from the neoliberalized political economy, as well as from culture.

Within representation's ruin, what used to be "outside" of capitalism—like marginality, queerness, or race—has been symbolically incorporated and deprived of its capacity to disrupt and contest. Figures of otherness have disappeared and been subsumed into "lifestyle" options. The underclass is a blurry horizon disconnected from the flows of global capitalism; far from being a political figure, the underclass is sometimes subject to site-specific intervention, pacification, betterment, development, and community-building projects. Its emancipatory horizon lies in entrepreneurship. Moreover, in the twenty-first century politics is no longer representative, but what some theorists call "post-politics." Following Jodi Dean, this means that politics now aspires to a superficial democracy that neutralizes antagonism and denies democracy's limits and mechanisms of exclusion. "Post-politics" thus implies the disavowal of the fundamental division conditioning politics, as equality has come to mean inclusion, respect, and entitlement. "Post-politics" means consensual politics, the end of ideology, the neoliberal withering away of the state in some areas and its strengthening in other strategic ones, and the financialization of the economy.[1]

Insofar as democracy has become the goal of political action, visibility has become a key feature. This form of politicization presupposes that displacing signs may contribute to destabilizing or mobilizing people, providing tools for articulations that can enable specific political goals. As a consequence, cultural production has become inextricable from political action. We must also consider what was made evident by the 2011–13 worldwide mobilizations: the huge gap that exists between government (political parties, elections, institutions) and the actual forms in which we are being governed, which give shape to our lives and the ways we make a living—according to the interests of international trade organizations and corporations. " *Que se vayan todos*," or "They all have to go," has been the motto on the streets of Argentina since the early 2000s, even if "they" all

eventually end up staying. In Egypt, Tahrir Square took Mubarak's head, and the Tamarod (rebellion) movement took Morsi's. Collective self-determination was reclaimed in the streets, and yet the people's goal was not to get organized and take power because, first, power creates the fiction that gathering and protesting is enough to change things, and second, because politics no longer works as representation.

If traditional forms of power were representative and lodged in institutions and persons, power is now hidden in infrastructure (a highway, a supermarket, software, fiber optics, a data center, corporate providers of energy and water) and materialized as spatial arrangements. Post-representative forms of power manifest themselves as the organization, design, and configuration of the world; these forms of power are architectural and impersonal, as opposed to representative and personal.[2] Moreover, politics is also post-ideological, which means that critical disposition, symbolic gesture, political position, and everyday life are completely dissociated. This dissociation leads to pervasive contradictions: denouncing hunger in Africa, but drinking coffee at Starbucks; expressing solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza, but consuming Israeli goods; protesting against violence, but exploiting one's own employees; opposing slavery, but buying clothing manufactured by enslaved people in Southeast Asia; expressing concern about global warming, but buying food in supermarkets; applying for government and corporate funds to produce projects that critique them. Our post-political and post-ideological era is characterized by a sharp discrepancy between political position, political action, and symbolic gesture.

In what follows I would like to address the transformations in militantism in the context of the shift from representation to post-politics and post-ideology, as manifested in politicized art in recent decades. This shift embodies the passage from the ruin of representation to sensible politics: from internationalism to multiculturalism, antiglobalization, and recent artistic production that, aside from taking up the task of rendering visible the invisible, has proposed forms of salvaging reality, of self-organizing transient communities, bettering the conditions of living and working, and imagining new forms of communal organization, social therapies, and useful art. One of the questions that urgently needs to be asked concerns the role that contemporary art plays in geopolitics, if we consider the art world as an industry, as the harbinger of neoliberalism, and as a tool for pacification, normalization, and gentrification. Relatedly, can the nation-state can still function as a container for globalized struggles? What can the political art and militancy of the 1960s and '70s contribute to these struggles?[3]

"Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault discussed the shifts in militantism and their implications in a public dialogue on March 4, 1972."

The Ruin of Representation

A century ago and up until the 1960s, political action was framed under unions, parties, and associations, and consisted in attending rallies and organizing strikes, meetings, and marches. In this context, militants delivered pamphlets and gave speeches—what is known as "agitation" work. For instance, Lucy Parsons was a member of the Communist Party and an indefatigable agitator who also belonged to the Chicago Working Women's Union and joined the Socialist Worker's Party in 1877. Parsons travelled throughout the United States and became a well-known labor leader and one of the main defenders of anarchism, Black people, and the rights of prostitutes.[4] Another militant, French philosopher Simone Weil, sought to transcend the domain of politicized speech (although she was known to have given speeches at workers' meetings in Le Puy, where she taught philosophy) and engaged in factory and peasant work as well as in armed struggle with the Republican Army in Spain. In the 1960s, a major shift took place in political engagement, especially after May '68. Following in Weil's footsteps—and in opposition to Jean-Paul Sartre, who kept militant action and philosophy as two separate activities—figures such as journalist Ulrike Meinhof, philosopher Régis Debray, and filmmaker Masao Adachi bypassed the party as the container for progressive politics and engaged directly in armed struggle, seeking to join theory and practice. Maoist students also rejected the party and worked alongside laborers and peasants, no longer seeking (as Lenin's had prescribed in his text "What is to be Done?") to militate ahead of them, but to learn from them.

Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault discussed the shifts in militantism and their implications in a public dialogue on

Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Declaration of Poetic Disobedience, 2006. Video still. Image copyright of the artist, courtesy of Video Data Bank.

March 4, 1972.[5] They posed the question of the role of intellectuals in relation to the struggles of students, workers, and prisoners. In the discussion, Foucault defined two types of politically involved intellectuals: "outcasts," who engage in actions that are regarded as subversive or "immoral" by bourgeois society (i.e., Jean Genet); and "socialists," who use discourse to reveal particular truths (i.e., Rosa Luxemburg). Intellectuals had traditionally taken the latter role, serving as "the consciousness of the people." The events of May '68, however, marked the awareness that the masses no longer needed intellectuals to represent them or to describe their various forms oppression. For Deleuze, the role of the intellectual was no longer to situate himself ahead of workers, but to contest the very forms of power that position intellectuals as producers of knowledge. Thus, what was problematized by May '68 was precisely the notion of the "representative consciousness." Intellectuals had been rendered aware of how they propagate discourses of power disguised as "knowledge," "consciousness," and "truth." For Foucault and Deleuze, there could be no representation, not because there wasn't a signifier ("archaism") that could bring together a given group based on common interests, but because in "speaking for others," there is always an unconscious desire operating: to know, appropriate, and have power over the Other, denying him or her the right to self-consciousness.

Foucault and Deleuze thus gave intellectuals the task of organizing struggles beyond representation and "class consciousness." They posited militantism as a matter of denouncing, speaking out, finding targets, and creating tools to fight different forms of power and oppression. This cleared a path for an array of different struggles beyond class consciousness, rooted in the cultural and social arenas, as well as for a politics of counter-information, which privileged the mass media as a site of militant intervention. New micropolitical struggles targeted the processes of subjectivation (*subjectivation)* and subjugation (*assujettisement* or *sujétion*), which assigned roles, functions, and identities to individuals subordinated by a given form of power. These struggles sought to use the logic of subjectivation to organize militant self-consciousness, constructing an active, politically constituted subject or subjectivity that could counter the process of subjugation. In the domain of art, after the shifts prompted by the ruin of aesthetic-political representation (manifested in philosophy as post-structuralist theory), artists developed conceptual art strategies that aimed to dematerialize the art object in order to resist its ever increasing status as a commodity. Through institutional critique they began to question the conditions of art production, and through a pedagogy of viewership, they made art (most notably video art) that sought to counter the spectacle.

From Anti-Imperialism to the Global Celebration of Difference

Parallel to student and worker struggles in Europe, anti-imperialism and decolonization battles were underway in the third world, seeking to establish alternatives to Western capitalism. Cuba, China, Palestine, Chile, and Vietnam were key referents in the 1970s. Communism was a "living hypothesis," a horizon that mobilized the belief, passion, and will of a large part of the revolution and inspired solidarity from the Western world.[6] The political figures brought about by anti-imperialism were the empowered peasant or slum-dweller and the colonized subject fighting for their own emancipation against empire. By the 1980s, however, the revolutionary anti-imperialist subject and project had been disavowed as a sort of aberration of decadent socialism, A new de-ideologized form of third-world emancipation, beyond the international division of labor and the figure of the worker as a politically self-defined subject, was foregrounded. Anti-imperialism had implied universalizing a cause or giving a name to a political wrong; the "wretched of the earth" emerged for a historically specific period of time as a new figuration of "the people" in the political sense. But a new ethical humanism took over, replacing revolutionary and political sympathy with pity and moral indignation, transforming the latter into political emotions within the framework of human rights.[7]

This led to new figures of alterity in the 1980s and '90s: the "suffering other"' who needs to be rescued, and the

postcolonial subaltern demanding restitution, presupposing that visibility would follow emancipation. These figures became the postcolonial, ethnically self-defined and self-represented subjects struggling for recognition and for a place from which to speak their own suppressed, unheard, or forgotten narratives: "I speak therefore I am," utters performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña in his *Declaration of Poetic Disobedience* (2006). In order to avoid the representation of identities based on archaisms (or "essentialisms," as Gayatri Spivak put it) that would perpetuate the discourses of Western society's "Other" through nationalisms, myths, and other types of ethnic-specific narratives, in the 1980s postcolonial theorists posited a *differential structure of identification*, in which identity was conceived as always being in the process of formation, constructed through ambivalence and "splittings."[8] What became crucial politically, according to Homi Bhabha, was the articulation of "interstitial moments," or processes produced in the articulation of differences. For Bhabha, "third spaces" can allow for an elaboration of "communal" representation, generating "new signs" of cultural difference as "sites of collaboration."[9] The concept of "difference," however, came to be trivialized. By the late 1990s it manifested itself in the art world as biennials in marginal corners of the world, somehow fulfilling the multicultural utopia of globalization.

Under the site-specific intervention model of the biennial, space came to be regarded as epistemically rich; delivering experiences or intervening in everyday processes took over from representation. Site-specific art sought to infuse social criticism into the everyday. As a moral statement, however, site-specific intervention became the limit of its own political effect. Confined within the art world, it provided contrasts and pointed at potentials, yet fell short of modifying the background of political turmoil, and even caused epistemic violence to the site in question. Site-specificity had been liberatory insofar as it had enabled the displacing of essentialized nation-state identities and had introduced the possibility of multiple identities, allegiances, and new meanings. This was prompted by what Susan Buck-Morss described as a compensatory fantasy that responded to the intensified fragmentation and alienation of an expanded market economy.[10] Thus, in the "biennialized" art world, multiculturalism, polyphony, and marginality actually came to affirm white hegemony, insofar as they expressed a moral struggle for *recognition*. Considering that fluid identities are made possible by the privilege of mobilization and thus bear a specific relationship to power, a new class division based on degrees of mobility was established: on one side, a transnational class of cultural workers with smooth access and safe passage, pondering the *elsewhere* of global processes; on the other, migrant workers and refugees crossing borders as "illegals" to survive.

Minerva Cuevas's Mejor Vida Corp offers a student card to an exhibition visitor, 2012.

Globalphobic Aesthetics and Tactical Media

With the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, the political horizon of communism as a promise, a utopia, an intellectual construct, and a political vision waned. Instead, it became a place and an event in actual history, a disastrous experiment manifested in totalitarian dictatorships.[11] As neoliberal policies were implemented and free trade agreements were signed across the world, the antiglobalization movement arose in the mid-1990s, opposing neoliberal reforms and fighting for fair trade, sustainable development, human rights, and corporate accountability. Following Brian Holmes, this movement was the first attempt at a widespread, meshworked response to the chaos of the post-'89 world system. Within this framework, anticapitalists critiqued the failures of neoliberal governance from an array of different positions: democratic sovereigntists, anti-border libertarians, and the more traditional, union-oriented Keynesians.[12] The antiglobalization movement conceived itself as a social base for criticizing corporate capitalism, globalization, and the growing political power of multinational corporations, exercised through trade agreements and deregulated financial markets.

Antiglobalization protesters converged at gatherings of world leaders, most notably in Genoa 2001, and at their own international conferences, like the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil that same year. The political subjectivity embodied by the movement was theorized by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, who, in line with May '68 post-representational politics, sought to go beyond the worker-based identity of the "proletariat" and the homogeneity inherent in the concept of "the people." They thus they coined the term "the multitude." For Hardt and Negri, the multitude is a social being formed in the no-place of capitalism. It is a decentered network of singular cells within Empire immanently producing the "common," which is also the substance of the multitude

and the condition and end of production (the *locus* of surplus value). The multitude exists within the imperial rule of biopower, a form of social control that regulates and administers life from within, extending through consciousness, bodies, and the entirety of social relations. As opposed to taking over power and the means of production, as Marxism prescribed in the twentieth century, for Hardt and Negri the task of the multitude is to democratize the common(s), exploit networks of social production with the purpose of achieving autonomy, and undermine the sovereignty of biopower. The flesh of the multitude, however, embodies a series of ambivalent conditions that can become dangerous: social production can either lead to liberation, or be caught in a new regime of exploitation and control, feeding biopower.

In parallel with the antiglobalization movement, artistic production veered toward anticapitalist politics, characterized by interdisciplinarity and the adoption of an array of countercultural positions and political affiliations, with the goal of creating autonomous zones, albeit symbolically. Examples include art collectives producing counter-informative, didactic, and symbolic interventions or actions against capitalism in the public sphere: REPOhistory, Group Material, Guerrilla Girls, WochenKlausur, Colectivo Cambalache, Las Agencias (Yomango, Prêt à Revolter, and so forth), Ne Pas Plier, Haha, the Yes Men, Superflex, Mejor Vida Corp., the Center for Land Use Interpretation, the Atlas Group, Raqs Media Collective, and Chto Delat. At the same time, tactical media emerged, with strategies like attacks on servers as digital "sit-ins." But while this form of creative activism lasted only until a globally integrated system of electronic surveillance was implemented after September 11 (as clandestinity became impossible and this form of attack was criminalized), antiglobalization art and activism have been criticized for having no political program, or for having the vague program of using imperialism against itself.[13]

For Hardt and Negri, the multitude has the desire for world equality, freedom, and a global democratic society, and it has the power to achieve them; but it has no discernible goals or agenda beyond opposing capitalism and appropriating production. The limitations of the antiglobalization agenda are illustrated by one of the actions performed within the framework of Yomango, a Spanish artistic project of social disobedience. The Yomango project involved disseminating instructions on how to appropriate goods available in globalized stores, followed by gatherings in which the goods were shared. Designed to facilitate the redistribution of the commons, the action, however, obscured the international and thus imperial division of labor and the conditions of production surrounding the goods that the participants appropriated for themselves.

Following Brian Holmes, the antiglobalization movement ultimately faltered due to the cultural consequences of

globalization, that is to say, the global success of American mass culture, which extinguished local cultures only to resurrect them in a Disneyfied form. The antiglobalization movement was also defeated by the very neoliberal program that launched it in the first place, which manifested itself as a military, moral, and religious return to order, a massive expansion of capital, and a worldwide clampdown on civil liberties.[14] In the realm of "high culture," the expansion of American mass culture went hand in hand with the globalization of Western modernism as the lingua franca of contemporary art, derived from an emptying-out of postmodernity as a critical and temporal category, and its replacement by a singular and internally differentiated global modernity.[15]

Relationality and Salvaging Art

In parallel with the antiglobalization agenda, a current in art production sought to experiment with different forms of collectivity and community beyond identity and processes of identification. Relational art of the 1990s was the catalyzer for transient communal gatherings that sought to revive social relations and counter the alienation brought about by the spectacle. This form of art, described by Nicolas Bourriaud, envisioned the audience as a community and unfolds in the realm of human interactions, elaborating meaning collectively. Instead of having a "utopian" agenda, relational artists sought to find provisional solutions in the here and now; this is why relational artworks insisted on being used rather than contemplated.[16] Another current of this participatory aesthetics was described by Claire Bishop, who put antagonism at its core in the creation of situations in which the members of a collectivity are confronted, thus drawing the limits of society's ability to fully constitute itself.[17] There were also "dialogical" practices, exemplified by the work of Suzanne Lacy, which brought together an array of different people (i.e., high school students, the police, the media) and dispositifs, repurposed for the creation of transversal spaces for dialogue.[18] In Lacy's piece *The Roof is On Fire* (1994), part of her Oakland Projects, 220 public high school students took part in unscripted conversations about family, culture, race, and education while sitting in one hundred cars on a rooftop garage, with Oakland residents listening to them. Lacy's work combines institutional and social apparatuses with educational workshops, mass media, and policy development.

We can regard relational, participatory, and dialogical art practices as experiments with new models of social and political organization. These experiments emerged in the face of the fragmentation, the destruction of social bonds, and the alienation brought about by globalization. These practices also evidenced how art has become a form of experimental activity that overlaps transversally with the world through its flight into other disciplines, dispositifs, and regimes, with the purpose of addressing sociopolitical

Suzanne Lacy, Annice Jacoby, and Chris Johnson, The Roof is On Fire, 1994. Performance, Oakland, California.

concerns. Participation, however, has its limits, as it is one of the forms of neoliberal governance and power. Following Eyal Weizman, at the horizon of participation there is collaboration, "the tendency to forcefully, or willingly, align one's actions with the aims of power, be it political, military, economic or a combination thereof."[19] The problem is that the options from which we are allowed to choose cannot themselves be challenged, and thus participation ends up forcing the subject into compliance with power. This form of power has been conceptualized by Wendy Brown as "neoliberal governance," and its focus is creating incentives to negotiate goals in common.[20]

Governance in this regard implies the creation of systems that enable administered or controlled inclusion through the fetishization of democracy. Via integration, individuation, and cooperation, democracy is reduced to "participation," yet divorced from justice. Discontent is placated.[21] Participation thus raises political and ethical dilemmas, demanding that the power relations enabling participation be urgently questioned. Participatory art, however, can be understood as an effort to experiment with ways to restore community links that have been

destroyed or threated by neoliberal policies. Similar to Jean-Luc Godard, who has posited the image as a form of "salvaging the real," W. J. T. Mitchell has posited site-specific or relational art as a form of "salvaging," digging out things, recovering ruins, and rescuing neighborhoods by involving art and collaboration between institutions and communities.[22]].]

Art is expected to "save" reality by reviving the singularity of places and persons—here we can recall the use of locality and site- or cultural-specificity in the 1990s. It is not that the world or reality has been lost, but rather that our connection to and belief in them have been destroyed, and thus need to be saved. Art can help. For Mitchell, art's new vocation is to remake the world both literally and symbolically as a way of constructing social solidarity and forms of imagining together (e.g., Pedro Reyes's repurposing of guns as musical instruments, or Theaster Gates's Dorchester Project, which involved the renovation of formerly abandoned buildings in Chicago's South Side). The role of this kind of art has been to experiment with ways to restore vital contact with the real, highlighting the current crisis of presence due to extreme alienation in the West.

The group Yapi Sanat places a protest statue in front of the Istanbul Biennale at Istanbul Modern.

Politics of the Art World and Politics of Resistance

Antiglobalization, relational, and interventionist forms of aesthetic practice exemplify the different ways in which art and politics have related to each other within politicized aesthetics. But there are other ways in which politics and aesthetics converge. There is, for instance, a politics of the art world, as exemplified by Hito Steyerl's video *Is the Museum a Battlefield?* (2013). In this video-performance, which is also a kind of documentary, Steyerl eloquently connects a shell casing found on a battlefield in Turkey to the military-museum-industrial complex, revealing the ties between the weapons industry, transnational corporations, "starchitecture," and global biennials. The genealogy of Steyerl's video can be traced back to the institutional critique of 1970s, '80s, and '90s, which aimed to elucidate the discourses behind exhibition practices and raise concerns about art sponsorship.

Taking institutional critique even further, recently there have been mobilizations that transcend the domain of art production to become direct political action within museums. For instance, last June members and allies of the group Gulf Labor temporarily occupied the Guggenheim in New York to protest the working conditions of laborers building the new Guggenheim museum in Abu Dhabi. The group Liberate Tate has also engaged in various direct actions to shed light on British Petroleum's sponsorship of the museum. Artists are less and less keen to separate creativity, exhibition venues, and the sponsors that support them. They are reluctant to give credibility to sponsors that fund art in order to whitewash their own crimes.[23] These political acts—which involve taking a position, issuing demands, and boycotting—are different from the politically engaged practices I elucidated above, which have used the art world as a strategic space for political discussion and experimentation.

Through disruptive actions, groups Gulf Labor and Liberate Tate protest against labor exploitation, the capture of public space, climate injustice, and gentrification. They denounce the art world as "a spectacular subsystem of global capitalism revolving around the display, consumption, and financialization of cultural objects for the benefit of a tiny fraction of humanity, the 1%."[24] Artists at the 2015 Istanbul Biennial organized a "productive disruption" to highlight the escalation of violence in Turkey, demanding a return to peace negotiations between the Turkish government and

the Kurdish PKK.[25] At the 2015 Venice Biennale, artists issued a "Letter for Palestine" that called attention to the campaign for the academic and cultural boycott of Israel.[26] Also expressing solidarity with Palestine, at the 2014 São Paulo Biennial 176 of 199 participating artists signed an open letter opposing Israeli "cultural sponsorship" of the event. The curators supported the letter, and in response the Fundação Bienal de São Paulo agreed to "clearly dissociate" Israeli funding from the overall sponsorship of the exhibition.[27] Artists are now raising awareness about the epistemic and physical violence committed in sites of art production *elsewhere*. They are trying to restore contact with the political real by investigating and denouncing labor exploitation and new forms of enslavement: the figure of the worker as a site for politicization is returning to the fore.

Creating assemblages that link actors from the art world to projects oriented toward political action, these actors seek to create subjectivities and terrain for political acts by locating power struggles (instances of subjectivation), and are sometimes linked to social and political movements, autonomous collectives, and alternative media. Following Gregory Sholette, however, these forms of art tend to be characterized by the problematic absence of any ideological counternarrative to capitalism and by the belief (ever diminishing) that "cultural producers can bring something extraordinary to the underprivileged masses via the benefits of serious art."[28] Many of these practices described so far do not constitute political acts in themselves: images and symbolic gestures have served as back-ups to help activists gain political influence and visibility. While art and the art world have indisputably served as a self-reflexive site, and elucidated on global processes of oppression and expropriation, experimental laboratories or platforms for communal organization, collective therapies, speculative politics, yet as vehicles for visibility, politicized aesthetics these formats are not in and of themselves, a means to resist. Moreover, we must consider that critiques of capitalism need a social base, as well as forms of organization to resist against the neoliberal destruction of forms ways of life and common experiences. We must also take into account that nowadays, power is embedded in everyday objects and environments, that power is the order of things itself: it is not only infrastructure, but the way in which it works, is controlled, and built.[29] These forms of power make the nation-state deaf to any demands we might make of it. The nation-state today legitimizes itself not through democratic processes, but by neutralizing citizen demands through governmentality, and by governing its populations differentially, as we will see in the following part of this essay.

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1
Jodi Dean, "Politics without Politics," *Parallax* 15.3 (2009): 20–36.

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See Comité Invisible, *A nos amis* (Paris: La fabrique, 2014), 72–83.

3
These were some of the questions posed at the Sharjah March Meeting in May 2015.

4
See Angela Y. Davis, *Mujeres, raza y clase* (Madrid: AKAL, 2004), 157–159.

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See Maurizio Lazzarato, "From Knowledge to Belief, from Critique to the Production of Subjectivity," *Transversal*, April 2008 http://eipcp.net/transversal /0808/lazzarato/en

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See Irmgard Emmelhainz, "From From Third Worldism to Empire: Jean-Luc Godard and the Palestine Question," *Third Text* 23.100 (Fall 2009): 649–656.

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See Stuart Hall, "Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities," *Culture, Globalization and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representations of Identity* , ed. A nthony D. King (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 43.

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Homi Bhabha, "Frontlines/Borderposts," in *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question* , ed. Angelika Bammer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 269.

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Susan Buck-Morss, *Thinking Past Terror: Islamism and Critical Theory on the Left* (London: Verso, 2003), 64.

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See Boris Groys, "The Post-Communist Condition" http:/ /becoming-former.tumblr.com/p ost/262880375/the-post-commu nist-condition-boris-groys-the

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Brian Holmes, "Continental Drift: Activist Research, From Geopolitics to Geopoetics," *framework X ephemera* 5.X (2005): 741.

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See Gregory Sholette, "Art Out of Joint: Artists' Activism Before and After the Cultural Turn," *The GULF: High Culture/Hard Labor* , ed. Andrew Ross (New York: OR Books, 2015), 80.

14
Holmes, "Continental Drift," 741.

15
See Peter Osborne, "The Postconsptual Condition or, the Cultural Logic of High Capitalism Today," *Radical Philosophy* 184 (March-April 2014): 19. This singular modernity is akin to what Nicolas Bourriaud termed the "Altermodern" in his *Altermodern* (London: Tate Publishing, 2009).

16
See Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October* 110 (Fall 2004): 51–79.

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As in Santiago Sierra's *confrontations* or in Thomas Hirschhorn's *Bataille Monument* (2002), which was part of Documenta 11. Ibid.

18
See Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004).

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Eyal Weizman, "The Paradox of Participation," introduction to Markus Miessen, *The Nightmare of Participation* (Frankfurt: Sternberg Press, 2011), 9.

20
Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (New York: Zone Books, 2015),

21
Ibid., 129.

22
Mitchell delivered these remarks in a lecture at the 2015 Sharjah March Meeting. The voice-over in Godard's *Histoire(s) du cinema* (1998) says the following *:* "Même s'il est bondé d'égratignures au point de ne plus être utilisable, un petit rectangle de 35 millimètres est capable de sauver l'honneur de la réalité toute entière" [Even fatally scratched, a small rectangle of 35 millimeters is capable of saving the honor of the whole of reality

23
See Global Ultra Luxury Faction (G.U.L.F.), "On Direct Action: An Address to Cultural Workers,"in *The GULF* , 134.

24
"Global Ultra Luxury Faction (G.U.L.F.) Manifesto," June 25, 2015 http://supercommunity.e-flu x.com/texts/on-direct-action-an-a ddress-to-cultural-workers/

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See "Artists at Istanbul Biennial plan 'Productive disruption' to demand resumption of peace talks," *e-flux conversations*, September 1, 2015 http://convers ations.e-flux.com/t/artists-at-ista nbul-biennial-plan-productive-disr uption-to-demand-resumption-of- peace-talks-with-kurds/2375

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See Guy Mannes-Abbott, "The Emergent Wave of Artworld Activism," *The GULF*, 98.

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Sholette, "Art Out of Joint," 83.

29
Comité Invisible, *A nos amis*, 84–86.

Jonas Staal

IDEOLOGY = FORM

1. We Are All Terrorists Here

A young cat is curling around the legs of Diyar Hesso—filmmaker, teacher, and one of the main organizers of the Rojava Film Commune in the city of Derbisiye, in the Canton of Cezıre.[1] As I watch the animal play, I hear Hesso say, "He's Terrorist." I look up confused. "His name," Hesso explains, "the name of the cat is Terrorist." And with a smile, "Because we're all terrorists here."[2]

"Here" is the autonomous region of Rojava (West-Kurdistan), located in what many will know as northern Syria. In 2011, Kurdish revolutionaries, in alliance with Arabs, Assyrians, and other peoples from the region, declared Rojava independent from the Assad regime and established a system that they refer to as "democratic confederalism," or *stateless democracy*.[3] This practice of democracy without the state is structured by a collectively written social contract that defines the key principles of the revolution: self-governance, gender equality, the right to self-defense, and a communal economy.[4] Through communes, cooperatives, and councils, the performance of stateless democracy has now taken shape over three years. Its primary aim is the development of a system of thought and political practice that structurally undermines the monopolization of power. These decentralized structures are referred to as the "Democratic Self-Administration of Rojava," which comprises the total assemblage of self-governing political entities from this autonomous region.[5]

Teacher Raperin Derik leads an ideological training for local women organizers of Yekitiya Star in Derık, Cezıre Canton, in the autonomous region of Rojava, 2014. Photo: Jonas Staal.

I have previously written about the practice of stateless democracy in the context of the Rojava revolution, and here I will engage two related concepts: the *form* and the

performance of stateless democracy.[6] The nation-state is a structure that demands of its subjects a specific self-consciousness as "citizens." Abiding by the monopoly of power enforced by the state takes the form of a series of performative acts that are demanded of citizens—from paying taxes to voting—through which the form and legitimacy of the state is strengthened. As such, one could argue, the form of the state embodies a *script*. Those that perform this script are granted a certain privilege for their service in maintaining the state's legitimacy. This is different in the case of those who are deemed irrelevant as potential citizens (undocumented migrants, refugees, and so forth) or who attempt to challenge, alter, or rewrite the scripts through which the *stage* we call the state directs us (social movements, whistleblowers, liberation organizations, i.e. "terrorists," and so forth). In the case of stateless democracy, the form of the nation-state is rejected and replaced by a performance based on an ideology of self-governance at all levels of society. This performance brings about a proliferation of new forms, rather than being subjected to a single given one. The success of stateless democracy relies on what the Kurdish revolutionaries refer to as the "mentality" of the individuals constituting the communal organizations that perform self-governance at the base; one could also say that it concerns the *state* we are in—both literally in terms of the state as a structure of governance, and metaphorically in terms of our "state of mind." The manner in which the ideology of stateless democracy is internalized defines whether or not its performance can be successful.

In this light, Hesso's joke—"We're all terrorists here"—rings very true. We are not talking about terrorists in the sense of the sheer physical violence perpetuated by the Islamic State on whoever does not abide by its brutal Saudi-exported and US-armed Wahhabi doctrines, but rather people who are terrorists by default, because the Kurdish revolutionaries have separated themselves from the form of the state as such.[7] While an imperialist state such as the US employs non-state or extraterritorial entities such as drones, extralegal prisons, and proxy armies (out of which the Islamic State emerged), this love for extraterritoriality embodies a mere wish to expand the state, rather than a liberation from it. Unsurprisingly, the imaginary of the Islamic State—the "rogue" proxy-child of foreign intervention and financing—cannot but strive for yet another state. While its rhetoric focuses on the establishment of a worldwide caliphate, recently leaked documents, such as those that became known as the "ISIS Papers," show a rigid but rather conventional blueprint for a new nation-state.[8] According to Dilar Dirik, representative of the Kurdish Women's Movement, non-state entities that truly "live without approval" are of a different kind, as they are subjects engaged in the terrifying process of emancipation—a rejection of old forms in an attempt to perform new ones.[9] The notion of "changing mentality" names that terrifying process, for we are not merely speaking of a changing of guards from Assad's soldiers to Kurdish defense forces, but of a

rejection of the internalized guards and the oppression the old regime represented within the individual performer. Non-state entities that change mentality move beyond the usual script imposed upon them through the form of the nation-state. Consequently, they live a dual form of terror: the terror of liberation, and the state-terror that is employed to punish those that engage in this process.[10] For regimes such as Erdoğan's in Turkey, the true terrorists are those that Hesso describes: the humans and cats that decide to go off-stage—or better, *off-state*—altogether.[11]] that they have been offering to Isis, that blood-stained 'caliphate' would long since have collapsed—and arguably, the Paris attacks may never have happened." David Graeber, "Turkey could cut off Islamic State's supply lines. So why doesn't it?," *The Guardian*, November 18, 2015] The fourth wall of the geopolitical theater that the Kurds are dismantling consists of performing the fact that life beyond the state is possible, even though no one yet knows exactly which form this life will take.

What we can say with regard to the new forms that the Rojava Revolution has developed so far is that the assemblage of radical institutions gathered in the Democratic Self-Administration of Rojava is essentially the "form"—or the trans*form*ative base—of stateless democracy. The formation is transformative in that its decentralized, conflicting, and complex structures are hard to unify even in thought. As such, they interrogate the very idea of what the form of a nation, people, or community is supposed to entail in terms of a homogeneous entity. The heterogeneous, self-assessing nature of power performed through the disciplined practice of stateless democracy attempts to undermine any monopolization of power by all possible means. While "discipline" might be considered a problematic term for some, for the Rojava revolutionaries the capacity to collectively govern goes hand in hand with the governance of the self. This governance no longer takes place through an external actor—the "cop inside our head," in this case the former Assad regime—but through an attempt to define oneself as both an actor in and cocreator of the collective script entitled stateless democracy: a script that is performed off-state and thus, inevitably, a script that has to be performed as a terrorist.

2. Revolutionary Realism according to the Rojava Film Commune

The term "discipline" in this context can be understood in two ways: discipline in terms of a capacity to self-regulate one's performance in order to develop the common script of stateless democracy; but also discipline in terms of one's field of expertise. How, in this regard, does the discipline of performing stateless democracy relate to the discipline of form, the discipline of art?[12] To answer this

Filmmaker and teacher Khwshman Qado leads a teaching session at the Rojava film Commune in Derbisiye, Cezıre Canton, in the autonomous region of Rojava, 2015. Photo: Ruben Hamelink.

question, I will return to Diyar Hesso of the Rojava Film Commune. When I asked him about the specific relation of the nation-state to the form of art, he explained:

If you look at the history of art from the perspective of statehood, we see the emergence of an art that I would call "unrealistic." With that I mean that we see ourselves faced with an art that is consciously separated from societal developments, what is called "art for art's sake." In the context of the Rojava revolution we aim to develop a realistic art that is of a specific use, one could say a "useful art."[13]

With this notion of "realism," Hesso does not refer to a figurative realism, an art that derives from the mimicry of natural appearances. Rather, Hesso speaks of a *revolutionary realism*, meaning the kind of reality that becomes possible through a revolutionary practice but is not yet present. Revolutionary realism means that we reject the scripts that define what is realistic and what is utopian, what is proper citizenship and what is a terrorist act. Revolutionary realism focuses on shaping new possible realities once we have rejected the forms that structure our current performance, in this case specifically controlled within the stage of the nation-state.[14]

The question, from one artist to another, is how the transformative practice of stateless democracy and the new forms of self-assessing power that it tries to establish relate to the morphology of art. With the term "morphology," originally derived from biology, I refer here to what I believe defines the concept of art: the knowledge and practice of visual literacy.

Visual literary means our capacity to "read" form, but also to create form. For example, one can look at the depiction in a painting (it shows Marat in a bath after having been stabbed by a political opponent), but one can also read its construction, the anatomy of its form: its materiality, its accumulated layers of paint resulting from a series of performative acts—brushstrokes. The morphology of art contains at least as much information as a description of the image that a given artwork depicts.[15]

But this analysis and understanding of morphology is not limited to the confines of a painting or museum; one could, for example, engage in a morphological analysis of a parliament. If we would limit ourselves to a descriptive understanding of what a parliament depicts, we learn that it is a place where politicians and the government assemble. A morphological reading of a parliament, on the other hand, will tell us more: it shows us the parliament as an arena, as a theatrical space, where power is performed both through a specific spatial configuration, a specific

Members of the Rojava Film Commune mobilize workers in the city of Amude, Cezîre Canton, in the autonomous region of Rojava, to attend the screening of the 1921 film The Kid by and with Charlie Chaplin, 2015. Photo: Rojava Film Commune

number of actors, a composition of symbols, as well as an overall choreography. From a descriptive perspective, it is only of relative importance whether the parliament is circular, square, or triangular—the only thing that is important is that it's a parliament, and functions as such: people assemble, debate, vote, and this has a certain impact on the external world. From a morphological perspective—from a perspective that reads into the form of the parliament—we understand that a square parliament creates a different spatial and social dynamic than a circle, to the point that the form and choreography of the assembly affect the outcome: an open-air parliament might produce a radically different outcome than a covered one; a parliament with benches might produce a radically different outcome than a parliament with chairs.[16] Each spatial configuration, each object, each choreography inscribes a set of ideas into the performance of its actors. So while the nation-state is a construct that demands a specific performance, so do the shapes and forms through which its power is articulated and inscribed upon those speaking in its name. Ideology, in other words, has a material reality, which one can understand through morphology: through art.[17] The discipline of the revolutionary practice of stateless democracy thus also affects the possibilities of the discipline of art to engage new, yet unscripted morphologies.

Upon a superficial reading there might appear to be a relation between the ideal of "revolutionary realism" as derived from Hesso's words, and what in the Stalinist era of the Soviet Union became known as "socialist realism." In his "Speech to the Congress of Soviet Writers," cultural minister Andrei Zhdanov stated that "in our country the main heroes of works of literature are the active builders of a new life—working men and women, men and women collective farmers, Party members, business managers, engineers, members of the Young Communist League, Pioneers." Zhdanov explained that the task of the artist

was "knowing life, so as to be able to depict it truthfully in works of art, not to depict it in a dead, scholastic way, not simply as 'objective reality,' but to depict reality in its revolutionary development."[18] Art historian Boris Groys explains that this notion of "realism" in "socialist realism" had indeed little to do with the idea of an accurate representation of objective reality, but was rather "oriented to that which has not yet come into being but which should be created."[19]

The main difference between the two realisms is located in the collective dedication to the *possibilities* of a revolution (revolutionary realism) on the one hand, and the brutal singular enforcement of a decision of what a revolution is *dictated* to be (socialist realism) on the other. Socialist realism relies on the idea that the crystallization of the will of the proletariat finds its absolute form in the creation of a "socialist" state with a single author, in this case Stalin: the tragic role of socialist realism in that context is to depict a future society which, by definition, cannot be realized though the schizophrenic and violent state machinery developed around this single leader. Revolutionary realism, on the other hand, engages with an ideal of politics in which power is in a continuous process of self-assessment: its "realism"—in its most ideal outcome—is one that engages the new formations that come as a result of the collective, common performance of stateless democracy. Echoing the famous '68 dictum "Be realistic, demand the impossible," Hesso thus refutes the idea that realism is defined by what is currently present rather than by what is possible:

> We as the Rojava Film Commune try to represent the dreams and imaginary of this revolution. We believe in an art that connects the historical culture of society with a new revolutionary morality and politics. Our cause is society's cause; but not the society that is already present, the society that we're constructing as we speak.[20]

As a consequence, the transformative base of the practice of stateless democracy affects the conditions of artistic practice. The result is a highly speculative form of revolutionary realism: a formation of art based on the "imaginary and dreams" that are already present, albeit not in a fixed form, but in a process of permanent transformation. As such, the practice of stateless democracy reintroduces, both in politics and in art, the idea of a permanent revolution of *form*.

3. Ideology Materialized

When Rojava was declared autonomous and announced its commitment to stateless democracy, this changed the whole infrastructure of the region, as the material

remnants of Assad's regime were suddenly declared stateless—or, following Hesso's joke: these infrastructures became "terrorist"; their existing morphology began to mutate.

What used to be the northern region of Syria and is now Rojava consists of many government buildings, monuments, and parliaments built by the former regime. But with the Rojava revolutionaries' rejection of the nation-state paradigm, they also lost the overall form that maintained their unity. Suddenly, the government buildings, monuments, and parliaments were left formless. That is to say, for those non-state subjects that embody the revolutionary cadre of the autonomous region, these infrastructures had abdicated their previous construction of power. They were no longer acknowledged in their authority, as the form of the nation-state as such was no longer recognized. The practice of stateless democracy stripped government buildings of their power; it reduced public monuments to isolated islands no longer capable of enforcing their historical narratives; and it handed over the exclusive space of the parliament to communal councils and assemblies. Ideology changed the nature and meaning of form, even though this is not yet the same as creating new forms in the way that Hesso and the Rojava Film Commune are investing in a transformative culture that takes the imaginaries of the revolution as its point of departure.

Drawing of the new public parliament and surrounding park in the city of Derik, Cezîre Canton, in the autonomous region of Rojava, designed by the Democratic Self-Administration of Rojava in conjunction with New World Summit, 2015.

So what kind of morphology can we observe emerging? In many ways, Rojava can be seen as a gigantic squat. It's a squatted country, which, due to the ideological perseverance of the Kurdish revolutionaries, has begun to alter the meaning of the remnants of the nation-state that were left behind. When I visited the region for the first time

in 2014 with my organization, the New World Summit, we were hosted by Amina Osse, the minister of foreign affairs for the Cezîre Canton, and Sheruan Hassan, the international representative of the Democratic Union Party (PYD). They were the ones who introduced my organization to the altered and new institutions that the Democratic Self-Administration was constructing all over the region.[21] Old monuments portraying Assad and his father were appropriated into monuments for martyrs and thinkers of the new revolution; old military buildings now house schools or centers for the ideological training of the self-organized protection units of the region; municipal parliaments are now occupied by communes and cooperatives that have begun to govern their own neighborhoods, villages, and cities. Democracy had become liberated from the nation-state, although the practice of stateless democracy still struggles to reshape the old remnants of the regime to benefit revolutionary transformation.

Our New World Summit has been working with the revolutionary Kurdish movement since 2012. Its representatives were among the first contributors to the temporary parliaments that our organization developed in theaters, art institutions, and public spaces in Berlin, Leiden, Kochi, and Brussels.[22] As an artistic and political organization, our idea has been to reclaim the concept of the parliament as a temporary and public space, where we invite those dealing with parliamentary exclusion, such as blacklisted and stateless political organizations, to appear. Over the course of two years, our parliaments have hosted more than thirty organizations: representatives of liberation movements from the Basque Country, Catalonia, Kurdistan, Azawad, Ogadenia, Oromia, Tamil Eelam, the Philippines, West Papua, and East Turkestan. But here, in Rojava, our imaginary of a stateless parliament was no longer an object of speculation: in Rojava, all parliaments are stateless .

When Amina Osse and Sheruan Hassan suggested that we organize one of the New World Summit parliaments in Rojava, a fundamental separation between the imaginary of art and the imaginary of politics—as Hesso had named it—was overcome. The revolutionary imaginary of politics reached out to that of the arts. Ever since, my organization has worked with the Democratic Self-Administration of Rojava to develop a new, public parliament: a stateless parliament for a stateless democracy. Its construction is an attempt to engage what Hesso described as the useful art of revolutionary realism: a parliament that both expresses a political vision, but at the same time serves as a tool to bring this vision into practice.

What the Democratic Administration of Rojava in collaboration with the New World Summit has begun to construct is essentially an architecture that connects the material reality of the creation of a space with the aim of transforming mentalities along the lines of the practice of stateless democracy—transforming the state not just in

terms of its infrastructure, but also in terms of the specific "state of mind" that the performance of the nation-state implies. Rather than occupying an existing building, we began to construct a public parliament that from beginning to end was shaped by the ideological propositions of stateless democracy. We approached the notion of ideology as a material form; we approached ideology as a morphology.

For example, Rojava claims to be recuperating democracy's origins as found in the form of the *agora* (assembly) of ancient Greece, the space where the theater of politics began. The fact that Rojava's parliament is designed as a public space is a result of the declaration of Rojava's stateless democracy, which by definition turned all parliaments into public, communal domains. The circular shape of the parliament derives from the shape of the assembly and its attempt to dislocate power from a clear center and instead engage in an egalitarian social composition in which the distance between people is equalized. The circular arches represent the foundational pillars of the practice of stateless democracy, each carrying one of the key concepts of the collectively written social contract that forms the basis of the autonomous Rojava region. The trilingual representation of words on the arches, such as "Confederalism," "Gender Equality," and "Communalism," is an expression of the cultural diversity of the region; the Democratic Self-Administration always communicates simultaneously in Assyrian, Arabic, and Kurdish. The large canvasses that cover the roof of the parliament are hand-painted fragments of flags representing organizations that play a key role in the Democratic Self-Administration, together giving shape to a new confederate whole. Revolutionary practice and a revolutionary imaginary created the ideological design of the parliament; its morphology is ideology materialized.

Construction of the new public parliament and surrounding park in the city of Derık, Cezîre Canton, in the autonomous region of Rojava in early December, 2015. Photo: Ruben Hamelink/New World Summit.

The Constructivist aesthetics of the parliament engage the principle of a permanent self-interrogation of power in the practice of stateless democracy: the spherical shape of the parliament is no perfect circle; it does not commemorate a successful revolution of the past, but one that is enacted continuously in the present. The pillars of the parliament and the principles they represent are not necessarily in unity; they seek for connections, and in the process often stand in public conflict with one another. The decentralized placement of the arches that form the parliament as a whole further strengthens this sense of a parliament that is in *permanent construction*, even when it is finished.[23] The permanent construction of the public parliament thus also aims at a permanent aesthetic and ideological self-interrogation, a parliament in a state of self-critique: a hybrid architectural manifesto that can only be completed through the ongoing engagement of its users. This ideal of permanent construction relates directly to the self-assessing structures of power employed by the Rojava revolutionaries: its morphology thus cannot but engage these same principles in the domain of aesthetics.

The parliament, as the Democratic Self-Administration and the New World Summit intend it to be, is ideology materialized. Not just as a mere form, but as a form to be performed, and a performance aimed at self-interrogation and transformation. Rojava has shown that revolution is first of all a performance of ideology. The Rojava revolution is not one that hopes for a different world in an unknown future when statehood is achieved and utopia has developed properly and linearly, as our revolutionary textbooks have taught us. Rather, it is revolution as a painstakingly won process of building a new society through a change of mentality and a change of performance: through a change of form. The Rojava revolution proposes a different performance of politics, and as such, also a different performance of art.

4. Ideology = Form

The evental moment of the Rojava revolution has liberated the performance of democracy from the construct of the nation-state. Rather than performance following the prescribed scripts of the state, the revolutionary break from old oppressors and masters allows for ideology to be performed differently, to take a different form. Concepts of self-governance, long in the making through decades of guerrilla struggles in the mountains of Bakûr, are liberated from their bondage to a structure of governance that was never their own.

Revolutionary realism—the one and only true realism—thrives, and the formula that structures the paradigm of a new world is spelled as follows: Ideology = Form.

Murals in a destroyed Kurdish cultural center in the city of Kobanê, in the autonomous region of Rojava, have been smeared over by Islamic State militants. The mural in the center of the image depicting a sun and a pen mentions bears the name "Confederation of Kurdish Students" in Kurdish and Arabic; the graffiti by Islamic State militants on the left states "There is no god but God. Muhammad is the messenger of God" in Arabic, 2015. Photo: Jonas Staal.

… Out of old monuments, new shapes grow: the images of father and son Assad disappear, and a multiplicity of faces emerge, those of the martyrs of the Rojava revolution. A swarm of fighter-portraits consuming the pedestals one piece at the time …

… In Kobanê, for months the epicenter of the struggle between the Kurdish revolutionaries and the Islamic State, reconstruction is in full swing. Despite Erdoğan's refusal to allow for a humanitarian corridor, soberly built foundations of new houses have emerged all over. Just one neighborhood remains in ruins. No one touches a single stone or bombshell there: the ruins have been declared a monument—an enormous, permanent, and open scar in the heart of the city …

… On the first floor of a bombed cultural center, where children play with half-melted guns, a series of murals is still visible. Despite the bullet holes and the black graffiti of Islamic State militias smeared on the walls, the depictions of traditional Kurdish instruments and covers of books by local poets have remained …

… A few streets from the bombed cultural center, a new one has opened. A sharply dressed teacher sits in the garden with his students, playing traditional folk songs. Songs of defiance, performed in defiance. Stubborn forms that will be performed, again and again, despite everything, against everything, for resistance is life … [24]

… During a conference, a Kurdish party leader lectures in Arabic. While having fought for the right to speak Kurdish, now she decides not to: she was a former minority, now a majority; her Arab listeners were a majority, now a minority. She could perform power, but decides not to …

… A former guerrilla fighter is now a minister. She has been offered a private car and driver; she is offered the services of waiters and cooks; she is offered a bodyguard and bulletproof glass. Instead, she does the dishes for her assistant, she cooks for her team, she walks home alone. She performs differently …

… In Rojava, cats silently move through ruins and new building sites; they stand guard with fighters and rest with artists. Even the cats have changed form; even cats are terrorists here.

X

Jonas Staal is a visual artist whose work deals with the relation between art, propaganda, and democracy. He is the founder of the artistic and political organization New World Summit, which develops parliaments for organizations excluded from democracy, and the New World Academy (together with BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht), which invites artists and students to work together with organizations invested in emancipatory politics. He is also the initiator of the Ideological Guide to the Venice Biennale, a free smartphone app that provides insight on the social, political, economic and overall ideological backgrounds of every pavilion in the 2013 biennale. His recent publication *Stateless Democracy* (with Renée In der Maur and Dilar Dirik), deals with the cultural and political revolution in Rojava (northern-Syria), and can be download here () Staal is currently working on his PhD on Art and Propaganda in the twenty-first Century at the PhDArts program of the University of Leiden, The Netherlands.

1
An undated press release from the Rojava Film Commune, founded in 2015, states: "The most valuable outcomes of the cinema will be delivered to the peoples of Rojava in their own languages. We shall not allow the cinema to be simplified to become an industrial tool, or a consumable and exhaustible object. The squares of our villages will become our culture and art centers. Our factories and our restaurants will become cinema halls. Our vibrant streets will be our films sets."

2
Interview conducted with Diyar Hesso at the Rojava Film Commune, Derbisiye on October 30, 2015.

3
See *Stateless Democracy*, eds. Dilar Dirik, Renée In der Maur, Jonas Staal (Utrecht: BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, 2015).

4
"Social Contract," in ibid., 131–58.

5
My own research in the autonomous Rojava region taught me the following: The foundation of the practice of stateless democracy is located in the commune , of which there are dozens in every small city. The city municipality has the responsibility to meet the communes' infrastructural demands, but cannot enforce its own will upon the communes. For the cantonal council—three in total, from the east to the west of Rojava: Afrin, Kobanê, and Cezîre—the political task is that of coordination and international mediation on behalf of the communes and municipal councils. Finally, the trans-cantonal supreme council connects the three cantons and has the task of facilitating communication within this mosaic of political entities.

6
Jonas Staal, "To Make a World, Part III: Stateless Democracy," *e-flux journal* 63 (March 2015) htt ps://www.e-flux.com/journal/63/ 60907/to-make-a-world-part-iii-st ateless-democracy/ .

7
"Turkey's role has been different but no less significant than Saudi Arabia's in aiding ISIS and other jihadi groups. Its most important action has been to keep open its 560-mile border with Syria. This gave ISIS, al-Nusra, and other opposition groups a safe rear base from which to bring in men and weapons ... Most foreign jihadis have crossed Turkey on their way to Syria and Iraq ... Turkey ... sees the advantages of ISIS weakening Assad and the Syrian Kurds." Patrick Cockburn, *The Rise of the Islamic State: ISIS and the New Sunni Revolution* (New York: Verso, 2015), 36–7.

8
"The document—written as a foundation text to train 'cadres of administrators' in the months after Isis's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, declared a 'caliphate' in Iraq and Syria on 28 June 2014—sketches out how to organise government departments including education, natural resources, industry, foreign relations, public relations and military camps." Shiv Malik, "The Isis papers: leaked documents show how Isis is building its state," *The Guardian*, December 7, 2015 http://www.th eguardian.com/world/2015/dec/ 07/leaked-isis-document-reveals- plan-building-state-syria/ .

9
Dilar Dirik interviewed by Jonas Staal, "Living Without Approval," in Dirik et al., *Stateless Democracy,* 48.

10
I write this in line with a series of conversations with writer Vincent W. J. van Gerven Oei on the subject of "progressive terrorism." With this term we do not refer to what is generally considered "terrorism" in terms of the violence of non-state actors, which, as we discussed, can differ from being the (necessary) result of a liberation struggle (e.g., the PKK) or embody a mere oppressive mimicry of the violence of the state (e.g., Islamic State). With "progressive terrorism" we specifically relate to a *terror of form,* meaning the existence or emergence of forms that existing structures—such as that of the state—cannot contain, and thus must refer to as "terrorism." For example, the Polish writer Witold Gombrowicz—an essential reference for both Van Gerven Oei and me—in many ways dedicated his lifework to confronting the internal formlessness of any structure of governance, thought, or sexuality: the terror of form in Gombrowicz's work embodies the necessity to recognize one's own authorship in confronting this essential formlessness, rejecting any glorification of form as "natural" or "authentic" in its supposed "mature" authority. "Living without authority" in that regard interrelates with Dilar Dirik's definition of autonomy as "Living without approval": both name the terror and necessity of liberation.

11
Especially from the perspective of Turkish President Erdoğan, the existence of the autonomous Rojava region represents a threat to his increasingly dictatorial policies. The rise of the progressive Democratic People's Party (HDP), which unites both progressive Turks and the Kurdish movement, and which managed to pass the high electoral threshold in the last two elections, has increased the regime's fear that Rojava will attempt to unite with Bakûr, the northern part of Kurdistan, which Erdoğan considers to be southeastern Turkey. Erdoğan's regime even tolerated the fundamentalist Islamic State's use of its borders in order to get rid of the Kurdish autonomists, and Turkey's strong position in the NATO alliance has been exploited by all possible means in order to gain international support to renew the war against the PKK and block humanitarian corridors or even economic exchange with the Rojava region. A recent article by anthropologist David Graeber gives a clear overview of Erdoğan's use of the Islamic State for his own purposes: "Had Turkey placed the same kind of absolute blockade on Isis territories as they did on Kurdish-held parts of Syria, let alone shown the same sort of 'benign neglect' towards the PKK and YPG [the Kurdish militant organizations from North and West Kurdistan

12
In a private conversation on October 17, 2015, in the city hotel of Derîk, Amina Osse, the minister of foreign affairs for the Cezîre Canton, elaborated on what she referred to as "democratic discipline." With this term she named not the role of the state in enforcing democracy upon its subjects, but rather the necessary moral and ethical compass of an individual in bringing about the collective performance of stateless democracy. In a democracy without the state, the capacity to outsource responsibility to an external structure of governance disappears, meaning that we essentially "self-govern": both in relation to our individual role in the performance of stateless democracy, and that of the community in which we partake. This is effectively summarized by the political group TATORT in their assessment of the practice of stateless democracy in Northern Kurdistan, when they say, "Popular participation generates a politicization of society, in which each person may become an autonomous political actor." See TATORT Kurdistan, *Democratic Autonomy in North Kurdistan* (Porsgrunn: New Compass, 2013), 21.

13
Interview conducted with Diyar Hesso in the Rojava Film Commune, Derbisiye on October 30, 2015. One will note how Hesso's introduction of the notion of "useful art" resonates with what artist Tania Bruguera has termed "Arte Util *,"* following her creation of the *Arte Útil Association* in 2011: "Arte Util aims to transform some aspects of society through the implementation of art, transcending symbolic representation or metaphor and proposing with their activity some solutions for deficits in reality ... Arte Util practices try to address the levels of disparities of engagement between informed audiences and the general public, as well as the historical gap between the language used in what is considered avant-garde and the language of urgent politics, science and other disciplines." Tania Bruguera, "Glossary," https://www.taniabru guera.com/category/glossary/glo ssary-glossary/ . Bruguera's frequent collaborator, theorist Stephen Wright, elaborates further that "usership ... names not just a form of opportunity-dependent relationality, but a self-regulating mode of engagement and operation. Which makes usership itself a potentially powerful tool. In the same way that usership is all about repurposing available ways and means without seeking to possess them, it can itself be repurposed as a mode of leverage, a fulcrum, a shifter, and as such, a game-changer." Stephen Wright, *Toward a Lexicon of Usership* (Eindhoven: Van Abbemuseum, 2013), 68.

14
In the process of editing this text, Brian Kuan Wood noted in this regard that "'realization' here is a

key term alongside realism when it comes to form. To be realist assumes a position with regard to the real, where to realize is to alter the status of the real." Personal e-mail exchange, December 2015.

15
Whereas the term "morphology" today has significance in domains as different as linguistics, biology, and mathematics, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe is considered to have defined the term in relation to the study of plants, rejecting examinations of plant organisms in the tradition of Linnaean taxonomy: "The close proximity of Goethe's perception of art and his study of nature suggests that the choice of the same methods for both fields is based on similar intentions. In several essays, Goethe wrote about his aims as a scientist … His intensive visual examination of natural phenomena, his efforts to objectify empirical observations, to use comparisons, and to establish series of observations, formed the basis for his project of morphology. Goethe defined morphology as 'the science of form (*Gestalt*), formation (*Bildung*) and transformation (*Umbildung*) of organic bodies.' Morphology was based on careful examination of forms and their modifications under different external circumstances, as well as on intuition in order to find archetypes (*Typen, Urphänomene*) and fundamental rules of their (trans)formation." Johannes Grave, "Ideal and History: Johann Wolfgang Goethe's Collection of Prints and Drawings," *Artibus et Historiae* 27.53 (2006): 183.

16
A relevant study in this regard was developed by architect Francis Cape, who analyzed the role of the bench in different communalist groups in the United States. The "utopian bench" in his analysis becomes the visual and ideological foundation for communalist politics: the surface on which we organize and articulate what a community is, should or could be. Francis Cape, *We Sit Together: Utopian Benches from the Shakers to the Separatists of Zoar* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2013)

17
My first attempt to define the practice of art in terms of a morphology was published as "Een wereld maken," *Metropolis*

M 1 (2015).

18
Andrei Zhdanov, "Speech to the Congress of Soviet Writers," *Art in Theory 1900–1990,* eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell), 420.

19
Boris Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship and Beyond* (New York: Verso, 2011), 24.

20
Interview conducted with Diyar Hesso in the Rojava Film Commune, Derbisiye on October 30, 2015.

21
It is important to name the variety of political parties that are, like the PYD, united in the Movement for a Democratic Society (Tev-Dem): an association of political parties and grassroots movements from all over the region. Within the Tev-Dem coalition, women's organizations are also prominently present, such as Yekitiya Star, which is part of the larger Kurdish Women's Movement and chooses its own women representatives and runs autonomous cooperatives and communes. Each of these organizations also runs its own academies, such as the Tev-Dem and PYD academies, but also the Star Women's Academy, where *jineology* (the sc ience of women) is taught. Throughout the Rojava region, the cultural dimension of the revolution is shaped by the Movement for a Democratic Art and Culture network (Tev-Çand), which consists of cultural institutions in each village and city that organize theater and musical performances, but also exhibitions and education for children and adolescents—the Rojava Film Commune being one of them.

22
The main contributors from the Kurdish revolutionary movement to the New World Summit have been Rojda Yildirim and Dilar Dirik of the Kurdish Women's Movement, Adem Uzun of the Kurdish National Congress (KNK), *Dilşah Osman* of the Kurdish Democratic Society Movement in Europe (KCD-E), and *Havin Guneşer* of the International Initiative. See the New World Summit video channel for their lectures https://www.youtube.co m/user/NewWorldSummit/featur

ed .

23
Architect Paul Kuipers, a member of the New World Summit, and myself have based a lot of our collaborative work on Russian Constructivist art and architecture, but we have also taken a lot of influence from Brazilian architects: of course Niemeyer, Lucio Costa, and Burle Marx, but even more Lina Bo Bardi (1914–1992), who further translated the European modernist paradigm of the infamous Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) into the specific context of contemporary Brazilian society. Bo Bardi took the step of developing a modernism that in many ways ran counter to the European administrative and formalist paradigm by investing far more in the sociabilities of architecture and its relation to other cultural domains, such as art, music, and theater. Her work formed a key reference in developing the interrelating political and social dimensions of the parliament, from its function as a space of political assembly to its cultural manifestation and—through the surrounding park—its role as a recreational space. Part of my research on Brazilian architecture that informed the construction of the Rojava parliament was published as *Nosso Lar, Brasília: Spiritism—Modernism—Architecture* (Rio de Janeiro/Heijningen: Capacete & Jap Sam Books, 2014).

24
One of the most well-known Kurdish slogans: *Berxwedan Jiyane,* "Resistance is Life."