Artistic Bedfellows

HISTORIES, THEORIES, AND CONVERSATIONS IN COLLABORATIVE ART PRACTICES

EDITED BY
HOLLY CRAWFORD

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UNIVERSITY PRESS OF AMERICA,® INC.
Lanham • Boulder • New York • Toronto • Plymouth, UK

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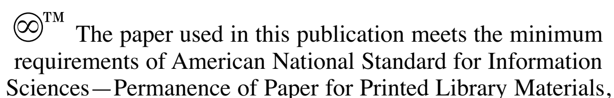
University Press of America,® Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard
Suite 200
Lanham, Maryland 20706
UPA Acquisitions Department (301) 459-3366

Estover Road
Plymouth PL6 7PY
United Kingdom

All rights reserved
Printed in the United States of America
British Library Cataloging in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Control Number: 2008926478
ISBN-13: 978-0-7618-4064-0 (paperback : alk. paper)
ISBN-10: 0-7618-4064-8 (paperback : alk. paper)
eISBN-13: 978-0-7618-4191-3
eISBN-10: 0-7618-4191-1


The paper used in this publication meets the minimum
requirements of American National Standard for Information
Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials,

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Acknowledgments

An edited book is a strange animal. It grows this way and that over a certain time period, and this one is very eclectic. It is not a compilation of already existing papers; it is a quest for an answer to my question, "what is collaborative art?"

I would especially like to thank Michael P. Farrell, Gillian Whitely, Ken Friedman and Grita Insam for their comments. Gillian Whitely read and commented on the entire manuscript. I would also like to thank Peter Selz, Dawn Ades, Michaela Geilbelhausen, Majorie Perloff and Peter Stastny for their continued encouragement and suggestions. I would also like to thank Lillian Fellmann and Zhanna Veyts for their help and interest in this project. Zhanna Veyts contacted many of the earliest authors, encouraged them, and discussed their contributions. Those papers were first posted online. They were the first papers in what was intended to be a peer-reviewed journal. Lillian Fellmann read and edited many of the early papers and helped recruit several board members for this journal. Given Lillian's short time in New York, and part-time status on this project during her third year as a Fulbright Fellow, this ultimately seemed impractical. So I decided that an edited book would make more sense. This was also a major undertaking. She spent part of her last three months working on the earlier version of this book. We discussed which papers might and should be included. She contacted authors and asked for images. Some of which were never used; that is both papers and images. She suggested short comments from the board might be interesting. After she left, in the June of 2006, she moved back to Europe and her own projects became her focus. I received and solicited more papers, longer essays as well as shorter ones over the next year. The organization was undertaken by me and is my sole responsibility. An edited book is not a monograph but a diverse set

of voices that need an order and direction for the reader. This book was particularly difficult due to its eclectic nature. Spelling and endnote style was not normalized. There are differences. They were maintained.

Lastly I want thank Joanne Foeller who did the final proof and index for my last book and this one. I know every author in the book has many people they would like to thank as well, but there isn't room. Each author's ideas and thoughts have influenced mine. That said, I add my special thanks to my husband George who set up the foundation which allowed for the funding of Zhanna, Lilly and other expenses related to this book.

Holly Crawford
New York City
September, 2007

Introduction

There are two art issues in the book—collaboration and art practice. Is collaboration a contemporary practice? There were studios, guilds, and groups with manifestos. That is not new. So what is new? The word is fairly new. That is for sure. And it is used in many fields. Team and group work dominated the schools and work place since the late sixties. So it is not surprising that many artists have collaborated on at least one project in their careers. Some instigated the projects. And many artists came to the practice 20 and 30 years later. Analysis and understanding of the practice are essential. Some of the questions are: What is the practice? Has it changed? If so, how has it changed? For instance is the process the same, but the subject different? Or are both very different? Is a collaborative practice enough to make the work art if you're a group of artists with an interesting and mysterious name? And what is collaboration in art and who and how is it practiced? Can a group make an artistic decision? How much do the individuals really merge? And are these really the correct question? Does this approach help us understand the art?

Do they need to merge or drop their egos to collaborate? Can they? The "I" is always there. There are other models that are less hierarchical than a corporate or military model that is in place in other fields. Current scientific research projects, which had a history of designating one principal investigator is now being supplanted with many investigators with equal weight. The principal-investigator model and practice might have been driven by the funding agencies. This is a change in structure and the way we think.

Collaborative and collaboration are relatively new words derived from Latin and French roots meaning to labor together. During WW II a collaborator was someone who worked together with the enemy. Now it has taken on

a much more positive meaning, as it has replaced the word "collective." And right now it is a buzz word in art. Everyone in art is collaborating with someone now, or has done so in the past. This may occur when two or more ever more than one person work together towards a defined and accepted goal. It all sounds simple.

We are very connected to a great, invisible world of people. For instance, Dick and Jane decide to make a loaf of bread together. How is the object made and who will make it? Who decides when it is finished? Whose vision is it? We have different skills. Maybe one goes to the store and the other kneads the dough. We might even enjoy each others' company, and in the end we are not interchangeable cogs in a machine. We are individuals. I can hardly make a loaf of bread alone, from scratch, growing the wheat, making the farm implements needed to plant, nurture, irrigate, and harvest it, chopping the wood for the oven to bake it, making that oven and the tools needed to make it, and doing everything else needed for a finished loaf of bread. Our culture is very complex. What if the loaf of bread is sliced? It's a new concept; is it mine or did someone suggest it to me. Who gets the credit for the slicing idea? Does Dick give Jane credit for the slicing idea, but give no credit to all the people who, over history and before history, conceived and implemented the ideas involved in the production of a loaf of bread. Who makes the decisions, and who settles any differences? How was the style developed? Is the bread rye or sliced white bread? It is raw and frozen? Or is it ready to eat? And what is more important, the loaf or the process? Did anyone else want the loaf after I or a group has made it? And does a brand name make a difference—Phytoplankton, Dick and Jane, or Jack Sprat. It seems to in our mass media celebrity-driven culture.

There are many Dick and Jane groups in the world of art now. Some come together for just one project and others for "ever." Jane may decide to give Dick credit but what about all the others who helped them in their work, and those who went before, from whom their work may be derived?

The word collaboration is now widely used. Here is an interesting and enlightening example from Philippe De Montebello, the Director of the Metropolitan Art Museum in New York. He writes, "An enterprise such as this *Bulletin* is by its very nature collaborative."[1] OK. "If space allowed, one would also gratefully acknowledge all the staff members past and present, curators and conservators, cataloguers and housekeepers alike, who have contributed to the furniture's documentation and its maintenance in generally superb condition."[2] Sounds good, and this is all very egalitarian and democratic, but what about the furniture makers? Without them there would not be any period furniture to display, document and conserve. They may all be team players,

but a corporation, even a non-profit, is hierarchical. Montebello is now the collaborative team leader and only he is known by name.

This book is predominately a collection of unpublished scholarly papers from scholars, critics and artists around the world, who have put forth new research collaborative art practices. Some papers were offered, and a few were solicited. The original question that drove me is: Is collaboration just a new buzzword or does it have meaning artistically, historically and in current practice? Since I'm an artist and art historian, I come to the subject from two perspectives. As an historian I want to know more than the artists want to reveal.

In addition to the scholarly papers that are survey articles and case studies, this book includes many short comments and insights from artists and others who have an interest in the field and who have collaborated. It is not comprehensive or by any means complete. They provide a juxtaposition of the subjective with the objective, adding relevant source material, or documents, to the historical analysis and current intellectual discourse. I wanted both historical perspective and the flavor of the current scene, and to do this found artists willing to share some of their work and internal processes, often a very sensitive matter. I understand; I'm also an artist and I do not want to spend too much time thinking about my own process. Inclusion of this material may raise the eyebrows of some art historians, but I think that in the end it adds material that is relevant and important to the history and current discourse. Instead of dispersing throughout the volume I have collected them in a separate section. I considered the suggestion of inserting them between the other analytical papers, but to do so would be using them as editorially to comment on the papers, which was not my intention. The contemporary comments and interviews are cases constituting an artistic survey of different types of collaborative practice, rather than a simple compilation of artists who collaborate. They are the artists looking at themselves. This is an important point and should not be overlooked.

Very simplified: Collaboration is a process that is engaged in by two or more persons that work together towards a specific end; that end may be an object. The creative artistic collaborative process to be fully understood must ultimately be analyzed—or at a minimum be understood, that is may be perceived/viewed—from two different perspectives. One is from the outside. The historian or viewer is looking at object X that was painted by the group Phytoplankton. Should it make any difference to the viewer how the work was executed? Yes, if the collaboration is the point. But, also are there any particular issues or problems associated with the practice? And are there any benefits? Some of the problems were addressed by Blackwell and Good, and Andrea Thal as well as others have addressed some of these issues. Benefits were discussed by several artists, such as Orlan and others.

Looking at the hypothetical group Phytoplankton, some of the questions that might be posed are the following. How do they function? How do they make decisions? Who makes the decisions and how are they made? How is the system constructed? Even, who constructed it and what are the rules? Who gets to play? If you do, how do these people interact? How does this system or group interact with others? These questions are important in art, culture and society.

The researched papers in the book mostly present original, previously unpublished research and analysis, building on the seminal work on collaboration done by artist and art historian Charles Green and social psychologist Michael P. Farrell. The aim was to broaden the history and move the discussion forward by adding new historical material, highlighting the diversity of ways in which collaboration can take place.

Many artists, and that word is used in the largest sense, at one time or another have worked with another person or a small group to accomplish a project. Many hands merge into one artistic hand, as Charles Green has argued. In some cases, these couples or larger groups come together on a project—which may or may not involve a physical object—with a well defined, limited objective, such as the making of a video. In other cases, the objective and time frame are much broader, as artists collaborate in forming an artistic vision or aesthetic. These groups are large and historically far ranging. Several papers, such as Horace Brockington's and Peter Frank's, deal with this type of collaboration.

Having sorted out these two very different types of collaboration, I wanted to look inside the box. Given a decision to collaborate, how do artists actually go about collaborating? A natural question for one trained like myself, both in contemporary art history and social psychology. Grita Insam, an Austrian art dealer, and Professor Michael P. Farrell share this curiosity with me. Grita Insam told me that she had been very interested in that question for years, but the collaborative artists she represents were not forthcoming. She and I might want to look inside the box, but artists are reluctant to discuss these issues. As an artist myself, I understand their reluctance. How was I inspired? Where did I get an idea? These are often questions I don't want to answer, partly because the process is so intimate, so private, and partly because the answer may not be entirely clear, even to me. Where does creativity come from—one person or many? When several people collaborate, ideas emerge from individuals, but are modified by interactions within the group. But exactly how do two or more people work out precisely what idea they will execute, and who will do what? This is the very question that drives Shawna Ferris's paper on the collaborative text by Harryman and Heijinian. As Ferris points out: did one of them write the text on the right and the other author the

text on the left or did both of them write both texts? What attributions should be attached to a text has been addressed in literature starting in the 1980s. There is the writer and the reader. Hence there is the artist and the audience, but this has become more complex with participation art. Where are the boundaries?

Some of the answers that the artists have provided are humorous, but still informative. I trust that this book sheds some light on some these tricky questions.

Up to this point the questions and my commentary have primarily taken the tack of social psychology as it applies to art and art history. Farrell wrote a book on artists and writers from just that point of view. There are others.

Lillian Fellmann, and others come to the collaborative art differently. They are interested in the political power of the group. The group might have more power, and hence political and social change might be wrought by their collaboration. Yes, collaborative groups may have more power politically, but do they artistically? And if the purpose is to influence and make social, economic and political changes, how is that measured? And is it art, advertising, or a public service message? Does it make any difference if it is art and. . . ? Does the group have more power than the individual? This is an important contribution of much collaboration. Some actions of collaborative groups have been acts of bravery that have resulted in their imprisonment. Beret Norman discusses this in her paper adds this group of artists to the historical discourse.

The papers in the book address a variety of questions in the context of collaboration in different art practices. Where is the line between a collaborator and an assistant, where one artist with a vision is helped by other artists or technicians who assist in its implementation? For example, when does the work of a studio assistant rise to the level of collaboration with the artist? Is there collaboration where a group of artists, each working independently and creating distinctly different art work, do so within the context of a particular vision which may have been spelled out by only one person, but which may persist for many years? The many historical examples include Surrealists, FLUXUS, Impressionists, the members of the Bauhaus, and the Pre-Raphaelites, among many others. I have come to the conclusion that collaboration may be a case either of many hands working to make one object, or of many artists working as part of a collaborative effort, whether working together at one place and time, or working entirely separately in space and time. As Peter Frank pointed out in our dialogue on this subject, what begins as a collaborative effort and vision of many, may later become an historical "ism."

The only paper in this book previously printed is Peter Frank's *Ken Friedman and the FLUXUS Years,* and it has been revised. It was originally published more than 20 years ago. It was written at a juncture in Friedman's life

and it reflects his and Peter Frank's thoughts on FLUXUS. I decided to reprint it here for several reasons. It is an important work, but the original publication was very limited and is now almost impossible to find. While this book is not an encyclopedic survey, it would be incomplete without a paper on the first international collaborative, or as referred to in their material "collective"—FLUXUS. Finally, it is one of several essays in this collection about the collaborative practices that may be involved in an artist's residency, a very important and relatively new artistic environment.

There are more than 40 contributors in this anthology. Many have written very scholarly, academic papers including previously unpublished original research and analysis. Added to this set of original scholarly papers are comments, conversations, short essays and quotations about collaborative art practices from groups who have practiced together for many years, or in some cases carried out only one project with other people. Some of the collaborators were all artists, while some collaborators came from different fields to join with artists. I have taken the unusual approach of combining the objective with the subjective, the long and the very short, conversations and essays, comments, case studies and scholarly articles. It is an eclectic mix which is why I chose the subtitle of histories and conversations. It seemed a better description. It is neither a discrete simple work, nor an exhaustive survey. It is presented as a text and reader to stimulate conversation and further research and discussion. In the end this book illustrates many of the different ways artists have collaborated and do collaborate. The book examines the field broadly, while asking specific questions with regard to the issues of interdisciplinary and cultural difference, as well as the psychological and political complexity of collaboration, illustrating that a diversity of approaches is needed in the current multimedia and cross-disciplinarily world of art. To the end this, my hope is that the book illustrates, analyzes, and provides historical insight into the many different ways artists collaborate, and possibly don't, and is an anthology and resource on the subject. Ultimately more questions were raised than answered.

NOTES

1. Philippe De Montebello, "Director's Note," in Daniëlle O. Kisluk-Grosheide, *"French Royal Furniture in the Metropolitan Museum," The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* (Winter 2006), p .2.
2. Philippe De Montebello, "Director's Note," in Daniëlle O. Kisluk-Grosheide, "French Royal Furniture in the Metropolitan Museum," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* (Winter 2006), p. 2.

Part One

HISTORIES, THEORIES AND CONVERSATIONS

Chapter One

The Decoration of the Paris Panthéon by Paul Chenavard—A Particular Brotherhood

Pierre-Olivier Douphis

On April 16, 1848, one month and a half after the February Revolution, the French provisory Government asked Paul Chenavard (1807–1895) to decorate the French Pantheon in Paris. This project was one of the most impressive works of art ever imagined: seventy scenes—representing the great men who had contributed to the evolution of mankind—would have decorated the interior of what was to become the Temple of Humanity. From Deluge to Napoléon Bonaparte, Zoroaster, Pericles, Caesar, Jesus Christ, Charlemagne, Pope Leo X, Louis XIV, Voltaire and many others would have been depicted in paintings on the walls, between the columns, but also on the piers and even in mosaics on the ground.

Unfortunately, as soon as this commission was made public, some artists, led by Paul Delaroche, leagued against it. They accused Chenavard of depreciating the artistic value of their own production by asking 10 francs per day and per person. At the same time, the catholic party also raised against the project because it judged the themes chosen by Chenavard inappropriate in a building that was still considered as a church.[1] Due to this opposition, after three years of intense work—during which twenty-one canvases were created—Napoléon III gave the Pantheon back to the Church in 1851, and the artist was thus unable to complete his project.

This was a real shock for Paul Chenavard, since the decoration of the Pantheon was his life project: in 1827, he met—supposedly—Hegel,[2] with whom he discussed the Philosophy of History.[3] The German philosopher told him that the artistic representation of this philosophy was still to be done. Later, during the July Monarchy, the artist designed the majority of the scenes that were to be shown in the Pantheon. This could explain the fact that he did not produce many paintings and exhibited only once at the Paris Salon.[4] Nevertheless, after

1851, he was allowed to keep his workshop in the Louvre until the 1855 Paris World Fair, still hoping that his pieces would be placed in another Paris building. But the Second Empire was not interested. In 1871, after the return of the Republic, Chenavard expected to now get the chance to go back to his project. But the new conservative government left the building to the Church and asked the best artists of the time to produce religious decorations (which can still be seen there). Meanwhile, it sent nineteen finished paintings to the Lyons Museum. In 1885, Chenavard and his admirers made a last attempt when the building was turned back into a Pantheon for Victor Hugo's funeral. But removing the 1871 decorations and replacing them with Chenavard's would have presented some difficulties. Therefore, the 1848 Temple of Humanity decorations remained a dream.

But even if Chenavard's canvases were not displayed in the Pantheon, the entire project is still known thanks to a series of articles entitled "Le Panthéon, Peintures murales," written by a friend of his, the French writer Théophile Gautier. Those articles were published in a newspaper—*La Presse*—in September 1848.[5]

They are important because they are the first to acknowledge that, as early as 1848, the artist was helped by collaborators in order to enlarge the *modelli* he had produced. Gautier further stated that if Chenavard had worked alone, "it would have taken two hundred years." But with the help of "twenty-five or thirty friends, disciples or simple workers" the necessary time could have been seriously reduced. The author cited the artist's forecast: "Within two years, the 'cartons' will be delivered to the public's judgment. Within eight years, with its decoration completed, the Pantheon will be the rival of Rome's Saint-Peter."[6]

Thanks to Gautier's writings, one could understand that the collaboration Chenavard wanted to create could be considered as a national atelier. The revolutionary government wanted to build such ateliers in order to give all unemployed workers a job. Unemployment had also stricken the artistic milieu and a majority of artists hoped and asked for the creation of the "République des arts" which could have helped them obtaining commissions.[7] The Pantheon decorations could have been the first step toward this utopian era: painters would have worked at it for a few years and the French State would have paid them for their task. This can explain why Chenavard received letters from artists who were ready to work with him. But the new government, which was in a very uneasy situation, wasn't prepared to pay twenty or thirty painters to work in the Pantheon. Then, contrary to what was expected, in September 1849, three people received official commissions: Dominique Papety, Philippe Comairas and Hippolyte Holfeld. A fourth one, Jean-Louis Bézard, was chosen after Papety's death. Everyone was to paint a scene:

Papety/Bézard worked on the two panels that represent *The Capture of Carthage*, Comairas on the two panels of *Attila* and Holfeld on the *Christening of Constantine*.

They all received eight hundred francs each. We also know that Bézard worked until the end of 1850, Comairas until the beginning of 1851, and Holfeld until 1853. Nevertheless, it is hard to believe that Chenavard carried out the fifteen remaining scenes single-handedly. Maybe unofficial collaborators were associated to the project. This one scene supports this suspicion: when the Archbishop of Paris, His Grace Sibour, came to visit Chenavard in his studio in September 1852, an "assistant" was also working there. Unfortunately, we know nothing about this collaborator (his name or his trade) or any other potential assistants.

It is hard to imagine what happened between 1849 and 1855, when Chenavard was preparing the Pantheon decorations. There are no archives we can rely on. It is clear, though, that the collaboration set in motion in order to accelerate the project was a failure. Chenavard and his aides were not fast enough to be able to present a completed work to his opponents. But in collaborating with other artists, he had reached his other goal—to avoid a personal style.

A NON-PERSONAL STYLE OF ART

In his articles, Théophile Gautier explained that Paul Chenavard needed collaborators ready to "sacrifice their personality for the benefit of the works." The author went on: "He thinks that great work has to be impersonal and look like the product of a mysterious aggregation, rather than the expression of a particular nature."[8] Chenavard took the "unknown workers who elevated and chiseled the cathedrals" as an example. Gautier explains: "Chenavard wants his paintings to unfold on the walls and on the friezes without anybody thinking of the hand that drew and fixed them." And he concluded: "The entire work will look like it came out of the same hand and of the same palette on a single day and, so to speak, without any effort."

In Chenavard's mind—because he was invested in the masterpieces of the western world—there was a fundamental difference between easel and mural painting. First of all, there was a thematic difference: while the former represents portraits, landscapes or genre pictures, the latter shows historical, religious or philosophical scenes. Then, there was a difference between the techniques: with the former the artist had to develop his own style, and that's why Gautier wrote about "easel paintings of a more or less limited dimension whose execution is and has to be the high point," while "with [mural paintings], the

benefit of chiaroscuro, transparency and stroke disappears; a beautiful layout, a great style, a simple and dull color[9]—that's what it requires." Ever since his return from Rome, Chenavard wanted to follow the great examples of the past: the frescos of the Sistine Chapel, of the Vatican Chambers and of the Pisa Campo Santo.

Reading Gautier's writings helps us to understand Chenavard's philosophy: to him, if the easel paintings speak to the senses, the mural paintings speak to the mind. In his opinion, the latter were the only ones that produced great art. He hated the little canvases that pleased the bourgeoisie and wanted to express the great philosophical ideas of his time, just as Giotto, Benozzo Gozzoli, Raphael or Michelangelo had expressed those of their own century.

Those painters had only been preoccupied in expressing the ideas of their time. In the 19th century, artists thought a great deal about how their works would be judged in the following centuries. If Chenavard wanted to leave a mark, it was to have his *work*—not his name—worshiped. That's why he wanted to give up style and color in his paintings: he thought style was the mark of an epoch and that color brought out irrational sentiments. But a painting with neither style nor color would have been too unspecific. Chenavard wanted to create a timeless piece, an art work that would be directly dictated by reason—or, in Hegelian terms, by the absolute Spirit, which has often been regarded as God himself.

Collaboration with other artists was therefore important. A single artist couldn't have realized this massive work. It had to reflect the people, if not manhood, and the only way to realize this for the Paris Pantheon would have been in collaboration with the best artists of the world. Unfortunately, Chenavard couldn't afford to ask the best artists to come and work with him. As a result, he had to put up with artists who were only moderately famous at the time.[10]

Nonetheless, his idea was carried out to the extent possible. Thanks to his three official collaborators and to some unknown ones, the artist succeeded in creating twenty-one 181-inch-high canvases that were devoid of color and his personal style. If today these works are not exhibited in the Pantheon, Paul Chenavard did at least produce them and they show the esthetical point of view of a very particular artist.

A PROPHETICAL ART

Chenavard had great expectations for his decorations. They translated a universal philosophy, which numerous intellectuals of the 18th and of the first half of the 19th century adhered to, into the visual field. Rather than letting

this ideal rest hidden away in books that most people wouldn't read anyway, the artist wanted to share it in a great monument that was the symbol of the emancipation of Humanity. Chenavard was convinced that art represented a more efficient way to teach people and to change their minds, and it is a fact that he considered himself a prophet. Gautier clearly expressed this in his text: "He is a historian of ancient religions and the prophet of the new religion—that represents the reign of Reason, the last and supreme stage in the evolution of humanity."[11] And in order to help Chenavard to announce this new religion, his collaborators would act as his "disciples" (a word that Gautier used as well) constituting a brotherhood.

Besides, it is not surprising to see that at the same time the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was created in England, a couple of decades after the creation of the German Nazarenes, as well as the brotherhood of the less codified Barbus (the Bearded) in David's atelier. We do not know if Chenavard had heard of the works of Dante Gabriele Rossetti and his comrades before they were exhibited at the 1855 Paris World Fair, but it is certain that he knew of the work of the Nazarenes,[12] which had greatly influenced him (as well as, most certainly, the pieces of the Barbus).

The idea of founding corporations came from Enlightenment, which recommended the creation of influential groups to counteract the stranglehold of the repressive institutions (the Church, the Kingship, the Nobility) and to replace God and King by Reason. Many European thinkers expressed that idea: Vico and Herder before Hegel, then Goethe, Carlyle, Comte, Lamartine, etc. Whether they were deists or atheists of various kinds, they all believed in the same thing: that Reason rules Humanity. The origin of the Freemason—which was certainly the best-known group in those mystical milieus—is to be found here. More radical groups followed, like the Saint-Simonists and the Fourierists, who advocated that society should seek progress and the happiness of humanity. Following their example, artistic fraternities appeared at the beginning of the 19th century—they saw the artist as a worker for universal well-being.

Replacing God with Reason,[13] this new religion needed adequate works of art as icons, while the artists thought they had to follow the example of their predecessors. They would form fraternities similar to convents or medieval lay corporations (one might want to think of the "cathedral workers" Gautier mentions). It is true that those brother-painters had a lot in common with monks: they worked in the same spirit, often dressed in the same way, believed in the same things and toiled toward the same goal. The best role-model was Fra Angelico, who was both a great painter and a sincere believer who truthfully expressed his beliefs in his art. Thanks to those fraternities, painters influenced and challenged each other for the sole greatness of art.

However, what the brotherhood Chenavard wanted to create was somehow different from the other groups. In a sense, self-aware artists used them to be acknowledged as real and competent workers, whose productions were personal pieces and whose signature was a guarantee of quality, founded those. In Chenavard's brotherhood, collaborators would have been disciples who would have enlarged the scenes drawn by the master and would have not even signed them.

According to Chenavard, these sacrifices were necessary, as the work of his brotherhood should mirror the expectations of the cutting-edge thinkers of his time. It was not the artist's name, which was to be read on the canvas, but the message of those thinkers. The artist was to show Humanity's struggle toward its emancipation. Under Hegel's influence, he would have shown the blooming of Logos/Reason[14] in the history of Mankind. For that purpose, the artist was to create pure art, without style or color. Escaping from its time, it would have evoked the medieval and Renaissance frescos as well as Antiquity's bas-reliefs (like those on Constantine's arch in Rome), which were conceived of as the highest examples of absolute beauty. The decision to work like ancient artists should have made it easier to salvage their long gone greatness. Furthermore, the Pantheon paintings would not so much have brought back the art of the past as to show the timelessness of its purity.

It is obvious that Chenavard's art would have been mystical. This mysticism runs through Gautier's entire text, and is especially penetrable in the following sentence: "[Chenavard] finds that great works have to be impersonal and seem to be the product of a *mysterious* aggregation rather than the expression of a peculiar nature."[15] The word 'mysterious' expresses here much more than it seems. It tells us that the Pantheon decorations had something to do with religious mystery, which recalls the Greek *mysterion*. If Jesus Christ needed apostles to build up the economy of salvation, Chenavard needed collaborators to reach the mysterious greatness of art.

The artist/prophet could then be, like the philosopher, the intercessor between the people and Reason. But it seems that, if all artists are able of such an intercession, only the greatest are clearly aware of their function and know how to carry their message to the people. Furthermore, in collaborating with them, average artists could have shared the message of Reason and would have been considered as disciples—disciples who then could have spread the prophet's message in their own works.

However, the younger generation was not yet ready to accept those ideas. If Théophile Gautier seemed to adhere to Chenavard's mystical ideals, some years later, the poet Charles Baudelaire, another friend of Chenavard's, purely rejected it. In a text called *L'Art Philosophique*, which was published after Baudelaire's death, he wrote: "What serves to achieve the utopian and deca-

dent character of Chenavard himself, is that he wanted to indoctrinate under his direction artists like workers, in order to enlarge his cartons and to color them in a barbaric manner."[16] Baudelaire didn't say a word about the content of the decorations and took only interest in the production organization. Thus, the poet expressed that content and form should be linked and that, if one of them was bad, the other couldn't be good. On the other hand, he didn't understand the mystical importance of collaborators as disciples. Baudelaire only saw them as simple workers to whom Chenavard denied the status of artists.

These two reasons, according to Baudelaire, prevented Chenavard from founding his utopia. Furthermore, it led to a dead-end. Rather than regenerate art, the painter's desire to abandon what was the basis of art as well as any great artist's work (style, colors, handmade works) would have hastened its decadence. Baudelaire's criticism enables us to see that beyond his philosophical and mystical ideas, Chenavard needed collaborators to achieve his goals.

A GREAT IMPOTENCE

Many artists have said that it is more exciting to begin a project than to lead it to its end. Such is the case for Chenavard who, during all his life, started numerous works but had great difficulties to finish them.[17] Maybe he could have completed the Pantheon decorations if he had lived in a time of liberty, or less political volatility, if he had made greater efforts and if he had found enough collaborators to help him. But the fact remains that he was not able to finish his project alone. In this sense, political opposition to his work appears as a pretext for him not to accomplish his task. One could even speculate, that in a way, outer conditions helped him to conceal his own impotence.[18]

For it is indeed a question of impotence. Yet, it is not a technical incapacity to hold a pen or a brush (there are various and beautiful drawings and paintings which demonstrate his artistic skills), but the fear to transform the work he had imagined into material. During the creative act—which is since Plato an act of little reputation—this imagined work loses its quality. During the transition from thinking to gesture, absolute beauty becomes relative. Perfection evaporates from the work. During the materialization, it becomes finished—that is to say, temporal, simplistic and, moreover, fragile. "The artist who seeks perfection in everything achieves nothing," wrote Eugène Delacroix in his *Journal* and it is possible that, when he wrote that, he was thinking of his friend, Chenavard. Perhaps he had clearly seen the problem that laid in his friend's ambitious mind.

This psychological impotence was also supported by the way the history of art was studied in the 19th century. At the time, several art theorists, like Charles Blanc—another great friend of Chenavard's—thought that the genius of an artist could be measured by his ability to translate absolute beauty into a piece of art. Looking at the creations of the time, those theorists were paralyzed by the necessary poorness of their themes as well as the techniques used. According to them, art in the 19th century was decaying and on the verge of dying, since it was no longer able to express the old Ideal. But, beyond their pessimism, they remained optimistic for they hoped an artist would come and restore art's greatness. Chenavard shared this idea; and during his youth, after his discussion with Hegel, he firmly believed that he was that artist and that the Pantheon decorations would revitalize art. Seeing that it was a harsh task and that many people opposed his project instead of encouraging it, the forty-year-old artist felt that he was no Michelangelo. Eventually, he became ready to give art what could appear as a fatal blow, for he was certain that it was necessary to its regeneration. But only a few people were ready to follow him. On the contrary, other artists believed that following tradition was the only way to succeed when a few others—the avant-garde—thought that the artist had to be free to represent what he wanted (and that was Baudelaire's point of view). Art definitively took a third path—neither the Academy's, nor Chenavard's pessimistic-optimistic one.

It is then certain that, by giving up the desire to create, Chenavard avoided having to reflect upon the difficulty of transposing absolute beauty in works of art as well as trying to express his obscure philosophy through artistic means. After the Pantheon failure, and by producing very few canvases while leading many discussions, he preserved art in all its phantasmatic magnificence, and kept it in the realm of ideas where it cannot fail and always will live up to any ideal.

To him, the few works he had created were successfully devoid of any individual characteristics (for, if he was a prophet, it was Reason and not Art he pondered), and since they were empty of any esthetic[19] potential, other people were able to realize them. He finally could see them as corrupted reflections of his personal ideal. In the Paris Pantheon decorations, no one would have found personal gratification—neither Chenavard who didn't want any, nor his collaborators who couldn't have received any either. If the decorations had seen the light of day, they would have been like a ghost: since the artist refused to involve himself in his work, it would have existed without any personality and without any soul. Since he wanted it to be everyone's creation, it would have been nobody's, for, in the wake of individualism, no one wanted to remain invisible behind its universalistic claim. In order to overcome its degeneracy, Chenavard dreamt of his decorations to be born without doubt

and apprehension, to be mature from its inception, perfect from the very first attempt. Finally, it indeed avoided corruption in being condemned to never having had the possibility to exist.

Chenavard's 1848 project for the decoration of the Paris Pantheon was a complex one. Not so much because of the theme he chose to be represented and the philosophical mirroring intended, but because of the artist's personality. Indeed, by refusing to associate his name to the decorations, he wished to abandon style and color and to work with collaborators who would have helped him in bringing his message to the front and into the spectators' eyes. But all this finally appears to be a pretext to hide his own impotence to create a personal style. It's hard to deny that he truly believed in the possibility of creating a brotherhood to decorate the Temple of Humanity but, above all, it is certain that the army of aides, which would have gathered around him, would have masked his incapacity to produce great decorative pieces. Despite what Gautier wrote concerning the speed with which the work could have been done thanks to the support of other artists, it appears that, from a psychological point of view, Chenavard was facing a crucial antagonism. On the one hand, he had to achieve the Pantheon decorations as soon as possible, and that's why he hired artists to work with him. On the other hand, his quest for the absolute left him without a choice but to work alone all his life. Alone, because he was the only one who could understand what he needed to accomplish. All his life, because his project strove for perfection, and therefore would never have come to an end. Finally, Paul Chenavard considered the Pantheon as a refuge. The decorations that he had prepared could never be realized, except at the moment of his death, when he himself wasn't standing in his way anymore but was leaving the building behind him, like a second skin, his double.

NOTES

1. The construction of the Sainte-Geneviève church began under the reign of Louis XVI, and was finished after the Revolution. The revolutionaries turned it immediately into a Pantheon. Napoléon gave it back to the Church in 1806. It became a Pantheon once again in 1831.

2. In a later interview, Chenavard said that he had met the philosopher in Rome. But Hegel never went there. If the artist met him, it was probably in Paris, in 1827.

3. Hegel believed in the meaning of History. According to him, a superior Spirit that was often called God but that he would call Reason influenced great men. Each one of these great men led his people toward improvement by recovering the techniques and the spiritual notions from the weaker peoples they conquered. A stronger people would in turn defeat them. The 19th century modern men thus felt that they

were custodians of this knowledge that was handed down throughout History. Chenavard's project was to represent a series of great men at the very moment when they became leaders of their peoples by taking the right decision at the most crucial time.

4. In 1846, he showed *L'Enfer* (*Hell*, Montpellier, Musée Fabre).

5. They were republished—with minor corrections—in a collection of texts, *L'Art moderne*, Michel Lévy frères, Paris, 1856, pp. 1–94. From now on, I will refer to this publication.

6. T. Gautier, «Le Panthéon, Peintures murales», *L'Art moderne*, 1856, pp. 93–94 (my translation). Gautier explained that Chenavard first pasted his canvases on the inner walls of the Pantheon and then painted them.

7. For a good study of the state of the artistic milieu of the Second Republic in France, read the exhibition catalogue: C. Georgel, *1848, La République et l'art vivant*, Paris, Fayard, RMN, 1998.

8. Gautier, 1856, p. 90. My translation.

9. This judgment was distorted by the contemplation of works darkened by successive layers of varnish and candle smoke, as well as time-intensive studies of black and white reproductions.

10. I am referring to Delacroix, Ingres, Delaroche, and so on. Papety was quite well known as he had won the Grand Prix de Rome in 1836. But who, at that time, had heard of Bézard, Comairas or Holfeld?

11. It is astonishing that Chenavard, who venerated Reason, considered himself the leader of what looks like a sect. But in fact, Reason carries mysteries too. That's why Gustave Comte's positivism was not the result of a metaphysical "why" but a scientific "how" that did not deny the transcendence of Reason. With its transcendental character, Reason can be experienced thanks to a philosophical approach: reading or listening to philosophical texts, or contemplating works of art—and, in particular, those that, in the 19th century Chenavard was a protagonist of, were called "philosophical."

12. He had met them in 1827 in Rome. Gautier also wrote, "this modern German school, so erudite and so full of thoughts and style under its cold color, has been the object of careful examination. Overbeck, Cornelius, Schnorr, and Kaulbach are equally familiar to him and he has dreamt in the Munich Glyptotheck as well as in the Sistine Chapel."

13. Even then, Jesus Christ would have found his place in the artists' pieces, because from a rationalistic point of view he was a man who wanted to improve people's living conditions. And the artistic creations of the artists would have sung the greatness of Reason; greater and more universal than the different gods, for those gods were the reflections of Reason itself.

14. In the Pantheon, Logos/Reason would have been represented as the features of Jesus Christ, at the top of a circular piece—the pivotal point of the Pantheon's decoration. Jesus Christ was also placed in the apse of the building, amid other historical figures.

15. Gautier, 1856, p. 90.

16. Baudelaire, «*L'Art philosophique*», *Œuvres complètes*, t. II, 1976, p. 603. My translation.

17. For example, Philippe Comairas had already collaborated for *Saint Polycarpe's Martyrdom* in 1841.

18. Indeed, the antagonistic environment did not thwart his idealistic project but made him give in to the difficulty of its realization, which in all honesty, must have been a relief.

19. Above the term 'esthetic,' lingers Hegel's shadow.

Chapter Two

The Calling of Two Creatures: Depression-era Collaboration and a Theory of Camera and Pen

Zoe Trodd

"two series of calls [that] enhanced each other quite richly"
[*Let Us Now Praise Famous Men,* 1941]

> "Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us. . . . There be of them, that have left a name behind them, that their praises might be reported. And some there be, which have no memorial; who are perished, as though they had never been"
>
> [King James Bible, *Ecclesiasticus* 44]

James Agee and Walker Evans took up the King James Bible's call to collaboration in their experimental text, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941), which takes its title from Ecclesiasticus 44. They produced what the Ecclesiasticus passage calls a "memorial" for an invisible, vanishing people and also made *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* a call to collective action *against* the perishing: they played out the "us" of their title through their own collaborative effort, and, in trying to give the vanishing tenant farmers of the 1930s a continued existence beyond memorial, they sought the collaboration of the reader too. The book demands a response from that reader addressed in the early pages as "you who will read these words and study these photographs . . . and what will you do about it" (7). Agee explains that the collaboration is "an effort in human actuality, in which the reader is no less centrally involved than the authors and those of whom they tell" (x), and adds: "The most I can do . . . is to make a number of physical entities as plain and vivid as possible, and to make a few guesses, a few conjectures; and to leave to you much of the burden of realizing in each of them what I have wanted to make clear of them as a whole" (97). The reader must play a central part, he insists, telling

us: "if these things seem lists and inventories merely, things dead unto themselves . . . then perceive in them and restore them what strength you can of yourself: for I must say to you, this is not a work of art or of entertainment, but it is a human effort which must require human cooperation" (98). Collaboration between artists and reader is key to the project: the "us" is artist and reader, as well as writer and photographer.

But the collaborative *us* of writer and photographer seems initially token by comparison. Agee refers to Evans' photographs only three times throughout the book, and when he finally writes at length about Evans taking a photograph that isn't amongst those published, there's no chance to make an explicit comparison between text and images. The book is a strange division of labor between the two men, and this division seems rooted in their different personal styles. In the summer of 1936, Agee, a reporter for *Fortune* magazine, persuaded his editors to send him South to report on the living conditions of cotton sharecroppers and tenant farmers, and to hire Evans as his photographer-collaborator. The two men took a while to understand one another. They would eventually become close, but initially Evans found Agee disconcertingly excitable, filled with the unfathomable energy of a six-year-old boy. A private man, Evans also thought Agee too revealing: there are passages in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* where Agee remembers masturbating in his grandfather's house, or where he wishes aloud for a prostitute and imagines some of the tenants having group sex with Evans and himself. "Agee was a very embarrassing man," Evans said in an interview later: "I love the prose, but sometimes I blush reading it."

In fact, many of the acknowledged difficulties of the book stem from the palpable disconnect between Agee's effusive prose and Evans' stark images. The project seems entirely *un*collaborative, and early critics observed that the book broke from the usual collaborative tradition of interactive techniques and similar personas. Evans recalled: "Agee and I worked in distant harmony, paying no attention really, by agreement, to each other" (Spears and Cassidy, 64), and Agee notes in his introduction that the photographs and text are mutually independent. Evans' economical, factual images precede Agee's 400 pages of crazed lyrical prose in Book Two, complete with an impassioned 50,000-word inventory of their houses–direct reporting on a scale without parallel.

For, while Agee admired Evans' sensitive work and his willingness to let his subjects pose themselves (which was an exercise in collaboration between artist and subject), *he* chose full self-expression, countering the restraint of Evans' work with his copious subjectivity. Evans occasionally acknowledged his own presence, for example in one image that includes his shadow, but Agee inserted himself fully into the text, even becoming the book's subject:

"I become not my own shape and weight and self, but that of each of them" (52), he explains, in Whitmanesque terms. Agee's foregrounding of his own conscious presence stemmed in part from his ongoing struggle with a sense that each of his subjects was absolutely unique and couldn't be understood by camera or described in ink: the next best thing was to offer his own response to them.

The book feels disordered, then, in part because Agee's form is imitating consciousness. His cataloging is also unsystematic because he believed *reality*, as well as consciousness, to be messy, and wanted to record it in all its messy variety, writing: "the whole job may seem messy to you. But a part of my point is that experience offers itself in richness and variety and in many more terms than one and that it may therefore be wise to record it no less variously" (216). Evans, however, saw the unruly world as a place of "filthy punctured cubes" and sought to order it as "Fourteen thousand two hundred and seventy three tragedies, 67284 mysteries, several obscure dramas with or without poetry," as he put it in a poem collected in the volume *Unclassified* (2000). In this poem America's obscurities are catalogued, and counted. He gave free rein to this anti-Agee archival impulse in his images for *Famous Men* as well, where the composed environments are still-lifes, nothing left to chance. He disliked the "accidental revelation," which hid things rather than exploring them, as Lincoln Kirstein explained in Evans' 1938 book, *American Photographs* (191), and he removed two candid shots when revising *Famous Men* for a second edition in 1960, so eliminating chance and disorder even further.

Agee's decision not to write a more traditional narrative also evolved out of a sense of guilt at attempting the project at all.

It seemed to him, as he explains in *Famous Men,* "obscene and terrifying to pry intimately into the lives of an undefended and appalling damaged group of human beings . . . for the purpose of parading the nakedness, disadvantage and humiliation of these lives before another group of human beings" (5).

The camera seemed particularly obscene. He remembers "you and your children and your husband . . . stood there naked in front of the cold absorption of the camera in all your shame and pitiableness to be pried into and laughed at" (321), a memory that evokes Evans' vision of "punctured cubes" and carefully numbered "tragedies" on display. His guilt about the camera's "cold absorption" and the voyeurism of the collaboration with Evans was exacerbated by his belief that every human advantage was a theft. He wrote in a chapter eventually cut from the published version: "I feel intense guilt towards every such man and woman and child alive; and I suggest that you need to feel it too; and that that sense of guilt cannot possibly be intense enough." He explains his circular, repetitive style as a response to this guilt, in the same

unpublished passage: “I have been aware that like one in a snowstorm I have been going in circles; and that has pleased rather than dismayed me . . . it was in the hope that by the slowly wound inane and earnest brutality and boredom a little might be set upon you of the unspeakable weight, and monotonies of the work itself.” His relentless prose, with page-long sentences, suits his theme of repetitive work: the book is slow going because tenant life is dreary. By closing the gap between the reader’s experience and that of the farmers, Agee grappled with his feelings of guilt, and his awareness of the camera’s voyeuristic eye; that “terrible structure of the tripod crested by the black square heavy head, dangerous as that of the hunchback of the camera,” the “witchcraft” of photography (364), the “stealer of images and souls, a gun, an evil eye” (362).

But in seeking to involve the reader and so defy a passive voyeurism, Agee made language a performance by writer and reader, and the book an event in time. He notes that we should read the book aloud and includes a cast-list at the beginning, believing that literature is not static but recreated anew each time it is read or performed, and wanted “the text be read continuously” like “a film watched” (x). Here is where a clear collaboration with Evans begins to emerge from the shadows, for Evans took up the idea of performance when he photographed a tenant child with a rumpled sheet shaped to look like wings, which begs to be read with Agee’s lines about “a furious angel nailed to the ground by its wings” (87), and “the little slit graves of angelic possibility” (96).

The child is a fairy or an angel, tenant life not without myth and drama: other photographers of the era also pictured children behind the bars of windows and jail cells, but only Evans gives the imprisoned child wings.

Agee writes in the opening to the book that there is no Queen of the Fairies to rescue the tenant families, and Evans puts *his* fairy behind bars: in acknowledging the national drama gone sour, writer and photographer collaborate to represent the fairy-tale stage-props left behind. Evans’ photographs of tattered minstrel posters and torn Hollywood advertisements further register this sense of national performance interrupted, and both men dwell throughout their collaboration on the *painful* beauty of the post-myth tenant lives: Agee writes a face “seamed and short as a fetus” (31), a light that “pulses like wounded honey” (49), and Evans represents the dark side of beauty in photographs that are without exception off-center. Edgy and unsettling, they echo numerous images of asymmetry in the text, where church, land, house, and life all lack–like Agee’s prose and Evans’ images–a center: the church they find has “subtle almost strangling strong asymmetries” (35), and the land “a symmetry sensitive to so many syncopations of chance, [so that] it is in fact asymmetrical” (203).

These details of collaboration are several of many throughout the work—for Agee remarks that images and text are not *just* "mutually independent," but also "fully collaborative" (xlvii). Seeking a "fully collaborative project," Agee did try to write like a camera: he believed that "words cannot embody, they can only describe," (210) and that the camera was "the central instrument of our time" (9). He insists, "[i]f I could do it, I'd do no writing at all here. It would be photographs" (4), and his imagination is often "photographic": sunlight is chemical like "a flash bulb," a child is a "photographic plate" (198). His focus throughout on the *process* of writing meant he wrote, then looked to see what was written: his writing comes to light like a developing photograph. And in describing, meditating, and analyzing all at once, he gives us timeless sentences, saying at one point: "you mustn't be puzzled by this, I'm writing in a continuum" (62). His writing is without narrative or chronology, and he creates static word-pictures with long repetitive sentences that mingle tenses–as in the very last sentence of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men,* where he moves from past to present to past: "each of these matters had in that time the extreme clearness which I shall now try to give you; until at length we too fell asleep" (416).

If the book explores the photographic imagination of the writer, it also examines the narrative imagination of the photographer. Though Evans railed against "that fantastic figure, the art photographer, really an unsuccessful painter with a bag of mysterious tricks," in a 1931 article for *Hound and Horn,* he had a highly literary sensibility, writing in a short unpublished piece: "Photography is interesting only because it can be a language. . . . Used with imagination, the camera is something like a writing instrument," able to "control diction and wield wit and fashion metaphor: they can almost pun and even do achieve oxymora. . . . Your first question of a print will be: does it 'read'? . . . I conclude superlative photography to be literate." Agee called Evans' work "Joycean" in its "denseness, insight and complexity," and Evans, when asked in 1971 what he taught his photography students at Yale, answered: "the relation between some great piece of writing and photography. There's no book that's not full of photography. James Joyce is. Henry James is. That's a pet subject of mine, how those men are unconscious photographers," and added, "I think, in truth, I'd like to be a letterer. . . . I'm literary." He claimed Flaubert as his greatest influence and described himself in another interview as "almost a pathological bibliophile." In his images for *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men,* Evans uses opposites, contrasts, and ironies in his images, packing them full of metaphors and quotations (as with his famous image of shoes that echoes a series of paintings by Van Gogh). He photographed billboards and signs, the written word in the landscape and cities, as though seeing language everywhere: tires and melons, for example, sometimes seem a visual study in the letter 'O.'

More important to the literary-photographic collaboration in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men,* however, are the moments where Evans arranges his images in a halting narrative sequence. Though Evans' style seems at first "straight, puritanical," as William Carlos Williams judged, or "naked realism," as the *Saturday Review of Literature* put it on August 23, 1941, it was in reality quite filmic. Eisenstein's montage technique influenced several photographers of the time, including Evans, who modified the film-maker's dialectic to meet the needs of a still-photographic layout, and planned with Agee "a new kind of photographic show in which the photographs are organized and juxtaposed into an organic meaning and whole . . . a sort of static movie," or so Agee recalled. Evans was interested in the continuity of film, like Archibald MacLeish who calls the blue line at the top of the pages of *Land of the Free,* a poem with photographs, "The Sound Track." As in *American Photographs,* Evans' images for *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* contain interactive relations, juxtapositions and serial progressions. In his afterword to *American Photographs,* Lincoln Kirstein acknowledged its narrative: "these photographs, of necessity seen singly, are not conceived as isolated pictures. . . . In intention and effect they exist as a collection of statements deriving from and presenting a consistent attitude," and have "logic, continuity, climax," he wrote (191).

This aesthetic is present in Evans' collaboration with Agee, too. Evans' photographs for *Famous Men* are a collection of small series, proceeding in spurts like Agee's prose. There are meanings to be gleaned in the process of turning the pages, and Evans' interest in the narrative possibilities of photography suited the demands of the photo-essays popularized by *Life* magazine in 1935, and from 1948 onwards Evans wrote photo-essays, supplying images and text. As an FSA photographer, Evans' interest also matched the belief of FSA Historical Section chief Roy Stryker that while the "news picture is dramatic, all subject and action," his photographers showed what's back of the action," offering "a sketch and not infrequently a story" (Fleischhauer and Brannan, 9). Some of the visual statements in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* are humorous, such as the pairing of photographs of two old men and two white horses, and others narrate part of the family's story: his photographs admit us gradually, so that we enter via the first image of the tenant Landlord, move past father then mother, and reach the intimacy of their marriage bed, before seeing their children, in descending ages. Agee then repeats this story some 50 pages later: "a man and a woman are drawn together upon a bed and there is a child and there are children" (49). Other pairings move from fullness to emptiness, from presence to marked absence.

Evans was narrating things "passing out of history," he said in an interview in 1971, and so, for example, the advertisement in the pairing towards the end

of the collection is echoed in the shape of the grave, while the headstone echoes the bottle, and the plate on the mound echoes the Pan-Am sign; all part of Evans' movement from capitalism to death.

The Fields family paired with their empty kitchen is another example. Evans noted in an interview: "I do like to suggest people sometimes by their absence. . . I like to make you feel that an interior is *almost* inhabited by somebody."

The woman's head remains as a present-absence in the bowl on the wall, her bent leg and bed leg and the chair leg, the girl standing with dirty dress in the V and the dark area on the wall, the father's square posture in the stove, the child's face and open mouth in the white inside of the pot, the older woman's head in the plate on the shelf. In 1985 Faye Kicknosway developed this erasure in her poem "Who Shall Know Them?" Referencing Mrs. Fields, she wrote: "where she sat / will be empty; she'll have scraped / herself free and she'll force me / to sit there, / where she was." The poem's narrator is then alone.

Experimenting with the idea of collaboration, Agee and Evans asked the reader to enter their scenes, like Kicknosway's narrator. It is a vanishing America, and Evans narrates its flow of moment and trace. His discourse of images, with an order that skips, jumps, cross-references, challenges the reader to participate in the production process, just as Agee does explicitly throughout the book. Their projects were the same: Agee and Evans asked the reader to find continuity out of the chaos, and *engage*, like one woman who wanted to write a message across one of Evans' photographs. Arriving in Roy Stryker's FSA office, she asked for an image to give her brother, a steel executive, intending to write on it: "*Your* cemeteries, *your* streets, *your* buildings, *your* steel mills. But *our* souls. God damn you."

In producing connections, the reader collaborates to resist the vanishing, and the "perishing" of that Bible passage. *Famous Men* leaves work to be done: while other documentary photographers of the period manipulated their photographs, moving furniture around within shacks or sheep skulls into different positions in the desert, Evans' artifice was in his sequencing. He didn't use props or force poses, but instead emphasized narrative selection and put his literary sensibility to work. The collaboration with Agee protests these other artifices, and also the more traditional collaborative documentary works of the time, for example that of Erskine Caldwell and Margaret Bourke-White, in *You Have Seen Their Faces* of 1937. Here a full exchange between photos and text means images are interwoven with the essay, and each photo has a fictional quotation by the central figure in the image: we read the authors' own conceptions of what such types might have said—there has been no individualization, as they explain in their introduction.

You Have Seen Their Faces fills in all the gaps for the reader, but Evans' echoes across images in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* build a syntax that appeals to active memory rather than passive spectatorship. Giving his images a syntax and narrative, and making his arrangement a journey that often seemed one from absence to presence, Evans gave visual expression to the migrant exodus from the Dustbowl. In several other photo-text collaborations of the period, the combinations of word and image also addressed the question of absence. Sometimes photographs suggest absence where their texts assert presence. In *12 Million Black Voices* (1941) for example, Richard Wright's text describes lush green land, huge trees and budding honeysuckle, while on the facing page an image of dry, dusty land marks the absence of these fertile features (32–33). On the next page Wright hints at the reason for this disjunction: "To paint a picture of how we live . . . is to compete with the mighty artists, the movies . . . the newspapers, the magazines. . . . They have painted one picture: charming, idyllic, romantic; but we live another" (35). The real absence is that of truthful representation, not honeysuckle. Or, in *You Have Seen Their Faces* one caption reads, "It never felt much like Sunday to me until I plucked the guitar some," but in the image all the Sundays on the wall-calendar are faded, absent. As far as the image is concerned, it simply "never felt like Sunday." Part of the week, or time itself, is gone: present only in its absence as a faded trace on the wall.

Again interested in absence, and also in Evans' theme of the journey, other photographers focused on a tension generated by words *within* the image, as in Lange's "Southern Pacific Billboard," where two migrants pass a sign instructing them to "Next Time Try the Train . . . Relax." The disjunction is in the situational irony of their movement past this advertisement, and in the way the sign forms a stark east-west right-angle with the north-south road: car tracks at its center, telephone poles on the left, and deep shadows on the right, all mark the endlessness of this journey ahead and so contrast the unreality of the sign's "next time." Similarly Bourke-White's "Louisville flood victims" has a line of people stretched vertically across, while the characters in the advertisement head toward the camera: again the angles of direction, so that the car bears down upon the line of people, emphasizes the disjunction between word ("There's no way like the American way") and image (the line of homeless people scattered along the American way, for whom it actually *is* "no way"). These are thwarted journeys—and for Lange's migrants and Bourke-White's queue, the "way" (*journey)* is as hopeless as the perished American "way" of life.

Like Evans, other photographers collaborated with writers to offer visual connections across frames that resonate with the prose, so building a pattern of echoes and traces. In 1940 Edwin Rosskam spent three weeks with Wright,

who was a national figure, after the publication of *Native Son* earlier that year. Rosskam was a FSA photographer and writer, editing a book series called *Faces of America*, and he had proposed a collaboration with Wright to Viking Press, hoping Wright would agree. *12 Million Black Voices* was to be the last in this series of image-texts on major American cities. The two men met, and in a 1965 interview Rosskam recalled: "I got him excited"—"photographs were then still something kind of startling and new." The book became illustrated folk history, collective autobiography, and sociological study of black migration: Rosskam noted of the 1930s documentary that "finally the urban scene began to come in," for one couldn't "do migration without showing, finally where migration went to. Migration went to the city." Wright contributed text, and Rosskam selected 71 images, observing later that "Dick Wright really knew that stuff cold. . . . I don't know if many white men had the opportunity to see it the way we saw it."

Rosskam, who made visual connections across frames in *12 Million Black Voices,* explained in the preface to his *Washington: Nerve Center* (1939) that "the new unit is the double-page spread. . . . Picture can help picture, picture can laugh at picture, picture can contrast with picture . . . text and pictures can rise and fall in importance, work toward climaxes over a series of pages" (n.p.).

He paired a courtroom image by John Vachon with an Associated Press lynching image in *12 Million Black Voices,* to pass brutal comment on the justice apparently featured in the courtrooms of the first. The caption to both is "the law is white," and this draws attention to the white book of law on the table in the first image and the similarly shaped white square of cloth around the neck of the dead man in the second. The white man who judges the blacks in the first image holds his fingertips together in a way that approximates the shape of the triangular rope knot in the second. Fingers and rope both echo the "uneasily tied knot of pain" described by Wright (11).

Rosskam made images resonate as pairs at other moments in the text, always emphasizing these parallels with careful cropping. Pairing one of his own images with a photograph by Russell Lee, he cropped them so that a man and a woman frame both, and a opening (door or window) forms part of the center backdrop in both.

Two empty chairs in the second substitute the presence of the two standing figures in the first. The toddler in white in the first image becomes the white cross in the second—the posture against the door forms a cross of door-frame and arm, and the black strip on the cross echoes the child's black forearm. The Jesus in a loin-cloth behind the cross has legs in the same pose as the child; right foot over left. Poised on the door-step, the child is the man "struggling to be born" and about to feel the "heavy toll [of] death," in Wright's text that

precedes this pair of images (93). On the brink of birth through the door, he is sacrificed to the white world: like Christ, he is doomed even at the moment of birth.

Wright explained the collection's aesthetic. Calling the reader to engage, he wrote: "Look at us, and know us and you will know yourselves, for we are you, looking back at you from the dark mirror of our lives" (146). It's a call to response taken up by other Depression-era collaborators who sought to bring the reader into the collaborative circle. In Sherwood Anderson and Rosskam's *Home Town* (1940), Anderson also addresses the reader directly, asking for identification: "Do you remember when you . . . were a small town boy? . . . Did you dream of some day being a railroad engineer?", and "you may yourself be one of the 'characters of your town'" (8, 95). *Home Town* tries to find continuity and stability through repetition and equivalence. Echoes across frames assert the representative and expected against the unpredictable, and emphasize patterns across American culture. On pages 12 and 13, Rosskam cropped two images by Ben Shahn so that there are three faces on the left of both images, four backs on the right of both. Kentucky might as well be Ohio. He does this again on pages 14 and 15, where two couples of different ages are made equivalents: both women staring directly at the camera, both men staring to the right. On pages 74 and 75, paintings frame both images on the left, the legs of otherwise invisible women frame both on the right, and naked bent forearms and elbows sit at the very center of both. Net curtains form the backdrop for both images, and three women sit on the left and a dark-haired woman with a child on the right in both.

Similarly, on pages 94 and 95, the women at the center of both images hold black books on their laps, or on pages 60 and 61, the line of the car's frame in one image continues diagonally across the page into the telephone wire of the other, connecting the two landscapes. The chimney in the second echoes the scaffolding in the first, the square carts set on a diagonal from bottom left to top right in the second echo the square houses that follow the same angle in the first. Fall in West Virginia might as well be Fall in Mississippi, Rosskam implies, through this pairing of John Vachon and Marion Post-Wolcott.

Lest we miss the device, Rosskam repeats it on the following double spread, with images by Rothstein and Lee cropped to make parallel Iowa and Vermont. Three boys in the second echo three benches in the first; two thin trees on the left in the second echo the two lampposts on the left in the first; the dark figure at the center in the second echoes the fire-hydrant at the center in the first; the four windows visible on the front of the house in the second echo the four cars clustered together in the first. Both images are framed on the right and left by trees, and the line of the sidewalk in the first continues visually across the double-page spread to the telephone wire that crosses the second at the same angle.

Rosskam continues this standardizing device throughout: on pages 100 and 101 four figures dominate the foreground and two hover in the background in both, and though the first images is of white townsfolk and the second of black, the figure on the furthest left in both is the only person to hold an object on their lap (hat and briefcase), and a noticeably white leg, of woman's stocking and man's light-colored trousers, echoes across frames. The two oval shadows cast by outdoor lamps on page 111 echo the two oval windows in the image on page 110 opposite, connecting Russell Lee in Texas to Ben Shahn in Ohio. The photograph on page 122 is also by Ben Shahn in Ohio, in fact showing the same church front, as the sign ("Linworth Methodist Episcopal Church") reveals, and combines an oval window reminiscent of the oval in Lee's image on page 110 with another oval-shaped shadow from an outdoor lamp, so melding Texas and Ohio. The handshake at the center of both images on pages 122 and 123 throws a parallel Arkansas moment into the parade of equivalents.

Rosskam's photo-arrangement was an attempt to establish a visual equivalent of Anderson's phrases like "in every American small town there is. . . . " (82); "And there is always that other women. . . . " (83); "She is always lying about. . . . " (86); "He is forever boasting of. . . . " (87); "she is always well-dressed. . . . " (97). Writer and photographer developed the idea that there is "in every town" a set of identifiable characters (34), "the 'characters of your town'" (95), as Anderson puts it, in self-aware quotation marks; the "town bully" (87), the "lonely man . . . usually . . . a bachelor" (82), the "practical joker" (83), the "born nurse . . . always Aunt Molly, or Kate, or Sarah . . . everyone's aunt" (83). "There is a Carrie Nation in almost every American town . . . always telephoning to the sheriff" (94), write Anderson. The book puts pattern where chance would otherwise be, in an attempt to keep "the old town life going" (34), and objects repeat in photos on pages 23, 24, 25, 27, 29.

Home Town is a memorial to the perishing of this small-town life, and, like *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men,* the collaboration also tries to resist the perishing. Artists struggled with facing reality while reality's faces were passing, but photography, medium of chance and fragment, tool of archive and document, became a medium of narrative, plot and trace. The call-and-response interaction between images and text, in *Home Town, 12 Million Black Voices,* and *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men,* and between word and subject within photographs in Lange and Bourke-White billboard images and Evans' own photographs of signs, filled the growing vacuum of absence and exodus during the Depression, replacing it with an aesthetic of echoes and an onward narrative of repetition with variation. It built an echo-chamber into which the

reader was invited. Readers saw the era's faces, but also recognized its stories, and felt an insistence that they identify with subjects and add the reality of their own life narratives to the mix. *They are* became *they have always been*—and then *you are them.*

Photographers and writers collaborated on narratives to explore, as Rosskam put it in the afterword to *Home Town,* how photography might represent "the most permanent" as well as "the most fleeting" (144). Facing a rupture with the past, photographers collaborated with writers to trace the ongoing movement of history. Collaborators offered onward narratives of repetition with variation that transformed chance into story, and sought what Malcolm Cowley called stories "written in the gullied soil, the sagging rooftree or the wrinkles of a tired face" (78), in 1937. Artists could do more than record chaos: they rehabilitated ruins as traces, and developed traces into narrative. Acknowledging the break with the past, they found dusty traces of its continuity, and restored a narrative via the passage of time in their collaborative image-texts. Their collaborations functioned like the two foxes calling to one another at the end of *Famous Men*, where the pair of invisible creatures have "two series of calls [that] enhanced each other quite richly" (411), though their "quality was very different" (410). They are "two masked characters, unforetold and perfectly irrelevant to the action, [who] had with catlike aplomb and noiselessness . . . sung" (415). While they sing the action persists. Only when the series of calls are "withdrawn" does the book abruptly end.

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Chapter Three

Creative Occupation: Collaborative Artistic Practices in Europe 1937–1943

Horace Brockington

INTRODUCTION

Acts of human collaboration became essential for survival at a time when the word collaborator had a double meaning. While this mode of artistic production typically requires a sacrifice of individual ego, during the German invasion of Europe in the 20th century proactive creative exchanges among artists could—and did—result in physical danger, imprisonment, and even death.

This essay addresses the capability of art and artists to work collectively towards a goal beyond creative production, to make sense of self in a world filled with uncertainty and despair. It addresses the power of the creative spirit to transcend the madness of a society thrown into turmoil and suggests the need of the creative imagination to find outlets, whether singularly or collectively, through chaos. While centering on art strategies and practices, this is ultimately a study of the capability of the creative spirit and human imagination to arise above all restrictive circumstances.

Abstracted from the more detailed "Jeu de Cartes; Artistic Practices in Occupied France and Southern Europe 1939–1943," this brief discussion proposes to present a new reading of intersecting lines of artistic production in Europe in a period when the critical role was diminished. Many of the artists were working in isolation and therefore did not reveal much of their output until after the war. Therefore they would not have been reviewed in the restrictive and controlled official publications of the period.

Regardless, it was impossible for any of the artists still in Europe not to address the issue of the war either directly or subversively. Many of these artists were held, dislocated from any conceivable reality. Therefore, collaboration became the means to maintain a relationship between a more stable past and

a shifting present. Through collaborative acts, the artists and their supporters found viable vehicles against the forces that threaten the very notion of what makes us human: will and creative imagination.

At the start of the German occupation of Europe many of the leading artists were forced to flee to specific regions while others, such as Picasso and Duchamp, were able to move rather comfortably if conditionally throughout the region. A number waited in "safer locales" until proper systems, legal, and illegal could be put in place in order to get exit visas and other necessities for emigration. For others denied exit status, containment via incarceration was an all too clear reality.

Despite their wartime conditions, artists were still able to develop interesting and often innovative collaborative projects. For the most part, many of these projects involved practices by individuals who were often unaware of each other's prior approaches. Many were relative strangers joined together by the conditions of the period. Occupation dissolved the notion of cultural superiority that had previously separated many artists who suddenly began living and working together. Void of restriction, these new exchanges created provocative works of art that fused ethnography, archaeology, popular culture, literature—and the political with the modern. As a result, they often challenged many of the individual artistic approaches through visual juxtapositions that were translated into new subversive and provocative perspectives of art and politics. In many cases, an artist's individual approach differed radically from what they created with others during the Occupation. For many of these artists such novel creative exchanges would lead to new approaches and attitudes towards their own individual creative venture.

Whether brought about through necessity or choice, collaboration was an essential characteristic of the cultural climate of the period. The resultant works therefore radically altered the concept of the artist as an isolated force. In fact, cooperative practice becomes nearly a central strategy of the period.

COLLABORATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Artists working collectively during the German Occupation can be grouped into separate and often overlapping categories. These include: French national artists whose personal statures transcended national boundaries; displaced persons who viewed themselves as cultural tourists, migrants, transients or displaced persons; Apatride/stateless refugees; and resistance workers, including networks such as the *Front Nationals des Arts* which began with five painters planning a newsletter.

While conservative values characterizing the Vichy regime often undermined cooperative ventures in both free and occupied zones, collaborations were part and parcel of the overall art environment in France and southern parts of Europe that were extremely active and productive. For example, at the camp of St. Sulpice, an internment camp for political prisoners, murals were done under the direction of Taslitsky, a Communist painter and an early resister.[1] Near Aix-en-Provence at Les Milles—an internment camp for German refugees that by 1942 had become a way station for deportation—a mural on the walls of the internees' dining hall was possibly directed by Max Linger.[2] While interned together at Les Milles, Max Ernst and Hans Bellmer combined their talents in drawings, including the work, *Les Creations, les ceatures de l'imagination*.[3]

For many foreign nationals there was a sense of displacement and a break with cultural and national identity. Particularly for artists in this group who had no earlier connection with the Parisian milieu, the geographical repositioning outside of Paris was accompanied by a lost sense of cultural authenticity resulting from physical displacement from a home country and culture. Faced with new signs and meanings and the pull from a traditional norm, these artists had a constant need to assimilate their individual identity into a new cultural hybrid.

Meanwhile, many of the French artists continued to identify with their national culture. Instead of assimilating, they aimed to re-create Paris in other places such as England, New York, and most conveniently Marseilles.[4] No matter where they located, they often envisioned themselves as "artistic ambassadors" for their native French culture. This is part of the reason that many of them—including Andre Breton, Fernand Leger, Andre Masson and Matta—returned to Europe after the War.[5]

Few artists continued to produce art as a solitary, purely aesthetic activity. Forced to deal with the reality of current events, a complexity emerged in which their life conditions produced aestheticized politics and politicized art to educate a public. This was especially true of many of the German artists who aimed works to focus on the National Socialist government's distortion of German culture as well as violation of human rights and racial prejudices.

The situation for international Modernists had been limited since the 1937 Paris World Fair when galleries and publications were shut down; collectors sold works and the art market essentially collapsed. When the Germans entered Paris in June 1940, the city was culturally barren for the most part. With the exception of French soldiers much of the local population had fled the city. One of the first acts of the German occupiers was to establish a branch of Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry, The Propaganda Abteilung, whose responsibility was to keep the French press and art worlds under surveillance.

However, most of the artists working marginally were uninterested in a new art hierarchy, given that figures such as Louis Hautecoeur, the head of the Fine Arts Department of the Ministry of Education and Youth under Marshall Petain, was rather conservative in his outlook. Despite the ministry's acquisition budget, artists working in exile received no benefits. Now officially dismissed by the official art center and its bureaucracy acting as the art market, artist refugees in the unoccupied areas reverted to the bohemian conditions of their youth. Isolated from their own extensive networks in Paris in the occupied zone, the networks themselves were widely disrupted. New means of survival became a daily reality.

Alternative means of support emerged, many of them collaborative in nature. Figures such as Peggy Guggenheim made purchases of art and provided funds. Some of the refugee artists in unoccupied zones were periodically visited and quietly supported by Paris dealers. Louis Carre was documented visiting Grasse and purchasing work. Mary Reynolds provided needed support and financial assistance in helping the international group of Modernists. Both Reynolds and Guggenheim thus offered essential support for many of the artists they had collected now refugees in the free zone. Creative activities at these various locales were far removed from the national artistic reconstruction that was occurring in many parts of the occupied regions.

With most of the innovators of the early twentieth century outside the Parisian center, the most significant creative collaborations were in Southern Europe and border regions of occupied zones. With these individuals trapped, the region became a center for art production during the war. As various sites became centers of creative collaboration, artists came together and disbanded just as simply as the sites ceased to be free zones. Sites such as Air-Bel and the cafes of Marseilles, along with other centralizing meeting places, become important points for artistic discussions, collaborations, as well as individual and collective productions and practices.

Forced by events, life in these locations was symbolized by a new spirit to create collectively. This condition replicated an early period in Paris, in which artists were able to work side by side while preoccupied with totally distinct stylistic modes of production, as well as theoretical and thematic concerns. In Southern Europe, a most diverse group of artists were suddenly thrown together, generating new reactions and interactions, and fusing their creative strategies with the regional characteristics of the site.

A CREATIVE NEXUS

Artists working in exile produced art under most extreme situations, often with improvised materials. In some instances, linen was beaten to a pulp in

order to expand the amount of available canvas while ink and watercolors were diluted. In other cases, wood and cardboard were substituted for canvas and fine paper. Most sculpture was done in plaster and only later cast in bronze. For the Surrealists, these shortages acted as point of departure for the discovery of new techniques.

There is no apparent homogeneity that runs throughout the work created during the period. Both formally and thematically the artistic character is composed of a host of possibilities and subjects that range from intersecting themes of self, history, memory, anonymity and partnerships. Not surprisingly, given the climate of war, an essential theme that runs through much of the work is related to mortality and death.

Hybrids of stylistic tendencies and intellectual platforms were the major concepts ruling the collaborative works. These included: new social Utopias (Ernst, Matta); resistance to doctrine political regimes (Masson, Matta, Lipchitz); issues of contemporary Jewish Identity (Chagall, Lipchitz); retreat to private life (Ernst, Tanquy, and Leger); conflicts provoked by the artist's own identities and sense of exile (Dali and Matta); a sense of "unconnectedness" with their new environment (Chagall, Dali, Feininger, Grosz, Andre Kertesz, Lipchitz, and Tanquy); self-image; and myth.

Despite the unconventional nature of many of the exiled artists, they often rendered conventional landscapes, still life, and a surprising amount of portraiture in rather traditional manner. Even the Surrealist Hans Bellmer created rather conservative portraits of "friends" (inmates/guards) while at the internment camps of Les Milles, including one of Max Ernst. Some suggest that traditional subjects served a practical purpose: artists not only exchanged their art among themselves but bartered it for favors from helpful individuals who knew nothing about aesthetics, including guards at internment camps, suppliers of art material and providers of food and drink.[6]

POINTS OF COLLABORATION

Collective artistic endeavors became a means of keeping the tension of daily reality at bay. Sometimes novel means and strategies of art emerged based on the lack of ordinary artistic materials or external influences such as the presence of noted figures or opportunities presented by disciplines such as theatrical productions or illustrations for literary works. Art produced collectively circulated through personal networks outside the support structure of the official art culture, including art publications, museums and galleries.

Sites such as Marseilles, Grasse, St. Martine dí Arcdeche, Oppede, Gordes, Cassis, Nice and Royan become points in which artisans, artists, decorators, miniaturists, engravers, collectors and patrons converged and, in effect,

decentralized the creative activity that had previously been based in Paris. Many of the collaborations at these locations were unique in that they were brought together by necessity, a byproduct of the political conditions in which artists found themselves living and working together. Although many of these arrangements were temporary, these re-locations would consist of profound periods of growth.

MARSEILLES AND THE SURREALISTS

Marseilles became an alternative art center during the period. Several of the major artists of the twentieth century passed through the region and it became a nexus of Surrealist activity during the occupation of France. The Surrealists continued their exploration of literary subject matter and populism, politicization and excessive preoccupation with eroticism, automatism, dreams, and biomorphic abstraction. By this time the surrealist movement had undergone several stylistic variations and permutations, although the work for the most part remain preoccupied with myth, magic, mysticism and psychoanalysis.

Two camps of surrealists emerged in Marseilles: one producing an abstract (the automatism of Miro, Arp, and Masson) and the other an eristic branch (Ernst, Magritte, Oelze, Fini, and Dali). In this context, peculiar attributes and interests taken up by the artists continued in Marseilles. These included: strange human behavior and symbolic relationships with animals, the notion of art as "ritual," and a search for the ecstatic experience which would open up worlds. The surrealists also continued their concern with social concerns although here they took a rather personal intent.

Surrealism, more than any other modern movement, had celebrated the condition of deterritorialization. Therefore, the movement entered its most esoteric phase during its years in exile. Practitioners shifted concern with myth back into lofty natural and supernatural phenomena. As a movement involving the issues of art as politics, it becomes important to consider how the various Surrealist visual dynamics, style and themes explore the capacity for using subversive myth making as a reaction to the political situation in Southern France.

Varian Fry and his counterpart, Daniel Benedite, established the Centre Americain de Secours (CAS) at 16 rue Grignon to deal with the long lines of refugees who needed funds for survival, help with U.S. visas, and a place on a waiting list for passage. Among those who waited were several Surrealist artists.

Artists collected at one of several cafes in Marseilles that had become outposts for both creative and social interaction. One collaborative project that

emerged from these activities was the redecoration of the Líeden by three members of the Oppede group: Zehrfuss, Zelman, and Herold. The site contained on the outside, frescoes by Zelman, while inside the collaborators created a play of mirrors on the walls and ceiling, which had the effect of reproducing visitors' images in multiples. The surface of the tabletops represented Newton's disk, creating a highly colorist effect. On the walls, and under the glass top of the bar, were a host of strange insects created by Herold. Through the glass top of the bar, fish could be seen circulating underneath.[7]

Other projects planned or actualized by various artists working collectively included sets and costume designs. These included a series of events intended to create a type of theatrical revival under the "aegis" of Jeune France. Masson worked on stage and costume designs for the play *Líescurial*, directed by Sylvain Itkine, a young director- playwright, but had had to abandon it while still in rehearsal.[8] Herold's sets and costumes for *Les Barbes Nobles* by Andre Roussin also failed to be realized. Yet, Compagnon de Basoche successfully produced *Conrad le maudit* with sets and costumes conceived by Herold and executed by Brauner, and *La Pipee* a sixteenth-century anonymous play for which the cartoonist Jean Effel designed a set loaded with birds and daisies.

In 1941, Marcel Pagnol founded a literary magazine titled *Cahiers du Sud* under the editorship of Jean Ballard.[9] The magazine's offices became a center for refugee writers and published a number of contributions by Surrealist authors. Many would take part in activities around the cafe Bruleur du Loup, and later become part of the Sunday salons at Varian Fry's Air Bel. *Cahiers du Sud* and *Confluences* published writings in the 1930's by German refugees, including Walter Benjamin. During the war the operation was also a book-publishing venture.

VILLA AIR BEL

By mid-autumn 1940 Fry and his staff were finding the workload and pressures in Marseilles totally exhausting. His wife Theo and Mary Jane Gold, a wealthy American expatriate, set out to find an alternative site in the country. On their first outing they essentially stumbled upon the retreat Villa Air Bel on the outskirts of Marseilles, in a suburb known as La Pomme.

Fry's staff was soon installed in the stately chateau with its elegant furnishings.

The two-story building was well portioned and set on a slight elevation within a spacious Provincial-type park entirely surrounded by a high stonewall. Beyond the Iron Gate, a broad lane climbed via two stone stairs of

ten or twelve steps each to a large square in front of the house. In the center of the square was a big round fountain. To the right were several large trees and a greenhouse. It was in this area that nearly all photographs in Air Bel were taken. The ground floor of the house comprised a large, typically French drawing room to the left a large dining room with an enormously long table that would seat eighteen comfortably. Here the guests played and painted—further off were several rooms for small gatherings and a large country-style kitchen, where French servant attended to everyone's needs.

The initial household consisted of the Belgian-born Victor Serge, a veteran of the Russian revolution and a founder of the Third International later exiled by Stalin to Siberia, Breton and family, Fry and the Benedites along with Mary Gold and an assortment of children. Breton would soon add a festive court atmosphere to life at the site; during its first winter, he welcomed various members of the Surrealist circle who had fled Paris.

Air Bel became a haven in which artists created a major series of artistic and literary works, including several "collective collages" and a card game called *Le Jeu de Marseilles*, as well as Breton's poetic work, *Fata Morgana,* illustrated by Wilfredo Lam. Breton described Vila Air Bel as a place where, for a time artists tried to carry on with their work as the world around them collapsed. He observes: "Towards the end of 1940 and the beginning of 1941, many people connected with surrealist movement in one way or another met or got together in Marseilles. The Surrealists mounting a retreat atmosphere at Villa Air Bel have to be seen as part of long tradition of male group formations that had been part of the avant garde self promotion for decades."[10]

As the business of Air Bel subsided in the evening, the site became a salon. Occupants would sing old French songs, discuss politics or attend readings. Breton always had some program lined up with prepared materials such as all sorts of colored paper and pencils, old books and magazines for cutouts and collages. He often presented discourses on Surrealist painting or read from the Surrealist publications he carried in his suitcase and letters from Duchamp or Perer.

Sometimes there were auctions of artworks made in Air Bel, with Itkine acting as auctioneer and exhibitions of paintings hung from the branches of the trees. Periodically the residents were in the trees. A famous photograph shows Fry and Consuelo de St-Exupery perched in the spreading branches of a *platane*. Fry was often present as observer but never as participant in the games.

The auctions and exhibitions at Air Bel originated because Breton was unable to secure a gallery in Marseilles to show work of Surrealist refugees. In May 1941, an exhibition of Max Ernst was held in the gardens of the estate with loans from Peggy Guggenheim, who agreed to host the event, which coincided with the inauguration of a swimming pool.

The activities of the Surrealists joined together at Air Bel would prove definitive. Reunited in New York, their intent and interest would be transformed. No longer concerned with the adaptation or creation of specific myths as it had been in the previous decade, Surrealism would increasingly become, as the author Whitney Chadwick described, "The myth of the integrated spirit set free along the path of liberty and truth."[11]

As the atmosphere in Marseilles became more restrictive, the highlight of the week became the Sunday events in which the inhabitants of the villa lunched at a table set outdoors under the "*platanes*."Along with Victor Brauner and Jacques Herold, who had come together to Paris from the same town in Romania, were Dominguez (a native of the Canary Islands), and Herold, and the French-born Wilfredo Lam with his German-born wife, Helena. Jean Malaquais, Pierre Herbert, Victor Brauner, Jacques Herold, Oscar Dominguez, Benjamin Peret, and Remedios Varo all lived nearby. Occasional guests such as the French gallerist Henriette Gomes and her husband Sylvain Itkine brought along members of theatrical groups and performers of satirical comedy. Additional occupants were Rene Cahr, and later Marcel Duchamp with Mary Reynolds, Max Ernst and Peggy Guggenheim.

While residing at the estate of the Countess Lily Pastre in the suburb of Montredon, near Marseilles, Andre Masson participated in some of the Surrealist activities at the Villa. During the winter of 1941 he made three drawings of Breton and was eventually included in collaborative activities. Brauner commuted to Air Bel from hiding places in the eastern Pyrenees (Brauner was among the Jews who attempted to survive in total clandestine) and gradually made lengthier visits to become an integral part of these exchanges as well. Herold who assumed a nomadic existence, changing identities periodically, was another constant collaborator. He eventually became affiliated with the Resistance network and was able to survive as a forger of papers.

In this manner of welcoming refugees, Air Bel became a center for artistic collaborations. The abundance of work created there during the period is best exemplified by a description of Arp's bedroom, which has been characterized as lined from floor to ceiling with *papiers froisses*. Collaborative works and collective activities common among the prewar Surrealists resumed; but now there was a different purpose. They brought together artists of different reputations and generations. The anonymity of the projects was caused by fear that authors would suffer if their art were to be recognized.

What distinguishes Air Bel creative activity from other sites was the fusion of artists and non-artists. During a conversation around the dining room table, for example, guests would suddenly find themselves creating collaborative art. Barrels of wine would be drunk, and then, suddenly, interrupting all conversations, Breton would say, "So shall we Play?"at which point the poet would supply his

friends and guests with old magazines, pencils, scissors, color tubes, and glue and they would play the old game of *Exquisite Corpse*, making collective drawings in which the sheet of paper would be divided into a grid within which different contributors made their marks and drew rebus-like symbolic portraits of well-known persons.[12] Lambert asserts that, one would draw a symbol and the others had to figure out what character was being evoked.[13] This developed into themes adapted from the mystical system of the Cabala.

AIR BEL COLLABORATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

From its inception in the early 1920's, the Surrealist movement had produced works in collaboration. *Les Champs Magnetigues*, signed jointly by Andre Breton and Phillippe Souplaut, is considered the seminal text in automatic writing.[14] The collaboration resulted from the artists' joint liberation from the bonds of rationalism, from the direct contact with the unconscious, and from languages and imagery no longer hindered by conventions.

The Surrealists had long been dedicated to the overthrow of values perceived as inseparable from a patriarchal and capitalist social organization. They sought to liberate the individual from the tyranny of rational thought, economic slavery and the coercive exercised control by the institutions of family, church and state. The means to this end was through the reintegration of those human values long suppressed—personal freedom and autonomy, intuition, emotion and the irrational. In Marseilles these concepts took on a different reality that would be expressed in a host of art objects, games, and personal interactions by diverse individuals who convene and pass through the city, and more specifically, Fry's Air Bel, located on the outskirts.

Art at Air Bel was transformed from an individual to group identity. Ironically, many of the collaborations were actually based on close-knit cooperation that had occurred prior to the artists' presence at the villa, based on marriage, lifestyle and family partnerships, and "art couples." At the site, the artists developed a conception of an artistic language continually in transition. As such, they were constantly exploring means that shed traditional signs of unwanted artistic personality.

One of the key elements that emerged from the artists working at Air Bel is one of a re-interpretation of authorship. The very dynamics of collaboration manipulates and voids the concept of "signature style" itself. Some of the works are constructed as they were actually done by one source and not collective, while others are intentionally created to reflect the dispersed authorship stressing points at which the collaborative and manipulative, constructed and individual artistic identities overlap. But for the most part the collabora-

tions were intended to escape the constructing consequences that existed in individual production methods.

Because of the collaborative nature of many of the surrealists' practices in consideration, one can view the extensive artistic production at this site as partnerships both gender-specific and clandestine. Such collaborations involved unorthodox models of authorship as results many of the artists have to reconsider their former working methods and themes. As such it is important to see many of the collaborations at Air Bel as an important stage in the evolution of Surrealism and modernism. Through collaborative authorship many of the works propose a new understanding of art, but equally artistic identity. By this approach the artists radically move from the traditional concept of individual artistic identity in which a sole artist is the creator of an autonomous art object. Collaborations at Air Bel evolve from objects identifiable by a "single"signature to a work composed of different production methods, which confuse the works. For the artists, part of these activities was undertaken to achieve new concepts of negotiated identity in which individual artistic personalities are eliminated in the work. But despite much of the experimental aspects of the works, a careful reading reveals that we are still able to discern how each artist was able to "code"themselves in the art.

As a result of collaborative artistic production at Air Bel, many of these artists were able to re-invent themselves through the obliteration of the "artist hand"in favor of teamwork that challenged boundaries between the inside and outside of the work of art. The villa provided a unique site for discourse, including: questioning the necessity of collaboration; the modification of artistic authorship; dynamics of allegorical identification produced by simulations; and appropriation of hybrid artistic practices and identities. The subjugation of individual signatures resulted in a paradigmatic interrogation of artistic production.

At Air Bel, creative collaborations were a normal part of the activities undertaken by visual artists as well as performers, writers, and temporary visitors. Creative exchanges assumed and required a coming together of talents and skills, which cross-fertilized one another through simple processes such collaborations, would normally begin after the Sunday "tea." They usually started with games, intended to bring subconscious contents to conscious perception, and to abolish internal censorship.[15]

AIR BEL—GAMES

Breton long emphasized the value of children's games as a means to the conciliation of action and dreams.[16] Therefore, Air Bel games and the playful

element that controlled them remind us of youthful child-like pranks. While daring and rebellious, they were often quite serious in their exploration of transformation, death and sexuality.

The games centered on action came from disturbing vital process. They personified disconcerting expressions thereby creating completely new situations. As part of a type of "performative art"these games cannot be separate from the artists' works and their individual and collective personalities. In these activities cultural traditions are fused within the world of surrealism under the dynamics of Andre Breton who helps to define the artistic and literary production of the participants during these events (games). Breton has described the games as examples of a mysterious collective imagination:

> In the course of various experiments conceived as parlor games whose value as entertainment, or as recreation, does not to my mind in any way affect their importance: Surrealist texts obtained simultaneously by several people writing from such a time in the same room, collaborative efforts intended to result in the creation of a unique sentence or drawing, only one of whose elements (subject, verb, or predicative adjective—head, belly, or legs) was supplied by each person, in the definition of something not given, in the forecasting of events which would bring about some completely unsuspected situation etc., we think we have brought out into the open a strange possibility of thought, which is that of pooling. The fact remains that very striking relationships are established in this manner, that remarkable analogies appear, that an inexplicable factor of irrefutability most often intervenes, and that, in a nutshell this is one of the most extraordinary meeting grounds.[17]

The importance of these games led to performances and actual art objects that broke down the barriers of the "marvelous and modern"and served as a link between the external world and the unlimited interior regions. These games are both cultivated and reflective. The artistic production that resulted from this activity was full of mysteries that depicted disturbing, iconographic mythologies that suggest a search for a metaphysical place of existence without leaving the ordinariness.[18]

A) *Le Jeu de la Veritie*:

In this game of truth, Breton would poise any kind of question—some related to intimate actions or situations—to individual members of the group. They had to answer at once with absolute veracity and without reflection. Although some were quick in inventing lies otherwise keeping their distances, Andre, with his experience in psychiatric wards knew how to break down conventional barriers. The group was able to learn a lot about each other. No pub-

lished versions of this game are known, but Phillippe Audouins provides an interesting description:

This game, which consists of telling the truth, whatever the question posed, is not strictly speaking Surrealist. In point of fact, the Surrealists played it incessantly and if it scarcely featured in subsequent publications, this is because it caused disagreements that were already too severe for anyone to consider worsening them by making them public. Without of course any smutty complaisance entering into it, it was actually to do with a quasi-ritualistic stripping of those present, . . . the symbolic death, and apparently, Levi Strauss—several times called upon to participate in this awesome game—regarded it (according to Andre Breton) as equivalent to an initiation rite.[19]

B) Automatic Writing:

Participants were to write by following the impulses of the unconscious, letting the hand be guided by the mind uncontrolled by reason. Breton would choose a word or a concept and the artists would free-associate.

C) *Le Cadavre Exquis* / The Exquisite Corpse:

Each participant would start a drawing, on the upper part of a piece of paper. They would fold the paper just enough to leave the power part of the design visible and give it to their neighbor, who would continue his/her own design on the protruding lines, passing it on until the group ran out of paper or people. This game resulted in the most inspired collective artistic works by the artists of this period. The diverse circumstances in which the works appear give it sense only through the changing meaning. Through these works zoologies and humanities, freely and mutually take each other's place and invade each other, expressing ideals that are otherwise impossible. Here metempsychosis or transmigration is an essential desire. The game therefore speaks to a type of transformation requiring transposition and impersonation on the part of the individual artists.

Breton's first wife, Simone Collinet, describes how the Surrealists chanced upon the game.

> It was during one of those idle and tedious evenings, frequent at that time—contrary to subsequent descriptions that benefit from hindsight—that the Exquisite Corpse was invented. Someone said: 'How about playing Consequences? That's entertaining.' So we played the traditional game of Consequences. Monsieur meets Madame, he says to her; and so on. But not for long. The game rapidly became something else. 'Just write down anything at all,' Prevert suggested.

> In the next round, the Exquisite Corpse was born. From Prevert's pen, as a matter of fact, for he wrote the first words, so perfectly complemented by those following; one wrote: 'shall drink the new'; the next: "wine."
>
> Once their imagination was let loose, it couldn't be stopped. Andre exclaimed with delight and immediately saw in it one of those wellsprings or natural outpouring of inspiration he so loved to discover. A torrent was unleashed.
>
> Even more reliably than with automatic writing, one was sure of jarring amalgams. Violent surprises prompted admiration, laughter, and stirred an unquenchable craving for new images—images inconceivable to one brain alone—born from the involuntary, unconscious and unpredictable mixing of three or four heterogeneous minds. Some sentences took on an aggressively subversive existence. Others veered into an excessive absurdity. The wastepaper basket played its part; one tends to forget that.
>
> The fact remains that the suggestive power of these arbitrary juxtapositions of words was so startling and dazzling and validated Surrealist theories and inclinations in such a striking way that the game became a system, a method of research, a means of exaltation and stimulus, a mine, a treasure-trove and finally, perhaps a drug.[20]

JEU DE CARTES/TAROT DE MARSEILLES

In January 1941, Breton proposed the creation of a new deck of cards. Researching the origin of playing cards in Marseilles Library, he learned that the derivation was military, the trefoil representing the soldier's country, the diamond arms, etc.[21] Breton not only changed the cards, but the dynamics of the game. Breton would answer by saying that on one hand, they were intended to distract him and his friends if only for a brief moment from the anxieties of the times, and on the other hand whatever material circumstances might be, it was essential to show that the debacle was not a debacle of the spirit.

In 1940, when his plan to mount a Surrealist exhibition in Marseilles fell through, Breton devised yet another group project, the collective designing of a new deck of Tarot cards. This talisman deck, known as the "Jeu de Marseilles," memorializes that tense and uncertain interval during which the Surrealist artists, poised in a void, redid the playing cards, symbols of the ultimate powers of fate. Similar to the collaborative efforts at other sites, the cards would not see publication at the time of their creation. They exist as a type of symbolic portrait, a collective invention of a new deck of cards.

Breton decided to substitute for the traditional suits four major preoccupations, each with its own symbols. The group came up with Love, Dream, Revolution, and Knowledge as the central themes. The old denominations of

clubs, spades, hearts and diamonds were replaced with black stars, door locks, flames, and wheels and blood; king, queen, and knave with genius, mermaids, and magus.

The artists selected for the project were Brauner, Breton, Dominguez, Ernst, Herold, Wilfredo, Jacqueline Lamba and Andre Masson. In a collective session, they drew new effigies depicting mythical or historical persons for the newly named suits. Among the people represented are Mariana Alcoforado, the Portuguese nun and author of a number of celebrated love letters dating from 1667, now considered probable forgeries; Lautreamont, pseudonym of Isidore Ducasse, author of *Les Chants de Maldoror*; Lewis Carroll's *Alice*, from the novel by Stendhal; Pancho Villa, the Mexican revolutionary; Helene Smith, the 19th century medium and prolific automatic writer; Ubu, anti-hero of URO ROI by Alfred Jarry. Their novel symbolism denoted a flame for love, a black star for the dream, a bloody wheel for revolution, and a key for knowledge. In order to eliminate the old hierarchies, the king and queen were deprived of their power, replacing them with genius and siren, while the Jack was freed from his subordinate rank and became a wise man. The Joker, naturally was Ubu, as his creator Jarry had drawn him. It was their intention that the deck, by retaining its old black and red colors, not only be used for all the existing card games, but that it could also inspire new variations through associations provoked by the themes and characters.

The personas ruling the individual design of the 16 new cards were assigned to specific artists: Hegel and Helene Smith (a twentieth century seer) fell to Brauner; Breton was responsible for Paracelsus; Max Ernst drew Pancho Villa; Herold created Sade and Lamiel (a female character from an unfinished novel by Stendhal); Masson did Novalis and the Portuguese nun; Dominguez was responsible for Freud and Lautreamont; and Lam's contributions were Baudelaire and Alice. Of the four aces: Breton created the keyhole of Knowledge; Max Ernst drew the ace of Love; Jacqueline Lamba the wheel of Revolution; and Lam and Dominguez were responsible for the ace of Dream.[22]

The images of the series are associated with themes linking them to magic, esoteric symbols and polygenic elements, whose ironic worth interacts with everything else, working in the same way as the illustrations of Tarot cards or signs of the zodiac. In this sense they echo the "Second Manifesto" sentiments of Breton: "I demanded the deep, true concealment of Surrealism."[23] While the terms of the cards appear imposed by Breton, it was Jacqueline Lamba who led the group in the production of a deck of modern tarot cards.[24]

The individual cards had the following significance (Bracket name indicates the artist/designer):[25]

Black Star: Emblem of Dreams
Genius: Lautreamont (Lam)
Magus: Freud (Dominguez)
Ace: (Dominguez)
Door lock: Emblem of Knowledge
Genius: Hegel (Brauner)
Mermaid: Helene Smith (Brauner)
Magus: Paracelsus (Breton)
Ace: (Breton)
Flame: Emblem of Love
Genius: Baundelaire (Lamba)
Mermaid: The Portuguese Nun (Masson)
Magus: Novalis (Masson)
Ace: (Lamba)
The Wheel and the Blood: Emblem of Revolution
Genius: Marquis de Sade (Herold)
Mermaid: Lamiel (Herold)
Pancho Villa (Ernst)
Ace: (Ernst)
Joker: Uba (Alfred Jarry).

THE BOX

Breton and Yves Tanguy collaborated on a box set of Surrealist Games, consisting of: *The Goose Game*; *Three Little Surrealist Dictionary: A game of Re-Definitions*; and an illustrated box edition of games, including photos of the Surrealists, with a cover image of a monkey drawing. The BOX is presented here as a series of photographs in a gold-leafed container. A copy of the index provides an insight into Surrealist range of games and purposes.[26]

BOOK FOR HELENA LAM

A related collaborative work by the artists in Marseilles was a small book made for Helena Lam. On her birthday she decided to stay alone and not join the group at Air Bel. There was nothing to send her as present, so those assembled each drew or wrote on a page or two in a little notebook. First a poem to Helena by Breton, then drawings and paintings by Dominguez, Brauner, Herold, Jacqueline Lamba, and her sister Huguette, and finally a drawing by the four-year-old Aube with her words written down by Breton.

The booklet is no larger than a file card and the paper is poor quality wartime paper, but it represents a large gesture of collaborative artistic and personal solidarity and concern toward this young woman, not a Surrealist but a chemist by training, and a German alien.

WILFREDO LAM AND BRETON'S *FATA MORGANA*

Wilfredo Lam knew the Surrealists, but he had been working in a semicubist style much more closely linked to Picasso who seemed to regard the Cuban artist as his protégé and in fact financially assisted him. Because of his cultural background (born in Sagua la Grande, Cuba) Picasso viewed him as an artist capable of portraying the rites and myths of a primitive society where as Picasso could only adopt and then adapt primitive art into a Western idiom.[27] Lam, however, chose to work within Western concepts of primitive art. By adhering to Western ideas of what a primitive painting should look like, Lam created an art that fuses his native culture and his more formal European training; his association with both Surrealist artists and Pablo Picasso enabled his art to become representative of two diverse traditions.

Lam's art became far more diverse after he became part of the inner circle of artists in Marseilles where he escaped shortly after the Germans arrived in Paris. The months working in close proximity to Air Bel marked a turning point in his work. Helena Lam noted that the collaboration with Breton opened her husband's art to a new realm of conceptualized archetypal images.[28] According to her account, on the day that Breton invited him to collaborate on *Fata Morgana* Lam stated: "Well, I guess I've been baptized now as a Surrealist."[29] *Fata Morgana* appeared first in an English translation by Clark Mills published by New Directions in 1941, and Roger Caillois in Buenos Aires put out the first French edition in 1942.[30]

While Helena Benitez translated Breton's poem into Spanish, Lam spent his time making drawings with China ink on parchment paper, sometimes making three to four at a time. He would select a passage in the work that evoked an image and proceeded to make drawings. Of the three-dozen made for the work, eight were used in the book. The drawings created for *Fata Morgana* in December 1940 indicate a definite turning point in his development while offering a key to his changing concept of art. His work became far more archetypal; the content of these works referred to magic rituals and primitive forms that revealed the influence of the Surrealist preoccupation with emotional fascination and hypnotism.

Lam continuously re-reads the poem selecting special sections to base his illustrations. Consistent with the textual movement of the poem, Lam drawings

are extremely lyrical. Two of them reveal the face of a young girl, the expression tender, soft lips. In the first of the series, the delicate flowers adorn the long mane of hair; in the second, magic creatures surround the girl. One lizard-like animal climbs her flower-adorned hair; others appear behind her head, and a little ghost-like figure holds its hand up protectively in front of her. A second head at the right seems to observe the going-on open-mouthed.

In another image a decorated mirror is held up in two hands. The expression of the eyes manifests doubt and anguish. Of the entire suite, this drawing is the most different from Lam's earlier work. The eagle takes off at high speed. Surrounded by three mythic creatures, he becomes a constellation of symbols/stars ending the wings, flower buds, repeated in groups of four.

OPPEDE

At Oppede in the Luberon, a nearly abandoned village, Bernard Zehrfuss, the French architect and Prix de Rome winner settled down after his release from the army. There he invited various artists (including Jacques Herold, Zelman, Consuelo de Saint-Exupery, a young sculptor named Etienne Martin, the Forces Nouvelles painter Georges Humbolt), artisans and architects to live communally and rebuild the village. Zehrfuss outlined the group intention as reflective of the Jeune France, the sponsor of the Oppede experiment: "Without returning to old methods or antiquated conceptions, we must lean on traditions, on the sequence of efforts that have made our country the most civilized and the most radiating, by tying them closely to new techniques."[31]

For Zehrfuss, the role of architects in the moral and material rebuilding of France was an immense task that required collective efforts and team spirit he wanted to create at Oppede. Out of this abandoned village, the collective aimed to create an immense atelier with a community of artists and professional builders. Oppede was to be the first of several centers that, under the Zehrfuss plan, were to experience a renaissance by attracting artists, workmen and artisans with the guarantee that they have adequate material living conditions.[32]

The concept was developed after three architects came to the area as farm workers. With their support in Marseilles, the chief government architect E. Beaudoin studied the possibility of having an Ecole des Beaux Arts annex at Oppede. Given the site was endowed with stone quarries and benefited from the presence of experienced workers, his plan was to use the region's resources. Despite the presence of many creative forces, the Oppede project was never fully realized.

SAINT-MARTIN-D'ARDECHE
LENORA CARRINGTON & MAX ERNST

One of Andre Gomez's photographs documenting Air Bel shows paintings hung in the trees on the occasion of a Sunday sale and auction. They appear to be mostly by Max Ernst. However, there are at least two paintings by Lenora Carrington, one a well-known 1938 self-portrait containing a horse.[33] The other is *Portrait of Max Ernst* (1940), in which the artist's birdlike head protrudes from a red-feathered shaman's robe.

By 1936 Ernst had published three of his collage novels and completed major Surrealist canvases. The following year, Ernst and Carrington met and subsequently lived together in Saint-Martin-d'Ardeche, about 48 kilometers north of Avignon, until Ernst's arrest in 1940. Carrington and Ernst had moved to the locale in part to escape the jealous surveillance of Marie Berthe, whom Ernst had separated from upon meeting Carrington.

In 1939, in the midst of increasing rumors of war, Ernst worked on a large painting that he somewhat nostalgically titled *A Moment of Calm,* while Carrington wrote and painted in a small upstairs bedroom. For much of the summer, guests overflowed the small house. Roland Penrose and Lee Miller arrived for few days in June on their way to Antibes. Peggy Guggenheim came to visit and left with Carrington's painting, *The Horses of Lord Candlestick*. Lenor Fini came in the company of the writers Andre Pieyre de Mandiargues and Federico Veneziano and spent much of the summer. Fini began a portrait of Carrington; the two women talked for many hours during the sittings but the project was abandoned when Carrington became angered after attempting to mediate an unpleasant visit by Tristan Tzara.[34]

Carrington and Ernst, in radically different ways, were preoccupied with the problem of identity, often metamorphosing themselves while linking to their artistic pursuits the question *Who am I?* Thus, for both Ernst and Carrington the autobiographical adventure had to be pursued in word and image. The dialogue between Carrington and Ernst which echoes in those paintings suggests the attainment of the fantastic world linked to intimacy with the partner. Their mutual recognition during the short time that they lived together left considerable traces in the representation, both verbal and visual, of the other. Such representations seem to have resulted from each partner's quest for identity. In their endeavors, they both sought continuity in artistic creation, thus alleviating the disruption caused by emotional intimacy.

A recently discovered painting *Rencontre* (Encounter) 1939–1940 constitutes a unique collaborative effort in which both artists contributed to a mountainous and volcanic landscape peopled by female figures created by Carrington and fantastic creatures produced by Ernst. It is of considerable interest

because—while it combines characteristics of both painters—it also displays a certain forced quality, as if Carrington and Ernst had sought to maintain at all cost their mythical and personal identities.

Carrington's 1939 *Portrait of Max Ernst* depicts her lover dressed in striped socks and the fur coat of the shaman striding across a frozen wasteland who will release the white horse that appears, as described in *The House of Fear,* sitting on its haunches with icicles dripping from its chin. In his lantern, instead of a bulb, is another horse, Carrington's magical animal of transformation. Here Ernst metamorphasizes into the mythical beast serving as her accomplice. His dream and his quest in this otherworldly landscape are nonetheless devoted to Carrington, present in the horse-shaped iceberg, as well as in many other features of the landscape. Ernst holds in his hand an alchemical vessel, enclosing ritual objects seemingly in the process of transformation. The painting testifies to the mutual offering that Ernst and Carrington brought to the world of imagination; the tribute was to the painter's universe and the potential to his imagery rather than a testimonial to the man. Her portrayal of Ernst moves in the direction of her later paintings as *The Burning Bruno* (1957), and *The Hearing Trumpet*.[35]

The summer of 1939 was to be the last for Carrington and Ernst. Their relationship disintegrated shortly after Ernst's arrest (he escaped and later became the lover of Peggy Guggenheim who bought his entire stock of paintings and offered to take him to the United States). After weeks of attempting to address her new solitary condition, Carrington finally suffered a mental breakdown. Emotionally shocked by the collapse of the familiar world, and under the influence of an old friend who arrived in St. Martin D'Arche after fleeing Paris, Carrington became convinced that her behavior betrayed unconscious desires to rid herself of her father in the person of Ernst and that she should also flee. The final breakdown came in Madrid when she was discovered at the British embassy threatening to murder Hitler and calling for the metaphysical liberation of mankind. Through the intervention of her family, she was consequentially institutionalized in England.

PARIS
MARY REYNOLDS' BOOK COLLABORATIONS

The beautiful and elegant Mary Reynolds, an active member of the Resistance, was the only person moving through the artistic bohemia of Paris with any money, yet she was always broke because she lent it or gave it away the minute it arrived from America.

Reynolds would prove to be supportive of many modernist artists. Her home became a center of artistic and intellectual exchange. She acted as central catalyst for much of the artistic interchange of the leading creative minds during the 30s and 40s. Not only did she bring European artists into unique circles; she also fostered important interchanges between visiting American curators, historians, collectors, and artists who arrived in Paris and their European counterparts.

Along with Peggy Guggenheim, Reynolds would assist in getting funds secured for artists and others coming to the United States for his/her future use, by channeling the money through her brother F. Brooke Hubacheck, an Attorney in Chicago, Ill.

Duchamp wrote about Reynolds, who had been his lover, after her death for the introduction of the Surrealist Affinities Catalogue:

> Mary Reynolds was an eyewitness of the Dadaist manifestations and on the birth of Surrealism in 1924 she was among the "supporters"of the new ideas.
>
> In a close friendship with Andre Breton, Raymond Queneau, Jean Cocteau, Djuna Barnes, James Joyce, Alexander Calder, Miro, Jaques Villon and many other important figures of the epoch, she found the incentive to become an artist herself. She decided to apply her talents to the art of book binding. After the necessary technical training in a bookbinder's atelier, she produced a number of very original bindings completely divorced from the classical teachings and marked by a decidedly surrealistic approach and an unpredictable fantasy.
>
> The Second World War found Mary in Paris, ready to fight and she fought in her brave own way by joining the ranks of the "Resistance"in 1941. In 1943 she barely escaped the Gestapo by actually "walking"over the Pyrenees into Spain—
>
> A great figure in her modest ways . . .[36]

Duchamp was such a central figure in Reynolds' life, it not surprising that the two actually engaged in creating a series of collaborative works. In 1939 she completed his design for the binding of Giorgio de Chirico's *Hebdomeros*, which featured lettering rendered in a perspective recession on both the front and back covers. In 1940 Duchamp provided the design for a leather-bound edition of Andre Breton's *Anthologie de l'humour noir*, a book which included, among other things, a selection of Duchamp's puns. The cover binding may have been inspired by Breton's droll subject, for its relatively somber outward appearance forms a marked contrast to the two 19th century illustrations that Duchamp bound in as end leaves, one entitled: HOMME/RACES CAUCASIQUE ET MONGOLIQUE, and the other HOME/RACE ETHIOPIQUE(an obvious pun on the term *black humor*.

According to Bonk, Duchamp, had originally planned to reproduce two views of his readymade *With Hidden Noise* on the cover of this book, running off extra prints to use in his album, (Boite-en-Valise) but censorship in Occupied France banned publication.[37]

Despite her conditions in Paris during the war, Reynolds continued to create various book covers for artistic and literary works, including those of Jean Arp, whom she had visited with Duchamp in Grasse. Arp was undoubtedly present during the collaborative works created by Arp, Sophie, and Sonia Delanauy. Evidence of these collaborations is found in Mary Reynolds' personal collections at the Art Institute Chicago and Ryerson Library. They include: a project for Arp entitled: *Art Concert*. There are also projects with Jean Bazaine, contained covers by Fernard Leger (title: Fernard Leger: *Peintures Anterieures*, 1940) in which Reynolds created the illustrated paper cover) Additional collaborations found in the collections include:

Jean Couteau: Work created in 1940–41, including: *La Fin du Potomak*: 1939, Paris Gallimard, 1940 (Reynolds' design consisted of one-quarter vellum, sides covered with gold-starred paper, the same as the end leaves); *La Machine a ecrire; Piece en trois actes*, Troisieme edition, Paris, Gallimard, 1941 (Reynolds' design was One-Quarter vellum, sides covered with white vellum on which an upper case M is repeatedly typewritten in red and black).

Jean Desbordes: *Le Vrai du Marquis Sade* (Reynolds' design has red sides and the spine has an embossed design in black calf and red morocco. Black end leaves with an original paper cover).

Marcel Duchamp: *Rose Selavy* (Paris) GLM, 1939 Reynolds' design has Nigerian goatskin backbone.

Henry Miller: *Tropic of Capricorn*, Paris, The Obelisk Press, no date (1939) (Reynolds' design is full gray morocco with end leaves printed with the sign of Capricorn.

PARIS/NICE/ROYAN
HENRI MATISSE/PABLO PICASSO

Since 1906, Matisse and Picasso first began to meet regularly. Over the years the two artists created an interactive dynamic that affected both their works, as each understood the importance of the other in pushing the modern. Their work and relationship fostered a creative dialogue that helped establish a complex and fascinating artistic relationship by the two most significant artists of the twentieth century.

May 1940 saw the last meeting of Matisse and Picasso for almost five years. By now their relationship had moved onto a plane of truer, deeper

friendship. They were bound together by the recognition of each other's genius, but also, and possibly at an even deeper level, because although they both saw themselves as modernists, each saw the other as extending the frontiers of tradition. Indirectly, the war helped cement this closeness. Picasso was Spanish to the core of his being, and France was his adopted country where Matisse now represented the national culture.

Picasso and Matisse experienced a renewed vitality in their art during the war while remaining in relative isolation. They summed up a major phase of their work during this period in preparation for new works started after the war, which also signaled a turn in their relationship. Despite their distance, both artists would offer the other comfort knowing that they were united by their determination to remain in France, and quietly working away from the eyes of the art circuits. Each would produce an important series of works that reflected their gradual acknowledgment of their mortality, but each was equally still able to offer the other new inspiration in his work.

During the war, however, Matisse's ability to work was limited. The situation became graver after a serious operation limited his movement and therefore prevented him working on large-scale paintings. Some of the paintings done in the 1940's were begun before his operation and continued through the decade as he came back again and again to the work in order to complete them. Thus, the work in Nice marked a crucial end to another phase of Matisse's career.[38]

Similarly, for Picasso, the seaside city of Royan, where he relocated between September 1939 and August 1940, would signify a change in the artist's career, just as *Woman Combing Her Hair* marked a summation of his previous work. Picasso was never certain he would work again, and actually experienced fear for his life.

Unable to paint following his 1941 operation in Nice, Matisse turned to the cutout and religious subject matter. This turn created a big rift in their relationship, as Picasso was against formal religion. With Matisse's deteriorating health, Picasso did go and see him, however. More importantly, Picasso was intrigued and outright amazed by the cutouts that Matisse had started to create proving that the aging Matisse was still able to offer something new and challenging to the younger artist. Vernadoe notes that, in sheer homage to the cut-outs, when Picasso returned to making sculpture, it would not be executed in the bulky box style of his early career but rather the flat, almost folded thin paper-like manner exemplified by *The Chair,* constructed of painted sheet metal in 1961.[39]

Although the effects of the Occupation and Matisse's fragile health made it impossible for Picasso and Matisse to meet and see each other's contemporary work, the two artists sustained supportive relationships through other

means, and this formed the basis for the closer friendship of the post-war period. Each derived solace from the thought that the other had remained in France instead of seeking safety in North or South America, and continued to work in his own way with unimpaired commitment. They were a pair of opposites: Matisse, the master of decorative effects and exponent of joy and serenity and Picasso, the sculptural painter and exponent of passion and tragedy.

MATISSE & ARAGON: EXCHANGE OF PORTRAITS

Self-Portraiture has often acted as a means for the artists to reflect on how they see themselves in relation to the larger world. Therefore it is not surprising that there is an increase in its production and its communication of interchange during the Occupation when identity became a matter of survival.

Countless self-portraiture drawings exist from the Occupation period by a variety of artists. The self-portrait often acts symbolically as a point of transition. Bellmer and the poet Max Jacon drew their faces as a type of self-reassurance, a type of continuity in their own self-image at a time when society was treating them as though they were less. Matisse undertook a series of self-portraiture during the period while Picasso's self-portraiture from the Royan period are haunting depictions of his reaction to the Nazi presence in the area.[40] Masson has described his pre-occupation with self-portraiture as a means putting oneself in front of a mirror so as to analyze the torment.

Louis Aragon was a figure of impressive complexity; Surrealist poet, realist, novelist, essayist, and dedicated member of the French Communist Party. As the editor of its weekly *Les Lettres francaises*, he was a prominent voice on the literary left. He wrote copiously on Matisse in a series of highly personal essays, collected under the telling title *Henri Matisse, roman*.[41] Four charcoal drawings of Aragon are reproduced in Vol. I, while thirty-four of the pen and ink drawings are reproduced in Vol. 2. Aragon wrote a sympathetic preface to the album, *Matisse-en France* in which he claimed the modernist's artist for the great French traditions.

The connection between Aragon and Matisse is a curious one given Matisse was nonpolitical and was certainly not a Communist. Aragon was not notably a champion of modern art in general. The link is linguistic: Aragon was deeply concerned with the primacy of the word as the foundation not only of language but of thought, found a counterpart in Matisse and his development of the elements of visual shorthand he called "plastic signs." Aragon approved of Matisse's transcendence of detail by the sign, and he seems to have understood that they both wanted to augment their respective

languages with personal signs by which they might respond consistently to the particularities of the world.

In the drawings of Aragon, we have one of Matisse's most sustained efforts to apply the sign to the portrait. But as these drawings also demonstrate, the essence of a facial feature proved to be easier to signify in a single image than the complexity of a person's character.

In one of several charcoal portraits, Matisse depicted Aragon with something of the bland, muffed quality of the charcoal drawings. In the pen and ink, V*ariations*, Aragon unfolds in the kind of *floraison* that characterized his drawing at this time. When viewed as a series (Klein-105) these drawings express what Mattise called the "cinema of my sensibility," as he often described this rapid procedure. Changes of expression, pose and gesture in the depiction of Aragon reveal his character as a remarkable range of demeanors, from aquiline suavity to rubber goofiness. Here Matisse could indulge in caricature without being limited by a single outcome. Aragon's accessibility and humanity come through in all of them, overcoming his sense of self-importance, which was considerable.

An intriguing charcoal on paper of Aragon, created by Matisse during this period is noteworthy in that it attempts to fix the identity of a complex person in a single drawing. In his portrait of the young writer Louis Aragon of 1942, he used the elaborate "theme and variations" method to do justice to the complexity of the sitter as well as the mulitiformity of the artist's response. Matisse's approach to the portraits of Aragon is derived directly from the "theme and variations" project. Matisse had intensively exploited this compositional procedure in the previous year, in series of drawings of still life motifs and studies of models, later published as *ëDessins: Themes et variations.*

PICASSO/DESNOS

By the summer of 1940 Picasso decided to remain in France. He left Royan and returned permanently to Paris where his presence became a symbol of artistic courage and hope. He undertook a series of collaborations with others during the period, most notably *The Picasso Album*, which had a tragic outcome in the internment and death of his collaborator, Robert Desnos.

The Picasso Album characterized the attitude of the period, in which individuals united by a shared hatred of Nazism and a desire to leave behind concrete evidence of their feelings took risks that might have been considered earlier, some of which cost them their very existence. It is a brilliant example of how an artistic collaboration could influence novel developments in both

visual and literary artists. It is also important for its images, suggesting that the motif of still life and portraiture in hands of Picasso could be molded to convey a tragic subtext, and the essay penned by Robert Desnos.

By February 1943, the Nazis had imposed new laws requiring Frenchmen into forced labor in Germany while stepping up activities in the formerly free zone of France and areas formerly controlled by the Italians. Increasingly, new Resistance activities emerged. Later in the year, the Gestapo had captured and tortured the top leader of the French Resistance movement Jean Moulin.

In response to the changing climate of the Occupation, Picasso worked with Resistance poet Robert Desnos to create an album which included sixteen paintings with a preface by the writer, who was at that time a journalist carrying on dangerous missions for the Resistance group Agir. The genesis for the project was actually Maurice Girodias, the publisher of Les Editions du Chene, who as a Jew risked arrest, deportation, and death.

By 1943, *Cahiers d'Art* and *Arts et Metiers graphiques* had stopped publication, thereby providing Girodias a unique opportunity despite the risks, of a dangerous form of provocation.[42] His assistant was Andre Lejard, formerly the director of publications at Arts et Metiers graphiques. Desnos had met Lejard through the publication *Arts et Metiers Graphiques*. For Picasso this was of considerable risk given that the Gestapo had intensified their visits to Picasso, hoping to find traces of his gifts to Spanish loyalists.

Desnos and Picasso had known each other slightly before the war. As usual with many of Picasso's collaborations, there was mutual admiration for the young poet, who was boundlessly attracted to the older genius's art. In 1930, Desnos had written an article entitled "Bonjour Picasso" for a special issue of Georges Bataille's Documents (1929–1930) in homage to the artist.[43]

The Picasso Album proved to be a major collaboration between writer and poet. The album suggests Picasso's point of view on contemporary reality diverged from visual language officially approved in Paris in 1943. Desnos' text is intriguing, in light of the era when it was common practice to criticize Picasso's wartime behavior.[44] He describes Picasso's art as:

> . . . a universe in perpetual expansion and contraction. About which our ideas change and become more complete as it becomes more complete and reveals itself in a new aspect. A true understanding of Picasso's canvasses implies the complicity of the author and that of the spectator.

Throughout the accompanying text, Desnos proposes a contrast between Picasso's content and other forms of art. He suggests that Picasso's portraits combine profile and the front view of the same person as depicting the dou-

ble face of our contemporaries. He proposes that Picasso images convey a passion for life and freedom that he equates with Picasso's art.

Shortly after the text was published in February 1944 Desnos was visited by the Gestapo at his home, where he was arrested and sent to French internment camp of Compiegne. He was later deported and died of typhus in a concentration camp.

GRASSE
ARP & TAUEBER

Jean Arp and his wife Sophie Taeuber-Arp were on Varian Fry's list of imperiled artists. The couple had left Muedon, outside of Paris, for sanctuary in Grasse and reached Sanary in 1941. This unusually harmonious and devoted couple produced numerous works in collaboration. Their joint efforts consist of drawings reproduced as a series of linecut accompanying Hans Arp's "Poemes sans prenoms." In 1941, the volume was later bound by Mary Reynolds in decorated paper covers (No. 46 of 150 copies in the Mary Reynolds Collection).

Just prior to leaving Muedon, Hans Arp released a volume of poems *Muscheln und Schrimeî* (Shells and Umbrellas). Arp perhaps printed it because it does not list a publisher. In addition to Arp's address in Muedon and the date 1939, the back of the volume provides the name of a Czech typographer and states that the drawings are by Sophie Taeuber-Arp. This is the first book jointly published by the Arps. It represents a period when the Arps created several intense collaborations, which would continue in Grasse. Such collaborations included branching out and working together.

Acting independently, Sophie favored geometric linearity while Hans Arp concetrated on biomorphic shapes. But in their collaborative works they found common ground; in many, the two artists composed single objects where the contribution of each is not known or not discernible. By this period the Arps had excelled in various media and genres and had closely followed one another's works in progress. Each partner looked upon the other as disciple and guide, even when they did not work on the same project.

In *Muscheln und Schrimeî,* Hans and Sophie confront each other as visual creator versus verbal creator. The relation between text and image in the book is intentionally casual or arbitrary. Although the title page states that the poems are by Arp and the drawings by Taeuber, the connection between the two is not defined by such terms. Even though the drawings may not have been made specifically for the poetry, we can still consider text and image as responding to each other, and we can not easily discern to what extent drawings add to the elegantly type set text. We cannot presume that

Sophie was presented with a complete manuscript of the poems before undertaking the illustrations, even though she could hardly have remained unaware of the various stages and phases in the production of the texts. It is entirely possible that her drawings, far from interpreting or even referring to the texts, were selected at the last moment as an additional adornment of the privately printed volume.[45]

COLLABORATIONS IN GRASSE

Fearing serious problems with the Nazis, the Arps left their home in Muedon in June 1940, just before the occupation of Paris. In that summer of wandering they would visit Peggy Guggenheim at Le Veyriers on Lac D'Annecy and then head for Dordogne, where they met Domeal and Gabrielle Buffet. The Arps finally settled in Grasse for two years near Alberto and Susi Magnelli before moving on to Switzerland.

In Grasse, their small group of friends would widen when Sonia Delaunay joined them after the death of Robert Delaunay. In spite of the war, of the worries about the future and of the always-disappointing attempts to obtain a visa for America, which was never to materialize, this was to be an extremely fruitful period. Arp would later state "In the dark, unreal years of 1941, the reality of beauty was the only consolation of our little circle in Grasse."[46] For the most part, Arp devotes himself sculpture.

The Arps' presence in Grasse would affect many artists. The German artist Ferdinand Springer attributed his new interest in abstract to their influence while asserting that the advice of Magnelli and Sonia Delaunay provided the means to new plastic language. Francois Stahly, a young sculptor who lived near the Arps in Grasse also stated that the Arps provided an important point of entry for his rare venture into sculpture.

The art continued as long as materials were available, but Magnelli acknowledged that they started to work with *papier colles* and *gouache*. The artist used music paper as a background for his collages and even painted on embroidered linen sheets from his wife's trousseau.[47]

The four created a series of Lithographic plates in 1942. During a time when collaboration had unanimous double meaning, their Swiss printmaker was seized and killed by the Gestapo. Delaunay managed to save the original drawings, and an edition of ten colored lithographs was finally published in Paris in 1950.[48] Arp later wrote a summation of the creative interchange:

> These lithographs are collaborations. Sonia Delaunay, Sophie Taeuber, Alberto Magnelli, and I did them, sometimes two of us together, sometimes three or four

> of us. They are duos, trios, and quartets. Four instruments create a harmonious consonance. Four people blend, submerge, and submit, to attain a plastic unity. The lines of one hand furrow the color spaces constructed by a fellow hand. Shapes join together and live naturally, as do organs in a body. An alloy is cast into a bell and rings out. In 1941 we found ourselves in Grasse. The constellations bringing those four artists together were especially favorable to the realization of joint work, for the tragic hours during which these lithographs were conceived compelled modesty, the sacrifice of all vanity, the effacement of any overly individual expression.[49]

CONCLUSION

Modernist culture by definition is migratory, framed by consequences of artists in exile or moving nomadically between ports of entry. It is impossible to imagine modern life without considering the exile or immigrant and expatriate in transforming or hybridizing any nation's culture since the start of the 20th century.

The collaborative cultural production of exiles, outsiders and migratory artists played a crucial role in shaping the art of the 20th century and continues today. The conflicts, political and geographical fragmentation that shaped Europe and the world during the period of 1930s and 1940s led to very unique artistic productions and creative collaborations. With inventive practices, strategies, and personal relationship, artists responded to the intersection of self, artistic production and history championing creative and cultural adaptation providing exciting and new works.

Of those artists who remained in Europe, many stopped working. Others continued to work and move through constantly almost unpredictable conditions created from within, well aware of the danger and destruction without. The concepts of languages, customs, and cultural tradition undoubtedly are the main aspects of exile experiences. Despite these differences, artists in various regions were able—albeit temporarily—to forge an artistic milieu that produced a substantial body of collaborative works.

However, this group activity could not have been without its conflicts. Concepts of cultural studies in which issues of displacement, exile, migration, gender nationalism, cultural hybridity, multiple linguistic environment must also be consider in the complex formulation of new artistic identity. These artists were fully conscious of their collective and individual displacement. As such, their artistic identity, both permanently and temporarily, are informed by this reality which manifests as a set of acts and art works.

Artists are forced to define an artistic milieu in which the complexity of the world is re-positioned by a group of individual artists defined by multiple and

diverse necessities. At these very locales social and political climate conditions greatly affect artistic production. Sites such as Air Bel, Grasse and the others of this disscussion offered an important point of departure and re-invention for many of the artists, but also new and starting points for post-war modernism. The points become springboards bringing forth a host of diverging artistic sensibilities

Keith Holz described the dynamics of many of the collaborative projects created during this period as redefining the underlying traditional definitions of modern art and of the modern artists as an autonomous, apolitical creator.[50] As collective acts and artistic productions fuse, the resultant artworks are intriguing sites for cultural cross-references. New re-alignments dissolve the concept of cultural leadership which is replaced by collective identities that manifest hybrid artistic and cultural platforms. Still, the viewpoint proposed herein is less an issue of cultural transfer or the transmutation of any particular stylistic tendencies but rather the adaptive nature of all the individual artists involve to re-establish unique independent productions as well formative collaborations. It embraces the concept of how artists make selective use of those aspects surrounding art practices suited to their unique and collaborative concerns.

Artists working in the occupied and the free zone experienced a rich productive artistic interchange. Creative collaborations during the period reveal how much the individual artists maintain their own styles, while transcending stylistically and contextually aspects of an autonomous artistic voice.

Through collaborations artists were able to investigate the enigma of alternatively constituted artistic "authorship" and their link to the crisis of the period. The collective acts re-invent the notion of modernism in which art worked in revolutionary and at times subversive intentions. These artists speak to the collective aspect of modernist art as fragmented, evolving, and unfinished.

The complexity of collaborations is compounded by a number of factors that each artist brought to the experience in varying degrees. These range from public and financial status, living strategies to degrees of social acculturation and resistance. It would be erroneous to deny that certain artists brought with them cultural lives and other intellectual outlooks that operated at adversarial parallels to their creative partners. However, despite the lack of a cultural or artistic common ground, conflicts were placed aside by divergent artists in order to make them a success.

Working under the conditions of a shared experience had an impact on the highly individual nature of many of the artists who were stunned by dislocation and the rupture in daily life. The dynamics of being part of an exile group necessitated exchanges between groups, couples and single individuals that

emphatically affected creative production. In the end, the interconnections between various artists in regions outside of Paris reconstructed dialogues between works of art and the potential of fruitful collaborations.

NOTES

1. Cone, Michele C. Artists Under Vichy: A Case of Prejudice and Persecution, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 107.

2. Darmon, Camp des Milles, also see Fontaine, Andre, *Un camp de concentration a Aix-en-Provence: Le Camps d'estrangers de milles 1939–1943*, Aix en Provence; Edisud, 1989.

3. Cone, Artists Under Vichy pp. xxiii, also see *Last Traces: The Lost Art of Auschwitz*, Joseph Czanecki, New York, Atheneum, 1989; "Brush with Death: An Artist in the Death Camps, Morris Wyisograd," Albany, State University of New York Press, 1991; Salon de refuses: Art in French Interment camps 1935–1945; exhibition at the Ghetto Fighters House, Western Galleries, Israel Spring, 2000; *Art of the Holocaust*, Janet Blatter and Sybil Milton, USA, Routledge Press (W.H. Publ), 1981, Spiritual Resistance: Art From Concentration Camps 1940–1945: a selection of drawings and paintings from the collection of Kibbutz Lochamel Haghetoot, Israel, Miriam Novitch, Union of American Hebrew Congregation, 1981.

4. Sawin, Surrealism in Exile, Sabine Eckmann, 'Surrealism in Exile: Responses to the European Destruction of Humanism in Exile & Émigrés,' pp. 147–183.

5. See Laura Fermi, "Illustrious Immigrants, la historia de la migracion intelectual Europe, 1930–41" Buenos Aires, Editoiral Bibliografica Argentina, 1971.

6. Pierre Diax has stated that Picasso always painted self portraits at critical junctures of his life, see "Picasso and Portraiture," p. 158.

7. Cone, "Artists Under Vichy," p. 106.

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9. "Surrealism in Exile," p. 127.

10. Chadwick, Whitney, *Significant Others: creativity and intimate partnerships,* London, Thames and Hudson, 1993.

11. Chadwick, Ibid, p. 235.

12. Lambert,"Jeu de Marseilles," Ibid, p. 65, and Gold, " Crossroads Marseilles," p. 252.

13. Lambert, Ibid, p. 65.

14. Andre Breton/Phillippe Souplaut, "Les Champs magnetigues."

15. "Interlude Marseilles," Ibid, p. 14.

16. Helena Benitez, "Interlude Marseilles," p. 15.

17. Andre Breton's Second Manifesto, *see Manifesto of Surrealism*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1969.

18. See "Surrealists Games": compiled and presented by Alstair Brotchie, edited by Mel Gooding, London, Redstone Press, 1991.

19. "Surrealist Games," p. 156.

20. Andre Breton, "Le Cadavre Equis, Son Exaltation," Galleria Schwarz, Milan, 1968.

21. Tillery Roger, A History of Playing Cards," 1973; also see Hoffman, Detlef, " The Playing Card: an Illustrated History," 1973.

22. Lambert, "Jeu de Marseilles" pp. 65 and Mabille, "Jeu de Cartes surrealists in Vrille" Editions du Petit Mantes, Mantes, 1945.

23. Breton, Andre "Second Manifesto."

24. Lambert, "Jeu de Marseilles."

25. A second series of the cards were recently included in the Calmels Cohen Andre Breton Auction, (Andre) Breton 42 rue Fontaine, Paris, 2003 1st Edition, 8 Volumes:, Modern Art Volume. All the cards were later unified in their delineation by Robert Delanglade, and can be used as a tarot deck with 52 cards and a joker. ("Special Collections" University of Minnesota, Minneapolis).

26. ("Special Collection," MOMA, New York).

27. Champa, "Flying Tigers."

28. "Surrealists in Exile," p. 124.

29. "Surrealists in Exile," p. 125.

30. Limited editions of the "Fata Morgana" taken from Special Collection, MOMA, New York, and the Special Collection, Frick Collection, New York.

31. Saint-Exupery, Consuelo," Oppede," New York, Brenatano, 1945.

32. Bernard Zehrfuss, "Oppede essai de renaissance." Cahiers du Sud, (February, 1941), p. 68.

33. Actually self portrait is dated 1937, Collection of Pierre Matisse alt. title "The Inn of the Dawn Hose /Autorrretrato."

34. See discussion of Carrington's re-self definition in Lourdes Andrade "Lenora Carrington, Magic, Mist and Surrealism in "Carrington Retrospectiva" Montrey, N.L. Mexico, Museo de Arte Contemporaneo, de Montrey, 1994, pp. 19–30.

35. Whitney Chadwick "Lenora Carrington: La Realidad de la Imaginacion" Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, Mexico, 1994 and Surrealism in "Exile," pp. 130; and " Lenora Carrington: A Retrospective Exhibition," University Art Museum, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, 1976.

36. Chadwick, "Surrealism," p. 78.

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39. Conversation with Kurt Vernadoe: February 12, 2003. ibid.

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42. Cone, M., "French Modernism," p. 124.

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44. John Russell, "Matisse Father and Son," Abrams, New York, 1999, p. 231.

45. Hubert, "Collaborations Couples," pp. 31.

46. Serge Fuachereau, "Arp," New York, Rizolli, pp. 23.

47. Cone, M., pp. 96, and Musee Regional d' Art et d' Historie," Six Artiste de Grasse, 1940–1943," Grasse, 1967.

48. Arp, "Jours effeuilles," Paris, Gullimard, 1966, pp. 24.

49. Ibid.

50. Holz, Keith, "Im Auge des Exils: Joseph Breitenbach und die Freire Deutsche Kultur in Paris, 1933–1941," Berlin, Aufabu, 2001.

Chapter Four

Collaborative Practices in Environmental Art

Grant Kester

> What is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is; if someone asks me, I no longer know.
>
> —St. Augustine

As Augustine suggests in his *Confessions*, the moment that passes between posing a question and receiving a reply is marked by both risk and possibility: the risk of doubt and uncertainty, and the possibility of an opening out to the other. Collaborative and participatory art practices move along this same trajectory, from self-assurance to the vulnerability of intersubjective exchange. The certitude of expressive models of art making, the material mastery and tour de force gestures of the exemplary object, are replaced by processes that are contingent, ephemeral, and improvisational. Collaborative practices operate on multiple registers. At the most basic level are what might be termed technical collaborations, either between two artists (e.g., Gilbert and George or Linda Montano and Teching Hsieh) or between an artist and a printmaker or foundry. These interactions begin to erode the romantic image of the artist as solitary genius, positing instead a guild-like community of co-creators. We also find collaborations that break the "fourth wall" of artistic creativity, transforming spectators into participants. These include spaces organized by the artist (Rirkrit Tiravanija's gallery-based lounges) as well as more direct forms of participation in planning, implementation and data collection (Basia Irland's *A Gathering of Waters*, for example, or Mark Dion's Urban Ecology Action Group). A third area of collaborative practice involves an even more extreme disavowal of the "ego imperialism" of artistic identity, through the artist's long-term involvement in a given site or community. Artist and organizer Ian Hunter describes these as "immersive" practices,

leading at their extreme edge to the "disappearance" of the artist as conventionally understood (cf. John Latham's notion of the artist as an "Incidental Person"). Here the sublation of art and life is sought not through the introduction of quotidian material into the sanctified field of the art object, but through the dismantling of the artistic personality itself in a splay of mediatory practices and exchanges. Deprived of the venerating mantle of the gallery and the museum, the artist is rendered less majestic, but also more accessible, better able to reveal creative insight as a shared human capacity rather than a divine gift.

Contemporary collaborative environmental art draws on a tradition that extends back to the 1960s: the "social sculpture" of Joseph Beuys, Alan Kaprow's Happenings, Stephen Willat's "feedback" systems and John Latham's concept of the artists' "placement." While some artists of this generation viewed the landscape simply as a large canvas, of interest primarily for the formal possibilities of scale and material it allowed, others began to approach nature as a complex gestalt of biological, political, economic and cultural forces. Hans Haacke's *Rhine Water Purification Plant* (1972) created a literal linkage between the space of the museum and the surrounding environment, using a system of pools and filtration units in the gallery to reveal and then cleanse the pollutants in the nearby Rhine river. The innovative ecological proposals of Helen and Newton Harrison, generated through free-flowing conversations among scientists, activists and policy makers, are one of the most important touchstones for contemporary environmental art practice. Over the past four decades their projects have embodied a relationship to nature not as something to be mastered or turned to our advantage, but as an interlocutor and agent speaking to us in a language we are not always prepared to understand. There is, one might argue, an underlying synchronicity between their collaborative approach (in which the work of art is less an *a priori* construct than an open-ended process) and the ethical relationship to the land implicit in their work. Younger practitioners, working both nationally and internationally, have built on this legacy. Artists and collectives such as Ala Plastica, Littoral Arts, Dan Peterman, Platform, Temporary Services, Buster Simpson, and Superflex, among many others, have developed projects ranging from portable biogas generators designed for rural African villages, to proposals to uncover long-hidden rivers in the heart of London, to recycling centers on Chicago's South Side.

In the face of a recrudescent Social Darwinism, exemplified by the winner-takes-all individualism of *Survivor* and *The Apprentice*, progressive models of collective action are thin on the ground. In place of the *grand recits* of past political movements, which figured the collective as a universalizing abstraction, contemporary groups present pragmatic, localized strategies that provide alternative models of collective and collaborative agency based on affinity,

friendship and shared commitment. Critical and theoretical engagement with this work has been constrained by a number of factors. First, many historians and critics remain wedded to definitions of artistic practice that are considerably less radical than those embodied by the artists themselves. This is evident in the tendency of mainstream scholarship to focus primarily on collaborations among and between "artists" rather than those collaborative projects that challenge the fixity of artistic identity *per se*. It is also not uncommon for critics to dismiss overtly activist art as politically naive or abject because it is seen as adopting an insufficiently reflexive relationship to political categories and identities. This dismissal operates through a kind of hermeneutic displacement in which a criticism of the work's perceived political failure is offered as a justification for challenging its status as art. A second factor that has limited theoretical insight is the now canonical status accorded to a particular set of conceptual oppositions derived from continental philosophy (and associated with the work of Derrida, Deleuze and other thinkers operating within the poststructuralist tradition). Art theory informed by this tradition carries a strong bias against collective forms of experience and action, which are seen as intrinsically totalitarian. Thus, while the spread of poststructuralism has precipitated a flowering of thought around the constitution of the individual subject, and modes of transgression appropriate to this subject (from Foucault's "biopower" to the Deleuzean "body without organs"), it has done little to advance our understanding of the positive or emancipatory potential of collective action.

A second, and related, bias stems from the privileging of language and text in the poststructuralist tradition at the expense of a deeper understanding of speech and action. From Saussure's bracketing of *parole* through Derrida's attack on "phonocentrism," actual human dialogue has been deemed politically suspect and unworthy of substantive theoretical engagement. As a result we have few useful theoretical accounts of the cognitive and haptic density of human social interaction, and the specific forms of knowledge catalyzed by it. For critics writing about art projects predicated on collective or collaborative experience and various forms of physical and verbal exchange, this absence poses a particular challenge. A functional theory of collaborative art must move in two directions. First, it needs to provide a substantive account of the specific effects of collective labor, and the relationship between shared labor and cognitive or epistemological insight. Second, it needs to account for the complex symbolic and practical status of alternative models of collective action, as staged in contemporary art practice. Why have they become so central, especially to a younger generation of artists? What is the political "event horizon" for collective practices in the absence of a viable alternative to the spread of capitalism as a form of social as well as economic organization?

The most promising direction for new critical research into collaborative art will come from scholars less invested in the routinized application of unexamined theoretical tropes, and committed instead to an open and searching investigation of the specific conditions of a practice that operates across the boundaries of phenomenology and social theory, cognitive and somatic knowledge, and aesthetics and ethics.

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Chapter Five

Concepts of Collaborative Art in the Divided Germany of the 1960s[1]

Nina Zimmer

In 1964, the director of the documenta III exhibition in Kassel, Werner Haftmann, stated in his opening speech: *"The idea of work sharing and teamwork, which produces wonderful results in the modern industrial world, is not appropriate for the art world. In the art world, it is, in fact, a bastard idea. The documenta exhibition wants to show the singular individual instead, the singular, creative spirit of the artist."*[2] Haftmann describes collaborative art work as bastardly, that is questionable products of illegitimate mingling, and sets it off against the English term "teamwork," a new term from the context of a discussion about the increase of productivity, which gained currency in West Germany in the era of the economic miracle in the 1950s.

Consequently, the ZERO group, officially invited to participate in the documenta exhibition, was banned from the main exhibition area when it became clear that they wanted to show collaborative pieces and not individual works. Instead their "white light mill" was installed far off the main path on the attic of the Fridericianum building.

Haftmann's problem with collaborative art is typical for a whole generation of modernist critics after WW II, even though prominent groups all over Europe, such as the Nouveaux Réalistes, SPUR, Zero, GRAV, gruppo enne, Equipo Cronica, and Art & Language, were experimenting with collaboration. Collaborative art in my understanding means artwork, whose signs have been determined by more than one person at the same time under the condition of general equality and the possibility of mutual influence on every part of the artwork. From Italy and Spain, to France, England and Germany, a wide range of artist groups used such collaborative forms of production to critique notions of the individual subject under new political and economic circumstances in the 1960s. Many of these groups formed networks, they knew

each other personally, exchanged ideas and exhibited together, while other groups seem to have reached similar conclusions more or less in isolation.

"Assemblage" is a collaborative work achieved over the course of several days by members of the Paris-based Nouveaux Réalistes group, in this case Jean Tinguely, Niki de St. Phalle and Daniel Spoerri from 1961. Interestingly enough, Jean Tinguely, was invited to Haftmann's documenta and showed an individual sculpture. His friends from the Nouveaux Réalistes circle on the other hand weren't invited, and Tinguely's group context wasn't mentioned in the catalogue. A similar case can be told about the German SPUR group.

SPUR

Originally, SPUR was founded in 1957 in Munich by the painters Heimrad Prem, Helmut Sturm and HP Zimmer as well as the sculptor Lothar Fischer.[3] In 1960 the writer and revolutionary activist Dieter Kunzelmann joined the group. Their work is multi-facetted, spanning from painting and sculpture to the publication of magazines, manifestos and happenings. In the conservative climate of post-war Munich, many former Nazis had managed to keep their positions—especially since the Cold War required experienced bureaucrats with stern anti-communists beliefs. The trauma of the "degenerate art" campaign was still fresh in the town where Hitler had inaugurated the "House of German Art," and it seemed natural that a young generation that had grown up during the war, first turned towards the long-banned Modernism. In their earliest paintings, Sturm, Prem and Zimmer are catching up with German Modernists such as Beckmann or Kirchner. At the same time they retained influences from the first touring shows of American Abstract Expressionism and from French *Informel* painting. They developed a highly original style of "facets," splinters of representational painting they combined to complex all-over structures. Works like the 1960 collaborative painting "collapse," alternatively titled "passion" by Prem and Sturm, demonstrate this endeavor.

Aside from this artwork as an object-oriented work, they started early on to experiment with different aspects of the art system. The first being a collaborative painting event during the opening of their first show in the Pavilion of Botanischer Garten, a happening directed against the idiosyncratic gesture of French *Informel* painters such as George Mathieu who repeatedly had themselves photographed in full genius pose while they threw brush strokes on the canvas.[4]

Another SPUR happening was aimed at the hypocrisy of opening speeches. For their show *Extremists-Realists* at the Völkerkunde Museum in Munich 1959, they prepared a tape with a nonsense collage of quotations by philosopher Max

Bense. On the invitation card it read that Bense was expected to give the opening speech—quite a prominent speaker for an altogether unknown artists' group. When the audience had taken their seats, a member of the group explained that Bense had not been able to make it to Munich, for urgent business required his presence in Milano and Zurich. So he couldn't deliver the speech, but instead had sent it on tape. The tape recorder was placed on the lectern, next to a glass of water. Indigestible snippets of aesthetic theory were to be heard for the lengthiest time, but the audience followed attentively and applauded politely afterwards. Only the day after, the scandal broke out when Bense read a review about an interesting opening speech he had never given.[5]

Anarchistic-spirited manifestations like this brought them in touch with the Situationist movement of which they became the German section in 1959. Manifestos and the publication of SPUR magazine followed. It featured a mix of individual and collaborative collages, self-made comics, Situationist texts, urbanistic theory and playful diatribes against everybody and everything in the German art world. The Bavarian police confiscated Nr. 6 and the SPUR group was sued for pornography and blasphemy.[6] The court case opened in 1962 and received a huge international media echo due to the fact that this was the first time after WW II that art was again on trial in Germany. The case ended with relatively mild fines for three SPUR members at the court of ultimate resort, whereas the court of first instance had ruled for long prison terms. SPUR group was dismantled in 1966, some members wanting to pursue individual artistic careers, others merging with the political students' movements which led to May 1968. Ex-SPUR member Dieter Kunzelmann went on to Berlin and co-founded the legendary commune called *Kommune 1*, a revolutionary group which held contacts with German terrorists and US Pop stars alike.[7]

Classical artworks, a sculpture and a painting, of two members of the SPUR, Lothar Fischer and Heimrad Prem, were individually exhibited at Haftmann's documenta III, but information about their group context and activities was likewise omitted.

What was Haftmann's problem with collaborative art works? Could it simply be that collaboration was too new a phenomenon? Not at all. Collaboration had always existed in workshop scenarios, and in the modern sense of shared authorship it became frequently used in the 20th century.

For instance in the collaborative "Fatagaga" collages by Max Ernst and Jean Arp, which Haftmann surely knew about,[8] or the experiments with exquisite corpses by the Surrealists.[9] Nonetheless, collaboration had always been the exception, and never the norm in modern art. Why was Haftmann opposed to the new types of artistic production that became widespread in the 1960s? In his speech, making clear that *"the documenta exhibition wants to*

show the singular individual" and *"the singular, creative spirit of the artist,"*[10] he expressed a distinct concept of artistic creativity.

One aspect of it is the idea of the artist as a genius. Collaborative art on the contrary is envisaged as a way of overcoming the stereotype of the artistic genius.

GRAV

The Parisian group GRAV declared in a manifesto from 1960: *"With this day the subscribers of this document declare the foundation of the center for visual research. By creating this center, they want to eliminate the traditional attitude of the painter as a genius and creator of unique, immortal masterpieces."*[11]

Next to overcoming the artistic genius, GRAV was demanding from artists to create anonymous forms and to fuse artistic and scientific research. Nonetheless the GRAV artists (Horacio Garcia-Rossi, Julio Le Parc, François Morellet, Francisco Sobrino, Joel Stein and Yvaral, the latter being the son of Vasarely) continued to work on their individual account, and created collective "Environments" mostly for exhibition purposes. In these works they were interested in combinations of geometric structures, kinetic elements, lighting and mirror effects, for example in their "Maze II" for the show "Nouvelles Tendance" in the museum of decorative arts in Paris 1964 or "Maze III" for a 1965 New York gallery exhibition. Increasingly GRAV used interactive elements in these environments and elaborated the notion of "play" as a constitutive element of their conception. A sketch for the show "Participation—looking for a new spectator" documents different elements designed for visitors to use or interact with.

EQUIPO CRONICA

Equipo Cronica was comprised of six artists, formed in 1964 by Rafael Solbes and Manuel Valdes, with the participation, in the group's early years, of Juan A. Toledo. They are considered Spain's foremost exponents of Pop Art. The group's work combined elements of British and American Pop with the figurative aesthetic of the 1960s New Figuration, creating works that criticized Spanish politics and questioned the canonized history of art. The last years of Francisco Franco's dictatorship (1939–1975) in Spain served as a backdrop for many of these works. Their art was also often self-referential, mixing images from the Spanish tradition as much as Modernism, with their

quotes ranging from El Greco to Picasso and thereby associating the vanguard to closed circles like those of authority. In "Dangerous Games" of 1970 for instance, the image of King Phillip IV, emblem of traditional Spain, as we know him from Velazquez portraits, appears as a sanguinary monarch who has just beheaded a victim, embodied in one of the figures of Picasso's "Guernica."[12] Cronica's main artistic strategy was to isolate figures from famous paintings.

The style of their quotes often resembles that of graphic design in ads: three-dimensionality is reduced to black and white contrast; details are dropped in order to reach an overall flatness of the image. It is interesting to observe, that the use of borrowed imagery makes perfect sense with the group's intention to overcome individualistic expression. Equipo Cronica, like GRAV, turned against the "attitude of the painter as genius," in their manifesto from 1965, where they express the need to *"radically overcome the mythology of individualism and of subjective expression."*[13]

EQUALLY EQUIPO 57

Equally Equipo 57 formulated in a manifesto from 1960: *"The artist bears the sign of individualism, of the war man against man, and therefore takes refuge in the clichés of genius and extravagance, clichés they need, to compete on a commercial art market."*[14] Equipo 57 was founded 1957 in Paris and was comprised of five members: José Duarte, Angel Duart, Juan Serrano, Juan Cuenca and Agustin Ibarrola. They worked exclusively collective during the relatively long period of the group's six-year existence. In the quoted manifesto, as in others, they criticized the Western concept of individualism and the genius. Their ideological basis was Marxism. In Franco Spain, the Communist Party remained banned until 1977, two years after the dictator's death. Ibarrola was arrested for "communist activities" in 1962 and served a three-year prison sentence. The group split into a French and a Spanish part and disbanded altogether in 1966.

Artistically and ideologically, Equipo 57 took up positions of the 1920s Constructivists, such as the claim for systematic, abstract forms, which were supposedly "of scientific nature." Equipo 57 therefore tried to derive the shapes they were using in their painting from mathematical formula.

There are many more artists' statements that could be quoted which express the very same idea of overcoming the concept of "genius." One particular figure that inspired criticism of the genius-artist in the 1960s was Marcel Duchamp. His works had radically changed the notion of the artwork, nonetheless they were depending on a comparatively traditional idea of the

artist, as a unique, innovative genius. Charles Harrison, who was affiliated with Art & Language, therefore stated: *"In the Duchampian tradition, the artist as an author died only to be resurrected as a dandy*."[15] In 1965 in the gallery Creuze in Paris, Edouardo Arroyo, Antonio Recalcati and Gilles Aillaud handed out their manifesto: "To live and to let die or the tragic end of Marcel Duchamp." They were talking about how Duchamp's works *"neither had the power to put in question the aura of the artwork nor did they question the myth of the creative genius."*[16] At the same time they were showing a sequence of collaborative paintings that tell the story of three young artists who assault and kill Marcel Duchamp, intersected by paintings that featured Duchamp's most prominent works.

The genius concept has a problematic history throughout the centuries that I cannot entirely summarize here. However, in Fascist Germany, it underwent a specifically perverted reinterpretation: Not long after his rise to power, Adolf Hitler was personally identified with the genius-concept. This was the conclusion realized by the poet and Buddhist lecturer Ottokar Matura in a publication bizarrely titled "On German genius—new research on the number, existence and species of geniuses in the Reich," printed in 1941.[17] But even after Hitler, Matura explained to his faithful readership, there still would be German genius: *"As long as there is a noble substance in the German race, new genius will arise."*[18] In "Genius as problem" also published in 1941, Wilhelm Lange-Eichbaum was likewise optimistic about Germany as an ideal breeding ground for future political genius—ironically enough, he remained skeptical about the chances of breeding good painters.[19]

COLLABORATION IN EAST AND WEST

That doesn't mean to suggest that Werner Haftmann had a fascist concept of genius in mind. When he gave his speech on the individual nature of artistic creativity in Kassel, he might in fact have been referring more to its 19th century models—but in any case, he certainly wasn't able to accept a rupture within the genius tradition in the fine arts. That might have to do with ideologies associated with collaborative art.

Kassel, where the documenta is located, is close to the former East-German border, and in 1964, the politics of the Cold War had an important impact on the cultural debates of the day. And collaboration had a smell of communism.

In East Germany, much like in the Soviet Union, there was not as much state-inspired collaborative art as one might think. A couple of murals were commissioned right after the foundation of the East German state in 1949, some of them executed by painters' collectives. Artists' brigades, after the

Bitterfelder Weg model, worked in most cases together with local officials and commissioners; there were also discussion groups with the artist and factory workers, for example when the decoration for the newly founded petrochemical Kombinat PCK in Schwedt was planned.[20] But although a lot of this artwork was considered "collaborative" because of the group discussions and committee meetings involved, it was mostly executed individually. Truly collaborative art, though, was rare. In the 70s, this understanding of collaboration can for instance be found in East Germany with the underground group TPT that evolved around A. R. Penck in Dresden.[21]

The most prominent project of the early days of the DDR, which gave reason for a controversial debate, was the 2nd German Art Exhibition in Dresden in 1949. Ten murals were state-commissioned; the idea was that ten artist collectives should execute them. Committed communists who had survived WW II in exile and had returned to Germany in order to help to build a communist model state proposed the concept.[22]

Although party officials had little input into the concept of collective work initially, after the project was hung they wanted to take steps against what they called "the proletarian cult," a term that stood for various forms of so-called pseudo-revolutionary attitudes.[23] Collaborative art was accused of being one of them. This might have been triggered by some mocking commentary from the West—West Berliner critics had reviewed the Dresden murals and made fun of a state "where artists were forced to paint collectively."[24] As a reaction, East German cultural politics now insisted on the possibility of individual art in East Germany—which, following the new party philosophy was considered collaborative by its socialist subject matter alone.[25]

A. R. Penck's group TPT (Team Psychology Technology), which worked outside the state system, was not so much a group of professional painters; the members' background was in film or music and they were amateur painters. They met once a week and experimented with different collaborative painting strategies. The very fact that they met as a group privately to pursue artistic goals was considered a rebellious act against the official state-supported art system. Their use of collaboration came out of a general experimental attitude towards traditional art forms. The pop band experience of one of the members could have also been a reason why their experiments took a collaborative turn.

However, because the group worked outside of the state system, the East German Stasi monitored the activities of Luecke TPT. Penck eventually had to leave East Germany in 1980, after many repressions, one of them being that his studio was raided in 1979, with all artworks destroyed, probably by a Stasi squad. His group activities were not the main reason for the East German state's suspicion and—finally, aggression—but they certainly played a role in it. He left for West Germany and later Great Britain.[26]

In the context in which Werner Haftmann was stating an example against the communist ideology of collaboration by praising the genius and individuality, he could not have aimed his critique at the East German or Soviet groups directly. As a matter of fact the few true collaborative brigades in the Bitterfeld sense at work in the 60s were operating in a manner that was beyond Haftmann's notion of collaboration and therefore not even subject to his critique.

Haftmann was much more concerned with Marxist groups in the West. And in fact, all Western artists of the 1960s experimenting with collaboration, from SPUR to Equipo Cronica, gruppo enne or Art & Language etc., were more or less inspired by Marxism—by versions of Marxism of course that had little in common with the reality of socialism in Eastern Europe. In Western Europe, the idea to turn to collaborative strategies was a clear political reaction against an increasingly conservative economic climate, but at the same time it was also an artistic reaction concerning the role of subjectivity in artistic production.

The atmosphere of the Cold War had led to a situation where art—finally freed from the long years of war and Nazi rule—was now, in a much more subtle way, used again to legitimize the new political and economic power structure. The painterly gesture of somebody like Jackson Pollock in which every trace of paint on the canvas is a testimony of the uniqueness and individuality of its author particularly echoed the political climate. The US proudly presented a homegrown avant-garde for the first time, and the highly individual style of American abstract expressionism was subsequently interpreted as an expression of the freedom of the country's citizens. As Charles Harrison put it: *"In the Western culture of the Cold War, modernism in art was firmly associated with the affirmation of liberal humanism and with the willful and triumphant self-expression of individual free spirits (in terms of that culture, only individual spirits could be free).*"[27] So as much as the East determined Socialist Realism as the appropriate style for the artistic representation of society, the West codified abstraction as the appropriate expression of "freedom." In the course of reeducation programs in Germany, there were for example regular tours of exhibitions that featured American Abstract Expressionism as a model of artistic freedom.[28]

The criticism of individualism by collaborative groups all over Europe occasionally had, then, an Anti-American trait. But at the same time the collaborative groups were also questioning the European version of abstract, gestural painting, known as *Informel*. Again SPUR in a text from 1959: *"Today, the painters of structure go so far as to transfer arbitrary individual gestures to the painting. This individual curlicue, justified by philosophy, mathematics or aesthetics . . . is going to spread over the whole world in order to establish*

a new "world language."[29] And: *"Art historians manufacture intellectual dinner conversation from every necessary spiritual revolution. We shall set against this objective non-committal-ism a militant dictatorship of the spirit."* (1958)[30] Soon the newspapers and art magazines echoed: "*Informel* painting results from a spirit of crisis."[31] Helmut Sturm recalls that the SPUR group initially wasn't conscious that their criticism of *Informel* already contained a dimension of social criticism. Inspired by the general critique of culture by Karl Jaspers, SPUR was looking for new values in a world that had just turned more complex than ever. It was then Theodor W. Adorno's sociology of music such as his book "Klangfiguren" from 1959, which provided the group with a new perspective on the socio-political aspect of their artistic doings.[32] Although Adorno was predominantly concerned with the problems of music, the issues were easily transferable to painting. *"The subject of the composer"*—read as 'artist'— *"is not individual but collective. All music, and even the stylistically most individual music, has a definitive collective nature: each sound expresses: We."*[33] The assumed solitude of the *Informel* painter or the abstract expressionist painter therefore became the reason why these movements were regarded as irrelevant. Only collaborative efforts promised progress.

On a different level, the forms of painting themselves became metaphors for sociological systems. What sounds absurd today was common practice in the 1960s, when the slogan calling for "democratization of art" was widespread. Wols' complex formations, often placed in the middle of the canvas, were understood by SPUR as a symbol of the estranged lonely individual.[34] Jackson Pollock's structures where single trails of paint joined at several clusters, were viewed as a more promising model of a society with several power centers—groups—balancing each other.[35]

What could be understood as a consistent, productive misunderstanding of Adorno wasn't limited to the SPUR group alone. Group ZERO, consisting of Heinz Mack, Guenther Uecker and Otto Piene, was criticizing the *Informel* in much the same way, using the exact same terms when describing it as "non-committal" and "arbitrary."[36] Artistically, ZERO chose a path quite opposite to that of the SPUR group. Mack, Piene and Uecker were searching for an elementary, ideal art experience, using geometric shapes, and monochrome surfaces—later integrating light and movement into their works. SPUR, on the other hand, stuck to the traditional means of painting, experimenting with a spontaneous painting process leading to "new figuration."[37] SPUR kept the individualized personal handwriting of abstract expressionism, but tried to overcome it at the same time by using collaborative strategies. They were aware of the contradiction attached to this, and understood it as the tension their collaborative—as well as individual work—was relying on. ZERO, again, was trying to avoid a personalized

painterly language, but soon developed a personalized sign language, so that the use of certain materials, such as the nail, could become an individual symbol again—in this case for Guenther Uecker. The search for more "committal" art forms wasn't limited to Germany. Equipo 57 in Spain, GRAV in France and gruppe enne in Italy were expressing very similar ideas. Alberto Biasi from enne for example condemned the "useless subjectivisms" of the *Informel* and asked for a renewed "positive *Informel*" (draft for a catalogue text 1959)[38] to follow, which would overcome the "social and political chaos" (manifesto 1961) absolute individualism had created. Subjectivism was criticized because it had led to an "overestimation of the individual."[39]

Haftmann of course would have called it an appropriate appraisal. While he was, in 1964, still fighting for the "singular individual" and took refuge to a highly dubious sexual metaphor to denounce collaborative art, calling it a "bastard idea," the general attitude of the art world slowly changed. Towards the end of the 60s, collaborative art was viewed as an original European contribution to art history, and as maybe the only counterpart to the triumphant American Pop-art. In 1963, the first prize of the biennial of San Marino was awarded to two groups: the ZERO group and gruppo enne.[40] The important Paris biennial called in 1963 for entries in the traditional categories painting, sculpture and graphic art and for the first time in the category "collaborative art."[41] At the XX. Salon de la Jeune Peinture (the 20th salon of young painting) 1968 in Paris, the vast majority of all entries were collaborative works.[42]

By 1968, collaborative art had reached a level of acceptance that the artists' groups of the early 1960s hadn't dared to dream of. They had managed to question the myth of the individual genius—collaborative art ceased to be an avantgarde affair. All the same, individual work quickly became the norm again, while many contemporary artists' groups today, like the Austrian group GELATIN/GELITIN or the German neo-conceptual Oskar-von-Miller Strasse-collective continue to work with what used to be called a "bastard idea."

NOTES

1. I would like to acknowledge the valuable input for this paper I received from Jeanne Nugent, currently Minnesota State University, who had invited me to her panel about Recovering Modernism: Negotiating Cultural Legacies in Postwar Germany at the 2003 MSA in Birmingham. I would also like to thank Kerstin Stakemeier, Basel, for editing.

2. Reprint in: Manfred Schneckenburger: Documenta. Idee und Institution, Tendenzen, Konzepte, Materialien. Munich 1983, p. 74–78, p. 77f.

3. Villa Stuck Museum Munich is preparing an extensive retrospective exhibition for July 2006.

4. Nina Zimmer, SPUR und andere Künstergruppen. Gemeinschaftsarbeit in der Kunst um 1960 zwischen Moskau und New York, Berlin 2002, p. 168f.

5. Roberto Ohrt, Phantom Avantgarde. Eine Geschichte der Situationistischen Internationale und der modernen Kunst. Hamburg/München 1990, p. 198. (The English edition: Roberto Ohrt, Phantom Avant-Guard. A History of the Situationist International and Modern Art, New York: Lucas & Sternberg, 2006 is in print.

6. Beate von Mickwitz. Streit um die Kunst. Über das spannungsreiche Verhältnis von Kunst, Öffentlichkeit und Recht. Fallstudien aus dem 19. und 20. Jahrhundert mit dem Schwerpunkt Deutschland. Beiträge zur Kunstwissenschaft, no. 62, Munich 1996, p. 56–63.

7. Ulrich Enzensberger, Die Jahre der Kommune I, Berlin 1967–1969, Cologne 2004.

8. See for instance: Hans Arp/Max Ernst: *physiomythologisches diluvialbild*, 1920, collage, pencil, ink on cardboard, 11.2 × 10 cm, Sprengel Museum, Hannover.

9. Exh. cat. Juegos Surrealistas, 100 Cadáveres Exquisitos, ed. Jean-Jacques Lebel, Madrid, Fundación Collección Thyssen-Bornemisza 1996.

10. Op.cit.

11. See exh. cat. Participation. A la recherché d'un nouveau spectateur. Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel, Garcia-Rossi, le Parc, Morellet, Sobrino, Stein, Yvaral,—Salle de Jeu, Réalisation collective de Groupe, Museum am Ostwall, Dortmund 1968, n. p.

12. Private Collection, Valencia. Reproduced in: exh. cat. Equipo Crónica en la colección del IVAM, Montevideo 2005, p. 49.

13. In: Kunstforum, no. 107 (1990), p. 139.

14. First published in: Acento Cultural, no. 8, Madrid May/June 1960, reprinted in: exh. cat. Equipo 57, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid 1993, p. 172–176, p. 173.

15. Charles Harrison, Essays on Art & Language, Oxford/Cambridge, Mass. 1991, p. 93.

16. Manifesto, September 1965. Reprint in: Um 1968–.

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25. Claus Träger and a writer's collective: Zur Theorie des sozialistischen Realismus, Berlin 1974, p. 584; Erhard John, Einführung in die Aesthetik, Halle 1972, p. 59.

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Chapter Six

"Avant-femme" or Futuristic *Frauen*: Collaborative Art by Women in the German Democratic Republic

Beret Norman

"Each woman is the melody of herself and the echo of others."

—Gabriele Stötzer on collaborative performance art in Bätz (1993, 77)

In 1983 a group of young East German women defied repressive laws and artistic conventions to form an unassumingly renegade collaborative group with a naive mission: to create an alternative meaning in their lives through art, beauty, and camaraderie. In this way they presented a subversive resistance to the one-party state's authoritarian regime that dictated the role of art in the German Democratic Republic's (GDR) society. The group,[1] founded in the small city of Erfurt in the German state of Thuringia by ambitious dissident Gabriele Stötzer,[2] began without high expectations of rebellion, and yet eventually grew into a performance art collaborative that focused on self-expression and social disruption. Before creating their performances, Stötzer and these women expressed themselves through paintings, weavings, photography, pottery, amateur 8 mm films, and sewing clothes. By 1991 they founded a space, the Kunsthaus Erfurt (Art House Erfurt), for contemporary art exhibits, workshops and studio spaces. The Kunsthaus Erfurt still thrives today and symbolizes the legitimacy of their six-year (1983–1989) resistance against the GDR's directives.

Stötzer formed this collaborative art group of women, which she later called the Künstlerinnengruppe (women artists' group). In 1989 the women named themselves Exterra XX, in order to fashion an indirect resistance to the GDR and its limits upon artistic expression. This artistic culmination is bittersweet: by establishing the Kunsthaus Erfurt, a recognized institution at which to display art in the newly re-unified Germany (1990), and by not having to work against GDR restrictions anymore, these artists' drive to produce collaborative art seems to have dissolved.

While Gabriele Stötzer's early artistic oeuvre exhibits a mode of subversion within a one-party society, one finds in Stötzer's collaborative art new insight into the struggle of women, as well as (unofficial) artists within the GDR, who were trying to find their voice, practice their craft, and establish their identity. Stötzer's larger project with the women of the Künstlerinnengruppe characterizes her personal resistance that overflowed into public space, a movement similar to the general dissatisfaction and desire for change in the citizens of the GDR that stirred them to overthrow their government peacefully in 1989. Through collaborative art, Stötzer discovered what the GDR's political and social system never allowed her to find: the vast space and potential for individual agency.

This article provides an overview of this German group's collaborative performance art that materialized around the writer, artist, and nonconformist Gabriele Stötzer. First I describe Stötzer's background and tell some of the story that motivated and made possible the dissident artist in her. Then I portray the beginning of the Frauengruppe and trace its artistic evolution from photography and film to its development of performance art within the Künstlerinnengruppe Exterra XX, best known for its international symposium on performance art in Erfurt, November 1992. The culmination of Stötzer's collaborative art was born at the same time as the citizens' revolts brought an end to the GDR, and her art escalated throughout the early years of re-unified Germany. However her collaborative work disappointingly fades with the women's hurried adjustments to life in re-unified Germany. The one enemy—the GDR, with its repressive laws and restrictive artistic conventions, was gone; the individual agency, which Stötzer and the women in the Künstlerinnengruppe found in collaborative art and which buoyed them from 1988 through 1993, now refracted as their energies split to follow varying goals.

Born into the GDR in 1953 in the eastern state of Thuringia, Stötzer learned, according to an interview, "an orderly theory of socialism: everything was historically clear, we were anti-fascists" (Dahlke 1997, 326).[3] This statement reflects the underpinnings of the GDR, a system of government that "promoted the broad-based anti-fascist agenda" (Fehervary 1997, 396) and that became the foundation for Stötzer's formal education. But this ideological training did not prepare her for the boredom and lack of creative outlets she experienced as a student at the Erfurt Teacher's College. "The college presented a future in which I should only function"—not participate in any meaningful way (Stötzer-Kachold 1992, 23). In 1976, after she gave a public reading of a banned political text, she was expelled from the college and labeled a class enemy. Soon thereafter she was sentenced to one year in prison when she refused to remove her name from a letter that protested the November 17, 1976, expatriation from the GDR of the controversial singer and

songwriter Wolf Biermann. Already expelled from her college, Stötzer was seen as a challenger to the GDR's social order—still a serious crime in the GDR in the 1970s.

The prison experience stripped from Stötzer any remaining faith in socialism she may have had, and she turned toward art to find a meaningful identity. Her release from prison and subsequent divorce one year later severed her remaining connections to her past and allowed for her full immersion into a different identity. At this time, and after declaring her job status as self-employed—a suspect and marginal definition in a country of workers—she semi-legally occupied an apartment and started an unofficial art gallery in it. She modestly called it "Gallery in the Hallway," and the Stasi, or GDR state security force, subsequently closed it in 1981. She continued to foster relationships with other artists during the late 1970s and early 1980s, and more significant contacts came when she met several women through the Erfurt punk music scene in 1981. It is with these women, in particular Verena Kyselka, Monique Förster, and Ina Heyner, that Stötzer began an artistic journey; the end product of which—the Kunsthaus Erfurt—still exists decades later.[4]

By 1983, Stötzer and these women deviated from the (very male-dominated) punk music scene and gathered in Erfurt as a group of women specifically interested in art and, significantly, without any ties to the secret police.[5] According to Monique Förster, curator of the archive at the Kunsthaus Erfurt, Stötzer invited Förster and several others to meet, and upon finding they had a multitude of topics to discuss, they decided to set pre-arranged topics for each subsequent meeting. This was the beginning of what they at first called simply the Frauengruppe or women's group (personal interview, May 1998). The group changed their collective name to Künstlerinnengruppe (women artists' group)—and specifically to Exterra XX in 1989, which identified them more directly as artists.[6]

The women in the fledgling Frauengruppe shared Stötzer's ambition of working as unofficial artists—artists who were self-taught and who did not attend the established GDR art schools—even though the distinction of unofficial artist was considered asocial and thus punishable under the laws of the GDR. At this point the group remained a small collective of admittedly amateur artists: they individually created artworks which were characterized by unity of vision; and their individual efforts—aimed at creating an alternative meaning in their lives—united them on the margins of GDR society. The group served as mutual inspiration and support, since the GDR cultural ministry did not allow unofficial artist collectives. Later the women actualized their joint enterprise, in the form of the Kunsthaus Erfurt—based on the principles of collective ownership. But these women were at first able to hide

their art behind a domestic veil—creating "women's art," such as weavings and clothing—and thus they avoided direct censure for a time. They could get away with their art because they produced it in their own apartments, and worked on "women's things." Only Stötzer sold her unique—hand-knitted and hand-dyed—sweaters, which provided Stötzer her main source of income. Although these sweaters were not seen as a political statement—rather they presented the buyers with distinctive items not available in the GDR stores—one notices how such purchasers may have consciously supported Stötzer's artistic, implicit resistance to the State. Traditionally undervalued, even in a socialist society, this women's work was not of particular concern to the police, the Stasi or the cultural censors. But Stötzer moved these women away from just a collective—a group that wanted to create alternative meaning in their lives—toward an art collaborative that created socially critical art works in the form of rebellious outfits and eventually bewildering performance art productions. The difference between the collective and the collaborative lies in the women's common effort in the latter: together they made films, created costumes, masks and surreal garments, and choreographed performances for their figurative expansion of their geographic limitations. Where the collective brought them together and provided inspiration to continue, the collaborative work—joint and cooperative work in the realm of visual art—allowed these women to free themselves of the state's dogma and create their own ideals of, at first, beauty and camaraderie, and later, of artistic, political expression. Due to Stötzer's early political problems, the group avoided art with direct social relevance or commentary; rather, the group's work remained indirect, but the members still confronted the social limitations that prohibited their freedom of creative expression.

The collaborative work of Stötzer and the founding group of women began with conceptual photography, moved into Super 8 films, and continued its evolution into performance art. Stötzer's first photographs consisted of series of women and can be interpreted as her reaction to the GDR's social confines for women. Worth mentioning are two series that portray isolated women: one set of twelve photographs portrays a woman being wrapped from head to toe in white muslin—like a mummy; a second set of nine images depicts a woman looking directly at the camera, as if into a mirror, as she applies and misapplies makeup—a stream of black liquid runs down the static expression of bored visage and resembles tears, but there is no sadness in her expression.[7] Both the progression of the images and the potential of implicit critique within each of the series motivated Stötzer to start working with film and its moving images. Again she remained behind the camera, and by 1989 Stötzer had become camerawoman, director, producer, and editor for ten films. The films' subversion resided in how the women could act out anything

they wanted, especially in the 1986 collaborative film *Frauenträume* (Women's Dreams). In this film, each woman brought one idea to the project. The avoidance of any type of political expression in the film surfaces as one finds women dancing, running, or pantomiming domestic scenes, e.g., cleaning a house or rocking a baby. By capturing these women's imaginings on film and by mixing them together in rapid succession, Stötzer validated the women's experiences and presented a different combination of daily life—a combination that deviated considerably from the state-sanctioned employment-based routine. But again, these films remained abstract in content and private or "unofficial" in use, and were thus politically acceptable, as GDR citizens were allowed to buy and use Super 8 cameras to make home movies.

Yet, starting with her work on film, Stötzer reappeared on the Stasi's radar. After the closing of her unofficial "Gallery in the Hallway" in 1981, and following her second attempt to exhibit her paintings in 1984, the Erfurt police and the Stasi kept track of Stötzer's activities. For this first attempt in 1984 she was punished with a small fine of 50 Marks. By 1987, as she continued to venture toward a quasi-public space in the arena of filmmaking, the authorities intervened when she stepped directly into the public sphere. The authorities did not seem to care about the films themselves, most likely because they contained neither plots nor dialogue—Stötzer's Super 8 camera was not equipped with a microphone. However, in March of 1987, at which time she had seven films to her credit, Stötzer received her second, more substantial fine of 200 Marks for the crime of scheduling a screening at a cinema in Erfurt, which the police stopped from happening.

None of this persuaded her to curtail her artistic activities. Stötzer was determined to continue her collaborative work with the Frauengruppe. In response to the fine of March 1987—a clear indication of Stötzer's confidence and relentless spirit—she wrote the following note to the women: "Achtung, the new film calls: [bring] Ideas, Sketches, Concepts—indeed, we will proceed. . . . Give Gabi K. suggestions before the women's group meeting on April 29, 1987."[8] Stötzer has written about the pluck these women had: "the women had to be infected with my way of seeing, with my marginal experiences. It took courage, to work with me, but this brought forth a special form of warmth or happiness even after the filming—like being in search of the other in oneself" (Stötzer 1996, 76). Thus a penalty and public censure failed to halt Stötzer's and the Frauengruppe's work; the relatively low fine—and lack of imprisonment—may even have served to encourage them (i.e., the risk of showing one's art was worth such a small fine). And as the note Stötzer wrote implies, their collaborative work continued. The sense of private accomplishment the women achieved through the collaborative films spurred the expansion of these women's visual artwork into a series of moving im-

ages; and thus their live, performance art was born. In the summer of 1988, Stötzer, Monika Andres, Förster, Kyselka, and Heyner—after having worked on eight films together—boldly invited other women in Erfurt to participate in a self-made fashion show under the social safeguard of the "Erfurt Church Days." The creative concept began as a collective act and resembles the previous film project, as Förster says, "each woman sew[ed] her own illusion, her dream" (letter to author, September 2005). The Frauengruppe used this semi-public space for a display of the women's talents, and the show featured fifteen women who sewed and modeled the items displayed—mostly inventive dresses and pantsuits in colors and shapes that were unavailable for purchase in GDR stores. The women gave the event the simplistic title "Fashion for Women by Women" (Mode für Frauen von Frauen) As with the photography and films, this first fashion show provided a certain amount of gendered protection in that the women were "just sewing clothes" and not claiming to be making art.

The women designated the event as a "fashion show" as opposed to an "art exhibition," and they even sold some of the outfits through the subsequent auction. This emphasis on fashion enabled the Frauengruppe to attract many women who may not otherwise have been willing to participate had the affair been about art. Merely one year after her latest public fine, Stötzer did not shy away from confrontations and censorship; rather, she tucked her aspirations into a women-centered project that they—the women in the Frauengruppe and the Erfurt functionaries or censors—did not call art. Not yet.

As they experimented with self-expression within the framework of the fashion show, the women's understanding of their own work changed and, as with the films, they moved toward collaborative art, in that they produced the art work—here the outfits and costumes within the larger fashion show—collaboratively. It was during the unstable political climate in the summer and fall of 1989 (peaceful political protesters regularly filled the streets in the neighboring city Leipzig, beginning that previous May), that the women enhanced their visual displays by adding costumes with masks and dresses made from recycled materials. Some of the masks contained political undertones, such as the "Nachrichtensprecherin" (Female News Anchor) whose face was covered by a metal plate. The Frauengruppe fashioned a new title for their hodgepodge happenings, now calling them "fashion-object-shows." Using a bricolage technique—putting together what was "at hand," such as fabric, cloth, newspapers and garbage bags, Stötzer and the women together shaped and created singular designs that were otherwise not "at hand" or available to purchase in the GDR. They cut symmetrical and asymmetrical lines into dresses and forged masks out of mesh, wire, paper, and wool. The socially critical use of materials 'at hand' came in the forms of dresses made

out of plastic yoghurt containers and out of the thin cardboard Coca-Cola containers, with aluminum soda cans attached—such recyclable items had not previously been available in the GDR. This latter outfit drew popular attention and carried the title, "Latin Corset."

When the fashion-object-show moved to a public library, the Stasi no longer looked the other way. At the group's second fashion show (now called a fashion-object-show), the Stasi held off the ticket-holders from being able to enter this city-owned library turned performance space. Perhaps the beguiling poster for this June 1989 event—showing an abstract face with one eye, a tooth-filled open mouth, a jagged arrow and the futuristic title "Avantfemme"—made the authorities look closer than their previous simplistic idea, "it's just women sewing clothes." Beyond the ticket- holders not being admitted, there were no other direct consequences for the women performers; this lack of punitive action remains another sign of the changing times in the months before the Berlin Wall was opened. Eventually Stötzer added readings of texts to the fashion-object-shows on stage; in this way the fashion-object-shows grew into the group's first performance art pieces, which they then called literary performances. These performances relied less upon the outfits than upon a mingling of moving bodies, colors, and language.

It is not just the new materials used that marked the transition from photography and film to performance art, but the women's common effort behind the fluid images and the fact that they brought these images to a live stage. This development occurred against the backdrop of the unparalleled historical and political change that marked the end of the GDR. The Berlin Wall was opened on November 9, 1989, and soon thereafter, in early December, members of the Frauengruppe became the first citizens to storm the Stasi offices in Erfurt. As Stötzer became much more politically active during this time, she gave up the artistic control she had exercised in editing the photo series and the films, and opened up the control and planning to the group. This change occurred in response to her experience of the artistic concert of bodies on stage, which spoke to her belief in "mechanisms of liberation" through art (Stötzer-Kachold, 1993, 36). And without the Stasi presence in the GDR after December 1989, the women had open access to all stages and could perform freely.

Together the Künstlerinnengruppe planned and choreographed the simultaneity of events within the fashion and fashion-object shows, which anticipated the group's performance art pieces as well as Stötzer's more innovative writing. The texts within Stötzer's 1992 publication, *grenzen los fremd gehen* [without borders, going astray], were written during the influential and busy years of political change, travel, and collaborative performance art. And instead of a rebellion, as in her 1989 publication, *zügel los* [unbridled], these

texts contain calls for action and for women to explore, experience, and change the world. In the program to a 1990 exhibit by the (then called) Künstlerinnengruppe, Stötzer foretells of the Kunsthaus Erfurt:

> What will come is a higher sensibility and rigorousness of the outer world, because [it has been] group-immanently experienced and lived out [. . .]. What will come and can come is a workplace for women in art—away from the lonely monuments and toward democracy and patience for the other, for the others, for the development of woman into Woman in the public space. [It is] a search for truth and for finding beauty as a value and not as a corrupt means of calculation, which brings woman under the instrument of another's power. What will come is a woman who becomes aware of her power and makes it sensual. (Kachold, 1990a)

In the 1992 collection of texts, *grenzen los fremd gehen*, Stötzer also describes her vision of female agency, which reflects the intense subjectivity and self-expression of so many of the Künstlerinnengruppe's performances:

> there must be innately female contents, energies and strengths
> that have not been reflected in the forms of communication
> of the last 2000 years
> [. . .]
> but the self-reflection of a woman is also a coming to terms with life
> first the space in us must be expanded
> in order actively to enter the outside realm (Stötzer-Kachold 1992, 138).

As the national politics rapidly turned toward re-unification (the majority of German citizens voted to re-unify East and West Germany in March 1990), the women in the Künstlerinnengruppe decidedly contained their energies within their local region and within the realm of art where they could influence change and continue to collaborate with one another. In May 1990 they formed the official entity "Kunst-Kultur-Kommunikationszentrum, e.V." [Art-Culture-Communications Center, Registered Association]. The women of the Künstlerinnengruppe then applied to purchase a badly maintained inner-city building in Erfurt, in which they installed an on-going art project in its empty rooms. After superficial repairs, they opened a coffeehouse on the fourth floor, coincidentally named Café Rapunzel, to the public in March 1991; at this time they were legally allowed only to have this fourth floor space on a rental basis. When they finally purchased the entire building in 1992, they moved the café to the first floor, showcased a gallery on the second floor, and kept a space for fashion and textile workshops on the third floor. In addition, a small office on the second floor contains the Kunsthaus Erfurt archive. The entire house would still have to be completely renovated, which the women started in 1993.

The group's transition into an established art group and into the realm of performance art was rapid, as the Kunsthaus Erfurt archive details. From 1988 to 1994 the Künstlerinnengruppe appeared in thirty-eight fashion-object shows—which the women called fashion-performances as of 1991—and twenty-two literary performances. As described above, the first fashion show was in 1988, and already one year later the group followed with five more events. In 1990 they gave four fashion-object-shows and four literary performances. Then in 1991 they doubled that number with sixteen stage appearances—five of which were labeled performances, the remaining eleven were fashion-object shows. In 1992 the group had fewer appearances—four fashion shows and seven performances—but they sponsored a week-long international symposium on performance in November, the Performerinnenwoche (Women Performance Artists' Week) in Erfurt. In the following year, 1993, the group focused on performance art; they had six fashion shows but they appeared in eleven performances—the largest number of individual performance pieces in the Künstlerinnengruppe's history. The considerable increase in performances was a direct result of the Performerinnenwoche. But in 1994 the number of performances recorded in the Kunsthaus Erfurt archive drops to two; there are no more records of collaborative performance art by the group after 1994. This sudden decline in stage appearances happened for two main reasons: Stötzer and Monika Andres left Erfurt; and Stötzer and painter Verena Kyselka chose to focus more on their individual artistic work and stopped working on the collaborative performance art.

Details from the international symposium on performance art, which follow below, allow for a further exploration into the Künstlerinnengruppe's collaborative art. The fashion shows and fashion performances initially grew into literary performances through additions of material and changes in format, not necessarily through a change in purpose or even an adequate comprehension of performance art, its history or its theory. Uninformed of other movements in conceptual art, Stötzer and the women of the Frauengruppe simply started expanding their fashion shows into performances, by changing the format and adding voices. They were performances and not ad hoc events. As Förster states, each performance was "strictly choreographed according to a plan that was created by the group" (letter to author, Sept 2005). Yet the famous names of other conceptual art groups, such as Fluxus or Viennese Aktionismus in the 1960s, the ground-breaking work of Pina Bausch and her Tanz Theater in West Germany in the 1970s and 1980s, or even the feminist performance art and films of Valie Export in Vienna in the 1960s and 1970s, remained unknown to Stötzer and thus to the Frauengruppe (personal conversation, June 1998). The only influence they had from contemporary performance art was one smuggled album, *America*, by Laurie Anderson, which

Verena Kyselka received from a relative (personal conversation, December 1997).

The planned sequence of events of a Künstlerinnengruppe Exterra XX performance often focused on free association, self-expression and on individual actions; thus the performances did not distinctly correspond to historian RoseLee Goldberg's significant discussion of performance art as "a way of appealing directly to a large public, as well as shocking audiences into reassessing their own notions of art and its relation to culture" (1998, 8). Certainly the women no longer appeared as models who systematically returned to the stage in new outfits; rather, in the group's performances most of the women were on stage at the same time and some interacted with each other, for instance, repeating a gesture or miming one another; others had little or no direct interaction with their co-performers. Within the structured plan of events, in which the music signaled changes, the women could move however and perform whatever they wanted, according to Stötzer's imprecise description: "each woman creates her own task and transports this task outward through a substantial moment of an essence that lies hidden within her" (1992b, 8).

The women artists' theoretical knowledge of their work with performance art reached its pinnacle during the weeklong interactive symposium these women held in the yet un-renovated Kunsthaus Erfurt, November 14–22, 1992. Verena Kyselka, after a performance workshop in Spain earlier that year, took the initiative and invited sixteen female performance artists from France, the Netherlands, the US, Brazil and around Germany—plus any interested participants from Erfurt's community. Along with the twelve to fourteen current members of the Künstlerinnengruppe, this large group interacted on the topic of performance art and—even without knowing of Goldberg's work—questioned and reassessed how performance fit into their notions of art. The book *Multimedialistinnen* (Multi-media artists) (Kyselka and Stötzer, 1993) was published as a record of this unique symposium.

The goals of this symposium were not only for the Erfurt performers to witness international performance art, but to enlarge each participant's understanding of performance art. Stötzer wanted performance art to consist of intentional effort but also be a part of one's way of life, as she states here: "Art is a word and a way of life [. . .]. Art is a means to play out our lives and make them transparent, even in a temporally accepted role" (1992b, 8–9). Yet two other principal scholars of performance art suggest that this complex field should focus on the individual body and its conscious, social awareness (Carlson 1996) and should be a meeting point of politics and art (Martin 1990). The Künstlerinnengruppe's lack of clear reflection about their society in the performances illustrates one limitation of

the group; but after November 1992 they made progress toward more specific social involvement in their art.

The visiting artists' site- and context-specific work about the former GDR becoming part of newly re-unified Germany during the Performerinnenwoche greatly influenced the women of the Künstlerinnengruppe and the results were profound. Although they continued to perform their popular fashion-shows five times in 1993, the group's innovative work intensified as the women created at least six distinct and new performance pieces. The titles of four of these carry unambiguous resonances of the socio-political landscape their art previously avoided: "Once upon a time. . . ," at the Kunsthaus, Erfurt; "Stasi Problem," at the Main Post Office, Erfurt; "Relic of Germany Greets Rusted Germany," in Kassel; and the performance for the opening of the outdoor, city-wide exhibit "Rifts/Cracks," in Erfurt. These titles speak to how the women associated—among other things—their relatively powerless position in the newly re-unified Germany with their confidence and ambition.

Their ambitions and confidence were tested, in their most political piece, the "Stasi Problem" performance in January 1993. This performance was unannounced and took place in a public space that connects all social classes. Standing in Erfurt's main post office on a weekday, Stötzer and Förster read the names of official and unofficial Stasi collaborators who worked in Erfurt. Three other masked performers moved amidst the people, standing in line at the post office, and pretended to eavesdrop on them as these names were read; in essence this performance reconstructed the constant and omnipresent condition of surveillance that the Stasi used to maintain control over people. In an interview five years after this piece, several of the performers recalled how unnerving the performance had been for them and declined to discuss it thoroughly (personal interview, May 1998). What has already become a popular topic for historians, the Stasi story in the GDR, remains a difficult topic for the victims—like these performers—to relive. Even though their six or seven subsequent performances in 1993 are noteworthy for their distinctiveness and originality, none of the remaining performances in their repertoire included such a contemporary and controversial topic. Instead Stötzer and the women moved into the realm of the abstract. For example, they performed as if each woman represented an element of nature in "The Birth of Fire," June, 1993, and they entered a fantasy realm in "Nymphs, Elves and Goddesses," December, 1993.

The rousing week of interactive performance that the symposium provided influenced each of the women in the Künstlerinnengruppe and conversely led to the group's eventual demise. To paraphrase Verena Kyselka, the women in the group did not know much about performance art; the more they learned [e.g., about performance art theory and its history], the more they realized

how difficult it was to work with so many different people at once and with their previous naiveté (personal conversation, December 1997). The group worked hard on new performances after the international symposium. Individually the women excelled artistically after the symposium—for instance, Stötzer's 1992 book, and Kyselka's 1994 book of her art, *Dschungelgöttinnen* [Jungle Goddesses], and as the Kunsthaus Erfurt drew so much of their talents and energies into the administration and maintenance of the gallery and the café, the women in the Künstlerinnengruppe faced the renewed and now critical difficulty of scheduling and of being creative with so many people and so many conflicting schedules; plus there was the comprehension—after the symposium—that their art should also articulate a social awareness. The individual women in the Künstlerinnengruppe may have realized that at least one line of their manifesto had a two-fold meaning—one meaning which did not advance the group effort: "Individually women are good but together they are mystifying" (Kyselka and Stötzer 1993, 3). They also stumbled upon the difficulties of collaborative performance art and why so many performance artists worldwide work alone and not in groups.

Stötzer's collaborative work within performance was in doubt even as early as 1993—which was one of the Künstlerinnengruppe's most successful years. Only four months after the riveting Performerinnenwoche, and as a clear example of her movement away from collaborative art, Stötzer states in March 1993, "I only want to write now. That's it," (Dahlke 1997, 318). This transition remains surprising when one reads a quote of Stötzer's published a few months earlier, in December 1992, that resides firmly within a context of many women working together: "We have placed our feminine laughter up against the seriousness of the GDR period and now against the 'Wendezeit' [time after the Fall of the Berlin Wall]. This made us relatively active and self-confident and gave us the strength to buy a house—even though most of us are single mothers or artists, and are not worthy of bank credit—and to make art applicable and considerable" (Stötzer 1992b, 8). But due to her success as a writer, as well as the problems she had trying to keep the Künstlerinnengruppe organized, she decided to leave Erfurt and focus on her writing.

One example of her turn away from what she saw as the laxity of the Künstlerinnengruppe's collaborative art can be seen in the 1995 conference she organized, called "Crystal-Sugar: Seeing/Speaking Conference."[9] The subtitle of the conference demonstrates Stötzer's intended focus, "The Image of Women in Contemporary Literature and Art." Under the listing of her presentation in the brochure, Stötzer defines herself first as a writer and second as an illustrator. By limiting her visual art to the realm of drawing and illustrations in this particular label, "Zeichnerin" (Illustrator), Stötzer avoids the oft-repeated and much more general word, artist, which she had used to describe

herself before this time. This change in Stötzer's self-description coincides with her change of mind regarding collaborative art. The conference brochure lists the speakers as German literary scholars, art historians, philosophers, directors of galleries, as well as authors and one painter. Thus, although she still recognized the creative independence she had in using the spaces of the Kunsthaus Erfurt, Stötzer's focus in organizing this symposium was of an academic nature, which noticeably reflects her turn away from the increasing lack of focus in the group toward a deliberate and scholastic tendency. It is this disciplined voice for which she also strives in her most recent writing—for instance in her memoir about her year of imprisonment published in 2002, *Die bröckelnde Festung* [The Crumbling Fortress].

Overall one must take into consideration the socio-political changes around Stötzer and these women in the years 1992 to 1995 in order to comprehend the dissolution of the performance group. Specifically, the influence of reunified Germany's free market economy, its focus on the individual, and the absence of the GDR's real-existing-socialism, within which many people had lived cheaply, changed Stötzer's ideas of collaborative art greatly; they changed so much that she identified herself more and more as a writer (individual, independent) than as an artist working in a collaborative group of women.

Although numerous reasons contributed to the end of the Künstlerinnengruppe's collaborative performance art, the epic—and ultimately successful—task of renovating the Kunsthaus Erfurt, which was finally finished in 1994, turned out to be the main cause for the end of the group's collaborative work. And instead of needing to create an alternative meaning for themselves, or to beautify life through art, as they did during the last years of the GDR, the women of the Künstlerinnengruppe in 1994 successfully established a space for art, and they have fewer boundaries to their individual discoveries than they had under the GDR regime. After 1990 and German re-unification, these women artists can travel, explore and be consumers in the world. But the end of these women's collaborative art does not mean their collective of artists no longer exists. Of the original founders of the Kunsthaus Erfurt, three women are still actively working there: Monique Förster is the archivist and administrator; Tely Büchner runs the gallery; and Verena Kyselka, an extremely active, multi-faceted, and successful artist, still lives in Erfurt and keeps her ties to the Kunsthaus Erfurt through a studio there. The café, remains a "hotspot" in Erfurt's nightlife, but is no longer run by the women in the Kunsthaus Erfurt. One would hope the individual excursions might also lead these women back to collaborative art, where they certainly made a substantial mark. Fortunately the Kunsthaus Erfurt continues to extend its innovative ideas into the Erfurt community, as its 1999 exhibit, "Licht-Türme" (Light-Towers) demon-

strates: five women artists[10]—among them Verena Kyselka—projected slides and videos upon five medieval towers within Erfurt's inner city. This wash of color and images created an historic and interactive nighttime event: medieval towers become magical art works with 21st-century technology. The women of the Kunsthaus Erfurt still know how to invigorate their city.

NOTES

1. The participants and members of the women artists group were Angelika Andres, Monika Andres, Eve Back, Claudia Bogenhardt, Tely Büchner, Monique Förster, Gabriele Göbel, Anke Hendrich, Ina Heyner, Angelika Hummel, Elisabeth Kaufhold, Dorothea Krug, Verena Kyselka, Ines Lesch, Bettina Neumann, Ingrid Plöttner, Karina Popp, Birgit Quehl, Juta Rauchfuß, Anita Ritter, Marlies Schmidt, Susanne Schmidt, Gabriele Stötzer, Susanne Trockenbrodt, and Harriet Wollert (Förster, 45).

2. Gabriele Stötzer had her first works and articles published under her married name, Kachold. I refer to her throughout this article as Stötzer—the only name she has used since 1994.

3. The translations of German quotes into English are mine.

4. Purchased in 1991, the Erfurt Kunsthaus remains in 2005 a thriving institution that has influenced the artistic landscape of the state of Thuringia. Within the building, the gallery continues to exhibit work from younger (mostly from the former GDR) artists; and there are artists' studios and workshop spaces above the gallery, and a café below the gallery. The address is Michaelisstraße 34, 99084 Erfurt. E-Mail: KUNSTHAUS.ERFURT@t-online.de.

5. The Stasi or secret police used many Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter (unofficial informants), also called IMs, to infiltrate all kinds of social groups within the GDR. But the Stasi remained unsuccessful in their attempts to recruit a member of the Künstlerinnengruppe who would inform on the others. The Stasi even used the tactic called "Romeos"—in which men were assigned to start romantic relationships with the women in order to get information about the group.

6. I refer to the group as the Frauengruppe when discussing events through 1989. For events during and following 1990, I use the term Künstlerinnengruppe.

7. These two images of women in the series of photographs represent the opposite of the "positive hero" which the early GDR cultural ministers prescribed since the early 1950s: a wholesome figure with whom GDR citizens could identify; a depiction of the positive development of socialism; and workers shown in a positive light.

8. This note was in the Kunsthaus Erfurt Archive. The "Gabi K." that Stötzer uses refers to herself under her married name, Kachold.

9. This program is in the Kunsthaus Erfurt Archive.

10. The five artists—and their respective towers and titles—involved with the "Licht-Türme" (Lights-Towers) exhibit in Erfurt (1999) are: Sabine C. Sauermilch, Johannes Tower, "undestroyed"; Constanze Unger, Nikolai Tower, "Blaues Wunder"

(Blue Miracle); Verena Kyselka, Georgs Tower, "Fallende Engel" (Falling Angels); Bettina Grossenbacher, Bartholomäus Tower, "Passage"; and Liz Crossley, Pauls Tower, "blinding sights" (Förster, 48–49).

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Chapter Seven

The Second Self

Charles Green

This short essay outlines the reasoning behind my studies of artistic collaboration and argues for the importance of artistic collaboration in understanding contemporary art. Two of the most commanding and pervasive concerns in contemporary art are the archival turn and the social turn; both consistently appear in association with artist collaboration. Together, the three terms embody art that has great currency, a disparate range of production from works that look like exhibitions, consisting of a variety of old and new objects and images placed together to articulate a scheme, all the way from art that employs the tools of precise collaborative archival investigation and is indistinguishable from social research, to art that looks like street demonstrations. The compelling connection between all this has suggested to many prestigious critics that an aesthetic of navigation, teamwork and ghost-writing is rapidly replacing postmodern appropriation as the best way to characterise and understand contemporary art's forms.[1] Though important writers have generally agreed on an emerging canon of such artists working across art and the social sphere, none has analysed this phenomenon in any depth beyond identifying an archival or a social turn. Still less has a historical genealogy yet become clear and broadly accepted, though there is consensus on the seminal importance of 1960s Earth artist Robert Smithson.

The same identities and working methods that we can locate in the 1970s in artistic collaborations re-emerged in the mid- to late-1990s amongst younger artists. The movement outside discursive boundaries, beyond stable artist/artwork divisions, into new forms of polemical and enigmatic group action should register as immediately familiar. The drive to rethink artistic authorship is not the property of any one period, even one as productively unstable as the late 1960s and 1970s, or the property of the present, but the

trajectory of artistic collaboration in the former period was part of an important sea-change in art as it is now. From the late 1960s onwards, artists moved away from stable media definitions of art and artistic work. At the same time, artistic collaborations moved towards identities that could be constructed—fictional, disguised or absent. The trajectory that I described at length in my book, *The Third Hand: Artist Collaborations from Conceptualism to Postmodernism*, was simultaneously one of disclosure and withholding of the self.[2] I mapped the types of collaboration in conceptualist art, understanding that even these refashioned selves were presented as if they were natural. My book was a taxonomy and at the same time a chronological history of conceptual art from the 1960s into the 1970s through the lens of artist collaboration. I showed that collaboration is not so much a mode of production as it was a key trajectory in art since the later 1960s to the present. There were three broad types of collaborative authorship, within which shared authorship was a strategy to convince the audience of new understandings of art and identity, as opposed to collaborations or collectives in which a conventional idea of art made in the studio is preserved.

In early conceptual art, collaboration was inscribed in the art. An interrogation of the inscribed figure of the artist alters our sense of that conceptual art's significance. By the mid-1970s, another type of artistic collaboration had become clear: collaborations based on families or couples who worked like anthropological or archaeological research teams, with an emphatically articulated, even rhetorical sense of historical perspective and memory, but behind a cloak of stylistic semi-anonymity. In a later phase in conceptualist art, the figure of the artist (and, again, an interwoven set of exaggerated, highly stressed, binary relationships between the visual and anti-visual, and between imagination and memory) was further deconstructed. Christo and Jeanne-Claude evolved a transitional artistic identity, in which a corporate "name" or trademark subsumed their own individual selves in an almost parodic exaggeration of artistic freedom. Gilbert and George linked their living sculpture's believability to their total self-absorption, creating a meta-identity that encompassed both artists, relegating them to the status of automata or puppets. Marina Abramovic and Ulay referred to "body memory" and the "third force" that they created in their interaction with each other. The productivist aesthetic implicit in modernism was rejected by all these artists, at least for the most part initially, though another model of the collaborating artist, which ends up entailing a more conventional idea of collaboration—the collective—returned during the 1990s. Collaborations were not so much a way of connecting with a social project—though it was in the case of Art & Language after its start, whose history I leave to the many other people who are working on it—as a way of working out if it was possible to engage in such activity. As time went

on, the desire to see political action in art through collective work increasingly replaced the desire to see if collaborative action could facilitate, through the removal of the artist, a new zone between art, writing and history. This zone is fascinating, and I think it is implicit in a lot of the activity in defining the new intermedia genre in contemporary art, only some of which involves new media. The typology of types of collaboration I have drawn up (cooperation in collective, short-term cooperation; corporate, bureaucratic groups or partnerships; married couples and families; and finally intensely and publicly bonded couples who created "third artists") also formed itself into a narrative, for certain types of collaboration were answered by others as each proved to be inadequate in the solution of artistic problems.

At the same time, I was working on a history of radical Australian art of the 1970s, writing about Sydney-based conceptualist artists in the light of a more general, agoraphobic disillusion with the horizons of mainstream conceptual art in the crucial years around 1970. The artists included Peter Kennedy, Aleks Danko, Tim Johnson and Mike Parr, who all worked in teams, collectives or with invented identities. They were associated with Sydney alternative gallery Inhibodress and the University of Sydney workshop, Tin Sheds, and had created cooperative links with Mail Art networks in Europe and the United States. They enacted a violent disavowal of self in works that rehearsed a series of models of systematic artistic work as a replacement for expressivity, transmuting the classic Conceptual Art idea of "dialogue" into aggressive new forms of autobiography, deliberately mimicking and mocking classic conceptual art in impure, inappropriately psychologized dematerializations of the art object. Eliminating the material object was not a heroic step forward towards enlightenment but, as many critics have pointed out, yet another erosion to which art was subjected in the gradual separation of production from its philosophical base, in which the artistic freedom represented by the crisis in artistic language of the early 1970s was a short-lived moment before terminal aesthetic and economic recuperation. Artists sought, of course, to avoid this recuperation, and did so frequently through the manipulation of artistic identity and, therefore, often through collaborations, as they did in the Sydney activist groups. Collaborations were sometimes a deconstruction of the metropolitan master-narrative—that of the "death of art"—and sometimes a reconstitution of the avant-garde narrative in experimental, deliberately "marginal" adaptations to the ecology of art. But unless they moved outside the ecosystem of the art world completely (and many collaborations successfully did; they are the necessarily invisible, exemplary figures of my work), activist artists still memorialized a self-definition that reified a conservative cultural category, that of art. It is far too easy to see in this an imagined hostility to activist art (as I once was accused in a set of e-exchanges). I was attempting to understand what I glimpsed as a decline of the intersection of col-

laborative and networked forms.[3] (Net activist Geert Lovink has since taken this up in a far more thorough way.) For new media artists and activist theorists alike face a problem: the sheer confidence, power, inclusiveness, size, and even generosity of the post-Darwinian, hyper-globalized world of contemporary art and its museums, galleries and art fairs. Overtly lustful as that world appears at its art-fair coalface, it also incorporates and subsumes wide audiences and the desires (foolish though they may be) of most artists. The commitment of an institution like Tate Modern, for example, to its October 2003 conference on artist collaboration and activism did not represent a significant recuperative response from any high cultural level to the problem of emerging anti-hegemonic artistic activities so much as the diffuse desire to represent all types of activity to both general and specialist audiences. The point I'm driving at is that the oppositional status of collectivist group action within the art world exists as symbolic and decorative—as a style, and even a saleable one, as it turns out.

Meanwhile, I had extended my research from *The Third Hand* into the area of cross-cultural artist collaborations, between a traditional Australian Aboriginal painter and two European performance artists, Marina Abramovic and Ulay. The result was a paper at Tate Modern, later developed into an essay for *Third Text*, "Group Soul: Who Owns the Artist Fusion?"[4] In short, the appropriative collaborative identity that Abramovic and Ulay set out—and that they had already located in the shadow world of Western Desert painting's networks of ownership and responsibility—is akin to the moral law that locality fails. I was proposing a notion of artistic collaboration that is different from the conventionally held view of collaboration as reconciliation. The latter implies both profit and loss and a book-keeping sense of the word, incorrectly seeing artistic collaboration as a balance. Instead I delineated an artistic field generated by the incorporation of others and "Others" within cross-cultural or cross-artist fusions. I wanted to point to the alternate model of artistic collaboration in which the parts of the relationship merge to form something else in which the whole is more than the sum of the parts, in which the parts are not removable or replaceable because they do not combine as much as change. The collaboration itself exists as a distinct and distinctive entity, in a second self as much as a Third Hand. One view of Abramovic and Ulay's work is that the particular variant of collaboration that it elaborates deliberately excludes any wider social or political stake. For some writers, their procedure of wholesale bodily appropriation and its underlying theoretical justification, most notably laid out in the famous late-1970s ordeals, results in what is little more than gendered domination. For Abramovic and Ulay, however, the obliteration of personal, ethnic identity was firstly a way of enacting an ethical connection or bond between souls (the group soul of that essay title) and, secondly, invoking the possible promise of a human community based on virtues such as a compassionate, panoramic vision (the discriminating ethical

vision of Buddhism, which by then was exerting a powerful pull on Abramovic). There is no reason why such a synthesis might not be critiqued or interpreted through the lenses of Deleuzian, psychoanalysis or neo-marxist activism, but to map collaboration through these systems was not my task. Instead, I was taking up Mieke Bal's contention that "the subject's agency . . . consists not of inventing but of intervening, of a "supplementation" that does not replace the image but adds to it,"[5] and in this paper, arguing that the artists supplemented the world-memory of an image. The artists were not so much combined by collaboration as supplanted or obliterated by the second self of the work itself. To understand this peculiar absence as an identity that might be mapped, like a psychoanalytic subject, I have now turned to iconologist Aby Warburg's unfinished 1929 *Mnemosyne Atlas*, a photographic atlas of visual art in which he effectively saw the artist as the hostage of cultural memory and a supplementary presence in the work of art. I invoke this Atlas in order to map the dimensions and limits of the second self constituted in contemporary cross-cultural teamwork and artistic ghostwriting. Warburg pessimistically and critically thought that the collision of culturally constructed imperatives with technological and social change, accompanied by the much less important variables of personality, shows that the history of artistic styles is the result of the sedimentary pressure of cultural memory rather than of innovations through self-expression or invention. His Atlas is governed, he postulated, by sublimations surviving from image to image in frozen, intensely felt gestures; explanations of these oscillate between attributing to them something of the syntactical nature of a legible sign language or something more of the nature of a wreckage, which is something that Robert Smithson would have understood. Warburg assumed—wreckage or signing—that the collective mind is connected by the sublimated image's affect. The real importance of artistic collaboration lies not at all in its significance in itself, but in the intersection of redefinitions of the artist with redefinitions of art prompted both by productivist changes in form from studio to post-studio work and by redefinitions of agency such as that of Warburg. For the task of understanding these shifts, accepted art critical methodologies, along with the familiar definitions of intention, period and chronological movement, will not suffice.

NOTES

1. See Hal Foster, "An Archival Impulse," *October*, no. 110 (Fall 2004), 3–22; David Joselit, "Navigating the New Territory: Art, Avatars and the Contemporary Mediascape," *Artforum*, vol. 43, no. 10 (Summer 2005), 276–279.

2. Charles Green, *The Third Hand: Artist Collaborations from Conceptualism to Postmodernism* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2001).

3. Charles Green, "The Visual Arts: An Aesthetic of Labyrinthine Form," in *Innovation in Australian arts, media and design: Fresh Challenges for the Tertiary Sector*, ed. R. Wissler (Sydney: Flaxton Press, 2004), 1–12.

4. Charles Green, "Group Soul: Who Owns the Artist Fusion?" *Third Text*, vol. 18, issue 6, no. 71 (November 2004), 595–608.

5. Mieke Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 13. Bal repeats theorist Judith Butler's astute refusal to replace "the intentional subject with a personified 'construction,' which, as she puts it, 'belongs at the grammatical site of the subject'" (Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio*, 14). I've used this reference before, and it stands as a pithy redefinition.

Chapter Eight

"Encompassing Unboundedness": Desire and Collaborative Authorship in Carla Harryman and Lyn Hejinian's "The Wide Road"

Shawna Ferris

"Sometimes the best way to undo a trap is to take it apart quietly without calling attention to it"—so write Carla Harryman and Lyn Hejinian in their provocative prose piece, "The Wide Road" (61). In this text, Harryman and Hejinian profess a shared interest in the possibilities of "measuring" desire (56). However, their text also playfully "measures," or "take[s] apart" questions of collaborative authorship. In fact, while the authors never directly indicate any intention of doing so, "The Wide Road" offers a variety of intriguing answers to Michel Foucault's famous question regarding the power and voice of the author in any text: "What matter who's speaking?" (115)

With Foucault's question in mind, I examine the double authorship of "The Wide Road," as it is expressed in the text's physical layout on the page, and in Harryman and Hejinian's exploration of what appears here as distinctly "female" forms of desire. Throughout my discussion I explore the effects of the interplay between the double columns in which Harryman and Hejinian write "The Wide Road." In doing so, I note the echoing of a variety of words, phrases, and themes from one column to the next, and I analyze the implications of the text's heteronormativity in relation to the desire it purports to measure and the collaborative authorial relationship/s it illustrates.

While "The Wide Road" simultaneously exhibits and critiques forms of authorial power, the consciousness with which Harryman and Hejinian signal their collaborative authorship here effectively "takes apart" the process of writing collaboratively. Indeed, even as they take on—quietly or not—the task of measuring something as intangible as desire, Harryman and Hejinian question the possibility of finite definitions *and* take apart the single author's traditional, finite authority. One of the three co-editors of "The Wide Road" as it appears in the feminist journal *Tessera*'s "Feminist(s) Project(s)" issue

introduces Harryman and Hejinian's text as one that "call[s] attention to [its] own materiality, establishing relations that disrupt reading as consumption and require productive reading processes." In "The Wide Road," the editor suggests, "the reader is invited to make sense of formal juxtapositions" (Henderson, 9). Another co-editor of this issue notes that Harryman and Hejinian "muse about desire and self-representation" (Moyes, 11). Interestingly, while these introductory comments clearly highlight significant aspects of Harryman and Hejinian's text, none of the editors use the word "collaborative" to describe "The Wide Road." This omission implies the text's collaborative authorship as self-evident and/or not an important aspect of this text's "project"; and I take issue with this omission.

While the text indeed highlights its own "materiality," and while Harryman and Hejinian's double-column format disrupts reader expectations, indeed requiring us "to make sense of formal juxtapositions" (Henderson, 9), "The Wide Road" also constitutes a playful performance of collaborative authorship. Though both authors' names appear on the title page, and though the two columns and their respective titles clearly reflect this double authorship, neither author specifically claims either of the columns as her own. Harryman and Hejinian overtly intervene in and problematize reader expectation. Although the two columns appear side-by-side (and this format is consistent throughout the piece)—just as the authors' names appear side-by-side under the title—"An Essay" (the left column of each page) is distinct from "Another Essay" (the right column of each page). Thus, though a Western reader's first impulse is to read down the left column and then move to the right and do the same, readers quickly discover that they must instead "jump" from the bottom of the left column on one page to the top of the left column on the next page. Readers must likewise read the right column of one page and then "jump" over to the right column on the next page.

In my experience, this exercise involves some slippage. I regularly catch myself reading a word or sentence from a right column after finishing a left column or, because the language in the two columns is often similar, my eye drifts across the page and reads a word or two from the opposite column even as I try to read only one column. Thus Harryman and Hejinian encourage readers to read each essay with a constant awareness of the other essay beside it on the page—much as, when we drive along a road, we are reminded (by the presence of others on the road, or by the empty lanes which could be occupied by others) that others also drive there.

This playful performance of dual authorship is also evident in the narrative voices and the language of the two essays, which comprise "The Wide Road." Though the essays are visually distinct, the narrative voice of each column is often plural. In both essays the speakers regularly eschew use of the singular

pronouns "I" or "one" in favor of "we." This plurality of voice suggests not only the potentially collaborative authorship of each essay, but also the authors' inclusion of their readers in the writing, or "measuring," and sharing involved in this text. The text thus becomes *more* plural than the two columns and two authors' names would lead us to believe. "Let's imagine," the speakers of "An Essay" invite us in their first sentences, "that desires are perceptions. . . and yet we aren't looking for ultimate or even penultimate pleasures, choosing instead to go on with our desires" (56–57). The speakers continue in this inclusive manner until, at the bottom of their third page they finally say, "Between the man and the woman rolls the inchoate river of desire. And this river, according to our thesis is voracious" (58). With the words "our thesis," the speakers identify themselves more explicitly as the "we" and "our" of their essay. However, each essay's consistent employment of inclusive plural pronouns until the "our thesis" moment in the text, inevitably suggests inclusion, or collectivity of voice throughout.

Thus the speakers of these essays challenge their readers to engage with and interpret their texts even as they, the speakers, perform collaboration. Though Harryman and Hejinian's names on this title page indicate that the authors are "present" and important in this text, the authors' subsequent refusal to use singular pronouns, their refusal to claim authorship/ownership of either one of the columns, playfully echoes and answers Michel Foucault's questioning of the author's traditional authority in his/her text. "What matter who's speaking?" Harryman and Hejinian echo. And then they answer: "It doesn't matter. We're speaking. We, the authors who are and are not here because 'we' includes 'you', our readers; even as we use 'we' to indicate our voices, themes, and theses in 'The Wide Road.'" Harryman and Hejinian thus theorize and perform collaborative authorship. Consequently, the "double" format and "plural" authorial voice in "The Wide Road" "take[s] apart" the traditional single author's, or artist's, "unique" and often "omnipotent" voice in his/her text.

That Harryman and Hejinian theorize and measure *desire* as they perform and theorize collaboration begs discussion here as well. Though neither of the essays in "The Wide Road" directly addresses eroticism in the collaborative process, Harryman and Hejinian's choice to measure desire in this collaborative piece reflects contemporary theories of same-sex literary collaboration. In his book *Double Talk: The Erotics of Male Literary Collaboration*, Wayne Koestenbaum claims, "Desire is a mist, only partially decipherable, that rises from the collaborative page" (177). Koestenbaum goes on to illustrate ways in which a number of seminal collaborative authorial relationships reflect the homoeroticism and/or homosexuality Koestenbaum sees as necessarily present in same-sex collaborations. Though Koestenbaum specifically theorizes

male-male collaboration, he also provocatively suggests that such desire may also be evident in woman-woman collaborative texts. He writes, "An entire book could discuss. . . female (and lesbian) collaboration" (13). Harryman and Hejinian's "The Wide Road," published four years after Koestembaum's important book, may in fact contribute a portion of the theoretical exploration he envisions for women's collaborative relationships.

Certainly Harryman and Hejinian's exuberant exploration of unlimited desire in this text creates a certain "mist" on these collaborative pages. In fact, in reading "The Wide Road," readers may sense not simply the "mist" of desire Koestenbaum finds in the texts he examines, they may actually feel the spray which precedes the mist as waves of desire roll across these pages. As the speakers of "Another Essay" warn us in their first few pages, "even the mention of desire causes desire to commence measuring itself and its implements of measure are *as various as the imagination*" (57, emphasis added). And "An Essay" echoes, "What we see at any given moment, the outstretched so-called field of vision, is bounded only by invisibility. . . . To be mobile and desirous is to be unbounded among distinct things" (57). Already then, desire is "unbounded," invisible, immeasurable—unless we are willing to place boundaries on imaginative possibilities.

Recognizing the necessity of imagining unboundedness as a way to open to desire as a motivator, "mediating the interplay of sensation with knowledge," (56) the speakers of "An Essay" write: "*Vivo con el estomago aqui/ y el Corazon otro lado del rio* (I live with my stomach here/ and my heart on the other side of the river" (57). They later expand this river metaphor such that it becomes not simply the space dividing aspects of the self, but rather the means of bringing sensation and knowledge together to create unlimited imaginative possibilities: desire. The river is thus described as "voracious, always redolent of more" (60). This voraciousness, or unboundedness, is most effectively illustrated in "Another Essay" as the speakers describe a woman's passionate physical and metaphysical response to the first touch of a new lover. They write,

> "She experienced the entire universe as being sucked into her lamp-lit body, bouncing and mingling among her sexual organs with limitless tensing, tickles, and ostentatious pressures. Now, with every increment of motion within, her desire to expel the inhaled universe into an explosion of song sliding down the bows of a viola through the coal-ridden creases of earth rocketing back out in flame and river-lashing liquid became an object in itself" (60).

As this passage so effectively illustrates, desire is unbounded, immeasurable, and infinitely present in this text. While it can be channelled, felt moving along and through bodily paths, expressed momentarily in words, it is also

potentially un-containable, even irrepressible once triggered. Desire is both a "mist" and, periodically, a spray that rises from these pages and drenches this collaborative project and its readers.

As such, however, Harryman and Hejinian's desirous text dabbles in essentialism. The authors' repeated invocations of duplicity, even multiplicity, as a uniquely female state of being, thinking, and desiring problematize even their double authorship as yet another possible incarnation of the essentialism apparent in "The Wide Road." In "The 'Risk' of Essence," Diana Fuss writes, "Essentialism is classically defined as a belief in true essence—that which is most irreducible, unchanging, and therefore constitutive of a given person or thing" (2). My discussion is primarily concerned with essentialism insofar as Harryman and Hejinian's text appears to envision a universal female essence—based in the female body—which may then be seen as a universally female experience of desire. Lines such as, "We are an unusual creature, since we are set apart from loneliness compositionally," ("Another Essay," 59) reflect the dual authorship of the text even as their descriptions of their desirous subject matter suggests their investment, at least for the space of "The Wide Road," in an essentialized form of "female" desire. A kind of "female" desirous, artistic, and intellectual experience advocated by French theorist Luce Irigaray and other feminist advocates of *l'écriture feminine*.

In "This Sex Which is Not One," Irigaray writes, "Woman 'touches herself' all the time . . . for her genitals are formed of two lips in continuous contact. Thus, with herself, she is already two—but not divisible into one(s)—that caress each other" (351). It is precisely a new interest in this autoerotic caress, Irigarary suggests, that can help women to experience *jouissance*, or the innate pleasures of life and sexuality. In doing so, as Ann Rosalind Jones explains, Irigaray and others emphasize that women "can then speak about [their *jouissance*] in the new languages it calls for, they will establish a point of view (a site of *différence*) from which phallogocentric concepts and controls can be seen through and taken apart, not only in theory, but also in practice" (358).

That lesbianism, for Irigaray and many others, facilitates women's experience of *jouissance* and their production of *l'écriture feminine* is the point at which we should return to Harryman and Hejinian's "The Wide Road." As the sex wars waged within feminism's ranks throughout the 1970s and 1980s taught us, while feminist essentialism has given us a much deeper understanding of women's sexuality, it often relies too heavily on traditional binary oppositional paradigms (man/woman, lesbian/heterosexual, right/wrong), and can thus be deeply divisive. And while the exuberance and desire evident in Harryman and Hejinian's prose can draw us in and ask us to consider more intimately the ways in which desire informs and motivates us, the speakers'

occasional grounding of this exuberance and intimacy in female physiology warrants closer consideration.

Though the speakers of "Another Essay" never specify that the "we" they describe is distinctly female, the speakers of "An Essay" are not as "careful." "An amazing memory—voluptuous and tenacious—is part of our physiological strength and maturity," they write (60). They then ask, "[I]s it true that what we write of [i.e. desire] is engendered by the tenacious impulse to possess, consume, absorb fluidly and indiscriminately and thus confirm or register what has been noted men most fear in women? In other words, their encompassing unboundedness?" (61). The relationship the speakers of "An Essay" construct between female physiology and a corresponding female desire to "consume," "absorb fluidly," and to form "diverse and multiple associations" (61), suggests this question is a rhetorical one. Harryman and Hejinian risk essentializing female experience—an almost inevitably reductive and thus dangerous rhetorical maneuver—in order to vividly explore and to "measure" desire. The speakers of "An Essay" thus posit femaleness as the prolific counterpart to more bounded, or "rigid", phallic, "male" methods of desiring. Thus "The Wide Road" dabbles in a form of essentialism that has proven dangerously divisive in traditional Western culture and in so many contemporary political debates.

That said, before we throw out this bath water, we must first recognize that there may still be one or two babies in it. Because most of the essentialist rhetoric noted above is extracted from only one column (the left one) in "The Wide Road," and because the other column illustrates "unbounded" desire through specific examples which may be seen to centre around women only incidentally—or because of the sex of the authors—"Another Essay" can also be read as one which responds to and undoes the essentialism inherent to "An Essay." The plural pronouns throughout "Another Essay" neither generalize "female" desire nor directly exclude anyone from its celebratory expression. However, as noted above, "Another Essay" and "An Essay" share authorship, physical proximity on the page, and can be experienced "simultaneously" by their readers. Thus even if one chooses to read "Another Essay" as a counter-essentialist text, "An Essay" keeps gender essentialism in sight in "The Wide Road."

Just as Harryman and Hejinian's explorations of desire risk and perhaps anticipate condemnation from critics of essentialism, their simultaneous theorizing of desire and collaboration acknowledge, and perhaps anticipate, controversy surrounding woman-woman collaboration in feminist theory. In "Strange Bedfellows: Feminist Collaboration," Carey Caplan and Ellen Rose discuss their own collaborative relationship. They consistently describe their collaborative texts as "lesbian" texts, even as they repeatedly emphasize the

metaphorical nature of this descriptor. "In 'real' life, we are not lovers," they write. "Our metaphor envisions a reciprocal, nonhierarchical yearning for mutual fulfillment. It describes the dynamic of desire, energy, and euphoria that switches on when we are actively collaborating" (550). Caplan and Rose insist that their collaborative, metaphorically lesbian "we" is unified, that "'she' and 'I' metamorphose into 'we'," and that "'We' emerges from the space between [their] individual, different voices, its meaning elusive, dispersed, always deferred, never unitary" (548–9). "Strange Bedfellows," published the same year as "The Wide Road," may serve as a useful map of Harryman and Hejinian's collaborative project.

The first page of "The Wide Road" offers an incarnation of the "elusive," collective, yet "never unitary" collaborative voice Caplan and Rose describe. The language and subject matter of the two columns intersect and play off of one another, echoing words and images back and forth across the page. "Our task is paradoxical and thus ornamentally sexual," the speakers of "An Essay" inform us. Across the page, the narrating "we" of "Another Essay" illustrates just such a sexual, paradoxical task: "[W]e embrace all but possess only air," they write (56). On this page as well, the two essays overlap significantly, and can be read as one essay through the first two lines of text across both columns. "Let's imagine that desires are too often curtailed! Too often perceptions more than motives, abandoned! Too often speechless!" As these first sentences indicate, even as Harryman and Hejinian write together about desire, their text performs a collaborative relationship in which collaborating voices are unitary but not unitary, a relationship whose subjects only imagine that their desires are "curtailed." For such erotic desires are not curtailed in this essay. The authors write together, as mutually desirous subjects. The way I read these lines, the voices of "Another Essay" interrupt and blend with the voices of "An Essay" to add an exultant spark of controversy to the calm suggestion that we "imagine" desires.

Though the columns do not, in my reading, dovetail so neatly again, they continue to echo and anticipate one another throughout the "The Wide Road"—as though the subjects of this text walk a "wide road" together, moving in the same direction, but not always walking at the same pace. One column notes, "Our many love objects are incomparable," while the other, on the same page, muses that "[m]easuring desire is never a quantifying of lovers" (57). The left column describes a "river of desire" rolling between a man and a woman; and the right column echoes this river metaphor in its description of desire as "*currents* of effect and possibility like Phlegethon [a river of fire in Hades], in flames and engendering whatever is to come, the objects and events of our desire" (58–9). Later, the speakers of "An Essay" say, "But to see (or sense—we, among other things sleepers, don't mean to unduly privi-

lege the eyes)" (61). And "Another Essay" echoes these images of vision and sleep on the next page, as the speakers describe a woman as a "detached observer in a dream" who observes a "noisy group of sleepers" (61). Finally, the essays converge again as they draw to a close. Invoking the road image of the title, the speakers of "An Essay" describe a "bird on the wire singing 'chirp tic tic' and the hard shadow of the telephone pole wobbling beside it. . . . The air is warm, eddies of humidity are stirred up here and there by bees. . . . Beside the road is a man in a hat plowing the field of vision" (64). The speakers of "Another Essay" echo and continue this very sexual juxtaposition of phallic and feminine, male and female, as they write an imagined woman's diary: "Menstrual bleeding reminds me that I may not care about any of this tomorrow. . . . I still prefer the universe to Philip; even though my cavities are filled with extra holes" (64). And so the erotic interplay of authorial voice and textual subject matter concludes in parallel and/or intersecting positions: plural female voices imagining romantic exchanges between male characters and some version of themselves.

Significantly, both essays in "The Wide Road" ultimately work to position desire as a current of passion flowing from female subjects to the male objects of their desire. In fact, despite the potentially "lesbian" nature of Harryman and Hejinian's joint authorship and the sexy, desire-filled result of this collaborative relationship, the heterosexual relationships with which "The Wide Road" concludes make the text almost insistently heteronormative as they recall all of the male/female relationships through which desire is explored and women's sexual responses are illustrated in both essays.

"An Essay" initially describes a man "staring at [a] woman cooking as if she were a priest at Mass" and notes that "Between the man and the woman rolls an inchoate river of desire" (58). Next comes an encounter between a woman and a male mausoleum guard, an encounter that concludes with the comment that "if it had been we instead of she . . . we might have made a date with the guard to meet us after work" (59). "An Essay" later closes with the image of the nameless man dropping his plow and running to assist the women who have stumbled on the road (64).

Likewise, the speakers in "Another Essay" begin by describing an erotic encounter between women on a horse and a man who hands them a pornographic book while a police*man* looks on (58). This essay later explores the ways in which desire forms and informs the actions of a woman they describe as "our protagonist, who . . . shares our profession," in her relationship with a man she meets and with whom she falls in love. Though the diary entries the speakers imagine for this lonely woman initially indicate that she must leave him to experience the ecstatic freedom of "the universe," the essay concludes with the man returning and agreeing to play "third fiddle" "to the

universe and to [the woman's] theoretical writings" (64). As the man runs toward the women in the final paragraph of "An Essay," Philip and the "lonely woman" try to "make a go of it" in the final paragraphs of "Another Essay"—and "The Wide Road" closes as an insistently heterosexual, even heteronormative text, despite its woman-woman authorship.

This heteronormativity in "The Wide Road" again suggests Harryman and Hejinian's awareness and anticipation of the ways that woman-woman collaboration has been and continues to be read. This insistently "heterosexualized" exploration of desire recalls Caplan and Rose's repeated assertions that their collaboration represents only a metaphorical lesbian relationship. Indeed Harryman and Hejinian's text asserts a similarly conscious rejection of lesbianism in the "real" lives of its authors, even as its collaboration demonstrates a merging of, or intercourse between, authorial voices.

In her book *Writing Double*, Betty London notes that, "women's collaborations have been haunted by what Terry Castle has called the 'apparitional lesbian'—a phantom figure that both reveals and conceals lesbian possibilities" (64). London continues, "[T]he discourse that surrounds women's joint writing has inevitably turned on transgressive sexuality, introducing the specter (*sic*) of lesbianism at the site of women's textual productivity" (64). Despite the *jouissance* of "The Wide Road" and/or its participation in the tradition of *l'écriture feminine*, the "apparitional lesbian" seems to haunt Harryman and Hejinian just as it haunts Caplan and Rose. In writing collaboratively, Harryman and Hejinian produce a text that critics like Koestenbaum or even Caplan and Rose may read as "lesbian." And just as Caplan and Rose deny any "real" lesbianism, the "insistent heterosexuality" of "The Wide Road" perhaps addresses and attempts to exorcise this same spectre in Harryman and Hejinian's textual relationship. However, the text of "The Wide Road" both encourages and undermines the efforts of those critics who would read Harryman and Hejinian's collaborative prose as evidence of more than a metaphorical lesbian relationship between its two authors. Subsequently, "The Wide Road" performs and invites readers to theorize collaborative authorship more extensively.

At this point in my discussion, I am left with a number of new questions about Harryman and Hejinian's desirous, collaborative project. Does the self-conscious "unboundedness" of two (female) voices playing off one another throughout the text only to posit, in the end, very similar visions of desire, suggest that agreement is the desirable end of women's collaborative projects? Is this similarity of vision instead constructed so overtly in order to beg this very question? After all, as I have argued in this paper, the consciousness with which Harryman and Hejinian present and perform their collaborative text indicates that "The Wide Road" must be read both as a measurement of desire

and as a taking apart of the collaborative process. As Harryman and Hejinian write in "The Wide Road," "Sometimes the best way to undo a trap is to take it apart quietly without calling attention to it" (61). Though Harryman and Hejinian's collaborative relationship performatively "undoes" traditional ideas of authorial voice and playfully encourages readers to join them in measuring the un-measurable, their text is simultaneously limited, or "trapped," by its own heteronormativity and gender essentialism. Perhaps then, the similar conclusions these essays reach suggest subtly—or "quietly"—that we continue theorizing this project, working to escape normative notions about desire, sexuality, and women.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Lorraine York, for reading and providing comments on a number of drafts of this paper. Thanks as well to the members of Dr. York's 2002–2003 Collaborative Women Writers graduate class for workshopping this paper with me.

Chapter Nine

An Easy Alliance: A Dialogue on Methodology

Lull (Elena Knox) and Cristyn Davies

Two Sydney-based Australians seek fluency between art and academia, setting new co-inspired work in motion.

Cristyn: After all our conversations about performance, dramaturgy, direction, and writing for performance and the politics of gender, in the lead up to your one-woman show, *dis Miss!* at the Sydney Opera House, I remember being struck one morning with an obvious idea.[1] I rang you in a slightly breathless and overzealous state from my home in Sydney.

You were on holiday, taking a road trip down the east coast of Australia from Sydney to Melbourne with some friends.

"Elle, why don't you come to New York with me and perform some of your work in July (2004) for the Women and Theatre Program? It would be a wonderful opportunity to present Australian work for an American audience. What do you think about working together?" I said excitedly.

I was the graduate student representative for the Women and Theatre Program (USA)[2], and part of the steering committee for the annual conference: "Identities on Trial." I was particularly keen on establishing a program of cultural exchange between Australia and America, specifically, a program showcasing work by young women, voices often under-represented in contemporary performance culture.

"Yes, sure, why not, I'd love to," you said, in your usual open manner.

Your performance of dis Miss! employs hip-hop culture—that fusion of graffiti art, break-dancing and rap music marked by the aggression of Reagonomics—in order to move through and beyond the urban Sydney city landscape. Your marked Australian female voice comes from within a body both sinewy and fragile; your voice is animated by a genre that relies on hyperbolic engagement to intervene in larger and more ominous dis-

courses about racial, sexual and gender identities. In its political dimension, *dis Miss!* focused on casualization of work contracts in the blue collar workforce,[3] specifically with regard to young women. Up to date, our subsequent work together has focused on gender and gendered relations with attention to space as well as cultural and political relations. After the New York showing of *dis Miss!,* we published a joint piece–poem cycle and critical essay–in a high profile Australian literary journal,[4] and began *a/genda,* a series of playful multimedia installations around gendered issues, to be placed in public toilets and on radio. The critical written component is presented as a glossy magazine in a toilet reading rack. For me that's when it began, the endless cycle of applying for grants. That's one of the things I've learned about collaboration—we seem to have spent as much time conceiving and working on projects as we have working on grant applications to get these projects off the ground.

Elena: Like anything, as you get better at them you get quicker. But you can't survive without them. I think of these big applications now as "virtual" versions of the meetings by which professionals in other fields facilitate projects, albeit without the gossip and fashion envy.

Much more invigorating are our brainstorms with a gin and tonic on the couch. Imagining covering costs (not to mention food or gin) by creating art installations about gender roles to be placed in public toilets; imagining one's livelihood being intact and unthreatened after having spent a year and a half researching and constructing these immersive soundscapes we are working on, along with crafted ersatz loo-reading material, refined performance art and faux-graffiti. Never mind. The energy derived from collaboration around passionate, shared ideas is worth the struggle. Energy also comes from communicating our ideas, an exchange of affect, with viewers/respondents/readers of our work. Pieces that begin life in the theoretical domain take on an atmosphere of contagion when placed amongst a larger group of relatively unsuspecting people.

I came to New York to perform with only mediated knowledge of American culture. I actually performed this mediated appropriation—audacious and foolhardy—I now realize it was this naiveté that probably made you invite me to Women and Theatre Program in the first place. You had been to New York many times; were supported by an Australian Postgraduate Award to investigate the work, and censorship of, two celebrated and radical American performance artists. Daunting. For some reason I wasn't daunted. A (published) poet since an early age, I appropriated hip-hop, stand up, fluxus, queer, drag—I created my own twenty-minute universe using music I had composed with my Sydney band. Even in the Sydney Opera House this poetic miscellany had challenged people. You and I transposed it to New York University.[5]

What about my shows made you want to work with me? I guess I've always gestured beyond a purely Australian context, seeking if possible a more interior world with simultaneously less boundaries, borders, limitations, predecisions. Issues arising in this world often touch on the performativity of gender, an academic forte of yours. . . . I have said over and again that I didn't really recognize this theme in my work before you pointed it out in your first article on *dis Miss!* Since then I have been clearer, more sure of my agendas and the often childlike personas I move and speak through on the stage. I'm glad we've continued the creative dialogue that formed around and because of that article; I'm glad it is leading to new and deeper places. As someone who, almost full time (perhaps more than full time?), makes art out of words, video, photography, sound, song, the body, music, and any physical material that comes to hand,[6] theoretical "knowing" in terms of histocritical and cultural study (and to a lesser degree aesthetics) is important to keep me grounded, on track. I also love to offer you the opportunity to touch, to work with some of these media. Would you say that overcoming an academic's fear of not "being perfect," of having to brutally discard dreams and deliver imperfect material, is tough? I would say that sensing your training in rigor and skepticism slows my process down, in an interesting, and as yet pleasurable way.

Cristyn: It's curious to me that you should talk of speed, and me intervening in the pace of your work in order to slow down your process. Your work, and working with you energizes me—not unlike a yoga class where you are invited to put in the work, challenge yourself, and sweat a little, and then leave—your breathing newly regulated and your awareness leaving you open to a multitude of possibilities. There is a sense then, in which we mark each other, intervene in each other's creative frameworks not just in order to reflect on the languages specific to the art forms we work with, but to subvert these ways of creating meaning in order to engage in cultural production, and also, cultural critique.

As a poet, a musician, and a performer, you are adept at structuring time in your creative work. Writing poetry demands that each word, carefully punctuated (or not), and each space, operates as a signifier to the reader. Writing music operates in a similar way in order to create desired affect in the audience. The performance of poetic language and music adds a new instrument to the equation—the performer's body, and her relationship to a space, a cultural context, and to the audience. Your work is particularly dynamic because you engage in a range of media, and you excel in all these areas.

I find our collaboration generative, and that your fusion of poetry, live performance, multi-media performance, and musicianship fuel me with the desire to persist working in the arts. In our current political climate, it is easy to burn out quickly. In Australia, (and certainly in the USA) neoliberalism has

ensured that funding to the arts has been cut in favor of economic rationalism, of fighting terrorism, and increasing national security. These decisions impact on subjectivity, the sorts of people we are allowed to be, and what we are able to be within this framework.

As we work on *a/genda*—a sound and language installation—I take pleasure in using language poetically, again to intervene in these larger discourses about how we should inhabit our bodies as gendered beings in public and private spaces. I love to enter that space in discourse, and enter into the space of critique in a nuanced way so that our audience doesn't feel like it's being hit over the head with a didactic diatribe.

Elena: I collaborate with artists all the time, in many genres, but this is different. Artist and academic. So different that I recently traveled from Sydney to the UK to attend a conference on the nature of this relationship: *The Articulate Practitioner—Articulating Practice* at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. Imagine our surprise when the mailing list of the Centre for Performance Research threw this up, the international Magdalena Project[7, 8] deciding to dedicate a week to examining just this issue. I got some funding and set off to be elucidated.

I guess the attendance there was about half and half—performing artists and academics with some interest in cross-institutional and cross-traditional collaboration. During the week a somewhat sci-fi category of "the hybrids" was coined to denote those individuals whose work crossed over and between these areas: artist with PhD, academic with art background, research fellow creating practical performance work. The label "hybrids" for me denoted (and separated off from the "pure-breds" in the group!) a working interdisciplinarity characterized by a folding-in of one's own skill base upon itself, as it were, or perhaps more simply by merging various colors on one's own (multidisciplinary) palette. We saw some amazing work that week. We did not come to any unanimous conclusions about how this personal "hybridity" (as one artist-theorist said to me about her collaborative process, "I already tend to cross disciplines *within myself:* then, and also, I collaborate with others") works itself out, or how to overcome obstacles such as a potential over-analysis of performative "instinct": how to make the work that comes out of it "real."

In a funny way, all week long we seemed to skirt actual questions of money and power. Was this British politeness? I felt a frigid air in the room when, during an open Q&A, I asked a fabulous Danish woman "who paid for your show?" It was not meant antagonistically; I was interested. When the fringe, the avant-garde, meets the (financially struggling) institution, who *produces* the work? Surely there are a variety of situational answers, especially in such a talented and high profile professional gathering. But the question, I

concede, is wearisome, the way that the practicalities of power often are. What matters is that people are tussling with the dynamic. That people from 15 countries booked the trip and arrived.

Cristyn: "Real" is such a contentious term within a Poststructuralist framework, but as I understand it, you don't want self-reflection about your work to inhibit the actual work process, or to rein in experimentation, at the level of form or content. In our collaboration, especially at the initial stages, we want to keep possibilities open, and mobile. The metaphor you use to describe practitioner-academics/academic practitioners (and you can tell by my language here that I'm resistant to these binaries and implicit hierarchies) of folding in is poignant. I think of our collaboration as exploding outward—we draw on our own interdisciplinary strengths, and create a smorgasbord of options, then we ruminate upon what is exciting to us, and what might work theoretically and in practice—then we refine and polish this work.

It's important that we don't desire to "become" the other person, as in a co-dependent relationship. I'm bemused that practitioners who are also academics (or academics who are also practitioners) were classified as "hybrids"—defying classification within the boundaries of established disciplines. Within my academic work, I work across various disciplines: gender and women's studies, performance studies, rhetoric, literature, cultural studies and philosophy—so I understand my own work to be interdisciplinary.

Elena: As do I. *a/genda* uses sound art, visual art, theoretical writing, interviews, poetry, and some performance. We each produce material work according to our specialist training, yours in writing, mine in contemporary art practice across a variety of disciplines.

Taking the *a/genda* project as an example, we might call the pre-production process entirely collaborative. Regular meetings riffing on ideas (I like to call them *obsessions*) that we'd like to see "made." A dramaturgical process with both of us as dramaturges, reading widely and drawing inspiration from experience in order to arrive on the same pin-head. I believe that the breadth of this project involves the disciplines it draws upon, but that its depth, in a way, is this close refinement of conceptual material.

In the production phase, I curate and blend all these things for presentation. For instance, our magazine FLUSH, which takes the aesthetic of a popular or even porn magazine to be read on the toilet, but contains academic text, interviews, poetry and photomedia that unpacks notions of gender. This type of artifact might then be—is often—published/installed in settings that you have researched or discovered, or engagements that you have set up, by paying active attention to the creative development of the project. It's also been very interesting for me as a performer that, thus far, much of the live presentation of *a/genda* has been in the context of academic conferences! Presentation of

a/genda can, and has, involved one, both, or, as in the installation of sound in a public toilet, none of us.

Cristyn: I'm very resistant to that cliché in which the academic operates as an observer to the artist who does the *real* work. That historical relationship is a problematic one, in that the academic (if she was lucky enough) had institutional support, capitalizing on the work of the artist who lived precariously between grants from arts councils and other philanthropic organizations and, of course, waitressing. As a young academic, I live in a similar way, from contract to contract because of the surplus of people with PhDs and little permanent work in Australia. Much academic work in the arts and humanities for recent graduates involves contending with a workforce that has embraced casualisation. I feel that I have more in common with the financial instability of the artist than an academic who has tenure, although, the idea of tenure is itself tenuous in the Australian academy.

Elena: I think you just answered my earlier question—*dis Miss!* spoke to you because it was about this very casualisation! It sprang from my grief at how (at the time) I was living. Making a living; producing myself in such a tenuous way. I'd say it will take some time to practically break out of our customary roles of "doer" and commentator, but one boundary has, I feel, been actually transgressed—I am able to rely on you for an active dramaturgical input, all the way to the very end of material construction and beyond. My work is not just placed by you in physical environments—a New York University showcase, a master class on performativity, performance and embodiment sponsored by The Australian Studies Centre at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, the upcoming Brisbane Writers Festival—but shaped by the brainstorming process I spoke of before. I think it is trust that has been developed: I don't know that I would show other critical writers any initial, soft, squidgy ideas, immature and unmolded, badly resonating and full of holes. Conversely, I don't know that they would trust me to precisely yet obliquely illuminate the already-articulate theories they might hold.

At present we are engaging with gender theory, feminist theory, theories of public spaces. Taking existing theoretical texts, rather than 'my artistic inspiration', as a starting point, we are creating artwork that slots into spaces in a work of 'hybrid' theory. I'm hoping these artworks–concrete poetry on recycled boards, performance happenings, sound art and noise collages, for instance–can colonize a work of theory as much as they inhabit the public spaces (specifically, in this project, toilets) in which they are installed and aesthetically function.

So in terms of collaboration, I possibly see you and your field as another space to inhabit! I'm scaring myself here. The caveat is, that we are working with maximum mutual respect. Yeah?

Cristyn: One of the challenging and dynamic components of our working relationship is speaking across languages—if you like—where you use the economic language of poetry, the languages of dance and movement, and also musical composition and photography, and I draw on previous experience as a performer, in addition to an understanding of critical writing and performance theory. Our collaboration resists any fixed boundaries about how each of us should contribute to a project, and instead, we merge our skills, and create written work and performances across a range of media and critical thinking. I think trust, and mutual respect for the skill, talent, and input of each other is definitely crucial to an effective collaboration. You have encouraged me to relax a little and let ideas be fostered organically. In academia, it is difficult to continue finding that time to think, and generate new ideas.

The focus seems to be on publication and the end result because that is how the university earns research money. Innovative thinking has to fit in between meetings, teaching, and administrative responsibilities. When you and I think aloud together putting forth many and varied ideas, I feel that we open up a luxurious space for critical reflection and development that says: this space is crucial, and this is why we want to persist. And, so we return to our theme of temporality, of slowing things down, of intervening in real time, of learning another's language, not only to forward our own thinking and creative work, but to critically and aesthetically intervene in public conversations and debates about pressing socio-political agendas.

NOTES

1. *dis Miss!* was performed in The Studio at the Sydney Opera House, Australia, on 3rd March, 2003.

2. The Women and Theatre Program (USA) is a focus group of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE). WTP holds an annual conference, sponsorship of ATHE panels and the Jane Chambers Playwriting Award. The organization provides various spaces for theatre practitioners and professions to interact in an explicitly intellectual and political environment.

3. Casual work contracts within an Australian context mean that a worker is not entitled to sick or holiday pay, and that the contract may be severed with one hour's notice. Casualization is increasingly prevalent in Australia across the entire work force.

4. Davies, Cristyn, "The poetics of Hip Hop: Elena Knox in *dis Miss!" Southerly,* Vol. 64, No. 3, 2004. Knox, Elena "hangover waltz," "hornpipe," "jitterbug," "polka for drivers," *Southerly,* Vol. 64, No. 3, 2004.

5. Twice I have performed at The Studio, Sydney Opera House, in collaboration with a large extremely popular red bean bag. My dominant memory of New York is

the unanticipated impossibility of purchasing filler for my trusty deflated companion, who otherwise could not have been accommodated by QANTAS. After seven hot hours, a bean bag was a bean chair, "beans" (filler) could only be found inside them, nobody had them, why did I want them, K Mart finally found me two small display ones, which I lugged to the theatre, emptied into mine, performed with, refilled, swept up and returned to the unsmiling shop assistants for a refund. This was culture shock.

6. Website: www.lull.net.au

7. Centre for Performance Research: www.thecpr.org.uk. In 2003 Elena attended a two-week workshop *Radical Approaches to Performance Art,* led by Guillermo Gomez Pena of La Pocha Nostra, www.pochanostra.com

8. Website: www.themagdalenaproject.org

Chapter Ten

Learning from Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown

Vladimir Belogolovsky

It is hard to imagine contemporary architecture without the influence of provocative husband-and-wife architects Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown. Venturi is often credited with fathering much of what is now called Postmodern in architecture. His very first project, the Vanna Venturi House, erected in 1964 for the architect's mother, together with his seminal book *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, (published in 1966) is a double manifesto. Its unprecedented critique of the "puritanically moral language of orthodox Modern architecture," which was blindly obeyed by several generations of architects, single-handedly changed the course of the profession.

In his book Venturi argued that the complex, contradictory and pluralistic society we live in should be reflected in contemporary architecture: "I like complexity and contradiction in architecture. . . . I speak of a complex and contradictory architecture based on the richness and ambiguity of modern experience. . . . I like elements which are hybrid rather than 'pure,' compromising rather than 'clean,' distorted rather than 'straightforward,' ambiguous rather than 'articulated,' perverse as well as impersonal, boring as well as 'interesting,' conventional rather than 'designed,' accommodating rather than excluding, redundant rather than simple. . . . I am for messy vitality over obvious unity. . . . I am for richness of meaning rather than clarity of meaning. . . . I prefer 'both-and' to 'either-or,' black and white and sometimes gray, to black or white."

Venturi blew away the untouchable modern dogma of one of the Modernism's founders, Mies van der Rohe, who inverted "less is more" into "more is not less," and concluded quite simply: "less is a bore." At this point, he observed, architecture seems to steer itself onto a new kind of highway of creativity where any existing rules are not to be followed, but rather to be bro-

ken. Ironically, this freethinking led to a spectacle and expressionistic architecture, which the couple now openly and wholeheartedly abhors.

In 1972 no small resonance was caused by a new book, *Learning from Las Vegas*, coauthored by Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and their colleague Steven Izenour, who died in 2001. Devoted to signs, symbols and commercial iconography in architecture, the book attempted to categorize all buildings into decorated sheds (simple forms with decorated fronts, acting like advertisement billboards) and ducts (sculptural forms, directly communicating a message about their inner function).

Many of Venturi and Scott Brown's written works would not be so influential if they were not such prolific builders, shaping their ideas in stone all over the world. Their most memorable projects include: Guild House for the elderly in Philadelphia, Seattle Art Museum, Reedy Creek Fire Station in Orlando's Disney World, the Children's Museum in Houston, Hotel du Departement de la Haute-Garonne in Toulouse, France, and, of course, the Sainsbury Wing of National Gallery in the heart of London, as well as numerous products and designs for such brands as Swid Powell, Alessi and Knoll.

In 1991, at the peak of his career, Robert Venturi received the very architect's coveted Pritzker Prize. This award can be viewed as a long overdue recognition of his early projects and writings. But it also seems very odd that only one of the two architects who claim to have equal share in collaboration for almost forty years would be privileged with the prize. If Denise Scott Brown had shared the prize, she would have become the first woman in history to receive the honor. I met the architects over lunch in their busy office on Main Street in Manayunk, outside of Philadelphia. Having just returned from China, they were preparing for a visit to their favorite place—Rome.

Vladimir Belogolovsky: You just came back from China. Are you working on any projects there?

Denise Scott Brown: We have a project in Beijing which we hope will be the beginning of something wonderful and there is a potentially very large project in Shanghai. In Beijing we are working on a campus plan for Tsinghua University. We've been architects, urban planners, and teachers, and have worked on campuses for large parts of our lives. A great deal of the work we do is academic. Sometimes we start a project as campus planners and it leads to a large architectural commission. Tsinghua asked us to share this experience and explore how ideas of education can affect the physical form of their university.

Robert Venturi: The second job is a very different project—two 45-story office buildings. It particularly thrills us because we have never done high-rises. We generally do institutional, educational, civic or government buildings. This

project is very emblematic of what we are concerned with as architects right now.

V.B.: You don't think there is a contradiction in inviting an architect from another part of the world to do a local project?

R.V.: Not in this era.

D.S.B.: In Beijing the client specifically wanted us because of our American know-how. They wanted to hear about American cultural values about education, though it doesn't mean they'll accept those values. They want to broaden their view; they are looking for people who can get into their shoes and see their point of view, but who have another experience and know other points of view. This is a society that has done 5,000 years of thinking and Bob and I have each done 70-some years of thinking. There's a lot we can share.

R.V.: One reason that we like working on the project in Shanghai is the essential multiculturalism that this city represents, the coming together of Eastern and Western cultures that has been happening in Shanghai in the last century and a half. Multiculturalism—that is, the juxtapositions of universal culture and local-ethnic cultures—is now inevitable, dynamic, enriching, and healthy. Shanghai has been and is a great example of this phenomenon.

D.S.B.: Bob and I come from multicultural backgrounds. My grandparents came from Latvia and Lithuania and, through them, I have an under-memory of Eastern Europe in my background—along with their 19th-century views of the world. But I was born and grew up in Africa. Our son recently visited Latvia and Lithuania and he says the people there look familiar. Bob's family is Italian-American. We both lived in Italy. We are both interested in other cultures. Bob and I speak some Italian and French. I also speak a little German and Afrikaans, and a very small bit of an African language. That is the cultural matrix we live in and enjoy, and it has helped to prepare us for working in other cultures.

V.B.: You have done a lot of traveling and experienced many different forms of architecture. Can you name one building or a project that you learned from the most and why?

R.V.: I have learned most from the architecture of Michelangelo. For me his Porta Pia in Rome is the most inspiring single building. I think of Michelangelo's and also Palladio's architecture as Mannerist. I've been learning and writing about Mannerism for many years. I learned a great deal from Michelangelo's buildings in Rome and Florence, and Palladio's churches in Venice. This is an architecture that inspired me the most and that is because of the idea of the Mannerists to accept and acknowledge convention and then divert from it—making exceptions and creating appropriate ambiguities. These are the ideas that I explored in *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*. And then of course, we apply these ideas not only to form in archi-

tecture, but also to symbolism, which we learned from in Las Vegas and the American Pop culture.

D.S.B.: Learning from one building is less interesting to me than learning from a spectrum of places. We learn different things from different cultures and cities. Sometimes we visit a great building and we adore it, but we also find that its context is as inspiring as the building itself. The lessons we learn from Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Rome and Tokyo are as intense, maybe even more intense, than those we learn from single great buildings.

R.V: And we learn from the ordinary as well as from the extraordinary.

V.B.: In 1965 you traveled to the U.S.S.R. to accompany an exhibition of American contemporary architecture and to lecture there. Why did you choose to go there and what was that experience like?

R.V.: I went because, as a young person, I wanted to learn from different cultures, from different places. I was fascinated by what I saw there—juxtapositions of huge communist architecture, which was very grand, kind of classical, and of historical architecture. I loved 18th-century palaces outside Leningrad and early Byzantine architecture outside Moscow. I was very stimulated by what I saw. I remember visiting one fascinating villa in Moscow. It was very well maintained, but in one part you could see the structure behind the sophisticated 18th century classical façade behind the stucco—it was made of logs. I thought that was very fascinating.

D.S.B.: Bob told me that, at the end of one lecture in Moscow, people started asking him about practicing architecture in America, and he said that it was easier for young Russian than for young American architects to get started in practice because they were employed by the state. He told the audience that young American architects had to struggle, and that he was lucky that his mother needed a house and asked him to design it. He added that he was teaching to support himself, was single, and was living with his mother. Someone in the audience responded: "Come to Russia, we'll find good work for you and get you a fine Russian wife."

R.V.: Yes, I was very warmly received.

V.B.: You both knew Louis Kahn very well. What did you learn from him?

R.V.: I met Kahn in 1947, before he became well known. He is now very much in fashion and he never went out of fashion. I have mixed feelings about Lou. He was a great architect and I learned a lot from him, but he was not a godlike architect, and I'm also bitter about him. The reason I'm bitter is that he also learned from me, and other young people around him, and he never admitted that, which is very unfair.

V.B.: What did Louis Kahn learn from you?

R.V.: He learned from me about the elements of layering; about windows as holes in walls rather than absence of walls; about breaking the order of

architecture, and about the use of inflection, which is the idea that a building can inflect beyond itself toward something else. Also Kahn was influenced by my use of historical analogy as part of the analytical process of design, which derived in turn from my professors at Princeton University, Jean Labatut and Donald Drew Egbert.

D.S.B.: In 1984 I wrote an article, "A Worm's eye view of recent architectural history." The worm was I. During my long life, I have seen a lot of architectural history, but I find that history is sometimes written 180 degrees wrong, by historians who were not there. I'm not an historian, but I can write the minutes of the meetings, so to speak. I witnessed many exchanges between Bob and Lou. All of us learned from Lou—that's admitted. But the lessons went both ways; Lou should have attributed some of "his" ideas to Bob, and a couple to me.

R.V.: We are actually old enough to know some history, not only from books, but through our own experience and we know that history is not always correct.

V.B.: History has its footprints not only in books, but also in places, such as Rome. What is it about Rome that makes it such a special place for you?

R.V.: Last year we celebrated the 55th anniversary of my first day in Rome. The first time I went to Rome was when I was 23. Rome was always a very important place to me. From before I can remember, I knew that I wanted to be an architect. My father and mother were both devotees of architecture. As an American, what fascinated me then about Rome was the fact that the city was made essentially to accommodate the pedestrian, not the vehicle. There were also the combinations of narrow streets and wide piazzas. Particularly, I'm fascinated by spatially complex baroque architecture. Also, there is a very special aura of Rome and its colors—yellow and orange. I have written a lot about Rome. That first trip was a very emotional (as well as rational) experience for me.

D.S.B.: The city defines the western canon of architecture. Even for Modernists it is the basis of architecture. For a long time I delayed visiting Rome. People asked: "How can you study architecture and not go to Rome?" Then, after graduation, I did go to Italy for six months and lived and worked briefly in Rome. The experience in Rome helped me to prepare for what I've done since, and the friendships I formed then have lasted until now.

R.V.: I was privileged to be in Rome as a Fellow of the American Academy. I learned from Baroque Rome more than from Classical Rome, and also from early Christian basilicas, adorned by iconographic surfaces. We find that iconography is very important. We recently finished a book, *Architecture as Signs and Systems for a Mannerist Time*. The structures we are designing in Shanghai now are essentially Mies van der Rohe-like buildings with LED or-

nament on the façades. These towers are very symbolic and they support the idea of architecture as sign, which is very different from the dramatic, baroque form of today's popular high-rise buildings. Much of architecture in the 20th century was based on the aesthetics of abstract expressionism. But there was always symbolic reference in architecture of the past—in Egyptian temples, Greek pediments, mosaics of early Christian churches, or stained glass windows in great European cathedrals. These represent narratives through which these buildings try to sell you something—Catholicism, Protestantism or whatever. In our own time, iconography can be applied to buildings too, whether it is signage, ornament, or electronics. For example, American commercial architecture sells products through displayed iconography. All of these things interest us and we expressed these ideas in another book that was published a few years ago, called *Iconography and Electronics upon a Generic Architecture*.

V.B.: In your introduction to Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, you said that this book is both an attempt at architectural criticism and an apologia for your own work. Why do you think contemporary architecture needs to be explained?*

R.V.: You don't have to explain anything. But if an architect cannot build because he or she is not in fashion at the moment, then at least his or her ideas can be expressed through writing.

D.S.B.: I think the kind of architecture we do *needs* words to explain it.

V.B.: Don't you do architecture that's inspired by the everyday and the ordinary? Ordinary means familiar, understandable, something that doesn't require much explanation, right?

D.S.B.: No, because if you find inspiration from the everyday environment that surrounds lives, people think that, as "high design" architects, you must be laughing at them. So you need to explain that this is a serious attempt to get to an essence. Another reason for explaining is that people have stereotypes. When we offer high-art interpretations of the everyday, we cross stereotypes. People who did not expect to see a soup can in an art gallery thought Warhol was putting them down. That's why there should be an elaboration in words.

V.B.: Is your architecture more about communication than about space?

R.V.: Yes, that is exactly it.

V.B.: Then how is architecture different from other art or music?

R.V.: I think all the visual arts are essentially saying something, employing narrative, symbolism, and representation.

D.S.B.: Architecture has a role that art and music do not have. It houses things, including people. Architecture provides both shelter and communication—a shed and decoration. When we said that most buildings should be designed as

decorated sheds, this was an extreme statement. But it was intended to help us get away from the notion that space is all that architecture is about. Space is just one of many components of architecture.

V.B.: In your design process, who does what? Who is the idea generator?

R.V.: We are both equally important in generating ideas. Denise was very influential in pointing out the significance of the ordinary and in introducing me to Las Vegas and Pop culture. I can say she corrupted me. But I influenced her by introducing the notion of comparative analysis. We both critique each other and critiquing is a very important part of design.

D.S.B.: The world doesn't see it this way, but we have a joint creativity. People in architecture believe creativity can't come from two minds. Therefore, in their minds, I have to be anything other than the designer—a typist, a manager, a planner. In reality, I'm a spectrum of things. There are artists who work together. Some paint together: he signs one side of the painting and she the other. And in our office, although we lead, we have the creative collaboration of 35 people in our work.

V.B.: When clients ask you to do a project, what do you think they really want you to do for them?

D.S.B.: Different clients want different things. Our clients in Beijing, for example, heard Bob talking about campus planning in a way that interested them. They didn't say—"Let's hire a famous architect and use his name to raise money." They felt there was a meeting of minds between us and that we had an experience and a methodology that could help them in their aim to produce a wonderful environment for the future.

R.V.: There is a notion right now that in order to do great architecture the architect has to be imported from abroad. European architects are redesigning many American museums and a lot of American architects are working all over the world.

D.S.B.: Art museums, in particular, flock to hire the latest architectural "star," who will design "signature architecture." They want to be seen as nonconformists—to join the crowd of nonconformists who are hiring that architect. There's an irony here.

V.B.: Irony and paradox play a big role in your architecture. They seem to enrich the work, subtly.

R.V.: I don't think you start out by saying, "I want to be ironical." But if you are designing valid architecture in our complex and contradictory era, then I think it turns out as mannerist architecture. So irony can become an element of such architecture.

D.S.B.: Mannerism breaks the rules. In architecture you can't follow all the rules of all the systems all the time, because many are in conflict in our complex society. Following one set will require breaking another. So that's one

reason for the existence of mannerist architecture. Also, it's good for architects to try not to build climaxes where they don't exist—that they be a little self-deprecating and ironic. The great monumental buildings are often, in some way, anti-heroic. They mix awe and human scale.

R.V.: As in the Porta Pia by Michelangelo.

V.B.: Could you explain your "Eclectic House Series" drawing?

R.V.: They were just about having fun one Saturday afternoon many years ago. They were related to the idea that architecture can involve layering, symbolism, representation, and can be decorative; that architecture can be inconsistent and contradictory; they also speak to the idea of just having fun, making abstractions of historical styles. This is a series of decorated sheds par excellence—one of them has been built in Maine.

D.S.B.: They were a study of multiple symbolisms. They find the essence of a particular style and apply it to a very simple structure in an almost childlike way. At that time, we were looking at lots of modest suburban houses, particularly in Levittown. We were also reading about the 19th-century English architect, Loudoun, who wrote about eclecticism. In one of his essays he showed how a very small structure could be treated in different ways stylistically. Bob's drawing was influenced by Loudoun.

V.B.: Las Vegas is probably as influential in your architecture as Rome. What did you find to be special there?

R.V.: We were very impressed by the vitality, the fanfare, the ugliness/beauty and the signage/symbolism. We said, "Hey, we can learn from this. We are not only going to learn from Le Corbusier, but also from what is considered the ordinary."

D.S.B.: We were impressed by bright signs against a very blue sky. There's an almost Greek clarity of light and color there. It's simple-minded to consider Las Vegas only at night. Also we thought that the city's chaos was an order we had not yet understood. We loved this intriguing notion.

R.V.: Just as Rome is thrilling as a pedestrian city, the Las Vegas of then was thrilling as an automobile city. After Las Vegas we no longer see Rome as space only, but also as the city of symbols.

V.B.: You once said, "What is beautiful about architecture is not the sculptural effects, but the signage on the form." But according to one source, your "iconic designs look overly flat and posterish, as if the exteriors of otherwise generic boxes are wrapped with fancy wallpaper—a snakeskin tile pattern for the Lewis Thomas Laboratory at Princeton University or a cutout classical temple for the façade of an unbuilt concert hall in Philadelphia." The same source continues: "At a time when architects from Frank Gehry to Zaha Hadid and Rem Koolhaas are exploring highly expressive sculptural forms, Venturi and Scott Brown's smooth-faced buildings look tight and

parsimonious, as if they don't know how to loosen up." How do you respond to this criticism?

R.V.: I think the critic you have quoted is not very sensitive and is duped by sensational, abstract-expressionist arty-ness that is irrelevant for our Information Age and Electronic Age. Viva art and architecture are again engaging representation rather than expressionism.

D.S.B.: Also it is important to understand that we are functionalists. A primary function of the Guggenheim Museum building in Bilbao was to produce a symbol to attract tourists and to help turn around the economy. Its function is to have magic. But that's not the function for most buildings, most of the time. Most are houses, schools, labs and commercial buildings. Most have no good reason to bulge out in "loose" artistic ways. Most need to make the best use possible of the space available to them and to be clad in the most practical skin. The Modernists claimed to make beauty out of just such considerations. Your "source"—and the Neo-modernists—has forgotten about the root motivation of Modernism.

R.V.: Our buildings are not constricted! I find excessively sculptural architecture more constrictive.

D.S.B.: To me Zaha Hadid's buildings are very personal abstract expressions that have little to do with architecture.

R.V.: They are bombastic sculptures!

V.B.: Isn't it wonderful?

D.S.B.: No, it is boring! These buildings are overdone and their personal expressions are inappropriate. Look at our University of Michigan Life Sciences complex and you'll find magic there—the kind that we find in, say, early Modern Dutch architecture (the Zonnestraal sanatorium, the Van Nelle factory). But you can also find magic at the scale of the complex, via its meeting places and pathways, direct yet winding, modern but modeled on those of a medieval town.

V.B.: What do you think about Postmodernism? How do you relate to it?

R.V.: I think Postmodernism involves a complete misunderstanding. We have nothing to do with it. In *Complexity and Contradiction*, I employed references to historical architecture for purposes of comparative analysis. But historic architecture should be analyzed, not copied. I think there is nothing wrong in employing historical reference, but there should be no ambiguity about what is historical and what is contemporary. For example, if you look at our project for the Philadelphia Performing Arts Center, its façade appears to include a classical pediment. But the pediment is a reference—a representation not a reproduction—and the lower level of the façade engages LED billboards. This is architecture as communication and it is the opposite of architecture as expressionist sculpture.

D.S.B.: Postmodernism was a theme not only in architecture, but also in literature, philosophy and theology. It had to do with a post-Holocaust loss of innocence, and with understanding different value systems, helping to mediate multiculturalism artistically. With all that we are certainly in agreement. Looking at Las Vegas was a socially concerned act. That type of Postmodernism had a well thought-through view of the relation between "is" and "ought" and as artists we agree that "ought" should evolve from "is." But look at what architects did with that theory. They said, "We can be free." We don't need to be socially concerned. Now the Neo-modernists say they have abandoned the doctrine of functionalism. My theory is that contemporary Neo-modernism is itself a form of Postmodernism.

R.V.: We gladly accept and acknowledge the ordinary and the culture and symbolism of the everyday. Unlike many contemporary architects, we don't have to impose a superior convoluted cultural ideology and our personal taste on other people.

V.B.: Some critics say that Vanna Venturi's House is the most significant house of the second half of the 20th century. Others say it is the first post-modern house. What do you think?

R.V.: I think it is the first modern house that employs symbolic references. It says, "I'm a house; I'm a shelter." Modernists would never do that. On the other hand I love the Villa Savoy by Corbusier and I learned a lot from it. It also employs symbolism, but industrial symbolism, within, ironically, its abstract aesthetic.

D.S.B.: I think the Vanna Venturi House *did* influence what architects call Postmodernism. But architects misunderstood its direction, what it stood for. For me, it has in it, in embryo, almost everything we have done since. If you look at our later projects, such as the Sainsbury Wing in London, you can find Vanna Venturi's House in there. So its roots are important for our own subsequent work. And since it was built, it has served as a touchstone for the ideas of successive generations of architects. This is more important than its temporary distortion by Postmodernists.

V.B.: Right now I'm working on a house with my partners on Long Island. At the beginning of the project, the clients gave us a tour of the neighborhood and as we were passing one particular house they pointed to it and said: "That's a wonderful house. We want you to design our house just like that." And of course, it was a typical suburban house with a colonnaded pediment. What should I do as a contemporary architect if the client says I want a Tudor house?

R.V.: I think you should listen to the client and ideally accommodate the client's wishes and also accommodate your architectural ideas. That of course can be difficult and some compromise can turn out well. But in the end,

your name is on the building, so to speak, and you must back out of the project if necessary.

D.S.B.: When you are a young architect you get what we call tea-and-sympathy clients. They are close to you. They get involved in what you are doing and they help you. The architect's mother is the best example of that type of client. But in the real world there are lots of sour surprises.

V.B.: A teacher wants to educate people, a doctor wants to make people healthy, and a writer wants to share a story. What do you think an architect should want to do?

R.V.: I think an architect should want to enrich life and a particular context and often that means being recessive. Not all buildings should scream and yell, "Hey look, I'm a building! I'm here and I impose myself—my ego—on all of you!" Sometimes it is appropriate, but in general, architecture should be a background for life and living. I love Beethoven, but you can't listen to his symphonies constantly.

D.S.B.: Doctors have a precept—at least, do no harm. We should want that, too. Architects have to realize that they can't make better people by giving them beautiful spaces. All the arts give pleasure. Beautiful spaces also give pleasure. But what I love about architecture is that its problems—the project briefs or programs—challenge both my intellect and my creativity to find the right resolution, one that could last 300 years or more. Yet at the same time, I love to make the results beautiful. When we visit our buildings and see that they are used as we intended them to be—that people have discovered what we put there for them—when we see something out there in front of us which was once just an idea in our minds and when we find it beautiful—this gives us a very deep pleasure. I don't know which other arts can bring that marvelous combination of feelings.

Chapter Eleven

Languages of Innovation

Alan F. Blackwell and David A. Good

It is a commonplace complaint that every profession speaks its own language, and that encounters between specialists require somebody to translate between these foreign tongues. All of us experience trouble understanding doctors, lawyers, politicians, scientists and even mechanics, unless a translator is on hand to re-phrase the technical jargon in everyday language. The cynical suspect that, where professional fees are involved, this jargon exists to protect the income of the speakers. Many professions are structured such that experts speak mainly to each other, and their clients must pay to participate. Where threat and fear enter the picture, argots like backslang, polari and verlan widen the gulf to protect speakers and their communities from scrutiny by the wider world. In either case, specialist languages provide real benefits for a community of practice, allowing complex concepts to be expressed in a single word, each word bringing with it a rich context of history, tradition and application. Specialist languages allow a professional discipline to do its work quickly, following established patterns of knowledge that are encoded in its language. However, dependence on a specialist language can also prevent innovation. When it is so easy to express familiar knowledge, novel ideas are not only hard to imagine, but hard to describe as they take form. This can be seen in every part of life, not only the established professions, but also among those whose work is to express original ideas.

Academic researchers are nowadays encouraged to be more interdisciplinary. Those constrained to a single university department are not expected to produce the innovative ideas that seem likely to arise from cross-fertilisation with other disciplines. In fact, little encouragement is needed, because originality is prized among academics. It appears that every modern academic now professes to do interdisciplinary research. Yet this pursuit of breadth is

accompanied by increasing specialisation of disciplines themselves, such that the disciplinary gulfs being crossed seem to become increasingly parochial. A Cambridge research fellowship dedicated to interdisciplinary research was recently awarded to a researcher crossing the apparently very similar disciplines of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering!

These phenomena can easily be explained as consequences of language. The older academic disciplines, those that have their own names and departments, have developed specialist languages over decades or centuries. When trying to cross these intellectual borders, it is far easier to collaborate with a department whose residents speak a related dialect, rather than a whole new language. Even encounters with other dialects can offer fruitful tensions (or evocative poetry), but one suspects that more exciting innovation might come from the collision between completely different languages.

This is the everyday business of Crucible, the Cambridge network for research in interdisciplinary design. Crucible was established to encourage collaboration between technologists, and researchers in the arts, humanities and social sciences (AHSS henceforth). It was largely motivated by the fact that the development of new technologies, an obvious locus of innovation, is constrained by the greater ease of having conversations using related dialects rather than different languages. The evolution of new departments provides an interesting case study. One of us (AB) has an office in a department of Computer Science. When the department was established, there were no computer scientists in the world, so the faculty were recruited wherever possible. They are mainly mathematicians and engineers, with a sprinkling of formal philosophers, cognitive scientists and computational linguists. The fields have different names, but are quickly merging—visitors have no doubt that they are in a department of computer science, and not a department of psychology. Most members of the department are not desperate to increase this variety. Indeed, the mix of disciplinary dialects provides sufficient internal tension that some of us struggle to understand our own teaching syllabus. The other (DG) works in a department of psychology in a social science faculty which has recently moved from being an interdisciplinary consortium to a disaggregated set of disciplinary departments. Disciplinarity has a clear appeal not least because of the certainty and identity it offers in specifying a group of like minded colleagues.

In this organisational context, Crucible offers a disruptive agenda. It is difficult enough for technologists to speak to other technologists, or social scientists to other social scientists, so why waste effort learning a completely different language? The answer is that our motivation is to contribute not just to the academic worlds of Technology and AHSS, but to participate in design in its most extended sense, and through that to a bridging of the divide be-

tween these seemingly distant academic tribes. We are interested in the ways that ideas can shape the world outside the university, whether through collaboration, consultancy or education of students who can be productive members of design teams. UK government policy is also concerned with enabling universities "to contribute to wider society" and in the Cambridge context this is of singular significance as these are the first five words of the University's mission statement. Unfortunately, this policy objective is expressed not in terms of design, but usually as a question of "knowledge transfer." One might imagine the university as a reservoir of knowledge, perhaps contained within books and the heads of individual academics, from which portions of knowledge can be poured out into the heads of recipients outside the university walls. But which of the available languages might this knowledge be expressed in, and how might it be translated into the languages current in business, industry, government and public service, each of which have their own lingua franca? Scholarship does not exist in any form independent of language, so the transfer of scholarly knowledge either takes place in the disciplinary language in which it was formulated, or must be translated.

The conceptions of knowledge transfer that often drive public policy are modeled on the supposed economics of the technology industries (and especially the Internet boom of Silicon Valley). According to this model, innovations made in a University are refined into "intellectual property" that can be legally protected, sold, exploited, and transferred between universities and businesses. In those industries, innovation does not require an inordinate degree of translation between disciplinary vocabularies. The employees of the university typically have degrees in the same subjects as the employees of the companies to which the intellectual property is being sold. To the extent that if any translation is required when the knowledge is transferred out of the university, it is in order to describe the knowledge in terms of business models, corporate strategy, financial and legal terms.

From this description, it is apparent that there is little similarity between this model of successful knowledge transfer in the technology industry, and the translation challenges that are at the heart of the Crucible mission, of encouraging collaboration between technologists, and researchers in the arts, humanities and social sciences. Knowledge transfer from an academic in one of those disciplines is unlikely to have easy outcomes in the field of technology, let alone in the transfer of that knowledge to innovators and creators in the commercial world. Yet this model is often clung to despite much evidence that what is important in developing the knowledge that can be successfully transferred is a prior two-way flow of problems, observations and ideas between a university and its external partners. This two-way flow around concrete challenges has much in common with the design process, in that it

focuses around the creation of entities which are essentially the cross-boundary objects to which all parties, no matter what their mother tongue, can orient and understand. It is for this reason that design seems a singularly appropriate mode of engagement between technology and AHSS and subsequently with the outside world than any conception of knowledge transfer.

Our question, therefore, is how innovative design can be informed or performed by people who do not share a common disciplinary knowledge. Should this be achieved by translation, by the construction of a pidgin that we hope will become a Creole, by education, or by the search for language-free encounters? In practice, Crucible acts in all of these ways, and usually by adopting more than one option at a time. The remainder of this chapter describes strategic approaches informed by each of them.

THE TRANSLATION MODEL

Some of our earliest experiments in strategies for interdisciplinary collaboration were funded, not by technology investors, but by the Arts Council of England. The Collaborative Arts Unit is a research unit of the Arts Council led by Bronac Ferran, an international innovator in arts policy. After working with Bronac to run a European policy conference on Collaboration and Ownership in the Digital Economy (CODE), we created a series of collaborative experiments to explore the questions of intellectual property and creativity that had arisen from the conference. Working with performing arts venue The Junction, and the Cambridge contemporary art gallery Kettle's Yard, we invited artists to engage with academic researchers through New Technology Arts Fellowships.

The starting point of NTAF was an invitation for artists to engage with new technologies under development in Cambridge University, in the hope that we might disrupt the usual routine of technology investment. Promising developments in basic science are quickly sold to, and thereafter shaped by, investors from large corporations or defence organizations, to an extent that many technology researchers seldom have the opportunity to consider applications outside the paths well-paved by investment funding. We hoped that collaboration with technologically sophisticated artists might encourage technology researchers to see different routes for development, perhaps even leading to different formulations of their research questions and objectives.

This was an ambitious goal, and we wished to approach it with an attitude that would encourage playful exploration and creative adventure, rather than premature commitment to the first solution that seemed likely to "work" (whether as an artistic outcome or potential technology). We therefore funded

and described the three fellowships as "Phase 1" projects, which might or might not be followed by further phases. The primary intended outcome of phase 1 would be a social goal, rather than an artistic or technological goal. Our ambition was that the artists appointed to the fellowship would establish a personal relationship with a scientific collaborator, sufficiently secure that the two would wish to work together to draft a funding proposal for further collaborative work as phase 2. A successful outcome of phase 1 would be the submission of that proposal to some funding agency (our own resources were not sufficient to fund realization of the kind of work we imagined might eventually result).

To further encourage openness to adventure, we regularly reminded all those involved that NTAF was a series of experiments, not a contract to achieve guaranteed outcomes. We stated that an experiment for which the outcome is known in advance would not be an experiment, and there would be nothing to be learned. We therefore warned sponsors and collaborators that we expected at least one of the three fellowships to "fail," in the sense that the collaborators might not reach the proposal submission phase. However, we always said that the circumstances leading to this outcome would be just as interesting for research purposes as those that resulted in progression to phase 2. All collaborators appreciated the opportunity and freedom afforded by this attitude. Nevertheless, the three fellowships did all result in proposals for further work, at the end point of some number of meetings over periods of three to six months. Furthermore, all artists successfully obtained funding to proceed with a realization of their collaborative concept; for example artist Alexa Wright's experiments with a computer-animated face that responds to the viewer's own facial expression was supported with a further grant from a national art-touring fund.

The process involved in reaching this point was almost exclusively one of conversation. The three fellows were selected on the basis that they were interested in new ideas, enjoyed conversations about their intentions and work processes, and looked forward to the challenge of understanding the work of other traditions. Nevertheless, none found the early stages of the fellowship straightforward, as they were introduced to a series of academics in the field that they wished to explore. These meetings were often awkward, as artist and scientist groped for some ground of mutual respect and interest that would motivate the necessary patience for the process of translating each other's understanding of a mutual goal. One or more Crucible staff always attended these meetings, acting as translator and multi-skilled facilitator (for example, simply ensuring the drinks continued to arrive in a pub where an artist was being given a rapid tutorial in applied mathematics).

The process of interdisciplinary translation here was not a literal one, in the sense that a statement in one language would be repeated as a statement in the other. Both were speaking English, of course, but were not necessarily

aware of which English phrases common in their discipline might be misunderstood, threatening, meaningless or offensive to the other. A typical "translation" strategy was to interrupt the conversation at these points, warning both participants about the nature of the likely misunderstanding. The skills necessary for this kind of translation are essentially those of cultural empathy, having sufficient familiarity with each discipline to recognize which phrases are special, and which underlying attitudes are unlikely to be welcome. In many cases, it was also necessary to anticipate some of these problems, briefing potential collaborators before they met for the first time.

CREATING A PIDGIN AND ENABLING A CREOLE

We found it useful to present the NTAF project to stakeholders and participants as a social experiment. The artistic and scientific outcomes were interesting in themselves, but our own interest was in the development of social strategies for interdisciplinary collaboration. As a result, working with social anthropologist James Leach, we became increasingly interested in the relationship between these artistic encounters and broader academic conceptions of interdisciplinarity. A project investigating "Social Property and New Social Forms" included four Interdisciplinary Design Workshops, at which James, working with the first author, convened groups of 15–20 experts from extremely varied disciplines to spend a day addressing some concrete problem. The problems themselves tended to expose the inadequacy of single disciplinary perspectives, including fair international law for licensing of pharmaceuticals, the development of a single ontology for genome research, and the ethical responsibilities of "creatives" in the advertising industry.

Each workshop in this series lasted 24 hours, starting with a seminar investigating academic perspectives on interdisciplinarity, followed by a reception and dinner. We had realized in the course of NTAF that food, drink and casual social gatherings were an essential prerequisite of the easy working relationship that would allow people to move beyond the comfort of their own discipline. The following day employed a range of strategies intended to help participants develop a common working language with which to address the workshop objective. In the course of the project, we found some strategies that were notably unsuccessful. One was the attempt to provide expert introductions to technical aspects of the problem. The time devoted to the expert introduction appeared to privilege one disciplinary language over the others, without any genuine opportunity for discussion on equal grounds. Eventually, we realized that even our own statement of the problem to be addressed on the day predetermined the acceptable language of the discussion, in the vocabulary that we used to describe the problem itself.

We therefore developed a workshop facilitation strategy in which the participants would construct their own interdisciplinary language, in the course of addressing a common problem. The statement of that problem, however, was deferred until the final phase of the workshop. Instead, participants were invited to reflect on their own reasons for being present. They were encouraged to speak as persons, not simply as representatives of an organization or academic community, and to accept the ethical and intellectual responsibilities of doing so. As facilitators, we wrote down and displayed the language used in these statements. The emerging aggregate of these personal motivations, discussed over the course of several hours, became the basis for a Creole of the different disciplinary languages. Rather than struggling for the validity of their own disciplinary perspective, or assuming a disengaged stance with regard to the applicability of others, the focus on mutual recognition of personhood required the recognition of each person's preferred vocabulary.

The final phase of the workshop involved the agreement of a question that should be discussed. In some ways, this might seem inadequate as an outcome of a rather expensive and time-consuming process. However it does correspond to common understanding of research challenges. Most researchers find that answering a question is nowhere near as difficult as asking the right question in the first place. In this context, a workshop designed to formulate good questions is a worthwhile accomplishment. However these workshops (using a format that we call the "Blackwell-Leach Process") produce a further beneficial outcome. The shared language that has been created in the process of agreeing the question persists as an intellectual tool available for use by those who have participated in its creation. A new language brings with it new perspectives on existing problems, in fields where redescribing a problem may reveal its solution.

Essentially, the process involved the creation of a primary common language which was based on the experiential worlds of the participants. They were then enabled in both formal and informal settings to "creolized" collaboratively that pidgin, and through it to have a mode of expression of their capacities which could be understood and valued by both themselves and the others involved. As this process continued it became a basis for mutual respect and trust which completed a self-reinforcing basis for the interdisciplinary endeavour.

ENCOUNTERS WITHOUT LANGUAGE

As an alternative to translating between disciplinary languages, or creating a Creole outside the boundaries of different disciplines, the third of the alternatives proposed earlier is that we might try to work without language. The Crucible strategy sees design as providing meeting points between disciplines. A

product can be understood for its own nature, perhaps to be described by each discipline in its own language, but necessarily tangible and available to each party irrespective of a linguistic description. Design processes often create concrete artifacts well before the final product takes form. Sketches, models and prototypes can all be understood to some extent without explaining them. They are used frequently in craft and professional practice, but less frequently as a component of intellectual pursuit apart from architecture and certain parts of engineering. Indeed, there is a degree of prejudice against the use of diagrams in presenting concepts in many disciplines, even where those concepts might be of comparable complexity to a diagrammatic presentation.

Of course most academics are relatively unskilled at model-making and sketching. We felt that this might be an advantage when encouraging mutual encounters with the outside world. Rather than constructing such encounters in the form of presentations, seminars and reports, all of which give the impression that the goal of an academic is simply to impose his or her great learning on others, a focus on physical products might enforce a more appropriate humility on an academic wishing to share the language of industry and the professions.

A number of Crucible projects have provided opportunities to explore this hypothesis under controlled conditions. One of the most successful, a project entitled Choreography and Cognition, was a collaboration between about a dozen choreographers and dancers, and a slightly smaller number of researchers from different fields of neuroscience. Meeting initially in the rehearsal studio of Random Dance Company, it was clear from the outset that different worlds of knowledge and skill were colliding. By (literally) sitting at the feet of experts in a language-less field, the project became grounded in a recognition that our academic languages were at best peripheral to the work that we wished to study and influence. However, rather than simply reversing the familiar conventions of artist-in-residence at a laboratory, the fact that there were a group of researchers allowed us to be more than scientists-in-residence at the dance company. That first morning's rehearsal was immediately followed by a research meeting, attended by the choreographers and several of the dancers, at which they were able to observe the complementary working modes of research scientists.

This productive starting point to the project bore fruit over the following six months, as the collaborators worked in parallel to create outcomes that realized their own ambitions for the project, while also involving regular encounter and influence between the groups. Wayne MacGregor and Random Dance created a critically praised new work, Ataxia, that was centrally concerned with a neurological condition. The researchers produced a wide variety of academic publications with new perspectives of embodi-

ment, language and representation. At no point did the two sides of the collaboration really share a common language, but we established a productive way of working side-by-side, often quite intimately, to productive ends.

An alternative stream of Crucible work has been based more literally on the sketching and model-making traditions of intellectual design disciplines such as architecture. In work that has been motivated and funded according to the technological concerns of Ubiquitous Computing, we have been building "tangible user interfaces" (TUIs), where physical objects become part of the computer user interface, replacing or supplementing the traditional mouse and keyboard. Innovations in TUI design have potential outcomes for the design of systems in which computers are aware of the physical environment around them, and of small digital devices (such as mobile phones and personal music players) that are carried in pockets, integrated into clothing or even become pieces of jewelry.

In several research projects, and also in short courses and facilitated workshops, we have encouraged computer scientists and their collaborators to explore very simple model-making techniques as an approach to inventing innovative TUIs. We provide them with the most basic physical materials (modeling clay, coloured card, straws, foam and so on), in order that their childhood experience will supply sufficient memory of how to use them. We then ask participants to explore the materials physically, letting transient physical forms inspire them to new digital interpretations of three-dimensional shape. This 3-D sketching is then used as the starting point for an analytic process in which we regard the relations between physical objects as solid diagrams, exploring the usability consequences of those shapes, materials and relations as a notational system.

After more than a dozen experiences of facilitating these 3-D sketching workshops, it is clear that the departure from academic language can be successful, although not guaranteed. In one case, the childish implications of using school art supplies was resisted by a group of scientists who perhaps felt that it was beneath their dignity. Some of them had been reluctant to participate in the event at all, and this abandoning of conventional academic language was the last straw, apparently convincing them that they were going to waste a day. More positively, the technique has been used for design collaboration between computer science researchers and members of the Alzheimer's Society, helping both people with Alzheimer's and their caregivers express their desires for technology that might assist them in everyday life. In this case, the lack of shared language was more extreme than in most Crucible collaborations, yet still allowed productive engagement between academics and a new constituency outside the university.

EDUCATION

Developing novel programs in either design or research or some combination of the two with experienced researchers and practitioners from outside the University offers both opportunities and difficulties. A number of the difficulties could be avoided if the educational experiences which formed the beliefs, attitudes and sentiments of the established disciplinary researcher were different. Suggesting this is easy, but achieving it is not. Interdisciplinary educational programs are superficially attractive, but often condemn students to superficiality in their work. This can derive from poor combinations offered in the syllabus or chosen by the students if their choices are unconstrained; having disciplinary teachers for each part of it who do not talk to each other; lack of clarity about the embedded disciplinary educational goals; and assessment systems which orient to a multidisciplinary rather than interdisciplinary agenda where creative use of more than one discipline by a student is not rewarded. Here again the Crucible focus on design is of value, but in a context where students achieve real conceptual depth as part of their studies.

The creation of Crucible was facilitated by engagement with the Cambridge MIT Institute (CMI) which was established by the UK Government to experiment with innovation and educational practices in connection with industry and based on the strength of the two Universities. A number of the new curricular developments it fostered were interdisciplinary even if the disciplinary reach was not as far as the Crucible mission proposes. In those new interdisciplinary curricula, as indeed is the case for single disciplines, the relevant literatures are so large that students cannot be taught a subject by teaching all of the available material. Some of it has to be neglected, but the key question is how much and should breadth or depth be privileged. The conclusion reached on the basis of various studies and findings from the existing literature was that depth should not be compromised for breadth. Depth in some part of a student's work is fundamental for establishing a basis for understanding those parts of a discipline which have not been taught and indeed understanding future research developments. It is also fundamental to developing the student's sense of their own capacity to be flexible and innovative with respect to both the development of new applications and new ideas as well as their communicative and team-working skills. The latter which are often looked down on as mere transferable skills depend upon a flexible grasp of what is known so that it can be offered to one's colleagues and partners in an intelligible form no matter what their own knowledge of the subject at hand. Communicative skills depend upon understanding one's own ideas, and being able to learn from others when they do not share one's own background.

In our work with doctoral students, we have been able to begin by assuming an established conceptual depth, and then have worked with students on innovative projects which bring together a variety of perspectives from outside technology if that is their background, or do the opposite if not. In each instance, however, we do not ask the students to become highly skilled practitioners of all aspects of other disciplines, or even pretend to a smattering from them all. Instead the focus is on appropriate depth and collaboration with others who are more widely trained for each part of the research and design work they undertake.

At the undergraduate level, this is a harder goal to achieve, but we are currently laying plans for a new studio design component of the undergraduate computer science degree which will be taken by students in their first year. In that, students will have extensive opportunities to work on design projects and will be expected to take certain other ideas from the various domains of AHSS and explore them in depth to understand their implications for their design practice. In this, the emphasis will be on the use of ideas in design rather than the mere critical evaluation.

Although a few universities in the world have experimented with programs of this type at Master's level (for example, the world-leading Computer-Related Design course at the Royal College of Art), the most significant innovation in our experiment is to introduce this material as the first thing that a student encounters, in the first year of a computer science degree. This will be offered as an option to replace first year physics, in a syllabus that otherwise includes no options, minor, or other opportunity to study in faculties other than computer science. Studio-style experiences, of building new technology under the guidance of practitioners, will alternate with theoretical seminars drawing on applied social science, business strategy and critical theory. We expect that it will attract a new kind of student to the discipline, a student that becomes a "native speaker" of the language of innovation, and equipped to translate and mediate when new technologies are constructed between business, the academy, and the rest of society.

LOOKING FORWARD: A CRUCIBLE MISSION STATEMENT

In the context of a metal foundry, the (literal) crucible is a vessel used to carry molten alloys from a furnace to the moulds in which products will be formed. For us, this is a fertile metaphor for a new kind of academic life. The Crucible mission is to provide a melting-pot in which academic disciplines are stirred together and recombined, to create innovative engagements between industry, society and the academy. To the extent that academic disciplines are constructions

of their own language and discourse, our role is to melt these down, combine them, and carry them to new places. The result may be either new forms or new languages to describe them. But more than either of these, we hope to contribute new ways of working, in which reflective research practitioners are aware of the languages they use, are able to adapt and modify them, and can educate new generations of researchers whose language offers new insights, ways of thinking and ways of describing the world. Where these students go on to become technologists, we expect them to be innovators in design, escaping the preconceptions of many new technology research initiatives with regard to the nature and social role of technology.

Chapter Twelve

Working Together

Ken Friedman

Working together with other human beings is an aspect of life that makes us human. Many creatures cooperate for safety, food, and shelter. Birds in flocks, wolves in hunting packs, tribes of primates all cooperate. Human beings do more. We work together and we plan our work, building projects and building organizations to realize our projects. We generate communities, societies, and cultures as we do.

The idea of communal work has been central to my interests for nearly five decades. In the early 1960s, I became interested in Unitarian Universalist theology, history, and social practice. The Unitarians descended from the Congregational churches of New England. These were Puritan Calvinist churches, but Puritanism took a radical turn in the theology of William Ellery Channing. In the early 1800s, Channing turned away from the doctrine of sin and punishment, turning from Trinitarian doctrine at the same time to establish what became Unitarian Christianity.[1] Channing influenced Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, among the other transcendentalists, all seeking better ways to build a world.[2] This community development embraced the concept of work.

While transcendentalist utopian communities as Brook Farm embodied this vision, this was not the first such effort. The Buddhist Eightfold Path—right view, right intention, right speech, right discipline, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration—embodies concepts of common work.

The Shakers organized most of their communal life around two functions, work and worship, and the productive Shaker economy was a distinctive attribute of the Shaker villages and communities.[3] Much of the regulation of Shaker life concerned work and community relations concerning work; and

reading the rules of the order, it is nearly impossible to separate work from the other aspects of Shaker life, with rising and returning, meals, and even household management structured around the tempo and meaning of working life.[4]

When I first met Dick Higgins, I caught a vision of community life and work in his ideas. Dick's "Something Else Manifesto" called for artists to "chase down an art that clucks and fills our guts."[5] This was both a call to collaboration and a call to productive work, to art as a kind of productive work engaging the concept of community.

Dick introduced me to George Maciunas, whose philosophy of Fluxus articulated many of the same principles. George's vision of Fluxus called for artists to work together, creating work together, sharing ideas and principles, supporting one another.

While George's vision of Fluxus was intensely political at one point in his life, he had shifted from a strict hierarchical concept of the collective by the time that I met him to a far more open vision.

The verb "to collaborate" come from the Late Latin collaboratus, past participle of *collaborare*—to labor together, from the Latin words "com" and "laborare" to labor. The relevant definition here means "to work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor."[6] The Oxford English Dictionary makes the definition particularly relevant to my purpose in this note: "To work in conjunction with another or others, to co-operate; esp. in a literary or artistic production, or the like."[7]

THREE FACTORS EXPLAIN FLUXUS AS A COLLABORATIVE WORKING COMMUNITY

Most of the Fluxus artists were already working in the tradition that Fluxus came to represent. Fluxus was our meeting point. As we found out about one another, we began to meet and work through Fluxus. This includes people who were not artists before the meeting, even though we did things that paralleled the activities of the artists and composers in Fluxus. That was the case for me.

Many of the artists already knew each other, and some had worked together for many years. This includes the people in the New York Audio-Visual Group, John Cage's former students, and more. They did not come to Fluxus: Fluxus came to them when George Maciunas created the name for a magazine that would publish the work of these artists. This work established the foundation of a building under construction. The work was already under way when Maciunas named the building "Fluxus."

Despite the broad range of interests and the wide geographical spread, this was not a large community. In the 1960s, the community involved fewer than a hundred people in a world population of about 3,000,000,000 human beings. These 100 or so were part of a slightly larger community of several hundred people active in the relatively small sector of the art world that we might label the avant-garde.

In this context, it made perfect sense that those who knew each other would bring other interesting people into a relatively small community of people interested in the same kinds of issues, people doing the same kind of work.

History is always contingent, though. A dozen different scenarios are possible in which people never met or met without forming a community or formed a very different kind of community. In this world, the social and historical development of Fluxus and intermedia meant intense correspondence for artists at a distance, common projects, and many kinds of collaboration.

One of the most interesting forms of collaboration involved creating the ideas that George Maciunas turned into the Fluxus editions. In essence, this was an industrial manufacturing program.[8]

The artists would send ideas to George, and George would fashion these into the astonish boxes, multiples, and films for which Fluxus is known. George's cooperative art projects and industrial production plans were examples of the pivotal concerns of Fluxus, but George often failed as a practical manager. It was difficult for him to work with people. He was severe in demeanor, too eccentric to work long and well with others. He was rarely able to carry his projects to fruition. He could not accept that negotiation and social dialogue are among the ways that innovative design concepts move from sketchpad to finished product program.

George Maciunas's manufacturing and marketing policies for Fluxus were visionary and, in part, mistaken. Fluxus boxes were designed to sell in the 1960s for prices between $2 and $10 each. Counting real costs, including labor, overhead, rent, telephone, and shipping, the boxes cost between $40 and $80 each to manufacture and distribute.

Part of the high cost resulted from the fact that boxes were never actually created by mass production. They were series of what would normally be considered prototypes, proofs, or trial runs. Each Fluxbox was handmade. Most were series, but many were unique variations on basic themes. They were handcrafted to give them an industrial appearance.

The material costs of each box were quite modest. If we had manufactured them on an industrial scale, the per-unit cost we charged would have been realistic. Because we covered production costs, rent, utilities, and overheads, Fluxus actually subsidized the customers and collectors. The art market price of Fluxus boxes now averages between $1,000 and $2,000 for the smaller

boxes. Adjusted for inflation, the price only recently rose above the original true cost of production and distribution. These prices do not account for storage and maintenance costs on inventory, let alone the artistic value or reputation value of the pieces as a factor in art market appreciation.

George Maciunas, who was trained as an architect and designer at Carnegie Mellon University, was interested in industrial processes. Given his background, George should have seen the flaws in production and price structure. Nevertheless, George also saw Fluxus as the enactment of a principle: immediate economic facts made little difference to him. He had to choose between creating the pieces in an impossibly thin market and not creating the pieces.

George often acted on the theory that a model, a living statement, is an important accomplishment. Perhaps he understood the economic problems, but he was convinced that industrial production would eventually allow him to create a going business in the manufacture and sale of Fluxworks. Unfortunately, he had no way to get from prototype to full-scale production. George understood the problems he faced. What he would not have understood and might have found unacceptable is the fact that Fluxworks are now being bought and sold like paintings.

George had a sense of moral zeal allied to his design genius. He saw, on many levels, what the world needed. His goal was to sweep away high culture and to lay a foundation for well-designed, large-scale culture.

The economic failure of the Fluxus product program and the financial collapse of Something Else Press led me to a deep interest in the economics of art. Not long after earning my doctorate with a thesis on the sociology of art and special attention to markets, I moved on to study the economics of art.

One thing that continued to interest me long after starting to work with George was the possibility of industrial production. Clearly, this would not be possible with art works. Multiples could succeed as expensive editions, but not as modest projects.

Instead, I realized that I should try a model based on the functioning product range from a firm that was already functioning in a major market. In the 1980s, I had the opportunity to try this with Arabia and Iittala.

Peter Frank tells the story of what happened in his article. Despite a promising start to the project, the collapse of the Soviet Union damaged the Finnish economy severely. The company that owned Arabia and Iittala went bankrupt, and the project vanished with the firm.

I remain interested in collaboration, both artistic collaboration and the collaboration between art and industry.

One aspect of this collaboration is the need for sustainable development, durable artifacts that people will want to use and keep using, and projects that create jobs.

The world can no longer afford bad design. Even in the developed West, approaching environmental problems will lead to major social and economic catastrophe. It's hard to imagine ourselves sitting in dusty streets, selling used clothing and old plastic bottles to one another, but millions of the world's poor live this way today, and severe economic disruptions can force us into a similar dystopia sooner than we realize.

It is not necessary to change fashions every season. We do not need to plan obsolete hard goods or to discard them routinely. Artists and designers can add value to the world, to human experience, by designing well on a large scale. One way to begin is to do better at meeting needs and opportunities for our normal clients. Then we can look to see what can be done elsewhere.

Consumer goods reflect the problems we create for ourselves. Some design goods planned for the large-scale markets require more work, production and detailing than better goods in the luxury line. Manufacturers develop product programs with planned flaws in order to distinguish between the good taste of the wealthy, the lesser taste of the middle class, and the bad taste of the lower class. Products are designed to fall apart or to wear out at a certain rate. Designers work to create products that will make consumers feel second-rate as part of a social structure that encourages displays of wealth in the effort to gain esteem. Responsible attention to design can often create better products for less money.

Inattention to the potential for adding value through design creates problems for our industries as well. Design is not a surface gloss. A basic function links product development to end use through all stages of planning, engineering, production, marketing and use.

Here, it seems to me that art and industry have something to learn from each other.

George Maciunas's last attempt at building a utopian community took place in New Marlborough, Massachusetts. George moved there, close to Jean Brown's Fluxus collection and archive in an old Shaker seed house.[9]

This part of the United States had a tradition of utopian communities from the birth of the Commonwealth to the grand experiment of the Republic. It was true for the American Renaissance spurred by Emerson, Thoreau, and the Transcendentalists to the settlements of the Shakers. It was true when Jean Brown set up shop a little ways down the road from half a dozen communes.

I spent the summer of 1972 in Tyringham working with Jean Brown. Every evening when we ate dinner together, she would quote the old Shaker proverb, "Hands to work and hearts to God."

Later, I helped arrange a meeting between Jean Brown and George Maciunas. I knew they would hit it off, but I never knew how well. It seemed

entirely appropriate to me that George found his way to Brown's corner of the world, heartland of the Shaker expansion.

A few years ago, Bertrand Clavez organized a seminar on Fluxus at the monastery La Tourette, one of Corbusier's late masterpieces. For the seminar, I gave a talk titled, *A Fluxus Theology*.

In reality, it was not so much a theology as an ontology reaching beyond art to the ways of being that Fluxus might involve. Even so, it had theological dimensions, and they are to be found somewhere between Jean's Shaker Seed House motto and Nam June Paik's version of the eight-fold way.

They all run through community and collaboration.

NOTES

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4. Andrews, *The People Called Shakers*, pp. 253-289.

5. Higgins, Dick. 1964. "A Something Else Manifesto." In *Manifestoes*. New York: Something Else Press.

6. Merriam-Webster, Inc. 1990. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*. Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster, Inc., p. 259.

7. Oxford English Dictionary. 2006. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. Edited by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner. 2nd ed., 1989. Oxford: Clarendon Press. Oxford University Press. URL: http://dictionary.oed.com/ Date accessed: 2007 July 3.

8. For more on the Fluxus product program, see: Friedman, Ken. "Rethinking Fluxus." (in) *Fluxus!* Zurbrugg, Nicholas, Francesco Conz and Nicholas Tsoutas, eds. Brisbane, Australia: Institute of Modern Art, 1990, pp. 10-27. For a comprehensive catalogue of Maciunas's Fluxus editions and products, see: Hendricks, Jon. 1989. *Fluxus Codex*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

9. The Jean Brown Archive is now part of the Getty Center for the Arts and Humanities in Los Angeles, California. URL: http://archives.getty.edu:8082/cgi/f/findaid/findaid-idx?sid=f28fb38780063af9a655841817b562db;c=utf8a;idno=US::CMalG::890164 Date Accessed 2007 July 25.

Chapter Thirteen

Ken Friedman: A Life in Fluxus

Peter Frank

In the late 1980s, having devoted the better part of the decade developing publishing and other social and commercial projects, Fluxus artist Ken Friedman returned to making objects. He did so in collaboration with the Finnish company Arabia. This paper starts there and then traces Friedman's early journey to that juncture. Hence it may be read in two ways. One way to read the paper is as an account of Friedman's residency at Arabia and his background and collaboration with the other artists in Fluxus. The other way to read it is as a history of Fluxus through one of its members.[1]

The group of artists now known as Fluxus worked together for many years. The community from which the group emerged formed in the late 1950s, among artists and composers who studied in New York with John Cage, among musicians and dancers who worked with Ann Halprin in the San Francisco Bay Area, among Japanese artists emerging from experimental groups in that country, and among kindred souls involved in avant garde tendencies throughout Europe. When George Maciunas joined this group, he coined the name "Fluxus," a rubric that gave the group a common identity, transforming it in the public eye from a loose-knit archipelago of friends into a team of like-minded avant gardists.[2] Maciunas' vision went even beyond philosophy and aesthetics, to embrace a more or less socialist political agenda. In the early 1960s he identified Fluxus as a "collective"; no one else involved in Fluxus, however, agreed to submit to such a structure. Thus, while Maciunas attempted to supervise Fluxus as a hierarchically driven collective, the movement in fact operated as a relatively open and informal network.

Maciunas functioned as the editorial chair of Fluxus, primarily responsible for the production of multiples conceived by various Fluxus artists, as well as for his own concepts. He determined the context and the structure, then, of his

projects while his peers maintained a similar role in setting terms for other projects he was responsible for seeing to fruition. Maciunas expended vast amounts of time and energy producing limited-edition objects according to directions given him by his Fluxfriends, taking no public credit for the effort. Although he viewed these objects as prototypes for mass industrial production, Maciunas' efforts in scavenging, compiling, printing, packaging, and otherwise fabricating these quirky multiple-edition assemblages resembled more the efforts of Medieval craftsmen.

In 1966, shortly after Friedman joined Fluxus, Maciunas "partitioned" the Fluxworld into four centers—a development away from his earlier concept of a political collective, towards a more democratic model with shared responsibilities. Friedman's experience in Fluxus was thus collaborative. When he joined it was, in his words, an "open, non-hierarchical laboratory of ideas."[3]

ONE

Art as we know it is approaching an important crossroads. The philosophies that have guided art since the late 19th century have receded, leaving ill-conceived, ill-founded and mutually exclusive points of view in their wake. There is no common standard. Ken Friedman's life and work[4] suggest a new standard, in art and around it. That standard embraces an informed awareness of art history and world history, a sense of the artist's role in society and a vision larger than personal concerns. Such a standard prompts the creation of meaningful art—indeed, even art that has an impact outside its own discourse.

Friedman's artmaking spans some four decades, providing a paradigm for artistic thought and behavior. This is partly due to his involvement in Fluxus, one of the most valuable and exemplary sensibilities in contemporary art. It has also been the result of his contribution to the development and influence of the Fluxus sensibility. Friedman did not attend art school or major in studio art at a university, as have most contemporary artists. He took his professional training in social science, earning a doctorate in leadership and human behavior. He did study the theories and methods of his colleagues, working beside them and with them. Others recognized what Friedman was doing as art before he did. In fact, as he notes, he joined Fluxus before he became an artist.

Friedman came to Fluxus in an unusual way. In 1965 and '66 he produced and directed radio programs for Radio WRSB at Shimer College, in northwest Illinois. Looking for program material, he answered an advertisement for the Something Else Press in New York's *East Village Other*.[5] Friedman re-

ceived copies of books by Dick Higgins, Al Hansen, Robert Filliou, Ray Johnson, Daniel Spoerri, Alison Knowles, Emmett Williams, and other experimental intermedia artists. Inspired by the publications, he based programs on the books and began his enduring correspondence with publisher Higgins, who invited him to visit when he came to New York. August of 1966 found Friedman staying at the home of Higgins and Alison Knowles.

"One day at Dick's kitchen table, I made a box," Friedman recalls. "It was the reconstruction of an object that I'd made a year earlier in Chicago. Dick thought it was very Fluxus-like, so he sent me to see George Maciunas. George thought the box was very Fluxus, and he thought I ought to be part of Fluxus. The box—which George published as *Open and Shut Case*—opened my life in Fluxus.

"While I was still going to be a [Unitarian] minister," Friedman continues, "I thought the Fluxus people were doing something remarkable. As Maciunas explained it, Fluxus frowned on the sterile professionalism that made the art world such an unfortunate place for creativity. Fluxus artists came to art from many backgrounds—from oil economics, from ballet, from printing and from poetry, even a few from normal (or more normal) types of art. George enrolled me in Fluxus several minutes before he bothered to ask what sort of artist I was. The truth is, until that day in August of 1966, I never considered myself an artist."[6]

Most artists become artists consciously. They establish their intentions before they create mature work. Most get their training in universities or art schools. Many, certainly of late, adopt the role of artist with success rather than artistic inspiration in mind. They launch careers without comprehending the purpose or social responsibility of art. By the time he met Maciunas, Ken Friedman had grasped that purpose and that responsibility through his work in sociology and theology. He did not aspire to the role of artist; it was thrust upon him. He was like the Pacific Island tribesman in John Cage's tale, explaining the ways of his people to Westerners. Asked about art, the tribesman responded, "Art? What's that?" When his visitors explained the idea of art, he replied, "We have no art. We like to do everything well."

Newly aware of his work as "art," Friedman accepted the role to which Maciunas and Higgins introduced him. They had Friedman's respect; if they judged him an "artist," he wouldn't argue. They named him a Fluxus artist. For an outsider and misfit like Friedman, it was an invitation into a group of imaginative and respected colleagues.[7]

Friedman was not oriented to art discourse, old or recent.[8] Neither was Fluxus. Unlike Friedman, however, the other Fluxus artists were keenly aware of the art scene. They kept a careful distance from the focus and interests of the art world, but they addressed it as much as they addressed larger society.

They amplified the outsider role of previous artists of similar sensibility. Sometimes they became subversive insiders. They incorporated and developed the attitudes and practices of the French and Italian *Nouveaux Réalistes*, the German *Gruppe Zero*, the Japanese *Gutai* group, Happenings artists in Europe and America, visual and concrete poets, radical musicians like John Cage, and unregenerate Dadaists such as Marcel Duchamp. Like these others, Fluxists drew on interests and experiences far broader than the narrow range that dominated the art world. A proto-Minimalist aesthetic of radical reduction and refinement inflected much Fluxus work at this time. Some saw it as the heritage of Duchamp's *infra-mince* approach, but Fluxus also introduced the wider worlds of politics, economics, social planning, psychology, anthropology, and physics into art.[9] Friedman fit this milieu naturally.

Friedman only fit the context in part, however. He was entirely unaware of mainstream art and its exclusive world. Fluxus had a subversive role in the art context, but that interested Friedman less than did its larger potential. His commitment to broad social change led him to appreciate activity in all aspects of culture. One notable example was Friedman's interest in the underground press; representing Fluxus, he helped found the Underground Press Syndicate in 1967. Friedman did not undertake his Fluxus projects to upend mainstream aesthetics. He used Fluxus to enhance daily life. Given the involvement of Fluxus artists in disciplines other than art, this was the realization of a Fluxus ideal.

TWO

After a long path through many projects, some artistic and some only tangentially related to art, Friedman returned to making art in the late 1980s.[10] He came to focus on issues that jibe closely with the Fluxus world view. One concern in particular brought him back to artmaking: the industrial production of art in the factory workshop. The impetus for Friedman's project was a Fluxus ideal that had always intrigued him. "Fluxus artists have always wanted to produce objects for everyday use in the household," he observes, "things for using as well as looking at. Things made to be looked at are useful, too, as *models* for experience. These household objects are utilitarian in a direct way."[11]

Over the years, both traditional and experimental artists have turned to making useful objects. Many of those objects were prototypes for limited production; some entered mass production. In the 1980s, designers and architects began to meet artists halfway, frequently in collaboration. Fluxus prefigured this manifestation of the post-modern as far back as 1962. Indeed, the exam-

ple and influence of Fluxus helped bring about the phenomenon of artist-designer collaboration.

It was fully in the Fluxus mindset that Friedman, once again making objects, would try to produce and distribute his projects through some of the world's best known manufacturers of design artifacts. His first projects took him to Finland in 1987, specifically to Arabia, one of the world's most influential ceramics firms. For Friedman, Arabia embodied the spirit of utilitarian artistry. For Arabia, Friedman's whole Fluxus approach married the modernist workshop with the post-modern assertion of variety and individuality; his design ideas were fresh and his visual skills were a perfect fit for the company's many categories of utensil and home decoration.

Esa Kolehmainen, a Finnish design economist who was Design Director of Arabia at the time, says, "Functionalism per se is at a dead end. People now look for individualism more than collectivism in design artifacts, for variety rather than uniformity. We can look to post-modernist models like, for instance, Memphis Milano for ways to this."[12] But this approach, Kolehmainen warns, does not always work. Many post-modern artists and designers take cavalier attitudes towards the use of materials and to the processes of conception, production, and marketing. They disregard or dismiss traditional working structures and mass consumption issues involved in operations management and factory production. Kolehmainen regretfully describes most post-modernists as "coming and going" in their willingness to work seriously for anyone beside themselves.

In Friedman, Arabia found a post-modern artist-designer whose model for the relationship of economics and art was far more responsible, but whose aesthetic was no less appealing than the contemporary artists and designers Kolehmainen bemoaned. In Department Manager Lisa Gabrielsson's words,[13] the "naif-Pop quality" of Friedman's images constituted a "quickly grasped" personal vision. Gabrielsson and Kolehmainen also felt that Friedman's knowledge of the worldwide museum and gallery network could help return Arabia to its former stature as producer of fine-art-quality ware. At the same time, his commitment to a workshop structure offered Arabia a way to continue its involvement in post-modern design while encouraging post-modernist artist-designers to focus their talents cooperatively. According to Kolehmainen, Arabia also found the "interartistic possibilities" of Friedman's Fluxus approach especially promising. Thus, for the first time, Arabia invited into its working environment an artist-designer who was not a specialist in ceramics or glass, having him work in several formats in order to produce a kind of Gesamtkunstwerk that could comprise a traveling exhibition.

Friedman's glass projects for Arabia led to projects for the glass firm Iittala, which had recently incorporated the Arabia-owned firm Nuutajärvi in a

merger. Nuutajärvi and Iittala then represented the two major traditions in Finnish glass making, the folk tradition and the modern, respectively. Nuutajärvi artists such as Oiva Toikka and Markku Salo maintained traditional glass craft and fine-art practices. At Iittala, international figures such as architect Alvar Aalto, graphic designer Timo Sarpaniemi, and industrial designer Tapio Wirkkala had pioneered the modern coordination of art, design, architecture, and industrial production. Friedman's work at Iittala resulted in the prototype for his Helsinki Collection.

Friedman regards the collections he developed for Iittala and Arabia as the product of artistic collaboration in the industrial setting, the kind of collaboration he had long sought. Friedman's dialogue with Kolehmainen and Gabrielsson clarified the needs of the factory and the market, taking the glass and ceramics projects into a new structure. Working at and with Arabia over the course of a year, Friedman created a product program integrating his own sense of line and color into the tradition of Finnish modernism.

Friedman's glass prototypes for Iittala represented the firm's first involvement with color applied to glass. More people associate colored glass with Nuutajärvi's long-established folk idioms than with Iittala's modernism. Friedman's prototypes were a new direction for the firm. And in kind, Friedman's stay in Finland and deep exposure to the folk and modern traditions of Finnish design influenced his glass projects, in manner and in substance. Friedman's resulting Gesamtkunstwerk contains stoneware and glassware of several varieties, together with paintings, sculpture, prints, textiles and objects in other media. He imbued these with the intimate playfulness associated with Fluxus, a quality often visible in the objects Friedman has produced throughout his career.

The 1987 Arabia Gesamtkunstwerk was a pilot project intended to launch a new product program. The long-term plans for the project would have spanned several years of production, exhibition and sale. But the changing Finnish business environment made this impossible. Arabia was already undergoing structural changes during the year Friedman spent in Helsinki. When he returned there in 1988 to supervise the first production runs, Gabrielsson had already left and Kolehmainen was in the process of leaving. Without a champion inside the company to move product development from prototype to distribution, the new line languished. Iittala retained some interest in the glass products, but it, too, lacked a development mechanism for such a project. Both companies recognized the need to innovate, but Friedman's projects began to enter production too late for the international market.

For some years, Arabia had been owned and subsidized by Wärtsilä, one of Finland's industrial giants. Wärtsilä also owned a famous shipyard business. In the shifting world economy of the late 1980s, the shipyards began to lose vast sums of money, and before the new decade arrived, Wärtsilä was bank-

rupt. Lohja, another major industrial concern, acquired Wärtsilä, selling the shipyards, Arabia and Iittala. Arabia now seems to focus on the domestic Finnish market. Its future in export may grow again under the new owners, but there currently seem to be no plans to produce Friedman's internationally oriented product line.

This, of course, seemed unfortunate to Kolehmainen, Gabrielsson, and others who had supervised the development of Friedman's products. The museums and galleries that had requested and sponsored the show as an entirely new way of merging art and life also regretted the loss of the project amid the vicissitudes of business.[14] Friedman's ambitious but intimate creations conjure the atmosphere of play and discovery that had characterized the Fluxshops and galleries run by Robert Filliou, Ben Vautier, Arthur Køpcke, Friedman himself, and many other Fluxus artists around the world. The new work also conveys more profound philosophical perceptions and seeks to provoke serious contemplation. Ultimately, this work displays the range of Fluxus thinking, showing that the humorous and the serious are two sides of the same Fluxus spirit.

Friedman's own approach to art has always balanced terse wit and a taste for simplicity against a large-scale, operatic expansiveness. Such a balance between these two equally Fluxus points of view creates dialectical tension and permits a wide range of artistic expression and perception. As with all Fluxus art, Friedman's work reveals and explains through contradiction and contrast, a process that started with his early relationship to Higgins and Maciunas.

THREE

Maciunas, Higgins and others saw Friedman's youthful idealism as a substantiation of the Fluxus ethos in a context wider than art. It was the kind of example they were trying to set, but their struggle against mainstream aesthetics made it difficult for them simply to set an example. For better or worse, Fluxus artists carried on the program of the historical avant garde. Their opposition to the art world was self-conscious and informed. In some ways, Fluxus differed from the basic aspirations of Surrealism, the Bauhaus and other prewar movements only in its loose sense of group identity. Its ethos was one of enhancing life through direct artistic and extra-artistic intervention and it opposed the mannered, self-justifying production of precious objects that characterized postwar art. Friedman understood this aspect of Fluxus almost before he knew he was making art. What he did not realize was how revolutionary this position was.

If his initial grasp of their position differed from that of his new-found colleagues, Friedman's practice in the late 1960s was essentially the same. His artistic practice differed from other Fluxists in degree, not in theory or intent. "Whatever else I may or may not have been," states Friedman, "I was not all that different from the other individuals in the collection of people and projects known as Fluxus. I found works and ideas that excited me. I found something to do with the energy with which I was filled, energy that demanded to be expressed, and was, in creating my own work, and in producing programs, concerts, exhibitions, and tours for the Fluxus people whom I came to enjoy (and sometimes to admire) so much."[15]

Friedman's unusual status as unselfconscious proto-artist within the Fluxus fold effectively proved the Fluxus claim to extra-artistic relevance. It also gave Fluxus one of its first true "concept artists." When Maciunas enrolled Friedman in Fluxus, he had to determine precisely what kind of Fluxus artist Friedman was.[16] Maciunas sought the uniting thread in Friedman's varied activities. He realized that the desire to subvert and transcend disciplinary boundaries was not Friedman's main concern. Neither was the urge to address life through art or art through life. Maciunas saw Friedman's focus as revelation and human growth through heightened awareness of all kinds: intellectual, aesthetic, spiritual, physical, social, political and more. Maciunas saw the *concept* of revelatory change as the core of Friedman's work.

In early 1961, Henry Flynt, a mathematician, musician and political radical, wrote an essay entitled "Concept Art." In this essay, Flynt defined "concept art" as "first of all an art of which the material is *concepts*, as the material of e.g. music is sound. . . ."[17] Maciunas, the principal supporter of Flynt's often extreme political and aesthetic theories, had not identified a pure "concept artist" in Fluxus (other than Flynt himself) until Friedman came along. Friedman's outlook was decidedly more humanistic than Flynt's. It was a clear demonstration that the Fluxus ethos had realistic applications. It was no longer possible to dismiss Fluxus ideas as impractical theory. Where Flynt proposed hermetic postulates, Friedman provided models for action and behavior. Along with ideas, Friedman designed concepts for action in the real world. Indeed, Friedman often realized his events in the real world *before* formulating them for presentation as concepts.

In many ways, Friedman was the Fluxus artist Maciunas had been waiting for. Until then, the participants in Fluxus had been fully formed artists by the time they came to the group. Friedman, on the other hand, was an artist waiting to happen, and Fluxus catalyzed Friedman's emergence as an artist. Neither Maciunas nor Fluxus "made" Friedman an artist. Rather, they provided the context in which Friedman recognized himself as an artist, and they provided him a platform.

Friedman came to Maciunas at a time when Fluxus—and the Fluxus sensibility—were losing energy and influence. Similar movements had dissolved in the several years previous. One reason was broader art-world recognition for many of the participating artists. The obsolescence of heretofore provocative ideas was another. More significantly, Maciunas had not devised effective means for disseminating information or ideas much beyond the Fluxus circle. Maciunas preached mass production, but he practiced handicraft techniques. He insisted on controlling the production and distribution of Fluxus objects. He theorized mass communication but rarely distributed information to more than a hundred or so people. Maciunas's cottage-industry attitude left Fluxus as much rumor as presence.

Despite his aesthetic and social ideals, Maciunas was diffident and idiosyncratic. Although he did not admit it, he saw Fluxus as an extension of himself as much as he saw it as a worldwide social and artistic phenomenon. He did not seem to trust his fellow Fluxus artists with Fluxus ideas, not even their own. Maciunas bristled, for instance, when Dick Higgins founded the Something Else Press in 1964. (Higgins founded the Press after Maciunas repeatedly delayed publishing *Jefferson's Birthday/Postface* under the Fluxus rubric. Higgins finally decided to publish it himself, a decision that became one of the more famous incidents in Fluxus history.)[18] Maciunas's idiosyncrasies, not least his jealous watch over Fluxus, thus prevented Fluxus from establishing the presence it might have otherwise had.

Maciunas did not see Fluxus as the extension of his ego so much as the embodiment of his wealth. (In this he tacitly agreed with one-time Fluxus artist Joseph Beuys, who famously declared, "art = capital.") Like the heir to a fortune who doesn't trust the managers responsible for creating his inheritance, Maciunas seemed to find anyone else's interpretation of Fluxus threatening. He should have welcomed it. He had conceived and designed Fluxus as a world-wide shared enterprise, but could barely bring himself to share it. By 1966, the results of Maciunas's hoarding impulse were clear. The world hardly knew Fluxus. It understood Fluxus even less. To be sure, Fluxus ideas were leaking into general artistic discourse. They would manifest themselves in the mainstream of art—and life—in a few years. By the time these ideas entered the mainstream, however, their origin in Fluxus was obscure. By sitting on Fluxus, Maciunas robbed it of the recognition it deserved.

Fluxus might have suffered even greater obscurity had Maciunas not begun to recognize the problem by mid-1966. He saw that he could not keep all of Fluxus to himself. He could not simply change his modus operandi, though; he required cooperation. By then, Maciunas had alienated many former and potential allies. Artists like Higgins were eager to promote the Fluxus point

of view along with their own artistic agendas, not instead of them. Maciunas, however, could indulge only himself.

When Ken Friedman came to him, Maciunas saw him as a kindred spirit and as a kind of disciple. Friedman had no artistic agenda of his own. He was a gifted younger person with an instinctive grasp of the Fluxus idea. He had a strong sense of purpose. More than the older, self-consciously artistic participants in Fluxus, Friedman could disseminate ideas and objects without imposing his own artistic ego on them. Friedman's point of view inflected his dissemination of Fluxus, but it was not the fully developed view that his more sophisticated Fluxus colleagues might bring to the task.

Friedman's association with Fluxus marked a turning point for the movement. For the first time, the possibility existed that Fluxus as constructed by George Maciunas could extend beyond Maciunas's purview. For the first time, Maciunas explicitly entrusted the Fluxus "gospel" to someone besides himself. He could at last acknowledge that creative individuals could enter Fluxus without direct initial contact with Maciunas himself. He soon began to extend his trust to others, especially those overseas. He had worked earlier with European Fluxists who ran Fluxus stores (Fluxshops) or organized Fluxus performances (Fluxfests). The cooperation had always proved short-lived, Maciunas and his contacts soon losing patience with one another. This time, Maciunas allowed himself to trust his cohorts.

Maciunas divided the Fluxus "world" into four parts. He entrusted colleagues with leadership of each quadrant. Before Friedman went back to California in November 1966, Maciunas appointed him director of Fluxus West. Fluxus East became the responsibility of the Czech Milan Knižak. Fluxus North was the domain of Per Kirkeby in Copenhagen. Ben Vautier in Nice was entrusted with Fluxus South. Emanating by fiat from Maciunas himself, such subdivision of the Fluxworld seemed almost Caesarian. In fact, as the division entailed Maciunas's ceding control to such an extent, it more resembled the partition of Charlemagne's empire. But finally, given the proselytizing goal of this exercise in shared directorship, it most mirrored the early missions of the Christian church.

The pretension of this global dispersion hardly seems appropriate to a movement supposedly designed to deflate pretension. But Maciunas's Fluxus often celebrated pretense, for its own sake and for the sake of parody. Maciunas doted on elaborate, even ritualistic games of disguise. So prone to conflate the real world and playful fantasy that he endangered his physical and financial well-being, Maciunas took nothing more seriously than play. He accepted nothing more readily than he did the sham, the false front, the put-on. Even his autocratic approach to Fluxus operations, with its imperious pronouncements and excommunications, took on the quality of a pose. Nobody

considered Maciunas a "Fluxpope" except those who did not understand his role-playing and masquerading. He loved to play-act—and it was hardly surprising that, at the end of his life, he came out as a transvestite.

Duchamp's *infra-mince* aesthetic was, and remains, basic to the Fluxus style. Even so, it has not precluded a grandiose streak in Fluxus practice as well. If the neo-haiku theater of George Brecht, Yoko Ono, Bob Watts, and others is quintessential Fluxus, so is the vast, Wagnerian sense of time and imagery of Wolf Vostell and Joseph Beuys. Terseness and self-effacing modesty characterize the art of Robert Filliou, for example, or Takako Saito, while the Fluxart and Fluxthought of Jackson Mac Low and Henry Flynt entail verbose elaboration. Yet Mac Low was as modest, and Flynt is as awkward, even shy, as they were and are long-winded. Chest-thumping and protean self-aggrandizement often characterize Ben Vautier's diverse output. At the same time, Ben's self-importance is matched only by his terseness and self-mockery.

Key Fluxus artists such as Dick Higgins, Nam June Paik, and Ken Friedman seem to embody all these characteristics at once. They manifest oeuvres and artistic personalities that bristle almost deliberately with contradictions. It is ultimately uninteresting to think of Fluxus—or, to use René Block's distinguishing term, "Fluxism"[19]—as promulgating a stylistic ideology, of either *infra-mince* or its portentous opposite. It is better to think of Fluxus as a dialectical relationship between two apparent poles of behavior and form. It is an abiding dialectic, one that engulfs its own synthesis in an ongoing argument, a stubborn refusal to reach resolution.

FOUR

Fluxus's dialectical style and philosophy permitted the young Ken Friedman to devote his energies to an aesthetic and a program of artistic activity essentially designed by someone else, i.e., Maciunas. Through it, Friedman defined his own artistic identity and ultimately imbued that identity with Fluxus' distinctive style and flavor. That self-definition mirrors the traditional master-apprentice relationship in art, the apprentice developing the work of the master by developing his own style off the master's. It is an uncommon relationship in today's art world. Currently, artists influence subsequent generations through academic instruction or indirect example; even studio assistants go on to produce work and thought in sometimes direct contradiction to their erstwhile employers'.

The direct master-disciple relationship now pertains more in the context of religious instruction, especially in Asian practices. The strong master-pupil

structure of training in Zen Buddhism provides an appropriate model for the relationship of Maciunas and Friedman. Given Friedman's interest in religion and the influence of Zen on the Fluxus sensibility, it is especially apt. Maciunas, however, was hardly a Zen master (even though many consider his eccentricities as Zen-like parables). Neither was he a pedagogue. What Friedman found instructive, inspirational and cautionary about Maciunas was his direct example.

Dick Higgins's relationship with Friedman was more pedagogical, though hardly more Zen. Friedman received no formal philosophical education from Higgins. Like an apprentice in the studio of an artist, he gained hands-on experience. That experience was not in studio practice, but in the publication and organization of art. Higgins admired Friedman's tremendous energy and was pleased to have it at the service of the Press. It was the unfocused energy of a precocious youngster but Higgins, only a few years past his own youthful volatility, knew how to harness it judiciously. He did so to the Press's benefit and to Friedman's. "Of 14 or 15 ideas he'd come up with," Higgins recalls, 'one or two would be quite workable. Not a bad average."[20] Most of these ideas were technical and administrative. They carried over from Friedman's previous organizational experience in church activities and the Esperanto movement.[21]

Friedman reorganized the Something Else Press mailing lists, for example, instituting a coded system where none had existed. He also worked with Higgins creating strategies to gain the Press public attention, using cheerful, Fluxus-like devices such as buttons and balloons to make the points. In these and other aspects of planning for the Press, Friedman enhanced his administrative and publicity skills, refining the broad and inventive methods he learned from and developed with the older artist. Higgins was also an exacting yet adventurous designer who imparted his sense of elegant yet lively presentation to Friedman.[22] This sense carried over to editorial activity. Friedman watched the editorial process but did not edit at the Press. Rather, he observed Higgins, Emmett Williams and Barbara Moore at their editorial tasks and put his observations to use later in his own publishing and editing ventures.

In the few months Friedman stayed in New York, between August and October of 1966, he worked with several businesses associated with the burgeoning "counterculture." These included ESP Disk, the leading record company for radical jazz; Underground Uplift Unlimited, the largest producer of lapel buttons of the era; Something Else Press; and Fluxus. Friedman worked "in-house" with all but the last. There was no Fluxus "house" to work in. In the couple of years before Friedman came to New York, Maciunas had operated The Fluxshop in a ramshackle Canal Street walkup. The shop proved too

unprofitable and impractical even for Maciunas, who found it wiser and more convenient to sell by mail order. Even so, he still fancied the storefront shop as the appropriate outlet for Fluxus multiples. Friedman obliged him by opening his own Fluxobject emporium, the Avenue C Fluxroom. With the Fluxroom Friedman took Maciunas's standards of intimacy one step further toward counterculture informality. He didn't live behind the shop; he lived in the midst of it.

The first Fluxus activities had taken place on Canal Street, in Maciunas's outpost. He subsequently based his operation in the warehouse area just north of Canal, in what was then part of Little Italy—the area that, thanks in part to Maciunas himself, was to become SoHo.[23] Relocating to New York in the summer of 1966, Friedman established the Avenue C Fluxroom away from these Fluxus stomping grounds, choosing instead the heart of the East Village. (Some Fluxus artists lived close by.) Friedman recognized the area as a center for the non-Fluxus counterculture. He established his Fluxshop near the offices of the *East Village Other*, the Peace Eye Bookstore, and the headquarters of the Diggers, thus consciously positioning the Fluxus presence in a milieu beyond the art world and building links to the cultural tendencies to which he also felt kinship.

The Avenue C Fluxroom proved short-lived as Friedman's New York plans unraveled. He did mount a few shows, of both his own work and the work of other Fluxus artists.[24] These gained little attention from the counterculture, or even from Fluxus's own community. Indeed, Friedman felt a bit abandoned by his Fluxus colleagues. Dick Higgins, on whom Friedman relied for advice, left for an extended tour of Europe. Maciunas became more and more preoccupied with his SoHo housing ventures (and misadventures), neglecting Fluxobject production and distribution. By late October, Friedman had had enough of New York. He packed up and left. He did not return to the midwest. He went to California.

FIVE

Friedman moved first to San Diego, where his parents lived. The Friedman family home became the first location of Fluxus West. Fluxus thus established and maintained an outpost in San Diego, from November 1966 through late 1979. At the end of 1966 the restless Friedman relocated to San Francisco, where he opened a Fluxhouse on the west side of town. He moved it several times in the following years. The first relocations were to sites near the downtown area; the later ones brought the Fluxhouse across the bay, first to Marin County, and finally to Berkeley.[25]

Friedman didn't call his Fluxus headquarters "Fluxshops," but "Fluxhouses," reflecting the broad nature of the Fluxus activity presented and organized there. The entire operation—the Fluxhouses, the archive and Fluxhouse in San Diego, and the Fluxmobile, a Volkswagen bus that served as a traveling Fluxhouse, studio and exhibition space—Friedman placed under the Fluxus West rubric. He chose relatively advantageous locations for the Fluxhouses.

Even so, Friedman's Fluxus activity did not attract much public attention. If the roster of artists featured in the Fluxhouse exhibitions between 1967 and 1970 were to be presented now, it would draw capacity crowds. In the middle and late 1960s, however, the American art public did not respond to names like Milan Knižak, Ben Vautier, George Brecht, Robert Watts, Di[e]ter Rot[h], or Christo. This neglect was especially characteristic of the insular San Francisco art world.[26] With the sole (but notable) exception of *San Francisco Chronicle* art critic Tom Albright, hardly anyone in the art world noticed Fluxus. Even so, Friedman gave all of these artists one-person shows, and gave many others exposure as well—often their first on the West Coast, or for that matter anywhere. He exhibited Fluxus and Something Else Press productions as well. In true Fluxus style, Friedman even fabricated works according to instructions provided by the artists.

Friedman gained rather more attention for Fluxus by taking it on the road. During those years, he mounted exhibitions in various venues around California. The 1968 "Feats of Exhibitionism" was one of the most significant. It took place at San Francisco State University, where Friedman was a student and taught occasional courses. He also staged events by all the Fluxus artists in contexts as varied as dance festivals, rock concerts, public demonstrations and religious gatherings. He presented many of these situations and performance pieces as "Fluxus Instant Theater."[27] Friedman also organized concerts at the Fluxhouses themselves, but most Fluxus West events occurred elsewhere. Among the intermedia experimentalists whose work he exhibited and/or performed were Christo, Robert Bozzi, Philip Corner, Daniel Spoerri, Yoshimasa Wada, Giuseppe Chiari, Benjamin Patterson, Shigeko Kubota, Joe Jones, Ay-O, Allan Kaprow, Ray Johnson, the Japanese Hi Red Center group, and the Spanish-Italian performance team Zaj.

Friedman used five major sources for performance scores. The first source was Fluxboxes comprising scores and instructions rather than (or as well as) objects. The second was Maciunas's compilations of scores. The Great Bear Pamphlet series published by Something Else Press comprised the third. Fourth were the Something Else Press books of scores and instructions, including *The Four Suits*, Wolf Vostell's *Dé-collage Happenings*, Higgins's *Jefferson's Birthday/Postface* and *foew&ombwhnw*, *Games at the Cedilla* by

George Brecht and Robert Filliou, *Ruth Krauss's I Think There's a Little Ambiguity Over there Among the Bluebells*, and others. The artists themselves were the fifth source: Higgins, Knižak, Vautier, Bozzi, Albert M. Fine and others sent scores, along with other kinds of work, to Fluxus West.

While the artists in any given concert or festival varied, Friedman usually included work by 15 artists: Brecht, Filliou, Higgins, Knižak, Maciunas, Vautier, Eric Andersen, Bengt af Klintberg, Alison Knowles, Takehisa Kosugi, Yoko Ono, Nam June Paik, Mieko Shiomi, Robert Watts and Emmett Williams. Friedman staged his own events in the Fluxus West concerts as well. Local friends and colleagues also proposed and realized work in many programs. Only a few such friends considered themselves artists per se. Under Friedman's influence, however, they appreciated and could recapitulate the Zen-like wit and neo-Haiku brevity of the Fluxus performance style. The genial spirit of Fluxus attracted these friends, and they enjoyed the style of Fluxus West in particular. More than a few became part of the loose coterie of assistants and collaborators who worked with Friedman. Some took part in the Fluxus West activities that had particularly lasting and influential results, developing, establishing and maintaining an international network for art information.

From the first, Fluxus West collected and disseminated information on experimental art, intermedia and what Dick Higgins termed "the arts of the new mentality." In the Bay Area Friedman continued the work he had begun at Something Else Press in New York, bringing his skill for coordinating information and creating networks to Fluxus and its allies, and to the art world in general. He established contact with art organizations around the globe. He exchanged information, publications, art objects, and even exhibitions.

By the beginning of the 1970s several developments enhanced Friedman's networking efforts. One was the emergence of conceptual art. Respect for information was a hallmark of such art, as conceptual artists readily regarded information as a support structure and even art itself. The rise of alternate spaces was another key development. Such exhibition and performance venues were neither museums nor galleries; they were exhibition situations. Still, at first Friedman was nearly alone. His efforts at presenting experimental art and intermedia were extraordinary even within the unfettered, ad hoc, do-it-yourself context of California art. His effort to gather, organize and share information was practically unprecedented.

Individuals and organizations often entered the communications network through Friedman's projects. Many met one another through Fluxus West, later following and developing the formats he introduced. For instance, in the early 1970s Friedman devised the *International Contact List of the Arts* as an exhaustive art-world mailing list. It became the model and first source for the

Milan-based international magazine *Flash Art*, which grew it into the invaluable source book, the *Art Diary*.[28] Friedman's experience compiling and publishing information later earned him consulting positions with such art reference publications as *Who's Who in American Art* and the *American Art Directory*, as well as more broadly based publications such as *Who's Who in America*. Still later, he moved into editorial positions developing important publishing projects.

Friedman and Fluxus West did more than exchange information with organizations and individuals or teach them methods of working. They exchanged art works—through the mails. Throughout his San Francisco period, and well into the 1970s, Friedman made art objects expressly to send via post. He painted such objects, assembled them, and sometimes simply found them and declared them to be art, à la Duchamp.[29]

Friedman was not the first to work with mail art and mailed art. His Fluxus comrades preceded him, as, of course, did Ray Johnson. Even so, Friedman's work established a new level of adventurousness and intellectual sophistication in mail art. When he began engaging in it, mail art was still a young genre, and one of Friedman's goals was to see how far he could develop it as a medium for information and for art—literally, pushing the envelope. He exploited vagaries in post office regulations. He worked with self-published postage stamps. He worked especially with rubber stamps, using them to cancel his postage stamps and create formal designs. He even used them as a source of found poetry, much as had Kurt Schwitters.

Friedman inspired a broadening of mail art by bringing the public into his many projects. He also expanded the mail art network by sending correspondence to a vast number of recipients.[30] Like other Fluxus artists, Friedman sometimes mailed work to exhibitions he was unable to attend. More important, Friedman's three projects—"One-Year One-Man Show," "Work in Progress," and "Omaha Flow Systems"—became the models for most mail art exhibitions since the early 1970s.

Fluxus West's extensive use of the mails encouraged the widespread exchange of source material in new art. In this way Friedman galvanized a widespread and enduring network of artists. This network, now almost four decades old, still creates shows, invents genres and establishes contacts between artists in different societies. "Friedman's most important contribution to correspondence art," wrote Michael Crane in his authoritative book on the subject, "was to help take it out of the private realm, which in the 1960s included roughly 300 active participants with [F]luxus and the NYCS [New York Correspondence School], and make it public via the creation of models for individual mailings, exhibitions, and publications."[31]

The conflation of individual artistic activity and widespread public interaction through art emerged as the goal of Fluxus West during its San Francisco years. Friedman came to view traveling as the most effective way to work. In 1971, he decided to take the show on the road. From then on he relied more on his Fluxmobile and less on Fluxhouses for Fluxus West activities.

Friedman's last attempt to establish a Fluxhouse outside San Diego came late in 1970. He left the Bay Area altogether and moved to Newhall, just north of Los Angeles, at the invitation of Dick Higgins. Higgins had moved from New York to teach at the newly established California Institute of the Arts. He anticipated not having sufficient time or familiarity with local services to run the Something Else Press properly. Friedman, he reasoned, was familiar enough with the Press and its social and aesthetic context, and energetic enough to manage its day-to-day operations. After Higgins completed his move and began teaching in October of 1970, Friedman moved to Newhall and took on all routine Press work except editorial and distribution. Higgins continued as editor of the Press and put a small cooperative back east in charge of distribution.

Friedman continued Fluxus West activity in Newhall, but the Press left him scant time to mount shows. Plans for exhibits and performances at the Newhall Fluxhouse amounted to little.[32] For his part, Higgins soon lost faith in the California Institute of the Arts. The school, originally heralded as an intermedia Bauhaus, did not live up to the ideals that had lured Higgins, Alison Knowles, Nam June Paik and other Fluxists to southern California. By spring of 1971, Higgins decided to return east. He urged Friedman not to come with him (he was moving to Vermont, not to New York City), but suggested he return to San Francisco State University to complete his degrees. Friedman did so, earning both his Bachelor's and his Master's degrees at San Francisco State University in August of that year. Back in San Francisco, however, he did not establish a new Fluxhouse. He began to use the Fluxmobile for almost all Fluxus West activities—performances, exhibitions, and even publishing.

SIX

Once finished with his studies at San Francisco State, Friedman began to travel back and forth across North America, usually driving the Fluxmobile. He lectured and mounted exhibitions at schools and museums. He consulted to exhibition spaces and libraries. He even created archives, publications and galleries. In 1972, for example, Friedman spent the summer in western Massachusetts helping Jean Brown start her archive on Fluxus and intermedia. The

Jean Brown Archive of Fluxus and the Avant-garde was a natural extension of the collection of Dada and Surrealism that Brown had assembled with her late husband, Leonard. Friedman advised Brown in the development of her Fluxus material as a distinct project. Brown housed it, together with her Dada and Surrealism archive, a collection of modern and contemporary art, and an impressive collection of Shaker furniture. From the start, the Jean Brown Archive had a clear identity. (In 1985, Brown sold her archives to the Getty Institute in Los Angeles.)

Both archives attracted artists and scholars to Brown's converted Shaker Seed House in the Berkshire Hills. At first, only artists came to see Brown's Fluxus material, the first major Fluxus collection in America. By the end of the '70s, however, curators and academics were coming to study both archives. Brown and Friedman had foreseen this. As scholarly visitors began to outnumber artists, the archive grew to the point that it was necessary to reorganize it, and in 1975 Brown commissioned George Maciunas to design and fabricate storage and display formats for her Fluxus material.[33]

Even earlier, in 1970, Friedman's work had resulted in a major traveling exhibition in Great Britain, the *Fluxshoe*. Friedman and Mike Weaver, director of the American Art Documentation Centre at England's Exeter University, conceived *Fluxshoe* (a trope on 'Flux-show') as a broad anthology of Fluxism. David Mayor, editor of the Beau Geste Press and its lively periodical *Schmuck*, organized the exhibition and festivals together with Mexican intermedialist Felipe Ehrenberg (then based in Britain). The year-long Fluxshoe exhibition toured Britain under the aegis of Fluxus West in England, also called FluxENGLANDwest. Festivals and performances by English artists and international visitors toured with the exhibition.[34]

While Friedman identified certain longtime participants as the core of Fluxus, he believed a broad sensibility defined the movement. He encouraged Mayor to invite a wide range of artists who practiced Fluxus-related art all over the world, including many whom Friedman himself had originally prompted to move in that direction. "That only some people and not others have associated with Fluxus," observes Mayor in the Fluxshoe catalogue, "is really a matter of chance. Individuals in many different countries have engaged in like activities, without even being aware of their similarity with fluxlike works, or even of Fluxus itself."[35] Fluxshoe presented the work of core Fluxus artists together with artists whose work extended and reinterpreted Fluxism. These extensions moved into the intermedia fields common in the 1970s. Several new modes of artwork were especially visible, including conceptual art, performance art, multiples, book art, mail art, body art and (rubber) stamp art.[36]

Friedman never organized a traveling Fluxus anthology quite like this in the States. Even so, in his travels across the North American continent Friedman was able to organize and stimulate many exhibits, drawing on the work of other artists as well as his own. "Omaha Flow Systems" was Friedman's most ambitious project in the field of communications art. Social anthropologist Marilyn Ravicz describes it as "a gigantic undertaking developed over a period of several years," noting that over 5,000 artists around the world participated in the project. They worked with the Flow Team Project staff, which received, logged and installed the art works into Omaha's Joslyn Art Museum. The museum then offered the objects to the public, free of charge. Friedman invited anyone who wanted a work to exchange it for a piece of his own and to share impressions of the work with the artist. The communities of communication and exchange that this project created were international in scope.[37]

Throughout the 1970s Friedman realized one-person shows in alternative spaces and museums, large and small, around the world. He also enjoyed occasional exposure in commercial galleries. He continued to send work overseas for inclusion in group shows and even enjoyed important solo exhibits in foreign venues, though he did not travel outside North America until 1986.[38] Instead, Friedman traveled to places like Cheney, Washington; and Brookings, South Dakota; Canyon, Texas; and Reno, Nevada; Dayton, Ohio; and Johnson City, Tennessee; Montreal, Quebec; and Calgary, Alberta. He flourished in these outposts, working tirelessly to conceive and construct installational and situational projects. Concerts of Friedman's own works, and pieces by other Fluxus artists, often capped his workshops in performance. In the early 1970s, when he began conducting such workshops, very few schools offered performance art as part of their normal curriculum. His travels seeded intermedia and performance art ideas in colleges and art centers across the United States and Canada.

Friedman frequently served as a visiting artist or professor, engaging students and faculty—many outside the art departments—in the process of conception and construction and presenting his own work as an interaction between himself and his audience. Some in that audience became Friedman's students and all became his colleagues, becoming artists themselves as he invited them inside the charmed circle of art. During these years, Friedman was, in David Antin's words, the "Johnny Appleseed of contemporary art." One of the basic tenets of Fluxus is Duchamp's dictum that "The viewer completes the work of art." Friedman made the theory a working reality, engaging the viewer in the physical, even conceptual completion of his and others' artwork.

Clearly, Friedman's projects were manifold and ambitious. When he had the opportunity to build a project, he took it. He always made as grand a presentation, and occasion, as he could. The structures he built took on mythic resonance and architectural form while revealing their knockabout, castaway origins. Friedman the theologist, the architect and the *bricoleur* was always as evident as Friedman the sociologist and poet. Sometimes Friedman would involve sizable working crews on large projects. *The Acropolis of Tulsa* of 1978 comprised twenty-six buildings and temples based on Greek forms, built on several scales, from table-size to room-size. With sculptor Chuck Tomlins as project director, Friedman realized the *Acropolis* at the University of Tulsa, installing it at the Philbrook Art Center. Drawings and philosophical texts covered the white temples and buildings. Many bore inscriptions layered with witty and informative puns (e.g. "Who's minding the stoa?"). Other site-specific projects included the spindly structures made for the *Idaho Number One* project at the Boise, Idaho, Gallery of Art (1975) and *The Twelve Coffins of Time* (1978) realized at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio.

SEVEN

Friedman practiced viewer-based Fluxism as well as preaching it. In the ten years beginning in 1973, roughly a quarter of Friedman's one-man shows consisted entirely of typed scores to his events. In true Fluxus spirit and style, Friedman presented the scores without adornment, one score per sheet, hanging them informally on the wall to indicate their availability. Performances of events often accompanied these shows, as well as his others. Like other Fluxists, Friedman felt that simply reading a score and imagining its realization could constitute a performance of the score as valid as other realizations without precluding them.

The format of event scores provided Friedman a handy, informal and accessible presentation of his work, available to venues that could not bring in more elaborate works or the artist himself. The format exemplifies the Fluxus ethos: ready to ship, ready to show, ready to perform. While Maciunas, Higgins, Yoko Ono, George Brecht, Alison Knowles and others pioneered the event format and the publication of scores in boxes and books, Friedman was the first Fluxus artist to create a standard exhibition of his scores. Beginning in the 1980s Friedman has organized, refined, and published collections of his once haphazardly assembled Events. The Events have also been published in German, Swedish, French, Italian, Spanish, Hungarian, Czech, Polish and Serbo-Croatian, among other languages. He sometimes illuminates pages of the Events with his inimitable, suitably witty drawings, providing a visual

hook to those who resist the idea of simply reading one's way through an exhibit.

The Events themselves fall squarely within the practice and sensibility associated with Fluxus since its inception, and even before.[39] Sometimes Friedman's Events propose situations of extreme duration. Other of the scores are so open-ended that they become timeless, but he still writes them as brief, intimate fragments. Friedman orients his events to conceptual gesture rather than staged spectacle, although neither their wording nor their spirit precludes live (or other) presentation. Notated with brief, open-ended verbal instructions, the Events suggest an improvisational, even impromptu theater. The format bespeaks the do-it-yourself tradition of Fluxus. Friedman recalls with amusement watching visitors to his Events exhibition create spontaneous realizations of the instructions as they coursed through the show. He also has fond memories of leading pick-up groups of artists and friends into Events exhibitions to do spur-of-the-moment realizations.

Maciunas called this kind of work "neo-Haiku theater," but this suggests perhaps too strongly the tradition of the stage. The simple, open-ended term "proposal piece" might be more appropriate. The practitioners of the form created a range of potential situations as broad as the range of traditional arts—or, even broader, as life itself. They delineated their proposals with words, the "material" Henry Flynt cited as the necessary medium of concept art.[40]

If the proposal piece transcends traditional artistic categories, it is still possible to analyze the oeuvre of any single artist through taxonomy. An individual sensibility, after all, has a shape as definite as it is unique. Breaking the oeuvre down sectionally can yield a kind of spectroscopic analysis. The proposal pieces of George Brecht and Robert Watts, for example, address distinctly musical formats, as in Brecht's *String Quartet*, *Clarinet Concerto*, etc.,[41] or Watts's *FH Trace.*[42] Dick Higgins's scores suggest musical, theatrical or poetic contexts.[43] Robert Filliou's works seem more to emerge from poetry.[44] One can thus examine and distinguish the proposal pieces of all the Fluxus artists. Brecht, Ono and La Monte Young were probably the first to use the proposal piece as a notational mode, Ono in the writings that she collected in *Grapefruit*, Brecht and Young in their early concert notations.[45] Interestingly, one finds the least formal designation given or implied in the work of the women who have worked in this area. Alison Knowles,[46] Mieko Shiomi, Takako Saito, Bici Forbes,[47] and most importantly, Yoko Ono were all pioneers of the medium. One could argue that women working with proposal pieces have approached them with less concern for traditional formats than have men. Even so, regardless of gender, the creators of proposal pieces have been aware of the basic intermedial nature of the mode.

The proposal format renders brief propositions in language, the most common and sometimes the least precise form of human communication. Proposal pieces offer the potential for a presentation unbound by conventions—even, as it turns out, typographical conventions. Human expression, emerging from individual complexities, finds itself least bound by traditional practice or traditional ideas in Fluxus proposal pieces. The Fluxus artists share a common sensibility in their performed work and especially in their written pieces. For this reason, proposal pieces do not guarantee complete freedom from formal or ideological convention. Even so, these works loosen the tethers that normally rein in both proposer and performer. Some psychologists and therapists have found the proposal piece format, and even specific Fluxus pieces, useful in their practice.

The humanistic basis of the proposal piece as a genre is more apparent in the work of some artists than in others'. It is safe to say that—with the possible exception of Allan Kaprow—no intermedia artist has sought to make that basis more clearly manifest than has Friedman. Friedman's proposals often engage individuals in direct relationship with other individuals.[48] Those of his events that engage individuals with objects lead to contemplative unity with the world rather than graceful formal gesture. Indeed, Friedman's proposals for one person often hint at a wistful loneliness, even when the proposals suggest comic scenarios.

Friedman's Events fall into seven approximately distinct categories. There are two kinds of ritual-like acts: ongoing acts that continue over long periods of time and singular acts carried out in a specific period. The ongoing pieces include the almost perpetual *Green Street* (1959)[49] and the works from 1971 (e.g., *Loss*, *10,000*) in which performers divest themselves, accidentally or deliberately, of personal property.[50] The singular works, most characteristic of the proposal piece as a medium, include *Scrub Piece* (1956), the earliest of Friedman's *Events,*[51] and other pieces as diverse as the ritualistic *Whoop Event* (1964–67),[52] the obviously incidental *Homage to Mike McKinlay* (1968),[53] the prankish *Cage Event* (1967),[54] or the meta-proposal, *First Cause* (1971).[55]

One might consider the next classification a sub-category of the last. Friedman's title for an event in another category, *Zen Vaudeville*, is a good label for this type of piece. In these works Friedman indulges in the same kind of gags, visual and functional puns cutting across the modalities of everyday life that Maciunas insisted were an integral part of Fluxus. Friedman ranges in his Zen Vaudeville pieces between the corniness of *Transportation and You* (1965),[56] the orchestrated drollery of *Cheers* (1965),[57] certain of the *Restaurant Events* (1964–67),[58] and the conceptual attenuation of *Anniversary* (1965–66).[59] The piece *Zen Vaudeville* itself (1966),[60] droll as it is, suggests more a straight

staged presentation. Like many of Friedman's events, and like many pieces by other Fluxus artists, it functions as a concept as well as a proposal for action. Other of Friedman's concept stage works include those in the *Fruit Cycle* (1963–68)[61] and the variations on George Brecht's *String Quartet* (1967), including *Solos* and *Riff*.[62]

Another denomination to Friedman's events that overlaps the read (literature-oriented) and the performed (theater- and music-oriented) is his poetry-in-performance. These works include the slogans such as those proposed in *Summa Theologica* (1964–66),[63] *Battle Cry* (1964),[64] *Incognito, Ergo Sum* (1966),[65] and other existential interventions such as *Sudden Harmony Dance Tune* (1965)[66] or the portentous *Zen Basketball* (1965–67).[67] There are also sound-poem proposals such as *Ken is Ben* (1967),[68] *Ode to Politicians* (1967),[69] *Hymn* (1967),[70] and the subsequent *Hymn of Her* (1967).[71] The last category also overlaps the performance-poem mode, and other categories as well. The 'object poems' propose graphic objects and situations. These include the *Fluxus Invisible Theater* sign and construction (1966),[72] the *Fol de Nuit* telegrams (1967),[73] and the card pieces (1957–1973) such as *Untitled Trace*, *One/Two*, *Citizen's Card*, *Contest*, etc.[74]

George Maciunas planned to produce many of Friedman's scores as Fluxboxes. Typically, he planned and announced more of Friedman's pieces than he published, but managed to print at least certain works. In their self-referentiality these cards constitute a sub-class within the object-poem category. Some of these poems, moreover, when realized in the world at large, also constitute what Friedman has described as "theater of the object" in essays discussing Fluxus performance.[75]

EIGHT

Friedman's Fluxus objects, especially the Fluxboxes he designed for fabrication by Maciunas (and later by other publishers of multiples, such as Wolfgang Feelisch and Armin Hundertmark), facilitate a "theater of the object." This "theater" is far removed from traditional proscenium drama. It can be realized and experienced under the most private and intimate conditions, as well as in public performance.

In public Fluxus concerts, Maciunas and his cohorts took every opportunity to mock the conventions of normal concert presentation by aping and exaggerating the formality associated with instrumental and vocal recitals, orchestral concerts, and even operas. Conversely, the Fluxbox format testifies to the profound dramatic possibilities of the parlor game. The personal encounter was as important to Fluxus as the public manifestation. Indeed, some

Fluxboxes functioned as props or scores for public presentation. Most provoked private Zen-like moments. People encountered them variously—found them, read them, played with them. Paik, Maciunas, Friedman and others sent them as surprises in the mail or left them on doorsteps. Fluxus didn't simply wait for the world to beat a path to its door; it reached out to individuals in their own private spaces, stimulating immediate unshared and unsharable cognizances.

Friedman's Fluxboxes, in particular, can be examined through his rubric, "theater of the object."[76] All of Friedman's boxes engage the viewer in a process. Many propose or define a specific action or sequence of actions for the beholder to undertake. Others function as relics from an action or for one, making the beholder a witness by inference. *Open and Shut Case*, for example, bears a facsimile of a legal document as its label and contains only a card printed with the instruction "SHUT QUICK" in urgent capital letters. Fingernail and toenail parings fill some versions of the *Fluxclippings* box, while clippings from articles and printed pages fill others.

Mandatory Happening proposes a self-reflexive event realized by the reader. The box contains a card reading, "You will, having looked at this page, either decide to read it or you will not. Having made your decision, the happening is now over." The very act of opening the box determines the outcome of the event. In effect, the "happening" is realized *a priori*. *Flux Corsage* contains seeds (oat seeds in some versions, sunflower in others), implying that someone must plant and grow his or her own corsage. Of course, one could eat the seeds, or wear them, or simply look at them and contemplate their corsage potential. (Another version of the box, closer to Friedman's 1966 prototype, contains labels reading *Orchid* or *Carnation*, together with a generous supply of pins.)

The performance parameters of *Flux Corsage* are as open-ended as a George Brecht card event. They are as open-ended as the parameters of *Mandatory Happening* and *Open and Shut Case* are closed. *Flux Clippings*, by contrast, does not suggest a use for the parings. It merely presents the traces of the activity that produced them. In this respect, Friedman, like Geoffrey Hendricks and several other fellow Fluxists, uses the Fluxbox format—a format designed to provoke playful parody and visual pun—in a reliquary fashion. The *Clippings* box contains the remnants of activity, remnants much like the objects Joseph Beuys created for and during his *Aktionen* of the 1960s. The difference is in manner and in meaning. Beuys's relics are as elaborate in their mode of address as Friedman's are simple. And while Beuys conjures an ever-expanding universe of personal and spiritual metaphors, Friedman weaves a counter-magic of demystification—a demonstration of the marvelous in the mundane.

Friedman's unique Fluxus objects also summon the marvelous from the mundane in a more obvious way. In these assemblages the artist recycles and transforms cast-off clothing and belongings that he and his friends once owned. Among the re-cycled substances is food, as seen in the 1967 *Fluxfeast*. About this boxed compendium of unappetizing, off-brand canned and jarred goods Friedman writes, "George Maciunas made the best Flux feast. I made the worst . . . totally disposable . . . only the cat will eat this."[77]

Homages to Friedman's Fluxus colleagues abound in his Fluxobjects, along with allusions to world history and the historical figures and events that fascinate him. *The Great Tie-Cuttings of History* of 1966, for example, displays six lacerated neckties that commemorate such events as the Diet of Worms, the Hanging of Richard Rumbold, the Death of Abd-el-Raman, the Battle of Stamford Bridge and the Assassination of Baron Lugorsky, as well as the better-known Battle of Hastings. The tie-cutting image, however, refers to Nam June Paik's first (and thus "historic") encounter with John Cage, during which, in the course of his performance, Paik jumped off the stage, doused the older composer with shampoo, and snipped off his tie. Even more amusingly transformative in their second-hand aesthetic are Friedman's Fluxclothing, pastiched garments such as shirts with socks sewn to them (the 1968 *Choreographer's Shirt* and *Dancer's Shirt*, dedicated to his parents), felt suits (the *Banker's Filzanzug*, a 1970–71 homage to Beuys), and even a jelaba—the long, loose shirt worn in Arab countries—with a necktie sewn on it, from 1965.

Friedman was creating objects before he fell in with Fluxus. He generates such items prolifically. Most are one-of-a-kind devices, Duchampian "readymades" subject to minimal manipulation. The subtle alterations and contextual ruptures Friedman visits upon his readymade items do not so much emphasize formal transformation as they play with expectations and evince ritual activity. These works, many of which Friedman mailed to friends, colleagues, and acquaintances over the years, do not merely comprise a mélange of inanimate things. They constitute a process of communication involving exploration, wit and respect, for the objects themselves and for their recipients. In itself, one isolated sock among the many mailed by Friedman and Fletcher Copp in their long-running *Sock of the Month Club* project had little artistic import. Rather, the sock was a remnant, a testimony to an ongoing process. Friedman and Copp hailed the recipient with this unexpected and unlikely arrival in the post. The two artists thus informed the recipient that he or she is a valued part of a network.

We see another frequent theme in the *Sock of the Month Club* mailings: trading, giving away, abandoning and surrendering personal effects to fate. Friedman had assembled many of these objects over a period of years, only

to disperse them as homages to their recipients. Magnanimity, and its mirror image of graceful reception, charge the dynamic of Friedman's work.

Omaha Flow Systems exemplifies Friedman's enactment of giving and receiving on a grand scale. In this vast exchange project, the give and take is of possibly revelatory objects and decidedly illuminating ideas. Here, Friedman orchestrated giving away or abandoning possessions, an expansive gesture echoed in many of his more simply notated works. *10,000*, for instance, consists of the following instruction: "Mail to friends, people chosen by random processes, or other groupings of individuals, 10,000 objects, papers, events, etc., over the span of a pre-determined time."[78] *Loss*, on the other hand, proposes that the performer "Lose tools and useful objects."[79]

NINE

Friedman wrote both *10,000* and *Loss* in 1971, at a time of great change in his life. This was the moment at which he shifted his mode of presentation from the fixed Fluxhouse centers to minstrel-like Fluxmobile travel around the country—and the moment at which he recognized himself not only as a collector but as a disseminator of objects—artworks, books, documents—to recipients of significance.

Life transformations and mode shifts often provide Friedman with occasions for gift-giving. Both his move to New York in 1979 and his move to Europe eight years later prompted such acts. Such giving seems logical especially in light of the burden moving his once-vast archive, library and collections would have constituted. But even when not in transition, Friedman gives away and passes on possessions, no matter how valued. His strong collecting drive is matched by an equally strong urge to keep on the move. Giving what he values—including the collections and archives he himself initiated—to friends and to institutions honors the value of the things Friedman had deemed worth acquiring. Gradually refining his twinned tendency to collect and to give away, Friedman has evolved the tendency into a systematic, carefully planned pattern. He now designs his gifts to enhance museums and archives, especially with material related to Fluxus. In this way, he has helped to build a framework for public and scholarly interest in Fluxus and the Fluxist idea.

From the very beginning of Fluxus West, Friedman placed important selections of Fluxus material, Something Else Press books and Fluxus West publications in key libraries and archives. He was also an active associate and colleague for legendary avant-garde archivist/collector Hanns Sohm, collecting Fluxus material, underground press publications, small press books,

counterculture materials and a great deal more for Sohm's legendary archive in Markgröningen, Germany. Friedman also honored Sohm's requests for his own work and documentation, usually giving Sohm multiple copies of his editions and prints so that they could be traded for other material that might benefit Archiv Sohm. (Dr. Sohm's archive is now a prominent part of the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.) Since the 1970s Friedman has also donated generously to several collections he helped to initiate and organize, such as the Jean Brown Archive.

By time Friedman moved to New York the Fluxus West collections had become so large and his travels so extensive that it was no longer possible for people to visit him and work directly with the holdings. He decided that the collections would serve their intended audience better placed in professional hands. By finding institutional homes for this material, he intended for it once again to become readily available to scholars, artists, curators and the public. By that time, Friedman had already sold and then donated archival material to the University of California at San Diego and the La Jolla (now San Diego) Museum of Contemporary Art; given material to the Archives of American Art and to Vancouver's Image Bank; and contributed several dozen crates of work and documentation to the Fluxshoe collection that came to form the core of the Fluxus holdings of the Tate Gallery in London.

Before moving to New York, Friedman donated art objects and publications once part of the Fluxus West collection to the George Maciunas Memorial Collection at Dartmouth College's Hood Museum of Art and to the Fluxus West Collection at the University of Iowa's Alternative Traditions in Contemporary Art collection. In New York, he made gifts to the library of the Whitney Museum of American Art, to the Portland (Maine) College of Art library, and to the Franklin Furnace Archive of Artists' Books (which itself was later acquired by the Museum of Modern Art). Friedman has also contributed extensively to the Fluxus collections at the Henie-Onstad Museum at Høvikodden, near Oslo, Norway. Together with Henie-Onstad Museum Director Per Hovdenakk, Friedman initiated an informal consortium of museums interested in Fluxus. The consortium includes several of the museums already active in Fluxus and brought in several new museums, such as Kjarvalstadir in Reykjavik, Iceland, and the Pori Art Museum in Pori, Finland. Having helped develop the Fluxus collections and archives at these institutions, Friedman continues to maintain close advisory relationships with all of them. He has also helped to arrange many other gifts for these organizations, gifts of art and funding from collectors, artists, and private foundations.

After completing his doctorate in 1976, Friedman was involved professionally in other scholarly projects, especially during his first several years in

New York. His most far-reaching innovation in this realm determined a new manner of publishing doctoral dissertations in professionally organized series. This project became the hugely successful UMI Research Press, a division of University Microfilms International. Friedman conceived of a radically new production design that enhanced UMI's already established Xerographic facsimile printing of doctoral dissertations on demand with cost- and distribution-effective series planning and short-run book printing.[80] His concept provided the working model for most UMI Research Press series, but it was some time before the publisher began projects in the arts. Friedman himself developed UMI's first series in the arts and humanities, selecting distinguished editors and organizing books in several fields. He appointed a widely recognized scholar-editor in each area, serving himself as advisory editor for the titles. These included books on Dada and the avant-garde edited by Stephen Foster; books on video, film and photography edited by Diane Kirkpatrick; and books on art criticism and art theory edited by Donald Kuspit.

During his years in New York, Friedman also developed several magazines on visual art, serving as editor from his New York office while the journals themselves were published elsewhere. The *National Arts Guide* was the brainchild of Chicago art collector and museum president Helyn Goldenberg, who had originally conceived it as a computer-compiled listing of exhibitions around the country. With his broad experience in organizing art information, Friedman helped to improve the compilation and presentation of *Arts Guide* information and developed the editorial section of the magazine into a source of substantial commentary. Friedman served as Executive Editor of *National Arts Guide* from 1979 to 1981. As it turned out, compiling and publishing comprehensive listings on a bimonthly basis was financially unsustainable. Many people bought one issue and used it as a directory for a full year. *Art in America* bought the listings and directory format from Goldenberg for the annual directory they now publish. Friedman took the writers he had developed for the *National Arts Guide* to his next project.

Art Express began as a visual arts magazine conceived by Bruce Helander, an artist and former administrator at the Rhode Island School of Design. Helander initially attempted to raise funds for the magazine based on his contacts and experience in Providence, but was unable to attract sufficient funding. Potential investors felt that the magazine lacked a solid editorial concept, and Helander was unable to attract staff or writers with national standing. He contacted Friedman in 1979, and late that year asked him to join the venture as Editor-in-Chief. Friedman redesigned and renamed the periodical, and created a plan that enabled Helander to raise the funds necessary to launch *Art Express*.[81]

Setting up the *Art Express* editorial office in his lower Manhattan loft, Friedman edited the pilot issue and prepared the first two issues of the magazine with his staff.[82] These first issues followed the precepts Friedman had developed in his years as a Flux-nomad roaming the United States. He had a broad knowledge of and contact with artists and writers across the country. The feature section and the review section of *Art Express* took advantage of this nationwide talent pool. The magazine covered significant art and artists without regard to their location—an editorial policy far different than the New York-based purview maintained by most American art magazines. Before Friedman's national vision, few of the non-New York artists *Art Express* featured were given any exposure outside their regions. Friedman also developed and exposed writers who had lacked opportunities to publish. *Art Express*—and for that matter *National Arts Guide*—heralded, and helped to create, the wider national vision now seen in American art magazines. A remarkable percentage of Friedman's editors and writers now work at major national and international art magazines, hold posts as critics in regional newspapers, or work as museum and gallery professionals.

True to his principles, and keen economic sense, Friedman hired his staff with a profit-sharing plan and productivity-based pay scale. He was the first national magazine editor to meet the standards set by the American Art Critics' Association for a minimum writer's fee. He based his decision not just on the eminent justice of the idea, but on the fact that it tied writers to high standards of performance just as it tied the magazine to a minimum wage.

Having published the successful pilot and first issues of *Art Express*, Helander broke the agreements on contract terms and profit-sharing. Friedman moved to defend his employees. In reaction, Helander forced Friedman out of his post as editor. Over one hundred editors and writers, along with the entire New York office staff, resigned in protest. Helander attempted to produce the magazine in Providence, going back to the original business plan. The venture went bankrupt after four more issues.

The *Art Express* bankruptcy cost Friedman his entire investment in the magazine, a profound financial—not to mention emotional—blow. Even so, he wasted no time. He began publishing a newsletter.

Friedman had earned his Ph.D. in human behavior; the sociology of art was his dissertation topic. Especially during his Fluxmobile years, he'd had increasing experience with the business side of collecting and disseminating information. By the end of the '70s this experience and training had sparked Friedman's curiosity about the business of art, especially the business of contemporary art. His interest was especially piqued by developments in the art world in the early 1980s, developments that troubled him. He was deeply concerned by the blatant, wholesale manipulation of the art market by alternately

colluding and competing dealers. He also found frustrating the naiveté most art-world participants displayed with regard to these matters—indeed, with regard to politics and economics overall, even when directly affected by them.

Friedman launched *The Art Economist* in 1982 as a small-circulation newsletter aimed at professionals. Even so, he and his staff addressed broad issues of investments, auction prices, attitudes and ethics. As a result, *The Art Economist* quickly became an art-world must-read. Subscribers copied issues and passed them on to friends. Dealers and museums began to call on Friedman for economic advice. He served as a consultant and expert witness in legal cases related to the economics of art. Major news media followed up on stories that first appeared in *The Art Economist*.

Of course, *The Art Economist* also followed financial trends in the art market. In that, it loosely paralleled *Art Aktuell,* a newsletter published from Cologne by Dr. Willi Bongard, the distinguished German economist. In part inspired by *Art Aktuell,* Friedman's own newsletter offered frequent, and pointed, prognoses concerning the art market.[83] But his goal was not to provide the art-world equivalent of stock prices or bear-and-bull predictions; it was to provide analysis with a sociological and economic grounding. Friedman had little interest in the short-sighted predictions that make most newsletters simplistic projections in imaginary accounting. Even so, he also provided prices and predictions. Bongard, the world's leading art-market expert until his untimely death in 1985, called Friedman the "Dow-Jones of the art world." In his commentary Friedman sometimes went beyond what might normally be perceived as economic matters.[84] Taking a broad view of human behavior, he saw social issues as inseparable from artistic and economic ones. This universalist, multi-disciplinary approach characterized the conference on the Economics of Art organized by Friedman and Prof. Oscar Ornati at the New York University Graduate School of Business Administration in the spring of 1985.

The conference was a success. It was also Friedman's last public foray into economic analysis of the art world; and *The Art Economist* was his last involvement with the creation of publications. His publishing ventures and his focus on economic and sociological matters fit his view of Fluxus as a mechanism for social and artistic change. Still, Friedman still needed to make objects and images—objects and images in which he could invest his observations on money and morality with a sense of magic and mythology.[85]

TEN

Throughout his involvement with Fluxus, Ken Friedman continually demonstrated respect and admiration for his Flux-colleagues. Even so, not all the

artists associated with Fluxus share Friedman's view of Fluxus, of art, or of life. The personality clashes which have always characterized the Fluxus group—an ever-looser confederation of notoriously testy, mercurial and territorial characters—have not interested Friedman; but from time to time his particularly blunt interpretation of the Fluxus ethos has made him a center of controversy within Fluxus. This is a position that Beuys, Higgins and Maciunas each occupied at different times. Further, the geographical remoteness Friedman has maintained for much of his career has also distorted his Flux-colleagues' understanding of his work. Some European Fluxus artists even believed for a while that Friedman was simply an apocryphal creation of Maciunas. (Of course, they suspected much the same thing about California.)

It has been Friedman's artistic rather than personal style that has most puzzled some fellow Fluxus participants. These Fluxus artists, along with various observers, view the Fluxus style as highly refined and entirely based on the Zen-influenced, monogestural "haiku theater" typical of La Monte Young, Yoko Ono, and George Brecht, among others. This aesthetic also manifests in the process-oriented poetry and music of Jackson Mac Low and Emmett Williams. While Friedman's Events share this aesthetic, his thinking is less hermetic and more externally oriented, as well as elaborate, in its address to the realm of the social. As a result, not all Friedman's projects correspond to everyone's idea of Fluxus. To some, the mythos-ridden *Aktionen* of Joseph Beuys, the symbol-laden social commentary of Wolf Vostell's happenings, the messily sensual performances and films of Carolee Schneemann, and Nam June Paik's technologically sophisticated broadcasts and installations seem equally remote. But, then, the range of Dick Higgins's oeuvre is similarly vast. Higgins's work embraces both the *infra-mince* aesthetic of neo-Haiku theater and projects as extravagant as anything conceived by Beuys, Vostell, or Friedman. As with Beuys and Vostell, many Fluxus participants and observers insist that Higgins did work that "is Fluxus" and work that "is not Fluxus." A purely formal reading of that distinction would then characterize Friedman's events as Fluxus and his other works as not Fluxus. To Friedman's mind, at least until recently, it was all Fluxus.

Long mystified by the exclusionary distance the *infra-mince* Fluxists sometimes maintained from him, Friedman has come to understand its source.[86] With that understanding, he can shrug off the criticism and get on with the work he wants to do. Every so often Friedman writes about Fluxus history or aesthetics, or even ethics. Each time, he takes the opportunity to refine his viewpoint, and each time expresses that viewpoint with greater clarity.[87] "Whatever one can say about Fluxus will have usually been true at one time or another," he wrote in the late 1970s, "or if it has not yet been true, will undoubtedly be true at some time in the future. Equally, whatever one can say

about Fluxus will at one time or another be false. To describe Fluxus briefly requires an overarching phenomenological discourse rather than a series of descriptions: to describe Fluxus is a task of describing hundreds of discrete yet intersecting phenomena."[88]

Such openness does not so much describe Friedman's activity in Fluxus as it describes his willingness to understand Fluxus as a realm of possibility. He does not view Fluxus in a programmatic way. There is no one Fluxus. There may be "their" Fluxus and "our" Fluxus, but it is all Fluxus, and all potentially good—or bad—Fluxus.

By early 1988 Friedman felt himself fairly well removed from the specifics of the Fluxus "movement" and closer to the spirit of Fluxism. After Maciunas's death, Friedman remained the one Fluxus activist working for Fluxus itself. A decade later—having completed the outpouring of gifts and donations that distributed artwork, books and archival materials from the Fluxus years around the globe—he finds himself closer to Dick Higgins in the way he works, as a catalyst, a guide, a facilitator. The overall strategy he has pursued for his entire artistic career, of developing a loose consortium of museums working to research, exhibit, and publish Fluxus material, is reaching fruition.

Pursuing that strategy, Friedman spent over 20 years as a Fluxus missionary, traveling throughout North America and maintaining a global network of communication. His friends repeatedly warned him his wandering undercut his professional career. He replied firmly that an art career is most substantive when it emerges from service and public dialogue in the world of human affairs. As a result, until the recent resurgence of general interest in the Fluxus movement and its participants, Friedman and his work were seen infrequently in magazines and exhibitions tied closely to the international art market. The peripatetic life Friedman led in North America, even after he settled in New York, had a contradictory effect on his prominence in contemporary art discourse. His travels broadened his communication and his influence but sometimes made him maddeningly difficult to locate. Invitations to participate in important exhibits and publications often failed to reach him on time, if at all. Friedman thus seems to have been far more underground a figure than he actually is. In fact, he is no more removed or unapproachable than his Fluxus colleagues, and is arguably less diffident than most of them. Like them, he simply happens to have followed a course often well off the beaten path.

Fluxus artists, Friedman not least, do not position themselves as traveling salesmen treading the well-worn highways of contemporary art. Rather, they view their role as that of builders engaged in social creativity, planning social architecture. In the last two decades many Fluxus artists have been recognized as major figures in the art of our time. So, too, have many Fluxus friends and fellow travelers (among them Dieter Roth, Ray Johnson, Christo

and John Armleder). The vast majority of Fluxus artists have created bodies of work that have become clearly visible and influential. While some of these artists seem to emerge one year and recede the next—subject to the vagaries of individual gallerists' and curators' programs and the increasing age of the artists themselves—this cyclical emergence and recession is evidence of enduring presence in an art world where most artists only enjoy fame for a season or two. As they return to visibility, some of these artists overtly affirm the principles of Fluxus, while others quietly practice them. Most have long since stopped promoting the notion of Fluxus per se.

By contrast, Friedman still preaches, practices, and declares allegiance to the Fluxus ethos. Long one of the most active proponents of Fluxus, he has also been one of the most consistent. For all that, Friedman now feels that his active work on behalf of Fluxus has ended. His major goals have largely been achieved, leaving a legacy that includes some dozen major collections and several dozen seed collections in museums and galleries around the world and a host of completed artistic and social projects. Fluxus itself has become a visible and major influence on artists around the world. The rest will flow naturally from the Fluxist tradition.

Historically and spiritually, Ken Friedman is Fluxus. He has helped to ensure that the elusive and supposedly ephemeral Fluxus movement is now regarded as a permanent force in art and presence in art history. He has also helped to bring a broadly humanistic Fluxist spirit out of a closed, hermetic circle of like-minded artist rebels. Fluxus is its own contradiction; Ken Friedman's life affirms it.

NOTES

1. This paper, originally written in 1987–88, was revised in 1993. It was revised again, with input from Ken Friedman and suggestions from Holly Crawford, for this publication. Sections were reordered and some material was added, including the prologue.
2. This discussion is based in large part on e-mail correspondence with Ken Friedman, June 27, 2007.
3. Email correspondence from Ken Friedman, June 27, 2007.
4. Friedman spent the year 1987 as visiting artist and designer at Oy Wärtsilä Ab Arabia in Helsinki, Finland. Arabia originally commissioned this monograph discussing Friedman's life and work to that year.
5. The advertisement heralded Al Hansen's *Primer of Happenings & Time/Space Art* as "The first popular book about happenings and the only book about *all* aspects of this vital aspect of the modern theater." Dick Higgins's *Jefferson's Birthday/ Postface* was described as a "collection of work by one of the most active inventors

in the performing arts, backed up by a concise essay that presents a powerful attack on the going styles in the arts, a memoir about the early days of happenings and a theoretical explanation of them."

6. Friedman, Ken, "Looking Back," (in) *Events*, edited with an introduction by Peter Frank, New York: Jaap Rietman, Inc., 1985, p. 230.

7. In "Looking Back" Friedman recalls the source for one of his earliest performance works, *The Light Bulb Show* (refined and restaged as *Light Bulb Variations* until 1975): "Children can be skillfully cruel, and my classmates never let me forget that I was different from them. I wanted desperately to be liked by those people. I couldn't be like them, and they couldn't accept me as I was. I managed to become the class clown and the school renegade. One thing I did in my clowning was to entertain the others, often successfully, with peculiar dramatic inventions such as the little radio programs offered in *The Light Bulb*. Now I look back to see the content in stark contrast to the reality of my experience: with a cast of object-characters, the world of my little programs was magical and undemanding. It was not serene, but it was subject to my control."

8. "At the time . . . I was still moving towards what I thought was going to be a career in the ministry. I specialized in studies in psychology and education, social and behavioral science. Humanistic psychology and the new therapies—Gestalt, encounter, body work—fascinated me. We work on what we need, and work I did. This part of my life is reflected in many of my events from that time." [ibid., p.232.]

9. For instance, in his contribution to the Something Else Press book *The Four Suits* Benjamin Patterson discusses 'Perceptual Education Tools' from the standpoint not (simply) of aesthetics, but of human behavior (Patterson, Benjamin, "Notes on Pets," (in) *The Four Suits*, New York: Something Else Press, 1965, pp. 49–53). For his part, in an appendix to his prescient 1961 essay on conceptual art, Henry Flynt discusses mathematical systems as art (Flynt, Henry, "Concept Art Version of Mathematics System," (in) *An Anthology*, edited by La Monte Young, New York: La Monte Young and Jackson Mac Low, 1963, n.p.).

10. According to Dick Higgins, "Friedman stays close to life and, every few years (or is it every few days?) gives up art forever. But as a confirmed life-watcher, he keeps having to share his notions and so, every few years (or is it every few days?) we get another Friedmanwork in whatever medium he had just announced he had given up. He produces because he has to share, not because it's professionally necessary. The result is, as a result, thoroughly professional, but that's another kind of paradox." [Higgins, Dick, "Ken Friedman . . . " in *Ken Friedman: Works at Emily Harvey*, New York: Emily Harvey Gallery, 1987, p. 3.]

11. Conversation with the artist, June 5, 1987, Helsinki.

12. In conversation, June 5, 1987, Helsinki.

13. In conversation, June 5, 1987, Helsinki.

14. Friedman himself felt that mass production was the key to his intention. In 1988, a well-known art dealer invited him to make signed, limited editions in porcelain with no intention of expanding them into mass production. After a number of discussions, Friedman felt compelled to decline the proposal. He would have loved to make the objects, he said, but making expensive prints on ceramic was the opposite of what his intention at

Arabia had been. He preferred to take an approach that would entirely merge art and industry. "It no longer seems appropriate," he said, "for Fluxus to mimic industrial methods while producing limited edition art." Friedman does make multiples, as all Fluxus artists do. His multiples are statements in their own right, exactly what they seem to be rather than art works pretending to be mass-market objects.

15. Friedman, op. cit., p. 232.

16. It might seem strange that, for someone promulgating art of multidisciplinary expansiveness, George Maciunas would be so concerned with categorization. But he was. Maciunas's colleagues recall his eager preoccupation with classification and nomenclature as an aspect of his contribution to their shared work. In light of the Fluxus aesthetic, the irony of this preoccupation was not lost on Maciunas himself. Rather than try to suppress a natural tendency, Maciunas indulged himself to the point of self-parody, clearly figuring that his mania would at least be useful for clarifying, if not exemplifying, the intentions of Fluxus. Maciunas's constant revision of nomenclatures and relationships, most especially in the intricate art-historical charts he drew up to provide Fluxus with a context of precedents, indicate a desire not to generate and enforce dogma, but to provide means by which the new Fluxist sensibility could be understood.

17. Flynt, Henry, "Concept Art," in *An Anthology*, op. cit.

18. In Higgins's *Danger Music* series, one score, dedicated to Maciunas, consists simply of the instruction, "Do not abide by your decision." (*Danger Music Number Thirty-Two* in Higgins, Dick, *foew&ombwhnw*, New York: Something Else Press, 1969, p. 22).

19. Block, René, "Fluxus and Fluxism in Berlin 1964–1976," (in) McShine, Kynaston, *Berlinart 1961–1987*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1987, pp. 64–79.

20. In conversation with the author, July 19, 1987, Barrytown New York.

21. This included both maintenance of ongoing functions, such as the radio show at Shimer College, and involvement in special projects like the Esperanto Conference Friedman organized in San Diego in 1963. Friedman had been active in the promotion of the international language, Esperanto, between 1961 and 1963, lecturing extensively on Esperanto in southern California, publishing a bulletin for the San Diego Esperanto Society, and managing America's oldest Esperanto Book Service as its owner.

22. Maciunas might have similarly influenced Friedman, had his own distinctive sense of design not been so spectacularly obsessive. Friedman appreciated the exquisite care Maciunas lavished on every mundane detail of every Fluxus object he fabricated, and, like other Fluxus enthusiasts, was amused and fascinated by the clever typographies Maciunas devised as visual-verbal leitmotifs for various Fluxus participants. But Friedman readily saw how impractical these were in the realm of more generalized, wider-circulation publishing. Maciunas's terseness, intimacy and elaborate wit recur time and again in Friedman's handmade objects and drawings, but in wider-circulation media, from books to periodicals to commercially marketed objects, Friedman harks back to his work at the Something Else Press.

23. By time Friedman met Maciunas, the Fluxus mastermind was extending his quasi-anarchist social beliefs beyond art and into life—at least the artist's life. Maciunas was

buying up buildings around the warehouse district and then transferring ownership to owner-resident cooperatives. Under the rubric of Fluxus, then, Maciunas pioneered loft co-oping in SoHo. Of course, a number of Fluxus artists were involved in these co-ops. Other Fluxus artists—Higgins and Alison Knowles among them—had been among those living in the Canal Street area even earlier, but had fled the frequently unsafe conditions and constant danger of eviction by the New York City Housing Authority. [For an extensive discussion of the Fluxus role in the establishment of SoHo, see Frank, Peter, "Fluxus in New York," (in) Block, René, ed., *SoHo—Downtown Manhattan: SoHo*, West Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1976, pp. 151–179.]

24. Friedman presented three exhibitions. The first was of the second *Fluxkit* (a boxed assembly compiled by Maciunas of objects designed by various Fluxus artists) in a mammoth suitcase version created specifically for exhibition. The second was Friedman's own *Dark Mirror*, a realization of his event with a score that reads: "In a white, well-lit room, create a mirrored floor by applying black enamel glossy paint to the floor, sand, buff, and re-paint, repeating the action until the floor is an almost entirely reflective surface. Subdue the lighting." [Friedman, Ken, *Events*, edited with an introduction by Peter Frank, New York: Jaap Rietman, Inc., 1985, p. 65.] The last exhibit was of Fluxus furniture by, among others, Daniel Spoerri, Bob Watts, Emmett Williams, Alison Knowles, and Takako Saito.

25. The Berkeley space, the only one given a name more elaborate than "Fluxhouse," was called the Berkeley Fluxus Center. Friedman lived in Berkeley while he audited classes at the Graduate Theological Union's Starr King School for the Ministry in 1970.

26. Jeff Berner was also actively promulgating Fluxus, concrete poetry, and intermedia in the Bay Area at this time. Some early miscommunication prevented Berner and Friedman from co-operating, but Friedman has always recognized Berner as a like-minded artist and "one of the major preachers of the avant-garde gospel to the American West." [in conversation, New York, October 17, 1987]

27. Friedman maintained his involvement with Liberal Religious Youth and other Unitarian organizations throughout his stay in the Bay Area, often organizing performance presentations and festivals as celebratory events, rituals and even sermons.

28. "In 1972," Michael Crane has written, "[Friedman] published the *International Contact List of the Arts*, containing some 1400 names of artists and interested individuals. Revised many times, this list has included as many as 5000 names and addresses and was used along the [mail art] network to expand its audience and potential users. In the early to mid 1970s, most correspondence exhibitions drew from this list and complementary lists such as those of Image Bank and International Artists Cooperation. Friedman's list was used in the early formative stages by such magazines as *File*, *Flash Art*, and *Art Diary*. . . . "

[Crane, Michael, "The Origins of Correspondence Art," (in) Crane and Stofflet, Mary, *Correspondence Art*, San Francisco: Contemporary Arts Press, 1984, p. 90.] The Toronto-based *File* Magazine's list and collation of other information, modeled on Image Bank and Fluxus West, ultimately became Art Metropole, the most extensive distributor of source material on new art in North America.

29. The 1967 event entitled *Chair* reads, "Mail a chair." In *Events* Friedman has written that the event was "[f]irst performed by mailing chairs and stools whole. When postal regulations changed, requiring smaller sizes, the chairs were disassembled and mailed in fragments. The chairs and pieces were always mailed unwrapped, with address and postage affixed directly to the surface." [Friedman, op. cit., p. 85.]

30. "Friedman's individual mailings," Crane attests, "include discarded three-dimensional objects such as socks, shoes, plastic lemons, bottles, keys, painted boards, and guitar necks. . . . Sometimes these objects are gessoed to receive cryptic images and messages drawn with ink. Other times they are sent raw. . . . The most famous of the object correspondences is *Sock of the Month Club*, co-founded and co-run with Fletcher Copp since 1970. The series consisted of a sometimes yearly mailing of used socks along with printed information detailing who or what each mailing eulogized, for example, Chairman Mao or Elvis Presley. . . .

"In publishing," Crane continues, "Friedman is partially responsible for initiating a form that eventually became known as the 'dadazine.' In 1971, he founded and edited the first twelve issues of *The New York Correspondence School Weekly Breeder*. Ken Friedman is the only critic of mail art who continues to participate. He challenges by setting standards to push correspondence art in a direction where the network's potentials can be realized beyond an occasional atmosphere of pen-pal or mutual admiration activity." [Crane, op. cit., p. 93.]

31. ibid., p. 90.

32. Friedman did manage to mount one exhibition, *A Small Show*, comprised of intimate and tabletop objects by the many artists whose work had been shown at Fluxus West. Nam June Paik also commissioned Friedman at this time to write Paik's *Third Symphony* [cf. entry for Paik, Nam June, in Slonimsky, Nicolas, ed., *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Music*, New York: G. Schirmer and Sons, 1971, 1979.]

33. Maciunas, himself influenced as an architectural student by the radical simplicity of Shaker design, worked long and lovingly on the drawers and tables of the room-filling storage installation, crafting its elements from the same kinds of richly-grained wood as the house and its furniture were made. Not long thereafter, Maciunas—hounded by the New York City Housing Authority for his unlicensed and unsupervised development of loft co-ops in SoHo—left Manhattan for a farmstead down the road from Jean Brown.

34. The history of the Fluxshoe from the time of Mayor's appointment through the end of the tour is detailed in Anderson, Simon. *Reflux Action*. Doctoral dissertation. London: Royal College of Art, 1988.

35. Mayor, David, *Fluxshoe*, Cullompton, Devon: Beau Geste Press, 1972, p. 3.

36. In his letter to Mayor, reproduced in the Fluxshoe catalogue [ibid, p. 69], Maciunas drily cautions that, of the "list of people who have indicated they would participate in some way[,] 90% of the names have had no connection with Fluxus whatsoever, in fact many like Carolee Schneemann is [sic] doing very neo-baroque style happenings which are exact opposite of flux haiku style events." Still, Mayor subscribed to Friedman's inclusivist attitude. As Mayor wrote in the catalogue introduction, "Exhibiting Fluxus is not new; in 1970–71, Dr. Hanns Sohm and Harald Szeemann organized *Happening und Fluxus* in Cologne and Stuttgart. Though it was

attended by some flux people like Dick Higgins, Addi Køpcke, and Tomas Schmit, it suffered from its documentary rigidity. . . . [T]he Shoe is the first comprehensive effort to present a retrospective as well as a prospective of flux and similar undertaken in England." [ibid., p. 5]

37. Ravicz, Marilyn Ekdahl, "Ken Friedman—Totalkunst," in *Ken Friedman at the Slocumb Gallery*, Johnson City: East Tennessee State University, 1975, unpaginated.

38. These included Copenhagen and Berlin (1973), Geneva, Buenos Aires, and Poznan (Poland) (1974), Budapest, Milan, Aalst (Belgium), and Lund (Sweden) (1975), Finsterwolde (Netherlands) (1977), Amsterdam and Parma (Italy) (1979).

39. This discussion of Friedman's events is adapted from my introduction to *Ken Friedman: Events*. New York: Jaap Rietman, Inc., 1985, pp. i–v.

40. Flynt, Henry, "Concept Art," in *An Anthology*, op. cit.

41. in Brecht, George, *Water Yam*, New York: Fluxus, 1964

42. in Watts, Robert, *Robert Watts*, New York: Fluxus, 1964

43. in Higgins, Dick, *Jefferson's Birthday/Postface*, op.cit., and *foew&ombwhnw*, New York: Something Else Press, 1969

44. in e.g. Filliou, Robert, and George Brecht, *Games at the Cedilla, or the Cedilla Takes Off*, New York: Something Else Press, 1967.

45. Ono, Yoko, *Grapefruit*, Tokyo: Wunternaum Press, 1964. Reprinted New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970.

46. in Knowles, Alison, *by Alison Knowles*, New York: Something Else Press (Great Bear Pamphlets), 1964

47. in Hendricks, Geoffrey and Bici (Forbes), *Black Thumb Summer Institute of Special Studies*, New York: Black Thumb Press, 1966

48. The only other artist creating and realizing proposal pieces with such a humanistic emphasis is Allan Kaprow. The role of the terse written instructions in Kaprow's activities, however, is rather more peripheral than in Friedman's. The diction, the page formatting, and even the exhibitability of Friedman's events as written scores strongly implies that they suffice as read; Kaprow's lines of instruction, when exhibited or published, have until now invariably been accompanied with documentation of their (usually initial) realization, suggesting that for Kaprow the lines alone do not suffice.

49. "Acquire a Japanese scroll. Keep it in a blank state. After a minimum of ten years, or on the death of the performer, inscribe the name of the performer, the date of acquisition and the date at the time of acquisition. The performance continues until the scroll is filled with inscriptions." [Friedman, Ken, *Events,* op. cit., p. 6.]

50. "Lose tools or useful objects"; "Mail to friends, people chosen by random processes, or other groupings of individuals, 10,000 objects, papers, events, etc., over the span of a predetermined time." [op.cit., pp. 172, 162.]

51. "On the first day of Spring, go unnanounced to a public monument. Clean it thoroughly." [op. cit., p. 1.]

52. "Everyone runs in a large circle, accompanied by a strong rhythm. On every beat, all whoop or yell in unison. May also jump or raise arms to keep time." [op. cit., p. 12.]

53. "Eat hot peppers and pickled foods of spicy nature." [op. cit., p. 129.]

54. "As many people as possible jam into a cage or designated area in the time of one minute. Ten seconds pass in position. During another minute, everyone disperses rapidly." [op. cit., p. 95.]

55. "Cause an event to be performed to a friend with no explanation." [in catalogue to *Events*, New York: Institute for Art and Urban Resources at P. S. 1, 1980, n.p.

56. "Load a car with people. Drive to a bus stop. One performer leans out of the car window to ask someone waiting at the stop, 'Do the cross-town buses run all night?' All the others then lean out, singing, 'Doo-dah! Doo-dah!'" [*Ken Friedman: Events*. New York: Jaap Rietman, Inc., 1985, p. 34.]

57. "Conduct a large crowd of people to the house of a stranger. Knock on the door. When someone opens the door, the crowd cheers and applauds vigorously. All depart silently." [op. cit., p. 21.]

58. e.g. "Dress as badly as possible. Wear surplus clothes, tattered shoes and an old hat. Go to an elegant restaurant. Behave with dignity and exquisite decorum. Request a fine table. Tip the maitre d'hote well, and take a seat. Order a glass of water. Tip the waiters, the busboy and staff lavishly, then depart." (1964) [op. cit., p. 13.]

59. "Someone sneezes. A year later, send a postcard reading: 'Gesundheit!'." [op. cit., p. 19.]

60. "The sound of one shoe tapping." [op. cit., p. 53.]

61. e.g. *Fruit Sonata* (1963), which reads, "Play baseball with fruit." [op. cit., p. 9.]

62. "Each member of the audience shakes hands with those within reach"; "The audience walks around the hall slowly. As the walking proceeds, each person shakes hands with everyone else. Everyone slowly proceeds around the room, exchanging firm handshakes"; "The audience goes around very fast, running, grabbing, touching and shaking hands at a fast pace." [op. cit., pp. 96–98.]

63. "Jesus Saves but Moses Invests." (first version, 1964) "Jesus Saves; Moses Invests; but Buddha Pays Dividends." (second version, 1966) [first two versions unpublished]

"Jesus saves, Moses Invests, Buddha pays dividends. The Church of the Holy Mackerel Gives split stock." [(third version, 1967), in Friedman, Ken, *Events*, New York: Institute for Art and Urban Resources at P.S. 1, 1980, n. p.]

64. "A group of performers dress up as soldiers of fortune and adventurers. In one group or several teams, the performers deploy on foot or in vehicles through an urban area, staging mock battles. From time to time, a parade or victory celebration may take place, at which time, performers chant the slogan, 'Come the revolution and we'll all be revolting!'" [*Ken Friedman: Events*. New York: Jaap Rietman, Inc., 1985, p. 26 (given alternate title, *Come Ze Revolution*)]

65. The poem consists entirely of that pun [op. cit., p. 60]

66. *The Glottal Stomp* [op. cit., p. 25]

67. "Which is the dribbler and/ which is the dribbled?" [op. cit., p. 28]

68. "A performer becomes Ben Vautier for a period of time." [op. cit., p. 113]

69. "Alioto. Mr. Moto. Charles de Gaulle. Henri Bolle." [op. cit., p. 113]

70. "Hmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmnmnmnmmmmmm.

MMmmmmmmmmnmnMMnnNNNnnhhmnmnm.

HmmmmmmmmmmnmnmnMMmmmmmmmMMMm.
HMnmHhhmnmnmnmhmnnmnmnmmmmmmmmm."
[*Ken Friedman: Events*. New York: Jaap Rietman, Inc., 1985, p. 43; alternate version, p. 90]

71. "She./ Her./ She./ Her./ She./ Her./ She./ Her./ She./ Her./ She./ Her./ She./ Her./ She./ Her./ She./ Her./ She./ Her." [op. cit., p. 44] Compare to the Hershey-bar wrapper collages of Al Hansen.

72. "A large doorway is placed on a street corner, posted with a sign reading, FLUXUS THEATER. Admission 25 cents." [op. cit., p. 67]

73. "A book of night letter telegrams entitled *Fol de Nuit*." [in Friedman, op. cit., New York: Institute for Art and Urban Resources at P. S. 1, 1980]

74. The instructive text to 'One/Two' reads:
"[A card or page inscribed on the obverse:]
Side One
[and on the reverse:]
Side Two."
[*Ken Friedman: Events*. New York: Jaap Rietman, Inc., 1985, p. 37]
The text to *Citizen's Card* reads:
"[A card imprinted:]
Carry this card with you at all times."
[*Ken Friedman: Events*. New York: Jaap Rietman, Inc., 1985, p. 174]

75. "All the [Fluxus] artists' performance works are touched with a casual, intimate attitude running between the loose and free gesture which can become painterly to the austere beauty of the tea ceremony. There is a certain use of props and objects characterizing much Fluxus performance in which the object is lodged halfway between sculpture and prop, able to function as both. Much Fluxus performance is, in fact, a sort of Theater of the Object." [Friedman, Ken, "Fluxus: The Exquisite Corpse Stirs," *Performance Art*, vol. 1, nr. 1, Spring 1979. p. 20]

76. These are illustrated and described in the various volumes of Hendricks, Jon, ed., *Fluxus etc.: The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection*, including the initial volume [Bloomfield Hills Michigan: Cranbrook Academy of Art, 1982, pp. 112–114] and *Addenda I* [New York: Ink &, 1983, pp. 44–45]. In 1988 Harry N. Abrams, Inc., published Hendricks's authoritative *Codex Fluxus*, based on the Silverman Collection holdings. It includes a chapter on the many Friedman objects planned and published by Maciunas.

77. in Friedman, Ken, *Works at Emily Harvey*, New York: Emily Harvey Gallery, 1987, n.p.

78. *Ken Friedman: Events*. New York: Jaap Rietman, Inc., 1985, p. 162

79. *Ken Friedman: Events*. New York: Jaap Rietman, Inc., 1985, p. 172

80. Friedman conceived of the project while working toward his doctoral degree.

81. Thanks to Friedman's careful attention to market development, this proved to be one of the most successful launches in the history of art publishing. Unlike most editors, Friedman maintained a major role in the business side of *Art Express* during his entire time with the magazine. The name *Art Express*, incidentally, was suggested

by the artists Newton and Helen Harrison, longtime friends and colleagues of Friedman's.

82. Friedman's editorial papers and much historical material on *Art Express* are now housed at the University of Iowa.

83. For much of the newsletter's three-year existence the art market was threatened with a slump, brought on by the recession of 1982. The slump, as "The Art Market in a Troubled Economy" [vol. I, number 3, pp. 1–4] predicted and several auction analyses proved, was real. But Friedman's analysis also showed it to be rather less profound than had been feared. Two articles [vol. II, numbers 1 & 2, pp. 1–3 both numbers] debunked the then-prevalent ballyhoo about investing in contemporary art, concluding in effect that the only investors who could make significant money in the contemporary art market were dealers themselves. In several of its "Art Futures," however, *The Art Economist* advised collectors that purchasing the artwork of, among others, Mark Tansey, Betty Woodman, and Rodney Alan Greenblat was highly advisable—not so much because the resale value would treble, but because prices on those artists' pieces generally would become a lot steeper. The advice was offered not to quick-change investors, but to art-hungry collectors who could use a good bargain.

84. The abbreviated issues of the newsletter's last year [vol. 4, Nos. 20–25] offered little by way of market figures and analyses, containing instead only Friedman's observative and analytical essays on art-world events. These commentaries ranged far beyond the economics of art—with the important exception of "The Art Magazine of 1995" [vol. 4, No. 22–24], a transcript of Friedman's speech before an art criticism conference in Houston predicting and prescribing the future of art periodicals—but they allowed Friedman to muse on the moral concerns which had preoccupied him in his youth, and which he still felt were at the basis of proper behavior, in the art world and out.

85. Friedman's expertise in economics and art is still sought by museums, foundations, and private concerns. He occasionally accepts clients for ventures he finds especially interesting or challenging.

86. In a letter to Dick Higgins, dated September 12, 1987, Friedman wrote, "It seems to me now that a certain clear, programmatic style in Fluxus, very minimal and austere, can be seen as one generation. That would be La Monte Young, Yoko Ono, Jackson Mac Low, Eric Andersen, Alison Knowles, and some of the aspects of your work, of Brecht, of Watts. It's clear to me now that was the first Fluxism, what you've identified in the 9 criteria as minimalism.

"There is another Fluxism, the Fluxism of the social gospel. In this, I see Knižak, Beuys, Vostell, the Maciunas of George's actions (rather than George's artistic production theories), and some of the others, me, too, who came later.

"Suddenly I understand why, for . . . some of the others, Fluxus is only that first grouping of a dozen or so people who went on the first concerts. That style and tone of Fluxus is very different from the other. I felt the evolution of Fluxus fell into a chronological pattern—with people joining from 1962 all the way through 1967, then a gap before the next cycle of new members. Now I see one can make a split between the first Fluxus, the minimalist tradition, and the next, a tradition of social practice in

which the work was far less clearly defined by a concern for minimal style. That Fluxus was often somewhat expressionistic, highly experimental, placing greater value on trying all sorts of approaches to the world to see what would work. . . .

"And I see where my approach, even though I spent so much time working to present people's work and further the several views of Fluxus and Fluxism, was mysterious, incomprehensible and even liable to engender suspicion in some whose sense of Fluxus as a minimalist, private enterprise was particularly strong."

Friedman has also defined the different approaches to Fluxus as resembling those of the different modes of Zen Buddhism. In a recent note [October 30 1987] he observed that, "while some Zen Buddhists were hermetic in their approach, traveling missionaries like myself took Zen from India to China and from China to Japan."

87. In the "Social Fluxus" chapter of his essay, "Explaining Fluxus," Friedman avers that "[t]he real promise of Fluxus lies in its social humanism. The lightness, the humor of Fluxus, the refusal to obey rules in making art were never ends in themselves, but part of the willingness to let art be part of the life of the mind and of the entire human nature." [Friedman, Ken, "Explaining Fluxus," *White Walls*, nr. 16 (Spring 1987), p. 20.] And in a manifesto written for the Fluxus Workshop at Arabia entitled "Fluxus Principles of Art and Design." Friedman declares that

1. Motifs are drawn from history, from text and from human events. These are the prime sources of Fluxus.
2. Visual culture is the translation or repetition of meaning in visual form. It is *culture* in an anthropological sense.
3. An object that has useful meaning can be a work of art.
4. There is no boundary between art and life.
5. High art is dead when it rejects or excludes human experience.
6. The avant-garde is dead when it rejects or excludes human experience.

[Friedman, Ken, *Fluxus Principles of Art and Design*, Helsinki: Oy Wärtsilä Ab Arabia, Fluxus Workshop, 1987, p. 1]

88. Friedman, Ken, "On Fluxus," *Flash Art*, nr. 84–85 (Oct–Nov 1978), p. 30.

Chapter Fourteen

Temporary Bedfellows: Claes Oldenburg, Maurice Tuchman and Disney

Holly Crawford

The issue of whether a participant in an art project is an assistant, facilitating the artist's creation with technical expertise, or whether the participant is an artistic collaborator, is particularly interesting when the artist collaborates with a corporation. There are different types of artistic relationships, most entered into directly between artists.[1] Another type is a temporary relationship facilitated by a third party. I am specifically interested in the case where the third party, such as a museum or foundation, brings an artist and corporation together for a short period.

The artists' residency program at the Montalvo Center in the San Francisco Bay Area, does just that. It brings artists to the United States, specifically to the San Francisco Bay Area, and matches them to tech companies in the Bay Area. Gordon Knox, the Director of the Montalvo Art Center, commented on a recent collaboration that they facilitated.[2] An artist from India was matched to Sun Microsystems.

Gordon Knox argues that fresh eyes and ideas of the artists sometimes allow for breakthroughs that the company had been struggling with for years.[3] How is this possible if, as many argue, there are no sole geniuses, and history has looked for an individual to whom to award credit for results achieved by a group?[4] Knox seems to be suggesting that he is able to identify the right artist, the sole genius, a la Leonardo, and arrange for that artist to spend a couple of months with the corporation to solve the problem which the corporate group has been unable to solve. Has he become the head hunter the corporation turns to for the artistic, creative lone wolf? The man who can find just the right artist to plug into the tech group, when needed for a short period.

There is a well documented, earlier case involving Disney, where the facilitator Maurice Tuchman argued from the same perspective, ". . . that

companies might benefit immeasurably, in both direct and subtle ways, merely from exposure to creative personalities."[5] This assumes that only the artist is creative. Who is an artist? Is it really possible that none of the animators and imagineers who work at Disney are creative artists? Or are all these people creative in a different way? That art is defined in such a way that their work is not art? Or at least not *high* art. These are some of the questions that are raised. There are others. Two basic questions are raised. What is collaboration in art under these conditions? Is it necessary to produce an art object as the end product? More later on Tuchman's view of these issues. Historically this type of collaboration stems from two earlier projects—Billy Külver's EAT (Experiments in Art and Technology) in New York and Art and Technology that was curated by Maurice Tuchman, then curator of modern art at LACMA. Both of these projects were independently conceived in 1966. I want to narrowly focus on Tuchman's matching Oldenburg to Disney.

The Art and Technology project was conceived in 1966. It was a massive undertaking in which 64 artists were matched with corporations by Maurice Tuchman to work together—a merger of creativity and technical resources that would produce, he hoped, something for both the artists and the corporations, but ultimately an art object. The relationship would be a collaborative one between artist and the companies. What might this mean? Each corporation, the technology it develops, and the artist who is matched to it, is different. I do not hold this one case out to be representative of all artist-corporate collaborations. It is one where there was a successful outcome and where there is information and comments from all the parties. Specifically I will address the relationship, but first I want to lay the groundwork that Tuchman laid, and outline what he envisioned.

Tuchman arranged residency for a period of three months. He hoped that this was only a guideline, and that the time might vary. Artists were solicited to submit proposals. Robert Irwin told Tuchman that many of the artists felt ". . . that the Museum was primarily interested in producing an exhibition, rather than arbitrating the process of interactions, an end in itself. . . . "[6] Tuchman had initially stated that one of his arguments for engaging the companies was ". . . that the companies' collaboration with the artists might well result in major works of art."[7] Ultimately Tuchman was remaining flexible. "It is understood that this preliminary plan may change considerably during the course of the collaboration between corporation personnel and artist."[8] Flexibility was a necessary ingredient.

The artists want to be engaged in a process of discovery. The museum wants a significant piece of art. The corporations want, or at least wants to appear, to be cooperative and a partner in *high* art and Culture, but an art that is

not at odds with their ethos. Historically what happened? I will start with Oldenburg.

Why would Tuchman consider matching Oldenburg and Disney? And what effect did it have on the artist, before and possibly after this project? Claes Oldenburg has always been fascinated with the Mouse.[9] His work now displays multiple uses and meanings of the Mouse image, and far more variety than the work of Lichtenstein, whose appropriation of Disney images was more literal. In 1963, several years before Tuchman matched Oldenburg to Disney, Oldenburg had a solo exhibition at Ferris gallery in Los Angeles. For that exhibition he drew a pastel image of the Mouse's head that was used for the exhibition's poster. Not a happy grinning Mouse but a tougher, scrappy-guy image. The Mouse in Oldenburg's poster is derived from the early cartoons, those which he would have seen in his childhood. Other uses of the Mouse by Oldenburg include a proposal using the Mouse in the façade of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago; the Maus Museum installation; sculpture that include small multiples; and a performance with a plain canvas mask; banners and candy, all using his version of the Mouse.

These images flowed from strong influences in Oldenburg's childhood. In 1968 Barbara Rose asked Oldenburg about his childhood. "I made my own comics and stuff. I read all the comics. I sold comics. I think that they were, if you speak about exposure to art, I'm sure that's the only exposure that I had of any significance."[10] Oldenburg later merged his early understanding of comics with an appreciation of art and culture all successfully displayed in the Maus Museum, an installation Oldenberg created after his residency at Disney, which combines all the merchandise available at Disneyland stores with the context of objects more customarily displayed at a museum.

Oldenburg's Maus Museum highlights and pointedly comments on the museum's multiple functions, as it has absorbed elements of the broader culture surrounding the museum, becoming simultaneously a retail store, conservatory, educational and curatorial institution, all within the same building. "Beginning in the early seventies Oldenburg drew plans and on a couple of occasions actually constructed a walk-through museum in the shape of a geometric Mickey head. . . .[11] This installation was Oldenburg's Maus Museum. "Oldenburg's Maus Museum suggests not so much that the line between modern art and pop culture might be violated as that it had only a delusional existence in the first place: that each high-modernist urge has its companion echoing urge in pop culture, and that in America everybody in the long run ends up with mouse ears on."[12] In his Maus Museum installation Oldenburg points out those ears. Even as he parodied our museums he did so by referencing Disney material culture and Disneyland. Oldenburg also celebrated the image by his reference. "Claes Oldenburg—whose obsessive and

imperious fantasy about turning the whole environment into one Claes Oldenburg is the closest thing high art has to what Disney World achieves—has based a whole series of sculptures, multiples and drawings on the Mouse."[13]

Oldenburg first argues that the images he uses are not important. In an interview in 1964 he commented that, "I shouldn't really talk about Pop art in general, but it seems to me that the subject matter is the least important thing. It is a way of bringing in an image that you didn't create. It is a way of being impersonal."[14] Oldenburg has always maintained that he is ultimately a formalist. He explained to Barbara Rose, in a series of taped interviews that were mostly conducted during the year he was in residency at Disney, what it is that first catches his eye as an artist at the beginning of his artistic process. "It's not even an image in the beginning. It's form. It's a certain type of shape."[15] But in the end the image is still there. "And this is usually accompanied by a very obsessive use of that object."[16] He added that, "It becomes clothed in the texture of things. Then it becomes clothed in associations."[17] Oldenburg ultimately acknowledges that the image chosen is indeed important.

As time has made his memory of this residency fade through the years, his use of the mouse has diminished. One has to wonder if there would have been a different image if he had been matched to a different corporation such as The RAND Corporation, Bank of America, Twentieth Century-Fox, Times Mirror, IBM, Hewlett-Packard or Jet Propulsion Laboratory, which were some of the other institutions with which other artists were matched. In any case, Oldenburg's use of the Mouse did have an impact on others.

Updike underlines the importance of the image. "It was Oldenburg's work that first alerted me to the fact that Mickey Mouse had passed out of the realm of [the] commercially generated image into that of artifact, so that the basic configuration, like that of the hamburgers and pay telephones, could be used as an immediately graspable referent in a piece of art."[18] In 1981 Robert Hughes calls Oldenburg, "the thinking person's Walt Disney."[19] In the end the image—Disney's Mickey Mouse—is still there no matter what the intent or how abstracted. Oldenburg knows this. It is an important association made in the viewer's mind. He specifically commented on the meaning of the Mouse. "The content is sometimes provided by other people and the audience. This thing is really, isn't a mouse. It is . . . in the first place it's a head. So, if it's a mouse, it's the head of a mouse."[20] He tried to clarify this. "It's really a form. Calling it a mouse makes it accessible. It's funny somehow, if you give something a name, people can refer to it and like it, even if they, even if it doesn't even look like what the name describes. Which is true of all my work. I give it all these familiar names. And people seem to relate to the things through the names rather than what it looks like."[21]

Oldenburg employs a strategy of exploiting the attachment of his viewer to Disney's Mouse even if he thinks the association comes primarily through the name, denying that the image has much to do with the visual image of Disney's Mouse. It is an interesting side step. He is very astute in his understanding that the familiar name makes his image more accessible; the Mouse has nostalgic associations for many. For others, Oldenburg's variations on the form also make him a kind of trickster, employing the gambit by riding the coattails of Mickey's global recognition. Oldenburg's image with the Mickey name is a rectangle with several smaller rectangular spaces cut into the larger rectangle and two circles on the top. It looks like a face. It might be taken for a house, with doors and windows, or for an abstracted Jack-o-lantern. The attendant name "Mickey Mouse" assures associations with the viewer's old, familiar, and pleasant memories of a fantasy celebrity whose reflected glory enhances the perceived importance of Oldenburg's work.

Through use of the name Oldenburg not only references Disney's Mouse, he references his own first use of the Mouse, which was unambiguous. It was a feisty determined Mouse without abstraction, which Oldenburg drew for his 1963 poster. "Oldenburg's first use . . . seems designed to reanimate the mouse—to take a fixed, hieratic image and invest it with lust and glee. Oldenburg references the Mickey remembered—a scrappier character than the smiling corporate post-Disneyland Mouse.[22]

Several years later, Oldenburg presented Mickey Mouse as a formal object. ". . . Oldenburg began to play with a drier and more complicated metamorphosis for Mickey. He recognized what the animators at the Disney Studio had known years before; that the three-ring face was less a simplified caricature than a willfully anti-natural geometric reduction."[23]

Oldenburg had spoken with some Disney animators when he was provided studio space on the back lot of Disneyland in 1968 during his residency. In Robert Hughes' article, *Disney: Mousebrow to Highbrow,* in 1973 he reviews a group show in New York of the artwork of some of the animators who had spent their careers at Disney. According to Hughes this group show was put together by Oldenburg, "who had himself worked at Disneyland."[24] Hughes failed to mention, or even possibly realize, that it was only as part of this art residency.

On March 31, 2000, I spoke with John Hench, one of the original Disney animators, who had been assigned to work with Dali years before. Hench had given Oldenburg a tour of Disney in 1968, and I asked him about Oldenburg's project. Hench told me that Disney had talked to various "recognized artists" about working with new techniques in order to get new forms. According to Hench they had discussed a morphing technology. With this technology Oldenburg could morph a fan to a banana in 10 steps. He said

that Oldenburg thought about it but was fixated on his *Convulsive Ice Bag* (Hench's recollection of the title) at the time. Oldenburg wanted Disney to produce that design.

According to Tuchman's statement in *Art and Technology*, "Oldenburg's proposals for monuments and his anthropomorphising (sic) of objects and animals made the facilities at Disney seem almost necessary."[25] Tuchman added that the "collaboration as that between Oldenburg and Disney would, we knew, lend concreteness to the public conception of the program, which was at the time rather vague."[26] Tuchman says, "We persuaded Oldenburg to come to Los Angeles and tour Disney's facilities. He came November 17, 1968, and was shown various workshops and research areas in Glendale and several rides at Disneyland by John Hench."[27] Oldenburg was assigned a studio to work at Disney and observed that at the time Disney was working on the haunted house. "But in the haunted house they have all these effects where things were metamorphosing and they were using mirrors and stuff, so I went to the library and I got books on simple magic and also books on simple mechanics."[28]

Oldenburg designed a theater of animated sculptures that magically returned to their original form. For example, "a large object, as a car or piano, made of soft material, mounted on a machine that would twist, compress and change its shape (the machine was suggested by Disney's materials testing device); a cup would break and then reconstitute itself; a plate, on which eggs are cracked, thrown, scrambled and then reconstituted; a pie case, in which pies would gradually disappear as they were being eaten, and then be reassembled."[29]

These are all very magical proposals. Oldenburg was taking on the persona of *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. Neil E. McClure, Oldenburg's contact person at WED (a Disney entity for special projects referenced by Tuchman) told me about Oldenburg's residency from Disney's perspective many years later. McClure, said Oldenburg, asked for Disney to test many different fabrics, and Disney did so.

McClure also commented that Disney was knowledgeable about Oldenburg's art, and that they were concerned that Oldenburg would tie his design to a concept which would have been impractical, aesthetically, for Disney to support, such as Oldenburg's soft toilet.[30] This concern on Disney's part is confirmed in Tuchman's report. He cites the following memo, "A Mr. McClure called from WED Enterprises. . . . He would like to have you call Mr. Hench. They are afraid they might get a Kienholz-type product and, after all they are a family directed operation."[31]

Disney did encourage Oldenburg to make as many drawings and proposals as he wished. "(H)e was assured that all his plans for the illusionist works in

the Theatre of Objects were well within the capabilities of Disney's technology."[32] Disney was also concerned with costs, and ultimately exercised an escape clause in the *Art and Technology* contract,[33] on which Disney had insisted. "As you know, we have honored our obligation of $7,000, and the three-month period is now long past. . . . We are sorry a mutually agreeable project was not developed, but we must now turn our corporate efforts toward fulfillment of out primary obligations."[34] Oldenburg's designs and models were handed over to Ken Tyler at Gemini G.E.L. who were instrumental in the completion of the *Icebag*. In the end, this art object was created with the help of many people, and exhibited in Japan in 1970.

During Oldenburg's stay, Disney irritated him with the project's press release. Oldenburg expressed his concern to Tuchman, "John Hench's quote in the Glueck article certainly makes me pause. I wonder to what extent he will assume the position of spokesman for what might be done. The trouble with WED is that they are ideologically involved as well as technologically, as we know."[35]

Oldenburg was concerned that Disney would employ the gambit of capitalizing on his reputation as an artist to advance the acceptance of Disney images, to Oldenburg's detriment. Oldenburg wanted to make limited reference to Disney, and not allow Disney to reference Oldenburg at all.

The origins of Oldenburg's interest in variations of the Mouse are suggested in the following note to himself about his work, "Four spiral notebook pages, each 13cm × 7cm done after [the] visit to Disney Enterprises, where I had discussed the drawing origins of Mickey Mouse. The mice on the lower two pages have 'stars in their eyes.'"[36] It seems that the animators had pointed out that the projector, when viewed sidewise, is a black box with two round circles that resembles the Mouse. Oldenburg reiterated this to Martin Friedman, "There were mouse drawings before I lived in New Haven. When I was in Los Angeles in 1968 and 1969 talking to the people at the Disney Studios, there was much talk about mice and lots of drawings of mice. One source of the mouse image, a main source, is the old type of movie camera in profile. We talked about styles of drawing the mice and how."[37] This seems to have led to Oldenburg's many variations on Disney's rounded Mickey Mouse theme, repeatedly transforming it into a rectangular head and round Mouse ears on many different scales and in many different media.

In Oldenburg's hands circles become rectangles and soft becomes hard, though Mickey may never have been really soft. Oldenburg has frequently played with opposites in his sculptures, such as the soft toilet, a visual contradiction of the expected. Oldenburg's Mouse is flat and rectangular but with those two round ears. Oldenburg has suggested that it is a house, with the tongue as doormat. However, the sculpture is a flat surface, a façade; there is

no depth to this Mouse any more than there is depth to Disney's original Mouse—the Mouse in the animated cartoons is a flat two-dimensional image. Oldenburg's poster for *Art and Technology* has a drawing of himself surrounded by his various art objects. His *Geometric Mouse* sculpture and his portrait both have their tongues stuck out at the viewer. He later says that the mouth and tongue are a door. Yes, and no! Oldenburg returns that Mouse to the feisty character he remembers and identifies with from his childhood.

Oldenburg's sculpture has returned the Mouse to its original dimensions, while the Mouse of the parks has become three-dimensional. The original animators never drew Mickey from above; Oldenburg's sculpture would almost disappear if photographed from above. The original Mouse was not only an American icon useful to Oldenburg in gaining acceptance of his work, as he has admitted; it was also a flat geometric image, all circles, suitable for his intended work. Further, it was mass produced; his sculpture is machine made like Disney's industrial multiples. Oldenburg's Mouse is the Mouse stripped bare; the viewer sees his metal skeleton.

Images capable of multiple reproductions have always appealed to Oldenburg. "And if the thing rings through many changes then it seems to be an object that could mean a lot of different things to different people. So the thing gradually becomes dresses."[38] Oldenburg commented to Rose that, "I started producing what really were children's dream images."[39] His Mouse, like America, can be described as marketing sizzle and advertising hoopla combined with the industry, the steel, which characterized America, but with all its packaging. Oldenburg also presented Mickey in chocolate in a gold box, returning to food as subject matter but instead of constructing it larger than life-size, he has it manufactured like any other box of chocolates.

In one interview Oldenburg comments on his future vision of his *Geometric Mouse*, "A field, perhaps a slope of Geometric Mice is envisaged to outlast us all—like the heads on Easter Island. Later visitors to this planet will wonder what purpose these figures served—if they were things or portraits or gods."[40] Oldenburg added that, "The world is full of mice."[41] This seems particularly true for Oldenburg. This analysis of Oldenburg's Mouse is unfortunately abbreviated. His fascination from his performances in the early 1960s that included the Mickey Mouse head in *Moveyhouse*, *Maus Museum, Geometric Mouse* and his drawings suggest an unwritten monograph on this work. What can be said is that all his mice have throughout his career deliberately and successfully combined Disney familiarity with an existential perception of strangeness that a change in scale may induce.

Claes Oldenburg summed up his experience; collaborative relationship is not part of his vocabulary. "Technology is an available material, which is very different from certain conventional ideas of artistic activity in that it in-

volves a lot of other people, and it involves using skills that the artist or the originator of the event or action doesn't necessarily possess. I don't know anything about mechanics, and yet I'm creating something, or I'm imaging something which involves mechanics and I'm asking someone else to do it for me. The question is, can anyone else do something for me, or could I allow other people to do things that I don't know anything about, and what kind of controls and what kind of respect can I create in them for my intention if I don't really know what they're doing. So there are special problems involved in technology."[42]

Yes, he needs other people to help him complete his vision. Patty Mucha, Oldenburg's first wife, sewed all his soft sculpture. He did not. According to her he tried to sew one day and failed. He commented to Barbara Rose that he did not know if what he had envisioned would be finished because she was tired of sewing.[43] Not too technologically complicated, but more than one might imagine. Mucha comments that knowing the process of sewing, such as the zipper is sewn in first, was very helpful. "Plus my question to Claes, 'How is it going to hang?' would often initiate a necessary discussion to solving that all-important query. As we made more pieces Claes took a larger role in their construction."[44] The artist has a vision but are the people necessary to realize that vision really only objects to be used by the artist? What is art? What is an artistic collaboration?

Tuchman viewed it as collaboration; Art and Technology is a collaboration between the artist and those who have the necessary technology. Consequently artists were matched to corporations and institutions. Art objects and creativity are the realm of artists by his definition, and museums need "art" objects from an "artist." Claes Oldenburg learned a lot from his residency, but it seems that he did not feel that there was a collaboration. This was also true with his relationship to his first wife, Patty Mucha, an artist who sewed all his soft sculpture.[45] Artist and curator Coosje van Bruggen is his second wife and their projects credit joint authorship. It would be interesting to know more, but that is a different kind of artistic collaboration. There are many examples of collaboration between couples.

When artists come together with corporations or institutions that have technical knowledge, or for that matter with spouses or others, who should get how much and what type of credit for the resulting art object? Warhol had a clear vision in this area. It is a factory and he was head of the factory. It was not a team. Oldenburg, like Warhol, hired facilitators for his work, just as generations of earlier artists hired studio assistants, some of whom painted large portions of the paintings bearing the master's name. When does facilitation rise to artistic creation? Artists sometimes believe no one is entitled to any credit but themselves. Sometimes they share

credit, but they have to be people and not technology. What is right? Often it is very hard to tell.

NOTES

1. See Michael P. Farrell, *Collaborative Circles, Friendships Dynamics & Creative Work*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001; and Charles Green, *The Third Hand, Collaboration in Art From Conceptualism to Postmodernism*, Minnesota and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

2. Holly Crawford, *Critical Conversations in a Limo*, disk 1 of 4, Holly Block, AC Institute, 2006. A copy is at the Museum of Modern Art Library.

3. AC Institute's *Critical Conversations in a Limo*, in New York City in March 2006.

4. There are other reasons for people to artistically collaborate. Division of labor in a complex and international society makes it a necessary component to the process. And other reasons, such as they like working in groups and have been doing so since school. Team work being rewarded over individual production. This has been a trend in our education system.

5. Maurice Tuchman, *Art and Technology, Report on the Art & Technology Program of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1967–1971*. New York: The Viking Press, 1971, p. 9.

6. Tuchman. P. 12

7. Tuchman, P. 9

8. Tuchman, P. 10

9. For a greater analysis and discussion of artist's attachment to their subject matter see my book *Attached to the Mouse, Disney and Contemporary Art*, UPA imprint, Roman and Littlefield, 2006.

10. Claes Oldenburg, Rose interview, CD 6, 23 March 1968, Getty Special Collections.

11. Kirk Varnedoe and Adam Gopnik, *High and Low, Modern Art Popular Culture.* New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1990, 210.

12. Varnedoe and Gopnik, 210.

13. Robert Hughes, "Disney: Mousebrow to Highbrow," *Time* (October 15, 1973): 91.

14. Bruce Glaser, "Oldenburg, Lichtenstein, Warhol: A Discussion," reprinted in Steven Henry Madoff, edited. *Pop Art: A Critical History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997, 141.

15. Claes Oldenburg, Rose interview, CD 6, 23 March 1968.

16. Claes Oldenburg, Rose interview, CD 6, 23 March 1968.

17. Claes Oldenburg, Rose interview, CD 6, 23 March 1968.

18. John Updike, "Introduction," in The Art of Mickey *Mouse ed. Craig Yoe and Janet Morray-Yoe, (New York: Hyperion, 1991): n.p.* Updike, n.p.

19. Robert Hughes, *The Shock of the New*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981, 356.
20. Claes Oldenburg, Rose interview, CD 21, 16 April 1974.
21. Claes Oldenburg, Rose interview, CD 21, 16 April 1974.
22. Oldenburg's Mouse has eye rims, which was the Mouse that would have been seen "in the graphic art of the early Thirties." Gottfredson's Mouse, was also from the early Thirties, but his drawings of Mickey do not have eye rims. See John Updike, "Introduction," in The Art of Mickey *Mouse ed. Craig Yoe and Janet Morray-Yoe, (New York: Hyperion, 1991): n.p.*
23. Varnedoe and Gopnik, 210.
24. Hughes, *The Shock of the New*, 356.
25. Maurice Tuchman, *Art and Technology, Report on the Art & Technology Program of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1967–1971*. New York: The Viking Press, 1971, 19.
26. Tuchman, 19.
27. Tuchman, 241.
28. Tuchman, 244.
29. Tuchman, 244.
30. Telephone conversation with Neil E. McClure, August, 1999.
31. Tuchman, 242
32. Tuchman, 247.
33. Tuchman, 241.
34. Tuchman, 252.
35. Tuchman, 242.
36. "33—Metamorphic studies of cartoon mice, 'OhBOBOOY', Chicago, 1968," Claes Oldenburg, *Notes in Hand*, New York: Dutton, 1971, n.p. An early Mouse head is from 1966, Mouse head variations. "This drawing stared as a demonstration of how the mouse head subject was derived from the shape of the early film camera." Drawing and note page 22. See drawings and notes pages 22, 33, 43, 44, 48.
37. Martin Friedman, *Oldenburg, Six Theme* (Minneapolis: Walker Center, 1975), 33.
38. Claes Oldenburg, Rose interview, CD 6, 23 March 1968.
39. Claes Oldenburg, Rose interview, CD 5, 23 March 1968.
40. Barbara Haskell, *Claes Oldenburg Object Into Monument*. Pasadena, California: Pasadena Art Museum, 1971, 110. And so I have, but there are many more mice by more artists to come.
41. Claes Oldenburg, Rose interview, CD 21, 16 April 1974.
42. Tuchman, 264.
43. Claes Oldenburg, Rose interview and Patty Mucha, "Sewing in the sixties: recounting how some classic examples of Claes Oldenburg's Pop sculpture came into existence, with cameo appearances by Dick Bellamy, Dennis Hopper and Charlie the cat," excerpt posted http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G1-94079418.html. Reprinted from *Art in America*, November, 2002.
44. Patty Mucha, "Sewing in the sixties: recounting how some classic examples of Claes Oldenburg's Pop sculpture came into existence, with cameo appearances by Dick

Bellamy, Dennis Hopper and Charlie the cat," excerpt posted http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G1-94079418.html. Reprinted from *Art in America*, November, 2002.

45. Patty Mucha, "Sewing in the sixties: recounting how some classic examples of Claes Oldenburg's Pop sculpture came into existence, with cameo appearances by Dick Bellamy, Dennis Hopper and Charlie the cat," excerpt posted http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G1-94079418.html. Reprinted from *Art in America*, November, 2002.

Chapter Fifteen

The Ivory Towers Were Always Connected: Interdisciplinary Dia(b)logues as Challenge and Chance

Ursula Ganz-Blättler

Many of the early watchtowers whose remains can be found on mountains and hills throughout central Europe have originally been built for communication purposes. All through the Middle Ages they were not only used as outlook posts (. . . as the term suggests), but also as strategically positioned signposts which could, by way of reflecting mirrors and / or bonfires, quite rapidly transport messages over long distances from one end of a valley to the other. These tall and prominent buildings did not so much convey THE NOTION OF *loneliness* and some kind of outlandish *elitism*, but rather (like any other watchtower living up to its reputation) connectivity and collaboration.

This is why the often-used metaphor of the "Ivory Tower"—a place designing (specific) scientific customs and practices which include being cut-off or isolated from what is going on "out there"—always strikes me as significantly untrue. Studying in the times of the early Renaissance (and earlier, throughout the Twelfth and Thirteenth century) necessarily meant leaving home and travelling over great distances in order to reach places where either a thriving new center of commerce or a renowned church (. . . which was then perceived as "think tank" for developing practical uses for recently acquired information technologies) entertained a university. These amazingly innovative centers for knowledge broking were necessarily intercultural and multilingual, with Latin used as a metropolitan, mutually compatible "lingua franca." In some schools at least, resource materials and suggested reading lists incorporated the latest in Muslim sociology and philosophy, which was taught either in original Arabic or in Western translations.

It is only due to recent developments over the last 200 or 300 years that the academic worlds have become more and more segregated and specialized.

While "science" implicates a basic conception as dialogical (and thus international, and more often global) affair, the respective talks seem to be restricted to limited territories (or "sciences") only. In terms of interdisciplinary practices, such dialogue nowadays extends to an amazingly poor range of disciplines.

When cardiologists, risk sociologists and communication specialists get together to discuss issues of health care and heart disease prevention, such events prove to be welcome, but also rare occasions for a wide-range, multi-perspective exchange. Then again, since every discipline comes neatly packaged with its own set of preferred procedures, prejudices and fine-tuned terminology, the challenges of such endeavors are not to be underestimated. It is not an easy task to downsize one's own techno-babble in order to try to establish a common ground with someone coming from the next watchtower beyond the valley. Especially if this someone is an undisputed expert in her or his own field, but most certainly an absolute beginner and laywoman in mine.

As can be learned from the earlier academic experiences throughout the Middle Ages and Early Modernity, an interdisciplinary dialogue on a larger scale can only be achieved when three conditions work in favor of each other:

- There need to be communication networks allowing for random exchange of ideas and reflection.
- There need to be scientific centers as focalization points ready for the reception of promising ideas and for the active support of sparks igniting at the crossroads of the traditional, older disciplines.
- And there definitely needs to be a common ground, a shared mutual respect and a resulting set of respectively established linguistic codes as bottom line from where new and more collaborative terminologies can emerge.

Examples of how such an academic "Verknüpfungskultur" or culture of connectivity[1] might be organized and supported in the future can be found with regards to various cultural practices recently emerging within (or, more often, moving over into) computer-mediated communication. Such endeavors to be closely observed are *Wikipedia* (the Online Encyclopaedia successfully employing, and adapting century-old systems of collaborative knowledge organization), several variations of the individually and collectively alimented *blogosphere* currently emerging on the Web, but also various institutional efforts that encourage academic discussions on a monitored, yet deliberately "low-tech" and personalized base such as *Flow,* a critical forum on television and media culture published bi-weekly by the Department of Radio, Television and Film, University of Texas at Austin.[2]

So far no one can tell if the Internet will really go down into history as that great and inviting canvas for all creative groups, great or small, to collabora-

tively leave their prints and signature traits. With regards to the worldwide academic community, or communities, the Internet options have been embraced only hesitantly, until now. Far more, there is a significant amount of skepticism as to what extent any Open Source initiative can (and should) be submitted to rigorous standards of scientific quality.[3] What this intervention tries to invite is not so much the establishing of futuristic (utopian or dystopian) scenarios, as tempting as this may be—but rather to look back on century-long traditions of connectivity and collaboration in order to be inspired for the future. There are many "points of origin" to start and ignite from. Why not take the image of the Ivory Tower and turn it into a powerful metaphor once again, allowing the "lonely watchtower" to be conceived as connected, and as part of an illuminating system that allows us to see further. Further into what could lie ahead, that is. But also further back into what shaped us in the first place and brought us here.

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Hepp, Andreas / Krotz, Friedrich / Moores, Shaun / Winter, Carsten (eds.); Konnektivität, Netzwerk und Fluss. Konzepte gegenwärtiger Medien-, Kommunikations-und Kulturtheorie. Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften 2006.

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NOTES

1. A term borrowed from Diederichsen (2004); for a more communicational perspective see Hepp et al. (2006) and Hepp (2006).
2. For *Flow* as example of a monitored exchange between scholars of various nationalities and shades of (mostly) Cultural Studies see http://jot.communication.utexas.edu/flow/ (28.6.2006).
3. . . . resulting, for instance, in the fact that many Swiss university faculties do not allow the quoting of *Wikipedia* sources, for a claimed lack of validity and / or reliability.

Chapter Sixteen

Socially Engaged Art, Critics, and Discontents: An Interview with Claire Bishop

Jennifer Roche

What criteria should we use to evaluate socially engaged art?

London-based critic Claire Bishop recently raised provocative questions and poked at the critical status quo about the discourse surrounding what she termed, "relational" practices—socially engaged art, community-based art, experimental communities, dialogic art, littoral art, participatory, interventionist, research-based and collaborative art.

In her article for *Artforum* (February 2006), titled "The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents," Bishop argues that the creativity behind socially engaged art is said to "rehumanize" a "numb and fragmented" society. However, she emphasizes that she believes socially engaged art has fallen prey to circumscribed critical examinations. The discourse, she argues, has focused mainly on the artist's process and intentions, or the project's socially ameliorative effects, to the neglect of the work's aesthetic impact.

"Artists are increasingly judged by their working process—the degree to which they supply good or bad models of collaboration," she writes. "Accusations of mastery and egocentrism are leveled at artists who work with participants to realize a project instead of allowing it to emerge through consensual collaboration."

"There can be no failed, unsuccessful, unresolved, or boring works of collaborative art because all are equally essential to the task of strengthening the social bond," she continues. "While I am broadly sympathetic to that ambition, I would argue that it is also crucial to discuss, analyze, and compare such work critically as art."

Bishop draws on the notion of the aesthetic as defined by philosopher Jacques Rancière, who said that the aesthetic is the "ability to think contradiction." "For Rancière," writes Bishop, "the aesthetic doesn't need to be

sacrificed at the altar of social change, as it already inherently contains this ameliorative process." In other words, art heals. No need to hurry it along.

Bishop identified the writing surrounding the Turkish artists' collective Oda Projesi as emblematic of the way "aesthetic judgments have been overtaken by ethical criteria." When Bishop interviewed Oda Projesi for an earlier article, the collective—whose works include fostering community projects with its neighbors out of a three-room apartment in Istanbul—said they were interested in "dynamic and sustained relationships," not aesthetics. In fact, they said they deemed "aesthetic" to be a dangerous word. "This seemed to me to be a curious response," notes Bishop. "If the aesthetic is dangerous, isn't that all the more reason it should be interrogated?"

Bishop cites works by British artists Jeremy Deller and Phil Collins, Polish artist Artur Zmijewski and Brussels-born artist Carsten Höller as producing works that yield richer aesthetic possibilities. For example, she mentions Deller's "The Battle of Orgreave," which was a reenactment of a 1984 English miners' confrontation with police, complete with participation by a historical reenactment society. She cites its ambiguous purpose and result, along with its many, often contradictory layers of meaning and interpretation, as yielding a deeper, multifaceted work. She argues that this occurs, in part, because the artist acted on his desires rather than according to particular ethical criteria.

"Their work joins a tradition of highly authored situations that fuse social reality with carefully calculated artifice," Bishop says of Deller and the others. Like Dadaism before them, they created "intersubjective relations (that) weren't an end in themselves but rather served to unfold a more complex knot of concerns about pleasure, visibility, engagement, and the conventions of social interaction."

Bishop clearly wishes to shed the recurring ethical themes in the critical discourse, which she often describes as Christian ideals of self-sacrifice and "good souls," in favor of embracing the contradiction that naturally arises from the artist's intentions.

"The best collaborative practices of the past ten years," she concludes, "address this contradictory pull between autonomy and social intervention, and reflect on this antinomy both in the structure of the work and in the conditions of its reception. It is to this art—however uncomfortable, exploitative, or confusing it may first appear—that we must turn for an alternative to the well-intentioned homilies that today pass for critical discourse on social collaboration."

Not surprisingly, Bishop's article generated considerable interest, including a full-page rebuttal by art historian and critic Grant Kester in *Artforum*'s follow-up issue. CAN (communityartsnetwork) asked me to inter-

view her to learn more about her thoughts on evaluating socially engaged art and her current work. I caught up with her in early July, and we conducted the interview via e-mail.

Jennifer Roche: Your article, simply put, seems to be a call to examine (or re-examine) the principles under which we evaluate socially engaged art. You say that most socially engaged art has been evaluated from an ethical viewpoint (good vs. bad models of collaboration). Why do you think the discourse surrounding socially engaged art has lapsed in its critical examination of the field as you've described?

Claire Bishop: There are several reasons for this, and they range from the pragmatic to the ideological. On the one hand, in Europe at least, the influence of the art critic began to diminish in the early 1990s, and was replaced by the curator as the figure who makes or breaks an artist's career. And as we know, curatorial writing is on the whole affirmative and rarely expresses reservations about a given artist. When I embarked upon this research I was struck by the fact that most of the project documentation was written by curators. To an extent this is logistical: socially engaged and participatory art projects are so complex, sprawling and context-based that the only person with a handle on the overall project is invariably the curator. But because curatorial work is so often concerned with fair mediation (between artists, audiences and institutions), it is perhaps unsurprising that curatorial writing is oriented toward ethical questions.

On the other hand, we could also claim that an orientation towards the ethical is part of a larger trend in the 1990s, symptomatic of what has been called our "post-political" age. Slavoj Zizek, Jacques Rancière and others have observed an "ethical turn" in philosophy (as evidenced in the resurgence of interest in Emmanuel Levinas, in Giorgio Agamben, and in the idea of "radical evil" amongst Lacanian theorists), and this is also reflected in contemporary politics. The rise of communitarian discourse in the mid-1990s was underpinned by a desire to promote a homogeneous and consensual view of society: an "ethical community" in which political dissensus is dissolved. As Rancière points out in "Malaise dans l'Esthetique" (2004), this thinking also submits art and politics to moral judgments bearing on the validity of their principles and the consequences of their practices. He is not speaking directly of socially engaged art, but these ideas can be carried across with great poignancy.

JR: In your description of what a better critical discourse would require, you argue that the answer might lie in the French philosopher Jacques Rancière's argument that the "aesthetic is the ability to think contradiction." Would you elaborate on what you think best collaborative practices exhibit (beyond those projects you describe in your article)?

CB: This is a complicated question. I would like to argue that the best collaborative practices need to be thought of in terms other than their ameliorative consequences; they should also question the very terms of these ameliorative assumptions. My view is inevitably influenced by living in the U.K., where New Labour have for the last nine years instrumentalized art to fulfill policies of social inclusion—a cost-effective way of justifying public spending on the arts while diverting attention away from the structural causes of decreased social participation, which are political and economic (welfare, transport, education, healthcare, etc.). In this context it is crucial for art practices to tread a careful line between social intervention and autonomy, since demonstrable outcomes are rapidly co-opted by the state. Temporary Services once asked me which was worse: to be instrumentalized by the state or by the art market. I'm afraid I think it's the former.

I am also wary of the idea that there is a privileged medium for works of art. The mere fact of being collaborative, or participatory, or interactive, is not enough to legitimize a work or guarantee its significance. It is more important to observe how it addresses—and intervenes in—the dominant conventions and relations of its time. If we look at the proliferation of collaborative art practices today, it seems that many no longer have the oppositional and anti-authoritarian punch they had in the late 1960s and 1970s—when radical theatre, community arts and critical pedagogy emerged in opposition to dominant modes of social control. Today participation is used by business as a tool for improving efficiency and workforce morale; it is all-pervasive in the mass-media in the form of reality television; and it is a privileged medium for government funding agencies seeking to create the impression of social inclusion. Collaborative practices need to take this knot of conventions on board if they are to have critical bite.

JR: What do you think the heightened critical discourse you're advocating requires from the artist(s) engaged in socially collaborative art? From the communities considering socially engaged art or participating in it?

CB: It requires intelligence and imagination and risk and pleasure and generosity, both from the artists and the participants. For a while I have been tempted to write an article that pushes the ethical question a bit further, from a Lacanian angle. It would argue that the best socially collaborative art does not derive from a superegoic injunction to "love thy neighbor," but from the position of "do not give up on your desire." In other words, pursue your unconscious desire, as far as you can. The former (eg Grace in "Dogville") involves a sacrificial stance: it is the politically correct position of doing what seems right in the eyes of others. The logic of the latter is about taking responsibility for your own desire, rather than acting out of

guilt (for example, about being an artist). In Seminar VII Lacan draws a link between this ethical position and the beautiful. I haven't written this article as I'm not convinced of its ability to tell us much about contemporary art. But has guided my reading of certain works—by Collins, Zmijewski, Althamer, etc.

JR: You talk in your article quite a bit about the role that the artist's "authorial status" plays in socially engaged art. Would you explain what you mean by "authorial status" and why you consider it so significant to socially engaged art?

CB: By "authorial status" I simply mean an original and distinctive voice. I have found that socially engaged projects are on the whole rather formulaic and predictable, placing greater emphasis on the participants' creativity than on rethinking the conventions of participation, which are today somewhat orthodox. There is a common belief that reduced authorial status is more "democratic" and "ethical" than an artist imposing their vision or will on a group of participants. I think we can question all of these assumptions. Overturning the very premises from which social engagement operates can be both artistically and critically invigorating.

JR: Your article stimulated a lot of conversation. One discussion on the Web, in LeisureArts blog, raised a compelling point. The writer said:

I think (Bishop) misses something very important . . . namely that many of these practices might be better served by not considering them via art critical methodologies at all. There are a number of forms of cultural production that might call for new theoretical tools to interpret properly . . . I suspect there are many people operating in the domain of art discourse because they have nowhere else to go, even though their interest in connections to an art historical lineage is ancillary at best.

JR: What do you think of this?

CB: I completely agree that turning to other disciplines can help to sharpen our mode of discussion about works of art, particularly those that step into the social arena. Political philosophy and psychoanalysis have helped me to articulate my reservations about the political claims made for relational aesthetics. I am currently looking at sociology as a way to be more precise about the idea of "inclusion" and "participation" in socially engaged art. The task is to bind these ideas together in a discussion of the work's overall meaning as art.

But what this quote implies—and which I resist very strongly—is the idea that art is the "last place" to go for engagement, that it is the only remaining "free space." This idea is dangerous and lazy. It signals a retreat from the political, rather than the invention and assertion of new territories. It is fine for socially engaged and activist work to operate within the domain of art dis-

course, providing it also contributes something to that discourse (which actually does have an art historical lineage—think of Situationism, Joseph Beuys, Group Material. . .). It is comparable to a practice-led PhD: the practical work and the theoretical text both have to be PhD standard, equally important contributions to the field. But if the claims for transdisciplinarity are to be taken seriously, then these projects should also function within other discourses too. The situation I would want to avoid is of inconsequential practices that make no impact on either field.

JR: Why does your argument require that the ethical evaluation of socially engaged art be described as Christian? What does that mean for collaborative work arising out of cultures that are not historically Christian?

CB: The argument doesn't require that the ethical evaluation of socially engaged art be described as Christian—this is simply my cultural reference point for a self-sacrificial position, especially one performed for the eyes of the big Other. This is not to denigrate Christianity per se—there are many things worth salvaging in that tradition, as Zizek has argued. What interests me is his critique of contemporary ethico-political responsibility as a form of ideological absolution: it saves us from having to take on board an "ethics of the Real," in which we are responsible for our own actions and the potentially traumatic consequences of these actions.

In terms of collaborative work arising from other cultures: this is complicated, and I certainly considered it before using Oda Projesi as a case study. But eventually the focus of my article was the discourse that presently surrounds this work in the West; regardless of where the artist comes from, the work (especially if it circulates here) can still be subject to critical analysis. This doesn't mean ignoring the cultural context, just being alert to the way in which a reading overdetermined by this can swiftly become an excuse for not thinking through what it means for yourself. I hear these excuses all the time—not in relation to religion, admittedly—but as a form of positive discrimination in which the artist's culture/identity is more important than what we encounter.

JR: We caught up with you while you were traveling in Thailand to visit The Land Foundation in Chiang Mai. What piqued your interest in visiting them at this time? What did you learn?

CR: I am immensely grateful to the Leverhulme Trust for a research grant. I decided it would be useful to visit the "spiritual home" of relational art, Thailand. The Land in Chiang Mai is one of the most frequently cited examples of a socially engaged "relational" project, and almost all accounts of it are written by curators (Obrist, Birnbaum, etc). I spent four days in and around The Land Foundation, talking to its co-founder, the artist Kamin Lerdchaiprasert, and to Uthit Athimana, Professor of Media Art Design at Chiang

Mai University (on the board of the Foundation). My day with Uthit made the whole trip worthwhile as I learnt about Chiang Mai Social Installation: a series of impromptu and participatory performance and live installation festivals in Chiang Mai during the 1990s. These began without knowledge of Rirkrit Tiravanija's work (he didn't return to Thailand until 1996), and yet there are clear overlaps.

The Land itself is quite small: a functioning farm allotment-cum-architectural park located a 40-minute drive outside the city. The map to find it is elaborate—like the instructions to reach Spiral Jetty or Double Negative. It is extremely peaceful, and the pavilions are attractively modest. Several things about the project surprised me.

Firstly, the way in which entropy has already taken hold of The Land: Tobias Rehberger's pavilion was made with Swedish wood for a show at the Moderna Museet, and is now rotting in the tropical climate. Philippe Parreno's Battery House, which is supposed to generate its own electricity through an "elephant plug," has never worked. (For Parreno's film "The Boy From Mars" (2005), the building was lit artificially and a water buffalo "performed" the role originally intended for an elephant.) The building was supposed to fulfil Kamin's request for a meditation hall, but the concrete floor is curved, and punctuated by many struts, and cannot be used for this purpose. The ratio of water to land on the farm is organized according to the principles of a Buddhist agriculturalist, Chaloui Kaewkong, but this too isn't really working: the water is stagnant rather than flowing. Ironically, all these "failures" really endeared the project to me.

Secondly, that the only people who live on the site full-time are peasant farmers, who keep the premises ticking over. The bulk of the Foundation's activities take place in a group of buildings on the edge of the city, in a leafy district called Umong. There is an exhibition space/yoga hall with two offices, a meditation hall, a guest house, and a house with an open kitchen. Rirkrit is building a house on the adjacent plot. Several young people live and work on site, answering the phone and dealing with enquiries. Just after I arrived some of them also accompanied Kamin on an agricultural research trip to the north of Thailand. The week after I left, a group of Singaporean street artists were coming to stay. Umong is the hub of social activities, in contrast to which The Land itself is rather static.

Thirdly, that The Land is the result of conflicting ideas. For Kamin it is essentially a spiritual project. He wants to create an experimental living situation that will help him understand his place in the world, one that will hopefully be good for other people too. He is drawn to an ideal of self-sufficiency (inspired by Chaloui Kaewkong). Rirkrit, I understand, is more interested in an experimental project that fuses art and the social; he is less interested in

the spiritual dimension and more open to the possibility of buildings not functioning. Uthit is more skeptical, and has numerous reservations about the project. For example, he thinks that the engagement with experimental agriculture could be pushed much further (by collaborating with the agriculture department at the University, for instance), and that the Foundation should be more open about PR—in other words, that the rhetoric should be more adequate to the reality. The three are old friends, and it is clear that they have a constructive dialogue in which these differences can surface.

JR: What are you working on next?

CB: I've just finished editing a reader of key texts on participation in art since the late 1950s, which will be published in September. I've also been trying to order all my thoughts on the problem of socially engaged art into a book, but I'm struggling and still feel lightyears away from a coherent argument. My research fellowship ends in September and then I begin a new job as History of Art lecturer at Warwick University.

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Chapter Seventeen

"Detrimental to the Interests of the United States": Cuban Artists (Not) in Residence

Jenni Drozdek

Imagine the following scenario: you are walking toward the doors of a building located on the corner of Sampsonia Way on the North Side of Pittsburgh. As you turn the doorknob, a resounding "NO" startles you, and you hesitate before entering further. Ignoring your apprehension, you enter a stark room; the echoing "NO" repeats intermittently. You are drawn to the sound and find that it emanates from a giant white cubic structure that houses a large speaker. An identical white box faces it, and as you walk between the two, it is immediately obvious that though both structures accommodate speakers, they differ vastly in size. The forceful "NO" now reverberates throughout your body as you lean toward the tiny speaker and struggle to listen to its message. A pause between NOs allows you to hear a hushed voice. "Si," "yes" in Spanish, it counters, barely contradicting the raucous "NO" of its formidable neighbor.

In fact, the above is a description of a work of art created by the Cuban artist Yoán Capote. Titled *Impotence*, it was a work about opposition and incongruity. For all intents and purposes, it was simply constructed and almost minimalist in structure, relying on an auditory "yes" and "no" to convey its meaning. That the "NO" was louder, more intrusive and more remarkable is both significant and fundamental to the piece, an observation that will become much clearer by the end of this paper. As a Cuban-born and based artist, Capote, who along with his brother Iván, contributed installation works to Pittsburgh's Mattress Factory Museum, was denied an opportunity to take part in the museum's residency program to install his work of art. Though his work was ultimately created in spite of mounting difficulties, he nevertheless felt the "impotence" imposed upon him by the U.S. government. Thus his work's title was a fitting description of not only his own situation, but also of

the other Cuban artists who exhibited—a perpetual "NO" mocking and frustrating their efforts.

On October 3, 2004, the Mattress Factory, a museum dedicated to contemporary installation art, launched an exhibition called *New Installations, Artists in Residence: Cuba*.[1] As part of its mission as a "research and development laboratory for artists," the Mattress Factory commissions and exhibits site-specific works.[2] From 1995, and coinciding with Pittsburgh's Carnegie International, the museum began launching a major exhibition. In 1995 it was "Artists of Central and Eastern Europe" and in 1999, "Asian Installations." A significant resource for the creators of these site-specific installations is the Mattress Factory's "Artists in Residence" program. Those artists invited for residency, which can last anywhere from a week to several months, are provided with all the tools and equipment, labor and assistance, and any other support needed to realize their works of art. In addition to the actual materials and professional labor required, the Artists in Residence program provides housing, transportation, a per diem, and honorarium, allowing the artist to maintain concentration on the work at hand without the financial worries of daily life. However, what is mostly gained for the artist (and museum) is his or her full participation in the installation project. The artist, therefore, is in complete control of the result of the project, even if he or she is not alone in manually constructing the entire installation.

This description of the Artists in Residence program is a crucial component to this discussion because none of the Cuban artists of the 2004 show ever took residence in Pittsburgh, and thus the title of the exhibition, *New Installations, Artists in Residence: Cuba* was, I believe, very consciously ironic. The entire lack of physical presence of these Cuban artists had nothing to do with disinterest or apathy on their part and everything to do with the political friction between Cuba and the United States, which has not ceased since Fidel Castro seized power in January 1959. This paper will focus on the 2004 exhibition of Cuban artists and concentrate on three of the exhibition's works. Such an examination will show how the exhibition evoked and critiqued, both implicitly and explicitly, Cuban-American relations. However, I do not want to suggest that the works should be grouped together simply as "Cuban works"; such a categorization is too simplistic and does not give credence to their complexity and individuality. Yet, several themes did arise and interweave among the artists' works: primarily, control (both its presence and lack), impotence, and memory. But before discussing specific works, a brief summary of the conception and realization of the exhibition must be given.

Political tensions often invite interesting and compelling artworks, an observation not lost upon Barbara Luderowski and Michael Olijnyk, the Mattress Factory's director and curator, respectively. After studio visits and an

agreed collaboration with Cuban-based curator Maria Gonzáles-Mora, eleven Cuban artists were invited to create new installations at the Mattress Factory, an intriguing prospect for those who previously have not had the opportunity to work on such a large scale or utilize an entire gallery space.[3] Travel between Cuba and the United States has been problematic for a long time, but in 2003 further restrictions were placed.[4] Thus the curator and director planned on only half of the artists arriving for residency. As part of the application for travel visas, the artists' passports were held for six months, and the Mattress Factory sent a letter to Pennsylvania senator Arlen Specter, requesting that visas be granted so the artists could install their works. Ultimately, all of the requests were denied. The official reason given by both Specter and a stamped pronouncement on all the artists' passports was that their proposed visits were "detrimental to the interests of the United States."[5]

In June 2004, George W. Bush instituted tougher travel and trade embargos upon Cuba. According to *Democracy Now*'s Amy Goodman, even Cuban-Americans can only "visit immediate relatives on the island . . . once every three years, instead of [the previous] once per year. Visits can last no longer than 14 days. U.S. citizens who are not Cuban-Americans are banned from visiting the island nation." Additionally, according to attorney Art Heitzer, who chairs the National Lawyer's Guild's Cuba Subcommittee, there exists a "control of exchange" where, for example, U.S. publications have been warned against even translating Cuban articles.[6] In fact, restrictions have increased so dramatically that even communication with Cubans proved potentially dangerous. Luderowski and Olijnyk had to hire an attorney to monitor and advise every step in the organization and completion of the Mattress Factory exhibition. According to Luderowski, because Cuba is considered "the enemy," a relationship with the nation is akin to one with Al Queda, and thereby, the museum's communications were being monitored.[7]

Dismayed at the refusal to grant the artists travel visas, the Mattress Factory was not defeated and resolved to continue with the implementation of the exhibition. Because of the unusual circumstances of this show, i.e. the absence of the artists and thus their inability to take physical part in the construction of their site-specific works, a new kind of collaboration between curators and artists evolved. Working with González-Mora, the staff of the museum ultimately fulfilled the artists' creative visions via phone and email communication, faxes and postal mail, and "safe" meetings within Canadian borders, where Cubans are granted entry. Every element of the installation was discussed with each artist so that he or she always had the final word. Samples were sent, countless photographs were taken as documentation, parts and tools were ordered and minds were changed; and the artist, though absent in body, was always present in spirit, the realization of his or her work being

the only goal for which to aim. The outcome resulted in eleven very different and very powerful works, three of which will be examined here in some detail. It should be noted that because the works were temporary installations, they now exist only in photographic documentation.

The first work under discussion, Glenda León's *Habitat* and *Night Fantasy*, consisted of a bed facing a black wall, on which a portion of the night sky was reproduced, incorporating studded rhinestone earrings to represent each individual star. The bed itself became Nature transformed. Photographs of earth and rocks claimed the mattress and pillow, while a "comforter" of artificial lawn represented the grass. The headboard comprised another photograph of the Cuban sky, interspersed with billowing clouds. Thus León introduced representations of several elements of nature—sky, earth, and, as I will argue, water—into her work.

What León ultimately accomplished was the appropriation of the uncontrollable—Nature itself—onto which she asserted control through her clever transposition of nature onto man-made materials. Her procurement of control was a significant part of this work since so little power was given to her, owing to the restrictive travel embargo. Yet she did not let her absence be felt: the images of sky, rocks and earth of the bed all consisted of photographs she took in Cuba. Though she could not be present, she assured that part of Cuba was.

Though the side of the room that she titled *Habitat* incorporated photographs taken on Cuban soil, the opposite wall encompassed a completely artificial space; no photographs existed to capture reality. The wall, painted entirely black and speckled with makeshift stars, was a clever *trompe l'oeil*. Between the bed and wall of this night sky, or between *Habitat* and *Night Fantasy* (note too the titles' allusions to the real versus fanciful), rested the floor. Though not explicitly incorporated into the work itself, the floor became a significant facet of it; both its bluish-gray tonality and the allusion of space between earth and horizon suggested water, adding another element of nature to the work. And such an allusion is not minor, since more than half of the works in the exhibition made some explicit or implicit reference to water. To first state the obvious, that Cuba is an island, therefore surrounded by water from all sides. And water, both metaphorically and metonymically, serves as a powerful and loaded symbol for the Cuban people. Many have traversed it to escape a repressive regime only to enter a country that rejects them. In fact, the emigration from Cuba to the United States on makeshift boats or rafts is such a familiar occurrence that there is a specific term for such exiles: the *balseros*.[8] According to Marilyn Zeitlin, "the sea is a presence you constantly encounter in Havana. . . . [It] is the way into the world, but is also the barrier."[9] This statement is a powerful one since it reinforces the theme of impotence that pervaded so many of the works shown at the Mattress Factory.

Returning to León's work, one can now perhaps better understand the introduction of the water motif into it. As Zeitlin noted, it can serve as a barrier, an observation underscored in the artificiality of León's *Night Fantasy.* For when our imaginary *balsero* traverses the "water" of León's world, he or she encounters only impenetrable and impassable space, making his or her exodus from the island impossible. Is it any coincidence, then, that her bed recalled a grave? Does it not elicit the idea that such a pilgrimage would lead to death? Of course, not all *balseros* die during their journey to the U.S., yet thoughts of death must be unremitting when making such a journey, which is prohibited by both Cuba and the United States.

Another work that dealt more explicitly with such an emigration was created by José Emilio Fuentes Fonseca, or JEFF, as he is also known. JEFF's installation, *Sentamiento* and *Pensamiento* consisted of two rusted structures in the shape of a house and boat, evoking the paper boats children make to float in a bathtub. Inside both the large boat and house were miniature boats floating on rust-colored and encrusted water.

Certainly any interpretations relating to the *balseros* are less far-fetched with this work. Note that, for example, small boats were encased within larger structures, which effectively impeded their egress. Therefore, the small boats were forced to float uselessly and unproductively, never reaching any actual destination. That they were surrounded by and made up of rust is noteworthy as well. Rust connotes an ongoing process of neglect. And is this not what *balseros* must feel? Neglected by their government and ignored by the United States? That neglect must be a recurring Cuban *sentiment*, a word I use deliberately, seems a reasonable supposition. Thus, JEFF's titles for the house, *Thought,* and the large boat, *Feeling,* were fitting.

Finally, it is also significant that the artist incorporated child-like elements into his work, in which the house and boats resembled a large playhouse and folded paper-boats. That these structures were rusted alludes to one's own innocence eventually giving way to the "pollution," if you will, of experience. And therefore, playful imagery became invested with painful feelings, particularly the impotence of the *balseros*.

The final work that will be discussed is *Landscape* by Erik García Gómez, who photographed, in ten-minute intervals, a single spot off the coast of Havana for a twenty-four hour period. The work consisted of a large rectangular metal structure suspended from the ceiling that housed a long reel of photographic film—actually a combination of single images that were spliced together to form a sort of panorama—around its perimeter in which one encountered the day from sunrise to sunset (and it is important to note that the film was positioned at eye-level). But if one had the patience to stand motionless for twenty-four hours, the reel of film would change before their

eyes. A motor within the metal casing imperceptibly moved the reel one rotation each full day. Water, in this work, was a focal point. And the specific location from which Gómez took the photographs is also an important observation. Havana, after all, faces the United States, and the water off its shores has been innumerably traversed. As one looked at the ocean view of Gómez's photographs, the horizon appeared far-off and remote; infinite space seemed to separate Cuba from the United States. That the same scene was repeated over and over again for the duration of a day, and that one could walk around the entire structure and never find an "end," only enhanced the futility felt by the *balsero*, now embodied by the viewer. One could resolve to walk around Gómez's structure or stand in front of it for eternity but would be forever situated in the same spot; no traversal across the ocean could ever be made.

The concepts of impotence and memory in regards to the above works have hopefully now been elucidated. However, it would be wise to return to the idea of control, since, in their works, the artists referred to its absence while also assuming it. Certainly as artists and makers of works, they gained control in the mere act of creation, though in this case, not necessarily the physical completion of the works. Yet the ideas and elements reflected in their works also interrogated the idea of control. León, for example, appropriated Nature, thus taking control of what is in essence and reality completely uncontrollable. JEFF, too, assumed control by, first, expediting the natural rusting process of materials via a chemical one, and, more subtly, metaphorically enclosing and, at the same time, exposing both thought and feeling (recall the titles of his works). Finally, García Gómez, like León, appropriated control of nature: in this case by allowing the viewer to experience the duration of a single day as many times as he or she desired. One could walk around the artist's installation, watching the sun rise and set. Moreover, one could turn back the hands of time by walking around the work in reverse.

Such assuming of control resonated throughout the exhibition, even with the symbolic absence of the artists. The installation by Luis Gómez, for example, which consisted of a tangle of cords and projectors that beamed live-action imagery onto the stark walls, serves as an example. Feeling utterly frustrated at his inability to install and create within the gallery, Gómez decided to let his absence become a part of his art. Each webcam was sent to friends and colleagues around the world, and it was they who decided what images would be projected. The imagery could change at any time and often did exactly that. Unavoidable were the frequent breakdowns in communication, which, if anything, only added to the significance of the work. That he completely gave up control of this work was, in fact, a taking up of it. Gómez's absence became a powerful political statement that forced the viewer of the installation to confront the harsh facts of the U.S. administration's decision. And such a

confrontation was inescapable throughout the exhibition, though, to reiterate, was not an explicit or shared intention.

I would like to close with a quote by Cuban curator and exhibition collaborator Maria Gonzáles-Mora, who claimed that "the fact that [the show] features the work of . . . artists, all of whom reside [in Cuba], and opened barely a month before one of the more controversial and tension-filled U.S. elections, will make this exhibition especially significant. . . . By taking [it on], the Mattress Factory is living up to its core beliefs, its ethical stance and its philosophy."[10] Her statement reaffirms the feeling of many of us who took part in or visited the exhibition: that only the suppression of these artists' works, *not* their presence inside our borders, would have been detrimental to the interests of the United States.

NOTES

1. All information about the artists and the works of art in the exhibition was gathered from the accompanying catalogue published by the Mattress Factory, *New Installations, Artists in Residence: Cuba* (Pittsburgh: The Mattress Factory, 2004).

2. For a discussion about the history of and installation at the Mattress Factory, see Claudia Giannini, ed., *Installations, Mattress Factory, 1990-1999* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001) and *Mattress Factory: Installation and Performance, 1982-1989* (Pittsburgh: The Mattress Factory, 1991).

3. The artists included Iván Capote, Yoán Capote, René Francisco, Ángel Delgado, JEFF, Eric Garcia Gómez, Luis Gómez, Glenda León, Sandra Ramos, Lázaro Saavedra, and José Toirac (who collaborated with wife Meira Marrero and American artist Loring McAlpin).

4. For a historical discussion about Cuban-American relations and recent embargos see Patrick J. Haney and Walt Vanderbush, *The Cuban Embargo: The Domestic Politics of an American Foreign Policy* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005).

5. Information about the logistics involved and problems encountered during the preparation of the exhibition was taken from a lecture, "Overcoming Hurdles: Organizing New Installations, Artists in Residence: Cuba" given by curator Michael Olijnyk and director Barbara Luderowski on November 20, 2004. See also Bill O'Driscoll, "Artists Embargoed," *Pittsburgh City Paper,* August 12, 2004.

6. Amy Goodman conducted an interview with Art Heitzer on June 21, 2004 in a segment titled "Bush vs. Cuba: The Quiet War" on the radio program, *Democracy Now!* A transcript from the interview, from where the above information was taken, is available on www.democracynow.org.

7. This information was taken from Museum Educators' training sessions at the Mattress Factory, where I served as a Museum Educator.

8. One of the most famous *balseros* was Elian Gonzalez, whose 1999 emigration from Cuba became a media sensation in both Cuba and the United States, both countries attempting to claim him after his mother's death. See also Miguel Gonzalez-Pando, *The Cuban Americans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998).

9. Zeitlin curated an exhibition of Cuban artists at the Arizona State University Art Museum in 1998. Marilyn Zeitlin, ed., *Contemporary Art from Cuba: Irony and Survival on the Utopian Island* (New York: Arizona State University Press/Delano Greenidge Editions, 1999).

10. Gonzáles-Mora in *New Installations, Artists in Residence: Cuba*.

Chapter Eighteen

Suzanne Lacy: Oakland Projects

Dena L. Hawes

Lacy's collaborative performance entitled *Code 33: Emergency Clear the Air* is the focus of our conversation.

In performance art, the artist makes decisions on the content of the performance without knowing what the interpretation or responses of the audience will ultimately be. The viewers' responses to performance art interventions illustrate how the meaning attributed to a situation or political event can change.

Performance artists, like peace builders, can create a context that will assist disputing parties in seeing themselves, their beliefs about their adversaries, and their conflictual actions from a new perspective. Performance art can be viewed as a valuable technique that complements modes of conflict resolution. It can be taken a step further in that performance art interventions can effectively become peace-building efforts.

Suzanne Lacy has a long history of collaborative art practice that engages viewers in critical discourse within areas of identity politics, looking at a variety of issues including how class, ethnicity, race, age, and authority can all be deconstructed through time, space, and environment. Lacy's 1987 public performance project entitled *The Crystal Quilt* brought together four hundred and thirty aging women to discuss their personal triumphs and disappointments and their experiences with aging. The collaborative experience served as an example of the healing power of relationship and empathetic listening. The finale performance of *Code 33: Emergency Clear the Air* involved one hundred and fifty teenagers and one hundred police men and women in Oakland, California, as well as hundreds of people from the local and surrounding communities to talk about the dangers that youth and police face, and to open up possibilities for safer and more appropriate interactions between

young people and police officers. Sometimes heated discussion addressed hostility that some young people had towards police and served as a means of reaching a deeper understanding of youth needs.

Art can influence the way people interpret, perceive, and ultimately act in their communities. My empirical research for this study measured the impact that a specific kind of creative experience had on an audience in terms of its potential to shift attitudes. The study explored the issue of intentionality and how the artist's intention can influence the attitudes and perceptions of the viewer and change the way individual members of an audience perceive a group, situation, or political event. It explained how creative methods can improve awareness of the importance of effective communication, tolerance, and empathy and can potentially decrease violence through individual acknowledgment of the different narratives and multiple perspectives of a given group, situation, or political event.

Code 33: Emergency Clear the Air is a collaborative performance that was later made into a documentary film by Suzanne Lacy, Julio Morales and Unique Holland.

INTERVIEW WITH SUZANNE LACY

Dena Hawes: I'm interested in the concepts and issues that you were thinking about when you were working on/developing your performance *Code 33* (*Emergency Clear the Ai*r).

Suzanne Lacy: Let me get a little bit of orientation. From what perspective should I be speaking? Art or Public Policy? You're not dealing with art per se, right?

DH: Yes, art has to come into this. My dissertation topic is a sort of bridge between art and the social sciences—specifically conflict transformation. So, even though I'm writing this dissertation within the context of conflict resolution, I'm trying to flush out whether or not ideas that I see coming through your performance documentary video are operating in ways that I see them, or in ways that I think could benefit the field of conflict resolution. So we could talk about the whole variety of different ideas that were going through your mind when you were developing the piece.

SL: Okay. I have a long history of such works, and this project is part of that. By the time I started on *Code 33,* which was in 1997 or so, I had been working specifically within social justice areas as an artist for over 20 years. *Code 33* comes at the end of a ten-year trajectory of specific projects on youth in Oakland (California). So this project has a long history of cultural strategies just within my own work, as well as in the work of my contemporaries. Part of that involves

an aesthetic reconciliation with an avant-garde art practice in general during this time. So I was working with many concepts and issues as an artist, as an activist, and as an individual who wants to be of service.

So that's why I asked you if you want me to speak from artistic or political concepts. If art, that would take us back to Abstract Expressionism and to the Happenings and Fluxus movements. It would also take us back to my training and early work as a young feminist performance artist in Los Angeles in the '70s—and as somebody who was also involved in the ferment and upheaval and racial politics of the '60s through VISTA (Volunteers in Service and Training to America). Those are some of the social and aesthetic precedents that informed my personal engagement in the production of *Code 33*.

My public artistic work begins by posing questions; each work is a set of answers that lead to a new set of questions. The things I'm interested in are how and if art can provoke a change beyond the individual—a collective or social change. In other words, can art contribute meaningfully to a social justice discourse, but rise above the illustrative aspects that are typically part of the relationship between artists and movements? What is the role of an artist as author of a set of political perspectives and strategies, as opposed to the artist who illustrates specific issues? There was, particularly in the past, a kind of battle between artists and activists, with activists distrusting the artists' true intentions and their lack of clarity with respect to the party line.

I've always been interested in violence, and I've always been interested in race issues, and those came together in the '90s with the emergence of youth culture in the place where I lived—Oakland, California. Oakland has an incredibly diverse, African-American-based and activist culture. These were significant features of the ten-year series of works on and with young people that started in around 1992 and concluded in around 2000 with *Code 33* and a small later piece, *Eye 2 Eye at Fremont High*.

The concept and issues of the series of performances was born of my observation that most people, including myself, did not immediately live near, teach, or parent youth of color in urban centers, and did not know much about them except what they learned through the media. In other words, it was in recognition of my own social positioning and its very probable perceptual fallacies. So these works were meant to address the gap between lived reality (of the youth), and public perception of stereotypes used for overtly political purposes.

In the beginning it was to address this social fault line separating perceptions by race and class, and youth development became part of the strategy. So over the course of those ten years we worked with issues of education, health, parenting, pregnancy, sexuality, and police and youth issues—you

know, criminal justice issues, framing them both in terms of public perception and youth leadership development. The work was informed by leftist political thinking. It was informed by critical resistance and the anti-prison movement. It was informed by the radical work of people like Kristin Luker (Professor, UC Berkeley) and Mike Males (Associate Professor, UC Santa Cruz) who both wrote about the politics of teen pregnancy and, in Mike's case, teen issues in general. So we read a lot, talked a lot, and figured out our positions vis-à-vis these issues and how we wanted to represent these issues in the media, and we also figured out ways to substantively support young people, such as developing media literacy classes with high school teachers, providing faculty education seminars for the school system, and creating a youth leadership program—held weekly in City Hall, during *Code 33*.

For one project called *No Blood/No Foul* we worked with the city of Oakland to help create a city youth policy. We worked with the county Superintendent of Schools to create a prototype program for pregnant and parenting teens (a project called *Expectations*). So it's hard to answer what specific concepts and issues we dealt with, when, as you can see, it was fairly complex and lengthy—this engagement.

DH: Yes, I can see how complex it was.

SL: Do you want to ask about any specific aspects of the work?

DH: Yes I want to specifically discuss *Code 33: Emergency Clear the Air*. That's the one video-taped performance that I'm using in my research, and what you've explained to me is how you built up to. . . .

SL: The *Oakland Projects*, not *Code 33* specifically. The *Oakland Projects* were an attempt to see how far, within the civic structure and institutions, one could go as an artist—working artistically, and not lose the positionality of an artist. To become, in fact, something else, like a non-profit organization or a local politician or an organizational consultant. You know, it's sort of like when does art disappear? That was the overall artistic question that I was engaged with—one explored during the life's work of one of my own teachers, Allan Kaprow. Indeed, I didn't work alone, and over those years there were significant and recurring collaborations, sometimes produced under the name *T.E.A.M*, (Teens + Education + Art + Media), a sort of not-for-profit approach to getting grants and connecting the projects. But the real connection within the *Oakland Projects* were the people who committed to them over the course of those ten years in many ways—artists, teachers, youth, politicians, media makers, and so on. Like Annice Jacoby and Chris Johnson, both artists and writers, who were instrumental in the formation of the entire concept and participated in different ways in different projects, and like Unique Holland, a young high school student who continues to this day, fifteen years later, to work in non-profit youth development in the region, and like Superintendent

of Schools Sheila Jordan and Director of Public Health Arnold Perkins. There were many other people who contributed significantly to this work, too many to name.

In dealing with young inner city public high school youth, we focused on citizenship training and civic engagement through the strategy of media literacy and the skills of public speaking and art making. We felt it was important for young people to understand the relationships between a young person's portrayal through media, their own inadvertent representations, and their social and political position—and for them to take some level of control over their own representations in the community. Of course it didn't play out so didactically. We did things like take our leadership group to the Critical Resistance conference at UC Berkeley, train them to speak in front of Neighborhood Crime Councils, to make videos on safety in their neighborhoods, and to talk with adult authorities, etc.

It's the way in which I think art can play a significant role in social justice work, to provide a total project for young people, one they can learn specific skills while creating in something that is big, positive, and recognized by their community. But we made it fun, like going on outings or meeting with police officers in a safe setting, with pizza. Instead of talking about what kids were doing on news, we would try to get kids talking on news. And that's a dangerous task because media has its conventions—people have their perceptions—and interrupting perceptual conventions isn't always easy. When you approach those conventions or those perceptions within their own systems, whether it's media, or police or city council, or whatever, you run the risk of co-option. Whose message wins?

For example, if you work with pregnant teenagers and you do as we did—you send their posters all throughout the state, to all the politicians, and media, and educators, and so on—when you send their language, their poems, their drawings out to those people, you never know if they are going to be sympathetic or develop more empathy with young women, or come from a youth perspective, or if they will simply justify an existing preconception about promiscuous and uneducated youth.

DH: So you're saying that there are layers of interpretation that happen when you're performing, and you don't know what the perceptions of the individual audience members will be?

SL: That's right, but you do what you can to set up a frame for a new way of seeing.

DH: Right, exactly. But then media creates yet another. . . .

SL: I think it's another form of seeing and it extends the audience. So instead of one thousand people coming to a performance, forty thousand people see it.

DH: And you knew this because you've been working with media for a long time.

SL: Since about 1975; I was an early video and performance artist, and at that time the misperceptions of women, particularly around violence, were a part of my mass media inquiry.

DH: Okay, so you're very familiar with that whole forum and how media can have its own spin.

SL: Yes, and I've experienced the hard realities of both succeeding and failing in media interventions.

DH: So when you were developing this performance, and given that it was going to be relayed on media to some degree, what was the message that you wanted to convey?

SL: To the media or the live audience?

DH: To the audience that you were developing the piece for.

SL: It was both a live and a media audience. Actually I don't see a single audience for public art. I published an essay in a book I edited on public art (*Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, 1995) and in it I described the concept of audiences for art as a series of concentric circles (p. 178). For me everybody is charged with an aspect of the creation of the work—from the audience at an event, to the participants in its construction, and to the teenagers who generate the meaning and life of the work. There are layers of participants and levels of engagement. You try to create a perceptual experience, a shift, or a deeper understanding—in a variety of ways, with a variety of audiences. The police were one audience, and they were also actors, City Hall was another audience and politicians were also actors, youth were an audience and they were also actors. So, in that sense, there was no distinctive message and no distinctive audience—there were audiences and messages.

I don't mean to be vague about it. The fundamental idea we supported is that young people need a level of support that we have not given them, and that poverty, and race, and the way they are conflated in this country continues to perpetuate a series of mythologies that lock young people into a rather desperate situation, which I think is disgraceful. But it is a complex social issue, and unraveling and addressing various aspects of the situation of poor youth needs to be worked on at many levels.

DH: That came through—in my experience of watching the performance—their voices were conveying something similar to what you've said.

SL: Without being disrespectful or distancing the police, for example, as one of the audiences, the project was nevertheless extremely youth centered in its perspective. You know, it was an advocacy of young people.

DH: And was that your intent?

SL: Yes, absolutely.

DH: When you were developing *Code 33*, was there any intent to address how poverty, lack of education, unemployment could affect a person? . . (particularly in regards to conflict and/or violence).

SL: What do you mean by address? Did we include it in our analysis?

DH: Yes, was this something on your mind when you were developing. . . .

SL: Absolutely, it was an active part of the analysis. If you want to know where much of my analysis comes from you should look up Mike Males. His book *Scapegoat Generation* is a radical analysis of the way in which so called demographic facts about teenagers in California, mostly youth of color, are conflated to create mythologies that support other political agendas. While I do differ from certain leftist movements, and certainly my strategies are different from some organizations, such as police watch organizations, for example; nevertheless I am more aligned than not with left community organizing around race and poverty. It's part of my background, educationally and experientially. This work was controversial in the context of Oakland, an incredibly politically charged environment. Some people liked it, and some people found it too centric, too much engaged with consensus building in its strategy. But that doesn't mean the analysis isn't a radical one.

DH: Do you want to say anything more about this point Suzanne?

SL: Well, you don't work with kids in public school without figuring out very quickly how poverty, lack of education or unemployment affects them. In fact, the performances and projects are filled with specific and general information on these issues—bad schools, inadequate teachers, police abuse, lack of medical care, and so on. The analysis we made was based on California—how racism, ageism, and a blindness to class all operate in very specific ways in California. During the *Expectations* Project, we looked at Pete Wilson, the Governor of the State of California, and how his welfare reform lobbying and attack on teen pregnancy was part of an anti-immigration agenda. In *Code 33*, for example, we were well aware of police abuse in Oakland and some people felt that we should have nothing to do with police—only protest and agitate. The Free Mumia protestors—college kids from UC Santa Cruz for the most part—protested the *Code 33* performance. That's a difference in strategy, not in analysis.

Some leftists feel there is no point in working with what they consider to be corrupt institutions. Others feel that it is important to work to some degree with police themselves, particularly in a town like Oakland where there are a good many African-American police officers who came from ghetto neighborhoods—backgrounds where they themselves were jacked and beat up on by police. So my strategies of intervention are different, they are bound to be different. I find it hard to create an "Other"—it's that "Other has the face of

a human being." I'm a Buddhist, and I think it's complicated, this system of creating blame and trying to support change on all sides.

DH: Do you think this performance helps us to better understand differences in worldviews between youth and police in Oakland?

SL: Well, I don't know if it helps you to—I guess you'd be better a person to answer that question than me. When you say "us" I guess you mean whoever else looks at it.

DH: The viewer, the multiple audiences that have or are going to be watching *Code 33*. Do you think it helps those audiences, or some of those audiences?

SL: Are you trying to get at why I did the video?

DH: Yes, that is one of the issues I'm trying to get at.

SL: Or is it the issue of stereotype that's more important?

DH: I'm not sure if I was going to ask you the question about stereotyping because questions number 4, 5 and 6 on that list of questions I sent you are getting at the content of the video.

SL: Let me start with why I did the video. This video is very consciously created in a documentary format—it is not an art video. While it may be seen in an art context it's never going to become quote "art" as a video medium. It's designed, very specifically, for a popular audience. And it's designed to show, sympathetically, both police and youth, and to show the problems and dangers they both face—but it is meant to open up a more compassionate understanding of what takes place on an individual level, not on a social level, and to encourage a deeper compassion toward youth.

On a social level that analysis would be a different video. So this is kind of bedrock—what happens between two people, or four people, or an institution like the Oakland police, and a group of several thousand Oakland youth. And it's meant to open that up so that a possibility for a more appropriate relationship between youth and police can take place. And I think that goes to the issue of fathering or parenting.

After about a year of working with youth, I began to realize I felt very responsible for them in a teacher-like and even parental way. I thought a lot about how we as an adult society have virtually abandoned our children. I think that young people, particularly young men in Oakland, when they are exposed to police officers over time—I'm talking about kids that are between the ages of 13 and 16 or so (there is a whole different set of things that happen when they are older)—there's a series of emotions they go through. These emotions include rage, confusion, rebellion, admiration, even bonding.

It's not unlike what happens in an individual family. And I think that on the street what happens is their relationships, for a variety of reasons, become polarized, and police begin to overreact. Police are sometimes scared and

always on their guard when they approach teens. I've seen so many young men make a wrong step and instead of being reprimanded at a family or personal level, they are criminalized. When young people rebel, and there is no relationship that they have formed with the adult officer who challenges their rebellion—as in a family where the rebellion can be moderated by a relationship with a loving parent—then the hostility and misunderstanding grow.

When we created our youth-police training sessions, there was a consistent developmental trajectory that took place. For the first three or four sessions when kids and cops are put together in a way that's protected, but they are allowed to speak their minds, usually kids become very hostile and they really express themselves. Cops start out with a consistently authoritarian approach, feeling that all they need to do is explain why they are doing what they do and the kids will understand. That's session one. In session two, the cops tend to be extremely shocked when they confront the youth—a bit braver now—who are becoming vocal about their complaints. In their mind, they see "good kids" who are sitting down in the room with them—and they expect a reasonable explanation will be sufficient. They genuinely don't see why the kids have the feelings they do, so they're usually pretty surprised.

Then after about the third or fourth session a kind of interesting shift takes place where they begin to recognize each other, see each other outside of the workshops, some even start to like each other, and the cops see what is inherently "kid-ness," you know, that these aren't frightening people on the street—gangs of thugs who they have to exert dominant behavior over. That's the way police are trained to approach people on the street—police training is for your own safety.

On the street, what happens is cops begin to see kids in very non-humane ways—sometimes because of racism or prejudice against kids, other times because they've had frightening experiences themselves. And when they get into a group over time they start liking youth because they are in fact quite likeable. You know, they have their own little ways—even if this includes resistance or rebellion or hostility. And then, on the other hand, kids begin to see cops as individuals, and they begin to bond with certain ones, and they form relationships that last when they go back to the street. I've seen it happen over and over again. So what happens with this kind of exposure of kids and cops—they start to deconstruct some of their own stereotypes. I've heard this often, because I've interviewed a lot of them during and after the workshops and so on—it seems like it's a reoccurring phenomena.

Now in the performance itself, in *Code 33*, that situation is too public, too dangerous and fraught in terms of people's self representation for that transformation to take place in any great scale with the number of people that we worked with. So the meaning of the performance, while it carried some of the

transformative value of the private group, (along with some of those who participated in the workshops) was really more about what happened when a public witnesses this encounter. The encounter isn't only from a youth perspective, like gangster rap, and it's not playing only from a police perspective, like law and order. It's playing from a different perspective—one that is quite sympathetic to both, more sympathetic to young people ultimately, but nevertheless, it's a different kind of lens—the lens through which both the piece and the video was created. Whether it's successful or not, I'm probably not the person to tell you.

DH: Regarding the lens through which you've created this piece, does your Buddhist faith influence the way you've conceived and developed the performance?

SL: Probably on an unconscious level, but I was thinking a lot about consensual leadership and non-violence before I was a Buddhist. Some people are innately conflict-resolution-oriented, and I'm one of them. I resolve conflicts all the time, everyday. As an administrator and an artist I resolve large conflicts—I have stepped in front of hostile crowds and resolved conflicts. And my work has, at the heart of it, a coming together that I think is akin to conflict resolution, which is: "Let's see how we bring the various perspectives together to create a solution."

But, as you probably know, when you sit down to resolve a conflict between a figure of authority and a figure with less authority—both of whom are stereotyped in different ways by different communities—then you have to put aside some of the deeper implications of those social attitudes, even though you might be very aware of them. I remember negotiating over a couple of hours, a conflict involving one of my kids—he was about to be thrown out of a drug rehabilitation center. And that was a very bad idea because he would then have to go back to jail—it was either the rehab center or jail. He had been doing things that caused the rehab center to say "you're out." So I sat down to mediate the conflict. I was deeply sympathetic to the kid, but it wasn't the time for me to launch into my treatise on why the kid was in the center in the first place—a long and complicated history of abuse. The negotiation was centered on his actual behavior and what we could do to come to resolution—and they agreed finally upon a compromise.

DH: Thank you Suzanne for that story. Do you think that viewing this performance could cause a person to change their perceptions on the potential of police and youth relationships?

SL: Yes, it can and did. It doesn't for everyone of course, and many people only have their stereotypes reinforced.

DH: Was it your hope to change people's ideas about youth-police interactions?

SL: No, it's more complex than that. The *Oakland Projects*, in general, were about changing perceptions, but in the case of *Code 33* it was about public perception, local residents' perceptions, politicians' perceptions, and about making the institution of the police department (and other civic institutions) more malleable to include young people in their notion of citizens, and focusing on what youth need to thrive.

Look at what people who never walk around East Oakland or West Oakland streets see on their television every night in the Bay Area. They see a Black kid in hand cuffs and baggy pants being led away by a bunch of cops—that's what they see—that's mostly all they see. Every once in a while there'll be a story about a Black kid succeeding and going off to college, but that's not what makes the news, and that's not what draws people's attention. And there's no way that those images coming into your brain every night cannot help but shape your expectations about what goes on in the streets.

So if one night you turn on your television and set, and every television set is blasting three to five minutes worth of an image—that's healthy news coverage, but that's not going to change things dramatically. One problem for both artists and other non-profit organizations working toward social justice is that we suddenly find ourselves faced with this weight of expectation that's completely out of synch with the amount of resources that we actually have. There is an expectation that if you do an art project on police/youth confrontation and youth inability to feel safe in their neighborhoods you will either solve the problem or you shouldn't be doing it. To ask whether three to five minutes of news coverage on one night, or an hour long video, or a performance is going to change this vast flow of what George Gerbner called "the stream of media," is incredibly naïve. The flood of television, as you know— is moving in another direction on issues of race and poverty and police and social justice.

But to understand that gesture, or that activity, or artwork, within the whole, and the media reports of that activity touches other people's lives, and as an activity, as a news report, as a video, it certainly contributes to a direction that, were we to all share, would create a very different culture. This work offers a model for change, an example of talking rather than using force, a suggestion that there is more to this youth and authority confrontation thing than you might expect sitting at home in front of your television.

This really is about how we value certain kinds of action. Is a protest more effective than a public artwork? Sometimes our leftist political analysis is restrictive in terms of its strategies. We make a lot of assumptions about what is and is not effective. When you really work hard to resolve a conflict between three kids who are intimidating some older people on a corner in East Oakland, you make a dent in culture. Maybe the conflict returns with a new

gang of kids, and maybe it doesn't. But that one street corner with those five people is changed for a bit. If I came to you and said: Do you think they are really causing social change? What would you say to me?

DH: What you had said earlier, that it offers a model for change.

SL: One person at a time, one incident at a time, with as much and as many resources as you personally can mobilize—that you act in a way that you feel is beneficial to human kind. And, the other point that is very important to make here—I made it earlier—is the difference between strategy and analysis.

To focus on this specific human interaction, to bring some focus on relationship into the context of the police department officer training is not to say that you can't believe that the police department, as an institution, has been used historically to protect wealth, not poor people. It doesn't mean that you might not also understand that police culture is hyper-masculine, defensive, and secretive. You can believe all those things and still relate to each police officer as an individual, and still believe that the world would be better if one of them gets to know a few kids, faces down some hostility in a discursive environment with youth, rather than a confrontational street situation, and gets to practice reasonable conversation.

Other kinds of activism, such as police monitoring watchdog groups that picket, protest, hold hearings on police brutality and are always up there in their face—they are doing very important work, but sometimes activist organizations tend to think that you're either with us or you're not. You could be with them, *and* picking a different strategy. Which was why those of us who worked on *Code 33* for two years—most of us, including me, for no money whatsoever, killing ourselves for two to three years—were quite bemused when the performance was picketed by the Free Mumia local organizers. Everybody working on the production was watching this protest unfold and saying, "Well, *that's* really interesting. Our perspective fundamentally supported their analysis, why don't they want this to go forward?"

DH: But as you say, it's a difference in strategy between activists and conflict resolvers.

SL: Yes, but we offered to conflict resolve with them; we offered the organizers a platform, with or without police during the performance, but they didn't want it.

DH: It sounds like Free Mumia chose an activist-type of approach that often takes on more confrontational processes—different than conflict resolution—it's a different way of going about thinking about and through issues. As I understand, Mumia Abu-Jamal was a journalist in Philadelphia and former Black Panther who has been on death row for allegedly shooting a

police officer—he was convicted in 1982. He has received national and international support in his effort to overturn his conviction. In 2001 a federal judge overturned Mumia's death sentence but upheld his conviction, and I understand further decisions on Mumia's fate are upcoming. Why do you think Free Mumia chose to picket the *Code 33* performance?

SL: I think we are talking about more than one activist strategy. I don't consider myself a non-activist. In fact within art circles I'm considered a political activist. I think the issue is, in that particular case, they understood very clearly that it was more advantageous for them to adopt a position of complete resistance and garner media attention. To participate would make their coverage more limited, and as some of the producing team speculated, this viral media intervention was well planned.

DH: What would you hope a viewer would take away after viewing this performance?

SL: The performance or the video?

DH: The video of the performance.

SL: Which viewer? I think what we are coming to with your questions is a deconstruction of the notion of a single viewer and a single audience, or in fact a single maker. And if you see those people on a continuum—what would Shawn's mother take away? What would Shawn take away? What would Sergeant Israel take away? Or Jerry Brown, or Jacky Johnson? Different people will take away different things. I've told you my political position and my strategy, and the video becomes a way to further expose and explore the lives of the people who at that point in time participated in that work.

DH: Let me explain that when I said "a viewer" I was referring to a myriad of different types of people that would be viewing that video. And you could answer that in anyway that you wanted to.

SL: I think my resistance to ascribing what someone will take away, either from the performance or the video, is first, that all I have is anecdotal evidence—a lot of it, but anecdotal, nevertheless, that the project created a difference. I also resist the belief that any single action that I do causes some dramatic change. That seems hubristic to me. There's a tendency with some artists to assume that what they do causes great transformation in the world when they decide to step out of their studios. My position with respect to my work is one of healthy skepticism. I work to the degree of scale that I have resources for, listen as hard and non-defensively as I can to feedback from all kinds of people, work as hard as I can, and I make lots of mistakes. In the end, I hope it's of value. And I'm very interested in what kinds of questions are raised for possible future action and what we all learned in the process.

But just to underline. This work is about race oppression, poverty, and separation of children that are no longer embraced as the children of one's whole

culture. They are seen as "others" and demonized. Black, Latino/a, Asian and poor white kids are all of our kids, no matter what our race or class. I mean that's what public school is, right? Public school is the commitment that we make that all children are all of our children. And to the extent that we withdraw our support of public school, and we demonize inner city kids, we are basically cutting off our own inheritors. And it makes no sense whatsoever for us to say those kids are not my kids. They are the result of our social policies.

DH: Is there anything else you'd like to talk about? I asked you questions I thought about when I watched your video, but there may be things that I haven't touched on at all and you may want to talk about.

SL: No, not particularly. I'm kind of in the process of writing about these works, and I'm to do a thesis myself on all of them, actually, but not for a couple of years.

DH: This will be a dissertation for your Ph.D?

SL: Yes, it's actually a Ph.D. by publication, which is an analysis of prior texts. I'm posing that these works are texts to be analyzed. I feel like I'm immersed in them on one hand, and they're very complicated works. And on the other hand, sometimes they disappear into great simplicity. So I don't really have anything specific to say, but if you have any other questions I'd be happy to answer them, and talking with you is productive.

DH: Thank you so much Suzanne.

On September 22, 2006, I interviewed performance artist Suzanne Lacy while conducting research on artistic intentionality, a subject of my Ph.D. dissertation.

Chapter Nineteen

Simonides[1] in the Machine: The Art of Virtual Memory in a Pentagon-funded Initiative

Carrie Paterson

You begin your mission in a dark, foggy culvert littered with photo albums, water jugs, baby dolls—the personal belongings of refugees. Graffiti on the wall suggests you are somewhere in Eastern Europe, perhaps Bosnia. You hear and feel the sounds of an enemy convoy rolling overhead. From your scent necklace emanates the wet smell of mud and the dank musky odor of rats. You look around in your VR helmet to get your bearings, dictating your movements with a small joystick reminiscent of the Playstation X box. You are participating in DarkCon, a military-funded psychological experiment and virtual reality reconnaissance mission. Researchers will use the results of your experience and your physiological data to help understand how emotions play a critical role in the development of memory, judgment—and even morality—in virtual environments.

The Sensory Environments Evaluation project—or SEE—is just one of many VR and AI projects at the Institute for Creative Technologies (ICT) in Marina del Rey, California, being funded by the US Army. Promotional literature for SEE states that the developments of these technologies will be used for "art, education and training," but one might suspect it will not necessarily be in that order.

The SEE project brings up questions about the extent to which memory, morality and politics are linked via the virtual environment. This is especially true in the US where foreign policy and domestic complicity are scripted through the media's virtual world of unencumbered spectacle. The scopophilia of our nation assures that we will fall into line when marshaled, be it for the 9/11 show or another child abuse scandal. We are an easily manipulated civilization because we know what turns us on. When Eric Hobsbawm discussed the connection between the onset of nationalism in the late

19th century and the rise of the newspaper, one wonders if he could have foreseen that from these consolidations of identity in text, people would so easily forget how to read. In favor of the image we have conscripted ourselves to this media-state of the late-20th/21st century, bent toward a project of round-the-clock virtual war.

"Technology is a riddle, so let's work on the riddle and stop working only on the technology."—Paul Virilio

To take up this suggestion would require a change of focus in our relationship to the image, and thus the built environment and its infiltration by the media. To learn from SEE, considered one of the more "maverick" projects within the ICT network, we will have to learn to read the fine print. Because SEE is opposed to the use of hyper-real imagery in its VR, it stands in defiance of many trends in the entertainment industry and mass media, and thus to the political will that is inscribed therein. The extent to which the image-breaking and groundbreaking research at SEE might be later used toward the goals of Hollywood, Washington, or other social engineering has yet to be seen. But in the meantime, toward the goal of humanizing technology—or humanizing the human—we might find some clues for a new direction here, in the belly of the world's greatest war machine.

Present for this interview with writer Carrie Paterson, which took place at the end of 2004, are Jacquelyn Ford Morie, Project Leader of SEE, an artist and PhD candidate at the London Institute; the then-Project Coordinator, Josh Williams; and the Computer Graphics Supervisor at the time, the project's "Spacialist" Kurosh ValaNejad.

"We need some more bush sounds," Jacki remarks to Josh and Kurosh. We are watching the promotional video for DarkCon. "By that I mean anything that gives you the illusion of knowing a sense of your body. Until we get full tactile-ness in these things, sound is the best substitute."

While VR designers have usually put the emphasis on photo-realistic graphics, at SEE the emphasis is placed on all the senses working together.

"Kurosh came up with this term—'feels real,'" says Jacki, "an amalgamation of all the senses working in concert which we orchestrate as a single sensory package for you at all stages of this particular environment. You don't need verisimilitude to have them be perceived as real if you have supporting information from your other senses and you're using psychological cues that work."

She continues to explain how research shows the importance of the limbic system in emotional response and how the brain most effectively stores memories near its emotional core.

"We're trying to steer people [through DarkCon] by grabbing them by the emotions and letting them think cognitively afterward." The emphasis here is

on what SEE people call "coercive narrative" and "corroborative detail," the incidental elements designed into the environment to lead you toward a specific goal and to enhance your sense of reality while in the world.

To aid in the quality of a participant's reaction, SEE is developing a "scent necklace" that will give off appropriate indicators of place. Jacki continues, "smell is the sense that goes right to your reptilian brain. It takes the low road and you start to react before your cognitive brain gets the signal. You react to it in a visceral way that you just can't help."

But this is all theoretical at this point. Aside from a handful of test cases, myself included, the research test groups have not yet begun to go through the world.

When I went through an early stage of DarkCon, I found one of my most interesting experiences to be turning around in the culvert and walking through the salt marshes and off the edge of the world. As I fell, I turned around and saw the whole world in front of me, rising up and out of reach. But this beautiful, existential moment—the brainchild of Kurosh—is not available anymore. I questioned the group about the logic of this change.

CP: Your promotional video suggests that people can go anywhere and do anything—but now I understand there are landmines all around the perimeter?

JM: It's a pretty far distance to get to the perimeter. It's at least 4 min. and there's nothing out there—it's boring. You have a mission to place a GPS device—we hope that you will follow that mission. There's nothing to say you will. But we're trying to see if the ideas of coercive narrative we have will guide people to go where it's interesting. Part of the subject testing we'll be doing is to see if people are subliminally primed for games or subliminally primed to think it's a real mission—if there will be a different approach.

JW: We wanted to understand if, given an understanding of the mission through the briefing—and landmines will be one of those things we advise you to watch out for—is the participant going to have the understanding of cause and effect and of responsibilities for their actions and behavior.

JM: The hope is they don't go that way, but if they do at least the landmines are consistent with the story.

KV: I think that experience you had when you fell off the world is like in *The Truman Show* when Jim Carrey hits that wall—there is some kind of realization at that moment where there's a break in immersion. . . . But this is a pseudo military application—so it makes sense that if you go there and hit a landmine, you've actually compromised your mission.

CP: So you can't just go have a psychedelic experience.

JM: There's no reason you can't. . . .

JW: The psychedelic experience could be a cohesive one. But in this case we're worried about the narrative. We have to provide a context that allows us to continue the project here [points around the room]. . . . But we also understand that's a great place to push out into other contexts.

Future projects of SEE include an educational project about reefs, and "The Memory Stairs," both of which allow for a more open-ended exploration of virtual environments. The Memory Stairs, more of an art installation, combines a physical staircase with its virtual counterpart, thus heightening the body's sense of place while being submerged in "virtuality."

JW: DarkCon, being a prototype environment, is bound to be full of holes. Once we have these people who have walked to the edge of the world, we will . . . if their experience is lucid . . . have their physiological data lines up to show whether they were still emotionally invested. If they understand why it happened, we still have a measure of success.

JM: And there's still a lot of data to mine [with these prototypical gaming attitudes].

JW: There is a buzz right now in "technological-integration into education and training." The idea is to take what the game companies have perfected over the years—how they have gotten kids to play games all the time and learn these skills within the games—and to make them pedagogical. But users [of these educational tools] still might have the propensities to try to find the bug, try to break the game, try to win the points. Except those are the aspects that don't translate to the real world.

JM: [laughing] Yes. There are no "cheats" here. . . No "cheats" in life.

JW: We predict that when these gamers get into DarkCon, they will try to replicate those experiences. . . . So, DarkCon does not provide that. We believe that if you can make the training experience more real and less gamelike then you can have responsible actions made by the participant in the environment.

JM: By adding that human dimension we are suggesting that things are not resources to be "used," calling back upon your connection that you have to other people and other things—hopefully. . . .

CP: So, is there a built-in morality code to this project that is specific to the designers?

JM: I wouldn't say there is a morality code for this particular one, but I think it does set the base to show that there could be one. What we're out to prove is that emotions do add to the intensity of the experience, to the meaningfulness of the experience. By proving they actually can have these effects, we are opening the door for virtual reality worlds to become more than games—that's what I would hope.

CP: Back to the question of falling off the world—that type of experience, which rewards someone for having a genuine curiosity, creativity and a desire to be outside of strict social codes and regulation—that's being denied in the project. Doesn't that deny a large portion of a person's humanity?

JM: But I think you have to think of what the purpose of the environment is, what it's designed for. [This is a research project] where we're trying to design for the course of narrative.

CP: . . . You want the mission structure to make for some success or failure. . . .

JM: . . . and maybe [later] we design for the kind of explorations you were talking about…

CP: . . . my desire for an existential moment…?

JM: You can think of this as a kind of experiment to see if what we're doing with art and psychology can actually provide a more meaningful experience in something that is open-ended. And then you can design for whatever you want. . . . Once we know the boundaries [of what's possible], we can go anywhere and do anything with it.

NOTE

1. According to *The Art of Memory* by Frances Yates, the mental images of places or architecture have been commonly used in Western history to augment memory. We are grateful to Cicero for the first recorded story of this practice. It is said the art originated when Simonides, a pre-Socratic poet, was able to identify the dead in a collapsed house because he had left moments before disaster struck and could recall where each person had been sitting at the dinner table. It seems no accident of history this man was a survivor, a witness, a poet.

Chapter Twenty

Locating a Temporary Common Space: Cultural Exchanges in Weedpatch

Gillian Whitely

He vivido aquí en el Norte como 5 años
Trabajo en la uva, algodón, amarre, mandarinas
En donde aya trabajo ahí voy a trabajar

I've lived here on the north side about five years
I work on grapes, cotton, amarre, tangerines
Wherever there is work I go to work [1]

The women started coming in the '80s, '84 and '85,
Since the 1980s and 90s all the children started to come,
The youth would finish elementary
And they would aspire to come to "el norte" (the US)[2]

INTRODUCTION

Migration patterns have diverse historical roots—war, famine and poverty account for the dislocation of many communities. The global flow of technology, information, labor and capital has, however, become a particular characteristic of the 21st century and its "human traffic." Cultural exchange amongst diasporic communities and the recent emergence of "transmigrants," those whose lives are made crossing and recrossing national boundaries, are increasingly challenging notions of identity. Does this lead to the isolation or converging of cultures or, as Homi Bhabha has asked, is there a hybrid "third space" whereby cultures come together?[3]

Cultural identity also emerges from and through a sense of place. The particularities of place—local factors such as the built environment, spatial design and planning—can all profoundly affect the behaviour and attachment of

people to the environment in which they live. Doreen Massey, who has written extensively on the relationship between place and identity, has emphasised that whilst human inter-relations and social activities are directly related to a spatial and geographical locality, we also need to re-think "place" as fluid, unfixed and relational. As she reminds us, "place" and "community" have only rarely been coterminous.[4]

Working for four weeks on their project—*Incubate*—amongst the diverse migrant and indigenous communities of Southern California, the artists' collective *CoLab*, faced the complexities of operating at the intersection of place, ethnicity and identity. Bhabha's comments about "the radical incommensurability of translation" in his book *The Location of Culture*[5] has a particular resonance with their experience. In a community with three languages—Mexican-Spanish, Mixteco,[6] and Anglo-American—*CoLab* quickly identified "language" as not only the key site of cultural contestation, but also the prime site for their own artistic explorations and interventions.

Besides revealing the rich fabric of local transitory cultures, the resulting artworks and events created onsite—largely based around the gathering, telling and translating of stories—highlighted the problems and paradoxes of migrant communities and their popular perception. Also, inadvertently and in a small way, the *CoLab* project incubated a mutable "temporary common space" which facilitated dialogue within the community itself. This resonates with the ideas of Patricia Phillips, who has written extensively about the contested definitions and practices of public art. In place of the routine installation of permanent projects, she has advocated public art practices which are provocative and investigative, practices which create a psychological as much as a physical space—a "forum" for dialogue and multiple voices. As Phillips has argued, ". . . a public art that truly explores the rich symbiotic topography of civic, social and cultural forces can take place anywhere—and for any length of time . . . [it] would *create* the forum for the poignant and potent dialogue between public ideals and private impulses, between obligation and desire, between being of a community and solitude. . . ."[7]

COLAB AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CoLab was set up by three Midlands-based British artists—Heather Connelly, Jo Dacombe and Jayne Murray. The collective was set up partly to explore the practice of collaborative working. Primarily, though, it has focused upon a single specific initiative: the *Incubate* project. They came together through a common background in practising in the public realm and a shared interest in developing alternative approaches and strategies for working with communi-

ties. The idea of artists collaborating on public work which has a participative element is not new: in the 1960s and 70s, there were a range of groups working in this way, such as GRAV[8] in Paris or Eventstructure, a collective of artists working across Europe. Since the 1990s though, critics such as Nicholas Bourriaud have identified new contemporary participative contexts for art-making—"relational" approaches[9]—and there is a currency of interventionist models for public practice whereby artists produce temporary or ephemeral artworks both with and in communities.[10] A critical debate about these new forms of public practice has been generated, particularly since Claire Bishop's article on the current "social turn" was published in *Artforum* in February 2006.[11] Inevitably, "engaged" forms of practice will vary widely in terms of values, aesthetic and motivations - and the activism versus aesthetics debate is a tired one—but it is important to balance this against the contribution which particular practices—such as muf[12]—have made to communities and the shaping of places and environments.

The *CoLab* collective, however, is particularly interesting—not just because they are a group of artists working together in the public realm—but because of the unusual working method and approach they specifically adopted in the *Incubate* project. With a shared ethos and commitment to "process" rather than "production," they aimed to use their practice to initiate art-making which involved community ownership without being "community art." Their aim was to "use art as a vehicle through which to engage with people and place,"[13] As Jo Dacombe has commented, "It was about re-engaging with the familiar . . . finding a way that our work would be communicating with the people and the place . . . and re-engaging them with their place. . . ."[14]

CoLab set themselves the challenge of going to a place as "cultural outsiders" with the idea that, through dialogue and interaction, they would research, engage and respond in a way that seemed appropriate at the time and with no pre-conceived ideas about what that might be. One of the artists, Murray, has commented that, for her, the project was about "learning through difference—cultural, social and material—by practising in another place."[15] In effect, *CoLab*'s aim was to engage in transcultural exchange as a form of practice.

Adopting the research methodology of the "laboratory experiment" was particularly important for the group. This was partly based on the "experiential" approach which two of the artists had taken in an earlier public art and regeneration project in Corby,[16] but it also echoes the strategies of contemporary artists like Andrea Zittel.[17] Drawing on scientific practices and "action research" models, the *Incubate* project was set out in a series of planning documents whereby the artists discussed their aim of "testing a hypothesis."[18] evaluating findings within a live situation and intervening and collaborating

in a specific environment.[19] Echoing Miwon Kwon's writings about the development of new forms of site-specific work which embrace discourse,[20] one of the key motives of *Incubate* was "to generate a discursive environment" through creative means.[21]

SELECTING A "SITE OF INTERNATIONAL INSIGNIFICANCE"

Incubate was set up through an advertisement placed in the art press in which *CoLab* sought invitations from individuals or communities who considered themselves to be a "site of international insignificance." In exchange, *CoLab* offered to spend time researching, responding and creating work in the host community or site.[22] After receiving a range of "invitations"—from alternative gallery spaces and organisations across Europe and the US—*CoLab* selected the Arts Council of Kern's (ACK) invitation to Weedpatch community in Kern County, California.

The paradoxical nature of Weedpatch and its claim for "insignificant" status particularly appealed to *CoLab*. The historical, cultural and social composition of the community is complex and contradictory. Of course, the United States has a long history of public art—more recently, it boasts a formidable network of innovative public art projects—particularly with artists such as Suzanne Lacy and "new genre public art" emerging in the 1980s.[23] Whilst the Arts Council of Kern (ACK) provided the institutional framework and organizational support, with limited resources and geographical isolation, they were interested in developing how they deliver and support public art beyond traditional forms of practice. Consequently, ACK gave *CoLab* an enthusiastic welcome as they anticipated that the project might initiate new ways of thinking about public art in the region.

Weedpatch's "insignificance"—or at least its marginality—was underlined by social and economic impoverishment, as the area has been inhabited and colonised by different groups of migrant workers for decades, many of whom continue making the familiar journey from migrant accommodation to trailer parks and, finally, houses.

On the other hand, Weedpatch holds an enormously significant and symbolic place in American social, political and collective memory, as it was immortalized in John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath* published in 1939. Between 1935 and 1940, over one million people left their homes in Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas and Missouri where shifts in land ownership and the changing nature of agriculture were exacerbated by the "Dust Bowl" conditions. Families travelled hundreds of miles along Route 66 to seek work in California and many of them ended up in the Arvin Federal Government

Camp, renamed by Steinbeck as "Weedpatch." Life in the one-room tin cabins and tents was difficult and the "Okies" were ridiculed and marginalised but, with the passage of time, that history is being reclaimed and appropriated. The original Weedpatch Camp and School have acquired heritage status and a collective pride is expressed through events such as the annual Dust Bowl celebration—although, importantly, not all current residents associate or identify with that history which many perceive as "white"/North American heritage.

A key issue for *CoLab* in selecting a site with such a history was to get beyond its literary connections and attempt to approach the place with no agenda in mind—to work with the community as it is today "a small town of around 2000 people living in 13 streets."[24] Some wooden buildings from the original camp, post office, community center and library have been restored and relocated in an area designated as "historic." Other wooden buildings that were originally sited in the camp can be spotted around the town, moved, reused and rebuilt. Occasionally, the previous life of the place is secretly embedded in the environment with, for example, retrieved fragments of old linoleum and wall coverings often incorporated into later buildings. In the new migrant accommodation Sunset Camp, the buildings are now adobe; duplexes have replaced the tin cabins. Now the camp houses a new wave of migrant workers as Mexicans precariously seek a new life of prosperity in *el norte.*

WORKING IN WEEDPATCH

From the start of their four-weeks' residency, *CoLab* identified a number of unanticipated problems—an early task was identifying the place and locating "the community" itself as they found themselves in a place with no sign, no community center and no central meeting place. The lack of communal signifiers and the fact that there was no place for social exchange or cohesion proved to be key obstacles. On the other hand, these were also crucial factors in influencing the activities and outcomes of the project as *CoLab* quickly identified that there was not one but "a number of communities."[25] Gradually, Weedpatch revealed itself to *CoLab* as a range of largely separate communities, each with its own language, cultural and popular memories, histories and practices. Given the time limitations, finding a way to work in an inclusive and creative way with this heterogeneous community of Oaxacans, Mexicans, Mixteco-speakers and various generations of migrant workers—and without a translator or any immediate means of solving the issue of communication-presented a considerable challenge.

The diverse range of indigenous and second languages also offered a fertile source of cultural and social signification. Sarat Maharaj has written about the complexities and richness produced by the dissonance and difference in translation[26]—whilst meaning and nuance is sometimes lost and distorted, there is the potential for cultural gain and cultural exchange. In focusing around language and story-gathering through offering the community an "open-ended story recording service,"[27] the *Incubate* project has resonances with the ideas of Maharaj. The hybrid and segregated nature of the communities emerged through the complex processes of multi-lingual translation. With the assistance of local residents and translators, some individual stories were translated from Mixteco to Spanish to Anglo-American, others from Spanish to Anglo-American or from Anglo-American into Spanish and then Mixteco. As a purely oral language with a limited range of vocabulary, Mixteco posed particular problems for translators. In cases where there is no Mixteco equivalent for a word, this has resulted in the inventive creation of hybrid expressions or elaborate descriptions.[28] *CoLab* found that the shifts of meaning and misunderstandings resulting from this multi-layered process were uncontrollable and unpredictable but they were also an enriching and revealing aspect of the project.[29] As part of *CoLab*'s commitment to "giving something back to the community,"[30] an audio-visual installation resulted. From the individual recordings, a Weedpatch story—*Meanings Significado* —was threaded together into an image-text-sound work.

The month-long project culminated in the presentation of *Meanings Significado* at two different events in Weedpatch. A participatory plenary symposium was set up by the Arts Council of Kern; attended by various project partners, academics and representatives from the local press, it facilitated an informal discussion of the process and outcomes of the project. Also, a separate celebratory community event enabled local artists, storytellers and—most importantly—the residents of Weedpatch community to come together and listen to each others stories at "listening posts." This exchange of stories was particularly important as it initiated a cross-community dialogue which, it emerged, had rarely occurred previously.[31] Released from the barriers and hierarchies of language, the project facilitated cultural exchange amongst the host community in a number of interesting and unexpected ways—a "temporary common space' was created.

RETURN, REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

Since the *Incubate* project, the three artists have found different ways of responding to their own experiences in Weedpatch. After reflecting, the indi-

vidual artists are making work that both disseminates and responds to what happened with a range of transcultural explorations, conversations and connections. Working as a collective, they are committed to the dissemination of their "laboratory" findings, but, whilst cultural exchange remains a common concern, they will be translating their individual experiences and ideas into different locations, formats and media.[32] Three particular events, each with a different focus arising from distinct issues raised by the project, have already been organized for the East and West Midlands. In June 2007, the first event in Leicester—*Interchange: Cultural Exchanges in the Public Realm*—has an international focus. It aims to bring together artists and urban designers to consider the interaction and inter-relationship of communities of different, often migratory, cultures with the built environment. The event contrasts the *CoLab* experience in Weedpatch with the *Interval* project in Australia, reflecting on international experiences that take us outside our "comfort zone" and require cultural exchange in new places. It will also address how artists are articulating the stories and experiences of ordinary people and will explore their contribution to defining a sense of place.

For *CoLab*, one of the most stark differences about working in Weedpatch was the absence of public space where people coincide, to share and learn—so the public realm and the value of public places will be the focus of another event in Rowley Regis, in the "Black Country" area of the West Midlands. Murray's project, *Missing you already,* will highlight the ever-shifting ownership and roles of public places as they change with the times. One hundred people who live or work in Rowley Regis have been asked to respond to questions about a public space they would miss. Given that the design and ownership of the British public realm can be seen as shifting into a more American model, this work is considered timely and hopes to explore current values and understanding of shared spaces. These spaces will be highlighted for one day on 7th July. Additionally the event will feature follow-up work by the other artists. Dacombe has continued to explore story-telling through a range of open-ended installation works. The installation, *Interruptions,* representing one of her "journey-stories," makes oblique reference to the "remoteness of the Weedpatch experience."[33] The embroidered ribbons in the work are a metaphor for remembering and forgetting but they also refer back to the mnemonic devices used by ancient Aztec cultures. The threads also represent the start-stop journeys and unending stories of ordinary lives. For Connelly, an artist whose practice has most recently been focused on narrative and sound, the most interesting part of the Weedpatch project has been to reflect on the complexities and richness of the languages she encountered there. In *"Translating Weedpatch,"* an audio-visual work, Connelly explores some of the issues and discourses raised by "translation."[34] Bringing together multiple characters and narratives, the audience can experience the emotional

expression, the textures and rhythm of language of the people of Weedpatch. A third event focused around the issue of migration is planned to take place in Autumn 2007 in Lincolnshire. In this, *CoLab* will be taking part in a seminar workshop which will form part of the regional network, *Making the Connections: Arts, Migration and Diaspora.*[35]

One needs to be cautious about claiming that art projects can affect or develop cultural exchange—as Patricia Phillips commented in the 1990s, "public art cannot mend, heal, or rationalize a nostalgia-driven desire to return to less volatile times."[36] Furthermore, the public art "mantra" of culture-led regeneration dominated the 1990s but the relationship between public art and regeneration is problematic and complex.[37] A positive outcome of the project has been the involvement of the Arts Council of Kern County in different approaches to public art, and the project in the West Midlands aims to develop and continue that relationship. *Incubate* explored the intersections of language, culture, history and politics in relation to the particularities of physical place—but it also raised generic questions which the three artists will continue to explore in different locations and in different formats and places. For a brief moment in Weedpatch, *Incubate* explored the liminal gaps between language, meaning and understanding and engendered a "temporary common space" in the absence of a material/physical one for cross-cultural dialogue between immigrant communities on the borders of Mexico. Perhaps new spaces for cultural exchange amongst Britain's resident immigrant communities will develop from the artists' ongoing projects and collaborations, making a small contribution to Sarat Maharaj's idea of reindexing hybridity as "an unfinished, self-unthreading force . . . as an open-ended one that is shot through with memories and intimations of the untranslatable."[38] Alongside the cross-cultural aspects of the Weedpatch project, *CoLab*'s work connects to current questions about the contested nature of public space, its value and ownership. Allied to Patricia Phillips' ideas on "public art as a sign of life," it engages with a wider re-thinking of what it is to work as an artist in the public realm and underlines the vital and meaningful contribution that art practice can make to communities.

"Public art is about the free field—the play—of creative vision. The point is not just to produce another thing for people to step back and admire, but to create an opportunity—a situation—that enables viewers to look back at the world with renewed perspectives and clear angles of vision."[39]

NOTES

This essay was commissioned by *CoLab* as part of their funded support for *Incubate* from the Arts Council of England, West Midland Initiative (www.artscouncil.org.uk). *CoLab* has also been funded by a NAN bursary (The Artists Information

Company) New Collaborations Award (www.a-n.co.uk). It was hosted and funded in kind (accommodation, materials) by the Arts Council of Kern (www.kernarts.org). The project was also given support and assistance in Weedpatch, particularly in relation to translating Mixteco, by Unidad Popular Benito Juarez (www.upbi.org).

1. From Maria Sanchez Cruz's story, recorded, translated and featured in "Meanings Significado," as part of *Incubate*— a project carried out by *CoLab* at Weedpatch, Kern County, California, October 28th to November 5th 2006. Any transcription "errors" resulting from oral translations were purposefully retained—these "slippages" formed an integral aspect of the project.
2. From Juan Lopez 's story, *ibid*.
3. See Homi Bhabha, "The Third Space: An Interview with Homi Bhabha" in J.Rutherford, (ed.) *Identity, Culture, Difference*, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990, pp. 207–221.
4. Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994, p. 147.
5. Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London: Routledge, 1994.
6. Mixteco is an ancient indigenous language from the Oaxacan region of Mexico. As it has no common written form, it is largely an oral language with a limited vocabulary. The Mixteco community in Weedpatch originate largely from one particular Oaxacan village, San Juan Mixtepec.
7. Patricia Phillips, "Out of Order: The Public Art Machine" *Artforum*, Issue 27, December 1988, pp. 92–97. For a more recent text, see "Public Art: A Renewable Resource," in Malcolm Miles and Tim Hall (eds), *Urban Futures*, London: Routledge, 2003.
8. Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel (GRAV) was founded in 1960 in Paris by a group of Argentine artists Julio Le Parc, Horacio García Rossi, Francisco Sobrino, François Molleret, Joël Stein and Yvaral.
9. See Nicholas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, Paris: Les Presses du Reel, 2002.
10. The work of Lucy Orta and Jeremy Deller might be cited here.
11. Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents," *Artforum*, February 2006.
12. Since 1996, muf, a London-based collaborative group of artists and architects, have established a reputation for pioneering and innovative projects that address the social, spatial and economic infrastructures of the public realm. See muf manuals available at www.muf.co.uk.
13. Author's interview with Heather Connelly, April 2007.
14. Author's interview with Jo Dacombe, April 2007.
15. Author's correspondence with Jayne Murray, May 2007.
16. In summer 2006, Jayne Murray and Jo Dacombe worked on *Thinkspace*— an urban regeneration project devised and set up by Jo Dacombe, based in the ex-steel town, Corby, Northamptonshire. The project is ongoing and can be followed at www.thinkspace.org.uk. For further information email Jo Dacombe at thinkspace@ntlworld.com.

17. For information on Andrea Zittel's desert-living project see Andrea Zittel, *Diary,* Milan: Terna Celeste Editions, 2003.

18. Author's interview with Connelly and Dacombe.

19. In brief, the methodology set out in *CoLab* planning documents outlined the recognition, location and definition of an issue, formulating a hypothesis to address it, the employment of deductive reasoning, actively testing the hypothesis and concluding with an appraisal of results.

20. Miwon Kwon, "One Place after Another: Notes on Site Specificity" in *October*, No. 80, Spring 1997, pp. 85–96.

21. *Ibid*.

22. After selecting the Arts Council of Kern's invitation to Weedpatch, *CoLab* applied for Arts Council of England (www.artscouncil.org) funding to facilitate a longer residency. For information on arts activity in Kern County see www.kernarts.org.

23. For example, see the work of Lucy Lippard, Martha Rosler, Ukeles Mierle Laderman et al in Suzanne Lacy (ed), *Mapping the Terrain; New Genre Public Art*, Seattle: Bay Press, 1995, p. 70

24. David Nigel Lloyd, Assistant Executive Director and Director of Arts Programs, Arts Council of Kern.

25. Author's interviews with Connelly and Dacombe.

26. Sarat Majaraj, "Perfidious Fidelity: The Untranslatability of the Other" in *Global Visions,* London: Kala Press/INIVA, 1994.

27. Author's interviews Connelly, Dacombe and correspondence with Murray—*CoLab* was capitalizing also on the fact that there was an established tradition of oral interviewing amongst the region's indigenous communities through various anthropological studies.

28. For example, Mixteco speakers referred to computers as "machines of the devil" in their interviews.

29. Stories were told by Maria Mares, Dalia Villalon Jeanette Dhaliwal, Wade Meinke, Emma Worley, Pamela Worley, Barbara Worley, Julio Hernandez Cruz, Maria Cruz Sanchez, Mr. & Mrs. Bobadilla, Marco Antonio Garcia Vega, Cruz Ramos, Victoria and Domingo Medina, Juan Lopez, Earl Shelton, Mattaeo Velazco, Josefina Rojas, and Evonne Dunlap. Stories were recorded in Spanish, English and Mixteco and translated by Rosa Lopez, Hector Hernandez, Guillermina Sanchez, Patti Ramirez, Cruz Ramos and Roberto Escudero. Various residents also offered other skills to the project e.g. Ryan Edquist, assisted with filmmaking and has continued collaborating with Connelly on her follow-up activities.

30. Author's interviews with Connelly and Dacombe.

31. All residents were provided with the cd recording *Meanings Significado*. Audio clips from the stories of Victoria, Julio, Maria, Josefina, Earl and El Ranchito can be heard on the *CoLab Incubate* project archive pages at www.longhouse.uk

32. Author's interviews with Connelly and Dacombe.

33. Author's interview with Dacombe.

34. See Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator" [1923] in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, (trans. Harry Zohn; edited and introduction Hannah Arendt), New York: Schocken Books, 1968.

35. For further details see http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ss/global_refugees/index.html3

36. Patricia Phillips, "Public Construction" in Suzanne Lacy (ed), *Mapping the Terrain; New Genre Public Art*, Seattle: Bay Press, 1995, p. 70.

37. Tim Hall has written extensively on the employment of public art within urban regeneration, see, for example, "Opening up Public Art's Spaces: Art, Regeneration and Audience" in Malcolm Miles and Nicola Kirkham, (eds), *Cultures and Settlements, Advances and Art in Urban Futures*, London: Intellect Books, 2003.

38. Sarat Maharaj, *op. cit.* also available at *http://www.iniva.org/entransit/essay/text.html.*

39. Patricia Phillips, "Public Construction" in Suzanne Lacy (ed), *Mapping the Terrain; New Genre Public Art*, Seattle: Bay Press, 1995, p. 70.

Chapter Twenty-One

"Sometimes I'm Harvey Weinstein; Sometimes I'm Wes Craven. The Same Goes For My Brother." The Neistat Brothers

Lillian Fellmann

This is a transcription of an email conversation with the New York-based Neistat Brothers about their artistic collaboration. Holly Crawford and I came across an announcement of a show of theirs at the Palais de Tokyo shortly before we left for Paris. We meant to meet with the brothers in the City of Love but we missed each other. The conversation below took place as a multi-loop electronic mail interaction between Lillian Fellmann and Casey and Van between October 8, and December 12, 2005. Van entered the conversation only on December 12th[1].

LF: Casey, when we reached the Grand Palais the guards were about to close it. We have miscalculated the trip from the XVIII-ième arrondissement to the centre. However, it is a huge shame we missed your performance.

We went to the Palais de Tokyo afterwards and talked to Jerome (Sans) real quick—about the two of you, too. Missed you again. I couldn't call you because our international cell phone didn't work; the hotel we were at was "under construction," only sporadic email access, and no phone in the room until Sunday.

(Two weeks later.)

CASEY: Dear Lillian, I can't remember if I have gotten back to you yet but I am back at my desk in NYC and trying to tie up loose ends. We are still interested in doing something with you, please be in touch.

LF: Hi Casey, We still want to work with you too. We would love to learn more about your collaboration. Your documentation, description, essay, journal entries, catalogue of questions about your collaboration can take any form (okay, this is a circular argument).

CASEY: OK, Here is how we should proceed. I will provide you with some feedback to your inquiries. You respond to that with more inquiries and we can build from there.

LF: How do you start a project? Does each one of you collect ideas in a little box or a black book all by himself before the big bang exchange happens—rigid imagery stirs my inspiration?

CASEY: It varies. Sometimes it's a conversation. We both take a lot of notes in our black note books.

LF: What exactly is your art background?

CASEY: I took a ceramics class in high school. That's pretty much it for a formal art background. I dropped out of high school after the 10th grade. Later on, Van and I worked as art assistants under Tom Sachs at the same time for about 3 years; he was like a teacher.

LF: What is the age difference between you two? Did you play together as children?

CASEY: There are 6 years between us (Van 30, Casey 24). No we didn't play together; I mostly played with my sister. She's 1 year older than me and my baby brother Dean who is 2 years younger than me (and currently flying fighter jets for the US Air Force. (Dean Neistat is 22 years old).

LF: I fear (or rather enjoy) that this delayed conversation takes a very personal direction. I am sure that I don't have to emphasize that you are not obliged to answer all of my questions, and that you can ask me back—as this is, again, a conversation. First off another question: How come I am communicating with you and not the two of you, or your brother solely?

CASEY: Because I was the one who replied to the original email. Van is on the computer next to me. When I get tired of answering I can put him on. If you want him sooner just ask.

LF: Sure. In case you are starting a new project soon there would also be the possibility of me sitting in when you are working together, documenting what I see, hear, feel, and smell. This would be highly experimental and could falsify the actual process but would potentially be very fascinating.

CASEY: Provided you are small and quiet and don't ask questions, you are welcome to sit in the studio any time. A journalist requested this a while ago and was surprised with what she found. As exciting as the work is, and as energetic as we are, the day-to-day hour-to-hour happenings are mundane in our studio. I sit at my desk, Van at his and we work, very little action.

VAN: you can sit in, but most of what we do is dangerous, illegal, or fucking boring, and we move fucking fast, usually on bikes. I am not a silent worker. I scream at the top of my lungs. I throw things. I am a destroyer. I've been arrested and hospitalized for fist-fighting.

LF: I might take you up on your welcoming gesture. I guess I could hide and watch, or fight and learn. About your collaboration: How do you do it?

CASEY: We work 5/6 days a week in our studio in downtown Manhattan; our studio is a work studio; neither of us lives there. Our hours are roughly

8–9 am–8/9 pm; our studio is all about work. We have one full-time assistant, Ariel Schulman who is a filmmaker himself (http://www.redbucketfilms.com/). We enjoy our work and look forward to coming to the studio everyday.

LF: What does that mean—you enjoy your work, what gives you joy, the studio and its atmosphere, the interaction with each other, the fact that you are artists, and what specifically does that mean to you?

VAN: My mother gave birth to me as a teenager, committed my biological father to a mental institution, got full custody of me from the courts, and moved from Maine to Connecticut where she knew 1 person. She never pursued her dream of becoming a performer. Casey's father (who raised me from the age of 2, and I refer to him as my father) married my mother because he really liked me and she gave him an ultimatum. They had 3 more children together. They hated each other. Once they had a 2-hour fight in the car (with all 4 of the kids in the back) over whether or not the secret ingredient in Tootsie Rolls was orange extract. My dad said no, my mom said yes. A screaming, bitter fight.

As a kid I wasn't good at anything that was valued by parents or the public school system. I sucked at sports and academics. I was tiny. I weighed less than 100 pounds until I was 15. I was funny and came from a weird family who lived in a house that my mother modeled after a gingerbread house. Our cars were hand-painted with rose gardens and bee hives. We had virtually no parental supervision. My father hated, hated his job and never pursued his dream of becoming a kindergarten teacher. My mother is Catholic. My father is Jewish. I learned the big, big lessons in life from their mistakes: have children only when you're ready, only marry someone when it's perfect and only for love, and the most important thing you will do as a human being is to pursue and live your dream.

As Americans, we are taught to believe that our dreams can be realized through our work. In America, I believe, that is absolutely true. I am living my dream now, but it took 25 years for me to figure out what my dream was. As Lawrence says in the film *Lawrence of Arabia*, "A man can be whatever he wants, but he can't want whatever he wants."

When I was 25, Apple came out with a computer that let you edit video. I bought that computer with half of all my money, and I bought a video camera with the other half. About a year after that (after having made about 25 short films) I realized I was a filmmaker, and that my dream was to make films like the ones that are as much a part of me as my gingerbread house or the painted Volvos in which I grew up. So, if you ask me what an artist is, I can't tell you. But I can tell you what makes me one: a full commitment of my self to my work. I live an incredible life. I am fulfilled.

LF: What are the complications in your collaboration?

CASEY: Complications are rare, the occasional creative dispute is pretty much our only complication and usually that dispute is limited to the framing of a shot (in a film) or the final edit of a film. We rarely argue about ideas, they are almost always in line with each other's vision or if one of us doesn't 'get' the other's idea, we encourage the other to execute it so we can both understand. It's a positive relationship.

LF: How can your ideas always be in line with each other? Wouldn't such a similar output/production interest on the other hand presume an intimately shared intake and reception of life? Or starting from the other end, spending up to 11 hours together five times a week is quite a commitment and surely allows for this closeness. At the same time, you say you have very independent private and social lives. I don't see how you can have the time to have an active social life outside the studio and how that could be so independent?

CASEY: There is of course social contact but Van has his friends I have mine. He has his love, I have mine. There are a lot of overlaps, I don't have a friend that doesn't know Van and vice versa. But we certainly don't hang out everyday after work. There is a profound level of similarities in the intake and lifestyle that yields the work. We grew up in the same house, in the same neighborhood, with the same schools, same parents, and a lot of the same frustrations throughout childhood and now we live in the same city, deal with a lot of the same shit.

VAN: We interact outside the studio. Sometimes we go to the same parties. Tonight we're going to a Halloween party with some other friends. Our ideas are not 'always' in line with each other. Our process varies from project to project, but if one of us makes something that the other doesn't believe in, it gets reworked until we both feel good about it. I imagine it's like a producer/director relationship on a film. After Wes Craven shot scream for 2 weeks, Harvey Weinstein wanted to pull him and replace him with another director. Craven insisted on showing Harvey the edited first 10 minutes of the film before he would back down. Harvey agreed. Weinstein fell in love with what the director had shot and kept him on. The film went on to make over $200 million dollars. Sometimes I'm Harvey Weinstein; sometimes I'm Wes Craven. The same goes for Casey. On other projects we work side by side. It all depends on the situation.

LF: How can you possibly want to spend so much time with your brother?

CASEY: We share the same vision, work ethic, style, and goals. Plus we are brothers so it's not like a friendship, which could end. Brothers for life. Family is family and if we were to hate each other we'd still be brothers. Not like a traditional working relationship.

LF: I don't fully grasp your idea of brotherhood. If you would hate your brother you would still be brothers, you say, yes, but that would be a rather meaningless relationship on an inter-personal level (while still being a phenomenological or biographical fact). You seem to express the idea that being brothers is informing a certain responsibility towards each other. I understand that being someone's brother or sister gives you a different insight into their reasoning, their frustration, in that sense, also their falling out with you or someone else. It helps to be protective of him or her too.

CASEY: OK, that's a mouthful there. Let me try to answer as best as I can; the old saying is "blood is thicker than water" this is something I believe. Beyond the title 'brother' spending childhood with a sibling creates a bond that cannot be replicated in friendship or business. This bond is something to always fall back on. No matter how well you know someone—a friend, a lover, whatever—you can never know them on the level that a parent knows a child or a brother knows a sister. This is true in deciding to share our careers with one another. Elaborating on the idea that we share the same goals with our careers we share a lot of the same goals in our own (personal) family lives all of that equals a lot of shared confidence, we are both playing on the same team and trying to win the same competition.

LF: The two of you seem to share a pretty intense history of mutual care taking, which isn't necessarily the average brotherly experience. Do you feel that working together on some level could have an undercurrent of healing? You said, you ran away from home, are you now proving to each other that you are the strong ones, that you are the healthy, surviving kernel, while your family/your parents were (and I am totally guessing here) falling apart and felt sickening to you?

CASEY: Felt sickening is not accurate. My (Casey's) problems at home prior to me moving out at age 15 are attributed to my bad behavior more so than parental shortcomings. I don't know about that healing stuff.

VAN: We come from a family of adult-children and child-adults. We raised ourselves. Our sister is a successful business woman, and our youngest brother is an Orthodox Jew fighter pilot. Casey and I have an unspoken familial bond that no one in our family—not our parents, not Dean or Jordan—shares. We are also the only ones who have romantic love in our life. Casey is married with a child, and I'm involved in the most romantic story I've ever heard of.

LF: I am trying to understand the difference between a friendship and brotherhood. I personally don't think that brother-, or sisterhood, for that matter, doesn't necessarily provide a bond for life unless you choose to accept it as some "God given" responsibility that you base on the fact that you share

the same blood or home. But even if you accept that responsibility it doesn't automatically mean that you can work with your siblings or share their belief-system, or lifestyle, to choose a more secular term.

CASEY: No, we have a special brotherly relationship. Not typical by any means.

VAN: Casey and I come from the same point of view in our family, I think. Though it was *never* spoken about, I was an outsider in our family by virtue of the fact that I had a different father. Casey was the middle kid and fell through the cracks. As the family fell apart, I was away in college, and he had to be the adult. He is also brilliant, which can lead either to becoming a serial killer or a person of accomplishment. In our relationship, he is the rational one and I am the emotional one.

LF: When did that production method start, when did you discover that you can collaborate?

CASEY: When I ran away from home in 1996, I moved from Connecticut to Virginia, where Van was in college. We did a lot together including customizing our mopeds and building a moped ramp to drive the mopeds from the driveway into the living room of our house. We have always worked well together.

LF: You ran away from your parents to your brother. Did your parents pay his college; did they want you to come back? Why did you run away?

CASEY: I got into a fight with my mom. She said shape up or get out, so I moved out. Ran to my brother is not accurate, I moved in with a friend and together we moved to Virginia where my brother lived. I think my parents wanted me to come back. What parents would want their 15-year-old son living on his own with no support whatsoever? That said, a formal or forceful request for me to come home was never given to me so I never moved home. I am 24 now and to this day have never 'lived' under my parents' roof since that fight with my mother. no hard feelings for my parents, though, really.

LF: How did you two feel when Van left for college? It must have been a decisive moment in your relationship.

CASEY: I remember being 12 and driving him to college. My mom cried, I just remember being jealous that he got to do something new.

NOTE

1. Here are my answers to your thoughtful questions. I found them in my "SENT" folder in my mail program. I sent my answers on Halloween as I was preparing my

Lawrence of Arabia costume. The costume was a smashing success. I guess there may have been something wrong with your email address? I have been out of the country for about a month, and I detest email, which doesn't always reach me, as I use many different computers/software around the world. I once lost 10% of my grade in college because I refused to figure out the email system. It was American Cinema 1900–1946, the only film class I ever took.

Chapter Twenty-Two

Having Their Cake and Eating It Too: The Case of Christo's (and Jeanne-Claude's) Im(permanence) and Exclusivity

Holly Crawford

In a recent interview about *The Gates* and their other projects, Christo commented: "These works just go away and they have no reason to exist."[1] All Christo's temporary art works have two things in common—fabric and site-specific installations. They argue repeatedly that, "The temporary quality of the projects is an AESTHETIC decision. In order to endow (donate, make a gift) the works of art with the feeling of urgency to be seen, and the tenderness brought by the fact that it will not last."[2] Yet the temporary nature of their art requires closer examination. "To understand our work one must realize what is inherent to each project."[3]

One of the things inherent in each project is the name Christo, which has become a well known brand name for a specific style. Christo is the first name of the person, the artists' stage, and the artists' brand name, the name of the corporation through which Christo and Jeanne-Claude do business, and their son's last name.

The brand name Christo is used to include Jeanne-Claude. For example, a set of eight postcards, reproduced from drawings and collages, were all copyrighted only with the name "Christo." Yet they argue that this and early projects have been in collaboration with Jeanne-Claude. Her contribution is made clear only in the sense that the cards state that, "No proceeds for the Artists," using the plural, not the singular, of "artist." In this way, Jeanne-Claude is incorporated into the brand name Christo.

The brand name they have worked so hard to develop and maintain is no more ephemeral than our culture of which it has become a part, even though the products to which the brand refers are deliberately positioned as a temporary event. Each time the event is different—some thing or place is wrapped,

surrounded, or a wall of fabric is drawn over, around and through in a new location.

Another inherent aspect of each project is the political process it involves. By the time the temporary art installation opens, many preparatory phases of their art has already taken place. The initial stages are only documented by them. After they have received public approval the project becomes part of the public record. It has literally been recorded in the public record and then by the media. Using their statement that the art is positioned, or endowed with elements of a temporary gift to the community, we might think of their temporary art work as a community party with a cake. The design, planning, the baking and decoration all build tension through anticipation, each time in a new place. We the community receive our invitation well in advance, through the mass media, to attend the party.

Public attention to their event is carefully managed. Others are always in the works. Christo has even commented that they are intertwined.[4] This all changes when they receive approval. Then through the unveiling to the removal, they will only discuss the current event and past events, but not future ones.

Once a party, such as *The Gates*, is over the spectacle is embedded in our communal memory. Time alters memories; they are not very reliable. So Christo and Jeanne-Claude provide visual aids, such as books and films, at their expense, to assure that our memories of the various events take the form they wish. They control their history. They do not leave it to critics and art historians. Hence, our memories are created by the press coverage and by their own documentation in the form of their books, photographs, and films.

Christo argues that time is an important aesthetic element, and that the art must be understood as the whole process, from initial design to execution, and removal from the site. They mark the time of each project from its inception to its removal, which is the same as the practice of dating a painting. This is very different than most temporary installations or sculpture. For instance, the dates for *Surrounded Islands*, is 1980–83 and not just 1983. Other projects are: *Pont Neuf Wrapped*, 1975–1985; *The Umbrellas, Japan-USA*, 1984–1991; *The Gates, Central Park, New York City* 1979–2005.[5]

The Gates is the most recent project. I was fortune enough to have the opportunity to observe it closely. I was in New York the whole time and even attended several press conferences. The only other Christo event I attended in person was the opening day of Umbrellas in California.

At New York City's press conference, that was held the day before the curtains were dropped, Mayor Bloomberg informed the very large audience that he had bought two drawings, that Christo does all the drawing himself, and that you still have time to buy one. Christo would be drawing until the in-

stallation opened. This is part of the process. The drawings and collages are working drawings. They are the plans that get reworked and redrawn over and over again until the event is a reality. They are not ephemeral. They are for sale. The drawings and collages are part of the serial that comes to an end with the opening of the temporary art event. That is when photography and film take over.

The books that have been produced on each project do not contain any essays by art historians. The artists state on their own website that, "Christo and Jeanne-Claude have no royalties either on their books and films about their works, (sic) on the contrary they often financially help the publication of the books. Only two publishers never ask for money—Prestel and Taschen. The artists entirely financed the making of the documentaries."[6] And therefore, the artists entirely control the content of their projects. The ephemeral, temporary event, is quickly moved into the history through the artists' own creation of permanent, enduring objects and historical documentation This has allowed them to have their traditional art objects to sell and exhibit, while at the same time have their ephemeral aesthetic cake by very publicly positioning their art as temporary. Even though, the simplest means of obtaining knowledge about their temporary art is through their documentation and the new media.

The Press is an essential part of the process. *The Gates'* press conference took place on February 11, 2005, at the Metropolitan Art Museum in the Temple of Dendur room. An Egyptian building is maintained. Now no more than an artifact. On the cover of the press booklet is inscribed: "A temporary work of art. . . . "[7] There were hundreds of journalists on hand to record this temporary event. When asked why the project would only be up for two weeks even though it took more twenty-six years to obtain permission from the city to install *The Gates*, Jeanne-Claude replied that the "temporal period is an aesthetic decision."[8] She went on to say that they want their work to reflect the element of "love and tenderness for our own lives because we know it will not last."[9] The press have been invited as the formal witnesses and scribes of the labor, epic performance, and all too short, you better get here fast event.

Many artists document their ephemeral work. In the case of Christo and Jeanne-Claude, the material they use is not ephemeral, such as the steel and fabric used in *The Gates*. As I have shown, they argue that their work is ephemeral because it is only installed for a short period of time; this is not inherent in the material used, but is their deliberate artistic decision. That aesthetic decision is their way of adding tension and artistic control, by choosing to control time and entropy themselves, rather than leaving it to others and to fate. They do not allow the temporary art project to decay. They are removed and re-cycled into something else that is not art. Davenport, Christo and

Jeanne-Claude's engineer, stated that "anything that happens to any gate will be changed."[10] It seems that it takes only 10 to 30 minutes to replace either the fabric or an entire gate.

So they create, they preserve, and only then do they decide the time of death. It is all a very controlled process. The drawings, collages, photographs and films are the objects that are positioned to last. It is through the use of mass media material that Christo and Jeanne-Claude make public to the world their temporary installation of steel and engineered fabrics. Specifically, they have reported that they installed 7,500 gates: "5,290 tons of steel was used to make the 15,000 steel bases (equivalent to 2/3 the steel in the Eiffel Tower) and 1,067,330 square feet of rip-stop nylon fabric."[11] The physical materials of the installations would last for years, if not decades with some maintenance, but all the installations have artificially short lives combined with meticulous preservation at the time and documentation.

The press and the public are invited to the event. It is the culmination of the process that is both temporary and public. It is available to all for a short time. ". . . all our projects are temporary. No can possess them. Freedom is the enemy of possession!"[12] Obviously they want people to possess their drawings, but the event is open and free. There is no fee or membership, like the Academy Awards, but it is still exclusive.

Time and place make the installation exclusive. Anyone is free to attend a Christo and Jeanne-Claude art project such as *The Gates* in New York City. The only restriction is the viewer's ability to be there—in that time and place. They are very aware of this and play on our psychological desire to possess the elusive and ephemeral. ". . . the temporary character of these projects makes people come fast. If I told you, 'Look, there is a rainbow over there.' You would never say, 'I will look at it tomorrow.' People need something that is unique in the world. Christo and I are very touched by the expressions, 'Once in a lifetime' and 'Once upon a time.'"[13] They are using the ephemeral quality of the physical installation to make the viewer feel special. If you saw it you have bragging rights of a sort. The audience becomes both necessary and a special element of a spectacle. What does this do for them?

The documentation provides the event, and maybe the artists, a kind of immortality. Everyone can gaze upon the spectacle, attending through the media, now and in the future. An event that is free. This is how the art of the exclusive and impermanent becomes a permanent public memory.

Why are we captivated by the wrapping of a building or bridge? Are Christo and Jeanne-Claude playing peek-a-boo on a grand scale? It seems so. Are we really still enchanted toddlers? Now it's here and now it's gone. This is a game toddlers find fascinating and will play over and over, especially

with mother. It has been argued that the toddlers are reassuring themselves Allaying their fear that mother might really disappear forever.

The original object, of course, is mother and not Pont Neuf. In the game of peek-a-boo the toddler laughs, and so do we. Christo commented, ". . . I started wrapping very ordinary objects, such as bottles, boxes, furniture, toys, piles of magazines and so on. I was intrigued by the idea of a missing presence."[14] Now it's here. Now it's gone. No, the building is still here. It's all very magical, wrapping. That is one aspect of their work. It reminds us as a child is reminded, "Mother is still here."

So the transitory nature of our connection to our physical environment is part of their projects. Their projects end in destruction of what was there. Implicitly then, death is part of the project, and Christo is controlling it, like mummification by the Egyptians.

Their projects, whether they involve wrapping something in fabric or surrounding an island, involve a long governmental process. How many of us have the patience to endure the Kafkaesque process for the 10 or 20 years it takes them to get a permit? Is their art really the record of their epic governmental process? If that was all it was, who would really want to look at it? But it is certainly inherent in each project; they make it clear that they did spend years of effort just to get permission to install this object for your contemplation, for a very short period. And their effort succeeded. It is positioned as being all very Herculean. The lengthy process juxtaposed against the short-lived object makes it all seem so delicate and important.

We have all been faced with at least one real, grinding, Kafkaesque political process in our own everyday lives, and we are presented with similar experiences of theirs, played out in the media—movies, television, and the news. Each of us has bits and pieces in a file somewhere, reflecting our attempts to persuade some public agency to do something for, or not to do something to, us or our family. Obtaining a building permit is an obvious example. We live in a regulated culture. Christo and Jean-Claude's projects take years of negotiations with similar governmental agencies, only to be installed for just two weeks using Christo's own money.

Peter Selz has argued that their art is the political process itself, and not just the objects they install or even the documentation they sell.[15] Jean-Claude elaborated on the political process that is part of every project. "You see, every project is like an expedition, an adventure. And in order to realize it we have to learn about the local people, the local history, traditions and so on. It is very important, if we want to get the permits. For, example, our *Running Fence* project had to cross 59 ranches in California. Christo was mostly in New York, working on his drawings so we could pay for this project and I was with 59 families learning how they live. Why should they know about our art

if we don't know anything about how they live? So, I became the world's leading expert on how to pasteurize milk, how to make cheese, about the artificial insemination of cows and so on. Of course, when we were working in Paris and in Berlin, people there could care less about artificial insemination. We had to learn other things. So each project we learn something."[16]

This process is truly ephemeral and there is no archive, diary, or recording of conversations.[17] According to Jean-Claude there are only two photographs in one of the books, that was the documentation of her part in that entire process.[18] So it seems that Jean-Claude's essential contribution to these elaborate art projects is indeed their most ephemeral aspect.

It seemed appropriate that their press conference was staged at the Temple of Dendur, in the shadow of a building that must have been part of a large public building project and spectacle long ago. When we gazed at temple, we listened to how much steel was used, how many people were employed, and how it is the largest art project in New York City history. Yes, it seems very Egyptian. Christo and Jeanne-Claude's other projects have established Christo as an enduring brand name. Their projects have captured the attention of millions around the world and have become part of our cultural memory whose record may live on as long as the Temple of Dendur.

We will never know for how many centuries our cultural memory will retain the documentation of Christo and Jean-Claude's temporary public art projects, and the Christo brand name itself, which could be more durable than that of the architect of the Temple of Dendur. Or whether they will be remembered as a collaborative couple. We do know that they have positioned themselves so well that they can have there aesthetic cake and eat it too. Paula Harper points out in her September *Art in America* article, without noting the durability of brand name and documentation, that "they do seem to have it both ways. The temporary projects gain respect because they are free from the taint of commerce; this reputation and the attendant publicity generate higher prices for the commodities produced by Christo's labor as well as greater ease in gaining permissions for future public work."[19] So if you missed New York, the book was published in 2005 and the documentary film is ready for viewing. And they are on to their next event, and hope we will be too.

My original title was "Having Their Cake and Eating it Too: The Case of Christo's Im(permanence) and Exclusivity," but soon after I posted it on my cv on my website Jeanne-Claude called me one Sunday morning and told me that Christo was unhappy that I did not have her name in the title.

NOTES

1. Vladimir Belogolovsky, "Christo and Jeanne-Claude: the Art of Interference in Central Park," *NY Arts*, http://www.nyartsmagazine.com/pages/nyam_document-p.php?nid=624

2. Christo and Jeanne-Claude, "Errors," http://christojeanneclaude.net/errors.html

3. Christo and Jeanne-Claude, "How to Read The Art Works," http://christojeanneclaude.net/howTo.html

4. Vladimir Belogolovsky, "Christo and Jeanne-Claude: the Art of Interference in Central Park," *NY Arts*, http://www.nyartsmagazine.com/pages/nyam_document-p.php?nid=624

5. Christo and Jeanne-Claude, "How to Read The Art Works," http://christojeanneclaude.net/howTo.html and the cover of the press catalogue, *Christo and Jeanne-Claude, The Gates, Central Park, New York City, 1979–2005*, City of New York.

6. Christo and Jeanne-Claude, "Errors," http://christojeanneclaude.net/errors.html

7. Material handed out at the press conference, February 11, 2005.

8. My personal notes, February 11, 2005.

9. My personal notes, February 11, 2005

10. My notes, February 11, 2005.

11. Press Release, No. 59, City of New York, Office of the Mayor, February 11, 2005.

12. Vladimir Belogolovsky, "Christo and Jeanne-Claude: the Art of Interference in Central Park," NY Arts, *NY Arts*, online archive, http://www.nyartsmagazine.com/pages/nyam_document-p.php?nid=624

13. Vladimir Belogolovsky, "Christo and Jeanne-Claude: the Art of Interference in Central Park," NY Arts, *NY Arts*, online archive, http://www.nyartsmagazine.com/pages/nyam_document-p.php?nid=624

14. Vladimir Belogolovsky, "Christo and Jeanne-Claude: the Art of Interference in Central Park," NY Arts, *NY Arts*, online archive, http://www.nyartsmagazine.com/pages/nyam_document-p.php?nid=624

15. Peter Selz made this comment publicly in NYC at a lecture he gave. I discussed this with him, July 24, 2005, Berkeley, CA.

16. Vladimir Belogolovsky, "Christo and Jeanne-Claude: the Art of Interference in Central Park," NY Arts, *NY Arts*, online archive, http://www.nyartsmagazine.com/pages/nyam_document-p.php?nid=624

17. Telephone conversation with Jeanne-Claude, 9.4.05

18. Telephone conversation with Jeanne-Claude, 9.4.05

19. Paula Harper, "Public Art, Financing 'The Gates,'" *Art in America*, September, 2005, p. 59.

Chapter Twenty-Three

The *Wu-wei* of the 21st Century Art of Collaboration

Lisa Paul Streitfeld

My father revered collaboration as an essential path to transformation. As a neo-Reichian psychotherapist at the forefront of the Human Potential Movement, he put this philosophy into daily practice through the development of an East Coast growth center modeled on Esalen. As a result, my sixties upbringing required active participation in weekend encounter groups promising the achievement of universal love within the structure of the contained circle. This was inevitably followed by death, the return to the everyday routine of school, only to begin the cycle anew: a fresh leap into the unknown. Each subsequent group encounter with a new leader offered a novel approach and theme to the experience of transcendence.

At the core of this melding of opposites in my formative lifestyle was the unconscious embodiment of the evolutionary spiral propelling our technological age from one discovery to another. I bring this instinct for revelation to my practice as a critic of the avant-garde. In the 21st century, the art of collaborative performance takes up where the sixties Happenings left off—elevating audiences from observers to participants. A group effort dedicated to penetrating personal boundaries in order to arrive at a transcendental experience beyond time and space—this is the greatest hope that avant-garde collaboration holds for the sanctity of art. This authentic practice made visible by new forms is crucial at a time when the celebrity-obsessed media is saturating the collective consciousness with a toxic inducing cycle of addictive consumption.

DEFINING COLLABORATION

From a metaphysical perspective, the collaborative art consists of integrating two energy systems to create an unknown third entity. For example, astrologers

can forecast the potential of an intended collaboration between two or more individuals. This consists of calculating a composite chart that combines the planetary midpoints of each chart; this third entity represents the midpoint between two systems. It is here, at the center of the tension of opposites, that collaboration is born. The process does not mirror one energy system or the other but the integration of these dualities.

Because this third path between the opposites is holistic, it requires little conscious effort beyond surrender. In the Tao this holistic path is known as *wu-wei*. In his final book, *TAO: The Watercourse Way*, Alan Watts explains that the *wu-wei* is the lifestyle of one who follows the Tao which "must be understood primarily as a form of intelligence . . . not simply intellectual; it is also the "unconscious" intelligence of the nervous system. *Wu-wei* is a combination of this wisdom with taking the line of least resistance in all one's action." It is in this statement that we seek to embrace the process of the authentic art of collaboration in the 21st century.

CHARACTERISTICS OF COLLABORATION

Collaborative art practices I have investigated as a critic in the New York metropolitan area share common characteristics: the use of guiding symbols, interactivity, dynamic presence and transcending uncertainty. Briefly summing up each of these qualities will reinforce my definition of the collaborative art of the 21st century as a process dedicated to the holistic forms through the embrace of *wu-wei*. Recent examples come from the most cutting edge downtown collaborations of impresario Richard Move to the most elite art uptown art form, The Metropolitan Opera.

THE GUIDING SYMBOL

The World Trade Center tragedy hovered over any collaboration that evolved following September 11, 2001. Howard Meyer's Axial Theater utilized the WTC as a backdrop to a play investigating the millennial breakdown of patriarchal relationships. The Stephen Petronio Company utilized the symbol of the crucifix to depict New York City's response to the tragedy. Dance Theater impresario Richard Move put a sequined platform pump into play for the Baryshnikov Dance Foundation production of *The Show: Achilles Heels* which mythologized the bisexuality of his title character as an Aquarian archetype of gender union. And in *Madame Butterfly*, the ox-blood kimono train provided dramatic opening and closing images for a timeless story of unrequited love: the potential of the cross (the Self), a symbol of the human

journey of individuation, transformed into a river of blood after Butterfly's final act of self-destruction.

INTERACTIVITY WITH AUDIENCES

As the collaborators enter the process of *wu-wei*, they detach from their individual egos. When this moment of entering the divine occurs, the personal effort gives way to the universal. This is often experienced as the AHA moment, the breakthrough into divine consciousness. A performance that connects this primordial awareness of our connection to divinity to the audience recreates this feeling of timelessness.

DYNAMIC PRESENCE

The collaborative art requires that participants be fully present in the moment. In doing so, they deliver the cycle of life/death/rebirth to every performance, each time rediscovering their role in the sum as for the first time, thereby inviting the audience on this journey of self-discovery. After seven years of an intensive collaborative process, Axial Theater's breakthrough 2006 production, *Lost in Paradise*, succeeded in creating the alchemical transformation of two characters in the alembic of a cramped set by way of a holistic love reaching beyond patriarchal archetypes. Move's highly developed collaborative process transmitted aliveness by placing a blindfolded dancer at the center of his formalist *Toward the Delights of the Exquisite Corpse*. In a talk back following the public dress rehearsal of *Madame Butterfly*, two singers declared how the collaborative process demanded that they be fully present—and this in an art form where stage interaction between performers is secondary to the music! Is it no wonder that critics declared this work as a revival of the form?

TRANSCENDING UNCERTAINTY

The *wu-wei* process enables collaborators to transcend Uncertainty (i.e. the role that their consciousness plays in the outcome of their experiment) through the leap into the unknown. This can remove an artist from the familiar terrain of his formation or, conversely, deliver an artist back to his origins. Petronio's progressive leaps into cross-disciplinary collaborations with major cultural figures of our time peaked in the performance following his 20th an-

niversary season, in which he reflected back on his gay militant street performance through ACT UP. For the 2005-2006 *Bloom*, he integrated the poetry of Emily Dickenson with a Rufus Wainwright score and the Young People's Chorus of New York City attired in hand painted flower shirts to present the bloom of a holistic art of collaboration transcending time and space—as well as politics!

Conversely, Richard Move discovered an unexpected political message when collaborator Hilton Als (*The New Yorker* critic) introduced him to the deceased musical genius Julius Eastman. The Eastman score for *Toward the Delights of the Exquisite Corpse* includes the composer's verbal explanation for titles such as *crazy nigger* and *gay guerrilla*. Video pioneer Charles Atlas's development of primordial symbol of the ring through chakra infused color and the reflective costumes of designer/stylist Patricia Field completed the production.

This outstanding work of multi-media dance theater seamlessly incorporated the characteristics of the collaborative art: the guiding symbol, interactivity, dynamic presence and transcending Uncertainty. Moreover, it invited the audience into the process by which the *wu-wei* absorption in the body delivers us into the future of space travel, and—in keeping with Tao practice of incorporating the opposites—returns us to our human origins. Here we arrive back at the circle, a symbol for the life/death/rebirth cycle and the emerging archetype of the holistic Self.

Chapter Twenty-Four

What is Conversational Music or "Convers"?

Martin Simon

This interview about the nature and practice[1] *of Conversational Music or "Convers" was compiled from personal letters, notes and conversations between Noah Creshevsky, the composer and professor emeritus at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, and Martin Simon, the Slovakian-born composer and inventor of Conversational Music, exchanged over a period of four years between 2002–2006 during Simon's academic residency in New York City.* (Edited by David Sachs)

Noah Creshevsky: You talk about conversation in music. In a regular, spoken conversation one person speaks and one person listens. How do you explain that in a musical conversation there may be two or more people playing or "musically talking" at the same time? Where is the conversation here?

Martin Simon: In the most general meaning, "conversation" is a way of two or more people exchanging ideas around various topics. A conversation, like speaking, implies intentionality. I call that sense of purposeful deliberateness the "action-reception-and-feedback principle." If this principle is present, there is a foundation for a conversation. If it is not present, the relationship between the participants is somewhat in a state of ignorance. One party talking without its counter-party listening and responding does not establish a conversational environment.

NC: You say that conversation requires two or more participants, subject matter, and a sense of purpose. What happens when more than one person talks at the same time? Is that no longer a conversation?

MS: Let's consider an example of two people interacting. When one person talks while another listens (and vice versa), we have a conversation. Similarly, one person holding a pot while another pours water into it is an example of a non-verbal conversation. While the two examples differ in the essence of the ac-

tivity, both examples fulfill the general principle of conversation. The first example—a sequential pattern in which one person talks at a time—is a linear activity. The second example—the pouring and gathering of water—is a concurrent activity.

Analogously, one may begin to see that verbal conversation is not strictly a linear event, but a concurrent state of listening (holding a pot), and speaking (pouring the water). This example is analogous to a collaborative approach to making Conversational Music.[2]

On the other hand, when we talk to someone, it does not automatically mean that the other person actually listens. In such a case, a conversation does not occur. Therefore another requirement for a conversation is attention. (The other requirements, as discussed earlier, are existence of participants, subject matter, a sense of purpose and response.)

NC: That's clear now, what is more important, though, how does this rule apply to music in particular?

MS: Conversation in music happens either in a linear or concurrent way. One performer plays something while another performer tries to grasp his or her "intention" through a constant process of listening and reacting, musically. Attention spans vary from person to person and may often be unequal. Differences between individual performers are natural and contribute to the spontaneous flow of musical materials.

NC: Is this musical conversation a composition?

MS: No. It may come from a composition or it can lead to a composition, but mainly it is a state of referencing to things we already know from prior experience or want to explore later. Musical conversation emerges from one's own unique interpretation of the musical materials at hand. In contrast to strict realizations of fully notated scores, conversational music promotes the casual, fluid treatment of musical elements, including those represented by printed scores. Conversational music liberates the performer from the usual performer's role, by releasing him or her into a comfortable personal zone.

NC: You have a deep feeling for humanity and respect for the individual's contribution and voice. What inspired you to develop the concept of conversational music?

MS: I was not happy writing music the way I was, meaning that my personal performance did not adequately reflect the rigid indications of the musical score. Often, I also did not feel convinced by the players' interpretations of the written page.

Plus there were many possibilities of variations running wildly in my head, but the necessity of committing something to paper required that I choose a single variation at the expense of excluding others. The nature of writing forces anyone to choose a single "best" solution, and to then induce others to

rehearse and perform the rigidly notated phrase. Fully notated scores—surely a correct path for many composers—did not feel right for me. I concluded that there must be a way that I could create comfortably with increased possibilities for personal interpretation and open interaction. A summary of my experiments to develop the concept of Convers Music is documented in the essay "Notes on Conversational Music."

NC: How does this music sound? How does one know when it is a spontaneous musical conversation and not a rehearsed act?

MS: For a typical listener it is not important if one recognizes it as an authentic conversation or not. Listeners are concerned about the sound of music. Either they like it or not. There may be untold numbers of pieces that one finds highly inspiring or terribly complicated (or terribly simple).

Convers is not a style of music; it is a style of a person. The gestures of music are the gestures of the individual making them. That elusive personal character makes it difficult to put a label on the musical result.[3] Nevertheless, one may sense improvisatory qualities in the textures, rhythms and articulations that are not readily expressed through performances of fixed scores.

NC: What is the difference between conversation and improvisation? Isn't the term "Conversational Music" just another way of saying the same thing?

MS: For me, improvisation in its purest sense is the building unit of any action. It is the first thing one does intuitively before learning (or never learning) the consequence of an action. It is manifested in every moment of our lives, starting from the way we use our fingers to scratch our head before getting up from bed, to the way we bend over the washbasin in front of a mirror when brushing our teeth before falling to sleep (and far beyond). Improvisation moves in every and all directions.

Conversation and improvisation both utilize improvisation as a stimulus to any action. However, in a conversation one focuses a multi-directional improvised force on a particular goal with the intention of achieving that specific goal. Conversational Music is built with the same spirit as improvisation—the liberty to express our selves freely, but also requires a heightened level of attention—the desire to absorb and to give back.

NC: Is Conversational Music only present in unwritten formats or are there written examples, too?

MS: Conversational Music can be generated from themes both known and unknown. Conversation does not require notation but may be based on or inspired by it.

Conversation is not like reading a book; rather, it is talking about what happened in the book (or what will or will not happen).[4]

For example, "Anaconda" (a game for unspecified instruments) from "Melting Away," a collaborative multimedia community project, was con-

ceived from its inception as a composition based on a conversational model. The preparation for a performance includes the players' familiarity with every page of the score, but it is understood that some pages may be played out of order, or not be played at all, while other pages may be "discussed" vigorously.

"Anaconda" is a title for a music-game piece designed specifically to encourage performer-driven musical conversation. It is based in full on a simple, relatively well-known piece of music—the Canadian national anthem "O Canada" (from that the anagram: Anaco[n]da). The whole project "Melting Away" thematically covers the work of Canadian artists living in New York and was conceived in collaboration with video artist Elizabeth Whalley and composer-programmer David Reeder.

The musical score of "Anaconda" is written and presented in a way that leaves performers a way to personally engage their own senses. They are given the responsibility to make individual decisions, figure out workable connections, pace themselves appropriately, choose a co-playing partner, be as loud or as silent as they find considerate or harmful to others in the group. The personal judgment of circumstances and responsibilities for actions and consequences are in the hands of players.

The written musical piece itself (the score) is one thing and the performance influenced by it is another. Conversational Music is what emerges from the individual and group interactions with and without regard to the written score.

NC: Are you collaborating with Elizabeth Whalley, David Reeder or Paul S. Ray when writing a Convers piece?

MS: These people do not collaborate in writing or performance of Convers music, rather they collaborate in the production of the event.

In the work "Little Pictures," for example, the goal was to produce a collaborative multimedia event. One part of the project was that a group of musicians collaborated in open musical interpretations of small fragments of numerous musical miniatures that had been composed independently at an earlier time. The music performance itself was a collaboration.

NC: Can any piece of music be performed as a Convers piece?

MS: What comes to my mind is a silly comparison: "Can any physical movement be considered yoga?" Convers is not a single piece of music but a broader category. Like yoga, the practice of Convers maintains an attitude of an internal questioning mind.

The answer is "yes"—absolutely, almost any music can be reinterpreted, deconstructed, improved or adjusted to fit one's own needs or interests.

NC: Did you invent Convers in the US? When exactly and what drove you?

MS: Conversational Music has been around for quite a long time, mostly as a natural practice, unconsciously cultivated by many musicians and developed

informally. It may never have been formally labeled and identified as such. A conversational attitude is a pre-starting point of many works of popular, serious or any other music. It is a state of looking for alternatives and possible answers—a way of exploring the full span of momentary capabilities and inspirations before selecting elements that will best complete the work for public performance.

It was around spring 2001 during my music studies in New York when I happened to observe, by a coincidence, a non-public performance that was for that moment unusually sensitive, spontaneous and inspiring musically (and also a pleasure to watch). I have been at once captivated by an image of musical performances that would come out from authentic musical representations of participants' personalities and their momentary capabilities.

That early incident was so satisfying to me for its human communicativeness, accessibility and non-stiffness that I begun to wonder how to encourage more of these or similar performances. I sought to identify conditions and attitudes responsible for activating these resourceful personal forces inside any player. Ultimately, I envisioned how Convers could aid as an alternative practice to improve overall musicianship.

INSIDERSECTION (EXPANDED NOTES ON "CONVERS")

Who Is in Control?

1. In a standard, organized musical world, the composer's ultimate musical vision is set on paper, recorded on disc or performed in its desired, planned or finalized form (a product). Even a more abstract and less fixed musical score attempts to realize the aesthetics of its creator—the ultimate authority to measure the level of closeness of recording or performance to the creator's original stylistic, technical and aesthetic standards. Usually every creator has unconscious or conscious preferences that are set so high that they are rarely all completely satisfied—or only after a life-long dedicated effort. This internal vision, subjective for each individual, drives us to constantly pursue things that one personally believes are "better" and "more"—qualitatively as well as quantitatively.

A person in "control" of a "game" (in music, a composer or conductor) is not only a primary decision-maker of tentative, anticipated personal musical preferences, but also someone with the designated authority to influence others in the performance of the particular work. However, the "engaged personnel" may not necessarily feel the same enthusiasm about the work as the creator does, and is generally not allowed to express alternative solutions or

to personalize the work through discourse. In a jointly collaborative environment, a concept of control on one side and personal preferences on the other may cause a conflict of interest. Take the amount of individual beliefs, intellect, practice and experience multiplied by the number of participants and we could easily come up with an impossible equation.

The questions that may arise immediately are: "How do we arrive at a solution? Do we need to arrive at a solution? What are the pressures? Are they necessary?" The practice of Conversational Music addresses some of these issues in its own way. First of all, no unified solution is necessary. Definitive solutions are unlikely to be good for everyone—they may need further discussion and revision. Conversational Music takes the notion of a dynamic, active process of ongoing musical misstatements, corrections and discoveries occurring over time, not an imagined "product" fixed in duration and medium.

A creative brainstorming musical process—for example, in the form of a musical conversation—of a particular moment and on a particular musical subject may be fulfilling and mind-stretching on one occasion and frustrating on another. Confidence, imagination and sensitivity improve with practice. As a result of personal differences, any performance is unlikely to adhere to a single stylistic, technical or cultural standard of practice. The results may vary greatly. These qualities of an open system observable in any aspect of life and work may subsequently cause misunderstandings, hostility, arguments and revisions but may also lead to harmony, friendship, understanding and spontaneity. It is the evolving and naturally adjusted receptive relationship, which creates harmonious bonds or dissonant collisions.

Conversational Flow and Structure

2. In a nonverbal conversation—let's say body language—a physical pose or gesture may suggest one person's desired action. It is up to the other person to understand, join in or refuse to be a counterpart in a joint activity. In Convers, as well, two or more participants provide one another with opportunities to listen, suggest, support or change the course of musical events, based on reciprocal attention and taking responsibility for the results of one's actions. Individual decision and actions are set in motion during the momentary observation of an externally unstructured environment.

Compared to, for example, the "chance music" of John Cage, where unforeseen sounds may occur and are then left as they are, in Convers musical events are not purely a result of accident or chance but are appended with a causal and conscious personal reaction to momentary musical phenomena. Conversational Music is not focused on external musical effects (the music consumer's point of view), but rather on the interior effect—a participant's

expectations and satisfaction in sharing and confronting musical ideas of a personal nature without imposing a judgment on it. The musical structure of Convers is essentially causal and any musical or nonmusical, external or internal event may influence the continuance or interruption of the thematic flow (for example, "the telephone rings").

The Inner Face of Convers

3. Perhaps the most apparent difference between Convers and other presentation-oriented works of music is that Convers is a personal self-reflection within both formal and informal venues. It is not a style category; it is a functional category. For an active participant in a musical conversation, this aspect is of a much greater concern than it is for an external spectator. Regardless of external musical effect, the self-determined spontaneity is experienced from the first moment of active participation. There is no one to hold one's hand, and participants must assume a personal responsibility for their actions and consequences. For a novice practicing Convers, this feature may initially cause a creative block (temporary inability to play anything at all) or undue mental pressure (a fear that one may make a mistake or play improperly and that his or her public status may consequently be damaged).

It is important to accept and internalize the true purpose of Convers, and its benefits and sacrifices. This means to understand that Convers is not as useful in its presentational form (where one is under public pressure to present something accurately, clearly and thoroughly) as it is in its interactive form (where a performer can choose a comfortable environment where he or she can consider, examine and evaluate alternatives and compare them with others). Convers can be compared to an open-minded group meditation. It is worthwhile practicing and it brings satisfying results when no measure of public appropriateness or success is set upon participants. It advances internally with a sense of personal consciousness.

Facts versus Interpretations

4. Our environment is on the one hand built of complete and categorized objects and ideas, and on the other hand of potential, unexpected, uncertain and still shapeable physical and mental material. The second is yet to be transformed, if ever, to the first; in other words, the open systems may transform to closed systems and vice versa. Usually the two are present at all times as opposite elements of a common environment. Open-system characteristics (e.g., discussion, free

commentary, question-and-answer situations, informal conversation, improvisation) are more often found and expanded before and after presentation of completed ideas (e.g., in the form of book, musical score, audio recording, film, prepared speech, proclaimed set of rules, schedule of planned events, etc.).

The open systems may or may not ever become formally recognized as an established value belonging to an individual, group or institution, but more importantly they exist with or without our will and the imposed limitations that protect closed systems. Conversational Music intends to take notice of open musical processes that lead into or are the offspring of completed works; not necessarily claiming the same public importance as fully completed works and systems, but as a vitally existing source of inspiration stirring the water that may later take on a shape of a glass or spill out of a broken glass. Ultimately, a genuine musical conversation, like its verbal or physical cousins, comes naturally from an individual interest or need to participate, rather than from an external inducement to follow a prescribed structure.

As an example of a conversational musical situation, we can borrow an analogy from a discussion forum that takes place after a solo speech or after a prepared slide presentation on some specific subject. In the discussion that follows, much of the original content is likely to be lost, on the one hand, due to imperfect memory or, on the other, due to a questioning mind pointing out some new observations and connections related to the presented material. These factors cause inaccurate, inexact or new ideas, personally rearticulated interpretations along with possibly numerous misinterpretations that are exchanged as readily as a fact. Thus, the ambiguity of outcome from the practice of Conversational Music is deeply based in its very nature—to share music spontaneously and instantly with less regard to exactness and more concern with a consideration of variable options. The result is a diverse culmination of multi-influenced possibilities.

How Does One Start Practicing Convers?

By actively exploring and assessing one's own preferences and capabilities in a casual manner. Some general hints may be helpful:

- Find a comfortable spot (first, one not exposed to the public)
- Look at each other's eyes
- Listen caringly to what you are playing (and later how you are playing it)
- Observe what others are doing and playing (and how)
- Study how you can express yourself in ways that you would find personally compelling

- See where you can fit in and how you can support someone else's action or initiate a new direction (through rhythm, tempo, dynamics, articulation, harmony)
- Keep a state of a questioning mind; consider alternatives and develop variations
- Stop when you have had enough, feel exhausted or are no longer inspired

Part Two

SHORTER COMMENTS, THOUGHTS, AND PROJECTS

Chapter Twenty-Five

Some Thoughts on Collaboration

Guy Van Belle

SUNDAY DECEMBER 3, 2006

On the initial question "What is collaboration for you?" We started to wonder what was meant here: collaboration how we tried to deal with it in our projects over the last years? Or: collaboration in the arts in general how we perceived it? But since any specific question for a larger audience can have only value at the latter level, but does not mean anything without the former (call it proof of existence), we may have to try to answer it in both ways. . . .

Collaboration has been a major circumstantial factor in our creative production since the beginning of the 80s. We were all coming from different areas and backgrounds but found each other as musicians and taking up the non-hierarchical "band" model, like found in pop/rock/alternative. This contradictive model would stand even when we moved out of the more conventional music making into video and sound performances whether it was on stage, in a gallery or in a studio. Too young to be good but who cared about that?

We remember this very moment when at the former IPEM studios—they are now research oriented, but they used to attract tape and computer musicians for realizing their experimental work—when a rather well known composer would be puzzled about the three of us working all night and for weeks together on the same piece, and he would ask—rather rhetorically—how the hell we could stand each other's opinion? Of course we were puzzled by the question in the first place: of course we were driven by the experiment of how several ideas could be combined into one. And secondly: how could we generate something that in the end was more pleasing to all of us than just the realization of one idea! Of course we had to give in for one another and many

times none of us had a clue what to do next when nothing good seemed to came out of the machines! But in general we generated a lot of music/visuals based on one simple rule: “if it is not obstructing anything we try: it goes! And we still can see later whether we keep it or not.”

In the end we all liked it better, when we had forgotten who had done what exactly and who had changed anything to make it come out better. Sometimes you heard individual and recognizable moments, but it could never be only that, it had to become gradually packaged into a cloud that progressively masked ruthlessly any individual expression. Since we hated individual moments anyway, solos were avoided systematically for that reason, the result became automatically shared by everyone who was there: musicians, technicians, or any in betweens. Like a rocksong that is never the singer only, though it can bear a single name.

In this approach, the difference with the surrounding world is obvious, not only looking at the visual arts but also in the field of literature. Maybe the latter has a difficult time in a visual art-dominated definition of art, but it will always be an interesting reference point to us despite its forever unsatisfactory general model considering collaboration and creativity. There are hardly collectives at work in that area, and most of the writers have a single name to hold up quality and sales. Again there are a few exceptions like Oulipo, or maybe the altruistic, amateur and anonymous medieval language game and writer clubs: the rhetoricians (“rederijkers”). They were the forerunners to techniques that were later developed further by Burroughs (cut up), Cage (writing through Finnegan’s Wake), and even dada and Fluxus. They experimented with collaborative texts and other new formats, like freestyle rhymes and performances like in rap. But within literature these group productions were always regarded as not as important as the individual artworks, strangely enough. Yet thinking of all this, something may be wrong here with the evaluation itself.

And so we came to distrust the construction of an evaluation, like the ones repeated through history, which in almost all cases reflect fixed and authoritarian views on the arts itself, idealistic but uncreative and anti-experimental in nature.

So much for the factor collaboration, which we consider constructive for a new poetics lurking behind the official promotion of the good west-west competitive arts over the centuries after and coinciding with the invention of Colonialism by the Dutch in the east in the 17th Century (by building forts and claiming territory for the control of cultivation and trade).

Since the millennium bug we tried to contribute to the proliferation of new formats for the development of creative and expressive forms, whatever the disciplines or backgrounds are of the ones involved. We learned our lessons

over the last decades and agreed that collaboration is a dynamical basis from which new forms can emerge, but only if a new evaluation within the arts is simultaneously being developed. A new kind of evaluation that reconsiders in a perpetual/continuing way the possible new parameters involved in the making of evaluation itself.

This cannot be based on what happened before, and how we dealt with that, but on what lies ahead: and since historical value was too buggy anyway (hence the 2000 panic) please forget it now. Let's move on.

So suddenly collaboration becomes plural: we deal with collaboration +s, its nature depending on different situations, its topologies depending on where we are in the process of managing this multiplistic creativity. It is also variable: the shifting position somewhere in the spectrum oscillating between -1 and $+1$. Rather like living in a family where activities are getting done together and alone or in different combinations according to the need or will. Or even where activities are happening purely accidentally. Are artistic projects different from that?

Possibly, maybe not, but in many ways we cannot stick anymore to the production rules promoted by conventional organizations/institutions for financing, educating and promoting current art forms, since long ago they lost their promises. So today they can only save what is to save during the dismantling of the old bond. They have no intention whatsoever in creating artists that precisely and accurately operate to oppose becoming institutionalized puppets. (Ask us for 2 pages on mobility and exchange in the art world today next time and we will show how much the purpose is to strengthen global industry). So collaboration is not being taught at the academy and will not be promoted for another decade at least. Not only the vision is lacking but also the will. The arts wanted to be individual and hierarchical, competitive over the last centuries and that is claustrophobically maintained as an uncontestable anachronism today.

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 17, 2006

The trma-vrma project for next festival in Bratislava was set up as an experiment with 10 people to test the different levels of collaboration about technological and other content for creating a 2×8 hours performance over 2 days. The first day we set up 8 speakers in a hall with on both sides staircases. There was a mixer and we had patched up the possibility of feeding a soundcard with a stereo or multichannel stream, and to control that input to create an illusion of moving sound through the hall. For that purpose we organized 2 meetings with the participants to talk about the ideas for the mini-pieces,

and the purpose was to let them somehow run into one another. As initiator of the piece, we refused to take up a role as a leader or manager, but we rather wanted to see how people relate to one another through talking about their plans, and form alliances in a natural way based on interest and closeness of ideas.

Another and recent fascination is also the everlasting repression on the search for innovation of possible formats for creating new forms of art—read "synthesis," "composing" and "performing." The ways we deal with media and how we communicate with one another for leisure and work may have changed drastically over the last decades but in the arts it looks like interbellum times have stood still. To cut long explanations short: the idea was to try to implode the whole classical model of the cultural product, be it music or video piece or whatever else . . . now, in a traditional sense the audience will only experience the end product as an ideal outcome of a long series of phases and stages within the management of sound and image, through editing and changing.

This experiment was only a first step in trying to get the successive stages of conceptualization, creation, change, even technical setup, discussions and whatever can happen during the moments of creativity "present" within the piece itself. We are thinking about a kind of implosion of all this as creative elements and we are trying out ways for positioning and repositioning this within the piece itself. One of the obvious reasons is also to bridge real-time and non-real-time creativity through expansion of time within the performative action itself. But let's continue on this in another text maybe about the poetics of new active art forms.

There is an older field recording of Jodling Pygmees from central Congo, registered in the 50s, where the singing gets suddenly interrupted by a thunderstorm and heavy rainfall. There is that recording from San Lorenzo, Mexico, where in the back of the drums and flutes you can hear the rhythmical chiming of the church bells and throughout the recording people are talking vividly and as such contribute graciously to the whole recording.

Both ideas took a different turn. Collaborations did not happen like envisioned because most of the people were pre-occupied with their [kn]own world. The recordings did not come out too well because we were too busy with getting through the practical setups and changes. But some interesting things happened: gnd() did some live coding and gradually his evolving sounds would start to shift and spread through the hall over more than an hour. Xtabay's neo-punk band played a one-hour piece slowing down one song 12 times, and with a drumkit distributed over the staircases in between the beats real life stepped in: the voices talking about the action, the running on the staircase, the twisted rhythm because of the slowness. Barbara Huber's

"Table of Elements" generated a spatial choir of several artificial and real voices in a grid, which created beautiful moments, eliciting casual audience reactions from interested reactions to aggressive spasms. And somehow Urbsounds got hit by reality due to an electricity failure, Danky from Poo and Sden started to improvise during the mutilation of the voices of the "Table of Elements" piece and Matej's streams got controlled as planned through the spatial installation.

But throughout the first day it became clear that this setup had failed, specifically to let people automatically "see" what the ideas of the set up were. It failed to create a collaborative environment: because the technical topology did not suggest by itself what the collaboration could do. So invited people came to the hall and played their own performance without considering what was lying in front of them, despite the explanations on the list and the meetings before.

This is also and obviously due to the fact that we kept on refusing to take a certain lead, avoiding to make the above themes too explicit and trying to drive completely on what participants by themselves can experience and react to. Later on that evening we realized that maybe we had been making the trma-vrma piece in a wrong way: a production of sound has to incorporate the collaboration already, instead of counting on the later handling and management of the sound. So we underestimated the technical part tremendously.

Again: apparently you cannot create a good collaborative piece if the technical implementation—any topology of technological apparati will do—is not explicitly exchanging data/streams. Secondly, every participant in the process needs to have at least insight into the structure and kind of data/streams that are generated on each side. After all these years how can we make these obvious mistakes again?[here doubting about the above lines]

The Society of Algorithm came about in 2002, when we were invited together with Akihiro Kubota to perform in Nagoya. We had been discussing a lot about connected internet-related performances over the last 10 years and this was an occasion to perform live and face-to-face together for the first time. Mostly we exchanged some ideas (for next Art's birthday we want to work with formant synthesis and patterns based on conversation analysis), then we make some max and pd patches that we send to one another and change over a couple of weeks (sending it back and forth for each version we make of it so in the end we all worked on the same software running on each end), and finally we set up an audio and video stream, and a data-connection (osc), which we interpret and use again in the production of new sound and image streams, which we share. But in Nagoya, we came to the hall for the performance, connected both to the internet and did exactly as if we had each been sitting at the other end of the world. we liked it, both because that is

what we are in for: connected through fiber optics. Coding perception and synthesis. Exchange. Make one thing together. It was hard to tell what Akihiro did and what we did. We both think still it was a beautiful piece. This text could start over again where a format or a model of 20 years before was described. But it is different, and we plan to.

Obviously what works in the virtual domain is hard to be copied to the real world. Why do we ever try instead of proceeding further and bringing what we have there to another level? Maybe the initial experimental setup that made us collaborate in the first place was more about trying to explore one another than developing true content. We are . . .

Countdown, Control
4,3,2,1
We are, We are VR
We are, We are VR
We are, We are VR
We are, WE ARE VR
Troopers, three Yo! Virtual Realitay
Troopers, three Yo! Virtual Realitay
Troopers, three Yo! Virtual Realitay
Troopers Three yo!

4,3,2,1
We are, we are VR
We are, we are VR
We are, we are VR
We are, we ARE VR

Troopers three yo! virtual Realitay
Troopers three yo! Virtual Realitay
Troopers three yo! Virtual Realitay
Troopers three yo...
WE ARE VR

[For all the people I collaborated with over the years and esp. for Piet van Wymeersch (died spring 2005)] mxhz.org

Chapter Twenty-Six

The Electron Buddy System

Nicolas Collins

As long as I've been making music, I've been making music with electricity: my first instrument was an electric guitar (I was terrible), which was quickly followed by a tape recorder with sonic quirks of its own, and my first homemade circuitry. From the start this music required *connections*: the guitar, tape recorder and circuits all needed to be hooked up to one another and amplifiers before a sound could be heard. I found that the more interconnections, the better things sounded: the guitar was duller without a fuzzbox, and even shinier with tape echo, feedback and a squealing oscillator thrown in. Electronics, like the nature that spawned them, abhor a vacuum, and circuits seem smarter in groups than alone.

The 1970s were a good time for socially active circuits. It was the heyday of analog synthesizers, festooned with patchcords. Making music with them was like building with noisy Lego blocks, and one usually ran out of patchcords long before exhausting the connectional permutations. Gordon Mumma, David Tudor and their adventurous colleagues and students took electronics out of the studio and onto the stage. Tudor's sprawling matrices of small boxes resembled ant colonies more than musical instruments: with numerous interconnected pathways, they evinced a mysterious collective behavior that went beyond the understanding or control of their solo human performer. Any individual circuit might have been relatively simple, capable of only a narrow range of sounds, but the multiple lines of signal flow and feedback contributed an inherent instability, such that one small nudge of a knob or flick of a switch could propel the array from dead silence to complex, self-perpetuating rhythms.

I spent the better part of the decade tangled in homemade musical circuits, and then in 1978 I bought my first microcomputer. An A4-size exposed circuit board with a calculator-style keypad and display, the Synertek "VIM"

resembled an electronics project more than an iMac. The machine demonstrated two great advances over the synthesizers and circuits that came before:

- Through clever programming, this one circuit could emulate numerous individual circuits, in one compact package.
- It had *memory*, which meant it could embody one of the essential attributes of a score or musician: it could autonomously run a sequence of events, and it could make decisions based on evaluating past events.

Admittedly, programming in assembler language was brain-numbingly frustrating, but fixing bugs and tweaking the program was easier (or at least less destructive) than de-soldering. My First Microcomputer seemed so sophisticated (and expensive!) that I was tempted to hook it —and it alone—up to a speaker and let it sing. And so I did. For exactly one piece, a disappointingly flat piece, a piece performed once and only once. Then I was back to adding wires and introducing the computer to other circuits, instruments, and sundry objects.

Today, with so many musicians in the thrall of "laptop music," I feel so anachronistic: my laptop is there on the stage, to be sure, but wreathed by several years accumulation of musical flotsam—no different from any other circuit, except maybe, still, a bit more expensive. Despite the power of a single modern computer, and the myriad "virtual interconnections" possible with software plug-ins, there's no substitute for real jacks and plugs. Is it just a coincidence that "hooking up" has recently entered parlance as a synonym for a casual blowjob? Virtual connections are to patchcords as the chat room is to the back seat of a car.

All of this should come as no surprise. Circuits, like improvisers, tend to follow the logic of "the wisdom of crowds," in James Surowiecki's words:

> If you ask a hundred people to run a 100-meter race . . . the average time will not be better than the time of the fastest runner. . . . But ask a hundred people to answer a question or solve a problem, and the average answer will often be at least as good as the answer of the smartest member. With most things, the average is mediocrity. With decision making, it's often excellence. It's as if we've been programmed to be collectively smart.[1]

Music is not a race, but a series of decisions. And circuits—even the fancy ones we call "computers"—seem to be inherently "collectively smart," even when, occasionally, individually rather plodding.

NOTE

1. James Surowiecki. *The Wisdom of Crowds*. Anchor Books (RandomHouse). New York. 2005. P. 11.

Chapter Twenty-Seven

I Always Appreciated Teamwork and Collaborations

Orlan

I always appreciated teamwork and collaborations. My two greatest collaborations were first on the sound track of my video installation "*Bien que . . . oui mais et coup de donic,*" and second on "*Piece lumineuse*," the sculpture photo piece.

"*Bien que . . . oui mais . . . coup de donic*." is an epicurian memento mori, "*Bien que nous vivions . . . oui mais nous devons mourir . . .*" (even though we live . . . yes but we must die"). I worked with Frederic Sanchez. We spoke and exchanged a lot, about the urgency of living and of living intensely. The beauty and strength of the present moment, that are symbolized visually by games of artifact.

He made some suggestions a short while later, and then after more discussion we arrived to a final soundtrack that was really exceptional. That was it, the urgency, the repetition, but without morbidity. The sound track lasts 80 minutes, and the images 10 minutes. I made a triple loop with the images, so the viewers see something different each time, as the loop was randomized and it seemed as if the three sequences were varying each time. Of course I couldn't have done such a soundtrack myself. It supports the images in a perfect harmony and understanding of the spirit of the installation.

The second collaboration happened at the CCC of Tours and the Palais de Tokyo with the architect Philippe Chiambaretta. It was the first time I collaborated with an architect. We had met by chance, having been introduced by the director of the CCC. The project was mulling around for a while. The curator Linda Weintraub had invited me to do an exhibition in the United States. I initially wanted to do a remake of the operating block, but it seemed too literal. I wanted to recreate a medical atmosphere, the ambiance of an operating room, but with a distance. To create this distance I decided to work with

somebody else. In 2004 a retrospective of my work was organized, in two phases. First at the Centre National de la Photographie in Paris, by Regis Durand, and second at the CCC in Tours, where Alain Julien-laferriere took the risk of showing for the first time in France an exhibition based on my work resulting from surgery. He invited me to produce a new piece, and so I decided to work with an architect.

To recreate the feeling of the operating room, where there is a strong presence of heat, and light, Philippe suggested a material that played with the idea of skin. Prosthetics were set up outside the room. The result was something like an organic sculpture. On the inside, metal structures pulled on the "skin," creating a voluntarily deformed structure. We didn't want to create any kind of "fake" operating room. It had to be something light and immaterial. The material we used was called "Barrisol," which is an old membrane-like material that plays well with light when it is projected from behind. That created an interesting effect with the photographs we printed on it. This material allowed us to work on form, light, and image.

Philippe has this to say about working with me:

> "I'm convinced that architecture needs to regenerate its culture. It lives from outdated dogmas, images and cultural models. If we stick to a definition of architecture as the art of building, then the art of building must be invented for the twenty-first century. In the field of contemporary art, I see strategies, new types of representation and production and different ways of approaching projects. I discovered a link between Orlan's work on the metamorphosis of the body, and especially on the deformation of the skin during her surgery performances, and my own thinking about architecture of transformation and the plasticity of the membranes and envelopes in architecture."

It was a fruitful and intelligent collaboration that respected both of our crafts. It also put both of our thought processes in perspective through our respective inputs and the decision we made to find a point of convergence. Philippe's great knowledge of materials and building was essential.

Collaborations like these, or the one with the surgeon Marjorie Cramer in New York for my seventh performance-surgery, make those pieces possible, but they are also a continuation of my work in the sense that they are like hybridizations. The product of a collaboration is more than the sum of each party's knowledge and know-how, it creates a hybrid that transcends and extends the individual input and creates a piece that is more than its creators.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

The Dream of a Common Language: Thoughts on Collaboration and Protest

Zoe Trodd

"I always feel the movement is sort of a mosaic," observed Alice Paul in 1917. "Each of us puts in one little stone, and then you get a great mosaic at the end." Part of my research traces a collaborative spider-web chart of eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth-century protest literature and art, and focuses on the intersections between contemporaneous protest movements. For example, while the nineteenth century saw the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments exclude women, and divide abolitionists and suffragettes, Frederick Douglass and Wendell Phillips worked on women's rights, and women's rights activists worked to end slavery. After the Civil War, suffragists shifted from comparisons between women and slaves to comparisons between women and degraded workers, and worked with free love advocates, labor activists and members of the First International. In 1840 Lydia Maria Child explained that "a struggle for the advancement of any principle of freedom would inevitably tend to advance all free principles, for they are connected like a spiral line, which, if the top be put in motion, revolves even to the lowest point," and in 1898 Elizabeth Cady Stanton instructed: "Let us remember that all reforms are interdependent. . . . The object of an individual life is not to carry one fragmentary measure in human progress, but to utter the highest truth clearly seen in all directions." Douglass agreed, telling the Woman Suffrage Association in 1888: "All good causes are mutually helpful. The benefits accruing from this movement for the equal rights of woman are not confined or limited to woman only."

Equally, the 1964 Civil Rights Act did seem to separate the protest strands of the 1960s. It included "sex" as well as race in Title VII, and introduced legislation for an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, but feminists believed the law's administrators didn't take sex discrimination seriously. In

response they formed the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966, and were then refused membership in the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. Nonetheless, feminist leaders took inspiration from Civil Rights activists. As late as 1992, the feminist group Third Wave was borrowing the language of Civil Rights for their voter registration drive, Freedom Summer. Connecting other late twentieth-century movements, woman activists in the American Indian Movement formed the feminist organization, Women of all Red Nations, and the Women's Health Action Mobilization was inspired by ACT UP. Civil Rights activists protested the Vietnam War, American Indian Movement activists and Gay Rights activists worked with the Black Panthers and in the anti-war movement. Civil Rights and Black Nationalist leaders functioned as correctives to one another: "King and I have nothing to debate about. We are both indicting," explained Malcolm X in 1964. "I would say to him: You indict and give them hope. I'll indict and give them no hope." In early 1965, he told Coretta Scott King: "If white people realize what the alternative is, perhaps they will be more willing to hear Dr. King." He offered defense during King's 1964 civil disobediences, later adding: "If I were there with King and I saw someone knocking on him, I'd come to his rescue." In 1965 King planned to meet with Malcolm, realizing their views were not so different. Malcolm was killed on February 21, two days before their scheduled meeting.

My paper in this volume examines the 1930s moment when photographers and writers collaborated to resist the "vanishing" of not-so-famous-men. In *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, which creates space for the reader in that collaborative spider-web chart of intersection and influence, we see what Adrienne Rich called in 1972: "The drive to connect. The dream of a common language."

Chapter Twenty-Nine

Observations on Collective Cultural Action

Critical Art Ensemble

When Critical Art Ensemble formed in the late 80s, neoliberalism was only a rapidly rising ideology in the US, and not the unchallenged hegemony that it is today. In this historical moment, the idea of small group organization for collective cultural action appeared only as a winning proposition. The advantages of working in a group, particularly one organized as an organic entity, were numerous. We could pool talents and resources to accomplish tasks far beyond what any of us could do alone, and we had an existential comfort in knowing we had the collective to fall back on no matter how badly we crashed and burned when events went awry. Someone was always there to exchange ideas with, offer helpful criticism, or bail out another member in trouble. The only potential negative was that the culture market was very unenthused by collectives since it was deeply invested in the myths of individualism and genius; however, that wasn't the arena that most interested us, so our losses would be few. We envisioned our project as a contribution to the construction of a distributed interventionist network, and through the process of its invention create a platform for free public speech for ourselves. We still believe that this utopian relationship to collectivism and to our mission was, for the most part, tenable and reasonable at the time. Unfortunately, times change. Now we find ourselves in a neoliberal global economy that is being led in the US by the most reactionary and authoritarian branch of the right (neoconservatives). Cultural action is taken quite seriously by this group, since they are not post-ideology conservatives, and they find collectivism in any effective, nonelite form to be unacceptable (as do all neoliberals).

According to neoliberal philosophy, only the individual is free (to consume) and through this power alone to contribute to market formation or deterioration and to social production. Collective action beyond that of the

investment and managerial classes is an activity that must be regulated by law (even if this contradicts the libertarian position) should it be perceived as dangerous to the well being of the "free market." Partly because collective action is presented as a social ill, the overwhelming amount of culture is produced by corporate entities, and, as Naomi Klein has pointed out, various production sectors are more than willing to deliver "alt.everything." "Alt," even as a social form, will be tolerated as long as it remains normalized within the market place as an exchangeable product or sign under the banner of consumer choice. If not, proceed at your own risk.

Unfortunately, small cultural collectives existing on the order of four to ten members have an additional problem. They have a quantitative characteristic similar to a terrorist cell. (Even small friendship networks can get caught in this situation if they are of the right ethnic background, as with the Seattle, Buffalo, and Detroit "sleeper cells.") This size group, if combined with a connection to political advocacy, is immediately suspect and can end up the victim of preemptive justice perpetrated by the FBI and Department of Justice as did Critical Art Ensemble. In addition to the usual labels (socialists, communists, bureaucrats, etc.) employed to characterize collective organizations such as trade unions, capitalist authority now has a way to characterize even the smallest pocket of resistance as dangerous by labeling it "terrorist."

When discussing the risk of collective construction and action within neoliberal society, the next question to ask is, "who is working together within the collective?" Some member-to-member relationships are perceived by dominant powers as much more dangerous than others. One of the more problematic is interaction between professionals and amateurs, especially when the professional comes from a field that capital believes should be totally privatized and/or classified. Two such sectors are information and communication technology and biotechnology, both of which are thought by neoliberals to be key for expanding global markets, optimizing production, and finding solutions to emergent problems. Having the edge in these areas is an advantage of tremendous importance; so capitalist power vectors are very keen to keep the highly profitable technology and knowledge to themselves. When an expert agrees to help someone outside these spheres of production for pedagogical purposes or for some other collective social good, neoliberal authorities perceive that expert as a class traitor who must immediately return to the fold or be punished. Educating the public about the technosphere in any empowering way is unacceptable. The only reason it is done at all is to reproduce a vital technocratic class and to reproduce necessary technocratic skills within the general population. All who fall outside the ranks of finance capital should be kept as ignorant as possible in proportion to an individual's economic relationship to technology. Hence one of the reasons for the current ne-

oliberal attacks on higher education. (The other reason, of course, being that education should be fully privatized as a means to repossess this public asset and redistribute its wealth among an elite few.)

A second dangerous group characteristic from the perspective of neoliberals is the unsupervised interaction of experts from different intellectual or technical disciplines. Just as amateurs and experts should not come together for political or economic advantage, groups with a differentiated skill base organized around political and cultural advocacy are viewed with great suspicion as threats to the status quo of property relations as well as to national security. While collectives of this type are not yet illegal, they would be wise to have a lawyer on retainer. CAE does not mean to suggest that collectives are now a failed social formation or that new nodal structures must immediately be created (although we are very open to this latter idea), nor are we saying that activists working for global democracy should succumb to intimidation mounted by the variety of authoritarian agencies producing preemptive justice. We are only noting that cultural/political collectives are again perceived as dangerous subversive forms of social and political organization, and the act of collective formation itself, even at the *micro* cultural level, is now a site of struggle. What began in the early days of neoliberalism as a limited union busting initiative aiming for total regulation of labor organizations has since evolved into categorical attack on collectivism that touches every sector of socio-economic totality.

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Chapter Thirty

New Social Art School

Eva Mer

If man is determined by his environment he is not free.
Freedom has to come not from the environment but from creativity.

Joseph Beuys

It all started with a group of skateboarders and an artist interrogating political decision-making behind some barriers erected on a favorite skate spot in the city-center of Aberdeen, Scotland. The group, which became known as Aberdeen Street Skaters, made action, artwork and PR, communicated and connected with the city council and effectively made changes. It was an example of successful collaborative arts practice with roots in the reality of a local community. The artist, me, found that the cooperation with non-professional artists presented a broader meaning of collaborative art. It made great sense to continue working with people in an open environment for collective, informal learning in various artistic projects.

New Social Art School is obviously not a real art school; we have got no specific location, no teachers in the traditional sense, no curriculum and no money. What we have is a small group of people with various social and professional backgrounds. With their individual skills and knowledge, people contribute on a voluntary basis, and the collaborations are strengthened through the relationships that develop in the process. Projects are inspired and defined by local politics, often social and cultural issues, that we find an interest in. The work develops naturally through research, discussion and meetings with people rather than being preconceived by artistic notions or job arrangements.

New Social Art School should be seen as a movement, thriving on freedom from established restrictions, opposed to the conventional arts institutions.

Because the subjects for artwork are based in real politics, we wish to communicate issues directly to a public audience, in the hope that we, as artists, can use our creativity to contribute to the social and political debate for real. The specialized arts audience can always see the work later, and theorists enclose it in a contemporary art context—or not. New Social Art School should, in time, be defined by the work through which it manifests itself.

> *It is the citizens who create and develop culture in the community.*
> *This culture should be supported, not obstructed by the authorities.*
> *Always remember—never forget!*
>
> *—from Aberdeen Street Skaters Manifesto*

New Social Art School was founded in Aberdeen, Northeast Scotland, 2004. Work is presented on the website www.newsocialartschool.org

Chapter Thirty-One

Complicity

Andrea Thal

Aside from solo artists, it is artist couples, artist "twins" and any other combination of two artists working together, which are most visible in the art world and on the art market. Any variation of the couple, even if they do not sustain a personal relationship, seems to profit from the established norm of the twosome. Working in a larger collective is, intentionally or not, a statement due in large part to its rarity. This set-up represents an active choice for a format that is not an art world or art market standard.

According to the rules of the art market, larger collectives are misfits. Or, as the art market expert would put it: "You never know what they're up to: somebody might leave or they might not get on anymore. And in the end, you don't even know who owns the copyright to what." Most interesting in relation to such observations are the collectives that have given up individual identities for a single group identity. Collectives with group representation adhere to the concept that it is not important if, for example, the founding members are still part of the group. In a business dependent on the artist signature to certify the value of an object, group signatures will probably never interest buyers or sellers. Somewhat ironically, quite a few of those groups have adopted the visual identity and structure of a corporation.

Even in a less commercial context anything that involves more than two people is bound to be challenging for a gallery when it comes to making arrangements for the opening with accommodations, dinner or e-mail communication. Nonetheless collaborations of three or more people are popular. A lot of artists engage in such collaborations, often as a side project. They pursue a solo career, with the occasional collaborative project here and there.

Collectives don't necessarily work in different media or produce different works than a solo artist. But a collective engages in communication before it

produces something. This communication, the exchange leading to the production of something, is a collective's very first, and probably most typical "work." Some of the larger collectives I have worked with had to develop strategies to make their internal communication manageable. They would set up blogs or split into smaller groups responsible for a subsection of a project to develop ideas. Already when working in a team of two, I have experienced an almost constant presence of dialogue as the common characteristic of a collaboration. A collective's artwork is described, questioned and developed in verbal or written dialogue before it even starts to take material form. Unlike the solo artist, who one day presents his or her piece to a friend, a gallerist or the public, the artist couple or collective will have discussed their work beforehand. With an artist collective, there is no clear division of the artist studio as a site of production, and the gallery or museum as a site for critical meditation of an artwork.

At Les Complices* our mode of operation is collaboration. Co-ordinating the space with Jean-Claude Freymond-Guth for the past two years, we developed a pragmatic form of teamwork whereby most of the time one of us would initiate collaborations and the other would help where necessary. We engage in temporary collaborations with various artists, curators, theorists and activists of all sorts involved in the shows and other happenings planned and / or held at the space.

The position of Les Complices* as an artist-run space has always been crucial to our activities. A strong emphasis on the production of art, an awareness of the social networks within which artists operate and an interest in the involvement of people active in the local and international art scene are very important to us. By doing so, we try to cut across narrowly defined art world standards regarding the role of the artist, the curator, the critic, and so on.

The complicity referred to in the name of our space stands for a more pragmatic and less ideological grassroots and bureaucratic condition than working in a collective. Since they rely on temporary alliances only, collaborations are somewhere between working in a collective and doing things alone. In complicity everyone involved still represents their own individual goals. But they are also aware that they could never reach their goals without the involvement of others. The collaboration binds those people together and diverts much of your attention and energy in this precise period. Less than following a specific ideology, career or business plan, a complicity is based on a shared motive.

Chapter Thirty-Two

Transromantik

Catharyne Ward and Eric Wright

We first met in the mountains at Banff, deep in the Canadian Rockies, arriving via urban lives from New York and London for the art residency there in 1989. This setting immediately attached a great importance to travel and research in our lives and work, as they developed from that moment. Having backgrounds rooted in different cultures also helped nourish both the love affair and our collaborative work.

In the early 1990's we both spent time as set painters working for The Disney Corporation on the production of its "Sleeping Beauty" attraction at Euro-Disney, Paris. This experience as workers assembling the Disney dream was to germinate questions of the visions of this large entertainment corporation; observing first hand its rules, its paranoia, its branding and appropriation, and more personally the conditions that we, as workers, had to endure. Its regimented and rigorous quest for seamless perfection in attaining the Disney fantasy affected us profoundly.

Five years later en route to the Bavarian Oktoberfest we discovered Berchtesgaden, Hitler's mountain retreat and birthplace of 1930's German National Socialism and its effects on world culture. The haunting beauty of the Obersalzburg continues to be entrenched in myth. It touched our own fascinations with National Socialism with its repercussions and its relative position to the fairy tale king Ludwig's palaces which inspired Disney. Ludwig's excess of taste, attention to detail and themed castles had strong resonating influences on world culture, and his importance to popular entertainment culture was understated. We were aware of how Ludwig's Neuschwanstein had directly inspired Disney's visions and the castle in Sleeping Beauty, but had not fully understood the depths of the influence.

So one night beneath a heavy autumnal moon in a Hofbrauhaus in Berchtesgaden, served by lederhosen-clad kellners, we began to make associations and connections that tapped into a particular strand of mid-Europeon monomania that came from the stories gathered by the nationalistic Brothers Grimm, the fantasy castles built by Ludwig II of Bavaria and his patronage of Wagner's mythic operas, through the German romanticism of Casper David Friedrich, Hitler, and the master of fantasy, Disney. As one strand was revealed another quickly came, and we could not think of a better way to describe what transpired that night than by calling it a Revelation.

This, our first true collaboration has turned into something beyond our reckoning. Since we came together in the Rocky Mountains in Canada, it was significant to us and had a great resonance to come upon ideas while traveling in another range of mountains in the Obersalzburg. The title *Transromantik* is itself an expression of the romance of travel and it is as vital to recall the initial inspiration of the work as it is to explain the overtones it took on later. We also realized that this stream of influence infused many things that we know today from all over the world, but was not really given its full due. We created a large forest of "Trees" which became the perfect vehicle for the myriad of ideas that became the *Transromantik* series. We found that they could hold the combination of painting styles and assemblage from both of us and that they would almost grow into a story as they were transformed with paint and the addition of objects that we collected. We collected things that were not just from Bavaria or the Black Forest, but things that held the same weight of feeling that we experienced when we were in Germany. The very fact that many of the objects were discarded souvenirs invested them with importance, because someone had viewed the item as symbolic of their own journey. To us the importance of *Transromantik* is the romantic spirit found in the weight of folk memory embedded into it. In addition to the 30 tree sculptures, we also created hundreds of paintings on slices of tree trunk, flaschebaum (bottle-tree) sculptures and more, the full extent of which has never been exhibited. Our methods were intuitive, each taking shifts on the trees and overlapping with the painting and assembly. It was in this way that we could make so many pieces that together brought our ideas into a unified and focused whole. Having lost our industrial workspace, we were forced to make this project in our house and garden, daily squeezing and ducking around the trees. We made *Transromantik* for the unique space at The Chamber of Pop Culture, The Horse Hospital London, where it was shown in 2000.

The collaboration continued through other project-based exhibitions. We made *Volksgeist* in Toronto, which explored the communal and folk aspects of rituals surrounding drink and drinking culture. We also created *Gathering In The May*, which was centered around the customs of the spring rites of the

UK. Our interest in the doctrine of Manifest Destiny and the mass immigration from Europe to (and across) America, led us to follow the tragic and now mythic wagon trail chosen by the Donner-Reed party in 1846. Together, we painted a large, psycho-geographical panorama of the trail; and whilst en route, created a photo-documentary video of our arduous journey in relation to the myth of the romantic west. This work was exhibited both in part at P.S.1/MoMA New York and in full at Cafe Gallery Projects, London, in our solo show: *Destiny Manifest—Eden's End*. All these projects are linked to our desire to represent this connection of our collaborative lives with that of a greater human trajectory which spawned them.

Chapter Thirty-Three

Collaboration

TODT

Against the background of idealness and anxiety, and arising out of their dispute, is the very fact of the artwork.

Together now for nearly thirty years, the collaborative TODT, can best be described as the mechanic and metastatic delirium of an assemblage, constructing its own aggrieved and articulated body of organs, from out which it wills works and promise.

In collaboration, the world widens. Reaching out toward a prospect proposed as promised, it signals the advent of trust. Collaborating in the renewal of an act that validates existence, and is felt intimately within the commonality of its creations. In TODT this object, found wanting, is realized by becoming multiple. Thus as the co-hospitable host of several selves, our collaborative is a maniple being, made up as much of radical exclusions, as commodious inclusion. These nevertheless necessitate assimilation through parity, or the compensations of forms informed with neither. Hence, our collaboration is ultimately political.

The beauty of TODT as a collaboration lies in the terror of a composite self whose identity becomes confused. Wrestling with its own other, made up of the diverse appendage and attribute of partners, our collaboration seeks its same. What, in the tangled or mangled maze of multiple and tumultuous limbs, various and dissociated selves, and the parabolic or elliptical intentions of others, numerous and mixed, will constitute its own plural but unique singularity.

So a collaboration needs something that initiates the inclusive impulse of its membership to tackle some task, without which it is bereft. This indiscernible moment must be seized and manipulated by members impressed into action spontaneously, if works of art are to be realized. This rare instant, unbeknown to all simultaneously, must nevertheless be recognized and captured, despite the

difficulties of communication endemic in any collective. How fast can it realize this fortuitous moment, and rapidly mobilize its membership for the concerted effort necessary toward completion? Moreover, it must answer this question anew, each time it confronts the incommensurable task of making works from out of that vacuous space where nothing previously was. Together, this collaboration must proceed in spite of the overwhelming inertia with which it is burdened. If not managed properly, the threat of total paralysis could ensue, resulting in some sclerotic collaboration, and thus a situation of self-obsolescence. Therefore, any collaboration and TODT in particular, requires constant movement in order to cohere, and remain viable.

TODT is a contrivance designed to accelerate and project creations. Thus, our collaborative is first and foremost formed to function as an expediential engine, installed to expedite production. A synergetic generator of effects, techniques, and planes, whose imaginative horizon and capacity for labor is increased tangentially. These of course, are major assets a creative and well functioning collaborative offer. However, these only come about themselves by the exertion and combined efforts of a membership concerned enough to care. Primarily one must develop or cultivate the collaboration itself, which in its turn creates a culture of commitment. This culture of the collective, committed to the cultivation of works, is itself a work in progress.

Of great importance to all art in general, and our own specifically, is that place occupied with play. Within the making of art, a special space is preserved for that play one labors at, and the particular place this play occupies in some elaborate game with which one is engaged. This play, which is one task of art to enact, concerns the play of forces divulged and forged, gathered and released within the work of art. It is a game conducted, under what proves to be a rather rigorous regime of labor, meant to amplify, and at the same time detail, the contingent evolutions, and associations of play itself. A game of amorphous exchange, employed for the revelations of seizure and dromomaniacal drive of our own dissolution.

In conclusion, TODT attempts to realize the dream of collective creativity, by assiduously appropriating individual capabilities into a negotiated association of allied action. Offensive when massed in motion, dense in defense. Thus a war machine. Assembling a collaborative of differential potential, whose command of operation and control, depends entirely on coordinating desperate personnel, toward some eminent end. Envisioned thus, TODT becomes in essence, the mobilized ambulation of the material world, grasped as given, or ready at hand. This world as found object, or as as-structure and standing reserve; endeavoring so to render real the extrapolations of desires, whose own distillations in works of art, attest to strife, sacrifice and the pyromancy of play.

Chapter Thirty-Four

"This Way Up": Concept and Progress

Chris Fite-Wassilak

It is a conversation, stumbled onto unexpectedly like sidewindingly relevant words scrawled on a wall with the demand to be taken in, and in that recognition necessitating a response. The comic follows several characters in their wanders around and encounters in the city streets, with each issue featuring a new set of artists; Issue 1 featured 12 artists, 18 participated in Issue 2, and yet another 18 for Issue 3.

It was conceived to be a comic about Dublin, stories of communication among recognizable settings, growing characters, with each page done by a different artist. Two of us hatched the first egg, making a page-by-page layout sending it to every interested artist, doodler and enthusiast we met. What came back were snatches of frames, abstracted flights, labyrinthine collages, and a blatant disregard for the script. Artists on consecutive pages were working at the same time—minutiae such as whether "Jimmy" wore a hat on one page became important elements for (lost) continuity. Initially, we attempted to collate the images according to the original plot, altering pages to fit, say, the time of the day in the story, or in one case invoking the editorial right to exclude what appeared to be a random image of the ghostly face from *Snow White*'s magic mirror. It becomes important to question, however, whose line is it anyway? (Pun intended.) Where does our story end and the collaboration begin? You cannot pretend that there is no hierarchy: someone initiates the project. But we had to recognize, the specifics of a plot become simply the framework for inspiration. It is the artists' reaction to the project, the idea, the city, not just our version of the script that is reinserted to the confines of the page to make a new sequential narrative. Following this, however, for Issue 4 we are organizing contributions according to character rather than by page-limiting the number of artists to six.

Chapter Thirty-Five

Online Collaboration in Genomic Art

Holly Longstaff

1. Introduction: I am interested in exploring methods of reducing facilitator artist privilege through online discourse. The purpose of this piece is to provide participant collaborators with an opportunity to anonymously share their hopes and concerns about pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) by participating in online conversations contained on a blog website.[1] These conversations are then used in a second offline installation to spark dialogue and debate amongst observers. The project is considered collaborative because it could not exist without input from online participants. A conversation is inherently collaborative; otherwise it would be a lecture. In "*Distorted Conversations: On and Offline Explorations of Genomic Art*," I merely provide the shell or framework for the project. The substance of the piece is created through online discussions. In this way, the artist facilitator and participants collaborate to produce a piece that goes on to foster discussion for a wider audience in the gallery.

2. Process: Portions of the online blog conversations are converted into minuscule text and adhered to petri dishes that would typically be used during PGD procedures. These dishes are piled up around a microscope for the second offline installation portion of the piece. Observers of the installation are invited to join in this distorted conversation through the aid of the microscope. As such, the offline conversation mimics actual PGD procedures and every aspect of the online and offline portions of the project are controlled by and manipulated through PGD-type technology.

3. The collaborative experience: I was truly amazed at the breadth of discussion and variety of topics raised during online conversations. The participant collaborators expressed controversial ideas with respect and appeared to enjoy the experience as indicated by the passage shown below.

> *"This blog is fantastic, Holly. Thank you. It creates an innovative, safe, and inviting space in which to examine ethical perspectives that are sometimes vastly different and extremely volatile, sometimes even violently opposed."*
>
> —online collaborator 7

This project pushed the metaphor of ethical determinism while exposing key concepts such as normalization, genetic determinism, and individual autonomy. Discussions touched on issues related to eugenics, religious faith, sex selection, and cost-benefit analyses associated with PGD and disability-related programs. Some collaborators also raised deep ethical concerns as illustrated in the conversation shown below between collaborators 2, 3, 6 and 7.

> *"I'd also like to add that by giving this power to the general public, a value judgment is made about others living with the diseases or "abnormalities" that are being engineered out. . . . When we start making decisions about what type of life that is, I personally feel we are on morally shaky ground."*
>
> —online collaborator 2
>
> *"I would hate to be tossed aside like so much genetic junk simply because I have a disposition for high blood pressure, or a trick knee. . . . Still, for being a rather poor lot of chromosomes, perhaps someone should do something about our gene pool. Maybe this is the answer. Oh, but I always wanted to go to space."*
>
> —online collaborator 3
>
> *"It is a wonderful development which carries with it strong questions concerning morality. I see some very interesting comments though. . . . If the child I gave birth to as a result of IVF had defects, etc. would I still love it? Yes. But would I terminate the pregnancy if I knew about the defects ahead of time? This is the question. Is this action merciful or elitist?"*
>
> —online collaborator 6
>
> "*. . . [M]y sense is that if those with opposing ethical perspectives could realize the origins of their convictions (whether we believe in "origins" is another matter), then maybe conversations about pros and cons of new, controversial forms of research could be more fruitful. All ethical systems have origins. They are not absolutes. Why are they so difficult to challenge and change?"*
>
> —online collaborator 7

4. Next steps: The piece described here will be shown at an upcoming traveling group exhibition entitled "*Allegories of the Genome*."[2] This exhibition includes pieces from an international selection of artists who are interested in artistic explorations of genomic and genetic science. In forthcoming projects, I will continue to experiment with collaborations that involve other novel communication methods including face-to-face online discussion groups and audio/visual installations.

NOTES

Principal investigator: Holly Longstaff under the supervision of advisor Dr. Michael McDonald at the W. Maurice Young Centre for Applied Ethics through the University of British Columbia (UBC), 227–6356 Agricultural Road, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z2, telephone # 604-822-8625. This project received ethics approval by the Behavioural Research Ethics Board at UBC.

1. To participate in this project or view the blog, please visit http://genomicart.blogspot.com/>
2. This exhibition will begin in Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada at Outworks Gallery and will travel to Vancouver, British Columbia Canada with support graciously provided by Genome BC.

Chapter Thirty-Six

A Robot and Its Double

Pia Lindman

Collaborating with the Humanoid Robotics Group at MIT, I performed a series of embodiments based on my observations of and interactions with humanoid robots and their makers.[1] In this work, I approach the affective relationships expressed and mirrored in interactions between human and machine through sketches, video, and finally—and most importantly—physical reenactment.

In the fall of 2004, while preparing my fellowship at CAVS, I decided I wanted to focus on the relationship between a researcher and the object of study. The object could be of any kind, anything less or more abstract, such as electromagnetic fields, bacteria, or a monkey. For the simple reason that this object is only partially known to the researcher while partially unknown, no matter what the object is, it represents to the researcher an object of desire. I wanted to reveal how this desire manifests itself, while it is usually concealed by the rational, verbal argumentation of scientific discourse. I believed this desire to actually be in plain sight—in the everyday gestures made by the researchers inside the laboratory.

Thus, in 2005, I set out to investigate, record, and articulate the gestures researchers exhibit in their interaction with their object of study. Interviewing a number of researchers and visiting their laboratories, I could corroborate the veracity of Ian Hacking's observation in his book, *Representing and Intervening* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), that researchers rarely relate directly to their object of study, but rather indirectly—through either representations or instrumentations. I should add that today, both forms of interaction take place with the help of computers. For this reason, the researchers exhibit very little physical action specific to their particular field of research and all their gestures tend to be gestures in relation to the computer interface. Many interviews later, in the summer of 2005, Rodney Brooks introduced me to

Aaron Edsinger and his humanoid robot Domo. At that time Rodney Brooks was the director of CSAIL and Aaron was a PhD candidate at the Humanoid Robotics Group at CSAIL.

Domo is a computerized interface miming human behavior—and more. It accumulates knowledge in the same manner as an infant does, picking up things and learning from them. It has two arms, at the end of each four agile fingers, and two cameras designed to look like eyes on top of something that resembles a head. Domo can look you in the eye, distinguish human faces from other shapes in front of it, and catch moving objects. Aaron built Domo with Series Elastic Actuators (SEA), a sensory mechanism that makes it "aware" of forces touching it and, for instance, prevents it from hitting its arms into people. This renders Domo to have sensitivity to touch and you can move with it in ways that resemble reciprocity.

As Domo is composed of several computers and both mechanical and digital gear, it is its own representation (model or prototype), instrument, and object. Further, because Domo is an interface for human interaction, when testing the functions of this "object" a researcher needs to interact with it physically and as with a human (as much as possible). Indeed, in discussion with Aaron, I learned that whenever he had added new components or software to the robot, he usually interacted with it physically for up to 40 minutes and could then determine, from "what Domo's movements felt like" where the bugs and problems were in the machinery or computer system. With Domo I had come full circle in my exploration: from real objects in the real world—but seen and interacted with only through a computer screen—to the most sophisticated computerized object—knowledge of which could sometimes be acquired *only* by physical interaction in the real world.

In the process of learning about Domo—how it moves, what it thinks or feels (if it indeed does), and how it expresses itself—I did not only interview Aaron, but I also observed and recorded Aaron's and Domo's interactions. I researched the experience of their relationship by various forms of embodiments: I re-enacted them, made drawings of them, and interacted with them.

The drawings rendering Domo and Aaron as two humans interacting with one another brings into relief what I had originally set out to investigate. They show an array of human emotions ranging from desire, curiosity, and love, to repression, control, and dominance. As it is no longer possible to clearly separate the "Sculptor" and the "Pygmalion" in these drawings, or be struck by the "humanness" of the mechanical gadget, the viewer can focus on the emotions that are projected and mirrored back and forth in this relationship.

To pinpoint what in my process has been collaborative is somewhat difficult. Yet, the exchange I had with the many researchers, visitors, social and cultural scholars, who operate within or around MIT and its laboratories, was

a crucial element in the shaping of my process and the resulting art. Collaboration was something that happened in-between and all the while I was in process to crystallize my experiences into drawings and video. It was about becoming familiar with the lives of the researchers and their robots—what they thought about, who they were as people, and what the everydayness of the lab was like. This collaboration was about creating relationships. These relationships in turn provided me with a rich experience from which to create art.

NOTE

1. This essay is based on my experience as a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies and as an artist-in-residence at the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, MIT, between the years 2005 and 2007. I would like to thank Lijin Aryananda Jessica Banks, Rodney Brooks, Graham Coulter-Smith, Aaron Edsinger, Peter Galison, Larissa Harris, Caroline Jones, Kriss Ravetto-Biagioli, Marko Popovic, and Sherry Turkle for sharing their amazing minds with me and their generosity in regards to conversations, support, and feedback.

Additional information on this project see: Pia Lindman and the "MIT Project": http://web.mit.edu/pialindman and Aaron Edsinger and Domo: http://people.csail.mit.edu/edsinger

Chapter Thirty-Seven

Art.es and Collaborative Projects

Fernando Galán

When I decided to launch an international contemporary art magazine 3½ years ago I was certain of just a few things. I decided that the rest should remain flexible, becoming clear and more defined as experience dictated, allowing me to determine what direction to take each step of the way according to those that came before and to the lay of the land as we proceeded. In this way I would avoid what seemed the risk of making decisions based on excessive assumptions, and enclosed within the four walls of my office, remote from reality. Now, with 19 issues behind me, I'm glad I did it like that and I'm still learning as I go, adapting to the always changing circumstances. As editor and publisher (and fortunately with the support of an enthusiastic editorial and journalistic team) I can make rapid decisions, which is fundamental in making sure the magazine is as cutting edge as possible. It's similar to a speedboat, dodging obstacles and changing course with an enviable swiftness in comparison to a bulky aircraft carrier, which needs much more time and energy for any adjustment or maneuver.

At the same time, the few things I was clear about were essential and they seemed sufficient for embarking on a journey that from the beginning was difficult and perilous. There were basically four of them:

1. The magazine would be published in Madrid (Spain) but would be completely international, covering the entire thematic and geographic world of contemporary art. Today there are 75 correspondents and collaborators from 26 countries and five continents. In keeping with this idea, the magazine has been 100% bilingual (Spanish and English) from the start.
2. It would focus strictly on contemporary art, featuring only living artists.

3. It would embrace all possible manifestations of artistic expression. Hence, from the very first issue it featured permanent sections dedicated to Film, Media Art and what we call Off Art, those things brimming with creativity but that aren't usually included in the official circuits of the art world. A new section, Art & Food, has also recently been added.
4. Finally, what perhaps constitutes that magazine's principal philosophy and distinguishing characteristic: it would to every degree possible endeavor to highlight and give a leading voice to the main protagonists of the art world, the artists themselves, who all too frequently are unjustly forgotten.

This last point actually includes two important elements. On the one hand, as a critic and curator with many years experience, I've often felt an overwhelming responsibility for being a kind of spokesperson for artists, a sort of mediator between the public and the direct creators of art. I wanted to give (and still do) an opportunity to those artists who like to write or express themselves with words the chance to do so right in the pages of the magazine. So from the very beginning a section explicitly titled *Work and Word* was included. Moreover, each issue dedicates its entire cover and 12 full pages to a special Project created by an artist exclusively for the magazine. It's called the *art.es Project*.

The artists invited to create the Project are given absolute freedom to do whatever they want. The magazine's cover is its visible face, and it's always exclusively occupied by an image from the Project, with no other element apart from the magazine's own name. Evidently, the artists I choose to do a Project are artists whose work emphatically and unconditionally interests me. It often happens that the invited artist shows me two or more options of what they want to go on the cover, so that I can decide or approve. And in all these cases the artist has been surprised by my invariable answer: "Do whatever you want, you decide. There's no need whatsoever to consult me." That's my reply because I'm absolutely convinced that when artists enjoy complete freedom to create, with no preconditions, their work turns out more genuinely "theirs," and far better. Sometimes the images for the Project arrive at the last minute, sometimes even when I'm traveling, and I must be the only editor in the world who learns what the cover of the upcoming issue will be when it's already at the printers.

Another aspect of the freedom I offer is that invited artists can create one piece or a series, as long as the concept they want to develop is unified and coherent (according to their own criteria). That is, if it's a series of pieces, they should constitute an integrated whole. The first issue's Project was one by the Portuguese artist Baltazar Torres and consisted of a single sculptural piece. The cover image was a photograph that he himself took of the work,

and the inside pages were details of it, from photos also taken by the artist. Other artists created one piece for the cover and others for each of the inside pages, for a total of 13 works. In cases where the Project is a video it's usually a single work, and the images for each page are stills chosen by the artist. Starting with the second time a video was presented for the Project, I adopted the policy of including a DVD in the magazine with a copy of the entire video, as well as reproductions of the stills chosen for the cover and inside pages. Naturally, when the Project is composed of a series, the artist is also free to employ one or a variety of media.

In a word, the notion of collaboration that I propose to the artists chosen is that they have complete freedom to design the cover and 12 pages however they wish, with whatever inspires them.

The conditions of the collaboration are as follows: the artist donates the Project to the magazine, which in turn promises not to market it in any way; instead it becomes part of the art.es Collection, made up of all the works as they're created. As I mentioned, and in contrast to nearly every other magazine out there, the cover includes only the image from the Project (apart from the name and a tiny label saying "Bilingual: English / Spanish"). In exchange, the artist gets international exposure for the work or works created, and receives however many copies of the issue requested.

For the magazine's contents in general, I like to practice what I call "intergenerational integration" (focusing as much on veteran artists as emerging ones, even completely unknown ones), but I usually offer the Project to already established artists who enjoy some degree of international prestige. Nonetheless, I've also (happily) broken this rule on occasion. For example, in issue #11, I invited an until-then nearly unknown and very young artist from Dusseldorf, Andrea Lehmann. A coincidence occurred that is well worth recounting here: that issue was presented at Art Basel Miami Beach in 2005, and I went there thinking that I'd "discovered" a great artistic talent, only to find that she was about to have an important show at the prestigious space devoted to the Rubell Family Collection in that same city.

I'm a firm believer in all kinds of collaborations, and also that strength arises from alliances. I'm also happy to report that up until now all the artists who I approached with the proposal that they do a Project gladly accepted, except one. And frequently they accepted with evident enthusiasm. The single exception was precisely a case of an emerging artist that I mentioned above. I especially recall Hatsushiba's acceptance to do the Project for issue #3, when the magazine was practically unknown and when its future was placed in doubt by many observers. I didn't know the artist, and I had to urgently send the three already published issues (0, 1 & 2) to Vietnam where he lives and works. Hatsushiba finished the Project in ten days. I also remember

calling Marcaccio to see if he was interested: he told me he had some things set aside that had more or less been "censured" by a museum when he had wanted to include them as illustrations to the introductory text of a catalogue accompanying an exhibition of his work. He wasn't sure I'd be willing to accept them. In line with my heartfelt principles, I replied that if someone had previously censured them, then I was especially keen to highlight the work of an artist that I admired by publishing them in my magazine. . . .

The artists who have contributed to the art.es Projects published to date are (in chronological order): Baltazar Torres, Juan Usle, Masbedo, Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, Mateo Mate, Fabian Marcaccio, Francis Naranjo, Fausto Gilberti, Robert Gligorov, Marina Abramovic & IPG, Andrea Lehmann, Tim White-Sobieski, Kely, Nelson Leirner, Clemens Krauss, Melvin and Peter Welz.

Chapter Thirty-Eight

My Collaborative Art

Nadín Ospina

I consider my experience with the craftsmen a collaborative experience. The craftsmen bring to my work their unique knowledge in the ancients' pre-Columbian techniques. I lead the production according to particular and specific ideas. The process is the materialization of a personal idea through this collaboration with these very sophisticated craftsmen teams. I have had very long discussions with them about the works in progress. We jointly discuss the various issues. Examples of the many issues are: the kind of clay, the way to obtain it, the type of cultural representation, the level of aging, and the simulation techniques, etc. Some are professional forgers (outside the law) living in the marginality, and I was using their guile to make ambiguous objects in order to put them into the contemporary art world. I work with many craftsmen across Latin America from Mexico and Chile. Specifically, I work with Mr. Julio Aranda, a craftsman who specializes in polyester resin reproductions work from the Anthropology Museum in Mexico City. In Costa Rica: Mr Mario Montoya: ceramics; Manuel Rodriguez: gold, worked in the Gold Museum; Carlos Montoya: jade; Ricardo Matarrita: stone. In Colombia Arturo Delgado: ceramics; Manuel Carvajal and his sons, Reynel, Agustín and Edison: stone; Jose Garcia: painter.

—emailed to Holly Crawford, 12/11/06

Chapter Thirty-Nine

Collaboration between Tracey Snelling and Salvador Diaz, Chicago, March 2005

Tracey Snelling

I met Salvador Diaz from seeing one of his paintings at Art Chicago, maybe in 2002. It was of a little boy in a ghost costume holding a jack o'lantern with words dripping in painted red on the surface of it. Salvador's gallery put me in contact with him, and we started exchanging emails. The more work I saw of his, the more I liked it. It was colorful, sometimes humorous, but almost always had some dark layer to it. We became friends and spoke of collaborating together. When the gallery Brown Bag Contemporary proposed that we each do a separate installation at an art fair, and collaborate in the middle space, it sounded like a good time to work together. The gallery and I had the idea that Salvador and I could make the collaborative works during the fair, a small print of a collaborative work could be sold for $20 and act as a raffle ticket, and at the end of the fair two people would be chosen from the raffle tickets to become owners of the work. The idea behind it was to make art accessible to everyone. Not only could a numbered print be bought for a small price, but the act of creating the art could be seen, and at the end, one or two people could own work that would sell for several thousand, for only $20.

Salvador and I each set up our own installations, then we talked about what to build and how to build it. We decided that I would start building a sculpture (a building) and he would start painting on a newspaper; then we would switch back and forth between the two pieces. I noticed many interesting things throughout the several days that we did this. Since it was during the regular hours of the fair, people would stop and watch us work. Being that the fair was more conservative and not so contemporary, I sometimes felt that we were being watched like some strange new creatures at a zoo. I often had my headphones on, listening to music so I could tune the people and the place out. Another thing that I noticed was that the corner I was working in got

much messier than Salvador's, which was very neat and orderly. Since my work was more time consuming (Salvador paints fast) I had enlisted Salvador in helping me sand one of the plaster-covered buildings. Though he did not complain, I could tell that sanding was not his first love. Because I was still trying to get the building to a place that we could trade works, Salvador would spend his free time painting more newspaper paintings. I would watch occasionally while he did this. Once it looked like he was painting Shakespeare, then the person in the painting suddenly turned into Mona Lisa. I was captivated, but did not know if he changed his mind, was trying to impress me, or entertain the people passing by with a trick that he had used before. Just watching the ease he had when painting was great to see.

When we finally changed works, Salvador painted on the billboard area of my building, where I had expected he would. It looked great. Then, he started painting all over. At first, I was a bit bothered, as I imagine I had an idea in my mind of how the piece should be. This was also primarily my first experience collaborating, as I usually work by myself and maintain as much control as possible over the outcome of my work. But then I realized that I was trying to have control over the work, and let it go. I relaxed, focused on the collaboration of the other piece, and began to think outside of the box.

That was refreshing and made the process enjoyable. When we were finished, I was happy with both the pieces, and could see how the unexpected parts of Salvador's collaboration on the building made it look like a three dimensional painting. It was really nice, and so different from my usual work, which seems to be one of the points of collaborating. Salvador and I discussed the project later. We both agreed that it would've been much better to be seen with the right audience in the right venue. We also did not like working with people watching us! It was distracting, and seemed limiting in some ways.

I have ideas of how I would like to collaborate with Salvador in the future. I would like to do the same thing (building work in the same room), but in private without an audience. Also, since he lives in Mexico, I might build a structure and send it to him to finish. There are several other artists who I plan to collaborate with in the future. The things that delay the collaborations are time and location, but maybe those same aspects that delay it become part of what makes it interesting. I like the idea of taking perceived limits and turning them into integral parts of the collaboration. The unexpected and unplanned events in the collaboration seem to be the most exciting moments of the experience.

Chapter Forty

"i-Woz" and Gina

Steve Wozniak

I met a friend of Gina's at a concert and she phoned Gina who said immediately that she wanted to do my autobiography. I met Gina and we hit it off and the book really got finished because of the discipline of a co-writer who couldn't be let down.

Gina got a book agent, John Brockman. He sold it to three publishers. They each talked to me on the phone and had concerns about Gina and said that they wanted the book in my voice. I would speak into a recorder, it would get turned into a transcript, and Gina worked long and hard to piece together the chapters from that. Then we met each day for a month or two going over each sentence, reading the book aloud. I would correct some errors and rewrite parts to capture my own voice. From what friends tell me, I succeeded at that.

All of our sessions were in restaurants. I'd drive up to San Francisco where Gina lives and we'd meet in a coffee shop for the episode recording sessions. Sometimes people would hear us and stick around listening. The second editing sessions occurred in Campbell, near my home. Gina would drive down, which was more convenient after I had a spine injury that nearly delayed the book.

I try to be honest and I'm always joking and pranking too.

Steve Wozniak, emailed to Holly Crawford 10/3/06

Chapter Forty-One

On Collaboration

Gelitin

"We met on a bus which was going on the only highway we then had in Austria. At a gasstop where all we kids went for a piss, we locked ourself into a toilet and did our first performance "fake sex." We played a long time and the bus left without us. Since then we have been together."—Gelitin

"It seems simple, but is not. *A*: we sleep a lot and spend a lot of time lying in the grass looking at the sky, feed squirrels in the park all day long and be open for the moment of enlightement"—Gelitin (email to Holly Crawford, 4/28/06)

Oh the book is going to be finished. Sure use the quotes and I also attach a preview of an image you could use for the book. It shows Ali, Tobias, Florian and me as one organism and is a good example how we work together. Originally it's a color drawing but looks also ok in greyscales. So if you want it I send it in your requested size. . . . What else can we do for you?

Gelitin (9/25/06 Comments emailed to Holly Crawford)

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Critical Art Ensemble (CAE) is a collective of tactical media practitioners of various specializations, including computer graphics and web design, wetware, film/video, photography, text art, book art, and performance. Formed in 1987, CAE's focus has been on the exploration of the intersections between art, critical theory, technology, and political activism. The collective has performed and produced a wide variety of projects for an international audience at diverse venues ranging from the street, to the museum, to the Internet. Critical Art Ensemble has also written five books; its sixth, *Marching Plague: Germ Warfare and Public Health* was released in the spring on 2006.

Nicolas Collins is New York born and raised. He studied composition with Alvin Lucier at Wesleyan University, worked for many years with David Tudor, and has collaborated with numerous soloists and ensembles around the world. He lived most of the 1990s in Europe, where he was Visiting Artistic Director of Stichting STEIM (Amsterdam), and a DAAD composer-in-residence in Berlin. Since 1997 he has been editor-in-chief of the *Leonardo Music Journal*. He is currently Chair of the Department of Sound at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Recent recordings are available on PlateLunch, Periplum and Apestaartje. His book, *Handmade Electronic Music–The Art of Hardware Hacking*, was published by Routledge in 2006. Web site: www.NicolasCollins.com

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Peter Frank is Senior Curator of the Riverside Art Museum. He was art critic for the *SoHo Weekly News* and the *Village Voice* before he left his native New York for Los Angeles, where he is now critic for the *L.A. Weekly* and *Angeleno* magazine. Frank has also curated numerous exhibitions here and abroad and written many books and catalogues.

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Gelitin is a four-person Austrian collaborative. They met first in 1978. They have been playing and working together from 1993 when they began exhibiting internationally. www.gelitin.net

David Good teaches psychology in the Cambridge Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, and at King's College where he is a Fellow. His research is in the field of social psychology with a specific focus on social interaction. He has been involved in the development of new initiatives devoted to the social application of ICT in education and the workplace. He is also education director of the Cambridge-MIT Institute, and has developed new initiatives designed to understand and deploy those educational practices which have an impact on the development of entrepreneurial abilities. He has served on the Council of Cambridge University, and currently on the Council of the Royal College of Art.

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Pia Lindman was a Fellow at the Center for Visual Studies at MIT, and artist-in-residence at the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Lab at MIT. *Fascia*, her acclaimed video and performance installation was exhibited at the Storefront for Art and Architecture Gallery in New York City in 2006. The Finnish-born Lindman, as a Fulbright Scholar in 1999, received her second Master's degree at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She now lives in New York City and teaches at Yale University School of Art. Lindman has exhibited at, among others, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, The Sculpture Center, Artists Space; and internationally in Mexico City, Tokyo, London, Berlin, Paris, Vienna, and Helsinki, to name a few cities. In 2008–09 Lindman will be artist-in-residence at Kuenstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin, Germany. Lindman's work is in the collections of Museum of Modern Art, NY, Pro Artibus, Finland, and the Queens Museum of Art, NY

Lull (Elena Knox) works across theatre, video, fine art, sound and performance. She has performed at New York University, Centre for Performance Research and Sydney Opera House, among other venues. She has worked with

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Holly Longstaff is an artist and a Doctoral Fellow in the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Ethics of Health Research and Policy Training Program and the CIHR Institute of Genetics at the University of British Columbia's W. Maurice Young Centre for Applied Ethics. Her work explores genetic and genomic science through online discourse and offline installations. Holly's most recent group exhibitions include outworks Gallery's Allegories of the Genome show February 2007, Winnipeg, Manitoba where she will show "The junk we left behind" and Orange County Center for Contemporary Art's New Media show Nov 4th-Dec 17th, 2006, Santa Ana, CA where she showed "Distorted Conversations: On and Offline Explorations of Genomic Art." Her work is also included in the Rhizome ArtBase at http://rhizome.org/object.rhiz?44503

Eva Merz was born in 1966 in Esbjerg, Denmark. She lives and works in Aberdeen since 2003. Founder and Director of New Social Art School, founder of Aberdeen Street Skaters, member of UrbanNovember, Chair of Deveron Arts, member of Pittodrie and Castlehill Community Council. Merz never went to art school; she trained as an advertising designer in Esbjerg, attended an art course in Lillehammer, Norway and a photography course at Fatamorgana, Copenhagen. A walk across North America with native people was the most important education where she learned to run, pray and endure days with no food. Merz works with photography, video, interviews, texts, books and social activism: People, Places and Politics.

Neistat Brothers: Van Neistat was born Van Paul Moody in Augusta, Maine, on March 22, 1975. Van currently lives in Manhattan. He is single with no children. Casey Owen Neistat was born on March 25, 1981, at Lawrence Memorial Hospital in New London, Connecticut. In June of 2001 Casey moved to New York City to pursue a career in film with brother Van. Casey currently lives in downtown Manhattan and maintains an apartment in New London Connecticut where his son, Owen, attends the Integrated Day Charter School, an alternative school with a curriculum heavily based on the arts. URL: http://www.neistat.com

New Social Art School: A collaborative group of six artists—Eva Merz, Monika Vykoukal, Andy Dobson, Lindsay Gordon, Bob Steadman, Alejandra Rodrequez-Remedi—who live and work in Aberdeen, Scotland. Founded in 2004 by Eva Merz. *Getting a Fucking Job*, their first book was published in

2006. It is a book of interviews with 12 street beggars in Aberdeen. URL: http://www.newsocialartschool.org

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Tracey Snelling is a visual artist who uses multi media to explore architecture, landscape, and everyday drama. Her work has been exhibited internationally and is in collections such as the Baltimore Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Lisa Paul Streitfeld is a critic, curator and novelist based in New York City

Andrea Thal is the organizer of Les Complices* Espace libre & Edition, an artist-run space located in Zurich, Switzerland. Les Complices* engages in collaborations with artists, curators, designers, theorists and activists. Thal's own artistic practice focuses on the legacy of women in rock music. Various exhibition projects include collaborations with female bands and musicians from the late 70s to the present. Since 2002 she has been teaching at ECAL/University of Art and Design Lausanne and the University of Art and Design in Zurich.

TODT is a four-person collaborative whose members first exhibited together in 1970. Producing both room-sized installations and discrete objects using a machine aesthetic. WWW.TODT.US

Zoe Trodd is on the Tutorial Board in History and Literature at Harvard with a teaching appointment in the History and Literature department. She has degrees from Cambridge University and Harvard. She published *Meteor of War: The John Brown Story* (with John Stauffer) last year, and her book *American Protest Literature* is forthcoming with Harvard Press. She has published numerous articles on American literature and visual culture, most recently in Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Hollis Robbins (eds.), *In Search of Hannah Crafts* (NY: Basic Books, 2004) and Lucy Frank (ed.), *Representations of Mortality in Nineteenth Century American Literature* (London: Ashgate, 2005).

Guy van Belle was born in 1959 in Belgium. After studying literature and linguistics, a little philosophy and sculpting, he made a radical switch to computer music at the end of the 1980s. He has been involved in experimental media art in its many different forms since 1990. First, he restlessly lived and worked in Belfast, Ghent, Antwerp, Brussels, New York, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Den Haag, Berlin. His most important virtual organizations were Stellingname (1984–1989), Young Farmers Caim Future (1990–2000), dBonanzah (1998–2002), and finally mXHz.org (2002–?) and Society of Algorithm (2004–?). These setups were merely covers for collaboratively investigating the many different forms of creativity from real and non-physical people, including machines. Since fall 2005 he lived also in Bratislava under the name of Gívan Belá. The city does not plan a statue yet. For the 7th of November, 2022, he was preparing an homage to Arseny Avraamov in Baku and for that purpose set up the organization without a centre "The Baku 2022 Foundation" (2007–?).

Cathy Ward's art practice navigates a path of romantic obsession with mid-European folk-lore, crafts and funerary practices, collective memory, and the concept of "Manifest Destiny." Through her paintings, and sculptural installations she engages in an interpretation of historical folk practices and their relevance in the twenty-first century. She is a London-based artist, born in Kent, England, studied ceramics at the Royal College of Art with sculptor Eduardo Paolozzi. Selected exhibitions include: 2006 *Utopia* John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan Wisconsin; *High Roads Low Roads, Anthems, Dirges, Myths*, Museum of Fine Art, Florida; *Internal Guidance Systems* Visionary touring exhibition 2005 *Chthonic: Works by Neuve Invention Artists,* The Cavin-Morris Gallery New York; *Destiny Manifest- Eden's End,* Café Gallery Projects, London; *Treehugger*: *Now, Romantic, Nature*, Showroom MAMA, Rotterdam. 2004 *Romantic Detachment,* PS1 MoMA, NY; Residency Grizedale Arts, UK, Center for Land Use Interpretation, USA; *The John Moores 23—Contemporary painting prize,* The Walker, Liverpool; *Tale-spinning—Selections Fall 2004*,The Drawing Center, New York. Cathy and Eric Wright were married in 1992 and currently live and work in London, UK. For additional information see: http:// www.transomanitk.com.

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Steve Wozniak is Silicon Valley icon and philanthropist for the past three decades. Steve Wozniak, Founder, Chairman and CEO of Wheels of Zeus

(wOz), helped shape the computing industry with his design of Apple's first line of products, the Apple I and II and influenced the popular Macintosh. For his achievements at Apple Computer, Steve was awarded the National Medal of Technology by the President of the United States in 1985, the highest honor bestowed America's leading innovators. Making significant investments of both his time and resources in education, Wozniak "adopted" the Los Gatos School District, providing students and teachers with hands-on teaching and donations of state-of-the-art technology equipment. Wozniak founded the Electronic Frontier Foundation, and was the founding sponsor of the Tech Museum, Silicon Valley Ballet, and Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose.

Eric Wright draws from an introspective and highly personalized viewpoint to create paintings that reveal more about a human condition than they might outwardly imply. He chooses as his subjects country and western singers or landscapes that are like psychological roadmaps. The work is a personal expression through a realistic and narrative use of landscapes and figures. He steps outside of the personal within his collaborative work with Cathy Ward. He lives and works in London; he was born and raised on Ohio, USA. Recent exhibitions include: *Utopia* at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, Wisconsin (2006); *High Roads, Low Roads, Anthems, Dirges and Myths* at the Museum of Fine Art, Tallahassee, Florida (and touring); *Internal Guidance Systems* (touring USA 2005–07); *Destiny Manifest—Eden's End* at Cafe Gallery Projects, London (2005); *Treehugger: Now, Romantic, Nature*, at Showroom MAMA, Rotterdam (2005) and *Romantic Detachment* at P.S.1 MoMA, New York(2004). Cathy Ward and Eric Wright were married in 1992 and currently live and work in London, UK. For additional information see: http://www.transomanitk.com.

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