

Anex

An dieser Stelle möchte ich anmerken, dass sämtliche Materialien von John Jordan freigegeben wurden und Flüchtigkeitsfehler nicht berichtet wurden.

Anex 1

>> CENSORSHIP

■ On refusing to pretend to do politics in a museum

John Jordan

What is it about the word 'disobedience' that the institutional art world doesn't understand? Last autumn the Nikolaj Contemporary Art Centre in Copenhagen dropped the Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination's (Lab of ii) *Bike Bloc* project when it realised that the 'tools of civil disobedience' that we were going to build were not gestures but actual tools and tactics for the protest actions around the UN's COP15 Climate Change Conference. The curator told us that she feared that the museum's funders, the City of Copenhagen, would not support any 'illegal' activity. It seemed that she had assumed we would pretend to do politics – see 'Art & Activism' AM333.

Fast forward several weeks to another international contemporary art museum, London's Tate Modern. The Lab of ii had been invited by Tate to run a two-day workshop on art activism, looking at the issues of the museum's environmental impact and exploring, in Tate's words, the question: 'What is the most appropriate way to approach political issues within a publicly funded institution?' After several months of planning, we received an email from the curators that casually ended with the paragraph: 'Ultimately, it is also important to be aware that we cannot host any activism directed against Tate and its sponsors, however we very much welcome and encourage a debate and reflection on the relationship between art and activism.'

There were two things that we could have done in response. We could have refused to run the event under such draconian criteria and pulled out, or we could do something much more interesting by keeping shh and making the email the primary material for the workshop. At the end of the final planning meeting, at which it was confirmed that the workshop would conclude with a public intervention, one of the curators excitedly announced that it was 'incredible that it took Tate until 2010 to work with a "real" activist'.

Entitled 'Disobedience Makes History: Exploring creative resistance at the boundaries between art and life', the workshop was promoted on Tate's website and soon sold out. On a chilly January Saturday morning, 1 and 33 participants, together with the curator, sat in a circle on the top floor of the museum and began the first day-long event. All was going well as we played games to build conviviality, discussed our personal acts of disobedience against injustice, studied consensus decision-making techniques and explored the



Intervention that concluded the 'Disobedience Makes History' workshop at Tate Modern in January

work of artists who had applied their creativity to acts of civil disobedience, ranging from Gustave Courbet to Sylvia Pankhurst. When I began to talk about the climate crisis and the context of Tate, mentioning the fact that BP was a major sponsor whose former CEO, John Browne, was head of the board of trustees, things started to change. Then, when I projected the email on the wall and asked the students to stand along a spectrum line to begin to open up discussion as to whether we should or shouldn't obey the demand from Tate, the curator tried to sabotage the process of discussion, claiming it was 'limiting' the participants' experience. The participants, meanwhile, were thrown into heated debate, and after several hours two-thirds of the group decided to plan an intervention at Tate the following week, targeting the sponsors and highlighting issues of censorship.

The following Friday, I was summoned to Tate to discuss the planned intervention. I was met by four people, including head of visitor services and the head of safety and security. They asked me what was going to happen and I told them that I knew as much as they did: that, following the Lab of ii's methodology, the workshop was now entirely self-managed by the participants and that the intervention would be designed by them during the final workshop. The head of security explained that there were three principles paramount to Tate: the safety of people, the protection of artworks and, finally, to ensure the quiet enjoyment of the public. I reassured him that no action we would take would ever hurt anybody or anything and that, in fact, all our work is precisely about minimising the damage our system does to people and to eco systems.

The discussion then turned to the issue of 'reputational risk', about the fact that an action could affect a funding deal, that Tate prided itself on free access to art and that if its funding was hit it would not be a positive thing for anyone. I asked whether they were in effect attempting to censor the workshop: 'censorship', I was told, is 'an emotive word'. The tense and frank meeting lasted almost two hours, during which time we talked about BP's

use of the museum to give it social legitimacy and about the fact that the sponsors should not be 'embarrassed'. I was told that, though Tate did not have a problem with the 'intellectual content', three Tate staff would be present at the next workshop and would halt any activity that was not 'commensurate with Tate's mission'.

The next morning the participants arrived even more enraged than before; the more Tate tried to shut things down, the more the students were learning about how corporations drape themselves in a cloak of cultural legitimacy while those who work in our (so-called) public institutions play along. They experienced at first hand the hypocrisy of cultural institutions that claim to be sites of progressive practices. Eight hours later, the workshop ended with the words ART NOT OIL placed in the windows of the top floor. And, thanks to Tate's attempts at censorship, the participants are now continuing to work together and are designing a much more ambitious act of creative disobedience as well as planning a long-term campaign to get oil money out of Tate by 2012. A pedagogic success beyond anything we could ever have imagined. ■

JOHN JORDAN is co-founder of The Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination.

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Anex 2

Two Anecdotes on the limits of art and activism in a Museum

1) Letter to an Upset Curator.

28th January 2010

Dear xxxx

I realise that you feel upset and betrayed by what happened at the workshop. I would like the chance to explain why and what I feel happened and to frame it within the practices of radical pedagogy and art activism, which are the genres within which I and the Lab of ii work.

The “corporate censorship” email from the Tate was a gift to me as workshop facilitator. It was material that was the perfect pedagogic starting point for a workshop entitled “Disobedience makes History”. The key word here being disobedience. The workshop always aimed to “explore the history and practice of creative disobedience” (that’s what it says on the Tate web site) and so when I received the email that said:

“Ultimately, it is also important to be aware that we cannot host any activism directed against Tate and its sponsors, however we very much welcome and encourage a debate and reflection on the relationship between art and activism.”

I realised that these few lines of text could be the basis to a workshop that would enable a real experience of disobedience to take place, not the representation of disobedience, not pretending, not something theoretical or academic, but real and actual, in the here and now. It would also bring in issues of corporate culture, capitalism and climate change which as you know are at the heart of my work.

So I decided to use the email. I could have told you before hand, but decided not to after talking to several people, including Amber, as I felt that if you didn’t know then this would protect you *more*. If you did know, then you would have been forced to make a decision about further censorship or not, eg asking me not to use it. If you had asked me not to use it, my ethics would have lead me to disobey and I would have used it anyway. I felt that if you didn’t know then you could later on claim you had no idea if there were repercussions. I tried to present it with dignity, it remained anonymous and all I did was use it as a way of starting a process of thinking about whether we should disobey or not. I at no point said we SHOULD disobey and do something against the Tate and its corporate Sponsors, all I did was ask people to position themselves in a spectrum to see what the temperature of the workshop was.

You said yourself to xxxx when we had our last preparation meeting, that “ the point of activism is to disrupt things”. You and xxxx invited me knowing the kind of work and politics I practice, I find it extraordinary that you are shocked by the process that occurred.

The key to evaluating a pedagogic experience is the reactions of the students, in the end I did the workshop to create a powerful learning experience for the students, not to make the Tate happy. As far as I am concerned the role of critical pedagogy is not to tell students how to change the oppressions of this world, but to demonstrate that the world is not fixed, that what we assume to be static and sacred is not and that its always people with courage and creativity that have been at the forefront of changing things. The best teaching for me is when participants experience something real, something that means something to them, that emerges from their own lives and experience. I feel this occurred and the discussions, debates and emotions that we had during the workshop were powerful because of this. I have included some of the email feedback from participants below.

In the end it is about turning reality into material. I realised that this is something highly unfashionable in a world where many are paralysed by the cynical distancing of post modernism, a universe where the virtual and conceptual are king. But I want to find ways that we can touch each other again, where art makes our heart beat, our nerves tingle, brings our senses alive and back into the world. I try to create events that build real rebel relationships and have repercussions that might be difficult and uncomfortable but might somehow make a small difference in this rapidly dying world or ours.

I don't do this work to make a name in the art world for myself, or to promote my career, I make it because I feel deeply about the issues, I believe that business as usual is killing people and destroying eco systems in the name of profit and as a citizen of this earth I cannot ignore that, I have to dedicate my life to working for justice. The ethics always come first and if that means biting the hand that feeds me, then so be it. I want there to be the least distance between action and representation, the tiniest gaps between the aesthetics and the ethics. For me the aesthetic of the work is revealed by the quality of relationships made in its construction and the quantity of social change that occurs as a result of it.

I'm deeply sorry that you feel personally attacked by the process but feel that it really is about a much bigger picture, and believe that I tried to practice with dignity and integrity at all times.

I would like to end with the quote from the slide with which the whole Disobedience Makes History workshop began:

"I believe people are sensing, as Ivan Illich called it, "the shadows our future throws." Once you grasp the full significance of runaway climate change, and the exhaustion of virtually all our natural resources under the pressure of human consumption, you go through a change in your personal outlook. History becomes nearly irrelevant in these circumstances, as do most of the plans our parents made for us. We will not be colonising Mars. In the centuries to come, we can speak of success if there are still human colonies on Earth."

Albert Bates, ICSA conference 2007, Communes At Large Letters, Winter 2007

Yours JJ

2) Extracts of Minutes on a Meeting in Corporate Culture.

Prologue

“Basically, what I have to say here is simple: when people talk about politics in an artistic frame, they’re lying.”

Brian Holmes. Liar’s Poker. Representation of Politics/Politics of Representation: Sringerin 1/03

Ideally I would have tape recorded the following meeting, the timbre of the voices and tones of emotions would have given a dimension that written words can’t. But unfortunately it didn’t occur to me to be so prepared, so I have to rely on my notes and leaking memory. I apologise in advance for anyone who feels they were misquoted, but I have tried to stay as close to the sense of the thing as possible and I have minuted it because I think it revealed some important insights into how the power of corporations dominate the minds of those that work in our cultural institutions.

Perhaps I’m guilty of adding some dramatic atmosphere, of forgetting exactly whose words were whose, for anonymity the names have been changed and although the setting is the Tate Modern, it could have been in any major museum in the world.

I have put my thoughts, commentary on the dialogue etc. in brackets.

Act I

“The left fears for its own comfortable position as a critical voice fully intergrated into the system, ready to risk nothing... A true Left takes a crisis seriously, without illusions, but as something inevitable, as a chance to be fully exploited.”

Slavoj Zizek, 2009

It takes a while for the security guard at the staff entrance to take my photo to print out on the flimsy visitor’s pass. As I wait for Sophie the curator, a man, built like a bear, approaches me “are you John?” he asks, “yes” I reply. We shake hands and he leads me to the lift. We talk about the weather and the possibilities of snow. He jokes about the mobile phone footage that leaked out recently of riot police using their shields as sledges. “Was hilarious” I say, “but what was less funny was the fact that they were reprimanded faster than they were when they killed Ian Thompson during the G20 protests.”

I’m introduced to three others who will be joining the meeting, quite a few more people than I expected. It’s already feeling tense, I was never the naughty boy at school, but I imagine this is what it must have felt like when your summoned to the headmasters office.

We find a room with a huge long board table in it and the introductions begin. I don't remember all the official institutional titles or names but sitting round the table are: the bear man, David, – head of safety and security, a stern woman in black who never smiles and whose name escapes me – head of visitor services, a curator in uniform designer glasses – Micheal, and Sophie, the assistant education curator.

Act 2

“ The choice of doing nothing – of continuing to burn ever more oil and coal – is not a choice, in other words. It will lead us, if not to hell, then straight to a place with very similar temperatures. “

Bill McKibben – The end of Nature, Penguin, London 1990

“So what's going to happen during the intervention tomorrow?” they ask. “I know as much as you do” I reply. “Sophie is on the crabgrass network, it's all being discussed online by the workshop participants. These workshops are created from the bottom up, it's the participants who create the work, as yet it hasn't been finalised. We will hopefully come to consensus about the form of the action tomorrow morning and then carry it out at 3.30pm”

I can see that they are worried and I outline the workshop timetable that's been planned and try to assure them that whatever happens we won't be doing anything dangerous or damaging.

David begins a clear explanation about the three principles that are paramount to his work at the Tate– 1) The safety of people 2) The protection of art works and finally, to ensure the quiet and enjoyment of the public.

“25,000 people may be coming through the doors tomorrow” he says “ it's an important issue”

“But I always said that whatever we do we would hold to these principles.” I reply.

Then it becomes interesting.

“..there is also the fact that what you do doesn't impact the reputation or stance of the Tate. We are a charity and it's a challenge to get funding and enable this gallery to be free to the public. What you might do could affect a funding deal that is in negotiation ... it could affect the acquisition of an art treasure for the nation...”

(Is he really saying that what the workshop does tomorrow could be responsible for introducing fees for members of the public ? Seems a bit over the top)

“We have to find the balance of enabling activity to take place in a major institution and be mindful of the conditions we have to maintain.”

I look everyone in the eye and ask “So are you censoring me? Are you telling me what the workshop participants can and can't do.”

“Censorship, that’s a bit of an emotive word to use.” replies David.

“If our funding is hit and we loose a significant amount of money, then it’s not a positive thing for the Tate. We appeal to you to me mindfull of our sensibilities .. we have no intent in affecting artistic activities ” He continues.

No smile woman, whose face stretched to the limits with sternness, explains how worried she is about the fact that she can’t control what will happen and how the visitors might be affected. “ You might be wearing tape on your mouths, or masks, it could scare the children.”

“Oh come on, lets not bring children into it.” I retort (talk about emotive issues !)
“What we do will have an effect on visitors, it would be a pretty bad piece of art if it had no effect, but its not going to hurt anyone.”

“But what happens if an employee of BP comes to the Tate tomorrow ?” Sophie asks.

“Well that would be wonderful” (did she really just say that?) “ I would love to upset an employee of BP or Unilever.”

“We are not the establishment, we aren’t here to restrict and control you, it’s a much bigger picture.” Says stern woman.

“ Yes, the bigger picture is that the Tate is giving BP a social license to operate. Twenty years ago it was cigarette companies that funded art, it’s no longer very cool and progressive to promote cancer and so you dropped the tobacco companies. Now its oil companies who you wrap in your cuddly cultural legitimacy. But BP is pumping out more and more fossil fuels every day, fossil fuels that are responsible for putting the future of life on earth in peril. I look forward to the day when they aren’t seen as sophisticated and stylish anymore but as what they are rapacious genocidal machines. I want them to stop funding you.”

“You are entitled to your views, what we want is an agreement” says David, stroking his short grey beard. “ This is not a back street gallery where you can do what you want – You need to play the game.”

“Ok – tell me the rules then.” I ask.

At this point my notes become un readable for a while as I was desperately trying to concentrate and everything seemed to be moving so quickly.

I think what happened was a reiteration of the 3 points about safety of people objects etc and once again I said that wasn’t the problem, but that we should all be a bit more honest and talk about the real rules of the game, the fact that it wasn’t ok for a workshop to do an action that criticised corporate sponsorship at the Tate.

I ask if they would maybe write these rules in an email so I can be clear exactly what they are. “NO” David shakes his head emphatically.” I can see your taking plenty enough notes in your note book.” (Oh yeah.. they don’t want another controlling email projected on the wall do they!)

“We don’t censure the intellectual content of your work” says Micheal. (but this is a practical workshop ??)

David leans back on his chair. “Look, if you embarrass the people who pay for this institution then there is a reputational risk.” (but it’s the tax payer who pays for most of this institution ?)

Then there is a long discussion about the fact that I “Hi-jacked” the workshop and tried to “Create an action in my likeness” rather than facilitate an open participatory workshop. I challenge them to ask the participants if they were manipulated (I wonder how many artists who run workshops here teach consensus decision making and leave the creation of the work entirely to the group.) I tell them that at no point did I suggest we do an action against the Tate and their sponsors, and that I simply projected the email that asked me not to do this and asked the participants whether they wanted to obey or disobey the demand, the issue of disobeying being the central theme of the workshop.

“but I saw you order a taxi last weekend for your trip home. Taxis use petrol you know.” Says Sophie. (I had a bag that weighed a tonne full of 36 art books and a 10 m long banner – I couldn’t take it on my bike)

“Are you really saying that if I get in a taxi I cancel out my right to be critical of BP ?” (This is getting surreal – and we are sitting in a room that is so overheated that im can feel my head sweat)

No one says anything.

“You broke the our trust” says Micheal. I explain that I spent an hour and a half writing a letter to Sophie yesterday explaining why I didn’t tell her that I was going to project the offending email on the wall, and apologising if she felt betrayed. “We don’t normally expect our workshop facilitators to cause upset to our colleagues.” He continues, looking at me over the rim of his glasses.

“ I didn’t do this workshop to make the curators or the Tate happy, I did it so that the participants can have a real experience of artactivsm. You know what kind of work I do, what did you exspect? ”

They wanted me to be the fool in the palace. They thought that like most fools I would tell only the jokes that were officially sanctioned. They assumed that like all sensible fools I would not want to step out of line and risk loosing my head to the sharpened axe of the executioner. Surely I wanted an art career, surely I wanted to be invited back to the Tate, surely I was seduced by fame and power, just like everyone else. But power is the problem.

I turns out that David, Micheal and Sophie will attend the workshop and in their words “If you prepare an activity that is not commensurate with the mission of the Tate and that these are contravened in a significant way, we reserve the right to desist the activity and you won’t be able to continue with that format.”

“Ah,” my eyes have probably widened a bit.”so your going to police the workshop and shut it down if we disobey ?”

They mutter that its not really shutting it down.

“Look, I agree to follow the first three principles” I close my notebook.” but I will disobey the demand to not critique the funders, thats fundamental to the art. The workshop title is after all “Disobedience Makes History.”

The meeting ends with stern face leaning over and saying in a deeply condescending voice “Please go away and think about all these issues.”

I have had enough, I look her in the eye “You really don’t have to be so patronising.”

“You know” says David.” We have done much riskier things that this, I’ve had meeting like this with Damien Hurst and Sarah Lucas.” (Does he really think this is going to impress me?).

“They never bite the hand the feeds them do they.” I retort smiling, “Infact they FEED the hand.”

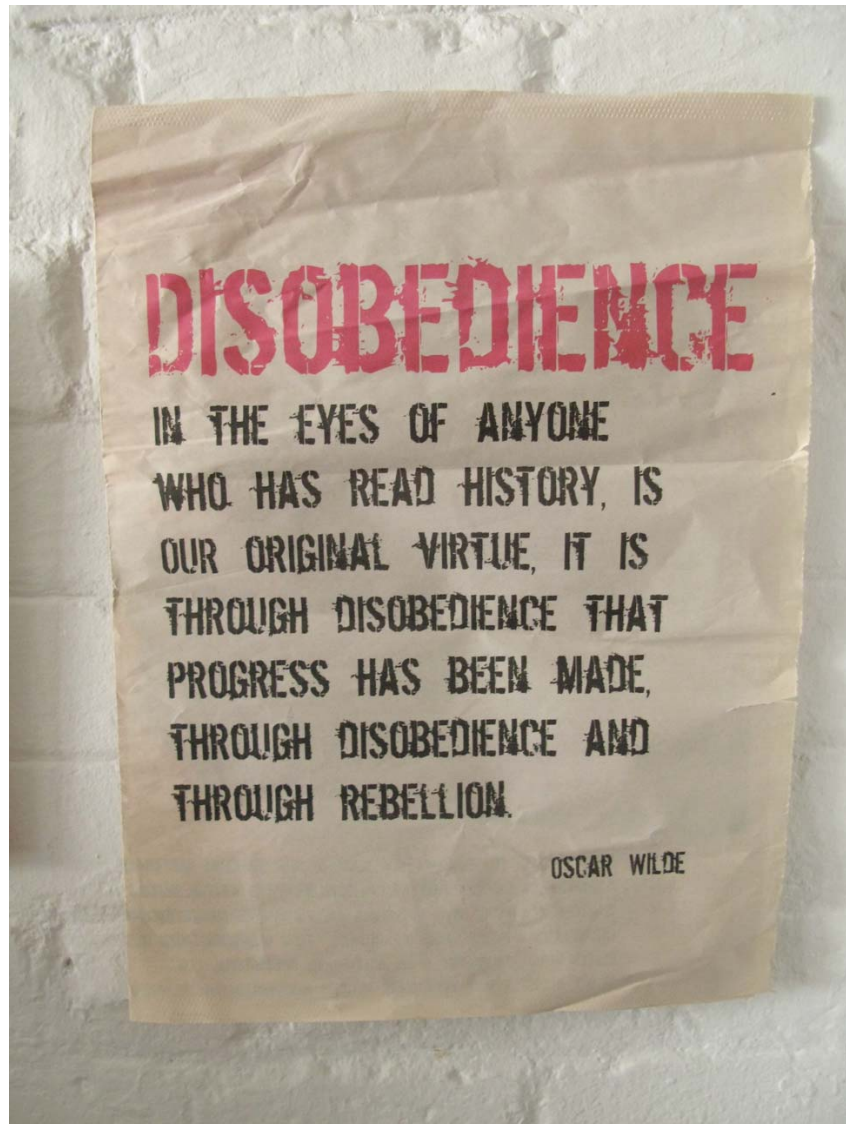
Act 3

After the meeting I go on critical mass with my fifteen year old son Jack, the biting wind eats into my fingers as we cycle through the teaming West End, around me are people who are gently disobeying, riding their bikes in a swarm like mass that becomes the traffic, a cloud of pedal power that leaves cars in their wake, opening up a space to breath fresh air. The crowds on the sidewalks smile at us, automatic intuitive smiles of amasement, they watch the hundreds of cyclists as they weave freely through the streets momentarily freed from cars. There is something so beautiful about Critical Mass.

I get home and log onto the crabgrass account, one of the participants has posted a quote from Joseph Beuys, an artist who has an entire room dedicated to him at the Tate:

“Art that can not shape society and therefore also cannot penetrate the heart questions of society, and in the end influence the question of capital, is no art.”

Beuys would be rolling in his grave if he knew how the memory of his disobedience has been eradicated by those who wear the mask of risk takers, the purveyors of critical culture who talk about freedom, but are bound by the chains of a culture of consent, a culture that so cleverly disguises itself as disobedient, that so beautifully sets up the mirage of coolness so that it’s suicide machines remain hidden from public view.



THE LABORATORY OF INSURRECTIONARY IMAGINATION

DISOBEDIENCE MAKES HISTORY: Exploring Creative resistance at the boundaries of art and life.

“The question of art is no longer aesthetics but the survival of the planet”

Platform (www.platformlondon.org), Postcard edition.

1989 “We treat insurrection as an art and art as a means of preparing for the coming insurrection.”

The Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination.
2009

Welcome to the DISOBEDIENCE MAKES HISTORY workshop. The aim of the two days we have together will be to explore the role of art and creativity in radical social change. We will see how artists and activists apply creativity to acts of civil disobedience and will aim to create our own public intervention at the end of the workshop. We will do this collectively using playful and participatory forms of learning. The workshop will be facilitated by John Jordan (<http://www.social-sculpture.org/people/wider-network/johnjordan-platform.htm>) but much of it will be self managed using tools of consensus decision making. Key to the Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination (<http://labofii.net>) is the building of convivial spaces that give people the collective confidence to apply creativity to direct forms of political intervention, we hope this is the minimum we can achieve together in two days and look forward to working and playing with you.

Below is a time table and two readings.

Day 1 Saturday 22nd January:

10.30 – 10.45 Intros and welcome

10.45 – 12.30 A pedagogic performance happening that explores the historical context of art and activism. This will involve participatory exercises, some big dresses, useful games, strange objects, lots of stories and a couple of big questions.

12.30 – 13.00 Tools of Conviviality: 1. An introduction to consensus decision making.. (<http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/free/consens>) End with 7 affinity groups created

Lunch. Please bring your own.

14.00 – 15.00 Tools of Conviviality: 2. An Introduction to spokes councils and some answers to big questions.

16.00 – 17.00 Laboratory begins. Some Permaculture Design (<http://www.permaculture.org.uk/knowledge-base/basics>) ideas are shared to help

research and plan intervention. Affinity groups work together. During the week, preparations for the intervention will continue over Crabgrass (an online organising tool for social change groups - <http://crabgrass.riseup.net/about/>). The format of day 2 (30th January) depends on the material that has emerged from day one, but we hope to end the day with a participatory intervention somewhere in the south east of this island!

This text was commissioned as a guide on art and activism for the Live Art Development Agency's resource room in 2004. The footnotes are just as important, if not more important than the main body of text.

In the Footnotes of Library Angels: A Bi(bli)ography of Insurrectionary Imagination.

John Jordan

Dear Reader

Before we begin on this journey in search of words and images that speak of the insurrectionary imagination¹; Before we bend those fragile spines and flick through brittle pages to reveal moments where the spirit of art² and activism merge³; Before we drift⁴ through these words, fingering paper, armed with footnotes⁵ guiding our steps across this library. I want to ask you a question - Do you believe in Library Angels?

1 The Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination (lab of ii) was founded in 2004 by myself, the artists activist, The Vacuum cleaner (see his DVD - The Vacuum Cleaner, Anti Adverts, 2003 ref: D0180) and radical educator Isabelle Fremeaux. The lab of ii is an ephemeral network of socially engaged artists and activists whose work falls in between resistance and creativity, culture and politics, art and life. It believes that playful forms of cultural intervention in everyday life and the development of free convivial spaces that enable participants to cultivate full confidence in their own creative capacity are fundamental tools for social change. Experiment I in Autumn 2004 was part of the big alter-globalisation movement gathering, The European Social Forum. Experiment

2 took place in Summer 2005 and involved touring to 9 cities in the UK with a caravan run on chip fat, infiltrating department stores with 'prayers to products' and training several hundred rebel clowns for civil disobedience at the G8 summit - See The Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination – 13 experiments in hope DVD. ref: D0261

2 It is useful to remember that the division between art and life is only a fairly recent one(circa 17th century). For most of human life on this planet and still in most of the (non-western) world, art is embedded into life, not as a separate activity but a fundamental part of society. Alan Kaprow's seminal essay "The Real Experiment" contrasts two traditions: art at the service of art (art like art) and art at the service of life (life like art). He shows that they both represent a fundamentally different philosophy of reality. "We may see the overall meaning of art change profoundly" he writes, " from being an end to being a means, from holding out a promise of perfection in some other realm to demonstrating a way of living meaningfully in this one." This and other incisive essays are collected in Kaprow, Allan and Kelley, Jeff (ed.) Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life - Allan Kaprow, Berkeley: University of California Press. 1996

3 No one is born an art activist, most of us began our work in the confines of the art or theatre establishments and took time to develop our practices outside. Feminist activist artist Suzanne Lacy has illustrated her own development from private to public artist, in an interesting diagram. Beginning with artists as experienter (private), she moves through artist as reporter, artist as analyst to her present role, artist as activist (public). See (page 263) in the excellent Richard Schechner book, Performance Studies: An introduction. London & New York: Routledge.2002 ref: P0289. For an up to date survey of art activist practices see - Thompson, Nato and Sholette, Gregory. The Interventionists: Users Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life. Massachusetts:

MASS MoCa Publications.2004.ref: P0639. A good primer that looks at works in the late 80's and early 90's is Felshin, Nina, ed. But is it Art?: The Spirit of Art as Activism. Seattle: Bay Press, 1995. For a historical look of the field in the 1970's see Lippard, Lucy, Get the Message? A Decade of Art for Social Change. New York, E.P Dutton, 1984.

4 A key inspiration for many art activists are the Situationists International (SI) - a group of artists and intellectuals who set out to completely re-invent both modern art and radical politics during the 1950-60's. For the SI, both art and politics had to be exciting, satisfying and effective immediately, in the here-and- now and for everyone -- and not in some far off future, some Heaven, or some period after the Great Revolution. One of the techniques they developed was the "derive", meaning 'The drift.' It involved moving freely in urban spaces without aim or direction but influenced by "psycho geography" (the study of a city's emotional landscape). The popular memory of this extraordinary group remains in the poetic graffiti daubed on Paris's walls during the uprising of 1968,

Perhaps you've never heard of them. Let me explain - Last year I was in the British Library, researching clowns⁶ and tricksters⁷ and I came upon a book about synchronicity. I opened it at random and read a story about how the writer Rebecca West had been researching a specific episode of the Nuremberg⁸ war crimes trials. She had been horrified to find that the transcripts were catalogued under completely arbitrary headings and impossible for any researcher to navigate. In frustration she took the first volume that came to hand, carelessly opened it at random to find she was not only holding the correct volume, but had opened it at exactly the right page.

These are the actions of what author Arthur Koestler⁹ calls Library Angels, those absent presences that somehow make the right books fall into our hands, those

much of which was influenced by their writings e.g.: "Be realistic, demand the impossible" and "all power to the imagination". - see Ford, Simon, A User's

Guide - The Situationist International 2005 LADA ref P0617

5 These footnotes are not an addition to the text, but an equal partner, walking guides to take us through the resources and books in this library and elsewhere.

6 "the clowns are organising... the clowns are organising – over and out..." screeched the Police radio, during an action against Menwith Hill spy base. In

2004 I set up the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (CIRCA) , which developed a form of political activism that brings together the ancient practice of clowning and the more recent practice of Non-violent direct action. The idea behind CIRCA was to develop a resistance methodology that by using clowning techniques would break open up the often brittle hearts and desensitised bodies of activist, enabling them to be more spontaneous and emotionally vulnerable. The tactic transformed situations of civil disobedience actions into ones where there were less dichotomies between the authorities and protesters and where the clown would replace confrontation with confusion. In search of truth and justice and armed with mirth and mockery CIRCA

carried out operations wherever necessary. This ranged from shutting down army recruitment agencies, infiltrating a MacDonald's to find 'happiness' and 200 trained clowns blockading roads during the G8 summit in Scotland. There are now CIRCA brigades in the numerous countries including the US, France, New Zealand, Belgium, Denmark, Brazil, the Netherlands and Germany. For writings about CIRCA see - David Harvie, Keir Milburn, Ben Trott, David Watts ed. Shut them Down: The G8, Gleneagles 2005 and The Movement of Movements, Autonomedia/Dissent! 2005.

7 I've always been fascinated by works that eschew traditional binary oppositions and fixed ideologies, that use of parody, absurdity, pranks, slippery identities, deceit and beguiling humour in the face of serious political struggle. These are all characteristics of the Trickster, the cross-cultural figure of folk tale, myth and the ancestor of the contemporary clown. He/she/it - for its gender is often undecided - exists on the borderline between life and art, the selfish and the communal, the real and the imagined, soul and body. The spirit of disorder, the shapeshifting trickster adds chaos to order to create a whole. Lying to tell the truth, the trickster's sly mischief heals the world. A wonderful example of this spirit at work in radical Live art practice is the Yes men. Infamous for their hilarious forms of culture jamming and "identity correction" whereby they impersonate corporate institutions such as the World Trade Organisation or Dow Chemicals, clandestinely infiltrating the global media and international conferences in their name, the Yes Men have turned the ancient myths of the trickster into a high tech contemporary practice. See The Yes Men: The True Story of the World Trade Organisation. New York: Disinformation. 2004 and their feature length documentary, The Yes Men: Changing the world one prank at a time, MGM studios inc. 2006.

8 When exploring the relationship between art and politics we cannot ignore the extraordinary and terrifying use of aesthetics and spectacular performance by the Nazi's during the 30's. This problematic relationship has led many artists and activists to be wary of merging art and politics too closely. This timid position was courageously rejected by Artist Joseph Beuys working in post war Germany. The aim of art for Beuys was its ability to make people free. His notions of social sculpture, which saw society as the material for artists to transform, were to be key inspirations for my practice and for those of Platform who I worked with between 1985-1997 (see note 6) The art market has often failed to represent his radical ideas preferring to overshadow them with his objects and performances, yet his philosophy of art and society continues to be one of the most radical positions of the 20th century. See: Joseph Beuys, Ideas and Actions, 1988 ref: P0500 and Alain Borer, The Essential Joseph Beuys, 1996 ref: P0125

9 Arthur Koestler described library angels as, "in charge of providing cross-references." See Olson Geoff, Is the Universe Friendly, in Common Ground magazine, October 1994.

strange creatures of coincidence who open pages perfectly for us when we least expect it.

I put the book down and gazed over the reading desk at the person sitting in front of me. He was one of those characters that seems to dwell permanently in libraries, a large dusty sedentary bespectacled man, reading “A Train of Powder” by Rebecca West. The very book that collects her Nuremburg trials writings. Of all the hundreds upon thousand of volumes in the British library, of all the hundreds of seats in this reading room, how could it be that I happened to have sat in front of this person, with this particular book in his hands.

Perhaps it was the library angels visiting me again, trying to prove their existence and whispering in my ear the question which Albert Einstein thought was the most important a human can ask – “Is the Universe Friendly?”

So dear reader – do *you* believe in Library Angels?

If you do then let’s start this winding journey asking questions¹⁰ knowing that the accidents of angels are there to guide us. If you don’t, it doesn’t matter, because they will reveal themselves to you in the fullness of time.

That’s if there is much time left. My guess is that if your interested in the meeting place of art and activism¹¹ you probably don’t believe in the ‘hope for the best’ fallacies of capitalism¹² or the myopic myth of eternal progress¹³. Maybe you recognise the irrational

10 “walking we ask questions” say the Mexican indigenous rebels the Zapatistas, whose spokes-person the masked subcommandante Marcos is perhaps one of the worlds most inspirational and politically effective performance artists. While Joseph Beuys turned art into activism, brilliantly articulating the socially transformative role of the artist, I feel it was Marcos who showed me how to apply such an understanding to places outside of the personal artist’s ego and the art world. Marcos turned activism into an art, in the most collective way possible, by creating Zapatismo – a movement that combined a post-modern performative politics with ancient Mayan indigenous belief systems and ways of life. A savvy manipulator of global media, a rebel poet, a man who tells stories about a funny beetle called Durrity. Marcos lives in the borderland, on the edges of armed insurgency and poetic storytelling, media performance and radical politics. His beautifully written communiqués that have emanated from the jungle of Chiapas since the uprising of 1994 have catalysed the global movements against corporate globalisation and injected a powerful dose of creativity into contemporary forms of resistance. For more see - Marcos, Subcommandante. Our word is our Weapon: Selected writings Subcommandante Insurgente Marcos. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2001 and Guillermo Gomez-Pena’s chapter “The ‘subcommandante’ of performance” (page 222) in his Dangerous Border Crossers, 2000, ref:P0117.

11 All art is political – not just art that claims its political agency. What could be more political than an art installation bought by a multi millionaire advertising executive as an investment and Public Relations gesture to show his rebel credentials (think Charles Saatchi and the Brit art pack) or a spectacular piece of contemporary performance funded by a multinational oil company. Complicity and silence are political, saying nothing when faced with a society at permanent war with itself and the planet, is a political act. Philosopher Herbert Marcuse however, argued that all art had within it the seeds of liberation and the more obviously political a work was, the less radical and transformative potential it had. For a fascinating debate around these questions see – Carol Becker’s essay – Herbert Marcuse and the subversive potential of art – in her edited collection - The Subversive Imagination: Artists, society and social responsibility - New York and London: Routledge, 1994.

12 Since the early 60’s Gustave Metzger’s work has been a systemic critique of the art world and capitalist values. In Ken McMullen’s DVD about his work, Metzger defines capitalism as a system based on the production of dissatisfaction - see Gustave Metzger, Pioneers in Art and Science: Metzger, 2004, ref:D0226. His movement for the auto-destructive art was in the footsteps of the 20th century avant-garde such as Dada whose 1919 manifesto demanded that “The new artist protests, he no longer paints ; he creates directly life and art make One.” For a short partisan history of these radical movements, see

- Home, Stewart - The Assault on Culture - Utopian Currents from Lettrisme to Class War, 1991 ref: P0733

lunacy of a consumer utopia¹⁴ of unlimited economic growth on a finite world. Perhaps you would agree with me that the future is as fragile a place as the planet and time is running out.

Last week my eleven year old son Jack said to me: “Dad, they’ve invented real laser guns – that you can carry around – That means we are *officially* in the future now doesn’t it.”

I wanted to respond by saying: “What future¹⁵ ?” I kept my mouth shut...

In 1989¹⁶ whilst I was working with the socially engaged¹⁷ art group Platform¹⁸ we produced a postcard proclaiming: “The question of art is no longer aesthetics but the

I 3 Archaeologist, historian and novelist Ronald Wright’s “A Short History of Progress” demonstrates how numerous civilisations collapsed because they ignored their natural limits. Analysing the patterns of ‘the trap progress’ he notes that civilisation after civilisation, when faced with ecological collapse have simply ignored the situation, continued to act in ever increasingly arrogant and destructive ways, until it’s too late. “The future of everything we have accomplished since our intelligence evolved will depend on the wisdom of our actions over the next few years” he writes “Like all creatures, humans have made their way in the world so far by trial and error, unlike other creatures, we have a presence so colossal that error is a luxury we can no longer afford.” See Wright, Ronald, (2004) A Short History of Progress, Anansi, Toronto.

I 4 One of Britain’s most prolific 19th century political artists and utopians was William Morris. Little do people know, when they are buying their expensive Morris designed wallpaper from Liberties, that he was one of the most radical thinkers of his time; a tireless revolutionary romantic, essayist, painter, designer, poet and political organiser, who worked with all the great communists and anarchists of his time. For Morris, art had “to create a new consciousness that moves away from the immediate towards the possible”. His utopian novel, News From Nowhere was a stinging critique of the sordid nightmares of

Victorian capitalism. It presented a convincing dream of a post-capitalist ecological English society, where city squares became orchards, schools and money were abolished and the houses of parliament transformed into a store for compost. Perhaps this visionary had an inkling that in the future the popular recognition of his work would be relegated to the shelves of luxury department stores when he wrote “I pondered all these things, and how men fight and lose the battle, and the thing that they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name.” See Thompson, E. P., William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary, London:Pantheon, 1976.

I 5 Projecting our imaginations into the future can be an obstacle as can its sometime companion hope. Because hope can make us forget that the only moment we can really have any control of is the present. History is always unexpected yet every act we take now can make all the difference in the way the future mysteriously unfolds. . “To hope is to gamble” writes cultural theorist Rebecca Solnit “It’s to bet on the future, on your desires, on the possibility that an open heart and uncertainty is better than gloom and safety. To hope is dangerous, and yet it is the opposite of fear, for to live is to risk” - see her wonderful little book about imagination and activism - Hope in the Dark: The Untold History of People Power. Edinburgh: Cannongate, 2005.

I 6 1989 was a year of extraordinary social change across the world, especially in Eastern Europe. Hidden from the official history of this period is the fact that many of the popular uprisings against the Soviet state were catalysed by groups of radical cultural workers. The revolutions in Eastern Europe were ignited not only by the big names that we know, Vaclav Havel, Charter 77, Polish Solidarity etc. but by a new wave of playful protests put on by guerilla theatre groups, musicians and anarchist artists that made it safe to go into the streets again. This little known story is a fantastic illustration of how history forgets (conveniently) that it’s often the small radical cultural acts of audacity and imagination that light the spark that pushes even the biggest empires over the edge. For how serious play ignited a revolution see Kenney, Padraic, A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989, , Princetown University Press 2002.

I 7 The term socially engaged art has become common currency for work which attempts to have a direct relationship with a public. Unfortunately some of this work tends to merely reproduce values of art world and museum culture – see ed. Various - Can We Come Back?, Ikon gallery and creative partnerships Birmingham, 2004 ref:P0644 for an example of work which fails to have a systemic critique. For a fantastic overview of numerous forms of genuine and critical engaged public practices - see Lacy, Suzanne, ed. Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art. Seattle: Bay Press, 1995

survival of the planet". Now it is stuck above the door to my workspace, everyday I ask myself: is this really the question of art?

Aesthetics¹⁹ – from the Greek word - aes-thesia - meaning the ability to perceive, to experience, to feel through our bodies²⁰. At the root of the aesthetic is somatic sensation, a profound noticing of our world. Seen this way, art is perhaps just paying attention²¹ – simply feeling.

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It's a winter Wednesday morning – I wake up to the distorted crackle of radio

news Yesterday 60 people were blown up in Iraq – this morning another 23

bodies were
ripped apart.

I feel the cold morning air on my waking skin

A new report is out - Top Climate Scientists suggests that the earth is heating up much faster than they predicted a few years ago – twice as fast – the ice sheets are not just melting now, they are breaking off in huge chunks, the gulf stream is slowing down, temperatures could rise by 11 degrees centigrade²².

18 For over 20 years, PLATFORM has been bringing together environmentalists, artists, human rights campaigners, educationalists and community activists to create innovative projects driven by the need for social and environmental justice. This interdisciplinary approach combines the transformatory power of art with the tangible goals of campaigning, the rigour of in-depth research with the vision to promote alternative futures. For documentation of their work on London's buried rivers - see the beautifully illustrated - ed. J Kastner and B Wallis, *Land and Environmental Art*, Phaidon, 1998 ref: P0530

19 For a gorgeous and highly recommended little critical journal (not dreary and academic but alive and thoughtful) that explores contemporary practices that bring art and activism together see - *The Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*, Los Angeles. Available online too at www.joaap.org

20 The body is of course at the heart of Live art practices. This room is full of books and images of bodies – bodies in pain, naked, strung up, pierced, asleep, wet, fucking, bleeding, fighting, being punished, decorated and adorned – but so often these actions that claim to speak of risk, abjection, politics and society are simply autistic aesthetic acts – gestures that mildly shock within the safe world of high culture, expressions of isolation echoing in the clean white spaces of art protected from the complications of the real world. There's a big difference between taking risks in the world of art and in the world outside. In the art world when you provoke, disobey the rules, push the boundaries, questions the canons you get discovered, rewarded, acclaimed. In the real world when you push the social boundaries you are marginalized, surveilled, beaten and imprisoned. For me the body that most touches and effects society is the one that is placed between the cogs of the machine – it is the bodies of protesters in trees defending woodland, the bodies of those standing in front of tanks in Palestine, the bodies jammed in the arms of bulldozers about to destroy another community. See my essay – "The Art of Necessity: The subversive imagination of the No M11 Campaign and Reclaim the Streets" in the epic collection of texts - Duncombe, Stephen. *Cultural Resistance Reader*, London/New York: Verso. 2002

21 Initiator of Happenings, live art events that attempted to completely dissolve the separation between artists and audience, Alan Kaprow has described art as the process of "paying attention." Most Happenings were not explicitly political, for an exception see Jean Jacques Lebel's chapter (page 268) in Sanford, Mariellen ed., *Happenings and Other Acts* 1995 ref: P0343

22 One of the earliest radical creative movements to work on issues of ecology were the Provos; a Dutch 1960's group founded by artists and anarchists, whose absurd playful happenings provoked, (hence the name Provo) the authorities to respond with excessive force. Every one of their theatrical protests would always be accompanied by an imaginative solution – named a "white plan." Their most famous one being the 'white bicycle' concept, a challenge to the pollution of the "car monster" and private property. Dozens of white bicycles were left unlocked on the streets, the idea being that anyone could ride them for free, leaving them at their destination when finished with and ready for another person to use when needed. The police's horror of communal property led to them to impound all the white bicycles, to which the Provos responded by stealing some of the police's own bikes. The Provo's enormous

I put the kettle on the hob...
I look at the blue flames, I smell gas, I imagine oil wells, pipelines,
refineries.. What future?

I check my email. Last week I was invited to give a key note talk at a conference entitled Artists of Conscience – they offered me a fee of £1000, a flight to Canada and lodging. I wrote back saying that to fly across our overheating planet for a four day conference, releasing 1.69 tonnes of carbon into the burdened atmosphere, would, unfortunately, *not* leave me with a clear conscience. I offered to send a video explaining why my conscience and concern about climate change keeps me at home. This morning's email says "no thanks, you have to come". I say "no thanks, I'll stay at home."

I wake Jack up, we listen to the few birds chattering outside. I remember Tree sparrows everywhere when I was ten – but since then their numbers are down by 95%. And I wonder who will hear the final call of the very last sparrow.

Jack doesn't want to go to school, I have to coerce him. On the way, the tube train is so packed with commuters that we have to take a deep breath in to fit in the carriage. I read in the morning newspaper that the US ambassador to the UN, John Bolton during the negotiations leading up to the 2005 summit, suggested that the phrase "respect for nature", should be cut from the outcomes document.

Outside the tube station I look at people in suits going to work in the financial district
and wonder what it must feel like to believe that the market is God²³, that it will save us. I wonder what the city will look like when climate change has hit hard and when the long emergency²⁴ of depleting energy supplies and collapsing ecological life support systems has become inescapable. As I emerge from the station I look into the sky – the clouds seem strange today.

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Last Sunday a wonderfully creative young rebel that I knew, climbed onto his balcony
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popular success gained them five seats in Amsterdam city council, which led to their ultimate demise. For more examples of radical performance that subverts electoral politics see Bogard, Larry, *Electoral Guerrilla Theatre: Radical Ridicule and Social Movements*, Routledge, London and New York, 2005.

23 Numerous live artists have been parodying the concept of the market as god. The Reverend Billy with his fake southern preacher character leading the "Church of stop shopping" has been performing often accompanied by his gorgeous subverted Baptist choir, in multinational chains across the world. Despite being banned from all Starbucks in the "known Universe" (their term) he continues to joyfully disrupt the cathedrals of consumption see the DVD *Rev Bill*, Conway Hall, 2004 - ref: D0230. The Vacuum Cleaner's "Prayers to products" takes people into stores to prostrate themselves in front of the goods they most desire – see footage of this in his DVD and the Lab of ii DVD (see note 1)

24 "We're living in a state of emergency." Says artists Guillermo Gomez-Pena, "I feel that more than ever we must step outside the strictly art arena. It is not enough to make art." His work (which to my mind is too often located in the art world) has attempted to span the space between a directly engaged activist aesthetic and the aesthetics of popular culture. Billed as "chicano-cyber-punk" it takes the form of performance, video and/or writing, exploring colliding cultures and North/South relations. There are numerous books and DVD's by and about him in the resource room – you could start with his book

- Gomez Pena, Guillermo, *Ethno-techno – writings on Performance, activism, and pedagogy*, 2005, ref:P0674 and listen to the weird 2002 electro opera

sound track - *Apocalypse Manana*, a collaboration with Mexican ex-rockers and composer Guillermo Galindo, ref: D0193

and jumped ...

Despair²⁵ never creates a revolution²⁶ wrote the 19th century “anarchist²⁷ prince”, Peter Kropotkin. I wonder what revolution took place in my friends head that shifted his delightful optimism needed to resist to the dark despair that made him jump.

Last night I couldn't see any stars. They say by 2020 no one will be able to see any stars anymore. That's if the lights are still on.

Perhaps the question is after all one of aesthetics – of sensing, of embodying feeling. Perhaps the question is: how *can* we really *feel* this all encompassing violence, this assault on our lives, our environment, our rights, our hearts, our minds? How can we comprehend with our gut this insane attack on all that is living by a system that prioritises things, abstractions, money?

25 Most radical politics is suffused with despair and a neurotic obsession with “being realistic”. No one is going to want to change the world unless it is the most joyful and desirable activity around. In a time when capitalism has hijacked our desires and wants, we must make rebellion more beautiful than anything capitalism can ever dream of. 1960's counter cultural phenomenon extraordinaire Abbie Hoffman knew how to inject pleasure into politics, “ One of the worst mistakes any revolution can make” wrote the arch performance prankster “ is to become boring. It leads to rituals as opposed to games, cults as opposed to communities and the denial of human rights as opposed to freedom” – see Hoffman, Abbie, (1989) The Best of Abbie Hoffman, New York:

Four Walls Eight Windows. For one of the most important and poetic Situationist texts, exploring how the system encroaches on every aspect of our lives and desires see Vaneigem, Raoul. The Revolution of Everyday Life. London:Left Bank Books/Rebel Press, 1992

26 “The revolution, in general,” writes the poetic guerrilla Subcommandante Marcos “is no longer imagined according to socialist patterns of realism, that is men and women stoically marching behind a red, waving flag towards a luminous future. Rather it has become a sort of carnival.” Reinventing revolution has become a key part of the recent anticapitalist movements. The Marxist model of a proletarian revolution, with the workers taking power and proposing a single blueprint for society, has become a dusty relic in the museum of failed ideals. The time of single ideologies and grand narratives is over. We are sick of sacrificing ourselves for the sake of gigantic game plans which don't account for our individual needs, our humanity, our culture, our creativity. None of us want to be soldiers or martyrs in movements whose big-picture and top-down solutions are to be imposed on the ‘masses’. Re-thinking revolution is what artists and poets are good at (and is also the reason that the system tries hard to distance them from revolutionary practices in the real world) . Injecting imagination into the centre of a revolutionary process, talking about passion and dreams as opposed to policies and directives has been the chosen role of radical artists from the surrealist Andre Breton to William Morris, from Shelley to Blake. “The role of the artists” wrote the African American activist and novelist Toni Cade Bambara “ is to make revolution irresistible”. For a rich collection of revolutionary cultural subversion through the ages see Blechman, Max (ed.) Revolutionary Romanticism. San Francisco: City Light Books.

27 The relationship between anarchism and radical artists has a long tradition. From Oscar Wilde to Gustave Courbet, The Expressionists to The Living Theatre, Herbert Read to John Cage artists have been inspired by anarchism's core belief in the creative potential of communities and individuals to resist authority and determine their own lives together. Since anarchism critiques authority and domination at all levels, from the governmental right down to the personal it has always presented alternatives that touch everyday life not simply the sphere of politics. Anarchists don't want to take power and control government but to break power into little pieces and distribute it to all, a transformation which would therefore involve a complete cultural rethinking of how we relate to each other outside of the logic of domination. Not happy to wait for a revolution in the far off future, but wanting to embody the change in the here and now, anarchists and artists share the same powerful drive to live and realise ones desires in the immediate moment. Of all political theories, anarchism is the one that puts the most emphasis on the power and potential of human creativity and our desire for autonomy and self determination. For more on art and anarchism see - Blechman, Max (ed.) Drunken Boat: Art, Rebellion, Anarchy. New York: Autonomedia/Left Bank Books.1994 and for a beautiful primer on leading an anarchist life see Crimethink, Days of War Nights of Love: Crimethink for beginners, Crimethink free press, 2001 Atlanta.

Many of us pretend that it is not happening, we distract ourselves to get through the day, we do everything we can to forget. *Thou shalt pretend that nothing is wrong*²⁸, is the creed of the market that is god.

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In 1994 I began to immerse myself in the direct action²⁹ movements, taking my imagination away from what critic Suzi Gablik calls “the jails of the art world”³⁰ and placing my body in the way of road building machinery and occasionally in the jails of her majesty’s police force. In those days those that spoke about the collapse of civilization and of capitalisms collective suicide were mostly the radical ecologist, the virulent anti-capitalists, the Earth First! protesters and a few obsessive reclusive scientists. Many would call them extremists disconnected from society, simplistic neo-luddites, and their Cassandra like cries were ignored and ridiculed. Mainstream media rarely broadcast such millenarian fears and politicians and corporate leaders stubbornly refuted them. But something has changed over the last few years.

When Britain’s Royal Society Professor at Cambridge University and Astronomer Royal, Martin Rees publishes a book entitled *Our Final Century: Will the Human Race Survive the Twenty-First Century?*, in which he states that “*The odds are no better than 50/50 that our present civilisation will survive*”; when the Pentagon publishes reports describing European cities sinking beneath rising seas caused by abrupt climate change and a future where “warfare would define human life” as “desperate, all-out wars over food, water and energy supplies”³¹ erupt everywhere; when ex NASA scientist James Lovelock ends his devastating analysis of the effects of climate change with a scene of a few survivors emerging from the billions dead, riding camels out of a dry overheated world towards the arctic, where they will attempt to rebuild civilization in a cooler

28 For more on society turning a blind eye to brutality see Derrick Jensen’s terrifyingly touching memoir cum poetic tirade against the endemic violence and barbarism of system that sees the world as an inanimate object, “A Language Older than Words” - London: Souvenir Press, 2002.

29 Direct action is un-mediated and immediate action to change something. At its simplest, direct action is about taking direct control of our own lives, and refusing to accept the authority of bureaucrats or politicians, ‘leaders’ or ‘experts’ to act on our behalf. It shies away from the dangers and betrayals of representation, and it takes matters into our own hands and acting collectively to address the issues that concern us. If we see someone who is hungry, we cook them a meal, if we think a mega dam should be stopped we refuse to leave our houses when the water begins to rise. It’s not about asking others to do things for us, it’s doing things for ourselves – its homeless Canadians squatting empty buildings; US Hacktivists blockading the World Trade Organisations website, Indian farmers burning fields of Genetically Modified crops, landless Brazilian peasants rebuilding their lives on occupied land. It is not a tactic of last resort, something that we turn to when all other forms of campaigning; such as letter writing and lobbying have been exhausted. Quite the opposite: it is the preferred way of doing things, it is both a way of working and a model for how we see a future society run. Discovering Direct Action was my moment of deserting the art world, I slowly melted into a social movement, gave up the label of artists (except for when asking for art organisations to fund creative resistance projects), but kept the weapons of creativity by my side and I soon realised that this was the most powerful, inspiring and socially efficacious context that I could use those weapons in. For an overview of the global direct action movement since 1994 see the book that I co-edited – Notes From Nowhere ed., We are everywhere: The irresistible rise of global anticapitalism. London & New York: Verso, 2003 ref:P0424

30 Suzi Gablik was an enormous influence for me. Her writings developed notions of relational art practices, where the artists position is one of dialogue and embeddedness in the world rather than objective alienated monologue. For more on her work looking at art as a service activity rather than merely an expressive individualistic act see Gablik, Suzi - The Reenchantment of Art. London: Thames & Hudson, 1991

31 see Stip, David, 2006, Pentagon Says Global Warming Is a Critical National Security Issue: Report claims climate could change radically, and fast, in Fortune Magazine, January 26th.

climate.³² We know that the end of the world is no longer the preserve of the freaks on the edges of society but is now a warning coming straight from the establishment.

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A psychological study of holocaust survivors revealed that many of them refused to face the seriousness of the holocaust even while it was happening around them. One survivor recounted how his orchestra didn't miss a single beat in the Mozart piece they were playing as they pretended not to notice the smoke from the synagogue being burnt down next door.

Last year, the sister of one of the London 7/7 bombers allegedly wrote an email to her brother encouraging him to go through with the action "We all have to be firm and focused with reality as time is slipping away" she wrote "and there is really no time to be weak and emotional." ³³

Meanwhile in the depths of the academy recent research in "neuro-economics" – which works out ways that neuroscience can understand economic performance - has shown that "people with certain brain lesions, which limited their capacity for emotion, felt less fear, took more risks, and made bigger profits than rivals in a laboratory-based gambling game"³⁴. According to the logic of the market and terror³⁵, success comes to those who have damaged their capacity to feel.

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I was 14 when my father died, my mother took me to the doctor because I refused to speak about how I was feeling – it was the same doctor who a few weeks before had administered morphine to my father to soothe his cancer riddled body – "so how are you feeling?" the doctor asked, I opened my mouth, paused and projectile vomited across his huge shinny antique desk.

I wish I still knew how to feel like that.

As artists and activists we are somewhat awake to atrocity, somewhat attuned to feeling, it's often the fuel of our actions, the catalysts to our creativity and yet we also know that to feel too much is as paralysing as feeling nothing at all.

If on that winter Wednesday morning I genuinely felt deep in my gut the Baghdad carnage, the reality of climate change, the mass extinctions - would I really be able to sit

32 Lovelock, James, 2006, *The Revenge of Gaia: Why the Earth Is Fighting Back - and How We Can Still Save Humanity*. Santa Barbara (California): Allen

Lane.

33 Reported on the BBC, 6th October 2005 - <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4315896.stm>

34 The Guardian, October 3rd 2005, London - Neuro Economics, Briefing.

35 Subverting the role of terror, the Quebec performance group - Action Terroriste Socialment Acceptable (Socially Acceptable Terrorist Actions - ATSA) make urban interventions that demand public participation and incite questions about history, ecology and the city. From abandoned burning Sports Utility Vehicle's to guerrilla gardening their work simultaneously informs and provokes - See their DVD – ATSA – ref: D0242.

calmly and just write?³⁶ Perhaps the only question really worth asking is this:
What is the appropriate response to the suicidal insanity³⁷ of our culture? What is
our Response
– ability?

Answering it is the hardest thing – sometimes if I listen to my gut, my response is to wish I had the nerve to sneak out at night and burn down London's financial district³⁸, sometimes I dream of planting a beautiful community garden³⁹ that provides food for my neighbourhood, sometimes I think the most important thing is to help build social movements and plan actions that make revolution irresistible, sometimes I think I

36. Joanna Macy writes and runs workshops for activists on how to work through despair. Combining an understanding of contemporary science, (especially systems theory and cybernetics) with Buddhism, she sees the world and the self as a continuous interdependent phenomenon. The cause of social and ecological crisis, she says, is our pathological notions of the separate self. The abstraction of an isolated "I" is the epistemological fallacy of the western world, a denial of the symbiotic relational nature of reality. Refusing to face our fear and confusion about the state of the world is a refusal to see a deep connection with it, to see how when it is affected so are we. "What looks like apathy" she writes, "is really a fear of suffering." Staying in touch with the pain enables us to acknowledge the fact that, as father of cybernetics Norbert Weiner said, we are not isolated objects in the world, but "whirlpools in a river of everflowing water. We are not stuff that abides but patterns that perpetuate themselves." See Macy, Joanne (1991) *World as Lover, World as Self*, Parallax Press, Berkley.

37 How often have you felt that you were slipping into insanity? Sometimes it takes those who are crazy to have the courage to realise that it is not they who are going mad but society which is insane. If I had to credit one book for propelling me into the world of live art it was the writings of the "mad" Antonin Artaud, which gave me an understanding that to embrace suffering was essential to life and that performance had the potential to push human experience to the limits. See the extract from his *The Theatre of Cruelty* (page 25) in (1996) Huxley, Micheal and Witts, Noel, *The 20th Century Performance Reader*, Routledge, London and New York. Ref: P0119

38 I live on the edges of the fetid powerhouse of global finance, the City of London. This square mile of land, a slick machine for making money out of money at any cost, is a critical canvas for acts of contemporary creative resistance. Working in the audacious direct action collective, Reclaim the Streets on the "Carnival Against Capital" which took place in the City on June the 18th in 1999, was one of the most perfect moments of imaginative insurrection that I have ever experienced. Seeing 10,000 people invading the city streets during a working afternoon wearing carnival masks (we produced 8000 masks to facilitate a complex crowd choreography, involving splitting the crowd into four using the colour coded masks, a strategy that would surprise and flummox the police and enable us to head for our target the London International Futures Exchange) transforming a space of profit and plunder into one of play and resistance, was one of those rare moments when action became the sister of dream. Whilst our wild dancing sabotaged the City of London, thousands of others around the world were simultaneously participating in a global carnival of resistance, ranging from a "Carnival of the Oppressed" in Nigeria, with 10,000 Ogoni, Ijaw and other tribes closing down Port Harcourt, to a spoof trade fair in Montevideo, Uruguay - from Barcelona where a piece of squatted land was turned into an urban oasis overnight, complete with vegetables, medicinal herbs and a lake to an anti nuclear demonstration in Gujarat, Pakistan by trade Unionists, to actions against child labour in Senegal - from Street Parties across the United States to domestic and garment workers demonstrating against the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The police reported that they had never witnessed a demonstration with such a "level of sophistication and planning", art critic Brian Holmes wrote that he had experienced "A new cartography of ethical-aesthetic practice..(being) invented, embodied and expressed across the earth". See the DVD by Spanish artist/activist Marcelo Expósito - *Radical Imagination (Carnivals of Resistance)* and *Notes from Nowhere, We are Everywhere: the irresistible rise of global anticapitalism.* (see note 29)

39 Another audacious act of resistance created while I was working with Reclaim the Streets was the Mayday 2000 guerrilla gardening action which several thousand people illegally planting a vegetable garden in front of the houses of Parliament. Despite the (Magritte inspired) publicity which claimed "This is not a protest" and described the action as the creation of practical alternatives to urban food production, it was to be the metropolitan police's largest mobilisation of forces since the war and the Evening Standard headline on the eve announced "Army on standby for Mayday riot". During the event an unknown person climbed onto a statue of Winston Churchill and crowned it with a strip of turf, transforming the British symbol of authority into rowdy punk sporting a green Mohican. An establishment commentator suggested that this iconoclastic act should have received the Turner prize - see Wilson,

Peter Lamborn, and Bill Weinberg, ed. *Avant Gardening: Ecological Struggle in the City and the World*. Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1999.

should do as little as possible, just live in the moment mindfully⁴⁰, try to be a good dad, live lightly and refuse to produce more stuff on this planet crowded with too many things and distracted by so much busyness.

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As an artist I've never been happy merely communicating the problems; I don't want to make more images that tell the world about the atrocities of war; I don't want to do a durational performance that points out the destruction of the biosphere; I don't want to make art *about* issues, but *in* them, *with* them. I want an art that is immediate⁴¹, that is embedded in the issues themselves. An art that directly intervenes and attempts to transform the problem not illustrate it. I don't want to represent things but to change them.

The trouble was most people called that – Direct action⁴², something activists do. To be honest I never cared whether it was called art *or* activism. As far as I was concerned Art was a concept that most non-western cultures didn't even have, and something that separated creativity⁴³ from everyday life. I was much more at home with the Balinese concept that art was simply doing everything in the best possible way, that it was a question of paying absolute attention to the world and to one's responses to it.

The term activist was equally problematic, it makes people who work on social change issues into experts, separating them from the rest of society. Activists become specialists in rebellion and the transformation of life and yet so often they live in a bubble very different from the lives of so called "ordinary" people. Taking on the identity of the

40 Buddhist monk and practitioner of what has been termed Engaged Buddhism, Thich Nhat Hanh writes "When we do not trouble ourselves about whether or not something is a work of art, if we just act in each moment with composure and mindfulness, each minute of our life is a work of art." See his (1991) *Peace is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life*, Rider, London.

41 All experience is mediated to some degree, whether through language, perception or our senses, but imagining an art practice that attempts to have the least mediation possible is what Hakim Bey has done with his concept of Immediatism. Bey calls for a practice which is deeply reciprocal, that has no border between performer and spectators, that utilises the imagination and bodies of all involved and that challenges the alienation of capitalist culture. Exploring societies where the shaman is not the specialist of the imagination but where everyone is a special sort of shaman, a kind of "democratic shamanism," he cites parties where odours are swapped, potlatch feasts, quilting bees, orgies and games as examples of Immediatism. See Bey, Hakim. *Immediatism: Essays by Hakim Bey*, San Francisco & Edinburgh: AK Press, 1994.

42 For a manual of direct action, packed with instructions and accounts of first hand experiences, ranging from building giant inflatable tents to hold rebel circuses in, to how to sabotage your workplace, getting food from skips and shoplift without being caught to managing non monogamous relationships, making smoke bombs to embedding permanent messages into road tarmac. See the 624 page masterpiece of contemporary propaganda – *Recipes for Disaster: An Anarchist Cookbook*, (2006) Crimethink, Atlanta.

43 Poet, philosopher and farmer Wendell Berry writes beautifully about reuniting art and everyday life within the context of ecological collapse: "Though people have not progressed beyond the need to eat food and drink water and wear clothes and live in houses, most people have progressed beyond the domestic arts ... by which those needful things are produced and conserved. In fact the comparative few who still practice that necessary husbandry and wifery often are inclined to apologise for doing so, having been carefully taught in our education system that those acts are degrading and unworthy of people's talents. Educated minds, in the modern era, are unlikely to know anything about food and drink, clothing and shelter. In merely taking these things for granted, the modern educated mind reveals itself also to be as superstitious a mind as ever has existed in the world. What could be more superstitious than the idea that money can bring forth food." See Berry, Wendell, (2005) *The Way of Ignorance: and other essays*, Shoemaker & Hoard, Washington DC.

activist often assumes other people aren't doing anything to change their lives and that it's our responsibility as "The activist" to act on their behalf.

While Activists have the monopoly on social transformation, artists have the monopoly on creativity, both roles continue the unhealthy division of labour and specialism⁴⁴ that our culture requires to separate people from each other and to stop us being self reliant.

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I'm acutely aware that the world of art desperately lacks genuine social engagement and the world of politics lacks creativity and yet I try not to get stuck in either of them. I try to find a path in the very middle: the knife edge between the two, the space in between, neither one - nor the other - but both. I try to reside in that most powerful place on earth: no man's land, the land where the unexpected *always* happens.

The best art is always found in the most unexpected places. "Art loves to be incognito," wrote the painter Dubuffet "its best moments are when it forgets what it is called." Making art that was invisible as art⁴⁵, was important for me. As a young live artists I was sick of doing performances in public spaces where I would inevitably end up talking with audiences about definitions of art and why the weird things I was doing in public was in fact art. I didn't care what it was called, what I cared about was what it *did*⁴⁶. Was it successfully transforming society?

I soon realised that by making the art "incognito", the work could touch people more. They didn't bring all their baggage and expectations of what art should do or be, and where it should be found. They became more open to the experience itself. For a while my work would use fronts⁴⁷; such as a fake urban development agency, to promote the

44 Specialists are people who know more and more about less and less, until they almost know nothing. Most forms of radical practices are "post disciplinary" rejecting all fixed disciplines. "Interdisciplinary says the more disciplines the better, but postdisciplinary", writes cultural theorist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett "says, "Forget them." Who needs them? Take a problem and go anywhere you need for the material." See the wonderful series of dialogues, including with Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, that explore the shifting site of the aesthetic in Gablik, Suzi. *Conversations before the End of Time: Dialogues on Art, Life and Spiritual Renewal*. London: Thames & Hudson. 1995.

45 The Situationists believed that the realization of art was only possible through its suppression. For a whirlwind tour that links the history of Dada, Situationism and Punk via the Paris commune, medieval religious sects, and more, see Marcus, Greil. *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of The Twentieth Century*. London: Picador. 1989.

46 To many it is the very uselessness of art which gives it its status. In 1990 Artists Mel Chin's worked with biochemist Rufus Chaney developing sculptural experiments with plant species that can be planted on toxic waste sites to clean up the contamination. The National Endowment for the Arts, decided that the work was "not art" and temporarily removed its funding from the project. For Chin, the aesthetic of the work was seeing the return of healthy decontaminated soil at the end of the project. See - Matilisky, Barbara C, *Fragile Ecologies: Contemporary Artists' Interpretations and Solutions*, Queens Museum of Art/Rizzoli, New York, 1992. Another artist to seek solutions is Mierle Laderman Ukele's, who works with the unglamorous yet environmentally crucial issue of urban waste. For over twenty years she worked "in -residence" with the New York waste department, setting up a series of performances, rituals and installations that provided poetic yet pragmatic answers to the problem of managing the mountains of rubbish from a megapolis. She describes her activity as Maintenance art, "unless we maintain," she says, "we can't continue". See more on her in Gablik (see note 30) and Burnham, Linda Frye, and Steven Durland, eds. *The Citizen Artist: 20 Years in the Public Arena: An Anthology from High Performance Magazine 1978-98*. Gardiner NY: Critical Press, 1998. ref: 1998 243

47 Spoofs and pranks have become a key tactic for many art activists and culture jammers. For an overview of artists using the genre, see Juno, Andrea, and J. G. Ballard. *Pranks!* San Francisco: Re/Search Publishing, 1987.

unearthing of a buried river⁴⁸, or a spoof sex shop and peepshow to ask questions about men's use of pornography⁴⁹. But it wasn't enough just for the art to be incognito, the label artists should go as well, and so I eventually dissolved⁵⁰ into social movements and applied creativity directly to acts of resistance – collective events, unsigned and un-attributed to artists. An action would be planned like any performance piece, crowd movements choreographed like dance, protest strategies would be scrutinised with the detail of design, propaganda would be as beautiful and enlightening as possible. Elegance, detail and crafting were essential.

I began to realise that producing forms that were difficult to categorise was just as important in the context of activism. So I started making the problematic stereotypes of “political activism” incognito too; collectively developing protests that were more akin to free parties than boring marches⁵¹, bringing out radical publications that looked (on first glance) like actual daily newspapers, being involved in riots that resembled carnivals⁵², designing actions that imitated the corporate PR campaigns of the very company targeted⁵³, training demonstrators to behave like circus clowns rather than dangerous

48 For documentation of this project “The Effra Redevelopment Agency” see J Kastner and B Wallis – (see note 18)

49 For more on this work that mixed performance, video installations, therapy, media interventions (including a frightening appearances on Richard and Judy!) see the catalogue Jordan, John “Consuming Desire”, Camerawork, London, 1999.

50 Critic Grant Kestler in his essay “Dialogical Aesthetics: A critical framework for Littoral Art” redefines the artist as “collaborator in dialogue rather than expressive agent”. See Variant Magazine – Volume 2 number 9, special supplement.

51 The direct action group Reclaim the Streets (RTS) , which I worked with (1995 – 2000) wanted to get away from a traditional confrontational protest situation and prefigure our imagined world in the moment of protest itself. We developed the street party, to reclaim public space from the motor car and consumerism and inject pleasure into political action. It involved bringing sound systems and thousands of dancers illegally into urban streets. One of RTS's infamous moments took place while 10,000 dancing people occupied London's m41 motorway, hidden under giant carnival figures we dug up the motorway with jackhammers to plant trees. The street party was to prove an idea which spread to global proportions by the end of the 90's. For more see Duncombe (see note 20) and McKay, George (ed.), DIY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain, London & New York: Verso, 1998.

52 Reinventing tactics of resistance has become a central preoccupation for the global movement of movements. How do we make rebellion enjoyable, effective and irresistible? Who wants the tedium of traditional demonstrations and protests – the ritual marches from point A to B, the permits and police escorts, the staged acts of civil disobedience, the verbose rallies and dull speeches by leaders? Instead, why not use a form of rebellion that embody the movements' principles of diversity, creativity, decentralization, horizontality, and direct action? These principles can be found at the heart of an ancient form of cultural expression, the carnival. Throughout history carnival has been a time for inverting the social order, where the village fool dresses as the king and the king waits on the pauper, where men and women wear each others' clothing and perform each others' roles. This inversion exposes the power structures and illuminates the processes of maintaining hierarchies – seen from a new angle, the foundations of authority are shaken up and flipped around.

The unpredictability of carnival with its total subservience to spontaneity, where any individual can shape her environment and transform herself into another being for an hour or a day, ruptures what we perceive to be reality. It creates a new world by subverting all stereotypes, daring imaginations to expand their limits, turning the present world upside down, if only for a moment. See Richard Schechner's essay “The Street is the Stage” for more on moments when rebellion and carnival collide in Cohen-Cruz, Jan ed. Radical Street Performance: an international anthology, London and New York: Routledge, 1998 refP0360

53 Joseph Beuys never divorced his role of teacher from that of artist and activist. Teaching was a way for him to create open forums to debate his expanded notion of art. Even social movements (The German Student Party) were founded during his charismatic classes. I have tried to put teaching at the core of my practice, for me the point of radical pedagogy is not to tell students how to change the world, but to show them that the world we assume to

be static and sacred is in fact fluid and malleable. This prank www.firstfreebus.co.uk was the result of a four month course I facilitated with University

Drama students in 2006.

anarchists. “Always do what’s least expected of you and always expect the unexpected” became my shapeshifter’s creed.

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It was the summer of 2000. I was about to go to Prague, to help organise the actions to disrupt the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). I had just read how the “pope” of surrealism, Andre Breton⁵⁴, had taken the works of Charles Fourier⁵⁵, the prolific 18th century Utopian with him on a long train journey across Europe. Drawn to Fourier’s complex ideal community with its liberation of passions⁵⁶, its joyful feasts, erotic freedom and non-compulsary playful work, I decided my train journey to Prague would be an opportunity to finally read his work. I spent the next few days trawling the bookshops of London. No one had anything by or about him. Disappointed, I got on the train without a Utopian volume at my side.

Many hours and borders later, I arrive in Prague. It was late at night, my friends had told me to meet them in a hip internet café in the centre of the city. The café had a tiny one room bookshop annex, unable to resist the joy of browsing I took a look. As I entered the dimly lit space I sensed something strange, a kind of ‘I’ve been here before’ sensation, a peculiar recognition of something familiar. I moved towards the shelves, eyes straining

to see the book titles in the low light. My first surprise was that most of them were in English, and then it slowly dawned on me. This bookshop was like a mirror of my own bookshelves at home, all my favourite books were there: Situationists, Dada, Abbey Hoffman, tomes about protesters, pranksters and rebel poets everywhere. It was as if someone had transported all my books to this tiny room in the back streets of this

54 Surrealism is perhaps the most popularly known of the avant-gardes, ask any western school kid and they will probably be able point you to a surrealist paintings. No doubt it will be by the great betrayer of surrealism, Salvadore Dali, kicked out of the movement and nick named “Avida Dollars” (an anagram of his name) meaning “greedy for dollars”. By the 1930’s he had sold out to “café society,” designing for corporations, painting ambassadors, supporting General Franco and erotically attracted to Hitler. All of which went against everything the surrealists who were “determined to make a revolution” believed in. “Rebellion is its own justification, completely independent of the chance it has to modify the state of affairs that gives rise to it. It’s a spark in the wind, but a spark in search of a powder keg” wrote founder Andre Breton. Dedicated to creating radical social change, the surrealists even set off a little known revolution. It took place in Haiti in 1946 following a lecture tour there by Breton and it toppled the repressive government. Now their radical political actions have been all but wiped out by the flood of benign coffee table books. Yet in the 1920’s and 30’s it was taken for granted that artists should engage in social change, Expressionists, Dadaists and Futurists all wanted to radically transform society. Diluted by a rewriting of history and subject to commodification by the art market they must all be spinning wildly in their graves. See Lewis, Helena. Dada Turns Red: The Politics of Surrealism. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 1990.

55 Charles Fourier’s extraordinary imagination anticipated many things, Freud’s psychoanalysis, climate change, the radical pedagogy of A.S Neil, the non specialised working community of Marx and Engels, the affinity groups of the direct action movements and the digging of the Suez and Panama canal. At the heart of his vision of a harmonious community were human passions. All evil was the consequence of repression and social peace could therefore only be achieved if society was built around the liberation and utilisation of passions. We all have attractions towards particular people and types of activities, Fourier’s Utopia was managed around these individual and collective passions. His vision however, was not of a chaotic orgy of free love and riotous abandon. He was an obsessive orderer, his work room was filled with pots of flowers, all regimented by colour or species, most of his work involved devising meticulously intricate systems of classification for matching different peoples passions so that they could live and work in harmony together. see Beecher, Jonathan, Charles Fourier: The Visionary and His World, University of California Press, 1986.

56 I don’t remember who wrote this, or where, or which library or bookshop I read it in – but its seems fitting words to end these footnotes that have taken us step by step across a world of politics and passions – “Don’t ask me what to do to change the world. Ask yourself what makes you feel alive, because the world needs more people who feel alive.”

magical city of alchemists and fairy tales. Then I saw a book that I didn't recognise, I reached up to get it from the high shelf , it was a big chunky grey volume, the title on its thick spine read: Charles Fourier: The visionary and his world.

The library angels had returned.

Extract from *Unleashing The Collective Phantoms: Essays In Reverse Imagineering*. Brian Holmes, Autonomedia, New York , 2008

LIAR'S POKER

Brian Holmes

Basically, what I have to say here is simple: when people talk about politics in an artistic frame, they're lying. Indeed, the lies they tell are often painfully obvious, and worse is the moment when you realize that some will go forever unchallenged and take on, not the semblance of truth, but the reliability of convention. In a period like ours when the relationship to politics is one of the legitimating arguments for the very existence of public art, the tissue of lies that surrounds one when entering a museum can become so dense that it's like falling into an ancient cellar full of spider webs, and choking on them as you struggle to

breathe. Now, the mere mention of this reality will make even my friends and allies in the artistic establishment rather nervous; but it is a reality nonetheless. And like most of the political realities in our democratic age, it has directly to do with the question of representation.

> **Picture Politics**

Does anyone doubt there exists a politics of representation? Such people have clearly not looked at the television during a political campaign. But worse, they have not looked at social movements. They have not witnessed the endless capacity of people who do not occupy positions of elite power, and who do not enjoy direct access to major media, to project their messages nonetheless, by means of signs, images and

gestures. Nor have they realized how effectively artists can work in such »outside« contexts: one need only think of Gran Fury, amidst the New York Aids activism of the eighties; of Ne Pas Plier, with the jobless people's movements in Paris in the nineties; or of the many artists who have participated in recent counter- globalization demonstrations and campaigns. Artists can play a vital role in this kind of »picture politics«.

At the same time, it is easy for artists to heed the injunction of the museum, the magazines and the market, which say: "Picture politics for me." Do a picture or a sculpture of politics, carry out the representation of political conflict, as in the installation piece by Thomas Hirschhorn, *Wirtschaftslandschaft Davos*, shown at Kunsthaus Zürich when Hirschhorn won the prize for Young Swiss Art in 2001. This work uses model houses, toy soldiers, real barbed wire and other ready-made materials to represent the besieged Swiss valley where the world's most powerful people annually meet. Hirschhorn's style can be referenced to dadaist collage, observes one critic; but his major source is "the practice of excluded people who know perfectly well how to get their messages across, by using whatever they find." [1] In this case the excluded people are those who confront the barbed wire at the World Economic Forum. And since counter- globalization has been a hot subject, representing them is a perfect way to become popular in a museum.

Hirschhorn goes further, though, because he turns a bit of ordinary life into a representation of politics, with his *Bataille Monument* in a Turkish quarter of Kassel. This life-sized library, snack bar and makeshift TV studio is a participatory project, whose effects in the neighborhood itself I won't presume to judge from a distance. What concerns me is the way he manages its relations to the artistic frame. On the taxi stand where visitors awaited to be ferried from the Documenta 11 to the site of the monument, Hirschhorn placed a quotation from the American artist, David Hammons: "The art audience is the worst audience in the world. It's overly educated, it's conservative, it's out to criticize, not to understand and it never has any fun

... So I refuse to deal with that audience, and I'll play with the street audience. That audience is much more

human, and their opinion is from the heart. They don't have any reason to play games, there's nothing gained or lost." Hirschhorn claims to have abandoned the framing structures of contemporary art, for a more authentically engaged social practice. But if that's the case, why the taxi, why the exposure of the site to visitors' eyes, which turns the social project into a representation? What kind of game is he playing?

In his case there are certainly things to be won - like the prize for Young Swiss Art, or the Marcel Duchamp prize for the promotion of French artists, awarded to Hirschhorn by the ADIAF association in the year 2000. The Duchamp prize is sponsored by PriceWaterhouseCoopers, a transnational consulting company, specializing in mergers and acquisitions. Kunsthaus Zürich, where Wirtschaftslandschaft Davos was shown, is regularly funded by the Private Banking subsidiary of Crédit Suisse, which ranks 31st on Fortune's Global 500 list. Documenta 11 was sponsored by Volkswagen, Deutsche Telekom and Sparkassen-Finanzgruppe. Does all this sound familiar? In the contemporary art game, the picture of excluded people's politics is worth a lot to the included - including transnational corporations. Of course I'm aware that the prize commissions are independent, just like exhibition curators. Their independence supports the notion of an autonomous artistic sphere, separate from the economic nexus that sustains it. These kinds of separations, between abstract financial decisions and their substantive effects, are exactly what the protestors at the Davos meetings refuse. Hirschhorn retains an interest in the artistic frame he claims to leave behind. Yet he seems particularly uncomfortable there; and it's intriguing to see how he ups the symbolic stakes in the Davos piece, formulating a direct critique of transnational capitalism even as he is pursued and courted by the corporate-backed prize commissions.

How does picture politics work, when it is associated with a proper name and presented within the contemplative frame of the art institution? Invariably it produces statements like these: "I represent the people," or "I represent a social movement," or "I represent the excluded" - which are the classic lies of representative democracy, when it serves to conceal private interests. [2] Of course, this root fact makes myself, a self-styled "critic" writing in catalogues and magazines about the relations of art and politics, into one of the baldest liars of them all. And for some perverse reason I want to tell you how it's done.

➤ Rules of the Game

Liar's poker is easy to play. The deck is composed of kings and aces. One person draws, and names the card in his hand; the other judges if he's telling the truth. If you draw an ace, it's easy: you have no choice but to say it's an ace. If you draw a king, then the game begins: because you can always bluff. Each time you claim to hold an ace, the other player must look in your eyes and decide if it's real. If he thinks it's not, he calls your bluff; and if he's right he wins a dollar, or ten, or a hundred, depending on how high you've set the stakes. If he's wrong, you win the same. And if he doesn't do a thing, he loses fifty cents, or five bucks, or fifty dollars, and the card goes back into the pack, so that no one ever knows if you were telling the truth.

For our purposes, the artist draws the cards, and the public calls the bluffs. Nowadays, of course, the artist often plays as a team with the curator or the critic; so those relations are never entirely certain. As for the cards, the ace is political reality, and its image in the museum is highly attractive. This gives the artist a great advantage: because to prove an ace is a bluff, you have to go out looking, whereas the public prefers to stay inside the museum. The artist, however, also has a great disadvantage, which is that the house - I mean the people who run the game, the founders, the funders, the boards and directors - actually can't stand aces, and if they think the artist really has one, they will never let him or her set foot inside the museum. So in both cases the artist has to bluff his way through, either claiming political engagement to live like a king inside the white cube, or hiding it to siphon off money, resources and publicity for use by a social movement. Occasionally, when the lie is too grotesque, the public will call the bluff; and then the artist has to give up some cultural capital. Even more rarely, it turns out that the artist is really involved in a social movement, in which case he or she is soon fated to disappear from the museum.

Now there's an obvious question: Why would anyone want to play such a game? In fact the question can be asked about anyone playing by the unbearable rules that hold in almost every social field today. These are the rules of inequality, exploitation, domination - those nasty realities we have to lie about in polite democratic society. When Pierre Bourdieu developed his theory of the semi-autonomous, rule-governed social fields, he first had to ask why people participate. He pointed to different forms of interest.

Individuals can have a monetary interest in participating in a given field, they can do it to acquire economic capital. They can also have an interest in the relations to be formed with powerful people, so they play to acquire social capital. But in the highly professional world of art, even more than in

most other fields, social capital is at least partially acquired through the accumulation of cultural capital, which can be conceived as the ability to produce and display the very specific types of signs, images and gestures which are most valued within a given field at a particular period. Accumulating cultural capital means mastering complex fetishes of meaning which have been constructed and transformed over time. Thus it becomes apparent that a powerful function of belief is at work. You must believe that these fetishes are really valuable, or 'interesting.' Bourdieu came to call this belief *illusio*, which he defines as "the fact of being invested, caught up in and by the game." "Being interested," he continues, "means ascribing a meaning to what happens in a given social game, accepting that its stakes are important and worthy of being pursued." [3] In the game we are discussing, the fundamental interest (or illusion) is the attainment of autonomy: a historical ideal whose terms are open to endless struggle. [4] There is a passion of this *illusio* without which it would be impossible to understand what happens in the artistic field today - in particular its lies, its bluffs, its representations.

Can the *illusio* that accounts for the very coherency of the field be transformed, gravitationally shifted, so that its prestigious objects - the signs, gestures and images - are reevaluated? Such a result could only come about through a shake-up in the system of positions occupied by specific players. This is what we are now witnessing. In the artistic game of liar's poker, certain players are increasing the stakes, and steering the conventional bluff of picture politics to the point where the contract that holds together the artist, the curator, the public and the house - that is to say, the museum as a social institution - finally breaks. When you can bluff your way to a very dramatic break, then there is the possibility of changing the field itself, of beginning to play a different game.

➤ Upping the Stakes

Let's recall certain wagers that link the 1997 Documenta (dX) to the 2002 edition (D11). The former attempted to reknit the ties between poetics and politics, within a history considered on a world scale. Its major innovation - the 100 Days lecture program organized by Catherine David - was a Napoleonic conquest of neoliberal globalization as an object for artistic discourse. Indeed, the exhibition as a whole could be criticized for using intellectuals and historical artists to represent a protagonism that the consensus of the European scene could not offer. An essay in the catalogue by Masao Miyoshi, illustrated with a geopolitical map by the late Oyvind Fahlström, sums up the equation. Entitled "A Borderless World?," it gives a detailed account of the rise of the transnational corporation and the attendant changes in the hegemonic functions of culture. Miyoshi asks the key question: "Are the intellectuals of the world willing to participate in transnational corporatism and be its apologists?" [5] But what no one said is how the world's artists, critics and curators could convincingly answer, in the negative.

No one on the center stage, that is. But part of the dX bluff was to include a cutting edge, the so-called "new technologies." The Hybrid Work Space would be inhabited, among others, by artist-activists making their first uses of the Internet, for a ten-day workshop called "über die grenze." I quote from an interview with Florian Schneider that appeared on the sans-papiers website founded by a French social movement shortly after the occupation of Saint-Bernard Church in Paris in 1996:

Q: About the Documenta, here, you can talk about illegal people in a very famous art exhibition. I think it is not so easy to do such things in France. Do you think it's easier in Germany, or is there something special here, at the Documenta? You're talking about illegal people!

A: Yes, sure, we are also a little bit surprised. On one hand we obviously have a fool's license here, we can declare everything, we can also nearly practice everything. On Sunday, we opened a passport exchange office, and we asked people to give us their passport to pass it on people who need it much more, which are undocumented or so called illegal people. A policeman appeared, and he asked "Is this art or not? what are you going to do with the passports?" And we asked him for his passport. He refused to give us his passport, but he promised us to talk with his superiors about the action, and that was what we wanted to reach. So it seems that we could do everything we want. It's great and very funny, but in the same way, it makes me nervous a little bit, because there is even no reaction by the other side. That's the main problem in the art context. We decided to use the possibility to make politics here because it's very important at this moment to spread the campaign we started, and to spread the aims we have, spread them very widely. [6]

The participants of "über die grenze" broke the conventional contract with the art institution, by refusing to stop at the borders of representation. Taking literally the corporate rhetoric about freedom of movement under globalization, they used dX as a physical and virtual platform to spread a new campaign, indeed, a new form of self-organization: the social movement "Kein Mensch ist illegal," which over the last five years has not ceased to grow and metamorphose, continually changing names, languages, spokespeople, participants, tactics... D11 recognized the importance of this autonomous, non-representational politics by inviting Florian Schneider to speak at the first of its Platforms, held in April 2001 under the title "Democracy Unrealized." [7] A year later, a No Border camp was organized by activists in protest against the Schengen Information System in Strasbourg, while D11 raked in the tourist crowds in Kassel.

Personally, I had entirely missed the Hybrid Work Space in 1997. But I did take part in the recent No Border camp with the conceptual group Bureau d'études, distributing a cartographic work - or what you might just call a tract - entitled "Refuse the Biopolice." One of the best encounters in Strasbourg was the Publix Theater Caravan bus, with a multimedia laboratory inside, a traveling café on top and a theater troupe performing anti-deportation interventions in public space. A week after the camp I found myself in Kassel, amazed to see a tremendous spectrum of precise and moving artworks, whose focus, in the majority of cases, was either oppression and imprisonment, or even more often, the contemporary border regime.

The activist pretensions of an experimental group in 1997, and the direct action of a social movement today, seemed to be justified, extended, deepened by almost every piece in the immense exhibition.

By searching across the world, D11 found the artists to support the critique that had been formulated in the previous edition. After watching Amar Kanwar's video on the Indo-Pakistani conflict, including fascinating shots of the ritual closing of the militarized border, I stepped out into the sunlight to discover none other than the Publix Theater bus, parked in front of the Fridericianum. But the next surprise was a police officer ordering the bus to leave, under the guidance of a Documenta security manager. The troupe chanted over their PA system, "Thank you, thank you to the German police for this beautiful performance, free speech is being silenced everywhere, thank you, thank you." And then someone walked up to the manager and the chief cop and handed them "Refuse the Biopolice." Both proceeded instinctively to roll it up into the form of a military man's baton - as though artworks, in the hands of power, could only be a weapon and nothing more. [8]

➤ **Playing the Ace**

"Artistic freedom is a fundamental right. And we feel free to promote it," proclaims the Sparkassen-Finanzgruppe in the pages of the D11 catalogue. You wonder how they feel about all the artists

participating in the current round of social struggles. Take one example: Las Agencias, a group which came together shortly before a week-long conference and workshop in October 2000 at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Barcelona, with an impressive list of picture-politicians (@™ark, Reclaim the Streets, Kein Mensch ist illegal, Ne pas plier, Communication Guerrilla, London Indymedia...). The program was called "On Direct Action as One of the Fine Arts." Held at the public's insistence outside the museum, in an anarchist union hall, it was a great success. Work continued for months thereafter on subjects like free money, activist fashion design, the practical use of pictorial shields, and a traveling Show Bus to bring culture to the people. Then, on the day of huge demonstrations organized against the World Bank in March

2002 - when 500,000 people took to the streets of Barcelona - the local police came to raid the bar of the MacBa, used by Las Agencias. And in the weeks after this event, the Show Bus was attacked and destroyed in broad daylight - undoubtedly by undercover police. It goes without saying that the breaking point had been reached: Las Agencias could no longer be funded by the museum. Pursuing their détournement of consumer ideologies, the group started a new campaign around the theme Yo Mango, a slogan referring to

a trendy fashion brand - but which also translates as "Just Nick It." Yo Mango practices redistributive shoplifting, in the spirit of thousands of unemployed Argentineans whom the international banking system left with no other choice but to steal their dinner, ransacking transnational supermarket chains. Is this artistic freedom? Yo Mango has become a social movement, crossing the border of representation. But from time to time - to the rage of some former members - they still exhibit in museums. Meanwhile the MacBa continues, more legitimately and subversively than ever, its inquiry into the relations of art and politics.

Political involvement is popular in art right now, and for good reasons. How do art professionals maneuver in this environment, between pressures from the public on the one hand, and from the financial backers of the institutional "house" on the other? What kind of game do they play? Bourdieu has this to say about moments of aesthetic transformation: "Revolutions in art result from the transformation of the power relations constituting the space of artistic positions, a transformation which itself is rendered possible by a coincidence between the subversive intentions of a fraction of the producers and the expectations of a fraction of their public." [9] We have seen this type of situation emerging over the past few years, as the globalized, flexibilized economy shakes up the hierarchy of social positions, rendering new alliances imaginable. And it is clear that some art professionals are playing the beginnings of a transformative game. But it would be naive to think that others do not see these situations unfolding. The art of maintaining social balances through the management of cultural trends has long been developed by the European social democracies, and is being taken over by the privatized institutions. [10] In other words, we must suppose that a fraction of those in power seek to manipulate the public, by instrumentalizing the cultural producers who play their tricks for them.

Our problem is to account for the strange duplicity of art institutions. Consider Documenta again. Why did the people who run what used to be the ideological set-piece of Western art, created during the Cold War less than fifty kilometers from the East German border, with the transparent aim of exalting the abstractions of subjective freedom in the face of socialist realism, suddenly decide to pick as curator, first a French woman with a lingering Marxist mentality and a strong interest in Brazil, then a Nigerian man with an intense investment in postcolonial theory and historiography? The only realistic answer I can find is that those who make the decisions saw that the first post-89 edition, curated in 1992 by Jan Hoet - a chic, friendly and mildly patronizing art-world type with "good taste" and a willingness to have fun without rocking the boat - was perceived within the artistic field as a gigantic flop. Just more of the same, looking paunchy and overprivileged. How then could Documenta remain at the cutting edge? If the Cold War was over, shouldn't the flagship "Western" exhibition now somehow engage with globalization? Did not that first entail finding out something about what globalization is (Catherine David's highly intellectual show), then diving right into and producing its multicultural legitimacy by actually exhibiting living artists from outside Germany, England, Italy, France and the USA - people who had never made the cover of Flash Art or Artforum?

The institutional "house" now seeks its interest in a complex game, which alone can reconcile the economic nexus it provides with the cultural capital it seeks among the more radical factions of the artistic field. It must ask its cultural producers for the ace of politics, while proving all the while (with the help of the police, if need be) that this ace is merely a bluff, that it is really a king (the sovereign power of illusion in representative democracies). And yet it is through this double game that new symbolic possibilities for conceiving and shaping the ways we live - what Nietzsche might have called "the transvaluation of all values" - can be distributed on the scale that an exhibition like Documenta offers. The Nietzschean dance happens not in some glorious void of the contemplative intellect, but in the real world. You have people whose genuine radicality is also a beckoning chance for career advancement, being instrumentalized by others wanting to add legitimacy to a globalized society facing a groundswell of critique. And the instability of the game - the depth of its gaping contradictions - has rarely been so great as today, while the corporate rhetoric unravels and everyone must face the reality of their positions in the contemporary economy, with its proliferating borders.

An example of how these contradictions unfold was the ad hoc Platform 6, called for 24 hours on the lawn in front of the Fridericianum, by No Border again, in collaboration with Rom people facing expulsion from Germany. This time the obvious parallels between the activist demands and the artistic arguments developed within the show itself helped overcome the resistance of the security team. Just imagine, for a moment, the different kinds of cultural capital that suddenly appeared on the table: "Okwui Enwezor, künstlerischer Leiter der Documenta, rief aus New York an. Die Kuratorin Ute Meta Bauer und andere MitarbeiterInnen und KünstlerInnen unterstützten und vermittelten. Thomas Hirschorn und andere KünstlerInnen und Documentas diskutierten aufgeregt über Documenta-Hierarchien und das Sicherheitssystem. Eine aufgeregte Nacht alles in allem." [11] The institutional struggle becomes visible at

unexpected moments like these, when everyone involved must take a public stand on the value

of the symbolic cards they are playing.

> Beyond Representation

These observations are pragmatic, based on personal experience. The truth is that the strategies of liar's poker are inevitable today, as cultural institutions both public and private try to mediate between the logic of profit and prestige and the desire for alternative valuations. But that can be put more bluntly: in the age of corporate patronage and the neoliberal state, art is becoming a field of extreme hypocrisy. [12] And so it directly reflects the crisis of the representative democracies. The temptation is then to cease playing the game (the anarchist solution), or to simply exploit the museum's resources for other ends ("radical media pragmatism"). Both positions are justified, from the activist point of view. But there are disadvantages to leaving entire sectors of society to rot, as each new swing to the neo-authoritarian right is there to prove. The most interesting question within the artistic field then becomes: How to play the exhibition game in such a way that something real can actually be won?

The very notion of cultural capital shows how domination operates through forms that need no longer have anything to do with rarity or accumulation. And the beauty of art in its turn away from the object is precisely that you can give it away: Dinero Gratis, as the Yo Mango group proclaims. Art today is one of the few fields open to experimentation with the technologies, habits and hierarchies of symbolic exchange, fundamental to a media-driven society. But these experiments can only take on a transformative power in the open, evolving context of a social movement, outside the cliques and clienteles of the artistic game. Which is why even the work of someone as outwardly radical as Thomas Hirschhorn appears so dubious. How can anyone be sure of its success, when the reception is dominated by his proper name?

The rising fortunes of interventionist art, the multiplication of exhibitions devoted to sociopolitical issues and activist campaigns, are proof enough that something political is at stake in the artistic field. And the stakes keep rising, as artists, curators and critics vie for radicality, relevancy, effectiveness and meaning. But one must constantly question what kind of currency we'll get when the chips are cashed in. The only way to go beyond the small change of individual prestige on the institutional market is to radically reverse the valuations effected by the critical gaze. And this requires an effort from a great many players of the game: a transformation of the very definition of cultural capital, a shift in the illusion of the artistic field. What is ultimately at stake is the very definition of autonomy, which can no longer be established in the sphere of representation alone.

Right now, the greatest symbolic innovations are taking place in self-organization processes unfolding outside the artistic frame. And it is from the reference to such outside realms that the more concentrated, composed and self-reflective works in the museum take their meaning. The only way not to impoverish those works, or to reduce them to pure hypocrisy, is to let our highest admiration go out to the artists who call their own bluffs - and dissolve, at the crisis points, into the vortex of a social movement.

NOTES

1. "Thomas Hirschhorn, Wirtschaftlandschaft Davos," by Patrick Schaefer, in *L'art en jeu*
2. Cf. Bureau d'études, "Cadavre de l'autonomie artistique," in *Autonomie artistique et société de communication 1* (Paris, 2002).
3. Pierre Bourdieu, *Réponses* (Paris: Seuil, 1992), p. 92.
4. Bourdieu devoted an entire work to the historical constitution of the ideal of autonomy, and to the field of struggle it opens up: *Les Règles de l'art* (Paris: Seuil, 1992).
5. *Politics/Poetics, Documenta X – The Book* (Ostfildern: Cantz, 1997), p. 193.
6. At <http://www.bok.net/pajol/international/kassel/florian.en.html>
7. Video available at <http://www.documenta.de/data/english/platform1/index.html>
8. Cf. the press release at http://zone.noborder.org/x11/templ/news_det.php?itemid=11. I am told that a Israeli delegation, visiting that day, had asked for maximum security. But of course this precise request is part of the worldwide security and border system.
9. Bourdieu, *Réponses*, p. 81. For a full development, see the last chapter of *Homo Academicus* (Paris: Minuit, 1984).

10. In Europe, the most relevant model of this takeover process is Third-Way cultural policy in Britain; see former culture minister Chris Smith's book, *Creative Britain*, and the discussions in Julian Stallabrass, *High Art Lite* (London: Verso, 1999), chaps. 6 and 7.

11. http://zone.noborder.org/x11/templ/news_det.php?itemid=18

12. Gregory Sholette offers a precise observation about the "fool's license" given to a certain kind of critical art: "What has been revealed by the institutional critique is one persistent and disturbing fact: many cultural institutions are led by the private interests and personal tastes of an invisible elite, rather than by their stated philanthropic and educational mission. Yet while the institutional critique has directly focused significant attention on this cultural contradiction for the past thirty years, it now appears to provide a degree of closure by reinforcing the notion that the museum offers an uncompromising democratic zone for engaging in civic dialogue." "Fidelity, Betrayal, Autonomy: In and Beyond the Post-Cold War Art Museum," *Third Text*, Summer 2002.

Originally appeared in Springerin #1, 2003.

Anex 4

E-Mail 1

Die von mir gesendete E- Mail wurde von Jordan kopiert und Antworten direkt eingefügt, deswegen reicht es aus seine Antwortmail abzu drucken.

On 22 Jan 2014, at 20:25, Carmen Fetz > John Jordan
Jan 31 um 6:26 PM, John Jordan > Carmen Fetz

Dear John

I hope you are doing well-

For some reason it did not send you my last e-mail. and so you did not hear from me for a while.

Thank you for the material you accorded to me- it was a great help. Now as I moved on with my theses I have some more open questions. Here they are:

Would you say that you have any specific strategy how to create (a conscious of) social responsibility or how to make people act? (maybe the Useres Guide of Demanding the Impossible - but on the other hand you might have some brief key words which are important for you)

this is a great and very important question you ask and of course

The key is not just to “create consciousness” That is a very liberal way of thinking that social change happens. If we imagine the civil rights movements in the US in the 1950, which won the right to vote such that a few generations later a black man is now president of the country, something un imaginable back in the 50’s, then we can see how real radical organising works rather than liberal pressure groups. Radical organising understands that you have to use force to deconstruct the institutions of oppression, of course to build such a force needs radical forms of political education, but that is different from just hoping to change peoples hearts and minds, as its more about teaching to organise and struggle. If the civil rights movement has put all its energy into persuading white people to be less racist and to believe that blacks were human enough to have the vote, we might still have a united states with the apartheid system it had in the 50’s where there were ‘only white’ restaurants, schools, buses, toilets etc.. What the movement did was to use direct action ... disobey the laws directly, eat in white restaurants, boycott the segregated buses (thus having economic leverage) etc.. these things forced the change of institutional structures and it was these structures changing that enabled white people to become aware of their privilege and less racist etc...

Direct Action is the key- i.e. providing immediate hands on solutions to a problem, if you understand that people are homeless you don’t analyse, outline or explore the problem, you don’t make a documentary or an exhibition about it, you open a squat to house them. If u see a forest being destroyed to build a coal mine you jump on the bulldozers to stop the destruction. Its direct. Not asking people to change their behaviour, not lobbying etc...

Im worried that liberate tate at the moment is too stuck on the liberal ideas that if we get enough media and get enough people involved then the tate will somehow change - there was a big strategy day last saturday in london where i was able to attend but i think you should really talk to folk who are working in liberate tate at the moment .. have u emailed them ..

If you want more on this see the book Deep Green Resistance - which has a good analysis of the difference between radical and liberal forms of strategy.

Do you think the first question “if people want to obey or disobey” was manipulative?

No not at all. The workshop was called “DISOBEDIENCE makes history” the whole theme was disobedience. The question was genuine and the way we asked it was by using the spectrum line technique where they decided

where to place their bodies on a line depending on their position e.g. if you are totally YES we should disobey you go one end, NO the other, MAYBE in the middle etc... and then the debate begins... Popular forms of education have to begin with where the participants are, but of course to do that it needs to frame interesting pedagogic questions otherwise it's just wishy washy

Did anyone drop off during the workshop? If yes why?

Not that I remember.

Who financed the workshop? (if it was Tate (and within that a certain percentage of oil) is this ethically ok then?

Yes they financed it and I gave the money to groups that fight climate change.

What do you understand by turning reality into material?

See Joseph Beuys's definitions of social sculpture, Situationist theory of art and everyday life and Alan Kaprow's essay "The real Experiment" - where it's not a question of putting reality into a museum or art context, but to transform that reality itself directly.

Do you see parallels between a socially engaged artist and a school teacher?

yes if the teacher is free to experiment and use popular education techniques (see Paulo Friere etc.)

And where were there any reactions/ changes after the action at the BP Sponsor Party. or after any other performance... apart from public attention?

all this is documented on the Liberate Tate web site - and best to talk to people now involved - DID I give you the mails ?

did you see the German article I wrote for KZM ?

greetings from train rushing through wet wet landscape

JJ

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