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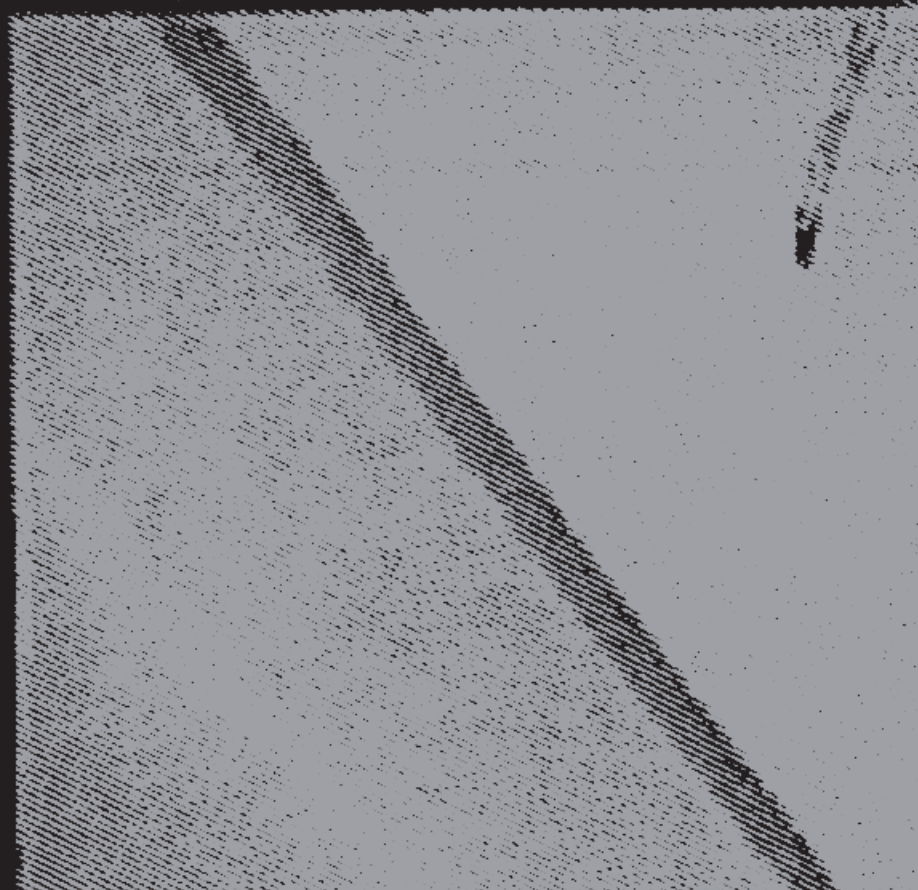
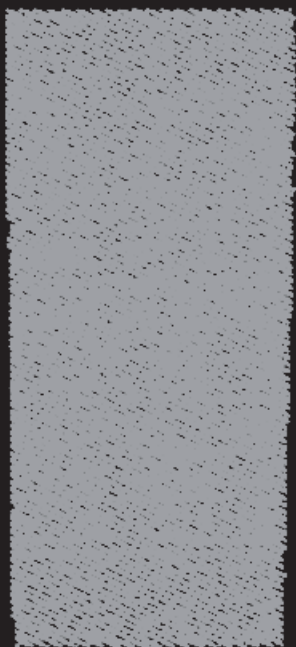
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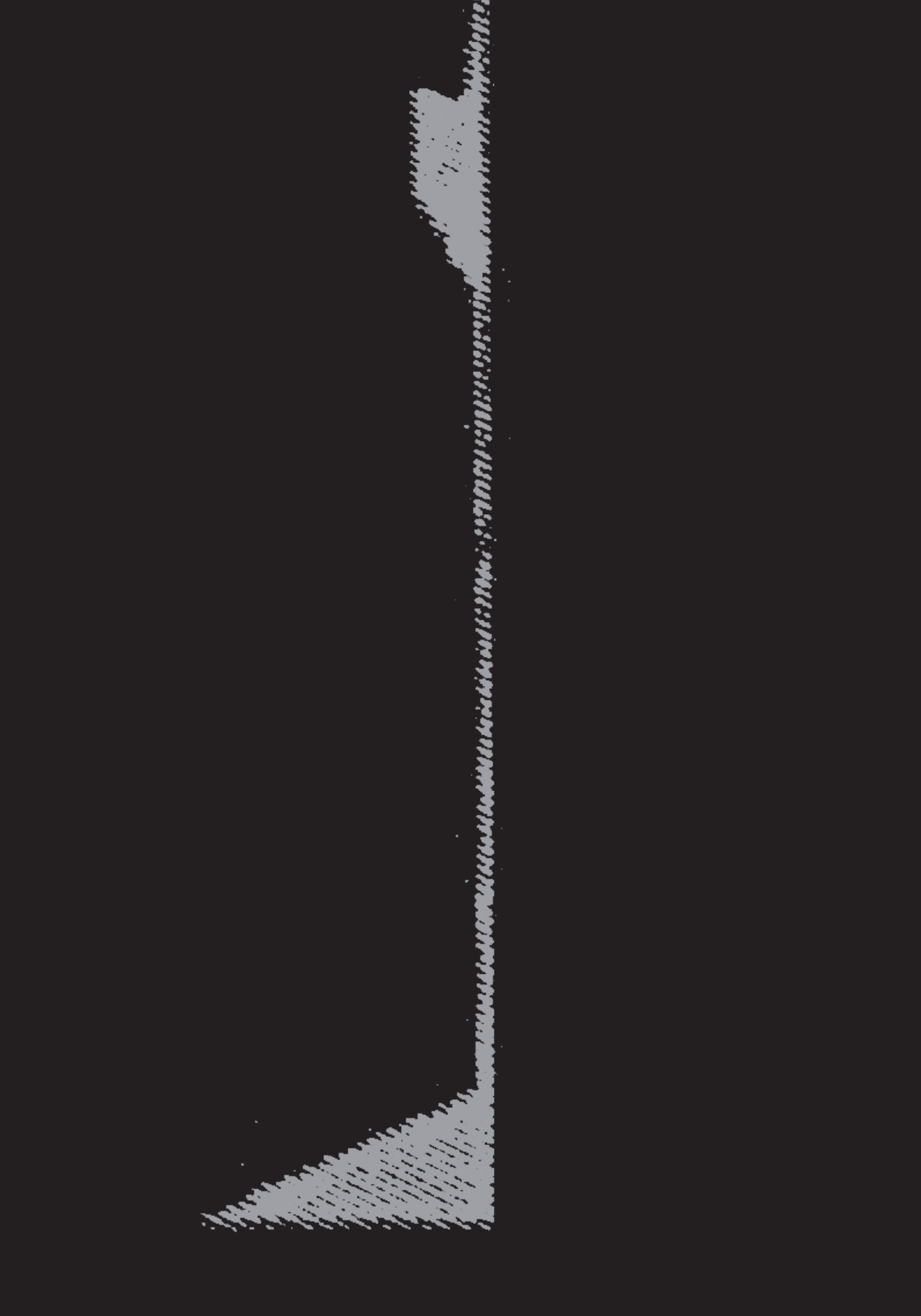
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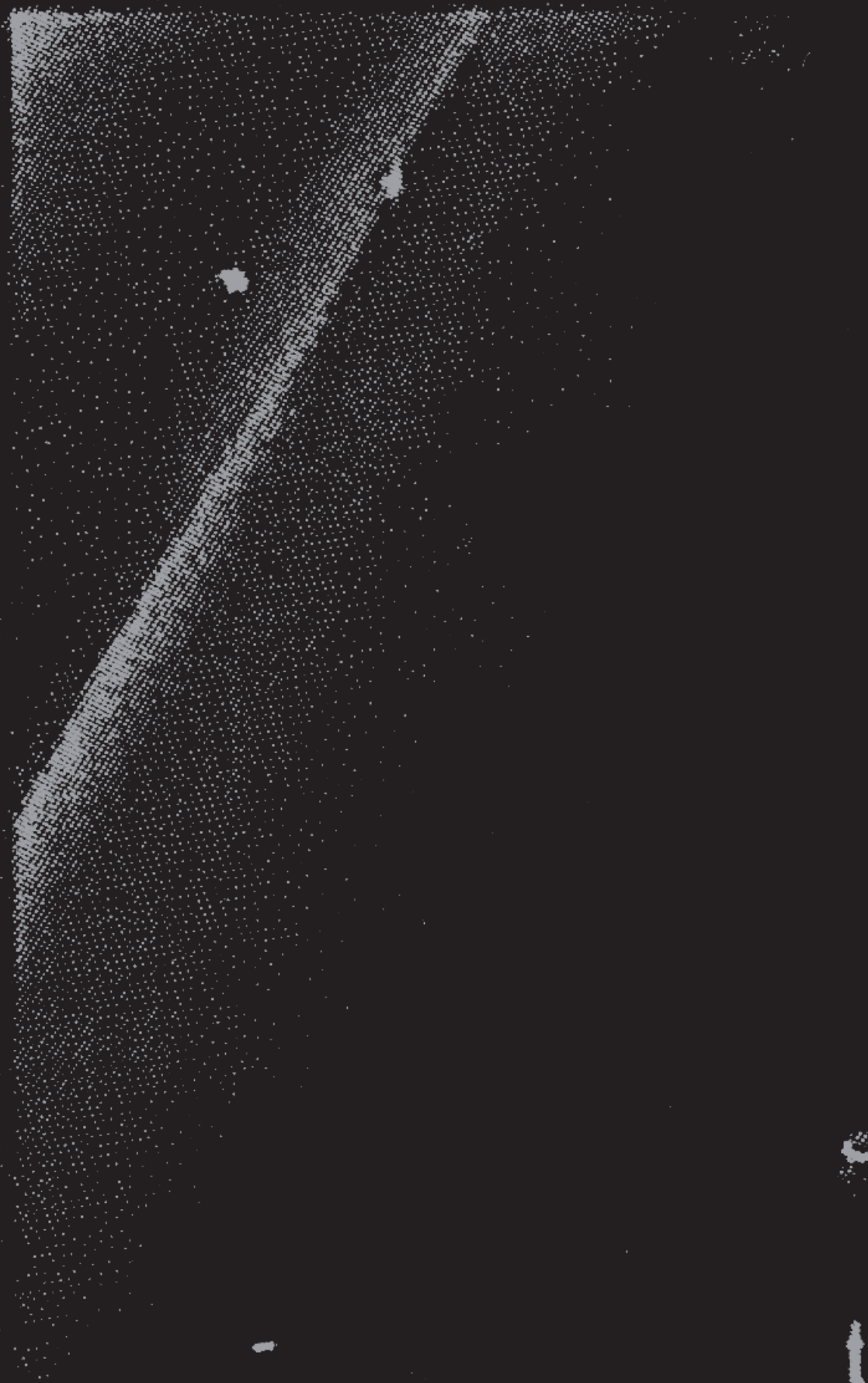
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problem.







Re: Invitation to contribute a text to the journal
Blackout

Dear _____,

We are sitting here at ECAV in our current working place, which is the salle de réunion at the administration. Our fingers are typing this letter to invite you to contribute a text within the *Art Work(ers)* research project.

We are thinking about how closing factories and the use of industrial ruins have affected our ways of working in the arts, and of the promises of creative economies. What narratives have been created to tell stories of art and industrial production as well as of deindustrialisation. Besides looking at historical examples such as EAT, Artist Placement Group, Equipo 57 & Grupo Y, Solidarnos & Ryszard Wasko, or Agricola Cornelia, whose work emerges in between art and (industrial) production modes, we are thinking of perruques (homers) and strategies to “reinterpret” the Taylorist use of machines with Situationist strategies. The question that we have in mind is less “why X has happened” but rather “why the alternatives Y did not take place”.

Two sites have become particularly important during the research: Chippis (site of the former Aluminium factory, today Constellium) and Ivrea (site of the type-writing machine factory Olivetti). How differently two factories have shaped the cities, societies and cultural scenes in which they were situated with their idea of labour.

In our research, we observed the involvement of artists and writers in the production of experimental publishing within industrial projects. Among them, poets such as Leonardo Sinisgalli would start the monthly magazine *Civiltà delle macchine* (1953–79), while art historian Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti initiated *SeleARTE* (1952–65). They addressed the workers, the cultural scene and a wider audience through contributions by Italo Calvino, Nino Franchina, Umberto Eco and Eugenio Carmi among others. All of them workers, each one in their field, but more often in a trans-disciplinary setting. The Olivetti typing machine factory was deeply connected to its publishing house, the Edizioni di Comunità: books such as *La condition ouvrière* by Simone Weil were translated, not only for the sake of patronage or pedagogical emancipation of the workers, but rather to support the reflection on labour and production in social and cultural terms. It is also for these reasons that a wide number of novels, magazines and poems inscribed within the *letteratura industriale* trend, emerged around utopian factory projects in the 1950s and 1960s.

Among the gestures that we have thought of for the *Art Work(ers)* research project, we therefore decided to re-activate these forms of publishing. We have planned two issues of the *Blackout* magazine, and would like to invite you to contribute to the issue zero. Our idea would be to collect in *Blackout* one writings on artists labour.

Blackout 1: Art Labour will be phrased around the following contents:

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- 5 Two Paradoxes, One Reversal and an Impasse: On Organizing the Labor of Artists
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- 25 Museum of Public Concerns
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For your contribution, we would like to propose the following conditions:

- The salary is 500 CHF.
- We wish to discuss further, through coffee or a skype, the general context of your contribution.
- We would be glad to contribute to your

reflections with materials (texts, images, videos) from our research, if you wish so.

- We would like to receive from you an abstract of 250 words including the main points of your text, and a biography.
- We will discuss with you the timeline for your submission in accordance with our editorial process.

Let us know if you are interested in this collaboration and if you have the time to participate. We are looking forward to hearing from you!

Warm wishes,

Petra Köhle, Robert Ireland, Federica Martini
For Art Work(ers)

Two Paradoxes, One Reversal and an Impasse: On Organizing the Labor of Artists

W.A.G.E

For close to ten years, WAGE has been agitating in the contemporary art field around a single demand: that non-profit art institutions pay artists for the work they contract us to do. While this could be perceived as an epic act of durational performance, it might likewise be written off as an inconsequential adjustment to an institutional field in need of total structural reform. It turns out to be neither, because WAGE is not an artwork and any truly inconsequential adjustment would not have taken a decade to make.

The very simple demand to be paid is as much an effort to recalibrate the art institution as it is an effort to recalibrate the labor of artists. Looking back, it has also been an effort to recalibrate the *institution of being an artist* because the call for compensation also called into question what artists do, why we do it, and whom we do it for. Out of these questions have arisen a series of incidental paradoxes, reversals, and impasses that have led us to WAGENCY – a forthcoming initiative by WAGE to organize artists and institutions, along with buyers and sellers of art, together around a shared politics of labor.

WAGE's focus on regulating the payment of artist fees by non-profits was critical to redefining the relation between artists and institutions as being one of labor and not charity, but WAGE emerges from a long tradition of artists organizing more broadly around the issue of remuneration for cultural work in the U.S. that dates back to the 1930s. We see the contemporary fight for artist compensation as being situated within a wider struggle for equity by all those who supply content without payment standards or an effective means to organize.

Today this might casually include anyone who navigates the Internet as a prosumer, and that includes most of its users – evading the simultaneous consumption and production of media,

social and otherwise now itself takes work. But beyond the data-driven participation baked into having a digital presence, a more narrowly defined understanding of a content provider might be anyone who produces that which can be read, watched, or listened to online.

The antiquated distribution mechanisms that used to generate revenue for hard-copy industries like music, publishing and journalism have been laid to waste by the reasonable expectation that we all have a right to free web-based content. But without consumers willing to pay for it, the struggle to re-establish profitable business models continues, and for content that behaves like a public good when it resists or is compromised by monetization, the public charity is looking like an increasingly viable option. Bookstores, newspapers, and magazines seem to be gravitating toward the very model that has so effectively exploited the labor of artists for years. And if the figure of the artist in the context of this model provided the blueprint for the perfectly exploitable creative subject – serving to normalize the expectation of free and underpaid labor – it is now incumbent upon this figure to direct content providers toward the exit.

But first, to understand WAGE's decision to stay focused so myopically on what seems relatively inconsequential given the many levels of structural inequity that characterize the contemporary art field, including and especially white supremacy and the underrepresentation of black people and people of color at all levels of institutional life, including and especially in exhibitions, we have to rewind back to 1969 and the formation of The Art Workers Coalition.

That's what WAGE did when it came together in 2008 by looking at the demands made by an open, multiracial coalition of artists, filmmakers, and

writers over a period of three short years, 1969–1971. The Art Workers Coalition targeted museums with an insistence on their reclamation as something like a form of representative democracy, accountable to that era's civil rights, anti-war, and women's movements asserted through what we might now consider the moral rights of artists.

Their demands were many and they were interlocked. After three years of uncompromising action calling for a redress of the art institution in its totality, the coalition fractured in and around its multiplicity of demands. The end result was just one concrete policy change: admission-free days at museums now often reduced to a single corporately sponsored evening per week. Noting this, WAGE chose to work toward a single achievable goal instead and one that was germane to the historical moment it had formed around.

That historical moment was early 2008, just before the financial crisis, as the gross excesses of the art market were being concretely felt at all levels of the field; sales volumes had expanded by 55% in 2007 alone. WAGE asserted that artists were being paid in exposure instead of cash money and that despite our cultural affluence, many were living in relative material poverty – relative to the excess surrounding us and to how increasingly unliveable New York City was becoming. We demanded to be paid for cultural value in capital value. Without being paid we were being exploited. Exploited because we function as an unpaid labor force that supports a multi-billion dollar industry.

Many aspects of this industry are unregulated which means there are no mechanisms in place to enforce compensation, so the only way to regulate the unregulated – to get institutions to pay artists – is by persuading them to. WAGE uses administrative direct action to remind

them that unless they back up the moral and political claims they make through their programs with materially equitable institutional policy, then they are failing as institutions. But this is only half of WAGE's work. The other half is persuading artists that what they do is labor which is increasingly less a process of persuasion than one of coercion, engaging what appear to be two distinct constituencies, artists and institutions.

In addition to coercion, WAGE does the policy-based work the state has declined to do in its failure to recognize the value of artists' work as a public good and to support it as such. WAGE stepped in and produced guidelines and standards that delineate how much money institutions should pay us and what they should pay us for. We also made tools and resources available to help them better understand the non-payment of artists as a profound blind spot in their operations. Our primary activity on the policy level is a program that publicly "certifies" those non-profits that pay fees according to our guidelines and standards. WAGE Certification recognizes and defines equity on hyper-specific economic terms, the most important of which are how we define 'Artist' and what an 'Artist Fee' is compensation for.

Artist refers to all those who supply content and services in a non-profit visual arts presenting context, including visual artists, performers, dancers, poets, filmmakers, writers, and musicians among others. WAGE does not distinguish between individual and collective/collaborative providers of content and services. All are covered under the term "Artist." WAGE does distinguish between the "Contracted Artist" who has been engaged by an organization to participate in programs, and the "Sub-Contracted Artist" who may be engaged by an artist to participate in a

project or program.

An Artist Fee is the expected remuneration for an artist's temporary transactional relationship with an institution to provide content. An artist fee is not compensation for the labor or materials of making art and it is not intended as compensation for the content itself. Rather, it is for its provision. This includes and is the work of working with an institution.

Out of WAGE's effort to define the labor of artists relative to the closest thing we have to an employer has emerged a paradox. In articulating on hyper-specific economic terms what the figure of the artist is and what it does, we first had to empty out what has historically defined it. Hyper-definition wrought total evacuation. Redefining the artist as a paid economic subject also meant clearing away the unpaid and exploitable one. It required debunking the myth of the artist's work as non-labor and dispensing with the untruth that artists willfully place that non-labor outside of capital. This figure of the artist, which some of us might know as the neo-bohemian but equally the self-righteous social practitioner, is a construction of what the industry demands.

The industry profits from obfuscating what artists do and why we do it, particularly when we do it alone under conditions that cultivate even greater individuation. WAGE's approach to organizing artists under these conditions began with a call to de-exceptionalize our labor by naming it as such. We did this simply by claiming a stake in the profit made from our work. We demanded to be paid for cultural value in capital value. Not so simple has been the process of rebuilding the compromised and contradictory figure of the artist with a sense of its own economic value.

WAGE asserts that an Artist is anyone who provides content for the

programs of non-profit arts organizations. So where Artist had previously been a very specific someone defined by its exceptionality and willingness to work for free, that someone becomes anyone. Artist becomes content provider, Artist becomes contracted worker, Artist becomes just like everyone else so that Artist stops seeing itself as exceptional and expects to be paid – just like everyone else. This is part of the work of convincing artists that what they do is labor.

Defining artists as content providers is also a way of linking our work to other fields in which content is understood as one of the costs of doing business. We de-exceptionalize the art field by reminding all who participate in what is now a more than 56 billion dollar industry, that artists are part of a vast supply chain that supports it and as such we should be paid. We believe that it's only once artists come to understand themselves as *not* exceptional in their support of and exploitation by this industry, that conditions of non-payment will start to change.

Since WAGE Certification's launch in 2014, more than fifty non-profit institutions have been certified across the US. It might be fair to say we have succeeded in shifting the field, which is to say that after almost a decade of agitation we have finally arrived at a general consensus that artists should be paid and that compensation for content provided is indeed a reasonable expectation. Our success in moving from non-payment as a norm to some form of payment as an expectation introduced a reversal, the timing of which has been very poor.

At the precise moment of WAGE's arrival at our goal of regulating the payment of artist fees, artist compensation becomes the least urgent ground for political engagement.

Furthermore, just at the precise moment WAGE moves into organizing the labor of artists through WAGENCY, the nature of our work appears profoundly privileged relative to the dehumanizing conditions most of the world's population labors under.

According to *The Art Market 2017*, "the top 1% of wealth holders in 2016 owned just over half of the world's total household wealth, while the least wealthy half of the global adult population collectively owned less than 1% of global assets."¹ It is undeniable and a fact of this report that artists work in dangerously close proximity to this elite. They consume the things we make as luxury goods and use them as financial instruments, so any labor campaign mounted on behalf of artists in the face of such inequity has to take a position relative to the chasm between working people and the global billionaires who are our customers, our funders, our patrons. The fundamental question then becomes, which side of the divide do we come down on? How can we identify as workers and still in good conscience service a billionaire class?

For WAGE this question is one of conscience. How to square the exploitation of our labor with the profound level of privilege we have relative to most other workers? Despite the simple truth of this question, the reality is that artists' labor is already connected through the supply chain to many of these 'other workers'. In fact, many artists themselves work secondary jobs within it, so the question of where we come down also has to be asked in terms of where we come down relative to our peers and to ourselves.

And so we have to ask: what about interns and fellows? What about subcontracted low-wage service workers performing frontline and invisible labor, gendered administrative staff who are undervalued and overburdened, as well

1 The Art Market 2017 An Art Basel & UBS Report by Dr Clare McAndrew, page 218.

as contracted freelance art handlers and teaching artists without benefits, health insurance or workplace protections? In some cases, the field's economic injustice includes everyone except the grossly overpaid director and sometimes also the self-exploiting underpaid director – but in all cases the division of labor is racialized. WAGE's advocacy exclusively on behalf of artists has been necessary to establish our unique status as unpaid workers but it has induced another paradox. By excluding other supply chain workers from our campaign, we have effectively re-asserted our own exceptionality and called into question any commonality our labor might have with others.

This paradox is not as simple as it seems, since there are in fact differences between the work artists do and other forms of work. The chart below is a rudimentary sketch of the art field's supply chain against which the labor of artists can be seen as both like and very much unlike other kinds of labor within it. Because WAGE believes that all labor is skilled, the differentiation of skilled and unskilled is meant to call attention to how our received understanding of the nature of work has led to outlandish and inequitable differences in rates of pay.

| Position | Labor | Qualification/Type/Pay |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Director | Cognitive, administrative, emotional | Skilled, networked, salaried employee |
| Curator | Cognitive, administrative, emotional | Skilled, networked, salaried employee |
| Administrator | Administrative, emotional | Partially skilled, gendered, salaried employee |
| Web Programmer | Cognitive, technical compensation standards | Skilled, often contingent part-time, existing extra-industry |
| Teaching Artist | Emotional, administrative, physical | Skilled, gendered, contingent, part-time or independent contractors, unregulated |
| Public Facing | Emotional, service | Skilled, often contingent part-time, increasingly racialized, underpaid |
| Art Handler | Physical | Unskilled, often contingent, unregulated except when full-time unionized |
| Shipper | Physical | Unskilled, disciplinary, subject to surveillance, third party |
| Security Guard | Physical | Unskilled, disciplinary, racialized, subject to surveillance, often full-time unionized or outsourced non-unionized |
| Cleaner | Physical | Unskilled, disciplinary, racialized, subject to surveillance, outsourced third party, non-unionized |

In the non-profit sector, the labor of artists is unwaged, unregulated and any pay is symbolic and entirely disconnected from what might be understood as necessary to our material survival. In other words, you cannot live on artist fees and WAGE's campaign cannot claim to be for a minimum or living wage – it is at bottom a campaign to be compensated, period.

Meanwhile, in the commercial sector artists' collective output represents the inversion of forced hyper-production. The art market needs many artists to produce

a lot of art all of the time but only in order to maintain the perception that there is a consistent scarcity of talent and 'good' work. Most of this work, whether good or not, will never be consumed and is essentially worth nothing beyond its material cost, but in its totality the field's voluntary valueless overproduction is fundamental to the market's functioning. The perception of quality as scarce, and the belief that only those with exceptional talent merit success, inflates prices and consolidates resources in the hands of a minority of artists.

And then there is the work of making art. It notably lacks the hallmarks of what might well be the baseline conditions for labor and life in the near future: discipline and surveillance. Conversely the hallmarks of creative work – privacy and freedom – are the preconditions for artist's labor as it has historically been defined.

While artistic work can be cognitive, emotional, immaterial, entrepreneurial, social, unpredictable, unstable, undisciplined, private, and self-directed, it might be fair to say that it also does at one time or another, for one artist or another, involve any and all of what other workers in the supply chain do that is listed above. This may include overseeing a staff, operating payroll, administration, fabrication, shipping, building, thinking, waiting, and watching, among other things. So, while the labor of artists is very fortunately not repetitive, disciplinary, dangerous, demeaning, or service-based it is however, unregulated, exploited, and unpaid.

If the nature of artists' labor often involves the same things that characterize other forms of contemporary work, the forces that determine its value are entirely different. These forces leave artists in a position of total confusion with regard to their own value. So even if artists agree with WAGE that the demand to be paid is a political one, preceding the

choice to make the demand and engage it as a politics is the lived experience of being an artist. And coursing through that experience are two fundamental yet unspoken questions that arise in the struggle to produce meaning as such, and they are inherently about value.

Is my work 'good'? Am I a 'good' artist?

These questions sometimes get answered in moments of validation or periods of clarity but they persist because they are in fact about something else. They are about value. Asking *is my work good* is the same as asking *does my work have value? Do I have value as an artist? Or just do I have value?*

There is a dangerous vulnerability in posing these questions to a field that generates value through the false assertion that good is in short supply. The perceived lack of career success and corresponding invisibility of all those artists whose work is relegated to the deep storage of the forgotten or the never seen is fundamental to making the success and visibility of a limited number of others possible. If this structural inequity is imperative to the functioning of the commercial market, then the transition from invisibility to visibility for most artists is not only unlikely, it is structurally impossible. According to its logic, too many successful artists at any given time would lead to decreased value and market collapse.

Our field also implies a great deal of value distortion. Observe how the industry devalues our labor while simultaneously overvaluing our work. As WAGE defines it, our "labor" is the work of supplying the content of exhibitions and programs – and because it goes unpaid it is apparently worth nothing – while our "work", the commodity version of the content that has been supplied and not paid for is overvalued (or devalued entirely) in

the commercial art market because its inflation serves the interests of those whose business it is to profit from the buying and selling of art.

Given that value in the art field is distorted, contingent, relational, and symbolic, there are no satisfactory answers to the question of whether or not my art is good or whether or not any of us as artists have value. In the eyes of the industry, most of us have value to the extent that our failure enables a few to succeed. For those artists who look to the industry, to the market, to awards, to curators, to historians, to critics, to gatekeepers of any kind for the answer, you are likely to be violently negated by it.

But what if you don't use the industry as a gauge. What if the question of your value as an artist is posed in the direction of other artists, not by "being in dialog with your peers," but in silent dialog with the capital 'a' art of your peers while doing the work of making art. Embedded deep in the labor process of artists is the presence of a third entity, the work of other artists, a prism through which we observe one another's practices and make adjustments to our own. Art as a third entity is also what we hope will be a more stable currency against which to more accurately measure the value of our own work, and in turn our own value, and even our own self-worth.

After all, if measuring ourselves against the standards of the industry yields nothing but unreliable distortion, then the artwork itself must be a more reliable point of comparison because it contains the content – the non-monetary value that the market can never fully own. Artist-to-artist through a third entity, a triangulation that should have the potential to yield less compromised social relations, more robust work, and clearer thinking. Art is or should be a cryptocurrency common to artists, its own black market. But unfortunately, and as always,

art is indivisible from the industry that surrounds and enables it, whether we as individuals choose to participate in that industry or not. As a commodity and as a public, good art's value is only and always contingent and is therefore always unstable.

Compounding this problem is that if you don't also already have a stable sense of your own inherent value (who does?), when your peers' success causes the currency of their work to inflate or become overvalued you are likely to experience a corresponding sense of devaluation, whether real or imagined. You are in fact participating in your own devaluation.

Why does any of this matter? It matters because if as artists we determine our own internal value and artistic self-worth against a currency that is inherently unstable and subject to what the industry demands to extract from us, we will always and forever be bound to one another comparatively through objects whose value is determined by their potential to generate profit, including the social, cultural and political capital that builds value.

For this reason, we need to build our own standards based on a common understanding of our work as having inherent value in part because it is our collective work – and its common value is something that we must also collectively enforce. If we are all linked in this arbitrary system of valuation, then we are all doing the work of increasing or decreasing each other's value.

Once we acknowledge that my success is dependent on your failure, that my failure enables your success, and that most of it is class-based, racialized and about the reproduction of these conditions, it is only then that we will be able to effectively organize ourselves together as a labor force and that means mobilizing politically.

The work of building a movement

organized around labor in a field that lacks even the belief that there is labor involved has been the work of WAGE for many years. But if we're to continue this work and expand it to include the formation of a quasi-union, we must be sure that our work continues to reflect the historical moment we are in, as it did when WAGE was founded in 2008. Almost ten years later, the art field and the world that consumes it have changed, and those changes must be reflected in how we organize.

In the U.S. there has always been a lack of state support for culture, but in combination with accelerating privatization, the non-profit sector is its own hyper-competitive marketplace in which a multitude of organizations vie for a scarcity of resources, cultivating a heavy dependency on the market and private wealth.

A shift in WAGE's rhetoric over the years in how we describe the class position of artists within the industry reflects its near total neoliberalization. Back in 2008, we framed the relationship between artists and institutions as being one of stark disparity, with artists representing an unpaid sub-creative underclass marginalized and exploited by a thriving institutional field. Today, with its impossibly high barriers to entry, the entire field is undeniably elite, catering to a demand for luxury goods and unable to stop the financialization of its output.

Responding to this shift we now make the case for compensation not on the basis of our *distance* from a billionaire class, but on the basis of our *proximity* to it. How we put it to artists is this: if you're willingly going unpaid by an industry in which you and your work support a billionaire class, then not only are you being exploited, your exploitation is supporting the consolidation of wealth by it. This is how we argue that the demand to be paid is a political one and we see

WAGENCY – and our work in the long term – as being a container for resistance and the politics of labor.

We also believe that artists bear some responsibility in this process. This is the ground on which WAGE's work has begun to change as it has taken on a third task. In addition to coercing institutions to pay artists, and coerce artists that what they do is labor, we now must also insist that artists actively participate in WAGE by making the demand for compensation themselves, and to do it collectively.

And this brings up the earlier question about which side of the class divide we as artists might choose to come down on, since increasingly we are being called upon to take a position (relative to gentrification in LA's Boyle Heights or New York's Chinatown, for example, or the call by Hannah Black and others for artist Dana Schutz to take responsibility for "treating Black pain as raw material" in her work). Artists' claim to neutrality may have finally and necessarily exhausted itself – a sign that exceptionality on any level, not just the economic one, is now a liability.

Finally, if we have to choose, do we identify with all those workers whose labor makes the production and visibility of our work possible – the fabricators, the administrators, the art handlers, the cleaning staff, the guards? Or do we obediently, through our own claim to neutrality, align ourselves with those real estate developers, HNWI collectors, flippers, and money launderers whose monopoly on capital might, if we are lucky, enable us to continue being artists?

We have now arrived at what turns out to be a very productive impasse: the impossible choice between labor and capital. We have now also finally arrived at WAGENCY, our forthcoming organizing model. WAGENCY takes up this impasse and neutralizes it by dealing equally with labor and capital so that artists don't have to choose. In fact, that choice won't be

available to artists as long as they choose to participate. The question for WAGE is not, which side do we come down on but is *why should we have to choose?* Why should we have to pick labor over capital or conversely, dis-identify with what could be a working class art world in order to earn income? We shouldn't, but if that's what the industry commands then we must find a way to resist it and build power in the process.

First: WAGENCY and labor. What started in 2015 as a simple idea of board member Suhail Maik's – to certify artists as well as institutions – has since evolved into something much larger and more inclusive. WAGENCY will certify individual artists, mirroring WAGE's existing institutional certification program in its continued focus on artist fees, but it will be part of a broader coalition encompassing both artists and institutions.

As a broad-based coalition and artist certification program, WAGENCY is intended to provide working artists with the necessary agency to negotiate compensation or withhold content and services from institutions that refuse to pay them fees according to WAGE standards. If WAGE Certification enables institutions to self-regulate by opting into a set of values and adhering to them, the role of artists within WAGENCY will be to self-regulate by making institutions' decision to opt in less of a choice and more of a necessity. Its purpose is threefold:

1. To build political and economic solidarity between artists.
2. To provide broad agency to artists of varying means.
3. To enlist artists in sharing responsibility with institutions for the process of shifting the entire field toward something more sustainable.

WAGENCY's most powerful 'lever' will be operated by WAGE Certified artists.

These artists must be prepared to withhold their labor when not paid according to WAGE standards, as well as pay equitably the subcontractors who contribute directly to producing the content of their artwork, namely their assistants. It's here that artists formally operate as institutions, where the studio becomes a factory, and where the equivalent of Just-in-Time (JIT) scheduling and zero-hour contracts are increasingly found.

But what about all those who can't afford to withhold labor? WAGENCY makes space for them to join as WAGENTS. These artists are the bulk of our constituency and their participation is fundamental to building power, but equally it's our responsibility to help empower them. As noted, because the perceived lack of 'success' of the many is necessary to building value for a select few, we believe that this imbalance needs to be understood and accounted for – especially by those who benefit from it. As such, WAGE Certified artists bear greater responsibility in applying pressure.

Instead of using a coordinated strike mechanism, WAGENCY takes the form of a matrix of individual boycotts that can and will happen at any given time. Its power lies in a large number of artists committing to withhold labor and demand fees, and on the pressure these acts apply to institutions over time.

At WAGENCY's core is what we've been calling the 'seeds of unionization'. This means that while WAGENCY has the potential to evolve into a union in the traditional or historical sense, there is nothing about how the art field functions to suggest that such a model would work. Because artists rarely, if ever, share the same employer at the same time and work not for a low wage but for free, coordinating what are perhaps the most individuated of all contingent workers means that WAGENCY cannot be anything but a non-traditional organizing

model.

Like a union, WAGENCY must be a worker-driven infrastructure that has the capacity to shift conditions in the field through collective mobilization, but it is also tasked with coordinating the atomized practices of content providers in a globalized economy comprised of non-profit and for-profit sectors that are entirely interdependent. For it to have real impact, WAGENCY must offer mechanisms for self-regulation in both sectors that have the capacity for international application. WAGENCY must also consider and account for artists' highly individuated practices and politics as well as the class stratification between us as workers.

If both artists and institutions are opting into an adherence to WAGE's payment standards and guidelines, then both are part of a coalition working toward the same goal. Under WAGENCY artists and institutions, or what we might have previously thought of as workers and bosses, will be collapsed together into a single coalition.

This development might have been unexpected but we've known for a long time that in the non-profit wing of the art field, the politics of labor aren't a one-way affair – it's never been as simple as artists vs. institutions or workers vs. bosses because institutions are made up of workers, many of whom are also artists. WAGE's efforts cannot be bifurcated into organizing artists on the one hand and institutions on the other. What we need to do is build a broad coalition of all those who voluntarily and publicly commit to adhering to WAGE's compensation standards and guidelines, whether artists or institutions, thereby drawing attention toward the real obstacle to an equitable distribution of art's economy: state deregulation, privatization, and the disinvestment in art as a shared public good.

Second: WAGENCY and capital.

For WAGE, resistance has never meant denying the existence or necessity of commerce and art's subsumption under capital. It has always been a matter of developing tactics and tools that block, divert and redistribute its flow. At best this means transforming art's economy into something equitable, and at bare minimum shifting it toward something more sustainable. To this end and as part of WAGENCY, we're working on an updated, digitized, and modular version of Seth Siegel and Robert Projansky's 1971 *The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sales Agreement*.

Also known as *The Artist's Contract*, it was intended to give artists control over the conditions of the sale of their work as well as the conditions of its exhibition, resale, and other concerns beyond artists' oversight once it has been transferred; it may be best known for introducing the resale royalty – an artist's right to 15% of any increase in value after the first sale. WAGE's update will be built on blockchain using a so-called 'Smart Contract'.

Blockchain is a decentralized ledger that can record each transaction or transfer of an artwork by tracking its movement through the marketplace in a way that is transparent, accessible, and unalterable. It also has the potential to manifest the highly individuated politics of artists' practices by controlling the conditions of exhibition and circulation through the enforcement of moral rights. *The Artist's Contract on Blockchain* is intended to:

1. Reclaim a portion of the surplus of wealth generated by speculation on the unpaid labor of artists.
2. Redistribute this surplus to bring about a more equitable distribution of art's economy.
3. Control the conditions under which artists' work is used.

A core principle is the assertion that moral and property rights are indivisible. Given

the increasing use of art as a financial instrument, it is – or should be – an artist’s right on moral grounds to resist or block its use as such. It is only through claiming a continued interest in our work as property that we can exercise the moral right to choose how our work is used when it is transformed into an asset class.

WAGENCY’s success in fundamentally altering conditions of non-payment depends on building a substantial coalition by mobilizing artists from across the class spectrum – the larger and broader collective engagement is, the greater an individual’s leverage with institutions will be. The same logic applies to redeploying The Artist’s Contract. If our purpose is to alter the terms of sale in order to redistribute the surplus of wealth generated by unpaid labor and to address art’s use as a financial instrument, then denial of the market and the refusal to participate are not forms of resistance within WAGENCY. Resistance for WAGE has always meant building critical mass through mass usage. The more we use it, the greater our resistance.

Political envision of heritage upon deindustrialization struggles. The work of artist collective Mesa8

David Romero Torres

In December 2007, the Regional Council of Culture and Arts organized an “associativity seminar” which was attended by representatives of different artistic fields from the Bío Bío Region, Chile. The seminar aimed to develop a diagnosis of each discipline, which would eventually lead to the raising of proposals addressed to the institution. The group of artists that attended this call held several dialogues with the institution and encouraged other artist to join a broad-based organization to empower their demands and rights as cultural workers.

That group of artists became the collective Mesa8, which over the years consolidates as a platform whose main goal is to engage with the public sphere, activating encounters between contemporary art and the community. Currently established by Daniel Cartes, Natascha de Cortillas, Eduardo Cruces, Andrea Herrera, Carolina Lara and David Romero, the aim of Mesa8 is to place the collective at the service of artistic research and experimentation beyond the conventional space of artistic production. Mesa8 presumes that the link between artistic practice and community is always crossed by conflict, all of which poses the challenge to

engage with the political dimension of society.

One of the projects in which Mesa8 raised that issue, was its program of artist residencies organized in 2011. Two residencies were carried out, the first one with the guest artist Leonardo Herrera (Colombia) and the second one with Christians Luna (Peru). Both worked in coastal areas in the Bío Bío Region, Tomé and Coliumo, at that time still distressed by the consequences of the great earthquake that occurred off the coast of central Chile in February 2010.

It was Leonardo Herrera who first addressed the history of the textile industry in Tomé. The crisis of “Bellavista Oveja Tomé” Factory was the starting point for developing a work on identity issues in order to engage with the people of the community. As part of the work developed by Leonardo Herrera during his residency,

Leonardo Herrera and Mesa8, “Encuentro para la Memoria Viva de Tomé”, August 13, Tomé, 2011.



on August 13 he organized along with Mesa8 the “Encuentro para la Memoria Viva de Tomé” (Meeting for the Living Memory of Tomé). Leonardo Herrera noticed the lack of meeting places for former textile workers, even though they once formed a working class group of more than 5,000 people. Thus, the textile history of Tomé was the opportunity to gather together current and former workers and anyone who had a relationship



with the textile memory through a meeting to share personal testimonies as well as the story of collective mobilizations of working class people. The community was invited to bring their archives of the textile history of Tomé (photographs, press clippings, objects, etc.); the archives were displayed on a table along with an improvised “office” in which members of Mesa8 scanned the archives brought by the people. Also, an architectural model of the fictional “Textile Museum of Tomé” was presented, as a way of triggering a dialogue around an old desire of the people of Tomé.

Two years after, Mesa8 and a cultural organization from Tomé, CECUM, launched a publication called “El Residente II” (2013). The publication communicated the experience of “Encuentro para la Memoria Viva de Tomé” and presented part of the archives collected



on that occasion. Along with the archives, “El Residente II” involved historians, cultural agents and artists of Tomé who reflected on the constitution of local identities around industrial contexts. The aim was to think on how to approach cultural heritage beyond merely commemorative or nostalgic positions, taking into account that identity changes continuously so it can’t be “frozen” by heritage management. The latter implies a constant examination of collective identifications as well as what has been told by the official history. The citizens themselves become protagonists of building common narratives in which memory and language are tools to resist the shock of neoliberal progress. Thus, through a number of interviews, articles, and visual interventions, “El Residente II” contributed with new meanings on the reflection about industrial and post-industrial realities in the Bío Bío Region.



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Mesa8 and CECUM, “El Residente II”, archives and model of the “Textile Museum of Tomé”, Tomé, 2013.

But before we continue, let’s describe the factory briefly.

“Bellavista Oveja Tomé” is the biggest and the oldest textile factory in Tomé. Around it, the owners built different neighbourhoods in order to divide the community into social groups: workers, foremen, and managers. The houses for the workers were located as close as possible to the factory; they were small and in the very beginning the baths were outside the houses, and one bath was shared between two or three of them. Moving a little bit away from the factory was the neighbourhood for foremen,

which had a clear difference to that of the workers; these houses had two floors and a front garden. Far away and no longer in neighbourhoods but in individual houses surrounded by the forest were the managers. Finally, the luxurious house of the owner was completely isolated from the rest of the village; the garden alone was the size of three workers' houses and from there the factory could not be seen.

A small river runs through the village and flows into the sea. The access to water was one of the main reasons to place the factory there. In fact, the village has a beautiful natural environment; it is located in front of the Pacific Ocean and surrounded by hills and forests. That's why they called the factory "Bellavista", which means beautiful view. The whole village found its *raison-d'être* around the factory together with all its functions and needs. The owners built the school, a gymnasium, a soccer field, a swimming pool, a casino, and also the workers' union building. Furthermore, they built the church, located a few meters from the entrance to the factory. Everything was planned in order to apply the principles of facilitating labour and exerting social control through education, religion and leisure.

For a while, the "Bellavista Oveja Tomé" Factory has been facing economical troubles and the businessman who owns it wants to sell the property. Obviously, it is easy to imagine how this may end. The building will be demolished to begin the gentrification of the area. But people want to imagine that this could also end up differently: that's why they organized themselves to protest against it, fighting for the preservation of a building that holds a big part of the history and the memory of Tomé. In 2016, several organizations gathered together to establish one platform to carry out this struggle, named "Mesa Ciudadana por el Patrimonio de Tomé" and Mesa8 was one of the collectives that joined the initiative.

One of the actions done by the participants –former workers,

Textile workers in front of the gates of "Bellavista Oveja Tomé" Factory, Tomé, around 1920–1930.

Tomé people claiming for the declaration of "Bellavista Oveja Tomé" Factory as a National Monument, May 29, 2016. Photo: Francisco Javier Matamala.



inhabitants, students and cultural workers- was the re-enacting of an old photograph that was taken around the 20's or 30's. The photograph shows a crowd of textile workers in front of the gates of the factory. It is actually an iconic document of the "Bellavista Oveja Tomé" Factory; looking at this photograph we have the feeling of facing an empowered working class mass. The people saw the defiant strength of the workers at the factory gates as a critical reference of the relationship between working class people and the industrial site, where workers are the protagonists, not the owners.

The symbolic protest in front of the gates of the factory resembles an action done by Mesa8 in 2013, whose documentation was included in "El Residente II". The action was called "Vestidos para la acción" (Dressed for action) and it was an urban *dérive* around the places and ruins of the textile history of Tomé. Members of Mesa8 and CECUM wore suits made of fabrics manufactured by the textile factory re-enacting the standing posture of the workers. This action shows a way to appropriate the documents of history, that is, the archives that belong

to the community. It essentially invites us to reflect on how social memory is preserved and what types of imaginary identifications are possible when people dig into collective memory.

The story continues, and in April 2016 "Mesa Ciudadana por el Patrimonio de Tomé" organized a march towards the capital to request the authorities to declare the factory as a national monument. However, the signature of the Minister of Education, which would validate the declaration, has been delayed; and the owner of the factory went to the Constitutional Court to block the initiative. In this context, on October 1st, Mesa8 performed an intervention in the public space called "Lectura Pública: [RE] NACIONALIZACIÓN" (Public Reading: [RE] NATIONALIZATION). The public

Mesa8, "Vestidos para la Acción",
September 22, Tomé, 2012.



reading was about the constitutional article, which declares a building as a national monument according to the Chilean law.

The paragraph was shared through a performative intervention that included its reading and the distribution of archives of the textile history, including episodes such as the visit of socialist president Salvador Allende in 1972. Thus, “Lectura Pública: [RE] NACIONALIZACIÓN” stressed the historical moment in which “Bellavista Oveja Tomé” Factory was the first nationalized company during the Chilean socialist revolution. Through this action, Mesa8 addressed cultural heritage as a sphere of citizens’ claim connected with other communities in resistance to the processes of dismantling industrial production. It can be seen as a critical moment in terms of the demands made by the community and the deaf response of those in power. When the consensus enters into crisis and reveals it as the imposition of control over subjectivities and bodies, then the possibility of change emerges, that is, the political emerges. In this sense, Mesa8 approaches cultural heritage as a space of material and symbolic struggle, as a space to criticize the effects of neoliberal progress.

Mesa8 and Mesa Ciudadana por el Patrimonio de Tomé, “Lectura Pública: [RE] NACIONALIZACIÓN”, October 01, Tomé, 2016.



The aforementioned also demonstrates that the return to the past, commonly associated with the feeling of nostalgia, can become an engine of social organization and participation. Relations of power cross cultural heritage and we must not lose sight of what remains veiled for cultural policies oriented to heritage management, which are generally governed by the logic of nostalgia and marketing. This is the case of closed factories and industrial facilities that become valuable products for gentrification initiatives. In this sense, artistic production investigates other ways to value and socialize cultural heritage, emphasizing the experience over the conservation or monumentalization usually carried out by governments and institutions. In opposition to this





Mesa8, working process for the upcoming publication "ATLAS", Tomé, 2017.

Assembly held by "Mesa Ciudadana por el Patrimonio de Tomé", Tomé, 2017.

logic it is possible to have an approach to memory as a political sphere that becomes a matter of investigation for contemporary art practices, addressing heritage in a critical way as can be observed through the work of Mesa8 in Tomé.

In a wide perspective, this approach connects with the question about the political dimension of art and its power to signify the present. Here, I am appealing to Walter Benjamin's conception of past as pendency and as a key of emancipation. In his Theses on the philosophy of history, Benjamin points out the "secret agreement between past generations and ours", a kind of fissure that wheezes the "breath of air that enveloped the precedents". This has nothing to do with dates and names legitimated by History

(historicism) but with a sort of "experience" that bursts and interrupts the continuity of linear progress. In other words, I am talking about the emergency of a "rebel memory" to understand the present and take position critically.

It's not a matter of nostalgia but a question about the present and the future. Memory is the key to understanding and giving meaning to our present and future. This is what explains our recurrent practice of memory: the desire to know what we are.

Museum of Public Concerns Mining Speeches: An Exhibition Project¹

Victor Galvão
Mabe Bethônico

Synopsis

The *Museum of Public Concerns* proposes an exhibition to be built together with a group of invited workers from the operational fields of the mining industry. A discussion will be initiated by the Museum members (artists and a group of students), and decisions to configure and build the event are to be done collectively, aiming for an exhibition around issues of mining that are to happen in an institutional setting.

With a geopolitical focus on Minas Gerais, Brazil, the Museum will articulate a workgroup, to elaborate together the conceptual and visual structures of a show, giving attention to aspects they consider relevant to be discussed about the environment and work in the field of mineral extraction. This group will be composed of four pairs

¹ The project *Conversas Minerais : um projeto coletivo* here outlined by Mabe Bethônico and Victor Galvão will be submitted for funding in December 2017 to the Cultural Foundation of Belo Horizonte.

of workers from four different extraction sites. The group will run the project for six months and together they will research, produce, discuss and conceive an exhibition and its particular strategies.

We speculate: What would be important to narrate, and within which content/documentation would this become apparent? Which issues would be a priority and how to display, write and communicate them? To which public should it be addressed? And where should this event be taken to and in what form?

Context

The *Museum of Public Concerns* is a collective of artists and researchers based in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais. It started with the initiative of the artist Mabe Bethônico as an artistic and activist project that has mining activity as its main subject of inquest. Minas Gerais is the main source of ore extraction in Brazil and one of the most important iron sources in the world. Mining is in the very name of this state, where “minas” stands for “mines”. Since this activity plays an important role in both the social and political constitution of the region, the museum’s work focuses on its effect on people’s lives, not the mineral extraction itself and its economies.

The Museum holds different archives from which activities are proposed, for example, a collection of newspapers about the subject of mineral activity in Minas Gerais, including the repercussion of the Bento Rodrigues dam collapse at the end of 2015. Another collection consists of inspection photographs from the government agency responsible for regulating the mining sector, and a photo archive about women at work in

the mines. The Museum's main purpose is to present a historical writing centred on human subjectivity.

In recent years, Minas Gerais capital city, Belo Horizonte, has opened a museum complex on historical buildings that used to host the state administration. Among these institutions, two museums deal directly with the subject of mining, even though they are founded and maintained by major mineral companies that explore the mineral extraction in Minas Gerais. One of them focuses on the minerals themselves and the richness of the region's ground, from a geological perspective. The other museum takes a more sociological approach, where it supposedly presents various aspects of Minas Gerais culture, and the mining activity is regarded as an inherent element of cultural identity. These places tell the history by the ideological rhetoric of progress, that considers mining activity as the protagonist on a discourse of technological, social and cultural development. Actual criticism is absent from these spaces, where the spectator's experience is reduced to videogame-like devices presenting a one-sided perspective of the mining issue, keeping apart the social and environmental impacts caused by the extraction and exploitation. This project seeks a counter-history, that does not corroborate with the corporate narrative made official by public funding on private institutions.

The project's main workplace will be the Museu Mineiro, a public institution for the preservation of iconographic heritage of the state of Minas Gerais. As well as the permanent exhibitions, library, archives, historical collections, the museum building has a space for temporary events, where it will be submitted the final exhibition of this project.

Project development

The elaboration of the exhibition is a pretext for allowing the debate and compilation of visual material, which can shape publications and other initiatives. The process implies working in sessions of discussion groups for image research and implementation.

We aim for the emergence of a set of local, subjective and personal issues to be approached, that are derived from the perspective of the workers, and reaching the immediate surroundings. The idea is that other imageries and questioning can conduct the narratives of the daily experiences of those who are involved with the mining environments, different from the images produced by the industry itself.

The exhibition will allow public visibility of the museum's prior collections, as they may be used as source materials for the participant's propositions, maintaining its constant rereading. In addition, the contribution of the participants to the museum's archive will promote its expansion and these new elements will consequently take part in future propositions and be subjected to new readings and articulations by other collaborators.

After the exhibition is set up, the following stage in the project development will be the promotion of debates where the workgroup will engage in public discussions together with other guests from different fields of knowledge and occupations. These meetings will work as platforms for exchange, where the works in the exhibition are a point of convergence for the multiple

voices that will integrate the debate.

² Published in 2011, it has been circulated in Peru, Uruguay and other countries in Latin America. It has been shared collaboratively with the Museum of Public Concerns by Maristella Svampa.

An in-depth guide elaborated by the Argentinian collective *Voces de Alerta* will be used as discussion trigger. Their *Guide to dismantle the pro-mining imaginary*² discusses 15 myths and realities of transnational mining and it will be used as a tool, allowing spontaneous argumentation and further choices to emerge.

MYTHS

Those who are against all kinds of mining are fundamentalists

In the foundations of the discourse in favour of mining there is the belief that it is a universal human activity, that cannot be dissociated from the notion of progress. Then, who is against this activity can be seen as an “enemy” of human development.

Mining is a “development engine” that drives the national economy

While transnational companies advance on Latin-American territory, the exploitation of mineral extraction makes the geopolitical asymmetry deeper as the monopoly of capital and technology remains to the countries where the material is imported.

Mining generates employment and local economic growth

The promise of generating jobs is one of the key arguments for promoting the large-scale mining, which is supposed to create work opportunities for the local population. However, all empiric evidence demonstrates that this sector is mainly capital-intensive, having an insignificant presence on generating local jobs.





MUSEU DOS ASSUNTOS PÚBLICOS

Mining creates many indirect jobs

Mining sector commonly highlights the indirect jobs it generates in activities induced by the demand of goods and services by the companies, but in fact, the local production chain in the extraction territories is extremely simplified, keeping the value of products very low.

Mining takes place in derelict zones, bringing development and elevating social standards

In order to legitimate the exploitation of territories of poor countries, the ideological discourse devaluates any other activity that might take place in those regions, regarding the mining as the only way for “economic development”.

The benefits of mining remain in the countries where the minerals are extracted, as the companies contribute to national development through the payment of different kinds of taxes

One of the key aspects for the large profitability of the mineral industry is how it can articulate specific tax exemptions for a large amount of money that, at the end is not able to reach the states.

Mining can be clean, without contamination of the environment, and can be done without environmental hazard. There is a technical solution for every environmental issue

It's very clear that all mining activities require large amounts of water and produce toxic waste. In the short-term, the companies may present in their favour, certain alternatives that seemingly attenuate the immediate impacts of the extraction. However, it has

been proven that some severe contamination processes, i.e. acid mine drainage, start sometime after mines are deactivated.

Every enterprise obeys strict environmental regulations and mining is the only activity standardized by an environmental law in the country

The reports usually presented by the companies as results of environmental impact evaluation can be contested for a series of reasons, that range from methodological faults on the diagnosis to the deliberate concessions on the legislation for eliminating the “environmental obstacles” for the mining activity.

No mining project is done without the prior consent of all communities involved

Throughout the history of exploitation, innumerable strategies of deceit and coercion have evolved. Even if a community does not consent to the start of a mining process, the companies can inflict very strong pressure or just disregard it, since there are no specific regulations for this kind of dispute.

Mining makes the social fabric stronger, reducing migration and dismantlement of communities

All empiric evidence demonstrates that large-scale mining increase migration and social conflict. When a company addresses direct benefits to specific individuals or sectors of a society, it makes a social division, contributing to the criminalization of socio-ecological resistance.

Transnational companies grant transparency and freedom of opinion on the evaluation of their activities

The complex juridical structures of the corporations are designed in such a way to prevent proper evaluation of their activities and to promote the prosecution of those who are critically opposed to them.

Every country is autonomous and sovereign in relation to transnational mining companies. Transnational Mining companies respect the legal framework of the countries where they operate

The very interest of the companies to operate transnationally is based on tax incentives, lack of legal impediments, and low production costs to their activities in foreign countries.

Transnational companies behave with social responsibility, strengthening the socioeconomic fabric of the region

The acts of social responsibility of the companies establish a corporate clientelism towards the society, becoming a State within the State, which strategies of co-optation make possible the violation of citizen rights.

Those opposed to large-scale mining, national or transnational, have no alternative for development

The neoliberal discourse, oriented in a strict sense to the promises of the “future”, eliminates the productive alternatives of a territory by erasing its cultural memory and knowledge, presenting the large-scale mining as the

solution for a miserable social condition.

America has a mineral destiny. Without mining development, there's no future for our societies

It is a recurrent fallacy to affirm that mineral extraction is a historical tradition in Latin America. This argument ignores the fact that the geopolitical division of work is an irresponsible project of exploitation of non-renewable resources that maintain and create new asymmetries in terms of economy, politics and environment between central and peripheral countries.

Timetable

months actions

The project execution is divided into three stages: 1/recognition 2/research 3/execution

-
- | | |
|-------|---|
| 01 | – contact unions and/or locate workers from the different sites [Belo Horizonte, Itabira, Nova Lima, Conceição do Mato Dentro] – invitations to a pair of workers at each location |
| <hr/> | |
| 02 | – travel to each site, meeting the invited workers: presentation of project/ brainstorm/ bringing the archive contents. |
| 03 | – meeting all participants in Belo Horizonte/ weekend: visiting the Museu Mineiro, where further meetings and final event will take place. – visit the Museu das Minas e dos Metais and Memorial Minas Gerais Vale: cultural |

- institutions kept by mining corporations – to discuss companies’ methods of approach.
- division of subjects/ approaches or themes to be developed by each pair
-

- 04 – compiling/ building information and materials from the individual propositions – research/ contents
-

- 05–06 – Production/ selection/ edition/printing/ expography
-

- 07–09 – Exhibition/events of debate and/or meetings
-

Budget [to be detailed/ specified]

- fees for guest participants travel and accommodation costs
- material and access to research and preparations
- production [enlargements, videos, wall texts and/ or print, documents’ reproduction, museography, etc]
- “public event” (debate/ roundtable)
- post-production [catalogue – publication, distribution]
- destination of content produced

Public Art Tours invites you to visit Chippis, Switzerland

Chrisantha Chetty

Public Art Tours (PAT) invites people on a journey through particular spaces and places. PAT wants you to experience public art in new and alternative ways, open your eyes to works you might have otherwise (dis)missed and challenge your perception of art, space and place.

Please use the following publication that is based on a tour of the existing public art in Chippis, a small town in the Valais, Switzerland, to take a self-guided tour through the area. PAT shows you a large variety of Chippis public art to reflect the diversity of public art practices: old, modern and the more contemporary.

Enjoy uncovering an array of sculptures, murals and interventions around the city.

Map:





1. Graffiti arrow on Grand Avenue

This is an example of graffiti or street art. There aren't many examples of this type of art in Chippis, but if you look carefully you will find a few on route. Graffiti is an interesting art form that was born out of rebellion and now has been co-opted by the art industry. It is a great example of how art can be institutionalised and commodified. It is quite common these days to find graffiti canvases on sale in galleries; very contradictory to the original resistant nature of graffiti.

As you can see, this arrow was once pointing at another form that has now been erased but still leaves a clear trace. This is a perfect representation reflecting ideas of memory and place.



2. Cross outside Church

This wonderful piece of art is a sculpture commissioned by the church. It is a highly symbolic work with a very clear intention of monumentalising the death of Christ. The church has been present in Chippis since its foundation, more than a hundred years ago, when the aluminium company Alusuisse opened a factory here. The importance of both the church and factory are referenced in the flag of the commune of Chippis.



3. Rock with hands

This work of art was commissioned by the school of Chippis in 2000. It is symbolic in nature, reflecting the positive ideals of the people that live in this place. The hands represent the unity of the many different cultures present in Chippis. This attribute is something the commune of Chippis holds in very high esteem. The four cote of arms on each corner of the sculpture represent a different place in the Valais. The sculpture unites these places and their respective communities.

The glacial erratic rock that the sculpture stands on is very particular and quite common in some parts of

Switzerland, which further highlights the concept of connection in this region.



4. Poster wall by Mary Xinha, 2012–present

A community project. A socially engaged work of art that the artist Mary Xinha created as platform for the surrounding community to advertise different activities and events. According to a representative of the city council, the area of Chippis is so small that online platforms are not necessary.

The artwork is successful in that it actually works in this community. People use the wall, making it fluid and changing. Outdated posters coming down and new ones continuously being put up. The artist saw an opportunity to connect with the public of Chippis and what is really great about this work is that it has been sustained by the citizens even long after the artist has left.

This work demonstrates how public art has the potential to engage with communities. The artist was given permission by the city to use this wall. She activated the wall for a few weeks and soon people started to catch on. In Switzerland, it is not common for people to break the rules, so the most difficult part for the artist was letting people know that it was ok to use the wall.



5. Fountain flower bed by Aleisha Anne, 2014

This could be described as functional art that has repurposed existing structures. It demonstrates how some permanent architecture fails to accommodate for change, which is ultimately inevitable. This artist has a few pieces around Chippis, where she repurposed structures with a desire to beautify the place. Who doesn't like looking at beautiful things- right?

While the terms "fine" or "high" art typically apply to works that carry an intellectual and emotional sensibility (sometimes alongside formal beauty), functional art, like this, combines these aesthetic ideals into works that you might never have expected to view as art.



6. Shi sculpture at the Chinese Restaurant

This is a very modern piece of work. It was commissioned by the restaurant owners. They wanted an authentic sculpture, so it is designed by a Chinese artist working at Xiamen Kao Shi Imp. & Exp. Co., Ltd, who mass produce a range of Chinese sculptures.

This particular sculpture is known traditionally in Chinese as Shi- which may be translated as guardian lion. Pairs of guardian lion statues are still common decorative and symbolic elements at the entrances to restaurants, hotels, supermarkets and other structures. The claws, teeth and eyes of the Chinese lion represent power. It is a protector of the space behind it, similar to government, art institutions and private funders in relation to art.



7. Log flower beds

There are many log flower beds in Chippis, however, not all are considered art. Don't be fooled by Triage Forestier into believing their mass-produced imitation log flower beds are art.

The log above is considered an art piece. It has been left over from a public

art festival that took place in Chippis a few years ago. The artist created a replica of the logs produced by Triage Forestier as a way to critique functional public art that is focused on beautifying spaces. This is problematic as it perpetuates the same ideal that it wants to challenge. It is, however, placed strategically between the logs by Triage and the benches which are also produced by Triage, thus working more critically during the festival than it does now.



8. Sunflower sculpture

This was commissioned by Alusuisse – the aluminium company that was the main reason for the formation of Chippis as a place. The company wanted to “educate” the people of Chippis on some of the great things they do. This wheel is actually a readymade sculpture that was a part of the machinery used in the factory. The artist worked closely with the company to come up with an idea that would reflect positively on the company. The artist was paid very well- though he/she wanted to remain anonymous- leaving their name off the sculpture.



9. Big rock

This is somewhat a fetish piece.

They are called glacial erratics and are very valuable. These rocks get eroded from the landscape and attached to glaciers, travel with them for some time- maybe even thousands of kilometers- and then fall off once the ice melts. Glacial erratics reveal information about the direction of ice movement and distances it has travelled.

One could say this art piece was produced by nature/god and then presented by man. Glacial erratics are not for sale but one can purchase fine art photographs or other representations of them.



10. Mural by unknown artist, date unknown

The people living here at the moment didn't know much about how this work came to be, so we can only really observe it on a formal level, speculating on intentions and symbolism. The blackness of the figures is apparent due to the lack of black representation in the rest of Chippis. With the normalisation of whiteness in this area and elsewhere in Switzerland and the world, blackness is made visible. This highlights how engagement with minority groups is becoming quite popular in contemporary public art practices. The baby, however, has blonde hair which is indeed a little confusing.

PAT encourages you to make your own readings of this and all the other artworks discussed.



11. Hat on log

This is often recognised as the best public art piece in the whole of Chippis. The artist is unknown. It is a playful intervention that could be categorised as a form of street art. It is a clever readymade interacting with its surroundings.

At first glance, the message appears clearly as a reference to the workers of the factory. A monument to the people that came to work in the aluminium factory that was the birth and growth of Chippis.

However, on second glance, it is apparent that it is actually a fireman's helmet, placed on a log opposite the fire-fighter building in Chippis.

Be careful of quick interpretations that might be far off from the truth.



12. Fountain flowerbed by the

42

community, 2015

This fountain flower bed was inspired by the one you saw earlier in the centre of town. This one however, is made by the residents of this house. They say the public art festival inspired them to create their own art. It is so wonderful to see this kind of outsider art or art brut. It is great when art inspires people to engage and realise their own creativity.



13. Rock bridge

This is an interesting eco-friendly land art piece. It is site-specific and functional. The artist used found material from the surroundings to intervene in the space- creating a bridge for people to cross. It's a very clever piece where the artist uses what's there instead of producing an addition.

This example is reflective of Public Art Tours' mission. To look closer at what is already there rather than permanently alter the space. This company is proudly green and eco-friendly. We aim to decrease our carbon footprint to a minimum.

We hope you enjoyed this tour. Keep an eye out for Public Art Tours- it might be coming to a city near you! Please email any feedback you might want to share to xantha.chetty@gmail.com.



A little bit about the creator of Public Art Tours:

Chrisantha Chetty was born in 1988, and raised in Durban, South Africa. She is an interdisciplinary multimedia artist, art collector, architect, activist, actress, dancer, theorist, philosopher, curator, songwriter, novelist, filmmaker, cook, designer, craftsman, tailor, photographer, journalist, human rights advocate and entrepreneur.

Chetty graduated with an Honours degree in Fine Art from the Wits School of Arts in 2014 and completed her Masters in Art in the Public Spheres at Ecole Cantonale d'Art du Valais in 2017. Her future plans include pursuing a PhD at the Royal College of the Arts in the UK.

Chetty has exhibited internationally in places including: Lagos, Lumbumbashi, Luanda, Addis Ababa, Bamako, Kampala, Cairo, Bulawayo, Harare, Strasbourg, Bern, Basel, Zurich and Sierre. She aspires to travel to and show work in the art capitals of the world such as: New York, London, Berlin, Los Angeles, Beijing, Brussels, Hong Kong, Miami, Paris, Rome and Tokyo.

Chetty won second place in The Martienssen Prize 2013 and has been awarded the prestigious Standard Bank Fine Arts award from the Wits School of Arts in 2014. Her ambitions include winning many more reputable art awards, such as the Turner Prize, and showing work in internationally acclaimed art museums, such as the TATE Modern in London and the Pompidou in Paris.

Her works explores capital in all its forms and how this knowledge may be used to benefit poor communities around the world. Her practice is process driven and socially engaged- inviting layman to engage with contemporary art and take advantage of its benefits.

Chetty is also a budding entrepreneur having started a few small collaborative ventures in the past. Her latest business is Public Art Tours (P.A.T.) which she uses as a platform for other projects including Amateur-professional art academy and Feed the artists fund.

Public Art Tours was created by the artist due to her ongoing concern of how to survive as an artist that produces ephemeral interventions in the public sphere while maintaining a certain level of autonomy. Chetty plays with everyday constructs in order to challenge conventional perceptions, whilst continuously critiquing her position and that of the institutions she encounters along the way.

Chetty believes in the power of her work to engage with people regardless of their backgrounds, knowledge and skills. She encourages all people to use art actively- contributing to positive change in their communities and societies.

Jardins a Fabriques, Constructing Visions

Guillaume Pilet

ENCYCLOPÉDIE (L'): Tonner contre.

En rire de pitié, comme étant un ouvrage rococo.

*O et dimmi poi se tante meraviglie sien fatte per inganno
o pur per arte.*

En créant ce rocher j'ai voulu prouver ce que peut la volonté.

The day when I finally visited the Buontalenti Grotto in Boboli Gardens, in Florence, I discovered Michelangelo's fascinating *Prigioni*, embedded at the four corners of the Grotto as if stuck inside the rococo concretion that gives the building its peculiar texture.

The “ideally unfinished” Prisoners seem to be trying to escape from the very matter of which they are made. Often a rather bombastic gimmick, the oxymoron perfectly illustrates the polarisations rational vs. irrational and reason vs. unreason that haunt Mannerism, and paves the way to an art of poetic entropy that simultaneously configures and distances itself from knowledge.

Starting from this premise, we shall explore a series of natural environments designed by humans in order to trace an intuitive itinerary or *rêverie* through a park. Our successive steps, alternately rational and irrational, shall measure the time of our contemplative promenade.

By extension, this exploration will be an opportunity to assess the borders that separate work from entertainment and science – a border where the arrangement of nature becomes an aesthetic, experimental or compulsive gesture, a means not to “perish through truth”,¹ to create ideal worlds and to express thoughts in spatial terms. The work of an artist or of an amateur, of a sage or of a fool, of an architecture without an architect, the anti-“machine for living in (machine à habiter)”.

The garden is like a microcosm, an encyclopaedia through which you can walk while abandoning yourself to intellectual musings.

The position I adopt in this article alternates between that of an enlightened enthusiast, an obsessive collector, a spellbound admirer and a clumsy craftsman.

The text, which I present here as one would tell the tale of a trip in the heat of the moment, is the fruit of a diffuse and intense reflexion that has been haunting me for several weeks and which I have put on paper, often varying the tone, whenever my occupations gave me leisure to do so.

“The most urgent matter was the garden”

Bouvard and Pécuchet, in Gustave Flaubert’s eponymous and unfinished novel, are a duo of enthusiastic amateurs drifting from one experience to the next and from failure to failure. Through their successive blunders, the author draws a merciless portrait of the vanity of knowledge when clumsily pursued by limited spirits. Exiled in the countryside, accomplices to ambitious and grandiloquent enterprises, “their meeting had the importance of an adventure”.²

1 Friedrich Nietzsche, “art is with us in order that we may not perish through truth”, *The Will to Power*, Vol. 2, Book 3, § 822, transl. Anthony M. Ludovici, London, Allen and Unwin 1924.

Thanks to a

providential inheritance, the two friends can leave the city and go live as country gentlemen in their newly purchased estate which comprises a farm, a small castle, and a garden. The vegetable garden becomes their priority as soon as they move in. And “since they were able to work together at gardening, they must needs succeed at agriculture; and they were seized with an ambition to cultivate the farm”.³

The necessary skills are drawn from specialised works, reference books and contemporary magazines, and the two protagonists give more credit to their patchy understanding of theoretical treatises than to the well-informed advice of actual farmers. Oral transmission is considered less credible, even archaic, and empirical, ancestral skills are derided and subordinated to encyclopaedic knowledge.

Despite Bouvard and Pécuchet’s careful application of these methods, the experience ends up in an expensive and catastrophic debacle.

The two rentiers’ successive failures to carry out their well-intentioned plans are described with cold, humorous contempt. Their tendency to over-poeticise every single gesture and to attribute philosophical values to the lowest tasks is also a reason why success appears to constantly elude them.

If their approach is systematically ridiculed, the peasants’ world does not get a much better treatment from Flaubert, who describes it in merciless terms.

Bouvard and Pécuchet then proceed to try their hand at tree culture, “not for pleasure, but as a speculation”. The harvest, however, is destroyed by a storm. The devastation of the orchard orients Bouvard and Pécuchet toward new readings in order to reorganise their garden.

They find Pierre Boitard’s *L’Architecte des Jardins* and, “in their enthusiasm for new ideas” and “for a

trifling sum”, they set about to design a rather eccentric small park on the fashionable model

2 Gustave Flaubert, *Bouvard and Pécuchet*, in *The Complete Works of Gustave Flaubert: Novels, Short Stories, Plays, Memoirs and Letters*, transl. Eleanor Max-Haveling, e-art now, 2015.

<https://books.google.it/>

3 *Ibid.*

of English landscape gardens. The inventory of the *fabriques* that they throw together includes a large granite rock (“resembling a gigantic potato”), an Etruscan tomb (“looking like a dog-hole”), a Venetian bridge encrusted with mussel shells, a Chinese pagoda, yew trees shaped like stags and armchairs, and a labyrinth with a large plaster gate decorated with bowls of pipes, naked women, horses, Abd-el-Kader and other exotic phantasies.

To set the whole ensemble to its full picturesque effect, they burn down the roof of the shack and pull down the large linden tree, which lays on the ground as if struck by lightning.

“Like all artists, they [feel] the need of being applauded” and decide to give a great dinner for the region’s most prominent personalities in order to show their creation.

The parade of notables is treated with lavish but second-rate dishes. After the niceties and champagne, the curtains are opened on the garden. The guests’ surprise is exhilarating to Bouvard and Pécuchet. But the surprise soon turns into contempt, and the artists’ pride leads to resentment.

From grotesque to picturesque

The formal vocabulary of this garden with its patched-up lyricism is based on the English landscape gardens that were in fashion in the 18th century and which included constructions known in French as *fabriques*. The latter provided places for contemplation and reflection along the promenade, and gave a picturesque touch to the landscape. While recounting the preliminary surveys of the two heroes, Flaubert mentions the Parc d’Erménonville (now Parc Jean-Jacques Rousseau) and offers a digression about this park and others that are emblematic of a certain idea of gardens as an expression of thought and object of knowledge.

By contrast with the French garden, the English landscape garden gives apparent free rein to nature, preferring the arrangement of idealised landscapes

to geometrical compositions and to the interplay of symmetries. These environments, inspired by Classical painting and poetry, include dream-like architectural structures representing archetypal buildings, invent new and extraordinary ones, or simulate natural elements such as grottos and waterfalls. Their success can be explained by the Enlightenment's search for new forms of organisation and diffusion of ideas, such as the cabinets of curiosities of which these gardens were an immersive version. In my view, they also clearly represent a transition from the rocky grottos (that gave their name to the rococo style) to the iconic colonnade buildings of the Neo-Classical tradition. Flaubert presumably had a certain contempt for these gardens filled with the simulacra of stereotypical architectures.

In the foreword to his book, Boitard writes: "I had one aim, which is usually quite difficult to achieve: I wanted this study to be as comprehensive as possible, and yet reasonably priced, so as to make it accessible to a wide audience of amateurs".⁴ This detail is representative of the will to democratise and disseminate encyclopaedic knowledge. The author must have reached his goal, since Flaubert quotes precisely this essay when the two protagonists – an incarnation of all the amateurs to whom Boitard had addressed his book – set out to arrange their garden. Legend has it that Flaubert read over 1200 books to write *Bouvard and Pécuchet*, in order to describe as accurately as possible the characters' "progression" through their experiences, which the reader can follow like a rite of passage. This obsessive erudition underscores the ridicule of the heroes' clumsy and superficial attempts at acquiring knowledge.

But let us return to Boitard's *L'art de composer et décorer les jardins*, and in particular to his typology of decorative buildings, which "fully belong to art and are therefore usually referred to as *fabriques*".⁵

Boitard divides them in two categories: useful ones, such as bridges, houses, theatres, etc.; and

⁴ Pierre Boitard, *L'art de composer et décorer les jardins* (2nd ed.), 1846, available on the online library Gallica (BnF) and reprinted on request by Hachette Livre. Unless otherwise stated, the translation is by Daniela Almansi

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 139.

ornamental ones, whose sole function is to achieve a picturesque effect. About the latter, he notes that “they are purely luxury products, since, although they can be used, their main purpose is decorative”.⁶ The category includes traditional temples, pavilions, pagodas, but also minarets and the so-called “*vide-bouteille*” (bottle-emptiers), “used to rest for a while and have a bottle of beer or wine, or a cup of milk”.⁷ Boitard’s typology ends with tombs, “the most effective *fabriques* if one wants to produce a melancholy scene”.⁸ We think again of Bouvard and Pécuchet, who “sacrificed the asparagus in order to build on the spot an Etruscan tomb, that is to say, a quadrilateral figure in dark plaster, six feet in height, and looking like a dog-hole”.⁹ Dog-holes (*niches à chien*), incidentally, are also listed by Boitard among useful *fabriques*... Amusingly enough, Boitard advises not to place this melancholy structure near a house, which is precisely what the priest deplores in Flaubert’s novel: this imitation of a tomb in the midst of vegetables.¹⁰

The Marquis René-Louis de Girardin was the instigator and designer of the ambitious Erménonville gardens, created between 1763 and 1777 on a swampy terrain which he intended to compose like a poet or painter rather than like a gardener or architect. He drew inspiration from his travels in England and financed the project with his family fortune. Two hundred English workers were apparently hired for the redevelopment of the area, which was divided into three parts: *le Grand Parc*, *le Petit Parc* and *le Désert* – a wilder section including several *fabriques*. The entire park includes several ponds and about fifty *fabriques*, the most notable one being the *Île des Peupliers* (Poplar Island) that hosts the grave of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The Marquis had been inspired by Rousseau, and when the latter fell ill, he invited him to retire in his park, where Rousseau died and was buried several months later. The grave was designed by Hubert Robert, well known for his landscapes of

ruins and artistic advisor of Girardin for the design of the park. The *Île des*

6 Boitard, cit., p. 156.

7 Ibid. p. 159.

8 Ibid. p. 161.

9 Flaubert, *Bouvard and Pécuchet*, cit.

10 Ibid.

Peupliers soon became a pilgrimage site, and remained one even after the philosopher's remains were moved to the Panthéon in 1794. The Island was also replicated in other venues such as Geneva, the Tiergarten in Berlin and Arkadia park in Poland.

There is a fourth sector that is not, strictly speaking, part of the park, due to its "utilitarian" purposes, but which is nevertheless integrated in the landscape: an "experimental" farm and lodgings based on a mutualisation of plots and of the living and leisure spaces. The whole idea illustrates the idea of parks as useful ensembles and as Humanist models.

Traditionally, parks were cultivated and, beside their decorative purpose, used to produce food. When Louis XVI of France presented the Petit Trianon to Marie-Antoinette, the exterior of the château included a botanical garden and greenhouses. The Queen later transformed it into a landscape garden, inspired in particular by her visit to Erménonville, and added a number of *fabriques* such as the Temple of Love, a Belvedere and a Grotto whose purpose fuelled some rumours, due to the presence of a secret entrance. Later on, Marie-Antoinette ordered the construction of the *Hameau de la Reine*, a hamlet composed of various rural architectures articulated around a lake. This simulacrum of a country village actually contained lavish rooms where the Queen could receive her guests with greater freedom from the burden of etiquette. Even though some parts of the structure were operational, they were a long shot from the progressive vision of agriculture imagined by Girardin.

As a last example of *jardin à fabriques*, also visited by Marie-Antoinette, let me briefly mention the *Désert de Retz*, built in the Yvelines between 1774 and 1789. Beside the usual Temple, Rock, Pavilion, Hermitage, Obelisk, etc., the park is dominated by the monumental *fabrique* of a huge ruined column. It was the main residence of François de Monville, owner and creator of the Désert. Inside the ruined column was a habitable tower organised around a circular staircase. The main difference with the generally mimetic *fabriques* that we have examined so far

resides in the degree of abstraction. The *Colonne*, in this case, suggests an improbably huge monument of which the column would be the last vestige.

Sculptural architectures

During six weeks, sixteen hours per day and away from the public eye, three artists worked to create a monumental, outrageous and orgiastic sculpture whose interior can be visited. *Hon* is a 23 m long femininity goddess, lying on her back with her legs spread apart, whose vagina gives access to a tortuous inner architecture. This collective work is based on the enlargement of one of Niki de Saint Phalle's *Nanas*, and is the fruit of her collaboration with Jean Tinguely and Per Olof Ultvedt. The anthropomorphic structure welcomes its visitors to the sound of an organ, like a cathedral, and with a ballet of mechanical gears, like a factory. Beside a display of fake paintings parodying an exhibition, the gigantic sculpture contains a planetarium in its left breast and a milk bar in the right one. This unprecedented exhibition, organised in 1966 by Pontus Hultén at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, is exemplary on many levels which I shall not detail here. However, I do see it as the origin of other monumental and explorable works such as Niki de Saint Phalle and Jean Tinguely's sculptural architectures: the Tarot Garden, the Jerusalem Golem in 1972 (a sculpture for children with three tongue-shaped playground slides), and Tinguely's monumental Cyclops in the Bois des Pauvres in Milly-la-Forêt, started in 1969 and finished in 1994 (after Tinguely's death in 1991).

Let us take one step backwards. I initially mentioned the Boboli gardens in Florence. Niki de Saint Phalle took interest in another Italian garden of the same period, the *Parco dei Mostri* in Bomarzo. Boboli, whose creation started in the second half of the 16th century, is relatively classical instance of Renaissance garden, plus two grottos that were commissioned to Giorgio Vasari, leading to the above-mentioned Mannerism (once again, what a stroke of genius to include Michelangelo's

unfinished statues, initially intended for the grave of pope Julius II!). The garden evolved with the centuries and fashions, with the addition in the 18th century of a *fabrique* called *Kaffeehaus*. The Bomarzo gardens, on the other hand, constitute a far more peculiar creation. Beside a few pavilions reminiscent of the Antiquity, the forest is interspersed with monumental sculptures of monsters carved into volcanic rocks: a sphinx, a harpy, a dragon, a nymph... and other, more cryptic hybrids that would have thrilled Aby Warburg. The creations are covered in various quotations and inscriptions¹¹ that are still the object of scholarly debates in which, of course, I did not take part.

“In 1955, I went to Barcelona. There I saw the beautiful Park Guell of Gaudì. I met both my master and my destiny. I trembled all over. I knew that I was meant one day to build my own Garden of Joy. A little corner of Paradise.”¹²

With these words, Niki de Saint Phalle introduces her book about the Tarot Garden. In 1955, she was 25 years old and recovering from a nervous breakdown. She was taking her first steps as a self-taught artist, and from then until the end of her life, artistic creation had a cathartic function for her – but not only. It would be unfortunate to reduce her creative force to a pathological condition, just as it would be inappropriate to reinterpret Niki de Saint Phalle’s feminism in light of the fact that she was raped by her father when she was 11.¹³ Nevertheless, that intolerable injustice must have certainly fed her thirst for equality and have given a sense of altruistic idealism to her ambition. We shall see below how this feeling was formalised in her Tarot Garden works.

In a world where time was extendable, I would also discuss Gaudì – of whom I know little, and who was such a revelation for the young Niki. I confess to being

rather indifferent to his work, and to never having been to Barcelona (are the two factors connected?),

11 Such as the one featured at the beginning of the present essay.

12 Niki de Saint Phalle, *The Tarot Garden*, Benteli, Bern, 1997.

13 Niki de Saint Phalle, *Mon Secret*, La Différence, Paris, 1994.

although I've been looking in vain for years for a certain book about Gaudì with a preface by Le Corbusier. And I will stop at that.

“The work of one man”

Rather than on the artistic value of his creation, Ferdinand Cheval heavily insisted on the amount of hard work he put into it. His Ideal Palace, initially baptised the Temple of Nature, is the fruit of “ten thousand days, ninety-three thousand hours, thirty-three years of testing”, as he wrote on a stele, before concluding “let anyone more persistent than me get to work”. Between 1879 and 1912, this postman from Hauterives, in the Drôme department, assembled the stones he collected during his shifts to decorate his painstakingly detailed rocky compositions. The result was his well-known architectural ensemble, so impressive for its size, naïve beauty, its poetry charged with folk wisdom, and its religious syncretism marked by an optimistic and contemplative Humanism.

Niki de Saint Phalle was deeply impressed by this work, which she introduced to Jean Tinguely.

“I told you about Gaudì and Facteur Cheval, who became my heroes as soon as I discovered them: they represented the beauty of a single man working alone in his madness, without intermediaries, museums or galleries. I teased you by saying that Facteur Cheval was a greater sculptor than you. ‘Never heard of that idiot’, you said. ‘Let’s go see him at once’. You insisted. So we went and discovering that outsider creator was for you a great gratification. You were seduced by the poetic drive and fanaticism of that little postman who had made his big crazy dream come true.”¹⁴

The Tarot Garden and, of course, all the other monumental creations mentioned above, therefore originate from these two sources. Tinguely and Niki de Saint Phalle visited the Watts Towers, built by Simon Rodia in Los Angeles between 1921 and 1954, and

Tinguely was particularly impressed by their size (up

¹⁴ Letter to Jean Tinguely, Exhibition catalogue, Musée d'Art moderne de la ville de Paris, 1993, p.153.

to 30m high) and by their structure in concrete reinforcing bars that inspired his own Cyclops. The metal mesh is mixed with cement and encrusted with a mosaic made of fragments of ceramic, glass, and stones...

“Yet we must play our hand”

In his book *Learning from Vernacular*, Pierre Frey proposes a definition of vernacular architecture adapted from Ivan Illich's *Le Genre vernaculaire* and inspired by Roman Law: “Everything that was crafted, woven or reared at home and not for sale, but for domestic use.”¹⁵

Jean Tinguely built his Cyclops without any authorisation, in the middle of a forest, with the ten thousand dollars that Niki de Saint Phalle had just made with the sale of her first monumental sculpture. Niki was openly uncomfortable about selling her work to rich collectors, who reminded her of the aristocratic milieu that she had so strenuously escaped. In a way, she got rid of her earnings in order to allow Tinguely to start his own project. The way in which she used her money had, in a way, a cathartic dimension.

In 1979, Niki de Saint Phalle received from Italian friends a property in Tuscany where she could work on her Tarot Garden. She was 49 at the time, and worked on the project until after the opening to the public in 1998. The park's monumental sculptures represent the 22 major arcana of the Marseilles Tarot. Despite the varying dimension and – in my humble opinion – interest of the works, some of them are true masterpieces – especially those in which the artist distances herself from the traditional representation of the card characters. I am thinking of the Magician, a monumental head with a protruding hand, entirely covered in a shimmering mosaic. Or of the Force, a young girl facing a dragon and dominating it by sheer willpower. And of course there is the Empress, the garden's largest creation, where Niki de Saint Phalle used to live while she was working on the park. The statue represents a sphinx with the head of a black woman, reigning with her monstrous proportions

15 Pierre Frey, *Learning from vernacular : pour une nouvelle architecture vernaculaire*, Actes Sud, Arles, 2010, p.13.

and serene authority over the park. Under certain angles, the complex shapes tend toward abstraction. Every detail is carefully planned. Beside living in her own sculpture, Niki de Saint Phalle also stayed in a space with psychedelic curves, almost entirely covered in mirrors. It is also a totem of her engagement for women's rights and for the rights of African American, for whom she campaigned since her young years and whom she honoured in many of her works.

The Tarot Garden was entirely self-financed. Saint Phalle commercialised a perfume in order to raise the funds she needed for her colossal project. The perfume was released in 1982 with the advertising catchphrase "Dangerous, but worth the risk". To her, merchandising was a way of democratising her work. Her inflatable *Nanas*, including the autographed ones, are still commercially available at a reasonable price. She also appreciated the popular side of monumental sculpture, especially because it escaped the laws of the market. In addition to being self-financed, the Tarot Garden also represents a considerable human investment. Following Facteur Cheval, she could have added the inscription: "In order to reach you goal, you must be stubborn". Instead she wrote: "*a me da più soddisfazione di [sic] fare qualcosa di bello per gli altri e per me che avere, avere, avere, avere... sempre di più, di più, di più...*"

Jean Tinguely, who had become her husband, took care of most of the enlargements and metallic structures with his assistants and workers. Several ceramicists also worked on site to create the mosaic tiles that cover most of the artworks.

Niki de Saint Phalle showed that her art, often associated with *art brut*, was not withdrawn into itself but an infinitely generous act of creation. Unlike her, Jean Dubuffet, who coined the term "*art brut*", paradoxically marginalised the very form of creation that he was trying to promote from the height of his institutional authority.

End of the journey

Recently I found, almost by chance, a photograph



of my friend Priscilla and me at sixteen, taken in the summer. I had regularly thought about that photograph, and had come to believe that the picture of us standing in front of a sculpture by Niki de Saint Phalle had been taken by the artist herself. Today, the idea strikes me as absurd. Yet it is not entirely unfounded. The photograph was taken in La Jolla, California, in 2000, by a charming old lady who spoke French. And Niki de Saint Phalle lived in La Jolla until her death in 2002.

I vaguely remember (too vaguely, perhaps) a short conversation about the sculpture or the artist... back then, I didn't know that Niki de Saint Phalle lived there. This enigma will never be answered, and it doesn't matter.

I thought that the framing was probably too poor to be the work of such a great artist. But I realise that the beauty of the image lies in the shadow outlined by the shadow under the mosaic Buddha and the two

clumsy Swiss teens posing in front of it, like a severe and monumental doily. The more I look at the rat-nibbled photograph, the more I find in it a sinister beauty under the sun of San Diego.

Thinking with your hands

Robert Ireland

As an artist, I feel stuck in an in-between status. I have experienced the emancipation of artists from the trap of workmanship and their refusal of any subordination to the medium. We took back our freedom by flouting medium-imposed techniques.¹

When I am asked what I do as an artist, the follow-up question is inevitably “what technique” do I use. I have always found this question unsettling, as it does not actually concern the meaning of what I do, but only the medium. Answering it would entail determining my identity on a purely artisanal level. It is all the more difficult for me to answer since in my artistic practice I tend to use everything

¹ This contradiction remains deeply rooted in art schools: technical training coexists with more conceptual aspirations, with each side fighting for primacy. The question that remains is whether, in the long run, an artistic training may not turn into a technical one, just as (academic) drawing eventually turned into a technique, based on “corporeal” notions and factual knowledge. The intrinsic contradiction of “thinking with your hands” is far from being solved. There are only major back-and-forth shifts between the two poles (see Thierry de Duve, *Faire École (ou la refaire?)*, Presse du Réel, Dijon, 2008).

I have in my arsenal: photography,² sculpture, painting,³ writing, installation, video... I have never wondered about what I was doing (or had to do) in terms of technique, which to me remains a tool subordinated to my needs: sometimes you use a hammer, sometimes pincers, and both come from the same toolbox. On the other hand, it is clear that a carpenter will not use the same range of tools as an electrician. The former uses chisels, glue and planers; the second, pliers and screwdrivers...

This state of affairs forced me to accept that, as an artist, I was a “non-specialist”. After all, the diversification of skills is consistent with hominidization: only after becoming able of multi-tasking did humans develop knowledge, language and culture... And parallel to the conquest of the external dimension was fulfilled the inner one.

As an artist, I am therefore technically an “amateur”, whereas my “status” is that of a specialised intellectual.

The artist, long considered an artisan – in the French acceptance of the term – could maintain the illusion of being a “skillful” and seasoned craftsman of “artefacts” and artifices. But soon, many voices rose to claim that being a craftsman entailed a form of subordination to the medium and to constraints of supply and demand, and that it limited the freedom that is intrinsic to artistic expectations.

When photography was invented, many second-class portrait artists panicked at the idea that a common mechanical device could so rapidly replace their time-consuming work.

² In this respect, I do not consider my photographs as such, but as traces, as condensations and rearrangements of photographs or of photon-filtering apparatuses...

³ This term carries a similar ambiguity in the field of contemporary art: how far can an artwork be considered a painting before shifting to the status of an object or sculpture? The same goes for objects covered by paint by the artist...

Out of fear of losing their jobs, several of these monkey-painters (who aimed to imitate their model as closely as possible) naturally switched to photography.

The saturation, control and skills involved in mastering one or more techniques often push artists such as myself to look for alternatives. Sometimes, this quest for new forms and materials strikes me as an act of vanity: artists who wish to break free from conventional techniques but do not master their medium may fall into the risk of technical fascination and become lost without ever developing an independent position and stance regarding the usage of objects. Robert Filliou's triad "badly done / well done / not done" challenges the common preconception that art can only exist if it is "well done" – an idea that harks back to the traditional criteria of skillfulness and mimetic illusion.

Artists, in my view, should maintain a critical distance and avoid any pretextual and time-consuming commitment to technical issues that may prevent them from having the time and means to achieve such a distance.

The question of "mastery" (usually associated to craftsmanship) brings to mind Claude Lévi-Strauss' much-debated concept of "bricolage", which I am quite happy to apply to my own practice.⁴ It involves an idea of "loss of control" and spontaneity, of making do with what is at hand. The concept of "bricolage" also evokes the age-old association with play as a means for artists to reconnect with their own childhood (loss of the sense of time), with the establishment of "rules of the game" and with the licentious construction of a space-time that is existential rather than strictly functional,

4 The term raises a new problem for the "intellectual" artist with regard to the category of "outsider art" (*art brut*) intended as an impulsion or non-intentional (anti-intellectual), systematic and repetitive act.

utilitarian, and productive.

If I take the liberty of quoting the title of Denis de Rougemont's "*Penser avec les mains*" ('Thinking with your hands'), it is because, as I agree with the idea of toning down this dichotomy, I often find myself in a situation where manipulation prevails over ideas and planning. Indeed, planning means knowing right from the start what you expect at the end of the process. I would not be an artist if I could not experience random surprises, lose control in the flow of serendipity, etc.

Once, as I was working on a public space project with an architect friend, he noted how much I was "using my hands". His observation struck me for two reasons: first, I felt that I was "using" my hands much less than other artists (who may be labelled or not as "classical" depending on their attachment to and skilfulness in a given medium). Furthermore, to me the architect was the one who planned, developed and managed projects that could take years to materialise.

Deep down, I believe that it is misleading to read contemporary art only through the lens of technique. This is why I never answer when people ask me trick questions about my medium before even knowing what I am working on. The art world has plenty of technicians and skilful painters. However, many of them may change technique in the course of their practice. Others may have assistants or work with skilled craftsmen and workers to create their work. Others don't...

The only thing that matters is the fruitful transformation of material into propositions, discourses and positions.

It is as if we were asking writers if they use a pen, a quill or a word processor instead of inquiring about what they are currently working on. Such an inquisitive question would place the debate on the wrong plan and would overlook the fact that Humans, throughout the centuries, have invented tools in order to use them and not to be used by them. Tools are there to set you free.

Read Myself

“The pleasure of the text is that moment when my body peruses its own ideas – for my body does not have the same ideas I do.”

Roland Barthes, *Pleasure of the Text*.

June 2014

It was my colleague Marco Costantini who first told me about the Kunstgiesserei sometime in the beginning months at my new job. He described to me some of their projects, and it was clear how important a reference this art foundry was to contemporary art production.

When I was asked to help organize the class trip to St. Gallen for the fall, I was glad to do it because it gave me a good reason to start communication with the Kunstgiesserei. During my online search for contact information, I learned that the Sitterwerk Foundation handled the mediation of Kunstgiesserei, and that this foundation is part of the numerous expansions and additions the art foundry has made to their activities and serveries over the course of a more than 30 year existence.

August 2014

I began corresponding with Ariana Roth, the manager at Sitterwerk, and the contact person for the organization of our school visit. She asked me if we would also like to tour the art library and materials archive that was part of the Sitterwerk. She suggested this would help with the logistics of our big group. Because of the question of group logistics, it was an easy yes, but personally, I was really looking forward to it due my passion for the interrelations of materials, books, and making.

October 2014

Our visit to St. Gallen was successful and we covered a lot of territory. It was no surprise the material archive and art library of the Sitterwerk was most exciting

Leah Anderson

part of our trip for me. I was captivated by the presentation Roland Fürth, the librarian at Sitterwerk, gave to our group. He explained how they work to connect the art library and material archive with activities of the foundry, and how they were trying to create a dynamic library—a library that isn't fixed—a library that can respond, move and change with its users and the passage of time. Instead of cataloging their collection of books with labels, at Sitterwerk, all books in the library are given an RFID tag and every night the shelves are scanned in order to generate a fresh image of each book's location. This implies that Roland is not occupied with (re)shelving tasks like most librarians. In fact, he encourages the library's users to be liberal and creative about how they remove and replace books on the shelves. The samples in the material archive are also coded with RFID tags, and there is a smart table at the Sitterwerk that is able to scan and read RFID information. Because of this table, it is possible to generate both a visual and print bibliography of the different materials and books consulted and collected during a research. It is also possible to stay in a small guestroom on site for a prolonged research and consultation of their resources. The newest addition to this dynamic library is their fanzine project. All visiting researchers are encouraged to compile and publish a fanzine of their research carried out at Sitterwerk. The fanzines become part of the Sitterwerk's database and collection.

December 2015

Time passed after the school visit to St. Gallen, and I often thought of Sitterwerk with a gnawing feeling. I knew I wanted to return. I saw a connection between their library project and my own artistic questions in terms of subjective classification and access to tools and

materials. However, I had also learned I cannot force my artistic labor. For me to do good and interesting work I require a certain kind of necessity and precision of intention—things I could not yet identify in relation to Sitterwerk and my practice.

June 2016

As the school year wrapped up, I noticed how I had let the demands from my job and personal life encroach far too much onto the time and energy available for my art practice. Sure, I think all of the roles I perform are extensions of my practice, but without a more personal questioning proper to my individual studio activity, I am less robust and creative in these different roles. I was feeling distant from my critical voice and passions, and the signs of frustration were popping up. I knew that I needed to make a plan for keeping focus and staying connected to my practice during the next school year. A residency experience seemed like a good option, so I completed a series of applications over the course of the summer.

I was working on an application that summer for six week stay in a small city in northern Germany when I began to piece together the ideas for a project I called TEXT(TILE). The residency wanted project proposals that were site specific or site responsive. They even provided a list of available collaborators. I saw that a local tile manufacture and textile museum was part of this list, and I was intrigued by the language connection I saw between text, tile and textile. I wondered how those connections might play out through artistic labor. I often build new artistic projects this way, starting with a word, or language element as a foundation and building a work up around this base.

November 2016

I think art practice is about evolution and perseverance, and I try to remember this when things don't work out-that the work is not lost- that it is still valuable. I like to think that any artistic labor I perform becomes a part of my practice and me. Even if unfinished or unsuccessful, I can always pick it back up and reframe-reconstruct-upscale-recycle. Nevertheless, I was a little discouraged when my final rejection letter arrived from my summer applications in November. What now? I thought.

After an appropriate period of mourning, I took a closer look at my situation. I needed to identify some of the connections I already had, but was maybe underestimating. What resources could I access and peruse to push my practice forward but didn't require external permission or a competitive application processes? I realized that my TEXT(TILE)

project from this summer's application had a lot of potential, and even more importantly, Sitterwerk would be a perfect host for developing this project further.

I contacted Ariana at Sitterwerk with a request to schedule a residency for myself that winter. I briefly presented my research and mentioned how beneficial it would be if I could stay in their guestroom for a week or so. We exchanged a couple of e-mails and the dates were set.

February 2017

I like to have a large table in the center of my studio. I am careful how I arrange the space surrounding this table. I must be able to access it from any and all directions of the room. I try to end each working session in the studio by "setting" my table. When I set my studio table, I try to arrange and place things in such a way that will remind me of any new and important insights or lingering



Self Portrait Reading Sitterwerk Fanzine no. 213; Photo; 2017

questions identified during a working session. This way, when I return to the studio, all the elements are set before me to reassess. I usually start a working session in the studio by asking some of the same questions: What do I think now in terms of how I left things last time? Is the general orientation and direction I am taking still good? Where are some of the weaknesses of the work? Where are the strengths? Where should I start today? My studio table is like a kind of 3D sketchbook, and each setting is a page upon which I can read myself.

The week before my residency, I decided to “set the table” for Sitterwerk. I included: A handful of small clay maquettes from last summer’s applications, some bizarrely shaped leftovers of my recent material experiments, several pages filled with writing torn from notebooks, printed quotations and image references, two copies of Roland Barthes 1973 essay *The Pleasure of the Text* (one in English and one in French), a clipboard with blank paper, a German-English dictionary, and a favorite pen.

I forced myself to write in relation to my table settings for about an hour each day during the week leading up to my residency. I was trying to warm up and cultivate a flexibility of thinking and doing through the use of words. I knew my time at Sitterwerk would be brief so I needed to be as well prepared as possible.

A couple days before I left for my residency, Ariana e-mailed me with some final details. She reminded me I would have 24 hour access to the archive and library but that I should probably plan ahead for meals. The prospect of living in the archive and the non-stop access were very exciting to me. Essentially, I thought, I will be part of the archive. Maybe, I laughed to myself, I can ask for my own RFID tag.

THE RESIDENCY

Monday February 20th 2017

For my stay at Sitterwerk, I wanted to try and do an embodied reading of *The Pleasure of the Text*, by reading a portion of this book each day of my residency. It is not a long essay and can be read in several hours. I was already familiar with it, but I wanted to slow things down, save the text, and see how, and if, it would influence my process. I began this reading during my long train ride to St. Gallen. During this first reading session, I was struck by two things: the many erotic allusions, as well as a brave use of first person. This is quite personal, I thought, and refreshing.

When I arrived at Sitterwerk, I went straight to work. I was only a couple hours in, and I had gone up and down the steep staircases connecting the upper and lower levels of the library many times. It was taking way too much energy and time to locate the books! I found it interesting and surprising just how physical this searching experience was, but I also wanted to be a little more efficient. I played around with different strategies, and eventually decided the physicality was good and that I should remain patient with it, besides it was facilitating serendipitous findings.

Later that evening, after everyone had left, I began to (re)arrange the books I had collected and piled onto the large old wooden tables in front of the bookshelves at the Sitterwerk. It struck me how familiar this process was. Here I was again, working with thoughts and materials through gestures of placement and manipulation on the surface of a tabletop.

That night I had a strange dream about a library that was breathing and had a heartbeat. My guess is that this was probably provoked by the sound of the RDIF machines making their nightly scan across the shelves.

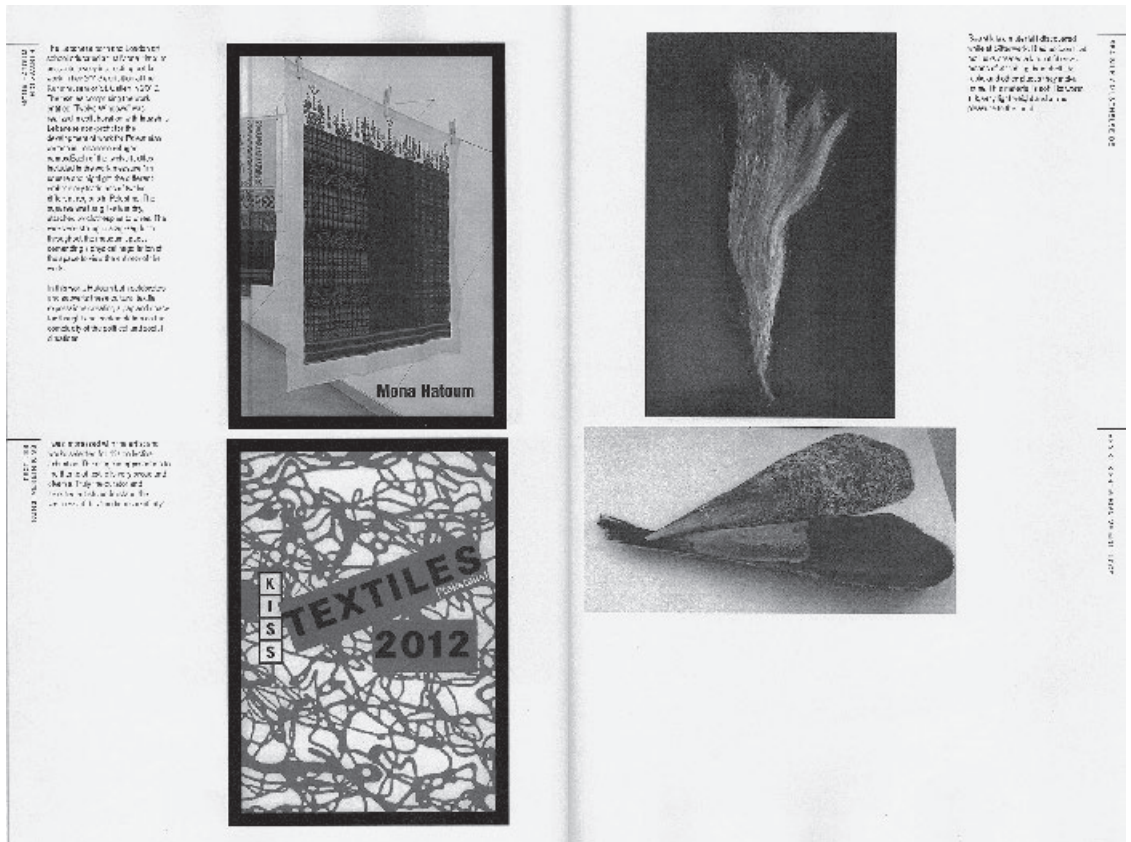
Tuesday February 21st 2017

It was funny to wake up in the Sitterwerk. My dream had left me feeling connected to the library, as if we were developing a kind of friendship. It was still early, and a couple of hours before anyone would show up for their day's work, so I brewed a cup of tea and began a leisurely reading of *The Pleasure of the Text* while still in my pajamas. One thing that I noticed during this second reading session were all the different words and similes Barthes was using to identify the site of pleasure and bliss in terms of the space between the expectations and the experiences of reading: The cliff, the rift, the gap, the opening, the cut... I liked this idea of a kind of "no man's land" being the location or home of textual bliss. I wondered, where was this space for me in terms of my residency? In a way, so far, I

was reading the database of the archive and library more than the individual things it held. I knew I needed to get deeper into the books and materials I had started to collect. I decided that I should start some photo documentation of the texts and images I was discovering so that I could have something to refer to and maybe prolong my work after my time in residency.

Later that morning I moved back into "search mode." I was surprised how much I found relating to text in the art library and by how little I found relating to textile and tile. I really had to push myself, expand my search words, and ask for some German language help. But by the end of the day I had three large groupings of books and materials each relating to one of the three branches of my research.

I noticed how my thinking and



way of working was different with other people around. It wasn't a good or a bad thing. Just different. Julia and Roland were observing how I was working and were curious to hear how things were progressing. They asked me if I had any questions or issues and offered a couple good suggestions.

That night I tried to read as much as possible. I was almost frantic-but productive. I had found a free online application that allowed me to underline and annotate my accumulated photo documentation. I began working on a drawing of a visual schema for the ways I saw the the parts of my research developing and expanding in terms of things I was uncovering at Sitterwerk.

Wednesday February 22nd 2017

My second morning in residency, I didn't get up early. In fact, it was the sound of Julia Luetolf, the material archive curator, taking off her coat and hanging it in the coatrack that roused me. I quickly dressed and left the guestroom not completely awake and entirely under caffeinated. Julia smiled at my sleepy face and told me that today would be a busy day for the Sitterwerk as they would be receiving a group of twenty or so architecture students from the EPFL. I quickly grabbed a coffee and read a couple pages from Barthes. With just an hour remaining before the students showed up, I pulled a couple last books off the library shelves and a few objects from the archive drawers. I sat in front of my collection and worked on formulating an outline for how I wanted the order the progression of images and written captions for the pages of my fanzine.

When the class arrived at the end of the morning, I lingered in the library so I could overhear the series of presentations given to the students but when the students dispersed into the library and archive that afternoon to work on their

individual projects, I took the opportunity for a walk to town in pursuit of fresh air and groceries.

I returned at the end of the working day with new energy and motivation to move forward on the fanzine. I figured if I could have a rough draft finished before I went to bed that night, I could easily polish things up with the help of Julia tomorrow. That evening flew by. Putting together the rough draft for the fanzine was more difficult than I anticipated because of the technology and the challenge of trying to edit and curate all that I had collected. Sometime around midnight the computer froze. I took it as a sign we both needed some rest.

Thursday February 23rd 2017

While finishing my situated reading of *Pleasure of the Text* on the last morning of my residency, I decided I would borrow the notion of the gap from Barthes as a thread for connecting the different elements in my fanzine.

I had drawn the connection that the physical aspects of printed words, woven textile forms, and tessellations of brick/mosaic/tile, were all comprised of visible edges for connecting-edges that create gaps. Sometimes these edges are large and make visible gaps: between words in a sentence, paragraphs in a chapter, threads of woven warp and weft, or the grouting of tile patterns; and sometimes these edges are too small for the eye to see. But the edges are always there, determining form and structure. I see these edges and their resulting gaps, which can be found in any mode of building though accumulation of adjacent parts, as locations of both a force and fragility. These edges and their gaps are found in both literal, physical space, but also are metaphors or images for thinking of social space. In these gaps or spaces of joining, segments and parts are both held together to make something larger-

or easily split apart. Either way, I like the idea of this connection space of building as the site of bliss and pleasure.

I worked through the lunch break and finished up the fanzine just in time to leave and still make all my train connections back home to Valais. Julia helped me print two copies of the fanzine; one copy for the Sitterwerk collection, and one copy to come home with me. I told Julia how satisfying it was to leave behind a trace of my labor and have it become part of something collective and larger than myself.

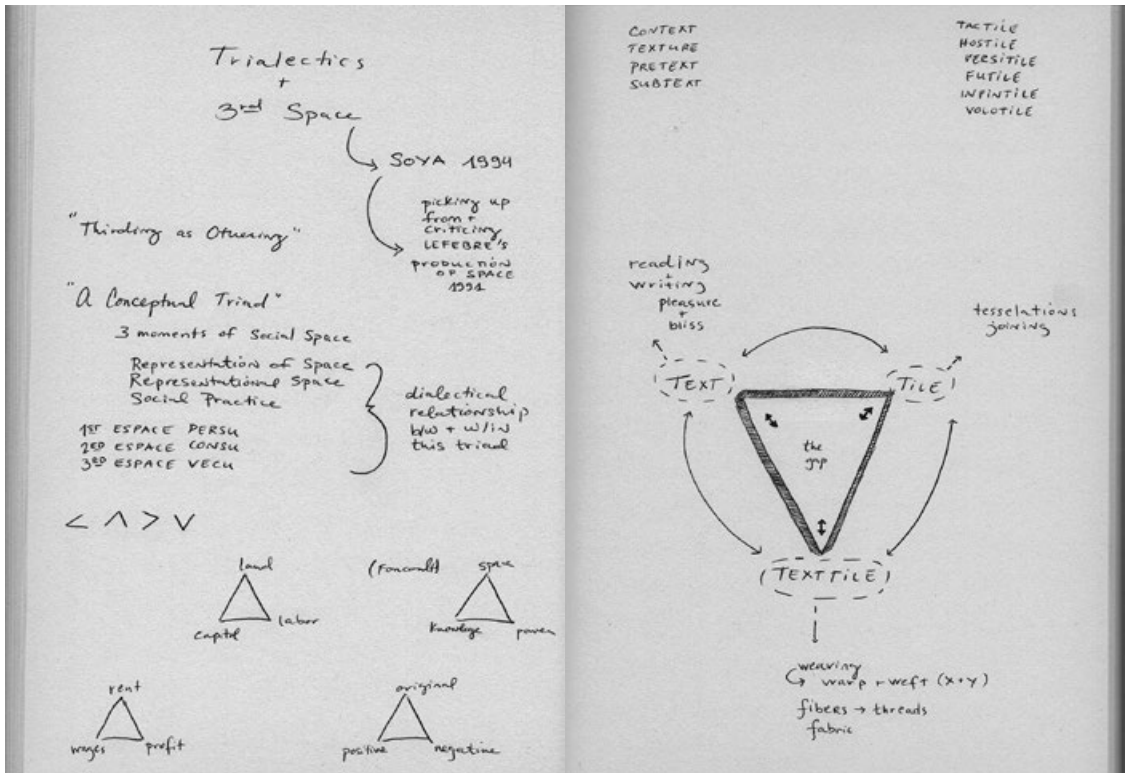
April 2017

That spring following my residency at Sitterwerk, I had several conversations with my colleague Federica Martini about her research project Art Work(ers). She spoke to me of the possibility of having me write an article for a journal to be

published in coordination with the project. She asked me if tacit knowledge was still an important part of my art practice and research. I responded, yes it was, but that I was exploring it more explicitly through my teaching activates these days. I told her about some my current artistic activities in terms of my project TEXT(TILE) and my recent residency at Sitterwerk.

May 2017

I received a letter of invitation from the Art Work(ers) research team explaining the progress and orientation of their journal project and how they would like to invite me to participate with a textual contribution focused on Sitterwerk. I started work on an abstract to be sent for the end of June.



-Pages from Sketchbook; Left: Notes on Thirdspace; Right: Visual schema of TEXT(TILE) project
Scanned image of paper document, 2017

June 2017

I submitted my proposal for the journal. It's never easy to be precise and critical about something you are going to do in the future. I think the real skill in writing an abstract is to leave enough space to negotiate and adjust as the process reveals itself while also being sure it's possible to fulfill the expectations all parties have agreed to. I wanted to approach the invitation as part of my art practice, and pick up some of the threads that lingered from some previous writing I had done a couple years ago. I was thinking about the use of the first person, and how while its use is a way of being both subjective and critical as an artist, it can also be limiting. I wanted my journal submission to be an extension or addition to my TEXT(TILE) project. With these criteria in mind, I decided to propose something new and experimental for myself as a way of telling the story of Sitterwerk. I wanted to work along the threshold (or gap) between the real and the imaginary, and appropriate some elements from the genre of speculative (non)fiction using the potential of the question What If.

August 2017

My journal submission ended up being a fictive first person narrative in the form of a personal diary. My protagonist shared an unfolding of mundane but also supernatural events that took place over the course of six months while living on site at the Sitterwerk. I thought of this narrator and the story as a way of accumulating and negotiating all the possibilities of first person, a way to include all of my "I's": the "I" who had been in residency at Sitterwerk, the "I" I try to hide, the "I" I try to show, the "I" am trying to be, the "I" I think people see, the "I" I could have been or could be... I thought of my fiction as involving tacit knowledge too: a means of showing rather than telling,

testing rather than explicating some of the important elements of my TEXT(TILE) project. It was a very interesting and important writing process, and something I am sure I will come back to.

September 2017

I got some feedback from the editorial team on my submission for their journal. Apparently, my submission was not enough in line with their intentions, nor very coherent with the other submissions. So they couldn't use it. Luckily their editorial approach is generous, and I was able to discuss these issues in detail and give it another try. I brought my fanzine from Sitterwerk to the discussion, and we got pretty excited about its potential.

Now, I found myself on the weekend before the new school year starts (when I should be focusing on lesson planning and administration) writing a new submission. Maybe this won't be right for them either. But I think it is something I had to do, and I'm trusting because I have taken this time and devoted this energy to performing this artistic labor I will be more robust and creative when I do eventually get back to my lesson planning and administration.

Even if I never see these words published, I know the work is not lost, not wasted.



Visual Bibliography appearing in Sitterwerk Fanzine no. 213 TEX(TILE); Scanned image of paper document

Biographies

Leah Anderson

Leah Anderson completed a BFA at the University of Colorado at Boulder in 2005, and a Master of Art in Public Spheres (MAPS) at the Cantonal School of Art of Valais (ECAV) in 2011. From 2011 to 2014 she participated in the Pre-PhD seminar with the CCC program at the Geneva School of Art and Design (HEAD). Most recently, Anderson has been focusing on her studio and teaching activities, from managing and teaching in the ECAV's ceramic laboratory, to participating in local or international exhibitions, talking to neighbours in the village, and negotiating modes of thinking and making in the studio, even in gardening and cooking- she understands the performativity of her varied roles of professional and personal life as essential to her artistic practice and research. Currently, Anderson's artistic inquiry is inscribed within the intersections between critical craft practices, discourses of knowledge, material and immaterial cultural dialectics, and forms of experimental reading and writing.

Mabe Bethônico & Victor Galvão

Mabe Bethônico (Belo Horizonte/Brazil) is an artist researcher and professor at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. She lives between Brazil and Switzerland. Bethônico works from institutional structures to problematize issues related to memory, from documents to fictions, using means of transmission such as publications and speeches/narrations, based on archives and field images. Since 2013, she initiated the Museum of Public Concerns, staged from collections, writings, meetings and exhibitions. As her main topic of

interest, she attempts to bring to public debate the social and environmental implications of the mineral industry in Minas Gerais, Brazil.

Victor Galvão (Belo Horizonte/Brazil) is a visual artist and researcher working with image displacement in history. Time is the main interest within his work, taken both as sociopolitical dynamics and as physical phenomena toward entropy. Bringing together found images and those he produces, his body of work constitutes a personal archive from which he articulates narratives both as fiction and as documentation of stories lost in time. The ideology of progress is often regarded in his projects, from an existential perspective more than an analytical approach, where he addresses subjective urgencies in relation to ever-changing landscapes and a chaotic flux of information.

Chrisantha Chetty

Chrisantha Chetty was born in 1988, and raised in Durban, South Africa. She is an interdisciplinary multimedia artist, art collector, architect, activist, performer, dancer, theorist, philosopher, curator, songwriter, novelist, film-maker, cook, designer, craftsman, tailor, photographer, journalist, human rights advocate, entrepreneur and perpetual student.

Chetty graduated with an Honours degree in Fine Art from the Wits School of Arts in 2014 and completed her Master in Art in Public Spheres at Ecole cantonale d'art du Valais (ECAV) in 2017. Her artistic practice involves working in various media including video, performance and spatial interventions. Chetty is also a budding entrepreneur having started a few small

collaborative ventures in the past. Her latest business is Public Art Tours (P.A.T.) which she uses as a platform for other projects including Amateur-professional art academy and Feed the artists fund.

Robert Ireland

Robert Ireland, artist, studied at the ECAL – Ecole Cantonale d'Art de Lausanne. A founding member of the M/2 artists-run space (Vevey). His practice includes painting, sculpture, artistic interventions in the public or architectural space, both permanent or temporary. Part of Ireland's artistic practice includes writing on artists' works, on space and architecture, as well as literary texts. In parallel with his artistic practice, he was lecturer at ENAC (Natural Environment, Architectural and Constructed) and at the College of Humanities at EPFL. Since 2008, he teaches at the MAPS program of the ECAV.

Guillaume Pilet

The work of Guillaume Pilet is based on a large and non-restrictive comprehension of the classical art history since prehistory. He adheres to the conception of images developed by Aby Warburg, according to which the images are apprehended as ghost stories for grown adults.

Guillaume Pilet obtained his Master at ECAL in 2010. A selection of his significant exhibitions include: *Biopic*, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne (2017) Kunsthalle Sao Paulo; Kunsthaus Glaris (2014); 1m3, Lausanne (2010) ; Centre culturel suisse, Paris (2008); Espace Forde, Genève (2007). In addition, he participated in *Performance Proletarians*, CNAC Le

Magasin, Grenoble; *Bex&Arts*, Bex (2014); *Hôtel Abisso*, Centre d'art contemporain, Genève (2013); *La jeunesse est un art*, Aargauer Kunsthaus Aarau (2012); *Môtiers 2011*, Môtiers (2011) and CCS à Liste, Bâle (2010). The Rotwand gallery was regularly showing his work between 2011 and 2016. Pilet also developed curatorial activities and co-directed the art space Forde in Geneva, between 2010 and 2012. He was teaching at the HEAD in Geneva from 2011 to 2015 and is currently co-directing the independent art space TUNNEL TUNNEL in Lausanne.

David Romero Torres

David Romero Torres was born in Tomé, southern Chile. He is a visual artist and researcher, whose work addresses two complementary areas: collective artwork and theoretical reflection. He is a founding member of art collective Mesa8 (Concepción and Tomé), which work focuses on performing projects that explore the relationships between art, community and the public sphere. He was editor and founding member of the magazine *Revista Plus* (Concepción), which has been circulating in Chile and other Latin American contexts. In 2014, he published a research about collective practices from Concepción, entitled “Testing the Common. An approach to the discontinuous traces of collective artistic practices from Concepción.” (Authors: Cristián Muñoz and David Romero).

W.A.G.E

Working Artists and the Greater Economy (W.A.G.E.) is a New York-based activist organization whose mission is to establish sustainable economic relationships between artists and the institutions that

contract their labor, and to introduce mechanisms for self-regulation into the art field that collectively bring about a more equitable distribution of its economy. This text was written by Lise Soskolne, an organizer within W.A.G.E. since its founding in 2008 and its core organizer since 2012.

Graphic Designer' labour to do (Blackout 0+1)

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| Concept/Design | 19° | 14' | 31" |
| Editing | 6° | 15' | 35" |
| Intro/Outro | 14° | 21' | 5" |
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| Layout/Type setting | 20° | 20' | 28" |
| Corrections | 4° | 57' | 1" |
| Lithography | 7° | 52' | 36" |
| Prepress | 2° | 35' | 42" |
| Communication/meetings | 8° | 48' | 19" |
| Dummy production | 2° | 51' | 37" |
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Blackout

Issue n. 1: Art Labour

An edition of the *Art Work(ers)* research project of the
ECAV – Ecole cantonale d'art du Valais, Sierre

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Art Work(ers), Federica Martini, Christof Nüssli

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Chrisantha Chetty, Robert Ireland, Guillaume Pilet, David
Romero Torres, W.A.G.E.

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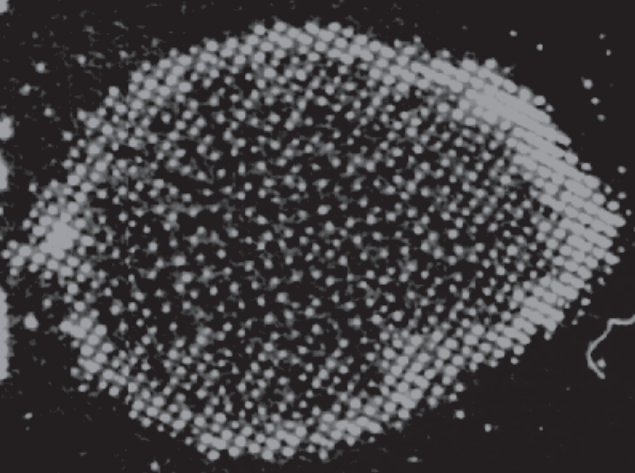
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Labor

Vol. 5

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Issue

n.1:

Art

Labour