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Journal of Visual Art Practice

Subscription information

Journal of Visual Art Practice, Print ISSN 1470-2029, Online ISSN 1758-9185, Volume 14, 2015.

Journal of Visual Art Practice (www.tandfonline.com/rjvp) is a peer-reviewed journal published in March, June and November by Taylor & Francis, 4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN, UK.

Institutional Subscription Rate (print and online): \$394/£247/€329

Institutional Subscription Rate (online-only): \$345/£216/€288 (+ VAT where applicable)

Personal Subscription Rate (print-only): \$61/£38/€47

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Introduction

Alana Jelinek

For this issue of the *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, I was given the great honour of a guest editorship, soliciting responses to my recent publication, *This Is Not Art: Activism and Other Not Art* (I.B. Tauris, 2013). At any time this would be a great honour but it is especially so given how recently I wrote the book. I would like to thank *JVAP* and particularly the editor, Chris Smith, for this opportunity.

As an artist with an art college/university undergraduate education, I have certain formative experiences, norms of an art education, which shape my understanding of what I do as an artist and a writer, namely ‘the crit session’. The ‘crit’ is a process by which the student-artist exposes the entire portfolio produced over the past year to peer scrutiny along with her fellows. It is this process, I believe, that is the foundation of an art education, initiating the novice into the artworld. It is here that we, student-artists, learn what it is to be misunderstood, partially seen, comprehended through the various prisms and filters of others’ experiences and the bias and preoccupations of others. Unlike at school, where the rules are simple – an artist is the person who can ‘draw well’ and make pictures that seem to say things expected of the adolescent mind – at art college the rules are less simple. For perhaps the first time in the student-artist’s experience, there is a relationship between the thing one has made – the artwork – and its audience, independent of the artist or their intention. What I learned above all from art college, through crits of my own work and watching and participating in the crits of others, was the impossibility of guaranteeing a particular interpretation. A viewer’s interpretation may or may not match the artist’s own understanding of what has been expressed or achieved. Moreover, I learned that to be an artist is to navigate an ocean of both helpful and unhelpful commentary. I learned how to read which comments will take me in a direction I intend and which will lead, unhelpfully, to other destinations. I now know this is no different from the experience of critique of theoretical writing.

It was not to illustrate this fact that I invited five people from five different disciplinary backgrounds to respond to *This Is Not Art*, although from my point of view it is exactly the process of diverse and divergent (mis)interpretation that occurs at art college in a crit session that has occurred here. I invited people with a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds because I am particularly interested in disciplinary and inter-disciplinary. The original contribution I have made in writing *This Is Not Art*, I believe, lies in the idea that we can and should understand art practice as a discipline, and a knowledge-forming discipline at that. I believe that it is the *disciplinarity* of the different disciplines, including art practice, that emerges when reading this issue of *JVAP* in its totality. What emerges are the biases, orthodoxies and norms of each discipline as the individuals from different disciplines engage with

the ideas and challenges in *This Is Not Art*. Writing for this issue of *JVAP* are Derek Matravers, a philosopher of the Analytic or Anglo-American tradition; Jennifer Clarke, a social anthropologist currently working on 'Knowing from the Inside', a post-doctoral research project about making; Larne Abse Gogarty, an art history doctoral research student working within the Marxist tradition; Alberto Duman, an artist based in London with a public art practice; and Sally De Kunst, a curator and recently appointed director of ARC Migros Kulturprozent, Switzerland.

To summarise the arguments in *This Is Not Art*: the book proposes the idea that art can be understood as a knowledge-forming discipline in order to counter, *strategically*, the various pressures that have emerged with the neoliberalisation of the economy and politics, as well as the internalisation of neoliberal values by the artworld. The first chapter describes neoliberalism as I understand it and the second chapter describes the process of creating (or defining) art and the artworld's collective construction of all things art. This chapter serves to place the responsibility for art, what counts as art and what is made as art, on the shoulders of practitioners, us. At the time of writing *This Is Not Art*, I also included curators, arts administrators, art historians, philosophers and critics within this circle of responsibility, following George Dickie's definition of the 'artworld', but I have since revised that inclusion. Thinking through the idea of disciplinarity further, I now understand that it can only be artists who are responsible for defining art, as it is scientists who are responsible for defining science, not commentators, philosophers or historians.

The second part of the book describes two of the more pervasive orthodoxies within contemporary art practice (in London) that, I believe, help to perpetuate neoliberal norms and values; values I wish to expose, undermine and ultimately supplant. It is this part of the book that has proved most contentious in some parts of the artworld, as is also evidenced here in this issue of *JVAP*. Two shibboleths come under review: the Marxist foundations or assumptions of much contemporary political or socially engaged practice and the schism between art for art's sake (or 'artlike art', a conceit I take from Allan Kaprow [1993]) and art as social use (or 'lifelike art', ditto Kaprow). While I stand by most of what I wrote in those chapters in the face of criticism, both anticipated and unanticipated, I do acknowledge that I failed to describe adequately in the book the distinction between scholars within the Marxist tradition, some of whom inform my own thinking, and the way that Marxist clichés are promulgated within the artworld in general. The target in those chapters is the simplistic and jejune model of power (and capitalism) held fast within the worlds of art and activism. Finally, I conclude with a section on art as a knowledge-forming discipline, the disciplinarity of art practice and why art is important, vital to society; that art is more important than political activity or activism for a society that values freedom and democracy and even more so for a society that does not. These propositions have also proven to be controversial.

I predicted some controversy when I wrote *This Is Not Art*. I knew who, among those I know, I would offend even though I like and respect them. It is this act of offending colleagues and friends that made the writing of *This Is Not Art* a difficult and painful act for me. Nevertheless, I saw where the artworld was going (and continues to go) and I understand that this direction is detrimental to art and therefore also to society. By contrast, I did not anticipate how many artists and others would respond so well to *This Is Not Art*. I did not anticipate for how many artists I describe the artworld as they understand it.

I believe the most generative and original part of my book lies in the proposal that we can and should understand art as a knowledge-forming discipline and then in reflecting on the disciplinarity of the discipline of art practice. When I wrote *This Is Not Art*, this idea was predominately strategic. I now wholeheartedly believe it to be the case. Art is a knowledge-forming discipline akin to any other knowledge-forming discipline and distinct from other forms of practice that do not create knowledge. Knowledge, I contend, is more than the semantic acquisition of facts, nor is knowledge limited to that derived from empiricism. I have the more expansive understanding of knowledge shared by some within social anthropology, (as one example, Salmond 2014), but at odds with other disciplinary definitions, such as the type and definition of knowledge that physics describes and, to some extent, that the discipline of history describes. It is for the reason of disciplinary difference that some of the criticism presented in this volume by Larne Abse Gogarty, an art historian, is at odds with my own disciplinary understanding and values and therefore, I believe, not relevant to me but perhaps to other art historians. For example, that the concept of *knowledge* can be reframed usefully as *storytelling* is not facetious, demeaning or inaccurate when viewed from the perspective of the discipline of art practice. Furthermore, the need to distinguish between art and art practice is on the basis that art is studied by art historians and it is inclusive of many *things* whereas art practice is a more recent phenomenon, done by those who define themselves as artists and understand their practice as art. What we do as artists, that is art practice, may or may not be studied by art historians but it comes from a disciplinary understanding of art, which is aligned with, contiguous but not the same as, that of the art historians.

When I was invited to guest-edit an issue of *JVAP*, it was with this project in mind: I wished to invite others from a range of disciplinary backgrounds to interrogate the idea of art as a knowledge-forming discipline. I was also interested in interrogating the idea that it is complexity and nuance on which disciplinary knowledge is progressed and therefore it is towards nuance and complexity that a knowledge-forming discipline is, or should be, orientated. On this point I must acknowledge one of the arguments identified by Derek Matravers, the contributing philosopher, in this issue of *JVAP*. I argued in *This Is Not Art* that new disciplinary knowledge is that which is more nuanced or more complex than that which has gone before. Historians, philosophers and scientists, for example, all work within the knowledge set determined by their predecessors and build, knowingly, on that knowledge, usually making what has gone before more nuanced or more complex 'in the light of new knowledge'. While I find Matravers' emphasis on truth a disciplinary orthodoxy (with my own Levinasian sense of Otherness the emphasis would be truths [Critchley 1992]), nevertheless I do acknowledge that I was succumbing to my own disciplinary orthodoxy on that point and I would rectify this were I given the opportunity of a second edition. In *This Is Not Art*, I was shy of asserting the value of truth having been educated and disciplined as a student in the late 1980s and 1990s when postmodernist thought and deconstructionist critique held sway at the art schools and universities. A new orthodoxy was formed then in which notions of truth were scrutinised for their maintenance of privilege, power and the status quo. The idea of truth was thoroughly discredited. I now acknowledge that new knowledge is not nuance and complexity in any undisciplined direction, but it must always be orientated towards truth. This includes in art practice.

One conclusion of *This Is Not Art* is to challenge artists, including myself, to create more complex, nuanced 'stories' than those that have gone before. In other words, to avoid reproducing clichés of resistance and endless variations on a basic matrix, which is how I characterise the majority of art I encounter in the London contemporary artworld and in the art press carrying stories from abroad. I had not, until I wrote the book, understood my own work in these terms. I, like other artists I know, was working with a nebulous concept of social good (how to define?) and an ambivalence with regard to originality. Understood as negative given its capitalist overtones and modernist origins (Krauss 1985) and also positive because each artist must find his/her own voice, originality was a concept to be navigated carefully. This said, there was no clear drive, or marker of quality, informing my own practice because none had been articulated within the artworld with the death of the author and since modernist myths of genius were debunked. I don't know that my artwork is any better since understanding the value of art in these terms. I think some of what I did before formulating the value of art in this way has merit and some doesn't. What I have is not a guarantee of 'good' or valuable art, but a coherent way of assessing my own practice and that of others. I do not look to the interstices of the London contemporary artworld because it is there that I find a coherent alternative, as arguably happened in the 1960–1990s when 'the alternative' was solely publicly funded (not public-private partnerships as is the norm today) and more genuinely diverse than the commercial sector. I look to the interstices (and it is here that I work) because, despite apologists for the status quo arguing for the variations within the endless variation on a single basic matrix, I know that it is in the interstices that something different can be found, however tentative and failing.

In addition to challenging all practising artists in the contemporary artworld to make artwork that nuances what has gone before and making our field yet more complex (instead of the simplistic and populist direction that neoliberalism demands of art and to where most contemporary art is currently orientated), my proposal that art should be understood as a knowledge-forming discipline has obvious implications for art education. I haven't worked in an art department since teaching at Oxford Brookes University while undertaking my doctoral research from 2004 to 2008 on 'Art as a Democratic Act: The Interplay of Content and Context', though I have been invited to give talks since the publication of *This Is Not Art*. My observations of a contemporary art education are based on my own education a generation ago and on friends and colleagues serving as informants of their experience as current educators and students. I have also read a little on the subject.

The problem, as always, seems to lie in answering the question: what is art for? Since the Coldstream Reports (1960 and 1970) which reshaped British art education and through which tertiary art education remains conceived, art has been aligned with design and the Bauhaus. I have been informed by Professor Lynda Morris (pers. comm.) that, despite lending his name to the report, it was Passmore and not Coldstream who understood the purpose of an art education in this way. Coldstream, by contrast, conceived of art as a way of seeing, of understanding the world, perhaps more akin to the praxis that I propose, where praxis is theory informing practice which then informs theory. With the current emphasis on design, an art education ends up fostering a way of valuing and understanding art as the creation of things that are ever more groovy, refined, marketable or challenging only in formalist terms. Whether this schism really happened or not, it is evident that art

is not currently taught as a knowledge-forming discipline. Art is not understood within the artworld as knowledge-forming.

If we understand art as a knowledge-forming discipline and that new knowledge is not simply the regurgitation of prior modes differently juxtaposed, but instead that art builds on the past achievements of our forebears, moving somewhere else with respect to these achievements, nuancing them or making them more complex, just as knowledge is created in all other knowledge-forming disciplines, only then does an art education begin to foster something radical. Only then can it embed the avoidance of the reproduction of capitalist norms. While a certain type of superficial newness is the very foundation of capitalism, it is nuance and complexity that lie at the foundation of something else. The radical potential of art, I argue, lies in its ability to articulate and to enact the subtle and the complex; this being the antithesis of any form of totalising discourse, be it capitalism, neoliberalism, fascism, communism or militant religious fanaticism. This is the job of art, all artistic practice, including all types of art practice and including those outside the institutions of art.

By contrast, the job of an art education, and specifically doctoral research in fine art practice, should be the articulation of the context of art, the methodologies appropriate to taking the discipline of art further and theorisation from within the discipline about the value of our discipline. For many decades we, artists, have left the job of articulating the theory and history of art to those with other disciplinary interests. Art historians, philosophers and anthropologists understand art in ways that are at odds with practising artists and, I would argue, this is demonstrated here in this issue of *JVAP*. They usually understand art solely from the point of view of audience and of critic (not as a practitioner) and they always understand art from a different disciplinary starting point. Artists are taught about our history and the various theories that continue to inform art practice by those who do not make art and by those who write from a different disciplinary point of view. While I acknowledge that the contributions of art historians, philosophers and theorists are very important to helping us, artists, understand what we do as artists, I am arguing that artists today, now that we have learned to produce doctoral research, could begin to take responsibility for the knowledge that our discipline produces.

Most anthropology is done by anthropologists going into 'the field' and researching a defined group of people, living with them for some time and subsequently writing up notes using an established method and language set by various antecedents within the discipline. Each anthropologist writes on a different group and so the corpus of anthropological knowledge is created. This is much how I understand art practice: each artist working within the methodologies and languages set by various antecedents, usually learned while at art college, and building on them, so creating knowledge. What is different between the disciplines of anthropology and art practice, though, is at the level of theory. In addition to the practice of researching the various versions of human society, there are a smaller number of anthropologists who write theory, philosophy or about anthropological methodology. These anthropologists move the discipline overall in new directions.

It is clear to me when I read the contributions to this issue of *JVAP* that each is conspicuously writing and contributing to the debate from within their disciplinary knowledge and bias. It therefore comes as no surprise that Alberto Duman, a practising artist, writes most in sympathy with what I am attempting to say and achieve with *This Is Not Art*. His contribution exemplifies the points I raise, fleshing

out what I intentionally leave as unpopulated by hard examples. I know that other artists can and will do the same; finding space in the theory to populate the text with their own examples. Duman's is an articulate example of the navigation of one artist of his own socially engaged values, his vision for his own art practice and the real terrain created by the contemporary artworld and the economic and political systems in which he operates.

For me, this issue of *JVAP* demonstrates the need for artists to write cogently about the value of art and its history from our own disciplinary point of view, with respect to the work of other disciplines and with rigour as well as creativity. (Khadija von Zinnenburg's recent monograph, *Art in the Time of Colony* [2014] provides a strong example of artists writing with both rigour and creativity.) Indeed, if I may use my own writing as an example, I write about Foucault in *This Is Not Art* from a decidedly art practice point of view and not from philosophy or sociology. This is not to say that I have read but a few quotes out of context or skimmed the pages until a sentence jumps out as so many of my colleagues in the artworld seem to do. It is a more rigorous engagement with his work than that, but my understanding of the work of Foucault is filtered through the fact that I make art and the fact that I have read in a typically art practice 'indisciplined' way. My library appears eclectic if one is an art historian, a philosopher or a sociologist but in fact, as an artist, we are taught to engage in a range of fields in order to address the big questions that concern culture and its contexts: to investigate where and how we create. This forms part of our training even if, for many, the task of reading Foucault without Nietzsche and Nietzsche without Kant and Kant without Plato leaves us wondering what on earth the man is talking about. Or when we do start to grasp some meaning within the text, our understanding is based (as all understanding is) on previous reading and this reading being other decontextualised text by the likes of Walter Benjamin, Slavoj Žižek and Jacques Derrida, we find ourselves eliding concepts and perhaps skittering further away from understanding than we had hoped. My understanding of Foucault (for example) is as correct and as incorrect as a philosopher's or a sociologist's. No doubt I read him idiosyncratically from both those disciplinary perspectives but I believe I read him appropriately for my discipline. It is a rigorous reading and so I have ideas and understanding gleaned from Foucault that I can offer other artists. This profound understanding about the role and truth of interpretation is not shared with other disciplines, including some of those writing for this issue. The truth that artists learn from our experience of the crit session is that there is no correct interpretation.

We need to wrest the value of art from the values ascribed, not only by the market and the state, as I have argued in *This Is Not Art*, but by other disciplines as well. Not only do I hope that artists doing fine art doctoral research will write in these theoretical terms (in addition to the more common practice of researching within design-led parameters), but that the theory and history of art will be taught in art departments by practising artists with PhDs instead of art historians, as is currently the case. Artists fundamentally understand what we do differently from those with knowledge produced within other disciplines and this disciplinarity is embodied by the contributors to this issue of *JVAP*.

Looking overall at the product of an invitation to those for whom *This Is Not Art* resonates and to respond as they see fit, it seems evident that each is writing and responding through his or her own disciplinary or professional background. The

curator responds as a curator would respond, the philosopher as the philosopher, the art historian as an art historian and so on. It was not planned this way but, as in so much modern and contemporary art, it is serendipity that raises the bar, that helps something become more important or more interesting than it might have been. It is clear to me that disciplinarity is being embodied in this issue, as well as the potential and pitfalls of inter-disciplinary working. While I acknowledge the validity of (some of) the arguments within each individual's response, over and above this, each article seems to enact the preoccupations of the author's profession or discipline. The art historian requires more concrete examples, better described, and has no sympathy for my reasons, articulated throughout *This Is Not Art*, for eschewing such an approach. The philosopher requires truth from me, if my project is to have value, and not just any truth but one of a particular stamp, the type of truth that is his disciplinary standard. The curator offers us her stable of artists, proud to have facilitated these artworks, all worthy of our attention, and demonstrating this fact. The artist, writing as an artist, describes well the process of making art within the 'ecology' of the contemporary London artworld and the social anthropologist, writing about art and making from the inside, and yet from a perspective that social anthropology brings, demonstrates well the difficulties of bringing together disciplinary knowledge, or in working with a multi-disciplinary approach.

Jennifer Clarke's 'Disciplinary Boundaries between Art and Anthropology' takes to task the idea of policing a discipline's boundaries with a focus on the boundaries between art practice and anthropology. Foregrounding in her contribution the positive benefit of inter-disciplinary working, Clarke fruitfully re-articulates a debate familiar to artists, the discussion around autonomy and heteronomy, as a description of an 'ecology of practices'. She states: 'Understanding the ecology of practices ... becomes a call to understand the ethical situatedness of ways of knowing and working within a complex and "entangled coexistence" (Stengers 2010, 34), which implicates everyone and everything'. Having a practice that is located in a disciplinary fusion 'art-anthropology', Clarke is illuminating in her discussion of the problems and pitfalls of much inter-disciplinary work with artists, highlighting the fact that most often the artistic process and the artwork itself is instrumentalised problematically, co-opted for interpretative purposes. Both in this text and in her practice, Clarke is interested in 'troubl[ing] the boundaries', writing:

It becomes more complex when one practitioner in art or anthropology could feasibly be addressing the same questions, by way of the same methods, going about it in the same ways (forms of exhibition, modes of working including the focus on the discursive, as well as the political, and so on). Here, easy distinctions between method and methodology dissolve.

I take her larger point that there are potentially problematic exclusions consequent of policing the boundary of art as I have done in *This Is Not Art*. The problem is not one of hierarchy, as Clarke acknowledges, as I do not place hierarchies on difference, but the problem lies in potential misidentification of some practices as not-art. In doing this, art overall may suffer, rendered poorer without these contributions. In policing where nuance and complexity may or may not occur, I too replicate the operations of (totalising) power and this is far from my intention.

Larne Abse Gogarty's response firmly grounds *This Is Not Art* in art history. She provides an art historical context for a particular type of political or socially engaged contemporary art practice that lies in the background of some of the ideas and provocations in *This Is Not Art* and she provides interesting details missing from the account of Duchamp's Monte Carlo Bonds. Her contribution enriches the discussion about 'art's dissolution into life via financial instruments', by triangulating Bowie and Duchamp's bonds with a third example in Theaster Gates' artwork and exploring further 'the aporia between autonomy and heteronomy'. She also provides a useful account of hegemony, a word I eschew throughout *This Is Not Art*, not because the concept no longer has salience – as defined by Gogarty, the concept of hegemony informs my own understanding of power and is folded within – but because I aimed *This Is Not Art* at a readership of artists and others for whom the word 'hegemony' has been evacuated of its specific meaning. Following the advice of Raymond Williams, whom I quote on this point, I aim to use words as they are used, however I feel about that usage. Hegemony is much misused among artists; most often it is employed as a coverall dismissal of one set of politics in favour of another. I avoided it in the hope that this choice would lead to greater clarity. There are other calculations of this nature in writing *This Is Not Art*, including the choice not to write defensively. Defensive writing addresses directly many of the possible angles of disputation, pre-empting and refuting along the path of an argument, often making it tortuous and difficult to read. In the place of defensiveness, I chose openness and clarity of expression and it is this openness of the text that renders me liable to misinterpretation or wilful interpretation (though I also know this is inevitable to some extent anyway). I made this choice because this is how I make art and how I believe most, if not all, artists make art. Art-making is an open process, not a defensive one, and so to write as an artist, I propose, is to write openly, including being open to misinterpretation even when rigorous thought and scholarship lies behind each word, each 'brushstroke'.

Alberto Duman's 'Not Here, Right Now/Right Here, Not Now' exemplifies praxis: what it is to be a practising artist navigating economic realities and artworld norms, critical of these and yet part of them, navigating the structures knowingly, critically, and attempting to put theory into practice and then return to theory with this new knowledge. On the one hand, Duman's article exemplifies the way the critically, socially, politically engaged artist today articulates his mission for his own practice. On the other, it articulates one of the many possible ways that artists can and must express the value of their practice in endogenous terms. Duman describes his own artwork in juxtaposition with Mike Nelson's proposed work with ArtAngel on the Heygate Estate in the Elephant and Castle, London, describing the contemporary mode of instrumentalisation of public art for economically and socially divisive regeneration projects and the various structures (artworld, economic, political, structural) artists work within and against.

Sally De Kunst's 'In between Meeting, Digging and Eating' is a catalogue of art practices seen at and hosted by the Festival Belluard Bollwerk International, Switzerland from 2008 to 2012 for which she was the curator. Like Alberto Duman's text, Sally De Kunst also serves to provide examples of art practice that may illuminate aspects of the contemporary artworld dealt with in *This Is Not Art*. Her contribution reminds us of the role that theory plays, not only in art practice, but in curating as well. Like the artists she curates, De Kunst refers to the writing of Grant

Kester and Claire Bishop among others, illustrating well the point regarding the role of discourse in the institutional definition of art. The locus of the analysis in *This Is Not Art* is London, as I state, and so I make no claims to know about other parts of the world, including other parts of the UK or Europe. It is interesting to see that for De Kunst, *This Is Not Art* seems to resonate despite its analysis being located elsewhere.

My understanding of the institutional artworld of continental Europe is that, while there are greater levels of public funding for art, the pressure to find and maintain corporate sponsorship is also present and that, while there remains an appreciation of the benefits of state provision of at least some social goods, there is a concurrent increasing belief in the market as best placed to provide all goods including social goods. My understanding of the political-economic environment of the USA is even more superficial, though I have recently been given cause to consider the differences between Europe and the USA having encountered the sociology of Vincanne Adams. I now consider in a different light the imperative that Grant Kester demands: that art must be a social good. The context in which he writes is one in which, nearly a decade after New Orleans was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina, 75% of the homes destroyed remain uninhabitable and this continued destitution of a specific population is due to the privatisation of the 'clean-up' (Adams 2013). It seems that both artists' projects and the various churches provide piecemeal relief for a system in which the state has almost entirely retrenched its responsibility for the poorest, most vulnerable sections of society and popular consensus has converged on the idea that the responsibility for poverty and destitution lies on individuals conceived as failures and not on systems that have failed.

As with the other contributions to this issue of *JVAP*, 'Art, Knowledge and Virtue' by Derek Matravers explores those areas of *This Is Not Art* that most readily intersect with his own concerns. In his case this is the definition of art, the importance of truth and the definition of knowledge. His observation that an attempt at a 'global ambition ... to find the value of "modern art"' is important 'unless one wants to be committed to the implausible thesis that the endogenous value of "disciplinary art practice" changes year on year' is welcome but my ambition to describe the value of art beyond my own little niche is because, without some attempt at a global value, the main political project of my thesis is missed. For me, however long the list of failed attempts by illustrious men at describing a global value for art, the reason for the attempt made in *This Is Not Art* is because, I believe, it is in its embodiment of plurality that art has the potential to nuance and make more complex. When art moves beyond reiterating the endless variations on a basic matrix, the potential for rupture, for 'dissensus' is achieved. It is for this reason that the value of art can be and must be found to exist in both the art-as-social-good tradition (life-like art) and in the tradition of art-for-art's-sake (art-like art). I also take seriously his question about whether art, in creating new knowledge (new stories) and embodying complexity and nuance, is necessarily 'on the side of angels'. Matravers writes: 'To return to the first and possibly the best of the theorists who see art as a branch of rhetoric, Plato knew art to be as capable of altering our view of the world for the worse as it is capable of altering our world for the better'. I acknowledge this point and would argue against the idea of art as (mere) rhetoric but I do feel it is true that complexity and nuance will always militate against a

totalising hegemony. This is a hunch and the question is the starting point for my next project.

I would like to thank each contributor for taking the time and effort to engage with my work and for doing so with such thoughtfulness. My thanks include the invisible labour of the various readers who commented on each of the contributions, guiding the final outcome presented here.

At this moment I stand by most of what I wrote in *This Is Not Art*, with all the caveats mentioned above. I have gained from the informal responses I have received from artists in addition to these formal responses. I continue to advocate for artists to involve ourselves more in the understanding of art and in discussion about the value of art. I continue to believe that art has an important role in society, a role that requires re-articulation since the normalisation of neoliberal values; one that is vital to revealing and embodying what is most at stake in our societies.

Notes on contributor

Alana Jelinek has been a practising artist with over 25 years' experience exhibiting work both nationally and internationally. Trained originally as a painter, since 2000 her work has included performance, installation and novel-writing to explore colonialism and neoliberalism. Her doctoral research in 'Art as a Democratic Act: the Interplay of content and context' was across both fine art practice and history of art and her recent publication, *This is Not Art: Activism and Other Not Art* (I.B.Tauris, 2013) completely revised many of the assumptions within that research in the light of later experience.

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Art, knowledge and virtue: comments on Alana Jelinek's *This Is Not Art*

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This article is a commentary on Alana Jelinek's book, *This Is Not Art*. It broadly agrees with Jelinek in her diagnosis of the current ills of the artworld, who is to blame for this, and the need for an endogenous value of art. Furthermore, it agrees with her that the value of art lies in its status as a 'knowledge-forming discipline'. However, it takes issue with the very notion of an 'avant-garde' art, with Jelinek's claims concerning truth, and raises questions as to what it is for the discipline of art to be 'knowledge-forming'. It ends with a sceptical doubt as to whether it is the nature of art to favour politically progressive messages.

Keywords: Alana Jelinek; definition of art; truth; knowledge

I am very grateful for the opportunity provided by the invitation to contribute to the special issue of this journal to discuss Jelinek's excellent and important book, *This Is Not Art* (Jelinek 2013) (page numbers that are not otherwise referenced are to this book). The book contains several clear and bold theses. As is the convention in my discipline, I shall largely ignore those with which I agree, and focus on those with which I disagree. However, I do need to start with a warning. In the course of discussing disciplinarity, Jelinek makes some sensible and sobering remarks:

The disciplines tussle for authority, assuming the supremacy of their methodology, the precision of their language or the truth of their knowledge. We favour whichever knowledge set, methodology or language we learned as undergraduates. (126)

The warning is well taken. I am a philosopher, trained in the Anglo-American tradition. To such philosophers, the concerns of the contemporary artworld seem off-beat and slightly obsessive. To outsiders, Anglo-American philosophers often come across as horribly naïve (have they not *read* their Foucault?) or insufferably patronizing or, of course, both.¹ Jelinek's book, although addressed to the artworld, engages seriously with philosophy. As Anglo-American philosophers have grown used to being ignored by the artworld, this is refreshing and welcome (it was not always thus; Joseph Kosuth's classic essay, 'Art After Philosophy' contains half a dozen footnotes to Ayer's *Language, Truth, and Logic* [Kosuth 1969]). Furthermore, Jelinek knows the field; she has a formal training in the area. As a result, I have not suffered the usual fate of those who stray into another discipline (blank incomprehension); instead, there are familiar problems, discussed in familiar ways. Furthermore, the general thrust of the book is something with which I have a great deal of

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sympathy. However, the distance between our starting points is sufficiently great for there to be ample scope for puzzlement.

For most of this article, I shall explore Jelinek's suggestion for an endogenous value for art: that art is a knowledge-forming discipline. I shall start with reviewing the broad historical and theoretical background, which explains why we need to come up with such a value. This is consonant with Jelinek's discussion, although mine will be couched in different terms. That is, philosophy is conducted at a high level of abstraction and my discussion will reflect that. The background story might make one less optimistic about there being a value for art. I shall then engage directly with Jelinek's suggestion.

I shall accept the received view that modernism (at least in the visual arts) started sometime around the 1860s. The concept of the fine arts, which had been with us at least since the mid-eighteenth century, no longer seemed adequate to capture what artists were up to. Unless I qualify the term, by 'artists' (and 'art') I mean (roughly) the progressive avant garde or what Jelinek calls 'disciplinary art practice'. I shall return to this slightly problematic classification below. The point at issue is that of providing an account of the nature and function of art.

Prior to the advent of modernism, when we operated with a concept of the fine arts, there was a compelling story to tell. In as much as the fine arts postulate a constitutive link between art and beauty, and beauty is a value, the value of art comes for free. The aim and function of art is the pursuit of beauty, and beauty is valuable. This view is implausible, even for the fine arts, if one construes 'beauty' narrowly; along the lines of 'presenting a pleasing visual appearance'. However, that would reflect only one sense of the word. A better construal of it would be along the lines of 'aesthetic merit'. In other words, art is valuable to the extent that it possesses aesthetic merit. As an account of the nature and value of the fine arts this does seem plausible. Of course, quite what it is to possess aesthetic merit is a difficult issue, but not (I think) an unresolvable one.

We are now approaching Jelinek's problem. The avant garde denied the constitutive link between beauty and art. However, it is a moot point whether, without beauty, the edifice will stand on its own. In ditching beauty, you ditch the explanation for the value of art. Without something to put in its place, it is simply unclear what the nature and function of art would be. The practice of art might lumber on (in the way that the practice of astrology lumbers on) without point or purpose, but basically it contributes nothing that could not be better done by some other practice.

The two most formidable theorists for modernism (Arthur Danto and Clement Greenberg) each had the same idea for the nature and function of art after the advent of modernism: that the role of art was to explore the boundaries of art. According to Danto, '[a]rt is a transitional stage in the coming of a certain kind of knowledge. The question then is what sort of cognition this can be, and the answer, disappointing as it must sound at first, is the knowledge of what art is' (Danto 1986b, 107). Greenberg famously held that '[t]he essence of Modernism lies, as I see it, in the use of the characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself, not in order to subvert it but in order to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence' (Greenberg 1961, 308). Neither view seems particularly well grounded. In Danto's case, there is a commitment to a kind of Hegelianism; the history of art as a progressive journey towards self-consciousness (see particularly Danto 1986b).

Greenberg's argument (such as it is) is even more bizarre; artists' use of art to establish the limits of art is modelled on Kant's use of logic to establish the limits of logic. However, logic is an obvious tool to turn to in order to think through the limits of things, so it is sensible to turn to it to think through the limits of logic. It is just not obvious why one would use art to think through the limits of art. Art, unlike logic, is not obviously suitable for thinking through the limits of things. Indeed, if Greenberg wanted to plot the limits of art, he would have been better off doing so by appealing to logic.

Apart from the dodgy theorizing, it is also not obvious that exploring the boundaries of art could ever be adequate as the nature and function of art. Unlike beauty, there is no link to value. It is just not clear why establishing the boundaries of art is an interesting project, or why anyone (apart from those engaged in the project) should care very much about it. Even if it were possible to say anything sensible about the boundaries of art (which I doubt), it is wholly unclear why knowing the results of such enquiry should be part of a worthwhile human life in the way that a plausible case can be made for beauty being part of a worthwhile human life.

At the heart of the modernist project, therefore, we have a vacuum: there is no account of the value of art. According to Jelinek this vacuum has been filled by values that are external to the practice of art (her term is 'exogenous').

... with the rise of neoliberalism, art's value has been wholly subsumed within the values and mechanisms of neoliberalism. The artworld has lost a way of articulating the value of what we do and art is now understood either directly in market terms, or indirectly in other neoliberal terms, as a measurable instrument for the amelioration of social ills as defined or at least sanctioned by government. (119)

Much of the book is a plausible reconstruction as to who is to blame for this state of affairs. It should make uncomfortable reading for the artworld as, in Jelinek's view, the fault lies with us. It is within our power to establish the ground rules of art, and we have conspicuously failed to do so. Instead, we have bought the establishment line and, under the self-image of being rebellious outsiders, pedal banalities that aim to tick the boxes of neoliberal success: matters such as facilitating plurality, inclusiveness and widening participation. The argument – which I think, for some, will be the most controversial element of the book – seems cogent to me. Where it leaves us is with the urgent need to find an endogenous value for art to fill the void.

Before considering Jelinek's positive view, there are two issues raised by the discussion so far on which I would like to comment. First, all sides in the debate operate with a narrow conception of art. The danger here is familiar. Philosophers of art, art historians, art theorists and artists themselves focus on a small subset of what the public call 'art'. This subset (which appears under various names – above I have used the term 'avant garde') is invariably associated with progressive circles of metropolitan elites. Furthermore, what goes into the subset reflects the theoretical views of whoever is doing the classifying (one need only look at Greenberg and Danto's view of what constitutes 'advanced art'). Although (of course) there is a wide spectrum of views within the discipline, Anglo-American philosophy tends to scepticism. It generally sides with the public in its doubts as to whether attempts to define the subset reflect reality, or, if they do reflect reality, whether they should be

taken at their estimation of their own importance (see, in particular, the new book by Dominic Lopes [2014]). Jelinek admits the broader notion of art; her term for the subset to which her theory applies is ‘disciplinary art practice’: ‘Disciplinary art practice is understood specifically as the material and intellectual negotiation with, and performance of, the conditions of modernity’ (133). One might have worries about the three aspects I have identified: whether there is such a subset; whether, if there is, it is a shadow of her theoretical commitments (after all, it will be easier to defend the claim that art is a ‘knowledge-forming discipline’ if it is *defined* as being in an ‘intellectual negotiation’); and finally, if there is, the question of its importance as a subset of what the public call ‘art’.

The second issue is that it is salutary to reflect that, since this issue raised itself as a problem, there have been countless attempts to provide the endogenous value of art. The most prominent is that of modernism (although even that takes on various forms [see Frascina 1985, Essays 3–5]) but there have also been many others, from theorists of impressionism to theorists of relational aesthetics. Some of these are clearly indexed to when they were stated; they were trying to find the value of the art of their time. However, others clearly have more global ambitions – to try to find the value of ‘modern art’ since the toppling of beauty from its pedestal. Clearly, the global ambition is defensible unless one wants to be committed to the implausible thesis that the endogenous value of ‘disciplinary art practice’ changes year on year. Although the failure of all previous accounts is consistent with thinking that some new account of the endogenous value of disciplinary art practice will be successful, the sheer number of failed attempts might make one wonder whether the right question is being asked.

It is one of the formidable achievements of this book to grapple with this important issue, and to defend a plausible candidate for the endogenous value of art. Jelinek argues that ‘we understand art practice as part of a knowledge-forming discipline in a way that has its analogue in the processes, mechanisms, and contributions of other knowledge-forming disciplines’ (119). As I hope will be clear, I broadly agree with Jelinek (although I am less optimistic about the chances of success). However, before discussing her view I am going to take issue with her use of the concepts of ‘knowledge’ and of ‘truth’. Jelinek anticipates this line from those of my disciplinary stripe – ‘the philosopher claims the authority to define “knowledge” and disregards the artists’ views’ (132). However, there is more at stake here than interdisciplinary squabbling over terms. When Jelinek claims that ‘truth is not universal, forever, or immutable’ (127), she is placing herself in some doubtful company.

There are many interesting questions about truth, and I will attempt to steer clear of all of them with a rather anodyne definition. There are such things as representations. Representations come in many forms: sentences, maps of the coastline, pictures and so on. Perhaps the most significant type of representation is a belief; my belief that there is a tree outside represents there being a tree outside. Truth is a property of representations: a representation is true if it is accurate – if the world is as it is represented as being. Notice that this definition says nothing about how we come to form representations, how we know which representations are true or how representations represent. It also says nothing about what is meant by ‘the world’; for these purposes, I am relying on a common-sense notion of something that is there *anyway*, independent of our experience (Williams 1985, 138). The point I

want to make is that without a distinction between an accurate and inaccurate representation (that is, without the notion of truth), we would not have a workable notion of representation at all. Without a workable notion of representation, we would not have a workable notion of belief. Truth – something universal, forever and immutable – is indispensable.

Although I have established my conclusion by argument, one can also get to the same place simply by reflecting on obvious features of our practices. If you are setting off to sail up an unfamiliar coast or drive in an unfamiliar city, you had better have a map that is accurate. If you want coffee, you will (barring good luck) only be successful in getting coffee if your belief that the café sells coffee is true. I have heard it said that a commitment to truth is in some way linked to authoritarianism or right-wing thinking. Aside from finding this connection theoretically obscure, it seems to me politically naive. We have to keep clear that some things are true; it does not matter how rich, powerful or insidious some force is, that force cannot make things that are true not true. The most it can do is convince people to believe something is true when it is not true (which leaves it in permanent danger of being found out). Faith in the notion of truth is the strongest bulwark against oppression. This is surely the main lesson of Orwell's *1984*; Winston Smith writes in his diary that 'Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four' (Orwell 1949 (2000), chapter 2); it is only the Party's apparent ability to destroy the difference between that representation and the representation that two plus two makes five that makes it appear that all is lost.

Indeed, Jelinek would not be able to state her argument without this core notion of truth (none of us would be able to state anything without this core notion of truth). When she says that '[a]rtistic ambitions are eclipsed by neoliberal ones and, because we have no distinct values with which to negotiate neoliberalism, we fail to resist or even recognize where we do not resist' (63), I take it she is not simply 'sounding off', making noises in a void. She is making a claim which she takes to be an accurate representation of the way things are. If I said 'it is not the case that artistic ambitions are eclipsed by neoliberal ones', we could not both be right; one of us would have got it wrong. One of the claims is true and, whichever one it is, the other one cannot also be true. If it could be, it would not matter which of the two claims Jelinek made. However, it does matter so it could not be.

As Jelinek realizes, truth and knowledge are closely aligned. You do not count as knowing something unless that thing is true. You can think you know something and be thoroughly justified in thinking you know it, but if it is not true you only think you know it, you do not actually know it. You cannot know that the world is 6000 years old because the world is not 6000 years old.

I said this was not about an interdisciplinary squabbling over terms. The words 'truth' and 'knowledge' are used in a wide variety of ways, and in different ways in different contexts. As long as we do not allow that to obscure the fact that the notion of accuracy of representations is indispensable, this need not concern us. So is there *any* notion of 'truth' or 'knowledge' that will vindicate Jelinek's claim that art is a 'knowledge-forming discipline'?

Jelinek goes into some detail as to what art actually does (which I will explore presently). Does it matter whether or not it goes by the moniker 'knowledge'? Jelinek's reasons for thinking that it does appear to be pragmatic: 'To view art as a discipline akin to other knowledge-forming disciplines is a strategic move' (158).

I take it that she means that linking art to disciplines that are uncontroversially knowledge-forming (say, the various sciences) means that it will both be taken seriously by those outside the artworld and open up new possibilities and insights for those inside the artworld. This raises our question again: with what justification can Jelinek appropriate the label, 'knowledge-forming', for the arts?

To answer this, we need to look in detail at Jelinek's account of the endogenous value of contemporary art. Her account focuses on the rhetorical power of art, and in this she aligns herself with some of the deepest and most influential thinking of art in the Western tradition. Jelinek claims that art '[can open] up many, multiple, various, nuanced, complex, other stories ... art may produce the kind of surprises that profoundly alter our established ways of seeing' (146).

In her concluding remarks in the book, she sums this up in a similar fashion:

At times, art creates radical new stories that profoundly alter our way of seeing, disrupting the order of things, making new sense of our place and time in ways that undermine totalizing discourse. (161)

However, we can all make up stories – even stories that change the way we view things. So what makes this a definition of '*art*' (as opposed, say, to writing novels)? Jelinek has two replies to this. The first focuses on the disciplinary nature of art: the stories are 'in response to a knowledge of the history of art practice' (148). This shares with much contemporary art theorizing (including the Institutional Theory of art in both Dickie's and Danto's versions) that art is essentially self-conscious. What makes this practice *art* practice is that it draws upon 'the history and knowledge set of an art practice' (149). The second reply is that art does not simply contribute another monolithic story; it does not tell it how it is to the exclusion of everything else. Rather, it recognizes plurality: 'Unlike other knowledge-forming disciplines, art does something more than invent new, nuanced or more complex stories: it enacts the plurality inherent in this process and, in so doing, challenges orthodoxy' (160). These created stories, Jelinek claims, 'constitute new knowledge' (151).

We can distinguish two different claims here. The first is that art creates radically new stories, and these stories constitute new knowledge. The second is that these radically new stories alter our perception, and in altering our perception we suffer an increase in knowledge.

In making the first claim, Jelinek claims (via a discussion of Dewey) to have Shelley and Wordsworth on her side (132). However, the role of the stories is to alter our perception. To fulfil this role, it is not clear why they need to claim to be knowledge. After all, our perceptions can be altered by a knock on the head, by a gift from a child, by accidentally treading on a beggar, and it is not clear what merit would attach to calling those instances of knowledge. Jelinek might accuse me of restricting the term to 'intellectual and cerebral knowledge' as she puts it (131). Perhaps Jelinek's claim is that anything that alters the way we see the world counts as knowledge. That would seem too broad; as stated above, the way we see the world can be altered by just about anything, and if just about anything can be knowledge then the term would lose all meaning.

What of the second claim; when our perceptions are altered, do we get to know things about the world that we did not know previously? Are we being taken closer to the truth? Jelinek appears to think that the role of the stories is to alter our

perception for the *better*. In what way could our perception of the world be *better* if not that our perception was *more accurate*, or closer to the way the world actually is (the *truth*). If Jelinek rejects this, it is difficult to make sense of her project. Artworks that created stories that made us sympathetic to neoliberal values would be as accurate as any other and no artwork would be open to criticism on this account (in particular, Jelinek would have to withdraw her criticism of certain works by Damien Hirst [147–148]). In as much as art reliably alters our perceptions to give us clearer insight, it is a knowledge-forming mechanism.

Jelinek's view provides an account of the nature and function of art that distinguishes it from activism, therapy, being a branch of the social services, or whatever other practice it is in danger of lapsing into. I shall finish this article in philosophical style (often mistaken for pedantry) which is to request that more flesh is put on the bones; that is, a request for details to be filled in. I shall take the account to be that it is the role of art to create nuanced and complex stories, which enact the plurality inherent in the process, with the purpose of altering the way we see the world.

As I said above, the claim that the nature and function of art is to alter the way we see the world goes back at least to Plato, and since then has been part of some of the deepest and most influential thinking of art in the Western tradition. A version can be found in Proust's essay on Chardin:

If, looking at a Chardin, you can say to yourself: This is intimate, this is congenial, this is full of life like a kitchen, then you will be able to say to yourself, walking around a kitchen: This is strange, this is grand, this is beautiful like a Chardin. (Proust 1954, quoted in Wollheim 1987, 98)

What is particular about Jelinek's view is the mechanism by which art alters the way we see the world: by telling us stories of a highly complex nature. This leaves us two things to sort out: the connection between a work of art and the story, and the connection between the story and our altered vision of the world.

On the first connection (between the work of art and the story) one might have wished that Jelinek had provided us with some examples. Her own practice mixes interventions (works made and shown 'in response to a specific site or context' [<http://www.alanajelinek.com/>]) with the production of objects. Some of the works are literally stories; for example, *The Fork's Tale*, a novel serialized over 12 months, published at the rate of one chapter per month in 2012. Another (*Capital Growth*) involved six oil paintings (each of one of the centres of capitalism in London) that were left at six locations associated with the artworld that had shown exceptional growth in privatization or links with the private sector. It is a bit unclear what Jelinek means when she says that these works 'create stories' (I am discounting the literal reading of this in the case of *The Fork's Tale*). They certainly prompt thoughts and prompt reflection, which is perhaps all that Jelinek means by her claim. However, if that is what she means, it is in danger of being a truism (although none the worse for that – a truth in this area is welcome, whether or not it is a truism). The second connection is easier to grasp. In this case, a work will prompt thoughts and reflection and those thoughts and reflections can alter our perception: we can cease to see things as part of the natural order, and start to see them as contingent products of our social arrangements (for example). Stories can get us to see animals

as worthy subjects of life (*Charlotte's Web*), war as terrible (*Guernica*) or the dispossessed as worthy of attention (*The Grapes of Wrath*). As Donald Davidson says of metaphor (and metaphors are, I think, structurally similar to artworks), 'there is no limit to what a metaphor calls to our attention, and much of what we are caused to notice is not propositional in character' (Davidson 1978, 263).

This is not so much a criticism of Jelinek as an invitation for her to say more. It might be that she simply wants to remind us that we should value art for its capacity to prompt the kinds of thought and reflection that sometimes change our view of matters. As an alternative to valuing art for being entertaining, or for its therapeutic qualities, or for bringing those 'difficult to reach demographics' into the art gallery, the point is well taken. However, it looks rather less a radical new proposal than a call for a return to valuing the communicative function of art.

It might be that I am selling Jelinek's account short. It is not only that she thinks art creates new and complex stories, but that it creates new and complex stories of a certain sort.

By creating, promulgating and inhabiting stories from within a different set of values – producing nuance and complexity in the face of orthodoxy – the artworld will be better able to resist totalizing discourses, including neoliberalism. This is true of all disciplines, but because art is not just a knowledge-forming discipline but a public action, entailing both action and story, it is directly constitutive of the public realm. Stories constitute ourselves, our personal and public identities, our society. When art enacts plurality, it necessarily makes the simplistic, reductive orthodoxies more nuanced and more complicated. (152–153)

The thought here is that because the stories art creates are nuanced and complex, and because they enact plurality, they will (for those reasons alone) stand opposed to totalizing discourses. This leaves art on the side of the righteous. Some support for this claim can be found in the fact that the 'official' art of totalitarian regimes (Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia and, Jelinek might want to claim, neoliberalism) was (or is) generally dire in virtue of its failure to be nuanced, complex or enacting of plurality. This is where I find myself less optimistic than Jelinek. I am sceptical as to whether it is in the nature of art to be either on the side of the angels or of the devils. A work of art could create a story that was nuanced and complex, that enacted plurality, and yet be rebarbative. After all, unless the plurality is only a sham plurality, it will contain the bad as well as the good, the vicious as well as the virtuous. To return to the first and possibly the best of the theorists who see art as a branch of rhetoric, Plato knew art to be as capable of altering our view of the world for the worse as it is capable of altering our world for the better.

Note

1. In my experience those in cognate disciplines have the same kind of reaction to Anglo-American philosophers as the Bishop of Southwark has to Lionel, his parish priest in David Hare's *Racing Demon*: 'There is something in your tone that is sanctimonious. You give an appearance of superiority that is wholly unearned. It is profoundly offensive. Because it is based on nothing at all' (Hare 1991, 76).

Notes on contributor

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Disciplinary boundaries between art and anthropology

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This article provides the perspective of an anthropologist who uses art practice and theory to reflect on interdisciplinary engagements, focusing on the arguments made about disciplinarity that feature in Chapter 5 of Alana Jelinek's *This Is Not Art*. The article considers the nature of boundaries metaphorically and methodologically, in relation to the comparability of art and anthropology. It examines whether 'policing' boundaries is necessary to wrest art from not-art, considered in terms of the instrumentalisation of art, and the appropriation of methods across the disciplines. It is concerned with what counts as knowledge, and how disciplines account for their conditions of existence, which the article explores in terms of an 'ecology of practices', in order to consider to what extent such boundaries are meaningful.

How thoroughly interdisciplinary is it possible to be? Are we lightly transferring a set of terms from one practice to another, as metaphor, *façon de parler*? (Beer 1996, 115)

What kinds of boundary can be policed, held firm against the outside, yet remain open, porous or penetrable? Two metaphors come to mind. First, boundaries with plasticity, in William James' sense: weak enough to yield, but strong enough not to do so all at once. I find this metaphor useful for imagining disciplines as systems, made up of individual elements, people and practices, like the active particles James describes, as part of a 'compound mass' that gradually yields to constant change; plasticity allows for the creation of new conditions without disrupting the integrity of the body (James 1890). The second metaphor I would like to offer is of a different order. It occurred to me as I was sitting in a café in Tokyo, watching an engineer squatting on the ground improvising new and entangled routes for electricity transmission, and wondering why I felt resistant to the arguments of *This Is Not Art* (Jelinek 2013). The notion of policing disciplinary boundaries struck me as paradoxical; not in the 'western' philosophical sense – it is not a logical paradox – rather it made me feel doubtful. The koan (公案), a Zen paradox, appears in the form of a story, question or statement that exemplifies contradiction (Chung-ying 1973). Puzzling over a koan is about finding a new way of seeing. Used in Zen practice to provoke doubt, they function methodologically through dialogic exchange, instruments to express and test understanding. To give an example: 'Call this a stick and you assert; call it not a stick and you negate. Now you don't assert nor negate, and what do you call it? Speak and speak'. To become enlightened (悟り *satori*, *wu*) one both must recognise the

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contradiction and accept that it is a meaningful problem. It means exercising the capacity to hold together and accept differences, themes that this article addresses.

I do not doubt the premise of Jelinek's book. Her arguments for understanding disciplinarity are persuasive because I also believe wresting modern art practice and how it is valued from the market and institutions is an urgent task, and one that can productively be tied to the notion of practice as 'knowledge forming'. Jelinek posits the disciplinarity of modern art practice in a way that is interesting, simultaneously asserting the importance of non-hierarchical differences and circumscribing boundaries that must, she insists, be 'policed'. The discussion that follows, then, addresses the contradictions I felt, considering an argument that inspires agreement but at the same time resistance to the book's ultimate demand that policing boundaries is necessary to respect difference, to wrest art from 'not-art'. Contemporary art practice has been co-opted by other agendas, and this must be challenged. Both public and private organisations are capable of crudely instrumentalising art practice in terms of what it is expected to 'do', in regard to education and interpretation for example. While this arguably has always been the case, the ways in which the market and the state increasingly do so, as Jelinek suggests, concerns me too. I found this to be the case doing research with the Forestry Commission about how to commission art for and about forests, examining how art's value – and artists' roles – is evaluated and measured.

On the other hand, interdisciplinary engagement with art practice presents possibilities for 'new ways of seeing'; sharing methods affords other disciplines other ways of forming knowledge. Disciplines increasingly are discovering that boundaries are fuzzy (Law et al. 2014). Many disciplines are borrowing 'creative' research practices and techniques from art. Equivalently, art borrows from anthropology – as the recent 'ethnographic turn' demonstrates, not to mention the tensions within art by research/research by art practices. Arguably, such developments demonstrate the plasticity of disciplines. Crucial to Jelinek's description of art (versus not-art) is its capacity to make new, more nuanced or complex stories, which is analogous with anthropology. Here, I consider anthropology's 'art-like' work and the appropriation of artistic methods. 'Disciplines don't matter' is an assertion made by anthropologists who advocate for anthropology's increasing experimentation with art practice as a mode of investigation. But does this make their outcomes of art? More than this, Jelinek makes the distinction between method and methodology a matter of definition, and I would tend to agree. I am increasingly wary of the (mis)appropriations of art, such as when research involving methods drawn from art practice is taken on naively, when it is assumed that art's transformative capacity facilitates a short-cut to 'public engagement', an assumption that, in my opinion, often results in instrumentalised, and rather artless, art.

Jelinek suggests that 'different ways of perceiving time and space' (137) are fundamental to disciplinary differences – otherwise described as 'core values'. This article explores the argument made in Chapter 5, 'On Disciplinarity', in relation to this in terms of art and anthropology in particular, by way of Jelinek's articulation of *praxis*, the agency of the artist and relationships with the 'artworld'.¹ In the book, praxis is figured as 'conscious, willed action' which in my understanding presupposes an active individual, involved in self-cultivation and transformation; this is akin to how I understand ethics as a process, and anthropology *as* ethics (Evens 2009). I begin by introducing the notion of 'ecologies of practice', a philosophical mode of

questioning central to my own work, as it relates to the notion of praxis outlined in the book. I want to suggest, as Jelinek does for praxis, that rather than separating theory and practice, it might be useful to consider the necessary *movements* inherent in one 'informing' the other. For me this speaks to the reciprocal and iterative nature of anthropology, part of the nature of working 'adjacently', as I shall explain. It requires movements between and away, perhaps premised on different ways of thinking about time and experience which, like a painter stepping back to consider the canvas from a distance, impel a return. Another spatio-temporal issue is the question of where the work of anthropology takes place. Does anthropology *require* a movement away from the field? Following this, I consider issues presented by Jelinek about the individual artist, as formed by their training and trajectory, considered alongside how a discipline is defined by its ability to account for its conditions of existence, before turning to a discussion of method and methodology.

Praxis and ecologies of practices

Considering 'ecologies of practice' in relation to the definition of praxis and the argument about policing the boundaries is pertinent to the attempt to produce non-hierarchical and plural ways of seeing. By drawing on Foucault, Jelinek shows how theory and practice are part of the same movement in praxis: 'theory does not express, translate or serve practice: it is practice' (Foucault, cited in Jelinek, 122). Jelinek transforms the concept of praxis as commonly understood, implying practice divorced from theory, towards an iterative process, of practice-informing-theory-informing-practice. It is this movement and the way each shapes and in-forms the other that seems important; knowledge forming takes place in the in-between, in the way that a melody is not experienced as a series of distinct notes but rather in the movements that carry the melody forward, and back.

Understanding an ecology of practices as a 'mode of questioning' is based on rejecting any 'disqualifying' other ways of knowing (Stengers 2005). This means, in part, that part of making differences explicit means taking into account that a practice is not self-evident. It needs to be *made* present, 'encouraged to present itself' in Stengers' terms. Practice is figured as 'the ingredient without which neither that activity nor that product would exist'; it encompasses both. It is not only the activity of an individual, since in this frame individuals are not isolatable, nor is it the product of that activity, but a movement or praxis where each informs the other. Beyond any particular practice, the ecology of practices allows for multiplicities, the co-presence of here and elsewhere. It provides other ways to connect. More than a description of relations, it is a direct response to the urgent need to challenge 'disembedded and disembedding' ways of knowing, which for me resonates with the stimulus of the book to separate out art from not-art, from other practices that have different or conflicting agendas. To situate knowledge making ecologically also means considering the effects on other communities (both human and non-human). To do so does not preclude differentiation; indeed, there is a fundamental duality, which Stengers describes in terms of science and politics (2010, 32). In the political sense, it is related to the 'production of values, to the proposal of new modes of evaluation, new meanings. [It is] about the production of new relations that are added to a situation already produced by a multiplicity of relations' (ibid.). What this means is recognising the inseparable relationship between what we value and the

construction of relationships. Taking an ecological perspective is therefore not simply a means of describing inter-relatedness or interdependence; the way Stengers frames it requires thinking about how practices ‘impinge’ upon each other. It is a way of acknowledging boundaries, and the Levinasian impetus that to deny difference is unethical, while simultaneously emphasising the ways in which disciplines and practices shape one another, and that this carries with it certain responsibilities. Following Stengers, I describe these responsibilities in terms of either obligations or requirements: the former express the internal responsibilities monitored by a discipline’s adherents, policing core or endogenous values (Jelinek draws on anthropological terminology to make this point, while I draw on philosophical ones), and the latter are those produced by external factors. Understanding the ecology of practices in this sense becomes a call to understand the ethical situatedness of ways of knowing and working within a complex and ‘entangled coexistence’ (Stengers 2010, 34), which implicates everyone and everything. It is a position that permits no transcending truths, thus, divergent interests can meet on equal ground. We can take seriously even issues we oppose, as Stengers suggests (2005). This requires practising openness as a kind of experimental togetherness, but in a mode that resists assumed neutrality. Ultimately, as Stengers argues, this is about making ‘peace a challenge’, rather than the condition for a polite conversation. The challenge, then, is about *how* people present themselves to each other, or to themselves in the presence of others. This awareness and effort should be understood in terms of disciplines or practices, as well as of individuals, because:

When you address a practitioner, you do not address only a human with a specialized activity. Practices are always collective ... the gathering of which cannot be reduced to a question of mere ideology [...] the importance of the question is what matters for each practice and how what matters effectively connects practitioners. (2011, 375–376)

The conditions or boundaries that Jelinek sets out are akin to the obligations Stengers describes. These are the internal requirements of a given community of practitioners, what it is that they must do in order to produce something that can be considered valid by members of that community. Demands describe another, equally necessary condition for a practice or discipline, but these, on the contrary, operate as external requirements; they may well not be satisfied by the obligations of a given discipline. What I want to suggest is that perhaps there are certain demands that should and can be placed on art, which exist separately to the conditions for art practice that Jelinek defines. Acknowledging the differences between demands and requirements that shape and connect practitioners and from which an ecology of practices is produced means rejecting any possibility of an *a priori*, universal law-like policing; it resists any attempt to produce a *methodological* demarcation. To do so would mean judging practices and disqualifying them in terms of the rules to which they conform – and this, as Stengers’ work shows, could result in the crushing of anything that seems not to conform to these ‘laws’. To this end, I am concerned that the definitions provided in *This Is Not Art* do not allow for sufficient variation between practitioners, if what is determined to be essential precludes other possibilities. For some artists their work is a deliberate intervention, intended to effect environment or social change (to fail to do so would be to ‘be reduced to the decorative’, as one environmental artist explained to me); others do not care about the label art.

Anthropology of the contemporary, movements in time and space

My research involves engaging with different disciplines, and bringing divergent practices and disciplines together, as a way of doing an ‘anthropology of the contemporary’ (Marcus et al. 2008), by ‘working alongside’ those whom Marcus calls ‘counterparts’ (ibid.). Counterparts may be those doing similar work, who share some of the roots of my understandings, despite divergences. They may be artists or journalists or scientists. What often distinguishes our work are the temporalities we work within and from. Anthropology privileges the capacity to take time. Foundational to what counts as anthropological knowledge is the necessary movement to and from, here and there.

Flipping the proposition presented in the book, that anthropology is what is written for anthropologists, as Gell cynically suggested, and taking our starting point as the practice of anthropology as it occurs in the ‘field’, with and alongside people, puts a particular focus on how ways of working and forming knowledge relate to and impinge upon our counterparts, treated as equals, but different. There are many such movements in anthropology beyond this starting point – away from the field, generalising from the concrete, processes that anthropologists sometimes construct as ‘analysis’ of data, or call ‘applying theory’, and so on – that define anthropology for some. However, I want to suggest that this focus on anthropology in the field contains the possibility of other movements, ways of working alongside, or between. Paul Rabinow describes this practice as a kind of working ‘adjacently’, developing Dewey’s pragmatic proposition:

Working between vocations is not the same thing as work among peers or among citizens. Its goal is not convincing the other of anything ... maintaining close proximity to the object of study but within an interval or point of symmetry converted into a zone of problematisation ... a space of problems, of questions. Of being behind or ahead. Belated or anticipatory. Out of synch. Too fast or too slow. Audacious. Annoying. (Rabinow 2008, 39)

In anthropology this idea of proximity is allied to a movement, to being out of time. This subverts the external perception of anthropology as a distanced and distancing kind of knowledge production, produced by way of objective observation and descriptions of a reality that exist independently of our relations with it. While it is still common, in my experience, to hear anthropologists discuss ‘data’ and argue over ‘evidence’ gathered from and by their ‘informants’, I don’t know any anthropologist who would describe their own entangled commitments as entirely objective, or our ‘informants’ as merely those from whom we extract factual data. Anthropology relies on both the entanglements of the field and the movements between and away. It is a process in which it is necessary to acknowledge our agency and impact within our field of research, and their impact on us. Self-reflexivity is central to the discipline, to how we come to know what we know. I am critical of the movement in anthropology from being apprentice to becoming expert because it can elide the ways in which we, as well as our knowledge, are complicit, our authority no longer reliant on how knowledge is in-formed *with* others, and how we are transformed by these engagements, even though this process is central, indeed, a core value of anthropology. I would argue that it is in such self-reflexive concerns that there is potential for art and anthropology to trouble the boundaries. When I draw on ways of working more established in art

practice, making and exhibiting images, installation work or other conceptual practices, I am interested in how these ways of knowing in-form and transform the kinds of truth propositions am I making. This in turn may remake the boundaries with anthropological ways of knowing.

What counts as knowledge, and the artist as individual

Jelinek draws on the anthropologist Marilyn Strathern's observation that a discipline is defined by its ability to account for its conditions of existence, in other words, what counts as knowledge defines a discipline. These processes necessarily extend through and beyond the individual and individual practices, as I suggested above. What counts as knowledge for modern art according to Jelinek is outlined in some detail in Chapter 5 and includes: history, historiography, forms of storytelling, methods and accepted lexicon, as well as knowledge sets, reference points and ambitions (131–135). This knowledge is, Jelinek suggests, 'policed by adherents' (136), not only from within institutional systems, but is enacted through individuals in processes of inclusion and exclusion. A straightforward way that art and artists are counted is in terms of what is recognised as experience, or training. Moreover, acceptable contributions to a discipline are not determined by the market or political efficacy, but by a capacity to be knowledge *forming*, which Jelinek describes as creating new or more complex or nuanced stories, which is a different order of value, or a different logic than that which underpins the value of intellectual property, which matters when art is marketised, or instrumentalised. Neither is it equivalent to academic research, education or activism. What is at stake, what holds the value of art, the obligation of modern art practice, is defined, by Jelinek, in terms of 'cultural differences'.

The comparability between art and anthropology may, Jelinek suggests, be merely a result of cultural 'diffusion' (142), which does not – should not – imply a continuum between disciplines. This view arguably is supported by misappropriations of method, or the confusion of method and methodology. Jelinek cites the archaeologist Colin Renfrew, who defines art as 'what we are and how we know what we are' (129) – surely this is as good a definition of anthropology as any? Anthropology, broadly understood, is about studying the conditions and possibilities of existence by way of comparison. It is certainly the case that academic anthropology has particular requirements, standards (and volume) of 'outputs'. In any case, Jelinek accepts the comparable nature of the disciplines – there is 'art-like' anthropology – and acknowledges that artists have been known to 'mimic' anthropology (as famously critiqued by Hal Foster [1996]). The (mis)appropriations of the 'ethnographic' by artists can be problematic and no doubt could be used to illustrate the differences between disciplines, but they are also pertinent to ongoing debates in anthropology, regarding the definition and scope of ethnography, for example (see Ingold 2014). I do not have space here to engage fully with the confusion over 'ethnographic' art, however I would argue that artists can, and do, conduct 'participant observation', and a range of other ethnographic methods. As Ingold (2014) points out, there are or should be no limits on method; yet to do so without comparable training or experience is sometimes seen as problematic. A related aspect on which anthropological fieldwork is judged, as I suggested above, is that how long one spends in the field is related to how 'deep' one's knowledge is. Ethnographies are often judged as 'rich' based on

the ‘thickness’ of the description, which in turn rests on the presumption that understanding can only emerge through longstanding fieldwork. The presumption, by comparison, is that artists doing ‘ethnographic’ work do not spend comparable lengths of time, though in my view this is an unfair distinction in many cases. It is in such temporal distinctions that adherents for anthropology draw their conclusions and authority: in other words, what counts as knowledge, in practice. I will return to such methodological issues later on.

For Jelinek, the assertion of individuality, or individual authorship of art, serves to distinguish the disciplines. The conception of the subject on which Jelinek’s argument rests is based on the modern premise that the artist is an individual agent. Far from the romantic genius, the artist is formed *de novo*, from the ground up ‘in negotiation with power’ in a Foucauldian alignment of modern art practice with the ‘permanent creation of ourselves’ (135). This is an argument I also make for anthropology as ethics. Jelinek’s clearly Levinasian understanding of ethics – essentially that it is unethical to deny difference – provides a philosophical basis for plurality, which for me resonates with anthropology’s obligations to represent others, even though notions of the individual may be highly contested within and between the disciplines. Prioritising the capacity of the individual to take responsibility, to be an active agent in the world, is not to refuse a relationship with the world; it is to emphasise it. On that we agree. Whether one takes a more radical philosophical position of the impossibility of fully knowing another, accounting for the conditions of existence must be situated in some kind of relation to an ‘other’ which requires at the least the recognition of difference, of boundaries. For Jelinek it is important that this is not a hierarchical process.

I broadly agree that artists (within modern art practice) are concerned with their own trajectory and place within the artistic tradition. As Munro suggested in the 1940s, ‘the role of the individual artist ... must not be too much obscured; he [*sic*] is always the vehicle through which [movements] operate’. There is an important point here about artistic freedom, because what this allows, he suggests, is that ‘[n]othing is ever completely explained’ (1949, 339). However, I am not sure that, like what methods are employed, it is the primary concern. What Jelinek seems to be getting at is that while ‘art-like’ work exists, there is a point where we must draw the line. My point here is that this – being concerned with one’s own trajectory – is an area of incommensurability between art and anthropology. Wouldn’t it have to be, to make it a ‘unique’ value for art? The relationships between what counts as knowledge, the role of authorship and self-reflexivity, or in other words how much we can say the work is the work of one person, or how much of the work is about the maker, and not the object of a work, are more complicated. A clearer point of difference might be to ask whose experience is privileged. What is the work trying to do? This is also not so clear cut in anthropological research. Distinctions are fuzzy.

For Jelinek, the definition of an artist (or indeed any individual’s disciplinary propensities) emerges from experience and training, a point that feeds into the larger argument about methodology. One’s early (tertiary or higher education) training is, she argues, fundamentally formative; more, an individual’s art practice is first and foremost a response to their personal trajectory, and only secondarily to the market, a brief or invitation. Implicit in this is a call to reject the value placed on art by the market. The argument is useful in that it also works to move on from an institutional definition of art while maintaining something essential to modern art practice, in terms of artistic licence, the freedom and authority granted by the artworld. The

primary concern is that art should be unique, new and nuanced, and at the same time resonate with a tradition that is defined and defended by its practitioners. Work needs to be put into context, at least to know whether it is original at all, as Munro (1949) argued; Jelinek's argument implies that we take this further, and ask whether it can be considered art at all.

Where the distinction is perhaps clearer cut is in the *form* of knowledge – what counts as a work of art, or of anthropology? For Jelinek the 'recategorising' of art is done by recipients (131); it is always open to being judged differently by different people. What is at stake is the freedom of interpretation for the viewer (or participant, or visitor, or audience – all of which are contested terms). How far can this be true for forms of anthropological knowledge? The argument rests on the ways in which the experience of an individual work of art is considered to be subjective. In disciplines like anthropology, the author may believe they can (or may simply want to) maintain control of the meaning. Such intentionality can be figured positively or negatively, as fidelity to experience, but it can be otherwise. But there is another angle to consider: if the meaning of modern art is radically open, how does one make judgements about whether work fulfils the conditions *This Is Not Art* sets out? The openness with which work can be received does not interrupt the larger argument, however, although I would add that artists-makers are not the only ones who must take responsibility for how art is valued.

My own work explores what can be shared between art and anthropology, as well as other disciplines, when methods, methodologies and the final outcomes are all open to experimentation. As academic writing and research, anthropology is primarily about writing texts, mostly for other anthropologists as suggested above, but anthropology takes place in many times and places, not only in the ivory tower of academia. To suggest otherwise would be an injustice to all the publicly engaged, applied, experimental and interdisciplinary anthropology going on all over the place. Anthropology as a discipline has different obligations; the academic is one among many. Part of the process for me does require a movement away from the field, whether that is done in the 'writing up' as we call it, or making a film, or another REF-able outcome.² The point is that knowledge is not a static thing, it is formed in the world, with people; this is an obligation for anthropology. The 'object' of knowledge may be an academic text, but couldn't it also be a work of art?

More than method, new ways of seeing

Schneider and Wright (2006, 2010) posit that experimentation with artistic methods in anthropology leads to 'new ways of seeing' – both in regard to forming knowledge and the presentation of outcomes. Furthermore, they suggest that collaborations between anthropology and art provide opportunities to develop 'alternative strategies of practice' for *both* disciplines. In the main, their focus is on what anthropology can gain by exploring 'appropriate visual representational strategies that break with traditional anthropological modes of representation' (2006, 12). Appropriating art practices and making art-like work affords practitioners other ways to observe, experience and understand things when focusing on the process rather than the outcome. I agree that there is potential for a kind of 'aesthetic resistance' (ibid.) which inheres in an ambiguity between text and image. However in practice, a drive towards disambiguation remains. What I mean by this is that while anthropological forms of knowledge

may seem indistinguishable from 'art' in terms of the methods employed to produce and exhibit it, a desire (from author/maker/s and/or 'viewer') to determine the work's meaning seems to endure in anthropology. When ambiguous anthropological work is presented, particularly during academic (re)presentations, ambiguity is often effaced rather than celebrated, often by way of contextualising text and commentary. Perhaps this is a reflection of the obligation anthropologists carry, in the sense I set out above: an obligation to represent the lives of others, to faithfully evoke not only their own but others' experiences. (That said, I am wary of marking a distinction with art practice – while it may be a condition for anthropology, it is an obligation evident in much contemporary art practice, although here paradoxically perhaps, the capacity for ambiguity could be said to qualify this commitment). Perhaps in anthropology there is no room for 'excess'? To fully explore this question would mean addressing the shared origins of art and anthropology, rooted in the surreal and the situationists (see Sansi 2005). Schneider and Wright refer to the 'shared and common object of culture; or, in short, the representation of others' (2006, 26). The drive to disambiguation in anthropology is, I suggest, a reflection of the requirement to consider anthropological knowledge (and thus the anthropologist) as 'expert', both within the academy and the discipline and as we relate to others. This is an issue I do not have the space to explore here, but it may be intimately and politically connected to the commitment to privileging the other in our representations, and not only re-presenting the experience of the individual author/s. Anthropological forms of knowledge are expected to evoke a sense of place, a community or the experience of others, a process that functions by way of comparison.

I agree that disciplines are not defined by their methods but by their methodologies, as Jelinek argues (136). Comparison as a mode of investigation is a methodology central to anthropology, whether that involves disparate geography or proximate but distinct cultures or sub-cultures, or disciplinary practices. Moreover, it is not only comparison across great divides; there is also a wealth of what can be glossed here as self-reflexive anthropology. This considers the transformation of the researcher, and is about investigating the grounds of one's *own* practice, or what Marilyn Strathern describes as a kind of 'auto-anthropology' (1987). The movement towards art-anthropology, where I locate my own work, is related to this. Rather than writing descriptive ethnographies 'of' art objects or contextualising artists' practices, art-anthropology follows and extends strategies such as those advocated by Schneider and Wright. To go beyond drawing on artistic techniques or methods involves doing anthropology *with* art, in a multi-disciplinary way. This includes but is not limited to experiments in representational strategies, wherein anthropological encounters with the world are re-presented in 'art-like' ways. Following the disqualifications and qualifications in *This Is Not Art*, 'creative practices' could be (and are often) used to describe art-like methods, but in doing art-anthropology (a compound practice rather than a division between them) my aim is to address the role and value of art, actively exploring the boundaries and the overlaps that carry across from method to methodology. Work (anthropological or artistic) that exists and operates in this zone complicates the arguments of *This Is Not Art*. It becomes more complex when one practitioner in art or anthropology could feasibly be addressing the same questions, by way of the same methods, going about it in the same ways (forms of exhibition, modes of working including the focus on the discursive, as well as the political, and so on). Here, easy distinctions between method and methodology dissolve.

Such overlaps are only possible where certain equalities are accepted and legitimated by those with whom we work. Training, exhibition and collaborations convey and confer legitimacy. Schneider and Wright appear to assume an equality of practice between art and anthropology based on certain shared goals and origins, but there is some criticism of this assumption. Strohm (2012), for example, argues that to *presuppose* equality is not sufficient; one must produce it in practice. I agree. I am wary when assumptions are made regarding the value of interdisciplinarity work generally, and art-anthropology in particular (along with art-politics or art-education and their underlying agendas, which may involve naïve or politically motivated notions of what art *should* do). Strohm redefines equality not as an ontological principle but something tied to verification and practice. It has no value in itself, but is evident in its effects: what matters is praxis.

Problems arise when art and art-like are muddled, are not perceived to be equally legitimate across both disciplines, problems important enough to warrant making the distinctions explicit, not least because overly easy borrowings are based on assumptions, such as the idea that art confers an inherently positive, transformative quality on other investigations. As Gillian Beer points out, '[n]o community can be sufficiently described in its own terms. Its characterising difficulties escape the terms available for description within that particular community; and that applies also to disciplinary communities. Those most sceptical about their own disciplinary practices are sometimes inclined to embrace the practices of an adjacent discipline too reverentially' (1996, 115).

Marking the difference between methods and methodologies implies a conceptual break between disciplines, what Jelinek describes as core values. My concern is that using methodology as a cover suggests a further split between theory and ways of working. The problems that *This Is Not Art* points to in articulating disciplinary boundaries are important in relation to the appropriations, or misappropriations, involved when borrowing methods is *confused* with methodologies, which speak to the aims of a practice. The instrumentalisation of art, a focus on ends not means, for the reasons I suggest above is evident in other ways, too. The co-option of art for interpretative purposes is revealed, for example, in the kind of criteria the work is measured against. Ironically, whether or not particular work satisfies such criteria is often moot when the categories that seek to outline and establish what an artwork should do are assumed in advance: for example, that forms of public art should engage and educate audiences is part of the presumption of what art does. The point is that when such evaluative criteria are presupposed with particular agendas in mind, certain problematic assumptions may be carried along with it.

Therefore, while artistic techniques, processes and methods are increasingly used in other disciplines, and can lead to new ways of seeing, the distinctions between methods and methodologies matter, because both means and ends matter. The active creation of anthropological knowledge involves more than making choices about which methods to apply to the field. As a way of being, and a practice of knowing, anthropology is praxis – theory-informing-practice-informing-theory as Jelinek defines it. This position emphasises how we know what we know, perhaps in terms of the existential, embodied, sensory or ethical processes; showing *how* we come to know what we claim to is inter-subjective (see Evens 2009; Jackson 1989; Ortner 2006). Moreover, how we know means incorporating not only other people as the 'subjects' of inter-subjective anthropological praxis, but also the materials and forces

which we work with and alongside, or adjacent to. Anthropology should be interesting to and valuable for those with whom we work, as well as for the discipline. In Jelinek's book the archaeologist Colin Renfrew is cited (129) as suggesting that the tasks of archaeology and reading contemporary art are the same, based on the 'uncoordinated nature' of their respective research programmes. If Renfrew means by that that reading art requires freedom of interpretation and imagination, and archaeology is uncoordinated in a similar sense, anthropology is equally 'uncoordinated' in lacking hypotheses. The reciprocal nature of anthropological work means acknowledging our own complicities with others, which can be messy. Knowledge making is uncertain, and messy, and we don't know, going into the field, what we will find; indeed, if we do find what we expected in advance, this would be considered something of a failure! To paraphrase Stengers (2010, 10): to accept what is messy is not a defect but what we have to learn to live and think in and with. Law et al. suggest that all practices are messy, because the world is *non-coherent*: '... different "logics" are always at hand: not that this is bad. Or, to put it differently, we're saying that the world, even the "modern world", is fuzzy and that it always has been. The challenge is to find ways of thinking and understanding this' (Law et al. 2014, 4).

Boundaries

The argument of *This Is Not Art* relies on philosophy for its definition of art as an intellectual and material engagement with the conditions of modernity, following Foucault. This philosophical basis contains certain assumptions that warrant further more detailed exploration, work to reconcile the autonomous and active self and the ways in which disciplines in-form each other. What appears paradoxically as a philosophical problem – the tension between modern art practice as necessarily premised on the individual artist as an autonomous subject, which does allow for the ways in which one is co-constituted with the world – generates productive questions for anthropology as a discipline, and I am sure, others too. Anthropology is similarly philosophically inclined (see D'Oro 2010) but what is crucial, as I hope to have suggested, are the movements between theory and method, methodologies and ethics.

As Jelinek points out, differences between disciplines are 'either not seen as such, or are overemphasised' (124). Whether the disciplines of art and anthropology exist on a continuum, converge, or require a conceptual break such as the one Jelinek is arguing for depends on the individual practitioner, as I have suggested. That there are boundaries does not preclude the crossing of them, and in any case, both disciplines involve different practices embedded in different logics, using different methods, based on different methodologies. Within and between the disciplines these practices co-exist: holding some things together requires holding other things apart (see Law et al. 2014). Where the boundaries lie, who or what is excluded, needs to be explored empirically to understand *how* such different orders operate. This is how to determine what counts as knowledge. My issue is with absolutism, which, as Law argues, is a straw man. Judging things in binary terms might be desirable but *how* they hold together is a matter for empirical investigation. Differences collapse.

In Evens' (2009) discussion of anthropology *as* ethics, boundaries are not fixed 'things' from which we view the substance on either side. He suggests that rather than focusing on what lies on either side of the line, we shift our attention to constitution of

the boundary, and how it serves to connect while ‘composed of [a] contradictory set of attributes’:

... when the subject is understood as innately situated in the world, its responsibility to and for itself naturally includes its other. In a world where boundaries both connect and separate, not only choice but also agency is completely differentiated. The ambiguity of such a world extends to the agent, which appears as an essential tension between itself and its other. Just as the choice of ‘a’ presents itself also as ‘not-a’, so the agent of choice presents itself in part as its other. Insofar then as the agent is an agent, it is ambivalently responsible not only to and for itself but also to and for its other, for it is in a way itself-as-other. (Evens 2009, 247)

Defining and policing boundaries involves exclusionary tactics. There are judgements involved when asserting any set of conditions, but these depend on where one is situated. I am concerned that such conditions might serve to disqualify, by paradoxically denying the ways in which disciplines shape, impinge upon others. The boundaries and productive tensions I am exploring are not between art and its other, but between comparable disciplinary practices where shared methodologies do not operate as opposites – ‘a’ and ‘not-a’, art and not-art – but are held in tension, itself-as-other. Perhaps what could be acknowledged more clearly in the articulation of necessary boundaries is that they serve to connect, as well as to separate. Whether this notion, based on an ecology of practices, rather than mere diffusion of interests expressed in the proliferation of ‘art-like’ objects as forms of academic knowledge holds together is dependent on particular practitioners, and particular work. There is no general answer, as Law et al. (2014) point out. We have to work it out.

The book describes a different set of conditions to those produced by neoliberal logic. But there are lots of different orders, or logics, at work in the relationships between art and anthropology as knowledge-forming disciplines. I wonder whether what escapes the logic of art and not-art is the openness of the discipline to the ways in which others impinge upon it, and are not collapsed into it. Art has always been a tool – able to be instrumentalised – but a tool is never neutral. The power the tool allows ‘has to be actualised’ as Stengers argues (2005, 185):

A tool can be passed from hand to hand, but each time the gesture of taking it in hand will be a particular one: the tool is not a general mean, defined as adequate for a set of particular aims, potentially including the one of the person who is taking it, and it does not entail a judgement on the situation as justifying its use. Borrowing Whitehead’s word, I would speak of a decision, but a decision without a decision-maker. The decision is making the maker as it is producing the relevant relation between the situation and the tool.

How we use the tools of art practice, or philosophy for that matter, can be investigated empirically; but to do so, for me, means beginning with (and in) the messiness of things in practice, with an understanding that the logic that we adhere to is a decision we make, and one that shapes how and to what extent we take responsibility for the different obligations and demands placed upon us by our practices and disciplines. For my part, leaving openings for other possible interpretations means dispensing with absolutist propositions or *a priori* explanation. It means my understanding is that boundaries are not infallible, because they require active

negotiation. For me, the challenge Jelinek's book presents is part of this active negotiation; its efficacy lies in the argument's capacity to give rise to questions.

To return to a metaphor with which I began: like anthropology, Zen is not a philosophy but a methodology. A koan is difficult – paradoxical – only if one loses sight of the purpose of the statement, the ends to which it is aiming. To assume that the simplifications involved in setting out conditions for modern art practice require unassailable boundaries would probably be to misunderstand the argument, and I share the concerns that motivate the decision to argue that sometimes a negotiation can be a kind of policing. The koan works practically, as the book's argument does, because Zen is a methodology, rather than a philosophy: it is about working out the apparent contradictions. To explain this, Chung-ying (1973) compares the practice of the koan to ways of looking at a work of art. It is possible, he suggests, to look at a painting *either* aesthetically or scientifically. The first is about having an experience, which could be described as 'ineffable'; the second works to a different logic (or in the terms described here, a different ecology of practices), where science is a tool that produces a certain kind of knowledge, with its own logic. Art practice, like reading art, is likewise open to different conceptual characterisations that are simply not compatible, or equivalent. The value of a scientific understanding of a painting is not intended as a substitute for the ineffable experience. It seems fitting to end with another koan: 'When I say, there is not, this does not necessarily mean a negation; when I say there is, this does not signify an affirmation. Turn eastward and look at the western sand; face the south and the North Star is pointed there' (Cheng 1973, 88).

Acknowledgements

The author's current research is part of a larger European Research Council-funded project called 'Knowing from the Inside: Anthropology, Art, Architecture and Design', based at the University of Aberdeen (2013–2016). Her doctoral research in Social Anthropology, *Working between Art and Forestry, Towards an Ecology of Practices* (2008–2013), was funded by the ESRC and the Forestry Commission as part of a Knowledge Transfer Scheme via the Scottish Government. She would like to thank Alana Jelinek for the opportunity to respond to *This Is Not Art*. Comments by an anonymous reviewer greatly helped to improve an earlier version of this article.

Notes

1. The 'artworld' is presented homogenously in the book, but I think this is a necessary part of the movement of the argument which aims to bring together the fragmented art-like art and life-like art dualism discussed earlier in the book. At the same time, as Jelinek points out in expressing disciplinary differences as 'cultural differences', it reinforces her experience of what is shared by artists, of diverse nationalities and so on, in comparison to experiences with those from different disciplines. Nevertheless, it occurs to me that to homogenise the artworld could be problematic, an assumption that all disciplines are figured as comparable, or progress through the same series of stages.
2. By which I mean acceptable according to the REF. 'The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the new system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions ... The primary purpose of the REF is to produce assessment outcomes for each submission made by institutions'. See <http://www.ref.ac.uk/> for more information.

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Capitalism, reproduction and ‘lifelike art’: responding to Alana Jelinek’s *This Is Not Art*

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This article responds to the critique of Marxist thought in Alana Jelinek’s *This Is Not Art*. Jelinek’s aversion to theorising capitalism as a mode of production leads to limitations in how we push forward the compelling arguments advanced in her book about the supposedly *a priori* politicised nature of what the author describes as ‘lifelike art’. In particular, I propose that the concepts of hegemony, ideology and fetish are missing in her account in favour of an emphasis on power. These concepts, alongside dialectical thinking, can help us grasp what is specific about the present moment in which we see an increasing tendency within ‘lifelike art’ to embrace not only the state but also the market and capital more generally. Against Jelinek’s vitalist emphasis on disciplinarity, however, I suggest that the analysis of artworks in our current moment necessitates a certain level of negative thinking. Not a negativity centred on the kind of dualistic antagonism derided in *This Is Not Art*, but rather one centred on a recognition that the meaning in emphasising art’s self-consciousness, or self-critique, lies in the possibility this offers for reminding us of the current limitations to life.

Keywords: Marxism; ideology; hegemony; dialectics; social practice; dematerialisation

In responding to the critique of Marxist thought in *This Is Not Art*, I want to think through what the book sets out to achieve, and whether its aims could be supported by, or whether they simply clash with, a Marxist analysis. Broadly speaking, Jelinek damns the relationship between contemporary art and capitalism, and in this respect the book joins a healthy debate on art and politics within contemporary theory, artistic practice and political activism that has grown since the onset of the financial crisis in 2008. Before exploring where Jelinek enters into this fray, I want to attempt to sketch out some coordinates.

Artists, curators and art critics interested in anti-capitalism and radical politics have increasingly turned their attention towards the question of labour over the last five years, alongside retaining a formal interest in participatory, activist or collaborative practice. The labour question in particular has emerged since 2008, and largely revolves around discussions of immateriality, precarity and affective labour. Key theoretical figures who have become fashionable in the art world include Franco ‘Bifo’ Berardi, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, and the debate has taken shape in exhibitions, symposia and writing. In the last year or so, we can track a rise in

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prominence of artists working politically around new technologies. For example, Hito Steyerl's recent work increasingly maps questions of labour and gender onto the digital. Political organising has increased too, with groups like W.A.G.E. in the USA and the Precarious Workers Brigade in the UK campaigning for better working conditions for artists. Outside of Europe and the US, large protests recently took place against the 2013 Istanbul Biennale amidst tremendous social unrest in the city, while in Cairo and the Middle East more broadly, many filmmakers and artists have formed collectives and responded to the revolutions and uprisings. Early in 2014, artists in Jelinek's native Australia boycotted the Sydney Biennale when it was revealed that a sponsorship deal had been made with Transfield, a corporation that runs detention centres. Shortly after the boycott began, the chairman of the biennale quit and the sponsorship deal was axed. Such success has not yet been replicated in the UK, but groups like Art Not Oil continue to campaign against corporate sponsorship at the Tate and other major institutions. I map out this highly schematic history if only to hint towards the pace of change in artistic practice, theory and politics and because I want to keep in sight the question of where Jelinek contributes to this unfolding debate.

To periodise these changes more explicitly in relation to the aesthetic, as opposed to campaign and debate, one can observe that the flowering of collaborative art practices over the last 20 years has not stalled, as Jelinek rightly observes. These developments have been theorised most prominently by writers such as Gregory Sholette in *Dark Matter* (2011), as well as in the assortment of publications dealing with what Jelinek calls 'lifelike art', such as Claire Bishop's *Artificial Hells* (2012), Grant Kester's *The One and the Many* (2011) and *Conversation Pieces* (2004). Major exhibitions such as Creative Time's *Living as Form* in 2011 have showcased and endeavoured to periodise this work.

The attempt of artists to work collaboratively with non-artists on social projects hovers throughout Jelinek's argument but never explicitly forms the object of critique. Nevertheless, it is important to register that the book begins with Jelinek informing the reader that her involvement with the art-activism group Platform, as well as the environmentalist groups Art Not Oil and Climate Camp, changed the way she thought about politics, art and philosophy. Her meeting of these groups in 2009 is figured almost as a moment of estrangement. Jelinek explains that the PhD thesis she wrote between 2004 and 2008 peddled normative assumptions about 'ethical' and politicised art practices, and that her experiences in 2009 radically changed her outlook. Although it is somewhat unclear how this change was manifested, perhaps one can glean from the positivist title of her doctoral thesis – 'Art as a Democratic Act' – that Jelinek's belief in the possibility of art to disrupt has, at the least, somewhat waned since (Jelinek, 2–3).

My article proceeds by responding to Jelinek's reading of the present moment, and how she views the relationship between art and capitalism. I will use this to discuss critical approaches one can take to the art world, and artworks. While art world institutions as she argues are increasingly compelled to reproduce dominant ideologies and socio-economic logics, I believe it is important to retain a sense of how artworks continue to offer different ways of thinking. In discussing artistic practices, Jelinek presents a fruitful critique of the formalist conventions guiding much 'lifelike art'. However, her derision of activist art as frequently clichéd and failing to undermine 'neoliberal structures' is never located in specific works (Jelinek, 8).

Indeed, Jelinek states in her introduction (4–5) that she offers few examples of ‘good’ or ‘political’ or ‘disruptive’ art practices because these are ‘time and context specific’ and because she doesn’t want to ossify examples of ‘best practice’, or meet the demand that critique should provide solutions. I want to draw out why this is a puzzling reason to not pay attention to artworks, and discuss her reduction of art to the sociological. Within this, I argue that the concept of reflection offers an impoverished view of the relation between art and politics. In the final section of my article I take on Jelinek’s critique of Marxism more directly and examine her terms; a critique of ‘binaries’ runs throughout the book, as does an appeal to the notion of ‘power’. Throughout, I hope to weave in a discussion of what Jelinek calls ‘lifelike art’ and how this poses particular problems for art history and criticism.

Reflection and the politics of practice

Throughout *This Is Not Art*, the notion of reflection crops up as a way of theorising the relationship between art and society. For example, in describing neoliberalism as a political formation, Jelinek writes: ‘In other words, wider society – its structures and discourses – reflects and reinforces the values and priorities of the financial sector’ (Jelinek, 20). The art world is identified by Jelinek as a part of society that has come to strongly enact this ‘reflection’ with many individuals within that field unwittingly embodying and perpetuating neoliberal structures, even as they affirm their opposition to this system (Jelinek, 17). In Jelinek’s account, such neoliberal values are not only inherent to art market institutions such as private galleries and auction houses, but have become endemic throughout the third and state sectors due to the rise of the ‘knowledge economy’ and the impetus to implement a ‘mixed economy’ and source private funding.

These shifts in the political economy of the art world are identified with the easy adoption and inculcation of neoliberalism among artists, curators and critics with Jelinek drawing on the arguments put forth by Gregory Sholette in *Dark Matter* (2011) and by Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello in *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (2007). Such changes in the ideological and economic foundations of the art world are undeniable, particularly as we head towards another round of Arts Council cuts in the UK. However, I am puzzled by Jelinek’s claim that neoliberalism is ‘[...] not the same as capitalism’. Instead, she believes that ‘[...] neoliberalism is a set of innovations and structures that maintain a capitalist model of ownership and accumulation’ (Jelinek, 21). This may seem like a minor point, but I believe it is important in order to understand the present, and how we might get out of the current crisis. It appears that Jelinek is suggesting that neoliberalism has supplanted capitalism with her differentiation resting on the argument that while many in the art world profess an aversion to capitalist excesses, they nevertheless embrace neoliberal values (Jelinek, 21). At the level of rhetoric, I would argue the opposite. It is far more common to hear critiques of neoliberalism in the art world, and most tend to shy away from a wholesale condemnation of capitalism. For example, recent campaigns against arts funding cuts frequently centre on proving how art contributes to a ‘healthy’ economy, or on the more liberal end of the spectrum on the ‘social value’ of art. Within this, Keynesian economics are frequently appealed to and maintain a resonance due to his role as founder of the Arts Council. This marks out a tendency to view the present neoliberal epoch as ‘capitalism-gone-bad’, and unfortunately

Jelinek's diagnosis seems to unwittingly reproduce this in affirming a separation between the two categories.

If we understand capitalism as a mode of production in the Marxist sense, the excision of neoliberalism from 'good' capitalism is redundant. This links to the question of periodisation I hinted at above, for Jelinek's argument rests on an assumption that capitalism was a static system, with a totalising appearance in the world. Neoliberalism as an epochal term is a helpful and accurate way of analysing changes in accumulation and social reproduction, as well as capitalism's contemporary spatial, temporal and political expression. Generally, neoliberalism is viewed as beginning with key events in the 1970s such as the breakdown of the Bretton Woods agreement, the OPEC oil crisis and the structural adjustment programmes of the latter half of that decade. Deindustrialisation and the attacks made on workers' movements by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher are also viewed as important processes in the securing of a neoliberal consensus. As a historical demarcation, however, neoliberalism does not mean a new mode of production. Rather, in understanding capitalism as always necessarily intertwining different methods of producing surplus, multiple temporalities and diffuse political orders, we can see that the logic of neoliberalism thrives on uneven development across the world. This ensures we don't fall into the trap of viewing history as a series of linear stages, which Jelinek is equally averse to but from a Foucauldian perspective.

If we view capitalism in the above terms, Jelinek's appeal to how the art world 'reflects' the financial sector appears, strangely for one so committed to disavowing Marxism, to rest on a rather vulgar base/superstructure model. Referring to her personal development, Jelinek notes that she was briefly involved with the International Socialists while at art school in the 1980s and I wonder how her account of the relation between economy and culture relates to that intellectual formation. Indeed, Jelinek seems averse to thinking through artworks, and her positive account of what an artwork can do is reduced down to a form of storytelling, or an ability to reflect on contemporary life (Jelinek, 159–161). As an example of where she gets closer to discussing artworks, institutional critique art is described as positing a binary model of victims and villains with no examples to substantiate or develop this claim. Conversely, Jelinek affirms Tino Sehgal's 'This Success or This Failure' (2007) as more 'subtle', but we get no sense of why or how she conceives this to be the case (Jelinek, 71–72). In relation to the view of capitalism I have described above, it seems necessary to restate some aspects of the debate within Marxist art history and cultural theory that work to refine the base/superstructure model, and explore paths through which writing about artworks can involve the generation of new meaning.

In his article 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory', Raymond Williams (1973) notes that the base/superstructure model involves viewing the economy as having a deterministic 'prefiguration, prediction or control' over culture. He emphasises that the simplest notion of a superstructure – rather than superstructures in the plural – involves [...] the reflection, imitation or reproduction of the reality of the base in the superstructure in a more or less direct way' (4). In summing up the problem with this, Williams emphasises that this relationship cannot be found without 'effort or even violence to the material or practice being studied' (4).

I am with Williams on this, and although Jelinek never directly discusses an artwork in such reductive terms – as simply 'reflecting' neoliberalism – she does shy away from actually thinking through artworks. This seems to stem from a wariness

of works that have been produced or displayed in institutions which form part of the overall reproduction of capital. It is interesting to note that Williams also identified in 1973 that 'the true crisis in cultural theory, in our own time, is between this view of the work of art as object and the alternative view of art as a practice' (15). This is obviously relevant for the field of 'lifelike art' as one that is rarely object-led and instead intrinsically part of the shift towards practice within art. With art that produces a more clearly discernable object, the relationship between the work's making, its reception and distribution is always active and changing, and therefore its meaning malleable and, as Jelinek would put it, contingent. Is this less the case with art that emphasises itself as practice? Do we not more readily appeal to the original conditions of how such a work was made (think of the debates on ethics and collaboration)? I want to suggest that this is not only due to what Jelinek identifies as a vague political orthodoxy within 'lifelike art' but is also as linked to art as practice.

Turning to a discussion that builds on Williams' argument, Stuart Hall's 'Notes on Deconstructing the Popular' ([1981] 1998) offers some pointers on how to theorise culture in relation to class formation and capitalism. In his attempt to summarise a notion of the popular, Hall's work, like Williams', is indebted to Antonio Gramsci and centres on disavowing crude notions of 'false consciousness' which Jelinek also critiques. Hall's sense of the popular is deeply suspicious of any notion that 'the people' are simply dupes of a populist consumerism. He equally dismisses the romanticism of an autonomous 'alternative' culture that lies 'outside' dominant social relations and emphasises that shuttling between the poles of pure autonomy and recuperation is a loser's game (Hall [1981] 1998, 446). Instead, Hall views culture as a changing field in which the processes of production, dissemination and consumption mean that we need to think about 'the changing and uneven relations of force which define the field' (449). Thinking through this, how is it that our analysis of art that emphasises process is so intractably static? Why is it so much more difficult to analyse ephemeral, social artworks in relation to the shifting terrain of production, reception and distribution? Inevitably we lapse into sociological categories when addressing such art, and though Jelinek's book does not overcome this, she opens up a provocation to the field by emphasising that it has become a formalist convention for leftist artists to work collaboratively. As Jelinek and others such as Bishop have noted, there is nothing inherently progressive in the idea of collaboration, or participation. Indeed, if we think of collaboration and participation as forms, then Hall's point that the meaning of culture and its place or position within the cultural field 'is not inscribed in its form' seems an important addition (Hall [1981] 1998, 452).

However, the above problematic is partly what discourages Jelinek from attending to specific objects or practices within 'lifelike art' or elsewhere. For example, in discussing auction success, Jelinek stresses that a 'type of pop art with representational elements, often referencing pop culture or brands, combined with an advertising-campaign-type of twist' dominates (Jelinek, 31). She does not give specific examples of what she has in mind here, but one can speculate that this refers to a broad sweep of artists, from Andy Warhol to Jean-Michel Basquiat to Jeff Koons to Takashi Murakami. In the case of these artists, there is significant difference of meaning and aesthetic form, and flattening them formalises market success in an unrealistic way. Similarly, Jelinek's complaint about institutional critique attacks the movement rather than artworks, meaning it remains an abstract point.

Art and commodification

In the same chapter that deals with the contemporary art market, Jelinek emphasises the rise of the knowledge economy as further undermining the possibility of ephemeral, process-based and conceptual art as a strategy of refusal to commodification (Jelinek, 35–36). This joins a healthy level of discussion that has proliferated since the early dematerialisation debates of the 1970s, and Stewart Martin's critique of relational aesthetics is exemplary. From a Marxist perspective, Martin identifies that any analysis of art's relation to capitalism must be founded upon the dialectical inversion between subject and object produced by commodification. Martin emphasises that there is also a dialectic in autonomy and heteronomy, as 'anti-art' and 'pure art' are 'two faces of the same currency' (Martin 2007 373). The anti-art position is generally associated with the dissolution of art into life and stumbles when it confronts the fact that the dissolution is one into capitalist life. An instance of this would be Jelinek's reasoning that the rise of the 'knowledge economy' stultifies the radical potential of conceptual or ephemeral practices. Another example would be Claire Bishop's argument that much contemporary participation involves outsourcing and has thus created a genre she calls delegated performance (Bishop 2012, 220).

As Martin emphasises, these dissolutions frequently lead to calls for the critical potential of art's autonomy as anathema to commodification. The argument that artists are generally un-alienated insofar as they don't sell their labour power to make their work and that they own the means of their production forms one part of this position. Jelinek's appeal to disciplinarity also has the potential to echo the 'pure art' side of the coin, although she has an interesting sense of why disciplinarity cannot be associated directly with particular forms. As Martin explains, 'pure art' is the flipside to 'anti-art' because it must necessarily confront that any 'purity' is guaranteed by the reification of art through its commodification (Martin 2007 373).

As Martin stresses, more interesting claims for art's autonomy were made by Theodor Adorno. For Adorno, the potential of art is to reveal the 'social totality' in the aporia which opens up between autonomy and heteronomy. Art gives itself over to capitalist life if it dissolves into life, and if 'art remains strictly for-itself, it nonetheless submits to integration as one harmless domain among others' (Adorno [1970] 2013, 323). This leads Martin to emphasise that 'art's autonomy is only constituted critically if it is mediated by its heteronomy', and he stresses that it is on these terms that we should consider art's critical potential (Martin 2007 375). Ultimately, and most importantly for this discussion, Martin's critique of Nicolas Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics* recognises that the affirmation of social relations as art in the face of commodification offers a fetishised view of capitalism. Value is not constituted by objects in and of themselves, but by the commodification of labour. As Marx stresses, labour is the source of value, and to view value as a property immanent to objects is fetishism. In relation to the problem of 'lifelike art', and how we respond to it as critics, Jelinek's complaint that its radical potential is quashed through neoliberalism's 'dematerialised' characteristics is important, but again, a Marxist view has this potential to recognise that such art stumbles as a political principle for the aesthetic long before. The problem is not with objects, but relations.

Before moving on to the final section of this article, I want to dwell on an example Jelinek gives during her discussion of the knowledge economy. She describes how the changes in intellectual property law led David Bowie to create 'Bowie Bonds' in 1997 and thus to monetise his future sales. Jelinek posits Marcel Duchamp's issuing of his own bonds in 1924 as a precursor. Duchamp's bonds were part of a series of what Olav Velthius has described as 'financial readymades', beginning in 1919 with the Tzanck Cheque he created to pay his dentist in Paris (Velthius 2000). The Tzanck Cheque was made by drawing the details of a normal cheque in great detail. Other financial readymades included the Czech Cheque and the Cheque Bruno, both created in 1965 as fundraising exercises. The Monte Carlo Bonds were slightly different and created to raise funds for a gambling project Duchamp established around adapting roulette to the laws of his favourite game, chess, thus based on removing luck and imposing a mathematical logic. Like the other financial readymades, the Monte Carlo Bond imitated an actual financial document, laced with surrealist details such as the text in the background reading 'moustiques domestiques demistock' ('domestic mosquitos half-stock'). The document was also signed twice by Duchamp, once in the guise of Rrose Sélavy, his alter ego, here presented as the president of the bank issuing the bond, and once by himself. Thirty of these were created and all owners were entitled to an annual dividend of 20% (Judovitz 1995).

The Monte Carlo Bond is a typically Duchampian joke, but its status oscillates between the artwork as total commodity and the artwork as dissolved into life. This, I think, fruitfully opens up that aporia between autonomy and heteronomy, and even more so because of the way speculation is invoked as a category common to art and finance. The real difference then between Duchamp's bonds and the Bowie Bonds is that the deployment of the former as artwork radically changes their meaning. Only attention to them as artworks can reveal this.

I want to triangulate Bowie and Duchamp's bonds with a third example of art's dissolution into life via financial instruments. Theaster Gates, a prominent Chicago-based artist working in the field of socially engaged art, has also created bonds. They were issued following his acquisition of a dilapidated former bank building on Chicago's South Side for just \$1 with the assistance of the city's mayor, Rahm Emanuel. Gates' career, unlike that of most social practice artists, happily straddles the marketplace and the non-profit sphere. In order to make the money for the renovation of the bank into a community cultural centre, Gates transformed marble fittings from the bank into small sculptures engraved with a representation of the building, his signature and the phrase 'In Art We Trust'. These were issued as bond certificates, with 100 tablet-sized marble bonds for sale at \$5000 each and larger marble slabs for sale at \$50,000 (Austen 2013). For a rising art star like Gates, these bonds represent a promising investment, though it is unclear whether there is a set dividend rate on the bonds. Gates often casts himself as a kind of trickster in interviews, and in this light it seems he is following in a Duchampian tradition (Colapinto 2014). However, as Jelinek quite rightly notes, the economic transformations between the 1920s and the present, not to mention almost a century of artists expanding the territory of what art is, means Gates' gesture has to be read differently. Whereas Duchamp's bonds tells us something about art and finance, Gates' bonds can in many ways be viewed as the ultimate example of how the social or dematerialised turn as antidote to commodification is an impossibility both for the historical reasons outlined by Jelinek and the more intractable ones outlined by Martin.

History and utopia

In this final section I deal directly with Jelinek's critique of Marxism. Gramsci is a good place to begin, as both Williams and Hall are indebted to his concept of hegemony and Gramsci also appears briefly in Jelinek's book as a straw man to Foucault, with little exploration of his actual writing. I want to begin by expanding on why hegemony is an important concept, and where Jelinek's emphasis on the category of power and discourse over hegemony falls short. As Williams emphasises, hegemony assists our understanding of capitalism as totalising – and not as something merely ideological. Gramsci's exploration of hegemony is complex, but in an attempt to sum up, one can say that it is a process of domination that involves both coercion and consent. It is not abstract or ideological and exists as much in the prison as it does in the classroom. For Gramsci, hegemony is a relational process that takes place across much of life, and continually appears as a body of practices and expectations that reciprocally confirm one another (Williams 1973, 9). The importance of hegemony is that it allows us to think through the formation of consciousness as attached not only to ideology but to understand how this is formed, materially, and why the dominant system is difficult to abolish. As Williams says in relation to education:

If what we learn there were merely an imposed ideology, or if it were only the isolable meanings and practices of the ruling class, or of a section of the ruling class, which gets imposed on others, occupying merely the top of our minds, it would be – and one would be glad – a very much easier thing to overthrow. (Williams 1973, 9)

This illustrates the problems with the notion of discourse as Jelinek puts forth, which in *This Is Not Art* primarily refers to ideology. A fuller exploration of what is meant by discourse and how it operates is lacking in the book, but as I understand Jelinek's argument, it is a category she uses to explore how power operates.

However, her notion of power also presents a problem. As with her account of discourse, its mode of operation is not discussed. Obviously these terms are deployed with Foucault in mind, but they need more exploration as otherwise the reader flounders in the face of claims such as those where Jelinek accuses Claire Bishop of a 'lack of understanding about the role of discourse in art' (Jelinek, 50). Without more clarification as to why 'discourse' is the container for so much meaning, the reader is left puzzled as to its conceptual significance with Jelinek's aversion to Marxism meaning these terms are constantly abstracted from a sense of how the social totality is reproduced.

As well as George Dickie's 'institutional definition of art', Jelinek's discussion of how various practices are legitimised as art is informed by Pierre Bourdieu, which leads to some brief remarks about art and class. Jelinek states that class is implicated in 'the very definition of art' and explains that here she is referring to 'monied or upper and middle class people' (Jelinek, 59). Following Bourdieu, Jelinek's notion of class emphasises taste, culture and profession. She says class may come to be constituted as a type, including artists, curators and others, seemingly referring to Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital. The problem with this, as with Jelinek's emphasis on the categories of power and discourse, is that it completely misses the relational quality of how class and hegemony are experienced. Bourdieu's notion of 'capital' is, as Jon Beasley-Murray has noted, in fact closer to the category of

'wealth' and thus cannot give any account of the accumulation of surplus, and concomitantly cannot account for exploitation or profit (Murray 2000).

I should clarify at this point what I mean when I say that Jelinek's argument is lacking because she does not theorise capitalism as a mode of production. As evidenced in her understanding of class and her preference for discourse over hegemony and power over domination and exploitation, she lacks a sense of how capitalism is reproduced. Jelinek views capital as wealth and therefore cannot account for production, valorisation and exploitation. Her frequent summoning of 'power' as a container to discuss all manner of social phenomena such as racism and sexism lacks an account of how exploitation and oppression are historically structured by material reality. 'Power' thus exists as an amorphous set of morals and behaviours, and fails to illuminate what those material realities are, how they exist and how we might transform them. To understand capitalism as continually reproduced through the accumulation of living labour transformed into surplus value is essential to understanding why it is destructive to human sociality and experience. Furthermore, to conceive of capitalism as a mode of production is to historicise it, a vital move in engendering the imagination of different possibilities.

Jelinek's belief that Marxism is binaristic and cannot assist in a critical engagement with questions of how power operates in the art world also needs correcting. In Jelinek's account, a binary model of power, as influenced by Marxism, is common among artists who work politically in community settings or with activist practices. She sees this binary model as conceiving that there are those that are powerless and those that are powerful. This leads to problems within community and activist art practices, as artists may imagine themselves as powerful, and as needing to help those lacking in power. This may be a fair dig at certain community-based 'lifelike' practices, but Marx is not to blame for such crude notions. Furthermore, Jelinek sees this 'binary model of power' as extending into the historical avant-gardes. This reduction elides the significant differences between the avant-gardes as surely we can assume that the Futurists had a different idea of power to the Dadaists, or surrealists (Jelinek, 69).

Jelinek's belief that crude binaries are Marxist comes out of a misunderstanding of dialectical thinking. She centres her understanding on Hegel's master-slave dialectic which she simplifies as ending (which I presume she means as reaching the *aufhebung*) in a kind of reversal, with the slave becoming 'whole' and the master becoming 'weak', both realising they are interdependent and ceasing to struggle (Jelinek, 78–79). This is a very simplified understanding of the master-slave dialectic, but more importantly, Jelinek fails to recognise that Marx's dialectic is different to Hegel's. As Chris Arthur has explained, the idea that the master-slave dialectic is the primary influence on Marx's dialectic became popularised through unfounded claims by Jean-Paul Sartre (Arthur 1983, 67). As Arthur details, the fundamental difference between Hegel's dialectic and Marx's rests on the latter's belief that 'only a change in the mode of production recovers for the worker his sense of self and its fulfilment' (Arthur 1983, 70). For Hegel, the educative effect of work even when carried out with violence and exploitation produces a consciousness for the worker where she can find 'meaning' in her product (Arthur 1983, 70). This sounds like the beginning of a Marxological exegesis but that is not my intention. Rather, I want to show what is at stake politically in Jelinek's misreading through the example she gives to claim that Marxism is binaristic.

Jelinek turns to feminism to exemplify her claims about dialectics being binaristic by stating that the movement's victories emerged out of a dialectical struggle between patriarchy and feminism. She says that feminists have full equality as their goal, and although she does not qualify this, one presumes she means full equality with men. One of the many contributions of Marxist feminism and black feminism has been to illustrate that the goal of equality is untenable for many as it simply means the freedom to be doubly exploited; in the workplace as well as the domestic sphere. Equality as I understand it means access to the double freedom of bourgeois society; that is, the freedom from the means of production and the freedom to sell your labour power. What Jelinek describes, then, is not dialectical but a bourgeois notion of equality and progress that deserves critique. She is mistaken to attribute such ideas to Marxism, as she is mistaken to simply say that dialectics is between 'two things' (Jelinek, 79). Capitalism in a Marxist understanding runs on the principle that some people buy labour power and others are compelled to sell it. While this creates two groups – proletarians and capitalists – only the most vulgar of Marxists believe there are not significant differences and modes of oppression and exploitation at work, taking into account race and gender as well as history and geography.

Jelinek is rightly anxious that reducing the operation of power to two classes may marginalise some within these groups, and politically this is undoubtedly where many socialist and communist parties have disastrously faltered, not least in their frequent blindness to gender and race. However, Jelinek's emphasis on empowerment is not a solution. As Marina Vishmidt has written, the concept frequently functions to describe a pragmatist and individualised process of social mobility within the parameters of already existing social relations, implying the possibility of accommodation rather than recognising a system structurally based on injustice and dispossession. As Vishmidt (2013) emphasises, empowerment only becomes clear as problematic when juxtaposed with the notion of "revolution" as a way to name the horizon of social change'.

I want to close by returning to the question of temporality. Jelinek claims that dialectics implies a teleological march forward, and again, this is certainly an accusation that can be levelled at vulgar Marxism. However, there is a long tradition that attempts to approach history in a more complex way, from Ernst Bloch and Walter Benjamin to more recent scholarship such as that by Massimiliano Tomba on Marx's temporalities (2012). In my view, an understanding of history as positively unfolding is as untenable as the retention of negative utopian thinking is vital. Art at best offers us one way of speculating towards that, and writing about artworks can be a further site of imagination. Within this, I suggest that the analysis of artworks in our current moment necessitates a certain level of negative thinking. Not a negativity centred on the kinds of dualistic antagonism Jelinek disparages, but rather one centred on a recognition that the meaning in emphasising art's self-consciousness, or self-critique, lies in the possibility this offers for reminding us of the current limitations to life.

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Not here, right now/right here, not now: unfolding the context in Alana Jelinek's *This Is Not Art*

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In this article I aim to unfold the main argument in Alana Jelinek's *This Is Not Art* into contiguous territories, located within the contemporary reality of urban development and the post-Olympic cultural landscape in London. Faced with the emergence and increasing production of artistic activities known as 'creative placemaking', and the enmeshed relationships between the continuing evacuation of social housing estates and the presence of artists as temporary occupants/practitioners in these interim spaces, a stark but necessary question is suggested: what is art *doing* in London at this moment in time? In asking this question, I am mindful of the precious distinction recently drawn by Angela Dimitrakaki, who suggests that we should differentiate between 'the artwork' as the output of artistic production, and the outcome of 'art' as a way of production. The production relations as 'outcomes' that we examine in this article are those of the forces engaged in the production of physical and social urban space in London today in which 'art as outcome' is a central component. I identify this as the 'aesthetic dividend', understood as the added value to privileged narratives of urban development inscribed both into planning authorities' scenarios and private developers' marketing strategies, and served by an array of specific artistic activities and their perception as 'creative placemaking'. Dimitrakaki's propositions will also be important in the central section of the article, when they will be drawn as important resources into the analysis of Mike Nelson's/Artangel's unrealized artwork for the decanted Heygate Estate in Elephant & Castle, South London.

Everything can be made up, can be made over again, and the absolute singularity of human experience – the source of both its tragedy and its beauty – is thus dissipated in the trivializing nobility of a redemption through art. (Bersani 1990, 22)

... art reflects rather than challenges the dominant social relations; politics mirrors rather than challenges the predominant relations of production [...] art's effectiveness no longer depends on art just as politics is related to a free-floating idea of power and the artist seems concerned with both and neither at the same time. (Leger 2013, 37)

There are many cultural synchronicities – predictable and unexpected, echoes and delay, above and below – that emerge when responding to Alana Jelinek's *This Is Not Art*, perhaps signifying above all the importance and timeliness of her intervention as 'a story of art told for this time, this contemporary moment, in recognition of the preoccupations and history of radical art practice' (Jelinek 2013, 4), and the contingencies of time and place that accompany its publication.

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The sense of epiphany described by Jelinek in the introduction of *This Is Not Art* might exclusively belong to her own trajectory of personal development, but the circumstances she describes have a very specific history, punctuated by passages which many of us might have recognized as contradictory crossings between art and life in our own practices in the artworld and beyond.

As an artist and a London citizen since 1990, I will be drawing on several of these contemporary instances in keeping with the ‘doggedly London perspective’ (Jelinek 2013, 4) of its source with the intention of dropping some of the abstractions at the core of *This Is Not Art* into an operative milieu and locating its philosophical propositions in a series of fragmented, local contexts that will revisit and review many of Jelinek’s points of analysis, questions and conclusions. By forcing a return to specific narratives, rather than providing a pointless exegesis of her story, I aim to unfold Jelinek’s argument into contiguous territories, located within the contemporary reality of urban development in London, intended as the primary condition that affects its cultural production at present and the global dimension that subtends to its production and reproduction. I will draw this condition further and deeper into its bearing on the story as told by *This Is Not Art* as one of my main points in this article, casting Jelinek’s preoccupations into actual London-based events that will help to reveal some aspects of this externalized mutual relationship between contemporary city and contemporary art unfolding at the intersection between art, urban planning, capital investment, public bodies and activism.

If – as declared at the outset – *This Is Not Art* is a hope and an attempt ‘to inspire others to consider art and art’s social role in a new, more generative, light’ (Jelinek 2013, 3), we might do well by starting to see more clearly the actual role of art in the contemporary production of the cultural imaginary of urban space in London and begin by posing a stark but necessary question: what is art *doing* in London at this moment in time? In asking this question, I am mindful of the precious distinction recently drawn by Angela Dimitrakaki, who suggests that we should differentiate between ‘the artwork’ as the output of artistic production, and the outcome of ‘art’ as a way of production (Dimitrakaki 2013, 6) so that we can better understand how art stands in relations of production (5).

The production relations we examine in this article are those of the forces engaged in the production of physical and social urban space in London today, in which ‘art as outcome’ is a central component. Dimitrakaki’s propositions will also be important in the final section of the article, when they will be drawn as important resources into the analysis of Mike Nelson’s/Artangel’s proposed artwork for the Heygate Estate in Elephant & Castle, South London.

Art as aesthetic dividend in the production of contemporary urban space

The urban is no longer an arena where value is created so much as extracted, gouged out of the common coffers, appropriated as monopoly rents and merchants’ profits, as shareholder dividends and interest payments; the urban, nowadays, is itself exchange value. (Merrifield 2014)

There could hardly be a more carefully constructed academic argument than the image shown in Figure 1, to impart to the reader the connections I am intending to draw between art and urban development in London today, particularly because its

FLYTHROUGH



Figure 1. Screenshot from the flythrough video of the forthcoming Hallsville Quarter development, Canning Town.

visual language is in itself a product and an argument of the primacy of the visual in the current urban regime in London. This single image, extracted from one of the now customary flythrough videos as selling pitch for worlds yet to exist, functions as marketing material, a glimpse into the future urban spaces produced through the local regeneration programme actively remaking the area of Canning Town, East London.

In this role, it is hardly an informative evidence of the future spatial qualities that await new dwellers, but more importantly, it is painfully revealing of the spatial unconscious in which the 'ghosts in reverse' inhabiting the future Canning Town have been programmed to live their aspirational lives in advance of their real counterparts. What this image also fails to tell us is that this specific public-private development at the core of the regeneration partnership between the London Borough of Newham and French developers Bouygues, sits in the middle of the so-called 'Arc of Opportunity', drawn by 'Newham London' (as the Borough rebrands itself for outside investors) in 2010 as a packaging of investment opportunities available in the Borough when they offered Newham as 'London's Regeneration Supernova' at the Shanghai Expo 2010 (Hancox 2014).

Perhaps also because of this initial pitch to Far Eastern markets both as investors and ultimate buyers of many of these flats, the image presents us with a new public space in which the future as dreamt by the developers – and virtually imaged by the 'creative

economy' of CGI service industry labourers freshly graduated from Art & Design departments of UK universities – is signified by the presence of a fictitious 'Newham Biennale', a virtually reaffirming index of the re-imagined East London as a mix between Shoreditch and Canary Wharf seen from afar, where real historical, social and spatial differences are digitally remastered into a city marketing mantra as a win-win situation.

This delirious fragment of social life in the forthcoming Hallsville Quarter is a joyful blend of artworld venues and brand outlets as 'destination tourism' where artists, shoppers and residents – presumably many of them temporary occupants of the nearby Fizzy Living¹ apartments in the Vermilion Tower – happily mingle together in the post-regeneration Canning Town where apparently any form of social conflict is merely translated into a library of homogenized royalty-free citizens moving in prescribed and managed routes.

The 2010 World Expo in Shanghai [...] suggested that the horizon of politics lies in the development of progressively smarter solutions by an alliance of business, science, and authoritarian state and city governments. The global-urban problematic, from this perspective, is above all a question of efficiency and proper management, where political contentiousness, like pollution, is one more problem to be solved. (Madden 2012, 782)

While often easily dismissed at face value as nothing but marketing trivia, these 'visions' of harmonious new quarters in East London – part creative quarter, part entrepreneur enclave, part shopping nirvana – are crucial entry points to develop a reading of 'art as aesthetic dividend' in the production of contemporary urban space in London today and the various levels of cross-over (as synergy) and screen-off (as differentiation) that constitute the architecture of this co-productive relationship between art and new urban spaces.

Indeed, the points of connections and frictions between artistic discourse, cultural production and urban development in London today function as the critical joints in which the infectious double-bind conduit between *endogenous* and *non-endogenous* values described by Jelinek are at their most discernible and laid bare in their contradicting and exploitative relationship.

This is not simply a correlation between art activities and urban space under a shared economic regime, but an enmeshed causality that is produced and reproduced in an auratic realm of marketing urbanism, where art functions as the aesthetic dividend central to the financial value of urban development, providing intangible currency as the value-added financial assets of 'uniqueness' and 'authenticity' that multiply the overall equity of the city/quarter/housing development. Cue the *Newham Biennale* yet to be conceived, funded or curated.

Hallsville Quarter is not the only place in Canning Town where obsessive creative placemaking is at work; the brochures for two neighbouring developments describe similarly passionate synergies between art and housing developments:

An arts centre and gallery, together with shops, restaurants and cafés will help to give London City Island the feel of an authentic and creative riverside community, bursting with ideas and vitality. (<http://www.londoncityisland.com/brochures/city-island-brochure> 2013)

At Cathedral we are consumed with a passion for creating new, thriving and sustainable places. Our friends at the House of Fairytales are *a group of extraordinary people who*

exist to change hearts and minds ... led by artist Deborah Curtis and Gavin Turk ... their presence on-site has led to more companies starting to take an interest in the area and there is a buzz of excitement and expectation. (<http://www.cathedralgroup.com/current-projects/canning-town/> emphasis added)

In this environment, the one-way umbilical cord of Clement Greenberg's autonomous disciplinarity turns into a two-way wireless connection between urban actors, trading their disciplinary values on the marketplace as the narrative hoardings of land value bubbles.

This productive relationship at work in the material and immaterial production of contemporary marketing urbanism in London shows its incessant deployment of images of art, artists, art activities as well as the presence of a whole industry of actual service provision to cultural master planners and developers in search of these narrative elements for their products.

This ever-growing cottage industry emerged during the last 10 years from a blend of discredited public art agencies looking to rebrand their services, creative consultancies quick in capturing place branding techniques, new cultural institutions driving the pre- and post-Olympic refashioning of East London,² eager art curators opening new markets for their work and erstwhile city boosters and PR agencies,³ always intent on pre-designing the city, shaping its future desires and colonizing its future opportunities.

The productive spectrum of this broad service industry might look different in *output*, but it turns out to be rather similar in *outcome*. The dead old crass bronze sculpture plonked in the lobby of a luxury block of flats 'as art' and the high-end bespoke 'community engagement' service provision 'as art' might occupy diverse positions in terms of art historical development and aesthetic perception, separated by different clientele, budgets and target audience, but as far as their social role and service provision is concerned – what they *do* as art – hardly any difference is registered.

The activities of 'leading culture and placemaking agency' Futurecity provide telling evidence of these operative realms of instrumental exchange:

We believe culture can add commercial value to new developments, offer purchasers investment opportunities and provide real stories for marketing, branding and communication [...] culture should be seen as an essential ingredient in the creation of unique places, offering authenticity to new places and value. (<http://web.archive.org/web/20130527104053/http://futurecity.co.uk/about/>)

The fact that the symbolic cultural economy of capital investment at the border between the City of London and Shoreditch has recently assumed the architectural form of a residential high-rise named 'Avant-Garde' (<http://www.telfordhomes.plc.uk/avantgardetower/>) should leave no doubt as to where we might be in the frantic exchanges between art and capital in between mutually cannibalistic recognition and denial, all the while posing as worlds apart in the same place.

In between many other consulting projects that can single out their unique contribution in having shaped London's public and private realm as it is today, Futurecity also wrote the City of London cultural strategy in 2011. This is 'a 200-page report exploring creative ideas and frameworks for the promotion of London as the world's leading cultural city. The document is a tool to attract inward investment

for the ancient walled city from current square mile occupants' (https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=6&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CEYQFjAF&url=http%3A%2F%2Ffuturecity.co.uk%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2014%2F04%2FPlacemaking-Case-Studies.pdf&ei=cj49VNe4EcviO-CUGBg&usg=AFQjCNG8QXY0ZWCyCeMwm56_Cj4yqgkODw&sig2=z4trm3P9bxTmFfKIrOTCzg&bvm=bv.77161500,d.ZWU). Sculpture in the City 2013 – a free exhibition of temporary public art that provides a changing programme of outstanding public art in an area that is changing rapidly (<http://web.archive.org/web/20130906225001/http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/visiting-the-city/attractions-museums-and-galleries/sculpture-in-the-city/Pages/introduction-to-sculpture-in-the-city.aspx>) – is one of the main initiatives derived from the document.

This tired but recently revived practice sees the art object intended as a 'gift' to the generic urban public, ranging from the transient passer-by to the resident community member. It is given a new sense of purpose by the current cultural climate, perfectly spelled out by the recent keynote speech at the British Library by the now departed Minister of Culture, Maria Miller: 'Our reputation for cultural excellence enhances the way in which the world sees us. [...] That reputation, with culture at its heart, is great for business' (Miller 2014).

Its return as a strategic tool in the London of 2013 renders explicit the symbiotic axis between the only models of urban growth that the current marketing urbanism has to offer: those of the financial city and those of the creative city. Financial enclaves and creative quarters that border each other (Shoreditch and Square Mile) overlap here, as the sculptures of renowned 'edgy, contemporary' artists (<http://web.archive.org/web/20130906225001/http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/visiting-the-city/attractions-museums-and-galleries/sculpture-in-the-city/Pages/introduction-to-sculpture-in-the-city.aspx>) extend their semi-autonomous status in the core of the world's financial centre.⁴

There is little merit in having a financial district with no culture in it – nor, possibly, a cultural district with no economic value. The two often go hand in hand [...] Today many investors, policy makers, and others are sophisticated enough to agree that art helps boost the economy by attracting tourists, increasing productivity, and making cities more liveable. (Townsend 2013)

At the heart of these artificially normalized relationships between apparently diverging mythologies and value systems, today's art output and capital investments are engineered to coexist in a mutually exploitative strategy of urban development where overlapping value propositions of intrinsic nature and instrumental motive – and vice versa – are carefully administered to maintain an orchestrated distance from each other, resulting in 'an ever-widening gap between the material conditions of art and its symbolic systems: between what the vast majority of artworks are today (socially and economically) and what artists, curators, critics, and historians say that artworks – especially their own work or work they support – do and mean' (Fraser 2012, 190).

In these hybrid environments, the emblematic division between endogenous and non-endogenous values, as outlined by Jelinek's *This Is Not Art*, produces effects akin to a two-way mirror, an overlap of identities that renders clear-cut separations more troublesome, if not somewhat more crucial.

Dimitrakaki's focused attention on the slippage of art's *outcomes* through the critical privileging of art's *outputs* speaks of the same necessary shift of attention:

Moving therefore from a critique focused on outputs to one focused on outcomes is neither simple nor desirable under the aegis of capitalist reason at present. But it is surely ideologically charged: *outcomes cannot always be mapped with precision. It is outcomes, rather than outputs, which often exceed measure.* (Dimitrakaki 2013, 6, emphasis added)

The issue of differentiation that preoccupies Jelinek and the subsequent problems she is trying to address when calling for an urgently needed 'endogenous discourse of validation' emerging from the arts is indeed a problem that relates to the developed capacity of both art and capital to externalize their inherent basic contradictions by foregrounding legitimizing narratives of their own operations.

While this specific narrative of exclusion and negation is historically narrated in art as its 'autonomous' status and its subsequent critical development, capital also deals with the mechanism of distancing its own contradictions by displacing them as externalities outside of monetizing logic or by simply 'moving them around' geographically. Art institutions nowadays exist in between confirming their own historically grounded legitimacy as the place for freedom, indeterminacy, plurality and individual agency, and the capturing of this symbolic function by material conditions inscribed in their core relationship with corporations and transnational capitalist class whose main interest is in artworks as 'tangible safe havens for capital in times of stock market uncertainty and as high-end status symbols' (Kenning and Kern 2013, 3), all the while sustaining the narrative of artistic autonomy as the preserve of unfettered creativity and unbridled innovation as an example of liberal, democratic values and their redemptive agency.

What I am hoping to show with the next section of this article is that the base conditions for Jelinek's set of propositions – if intended as a plan for revitalizing art discourse and practice out of its current state of proximity and subconscious symbiosis with the post-crisis neoliberal regime and its contemporary terminal horizon – are already active but deliberately segregated within the unseen folds of the stories we tell ourselves as art practitioners and educators and the social and economic relationship we choose to forget in these roles.

At the very least, a clear look into these folds as they become visible might instigate a process of anamnesia that can 'help us to think of art [...] and teach us to want an art, unavailable for any such legitimizing plot' (Bersani 1990, 4). The signs that some reawakening of this way of looking at art is taking hold are still largely symbolic, incomplete, morally insecure and, more often than not, forced upon us by accidental events, but in the face of the received modes of 'business as usual' and the cheap responses of 'it's always been like this', they assume particular significance.

Social housing as ready-made: anamnesia in the Heygate Estate

As Goetzmann et al. note, art prices, like real estate prices in desirable cities, rise with income inequality as the wealthy outbid each other for rarefied properties. Steeply increasing top incomes set off an equally steep inflation in the goods and services associated with affluence resulting in a downclassing of formerly affluent income levels. (Fraser 2012, 186)

In the early summer of 2005, I was invited to make a proposal for a temporary public intervention within a festival of events in Walthamstow under the title 'News from Nowhere; Visions of Utopia'. The site I chose, previously a post office, had already been earmarked for the development of a public library designed by Will Alsop, presumably intended to replicate the effect achieved by the newly opened Peckham Library in South London, an award-winning building and the centre of another regeneration project for London, but the opportunity apparently floundered for economic reasons.

The model of culture that had already been promoted for several years was – it largely still is, give or take its hardening in the post-crisis austerity regime – that of art seen as an 'economic avant-garde' (Groys 2011), a tool for social inclusion and employment opportunities, and a model for a creative, self-motivated, flexible and resilient workforce and citizenry. The previous years had seen unprecedented mushrooming of museums, cultural buildings and public art all over the UK, supposedly spearheading the economic development of areas considered 'deprived' or, in other words, still resisting the assimilation to the type of spatial standards and social spaces conducive for the establishment of the consumption patterns of late capitalism.

There was not yet gold dust in the air in Walthamstow; indeed the William Morris Museum, at the back of which we held the opening night's party, was still threatened with closure and in a rather drab state. In the week that followed,

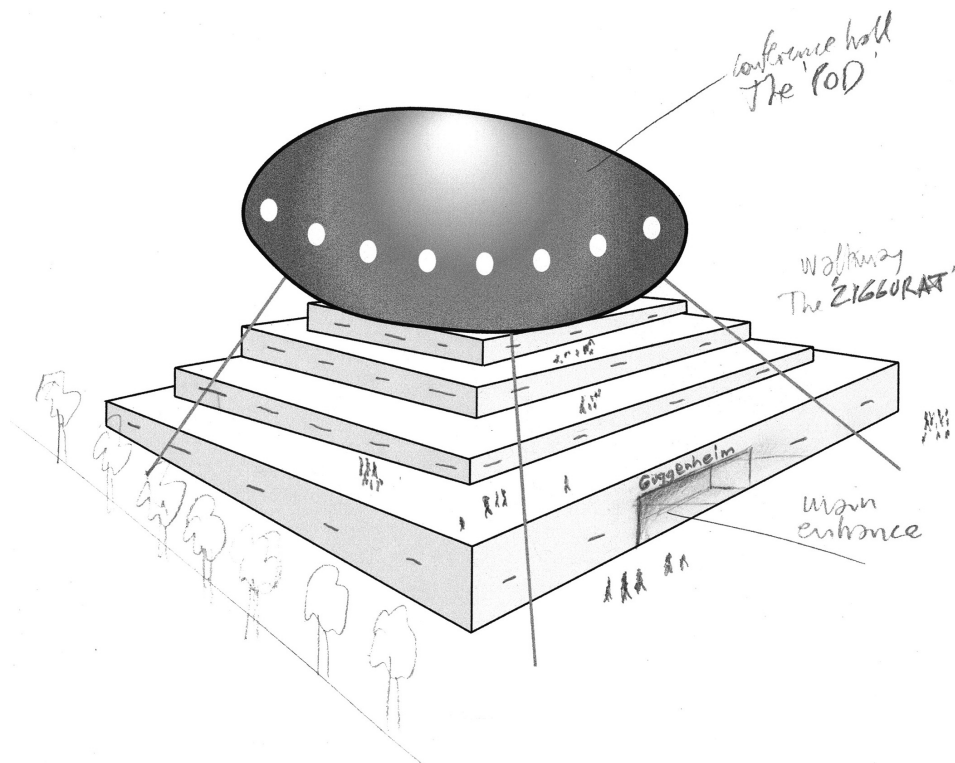


Figure 2. Image of the speculative Guggenheim Walthamstow proposal, Alberto Duman © 2005.

London would be announced as the host of the 2012 Olympic Games. On the very next day, 7 July 2005, London would experience the first ever coordinated suicide bombing terrorist attack on a large scale, claiming 52 of its citizens' lives.

Earlier on in June, what I came up with was the hoax project 'Guggenheim Walthamstow' described back then as:

... a hyperbole of such plans, a hoax presenting us with the possibility that the Bilbao effect might visit Walthamstow and work out its tainted magic [...] a large poster placed on the hoarding around the empty site at the heart of the district presents the passing public with the coming of the Guggenheim, including a sketched out vignette of the forthcoming building, a reminder of the overrated architectural gestures which so often today are the oversized logos of large capital expansion. (Duman 2005)

As I am working on this article, the amount of press writing on an impending burst of 'London's housing bubble' is increasing and the voices of discontent of its becoming a dumping ground for the accumulated fortunes of global billionaires – many of them also active art collectors and players in the London Art World – are becoming louder (Conway 2014; Moore 2014).

The nexus between art and capital that haunts the conscience of artworld practitioners – once perhaps a spectral presence, nowadays a brazen and blatant assertion of power with a kind of arrogant 'so what?' attached to it – brings in its wake several alienating after-effects. One is the rather comedic sense of disgust towards the vulgar image of art that is reflected back onto those who have done much to create it and disseminate it and who are enjoying its benefits, as Julian Stallabrass recently wrote in *The Art Newspaper* (Stallabrass 2012). Another is a provocation for many of those embracing a different logic of art and its direct associations with power and a yearning for action; one of the consequences is that of demanding a demarcation of clear boundaries recently expressed in the direct and challenging political language of 'which side is art on?' (Kenning and Kern 2013).

In this feverish climate of engineered housing market frenzy and increased polarity in housing conditions and expectations, it is no surprise that a coalition of academics, independent researchers, tenant groups and housing activists have recently teamed up to co-author the pamphlet 'Staying Put: An Anti-gentrification Booklet for Council Estates in London',⁵ which:

explains why the regeneration of council estates often results in established communities being broken up and moved away, and housing becoming more expensive. It is designed to help local communities learn about gentrification and the alternatives they can fight for. Through the experiences of council tenants, leaseholders and the wider community in London, it contains ideas, stories, tools and resources. (Lees et al. 2014)

The booming housing economy to which many Londoners do not have access – or don't want to partake in its obscene speculative character – is cleaving harsh lines that lead in different directions at once.

One of these has been the increased amount of artistic activities in social housing as site of artistic practice, participatory research and temporary accommodation. Given the increased marginalization and retreating territory of social housing estates in London – often substituted by the kind of housing developments that heavily employ the imaginary of art such as Hallsville Quarter/Newham Biennale – the

settings of a receding urban frontier have captured the attention of artists, art institutions, curators and researchers. Some of these activities – always underwritten by the unshaken belief that all art is good for people and it drives positive changes in their lives, but strangely aligned with council planning plans and developers' fantasies⁶ – have already been critically noticed at various levels (Christie 2014).

The story I am about to tell you takes one single case in this wide variety, complicating in some ways and facilitating in others an operative understanding of the active – not necessarily activist – deliberative role spoken for in *This Is Not Art*, and in particular the point at which these pronouncements might be effectively uttered. The fact that this specific confrontation occurred between a well-known art production agency and a collective of activist voices in the context of one of the largest urban regeneration projects in London provides a rich context in which to see some of Jelinek's themes unfolding in real time and space, hence recapturing the political aspect of her narrative of 'disciplinary boundary policing' right at the boundary of the art/activist fault line that her heady proposition originated from.

In early December 2013, the *Guardian* newspaper reported on a proposal by Artangel to engage the sculptor Mike Nelson to produce a temporary public art project within the recently decanted Heygate Estate in Elephant & Castle, South London, bringing to wider public attention events already known through blogs by local activists groups historically linked to the long and painful narrative of the Elephant & Castle regeneration; they were actually the sources of the article.⁷

Southwark Notes and the other associated sites specifically set up to protect and counter-inform residents and monitor the development of the Council regeneration in the area have accumulated a huge wealth of reports, testimonials, evidences and relevant reading lists over the last 10 years of activity. Particularly valuable is the mapping of the actual displacement of its former residents (<http://heygate.github.io/>), an independent research project central to the argumentation of a state-led 'gentrification' in Elephant & Castle. Typing 'Heygate Estate' into Google's search engine returns Southwark Notes in the first four sites on the list, just below the Wikipedia entry and the Council's own page.

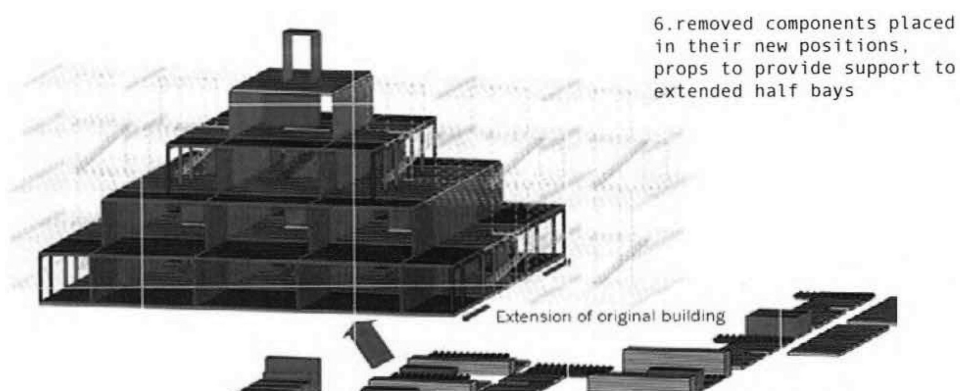


Figure 3. Image from the planning application for the Artangel/Mike Nelson temporary art installation.

Unsurprisingly, the developers (Lend Lease) are now largely missing from this search return; the words Heygate Estate have been purged and plunged into urban amnesia, an attempt to demolish its cultural as well as physical history out of existence and substitute it with new rebranded images, sadly provided by ‘artists’ at work.⁸

The project was described in these terms in the planning application submitted by Artangel to Southwark Council in late October 2013: ‘Nelson has conceived an idea to carefully deconstruct one of the low-rise four-storey blocks on the Heygate Estate, taking apart prefabricated panels and reusing them to construct a monumental form resembling a pyramid’ (https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CCUQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fplanningonline.southwark.gov.uk%2FDocsOnline%2FDocuments%2F328350_1.pdf&ei=4Uw9VJ2fJ-aY7gaAxoDwAQ&usg=AFQjCNHny2-1-FD7fh3eK4ig9iaGEC53WQ&sig2=mTZ3iGH749eba9-iBLNk-g&bvm=bv.77412846,d.ZGU).

With the project proposal now going public in the press, the confrontation was set between the dismayed long-term activists incensed at seeing the remnants of their homes quickly recycled on-site as art material and the swift moves of Artangel’s production machine making sure that the gap between decanting, demolition and take-over by the developer Lend Lease could be exploited in a timely manner before vanishing. This rushed pace was complicated by the fact that the last decanted residents from the estate were considering an appeal to the CPO (Compulsory Purchase Order) enacted against them by Southwark Council to finally evacuate the estate, delaying the process of transition from council to developers and therefore the possible implementation of Artangel/Nelson’s project.

The boundaries were very clear according to institutional criteria, Artangel being a certified art producer with a proven track record, and Mike Nelson described as a ‘Turner Prize nominee, Venice Biennale UK representative, leading British Artist’, but another type of economy participating in the legitimacy of art punctured such brand values to the extent that only a week after the *Guardian* article, the application was refused by Southwark Council, bringing to an end the confrontation that had just begun.

Apparently Artangel had been seeking a suitable site for this project by Mike Nelson for the past three years, at least confirming that the pyramid reference was not specifically initiated by the events of the Heygate Estate, but equally validating that evidently the basic requirements of ‘a housing estate before demolition’ were met by the Heygate Estate as much as any other around London using construction techniques from the same period, specifically mentioned Artangel’s two directors in their private reply to Niall McDervitt’s Open Letter to Artangel dated 20th December 2013:

The ziggurat form makes direct reference to the Jespersen system used to construct the Heygate Estate, as can be seen from the attached photograph taken during construction in 1973. (Lingwood and Morris 20th December 2013)

Presumably, it was not the disregard to the specific recent history of the Heygate Estate shown by the sketchy research work done by Artangel’s production team that caused its refusal by the local authority; indeed there are still perplexities as to whose intervention or what events might have caused the summary refusal and volte-face that eventually ran the project into the ground⁹. The then forthcoming local elections

in the Borough might have also contributed to the refusal of the Council, seeking to avoid the negative press profile such controversy might have caused.

When the proposal was swiftly rejected by Southwark Council on 20 December, the press release immediately issued by Artangel read:

Artangel's proposal for a major new artwork by Turner Prize nominee Mike Nelson on the Heygate Estate is a thoughtfully conceived project that would have created a powerful and challenging free public artwork ... London is one of the world's great cultural centres with a long history of presenting elegaic [sic] and thought-provoking public sculptures – from Edwin Lutyens' Cenotaph to Rachel Whiteread's House, produced by Artangel 20 years ago. (Artangel 2013)

In the mid/late 1990s, when public art activities started to be recognized as a manifestation of unseen social forces of uneven urban development or simply as 'bad art', the film *Fight Club* captured this urban knowledge by showing a large spherical sculpture, part of a gated shopping complex in LA, being unhinged by the militia at the core of the film's narrative, crushing into a Starbucks branch, conveying in a cinematic instant an alliance between 'plop art' and a sterile urbanism of corporate imagination.¹⁰

The temporary nature of Artangel's productions sheltered their work from association with more vulgar imagery blatantly connecting public art and urban development speculative activities, and in the gap created by this increasing rejection their sophisticated and fleeting spatial interventions started to acquire critical praise and audience accolades for their time-limited experiences as events not to be missed. After clinching a deal with Beck's Beer¹¹ – the Bloomberg of the 1990s in London – that allowed them to produce Rachel Whiteread's 'House', they acquired an unrivalled status as producers of work that 'would otherwise not be made'.

Increasingly, as London's artworld started to become more conscious of its increasing cultural capital and its attractiveness for business, they also became the evidence for another type of pioneering in the soft association between art destinations and urban investments, cultural events and urban development.

In many ways Artangel, in their constant search for London properties in a state of transition, became the high-end precursors of 'interim-use' as value-incubator for developments to come, all of which perhaps explains Richard Wentworth's jokey reference to their specific brand as 'the art world's estate agents'.¹²

For anyone interested in contemporary London urban politics, the name Heygate Estate is a highly contested signifier, or more precisely, a very clear signifier of contestation for urban activists and researchers, and a crucial object of contemporary study for urban sociologists, telling in clearer terms than most the story of top-down urban regeneration as the most aggressive grounding of neoliberal forms of capital in its assault on the last remnants of public welfare structures.

The number of activities countering the dominant narrative of the Heygate Estate destiny and its place in the wider Elephant & Castle regeneration has been widely documented both in academic circles and the wider press (Montgomery 2011; Sebregondi 2012; Cummins 2012), covering the long decade in between the early re-housing promises and affordable housing quota, until the late decanting, demolition and unfulfilled re-housing opportunities. For some of these academics and militant researchers, the Heygate Estate story provides the clearest argument for an

understanding of ‘the “regeneration” of council estates in London as nothing more than a state-led gentrification strategy disguised by a liberal policy rhetoric of mixed communities’ (Lees et al. 2013, 6).¹³

Between other stories of abuse and fraud, documented through the unintended release of politically sensitive documents previously redacted by Southwark Council, what also distinguished the Heygate Estate was that in order to finally evacuate the last remaining tenants, a CPO had to be issued (<http://heygate.github.io/>). It is hard to see how Artangel could position themselves in a direct collision with such a body of knowledge and still refrain from meaningfully attributing it a central place, instead continuing their production efforts without any direct and frank engagement with the local activists. It is equally unsettling to notice that the main absentee in this story, at any level, was the artist himself, Mike Nelson. Not a single statement on the subject has been released during or since the events in late 2013 from the artist whose name was the bearer of the art in question.

The removal of the artist’s figure at production stage is a clear indication of how the autonomous character of the artist is actually heavily dependent on and constructed through relations of production in which the artist is deliberately not involved; it was not art yet in the sense of output. It was brokerage for the art to happen, the art of production if you like. This brokerage as management of distance between practitioner and context has distinguished Artangel’s *modus operandi* as an amplifying device for artists: all artists whose projects have been funded by an agency such as *Artangel* in London have greater access to autonomy than those whose projects have not (Dimitrakaki 2013, 8).

Perhaps there was even an element of calculated ‘frisson’ of social reality in the staging of Nelson’s pyramid in a recently evacuated social housing estate, an added value of prayed social capital brought by the activists’ confrontation and the hard work of building up counter-discourses that brought them into view to many observers aware and engaged in issues of social justice in London, all of which were foregrounded in previous artistic activities in the Heygate Estate in its interim pre-demolition state. But none of those previous interventions could command the kind of ‘autonomy’, logistic efforts and funding largesse that the production machine of Artangel could provide to Mike Nelson’s sculptural work. It was a case of ‘Nice work boys, but now step out of the way and let the pros take the stage’, enacted at the most dramatically melancholic moment of this long narrative.

It is clear to see how the battle pitch was set: it was a case of Proper Art vs Proper Activism or, if you prefer, Art vs Life. The question was hardly whether the proposed work of Mike Nelson was art or not, but whether *this artwork* in *this place* at *this moment* should exist on a ‘scandalous site of social cleansing’ (Lees et al. 2013, 7), bringing all the power of contingency against ideas of autonomy of art practice, its value, its legitimacy.

For many of those directly involved, the proposal of Artangel/Nelson constituted an abuse of such autonomous condition, or worse, a continuation of the narrative of displacement enacted by the sell-out and decanting of the estate to make way for that ‘wealthier breed of pioneering urbanauts’ (http://londonist.com/2010/03/a_tour_round_the_strata_tower.php) at the expense of the sitting tenants and the association of the wealthier breed with the artworld that follows suit.

Equally, given the deep knowledge of the situation that transpires from the communication between Artangel’s production team and Southwark Council and the

fact that Artangel had worked in that neighbourhood on a previous project, a narrative of the autonomous art project as 'innocent bystander' caught in the political crossfire of local spatial politics seems untenable. What is more plausible is that the pragmatic position of Artangel in their broker role deliberately screened off all the local spatial politics in the pursuit of their project above all other considerations.

The enduring innocence of art discourse proposes itself as the ultimate value shelter for an autonomous sphere of art, a useless and redemptive field of action with a purposeless purpose, and as such, the perceived antithesis of specific and partial interests. Within this 'sacred' discourse of legitimacy, even the slightest concession that contingency might have a bearing on the negotiation of usage of these 'powers of exception' might usher a domino effect of collapse, as if one single bullet could ricochet an entire edifice of negation into ruins.

In the ruins of the Heygate Estate, Artangel attempted to uphold this conceptual edifice by screening off the necessarily political engineering work to make such a claim. This is exactly where the root of this non-event and its relevance to the subject of this article lies, and where the *art* is made despite the *artwork* not being made.

When discussing the idea of disciplinary boundaries as framed by Jelinek, those limits must not just be assessed in terms of answering the rhetorical question of 'what is art?' and its policing from within, but also – crucially – *what is art doing* with its disciplinary checked, autonomously accredited, cultural capital asset management?

The neoliberal urban regime of contemporary London produces its own narratives about art and artists; at the same time, various forms of public cultural production in the city pretend to remain discreet in their direct involvement in such social production, preferring to deal with still smouldering ruins, evacuated of their social history like a 'ready-made', but turned into a 'free, public artwork'. But when institutionalized neutrality is an impasse to actual and real freedom and access to rights for others, this deliberate segregation turns art discourse into sterile negation and reveals a malicious social positioning that art institutions and operators are increasingly at pains to deny entertaining. As artists we must be able to challenge and negotiate exactly the institutional autonomy granted to us in operational circumstances when the evidence points towards a specific case in which the use of such autonomous rhetoric would impact more negatively than its temporary waiving.

Within these practical as well as ethical wranglings, the complete absence of the figure of the artist from public discourse during and after the Artangel Heygate project proposal debacle is deeply troubling; even throughout this article, the reference to an 'Artangel project' rather than a 'Mike Nelson project' sends forth a signal that the brokerage of Artangel remains the namesake front-end of the project until the actual project begins and a switchover of emphasis brings the artist back into the foreground. The removal (partly strategic, partly sanctioned by necessity) of the artist during the negotiation phase outlines a psychological distance to places and events that counter Artangel's view of their projects and their values as well as producing some confusion as to where the 'autonomous' work of art begins and ends.

The first aspect of this distancing effect concerns Artangel's production values and main curatorial spectrum; indeed, housing, memory and dwelling have been central to their history as art institution. The second aspect brings back the idea of endogenous or non-endogenous values and their possible separation and containment, particularly in works of art within the social context; in other words, to what extent are non-endogenous values implicated to produce work of seemingly

‘endogenous’ value? Equally, and in reverse, to what extent are ‘endogenous’ values implicated in producing ‘non-endogenous’ values?

As the press release that appeared on their website following the rejection of the Heygate project’s planning application tells us, Artangel has a proven track record of delivering ‘thought-provoking sculptures’ in which previously inhabited private and public spaces have been at the core of an enviable record of artists’ projects under their brand, from Rachel Whiteread’s ‘House’ (1994) to Mike Kelley’s ‘Mobile Homestead’ (2013), their first production in the US. In this project, a near-sacredness is attributed to a private, lived space by its owner/occupant – the artist – and is given a unique status by being re-enacted into a full-scale replica, therefore both an evacuation of the real thing and a monument to it.

Artangel’s own production ethos strongly emphasizes the memory of the *artist’s dwelling as a work of art*, regardless of its material status, but no particular care is granted to a present and live history of evicted social tenants whose house was their own only weeks before the arrival of Artangel on the Heygate Estate site. On their website, Kelley’s project is described as a ‘full-scale replica of the 1950s Westland suburban home where he grew up, relocated to the city centre in a reversal of the “white flight” following the uprisings known as the “12th Street riot” in 1967’ (http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2013/mobile_homestead/mobile_homestead/about_the_project).

In a dizzying set of rich association, we remember the parabola of Detroit as it progressively descended into its unique current spatial and economic condition, leaving the economic value of much of its housing stock as nil or worth only their insurance policy, which in turn led to extended instances of arson as a one-way route out of misery (Chanan and Steinmetz 2005).

This historical reference to the riots, drawn as contextual material in the construction of the art project’s value, reminds us also of the racial discontent that brought about the dramatic events in Detroit in 1967, as well as many events in the blazing season of US urban riots, ‘caused by the almost only white repressive police forces and the housing conditions of black communities in equal measure, segregated as they were in poorly provided for public housing projects’ (Fine 2007). When a bar located in a predominantly black neighbourhood was raided in the middle of the night while hosting a party for several veterans – including two servicemen recently returned from Vietnam – for not adhering to drinking laws, the area erupted into riots ‘characterized by the same shocking and indiscriminate violence as the Newark Riot, which had ended less than a week before the Detroit Riot began’ (<https://lcrm.lib.unc.edu/blog/index.php/tag/newark-riot/>).

Riots also recently came back to London and other UK cities in 2011, a year before the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games, in circumstances frighteningly similar.

Following the shooting of Mark Duggan by police and the subsequent unrest and follow-up local protests against this event, relations between the local black community and the police spiralled out of control, spreading across the city and turning into a politically polymorphous rampage unseen since the Brixton Riots 30 years before. The spark that ignited in Tottenham moved into other parts of Hackney and then further beyond to other cities in the UK, showing the pattern of seemingly indiscriminate violence that made urban history in Watts, Newark and Detroit in the late 1960s US. After three days, the situation was brought under control and in the days that followed, London’s Mayor Boris Johnson publicly

pledged a £50 million capital fund for post-riot regeneration of town centres damaged by the riots. In January 2014, a highly unpopular verdict into the case that ignited the riot events back in 2011 determined the killing of Duggan by the police force as ‘lawful’ (BBC 2014).

In urban planning terms, one of the controversial outcomes of this public fund in Hackney is the Hackney Fashion Hub, which won planning approval by Hackney Council in October 2013 and received £1.5 million of post-riot public funds. Described on its website as ‘a major regeneration project on the edge of Hackney Central town centre that will create a new focal point for UK fashion in the heart of London’s East End’ (<http://hackneyfashionhub.co.uk/>), this is the centrepiece of Hackney Council’s response to the riots that started in Tottenham in 2011, another boutique shopping district, as an ailment for social ills, which has immediately spurred its own parody: ‘... a throbbing art scene and some of the most thrilling drama of the recent riots, this sexy ghetto is fast becoming the beating heart of London style [...] This is an opportunity for the most daring brands in fashion to build on the area’s anti-social capital’ (<http://www.hackneyhaute.com/>).

But rather than the project *per se*, it is the diversion of public funds specifically earmarked to repair the areas affected by post-riot damages, or the fact that once again in London a private development is written off as ‘urban regeneration’, that arouses suspicion:

It seems strange that a pot of public money, set aside specifically for areas affected by the riots, should be spent on lubricating the path for a wealthy private developer to transform one of the most deprived parts of London into something very much like a duty-free shopping lounge. (Wainwright 2013)

The wealthy private developer mentioned in the *Guardian* article is Harry Handelman, director of the Manhattan Loft Corporation and a member of the board of Artangel. His profile on Artangel’s website reads: ‘This honour reflects Manhattan Loft Corporation’s ethos to create outstanding buildings that leave lasting legacies for the communities living in and around them’ (http://www.artangel.org.uk/about_us/board_of_trustees).¹⁴

In an open letter to Artangel published on his blog ‘International Times’ on 17 December, as the Artangel planning application was awaiting a response from the council, Niall McDervitt wrote:

To object to a work of art must be a carefully considered act, as otherwise one may be allying oneself with a long line of philistines, ignoramuses and spoilsports. However, to create a work of art – especially a public work of art that is to be associated in the public mind with such an important issue as Heygate – one really has to know what’s at stake. (<https://poetopography.wordpress.com/2014/10/19/open-letter-to-artangel/>)

The ultimately deliberate sense of misrecognition between the symbolic and the real in Artangel’s position might be forgiven by those not professionally trained or involved in the subtleties of modes of artistic representations in social contexts, but not by those whose cultural capital rests on such expertise. Artangel could not possibly miss the charged context in which it was deeply engaged in working when preparing for Mike Nelson’s Heygate Estate ‘Pyramid’.

Still, in this case, the deliberate capacity of not knowing, the negation inherent in the understanding of the autonomous agency as the withdrawal from the urgent conditions specific to the Heygate Estate, produced a reversed effect. The non-expert actor in terms of its professional role (the activists in Elephant & Castle) sees what the expert (Artangel and Mike Nelson) decides not to see in order to maintain its capacity to articulate its own expertise as professional.

The asynchronous relationship between art and social context is leveraged by Artangel as a specific signifier of freedom from political conniving – *we're not biased!* – but here it is reduced to a bankrupted rhetoric of crossed purposes to externalize evidences that were clearly laid out all over the site proposed for the ziggurat of Mike Nelson.

The technique of 'un-seeing' at the heart of the characters in the narrative of *The City and the City* (Mieville 2009) applies to the citizens of two overlapping cities in mutual social agreements not to recognize each other, unless in specific areas of 'crosshatching' where the two layered realities collapse into one. Acts of deliberate externalization are now proprietary to both art and capital and the mutual recognition of such powers of segregation of social and economic contradictions contained within their acts seems to have become the essence of their double bind.

The politics of artistic phenomena, then, may lie less in which structures and relations are reproduced and enacted or transformed in art than in which of these relations, and our investments in them, we are led to recognize and reflect on, and which we are led to ignore and efface, split off, externalize, or negate. (Fraser 2012, 194)

Understanding art practice as a knowledge-forming discipline helps us to articulate what is art and what is not in a way that is open and honest, as well as describing what is good art in endogenous disciplinary terms instead of, as is now the case, through neoliberal and market values. (Jelinek 2013, 120)

If Jelinek's proposition of art as a 'knowledge-forming discipline' has value and practical implications, then the question remains as to what kind of knowledge art located within specific social realities produces in relation to those very same realities and to what ends, other than acquiring precious cultural capital at the expense of existing social capital under threat of dispossession. What is certain is that the Artangel/Mike Nelson proposal, if screened according to these criteria, would have difficulties in squaring up its own knowledge-forming with the knowledge already in place around the Heygate Estate, a vast body of work put together by activists and academics alike but most of all built on the lived experience of the tenants of the Heygate Estate and their fate. Whether the sculpture once realized might have indeed contributed to this body of knowledge as 'a powerful and challenging free public artwork', rather than constructing a segregated narrative of its presence in the evacuated site of the Heygate Estate, nobody will be able to tell.

I have dreamed of an impossible secret alliance between the Heygate activists and Mike Nelson, through which the decoy of neutrality that granted the planning application is then turned into a Trojan Horse unleashing an occupation festival, a bacchanalia of true intervention that would totally subvert the Council, Artangel and the developer's expectations of the ziggurat's role. A true pop-up from below, hijacking the funds of the Arts Council and Artangel towards a carnivalesque show of joy, impossible to repress.

But if we are to stand by the line of defence provided by Lingwood and Morris in their private reply to McDervitt's open letter to Artangel on 20th December 2013, its deliberately intended indeterminate meaning – thoughtful, thoughtless, contentious, elegaic [sic] or any number of any things (Lingwood and Morris, 20 December 2013) – would have more than likely positioned it as a local attraction for the same crowds that flocked to see the production of Roger Hiorns' 'Seizure' in 2008 (<http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2008/seizure>). Also within the Elephant & Castle regeneration area, 'Seizure' was a crowd pleaser as it proposed art as a moment to reflect on urban living conditions, on architectural form and its significance, but in its optical and sensorial experience it was equally removed from the real knowledge of the social reality that rendered that experience possible. The evacuated building complex that hosted its grotto of blue crystals was one of those intending to accommodate the overflow of residents in the Heygate Estate as their temporary accommodation, while the new houses were built through the regeneration project. Back then, the installation was described as a 'site of pilgrimage. Every day hundreds of people made their way across the capital to this anonymous council flat near the Elephant & Castle' (http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2008/seizure/about_the_project/seizure).

A specific reference to Hiorn's piece was actually made in the text of the planning application as lodged by Artangel on 29 October 2013, and used as a bona fide leverage for the success equally awaiting Nelson's pyramid:

This strongly demonstrates our success at using Southwark Council owned buildings, scheduled for demolition, to create interim art projects accessible to all of the community. (Artangel 2013)

Indeed, even today many people remember and think about Hiorns' piece – although I am sure that back then the Heygate residents had already started to build up resentment towards the Artangel brand. Like many others, for all kind of reasons, I joined the queues to see the spectacle of crystallization taking place on the inside of the anonymous council flat, once a home, now an artwork. But many years later, the piece has produced an altogether different knowledge that its host would have granted; Hiorns' installation now exists as a deterritorialized artwork in the Yorkshire Sculpture Park where its narrative has achieved an autonomous status thanks to its transferable architecture. From the beginning, the structure on which the crystalline aggregates had chemically developed was not that of the actual flat walls, but of panels that covered the actual walls of the flat, which acted as a blighted and gritty – but seductive in its evoking of living conditions well below the standards of most of its visitors – urban container to Hiorns' mesmerizing surfaces, an otherworldly frisson of post-evacuation 'sink estates' mixed with the kind of crystalline 'fourth dimension' that Robert Smithson described in his text 'Entropy and the New Monuments':

The order and disorder of the fourth dimension could be set between laughter and crystal-structural, as a device for unlimited speculation. (Smithson 1996, 21)

Perhaps the suggestion is that artworks also exist in a fourth dimension in regards to their historical contingencies, a problem that Smithson's fascination with crystals

and mirrors laboured in his practice as a possible escape from the constraints of historical temporality (Roberts 2004).

Art history remembers Robert Smithson's practice and relegates in the folds of insignificant footnotes his conflicts with environmental activists over some of his projects, leaving to his statement 'Friends of the Earth, Enemy of Art' (Smithson 1996, 163) the ultimate categorization of those opposing his practice as anonymous philistines.

However, the synchronicity of Artangel and Mike Nelson's proposed sculpture with its contemporary London context could not be easily escaped in their attempted foray in the Heygate Estate and it is likely that the decision by Southwark Council was simply due to fear of adverse publicity once the voices of activists started to intersect Artangel plans.

I started this section of the article on a personal angle, to contextualize my particular interest in Mike Nelson's architectural references and urban settings. In 2005 my project 'Guggenheim Walthamstow' posited as a hoax the arrival of an institutional ziggurat in an empty site in the centre of an area defined as 'deprived', its role being that of the tainted saviour of the community. The grossly unfit-for-purpose projected landmark, in its speculative character, stood as a symbol of all I thought we were doing ridiculously wrong in art, while thinking of doing good. It was enough to instigate the community response that eventually made it disappear, after a local newspaper article had to declare that the hoardings were in fact a 'work of art' and that the Guggenheim Museum juggernaut was never going to come to Walthamstow to 'regenerate' its deprived, culturally 'degenerate' citizens.

In the Walthamstow of 2005, the *work* (output) did its *job* (outcome) because it wasn't art until it was made so by default, once its initially deceptive function was discovered and the expected reaction of the community started to function. In short, I had used the autonomous tradition of art against itself to reassert its inherited power.

In Elephant & Castle, the unintentional disappearance of the planned ziggurat of Mike Nelson and Artangel has also done a *job* of its planned *work* even if not the one intended; its projected image was also shut down by community reaction at the news of its arrival in an unexpected turn of events, exactly because the real hoax of neutrality and promise of redemptive value of art was seen as such by other parties. Regardless of what caused the refusal of planning permission, the entropic double of the unmade pyramid by Mike Nelson in the Heygate Estate stands as a moment of anamnesia for contemporary art practice in London. The missing spectacle of its absence has produced a radical moment of visibility into the mist of art production and urban development and their enmeshed current relationship and has revealed something that Angela Dimitrakaki's distinction between output and outcome forces us to encounter:

...if we shift attention from output to outcome in art, we encounter a certain ideology at work: the ideology of upward class mobility – an ideology that used to be known as that motivating the petit bourgeoisie but that is now extended to the terrain of radical art as well. (Dimitrakaki 2013, 10)

If the question posed by Kenning and Kern was 'whose side is art on?', the answer emerging from the events at the Heygate Estate is historically rooted in the

autonomous tradition of negation: at the level of Artangel productions, ‘art is still on its own side’, a side benignly liberal, pluralistic and pragmatic, but also a side not so benignly neoliberal in the sense that its relativism is what the rule of the market requires (Leger 2013, 97).

The ‘unlimited speculation’ that curiously appears in Smithson’s quote, in today’s parlance is that of London in the grip of a speculative housing bubble, fomented by an auratic marketing urbanism which propels the monetization of its material assets and immaterial cultural production as an engine of wishfully limitless capitalization for the benefit of large investors, all the while relegating the beauty and necessity of everyday, ordinary cosmopolitanism into a world apart as a reductive – and increasingly reduced – backdrop to the strategic operations of developers, local authorities and in this case art practice.

It is not unlikely that had Nelson’s project turned into a real event, it would have easily featured in the brochures of the future development standing in its place as a value-added aesthetic dividend to the market value of overpriced, delusionally aspirational flats, perhaps in lieu of a still forthcoming Elephant & Castle Biennale.

One of these flats in the Strata Tower was recently temporarily ‘occupied’ as a site of protest by a group of activists and ex-Heygate tenants posing as prospective buyers and therefore allowed to visit one of the flats in the tower, only to then stage photographs of themselves holding placards with signs saying ‘Do I look like the wealthier breed of pioneer urbanaut now?’ (<http://southwarktenants.wordpress.com/2014/03/15/renters-occupy-luxury-tower/>), returning the language of gentrification back to its sender.

Notes

1. <http://www.fizzyliving.com/>.
2. For the most significant emerging entity in this field, see CREATE (<http://createlondon.org>), which has been recently awarded Arts Council funding as part of their National Portfolio Organization and develops cultural engagement strategies for private-public housing developments, often in collaboration with the Barbican. See <http://createlondon.org/event/hitchcocks-east-end> in Walthamstow with Hill Residential Ltd and LB Waltham Forest and <http://createlondon.org/event/ram-place-fashion-market> in Hackney with Manhattan Loft Corporations and LB of Hackney.
3. One of the most awe-inspiring in its field is called ‘Citizen Relations’ (formerly Citizen Brando). On its blog, we read: ‘We know how to get people talking. We believe we understand conversation better than any other consumer PR agency around. And, if you understand conversation, you understand how to change opinions, influence decisions and, ultimately, sell’ (http://uk.citizenrelations.com/creating-people-powered-conversations/#.U9tkNeN_sTY). Under its previous company name, Citizen Brando was also one of the partners in the failed interim space ‘Industrious’, ceremoniously opened in Canning Town on the site of the future Hallsville Quarter in 2012 through the London Mayor’s Meanwhile Spaces and unceremoniously closed (read unofficially bankrupt) in 2013.
4. For a more sober look at the City of London, I would suggest you book a place on the next Occupy Tours (<http://occupytours.org>). These are uniquely revealing guided walks organized by Occupy London. Places are free.
5. The pamphlet can be downloaded from three different sites, including <http://justspace.org.uk/2014/06/19/staying-put-an-anti-gentrification-handbook-for-council-estates-in-london/>.
6. CREATE’s mission, for example, is stated as follows: ‘Create exists to explore the ways artists can contribute to the lives of people in cities. We help artists to connect more closely with communities through an ambitious programme of projects’. This mission is,

however, predicated by direct alliances and alignment with regeneration plans such as the Fashion Hub in Hackney Central, discussed later on in this article. Who 'community' refers to in these cases, and how existing communities actively antagonizing Council plans are 'connected with', remains to be seen.

7. For a much more specific, first-hand and extensive account of these events, you can read Christopher Jones' article 'Pyramid Dead – The Artangel of History' on Mute magazine online (<http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/pyramid-dead-artangel-history-sdfoot-notellsym>). Also of note is the ample space given on Southwark Notes website to the literature describing crucial moments in the well-documented history of Art and Gentrification, brought about by direct involvement of artists at the core of the Heygate Estate activities of resistance and militant research (<http://southwarknotes.wordpress.com/art-and-regeneration/writing-on-art-and-gentrification/>). Christopher Jones is a member of the Ultra-Red collective (<http://www.ultrared.org/mission.html>).
8. Particularly instructive and revealing in the last few weeks have been the cringingly humorous stories related to the re-imaging of Elephant & Castle through a new sculptural commission apparently approved by the Council: <http://southwarknotes.wordpress.com/>. Sadly, the trite and dumb tendency of producing iconic works cueing the name place with cheap sculptural embodiments of that same name is a rich vein for the crass and populist area of creative placemaking. The Bull Ring in Birmingham has a bull; Elephant & Castle has a rebranded elephant on top of the castle. Whatever might be planned for Barking I fear the worst...
9. Christopher Jones, of 56a Infoshop (<http://www.56a.org.uk>) and author of the article 'Artangel of History' in *Mute Magazine* previously cited here, has now sent for the third time specific Freedom of Information requests related to these events to Southwark Council, and a partially successful reply can be seen here: https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/further_request_re_southwark_cou#incoming-552784.
10. The real location for the footage of *Fight Club*'s 'anti public-art action' was a mix between the Water Court at California Plaza, 350 S. Grand Ave (where the fountain exists but no spherical public art does) blended in the film's imaginary with the distinctive work 'North, East, South and West', a series of geometric sculptures by Michael Heizer located in Downtown Los Angeles, at 444 S. Flower St.
11. There is a relevant cultural narrative to be noticed here. Foreign mainstream lager beer brands started to penetrate the UK drinking market in London in the 1980s through acquisitions by main drinking giants keen to broaden the UK market. This was done with a young audience in mind clearly to dislodge the traditional drinking habits of ale and bitter and at the same time to project a more sanguine and popular image than the class pretensions of 'wine bars'. The success of its presence in the 1980s and 1990s was largely due to their washing the artworld with Beck's Bier to the point of image overlap. Beck's became the art beer of the 1990s and the backbone of the Young British Artists and others, including Artangel. Nowadays, lager is mainstream fodder in large supermarkets and corner shops alike, and the cultural association between art and drinking cultures is that of local micro-breweries producing pale ales, bitters and other traditional brews. In the process, the 'lager lout image' of the 1990s has been exorcized through a class shift and the young sophisticated drinker/art audience recognizes local provision of this expensive habit as a sign of cultural distinction and, by inference, gentrification. Double the pint cost and they will come.
12. Richard Wentworth in conversation with James Lingwood and Michael Morris, Artangel directors, as part of the events organized in conjunction with his commission 'Black Maria', 3 April 2013.
13. Also see 'Staying Put: An Anti-gentrification Booklet for Council Estates in London', cited earlier. Loretta Lees has also co-authored with Claire Melhuish of UCL 'Urban Lab', one of the most authoritative and comprehensive papers on arts-led regeneration in the UK (Lees and Melhuish 2013).
14. It is significant to note that the latest project of Manhattan Loft Corporation is the Manhattan Loft Gardens, a 42-storey tower in the middle of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. In the fly-through CGI for this development, the tagline 'sculpting a community' appears as one of the guiding principles of designing the building. Perhaps the long-lasting

association of Handelsman with Artangel has produced a transfer of skills between his business and artistic qualities of 'sculpture', associated with the rather unsavoury idea of a community created by a single-handed artistic action. See the Manhattan Loft Gardens CGI video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=egp66ajrgmo>.

Notes on contributor

Alberto Duman is an artist, lecturer and independent researcher whose core interests are located in the urban and the everyday.

He has had exhibitions and taught in UK and abroad, published in book, journals and magazines and presented events and he's currently running the BA Fine Art module 'Art Practice in the Community' at Middlesex University.

In 2012 he contributed to the publication 'Art of Dissent' co-edited by Hilary Powell and Isaac Marrero-Guillamon, with the photo essay 'AdiZones: rewriting the 2012 Olympic legacy as permanent branding', and led the event 'Regeneration Games' at the FreeWord Centre in London.

Between 2012 and 2014 he published papers and articles in: 'The Wick' Newspaper, The Occupied Times, City: analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action, the UCL Urban Lab Pamphleteer n.2, Architectural Review.

In 2013 and 2014 he led the Bartlett DPU Summerlab 'Localising Legacies'. A publication from the whole series of UCL Summerlab 2013 containing an article on East London can be read [here](#).

He is currently working with the DIG Collective in a space in Hackney awaiting demolition.

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 Fizzy Living: Reinventing Renting: <http://www.fizzyliving.com/>
 Futurecity Placemaking Consultants: <http://futurecity.co.uk>
 Hackney Fashion Hub and its spoof, Hackney Haute Quarter: <http://hackneyfashionhub.co.uk>; <http://www.hackneyhaute.com>
 Hallsville Quarter development, Canning Town, East London. Bouygues Developers and London Borough of Newham: <http://hallsvillequarter.co.uk/>
 Housing development in Walthamstow: <http://www.thescenewalthamstow.co.uk>
 London City Island, Bow Creek, East London, Ballymore Developer: <http://www.londoncityisland.com/>
 Manhattan Loft Gardens, QE Park, Stratford, Manhattan Loft Corporation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Egp66AjRgMo>
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 Strata Tower: http://londonist.com/2010/03/a_tour_round_the_strata_tower.php
 On the work of Jake and Dino Chapman: <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-liverpool/exhibition/jake-and-dinos-chapman/jake-and-dinos-chapman-room-6>

Elephant & Castle/Heygate Estate activist blogs

35% Campaign: 35percent.org
 Better Elephant: betterelephant.org
 Elephant Amenity Network: elephantamenity.wordpress.com
 Heygate Was Home: heygate.github.io
 People's Republic of Southwark: peoplesrepublicofsouthwark.co.uk
 Southwark Notes: southwarknotes.wordpress.com

In between meeting, digging and eating: six years of hosting the Festival Belluard Bollwerk International

Sally De Kunst*

We should be inventing new connections between artistic activity and a range of other human activities through the construction of a democratic public space, outside of the traditional spaces for art; a zone of ‘indistinction’ of life and art, that allows a knowledge exchange, and where collectivity and commitment can be reaffirmed. In this article I analyse my practice as the director of the Festival Belluard Bollwerk International, in Fribourg, Switzerland, from 2007 to 2013. How can an art festival function as an interface between art and everyday life, as an agora? I draw on the work of Jean Rancière to argue that we were thriving in a zone of indistinction of life and art, where the agency of the art projects we produced consisted within their presence and their disturbance of the everyday, rather than in making concrete political or social claims. Furthermore, the subject of community in artistic practice is developed in relation to useful art and the exchange of knowledge in an emancipated way. The ideas presented will be illustrated with different art projects produced at the Belluard Festival.

Keywords: public space; political agency; tacit knowledge; community; useful art

‘Why are you digging a hole in our park?’ asked one of the neighbours when artists Kosi Hidama and Gosie Vervloessem started their *Digging Project* in June 2011 in the Parc St. Thérèse in Fribourg, Switzerland. ‘We haven’t voted on that.’ More questions about Swiss basic democracy, territory, utility, urbanism, etc. would be raised in the following days under the burning Fribourg sun. Over a period of eight days Hidama and Vervloessem would be digging a hole, without any obvious purpose, except for the performative act as such – the hopeful gesture of slowly working ourselves collaboratively towards the middle of the earth with some shovels. Many specialists helped to prepare the project with their knowledge and expertise: the city architect and his team, the city’s civil engineer service, the state’s archaeology service, the local police, a geo-biologist, the Department of Geosciences of the University of Fribourg, a medium and others. And many more people eventually joined in, digging and discussing: visitors of the Belluard Bollwerk International (the festival that produced the performance), neighbours, passers-by, schoolchildren ...

The Digging Project is as such a fitting example of what art nowadays should be about: we should be inventing new connections between artistic activity and a range of other human activities through the construction of a democratic public space, outside of the traditional spaces for art; a zone of ‘indistinction’ of life and art, that

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Figure 1. Kosi Hidama and Gosie Vervloessem, *The Digging Project*, Festival Belluard Bollwerk International 2011. Photo: Charlotte Walker.

allows a knowledge exchange, and where collectivity and commitment can be reaffirmed. Alana Jelinek (2013, 151–152) rightly points out in her book *This Is Not Art* that art is a public action, entailing both action and story, and it is directly constitutive of the public realm. ‘Art creates radical new stories that profoundly alter our way of seeing, disrupting the order of things, making new sense of our place and times in ways that undermine totalising discourse’ (Jelinek 2013, 161). As already suggested 12 years ago by Nicolas Bourriaud (2002), the beginning of every story is a meeting.

The crucial aspect of my practice as a curator is hospitality: facilitating a meeting. I perceive such hospitality as very explicit. Strong artistic projects can only take place in a friendly atmosphere, where a large audience, artists and other stakeholders feel welcome. In this regard, according to different online dictionaries, the English word ‘host’ refers to ‘the master of the house’, ‘the manager’, ‘the inn-keeper’, ‘the mentor’ or ‘the facilitator’. In recent decades, the role of the curator has expanded to include ‘producer’, ‘agent’, ‘DJ’ and many other functions. It is a very versatile profession. But for me the curator is in the first place the host, who generates the meeting between artists, audience and other stakeholders.

In that sense I strongly relate to the analysis of Chantal Pontbriand (2013, 190), who refers to the art institution in the twenty-first century as a ‘contemporary agora’, and no longer a place for contemplation or aesthetic pleasure:

the visitor to the museum or the gallery is also a flaneur, a passer-by, for whom the experience of the museum is an experience like any other, accessible and part of everyday life. [...] The museum is connected to a mass culture that is specific to the present and that diminishes yesterday’s hierarchies between the connoisseur and the individual.

In retrospect I can conclude that, without having had knowledge of Pontbriand's definition at the time, as the director of the festival Belluard Bollwerk International I have, between 2008 and 2013, been facilitating an 'agora' for the artists and the audience.

Belluard Bollwerk International is a small big arts festival that, for the last 30 years, has taken place every year at the beginning of the summer in Fribourg. It has a history of producing and presenting work by local and international artists in a convivial context. It is hard to pin down the disciplines presented at the festivals 2008–2013. Word had it that we were 'in between', which was at the same time challenging and exciting, but complex. In order to stimulate exchange between the Fribourg public and the artists, we launched a call in 2008 to invent a festival centre for Belluard Bollwerk International. In 2009 we produced *KITCHAIN* by Antonio Louro and Benedetta Maxia, a concept that responded to the challenge by focusing on the ritual of cooking and eating as a detonator of social gathering and exchange. *KITCHAIN* amplifies and encourages the social interaction between the artists, team, audience and other stakeholders by implementing an open system that invites people, through their actions, to turn the entire space of the Arsenal (an old warehouse next to the Belluard, a fortress from the Middle Ages transformed into the festival's main temporary venue each year) into a huge, bustling kitchen. A modular table-based system, *KITCHAIN* consists of four units that can be easily assembled into a structure around which to cook, eat, drink and discuss. The system can be used in two ways: ready-made and do-it-yourself. The first allows people to observe the professional chefs at work in the open kitchen and consume their dishes. The second gives visitors and artists the opportunity to cook their own meal by using the two kitchenette units and the barbecue incorporated into the structure. *KITCHAIN* was created as a long-term project, and over the years we explored the flexibility of the system, by creating different layouts that re-envisioned the concept of the space for every festival anew. Besides the professional kitchen and the cooking corners, a bar, a cocktail bar and a DJ table were integrated in the structure, and several art projects took place that related to the politics of food. *KITCHAIN* as such attracted a varied audience of artists, festival visitors, neighbours, food lovers and others who liked to hang out and discuss, and created a meeting place and openness the festival was previously lacking.

The art world being more and more like the real world, a place for working through issues rather than a world of representation, the Belluard Festival functioned by way of *KITCHAIN* and its other projects as an interface between art and everyday life, as an 'agora' as such. My biggest quest in this frame was to find a good balance between artistic autonomy on the one hand, and the link between the artist and the world that surrounds him or her on the other. This does not mean, however, that we produced social projects or 'community art', which is nowadays often used by neoliberal governments in the UK, Australia, the US or the Netherlands to fill up the holes in their own public and social policies (Seydel 2013, 6). Rather we were thriving in what Jacques Rancière (2004) calls the 'zone of indistinction of art and life'. Rancière argues that the aesthetic regime of art, or the system as we have understood it since the Enlightenment, is predicated on a tension and confusion between autonomy – the desire to be removed from means-ends relationships – and heteronomy – the blurring of art and social reality. The third way, the grey zone of indistinction of art and life, allows artists to intervene in



Figure 2. Antonio Louro and Benedetta Maxia, *KITCHAIN*, Festival Belluard Bollwerk International 2009. Photo: Nicolas Brodard.

political questions and cross the borders of their artistic practice (heteronomy), but at the same time this happens through an artistic process or within a frame – the art institution – that is outside of politics (autonomy). The Belluard Festival investigated this third approach in different performative ways: actions or utterances that through their performance changed the situation or the power relations within the given encounter or context. One of the earliest, much talked about, examples of such projects is *Die Insel* (2008), by the German artist Christian Hasucha, an island covered with grass on scaffolding in front of the train station, on one of the busiest squares of Fribourg. It was free to rent for time slots of three hours. The ‘tenants’ were at the same time spectator and performer, on a three-metre high platform that gave them a new perspective on their city, and questioned ‘territory’ in the complex public realm of Fribourg.

It is important to get to know a local context well, when producing art projects in the public space. Fribourg is a town in the confederated Switzerland: a de-centralized country with four official languages, 26 states and as many different mentalities and cultures. Although it is geographically in the centre of Europe, Switzerland mainly focuses on local art production, and this is often due to cultural politics and funding bodies. ‘Internationalism’ in the Swiss German region mostly means an exchange with Germany. In the French-speaking Romandie there is a strong link with France. Fribourg is a small Catholic town with 40,000 inhabitants, of which a third are foreigners (<http://www.ville-fribourg.ch/vfr/fr/pub/actuel/statistiques.htm>), with a renowned university with 10,000 students (<http://www.unifr.ch/international/fr/in>) and is situated on the language and cultural border between these two regions. It is a city where superstitious practices are numerous, where the surface area of shopping



Figure 3. Christian Hasucha, *Die Insel*, Festival Belluard Bollwerk International 2008. Photo: Christian Hasucha.

centres per inhabitant is one of the highest in Europe, and where I counted seven tattoo shops for its 40,000 residents. This complex combination gives it a sort of ‘cosmopolitanism’, an openness and curiosity. We seemed to be situated in quite a remarkable place that turned out to be the perfect context for unusual art projects.

The performance *Building Therapy* (2010), for example, during which the German artist Thomas Bratzke treated a building (which was threatened with demolition in order to expand one of Fribourg’s many shopping malls) with acupuncture, revealed through his research that Fribourg is the Swiss Mecca of alternative therapy and superstition, with many *faiseurs de Secret* (practitioners of the Secret). Ethnologist Magali Jenny (2009) writes that the Secret, or gift of healing

through prayer, is an ancient practice that can be traced back to Christian antiquity and perhaps even further. Various formulas can be used to cure or ease a wide range of ailments and injuries such as burns, bleedings, ulcers, warts and headaches, as well as certain psychological problems or even the loss of objects. The intervention is special because it does not require any direct physical contact with the patient. You can simply call the practitioner of the Secret by phone. The gift is passed on between individuals, often to the younger generation and in strict confidence, and is primarily an act of charity and devotion that must be performed free of charge. With no governing body and no official organization as such, it is a world of its own, shunning publicity, financial gain and glory.

During the process of *Building Therapy*, an in situ art project that dealt with healing a building through acupuncture, and in doing so curing its inhabitants as well, many people started to discuss the alternative practices in Fribourg, such as the Secret, with me. Many people in Fribourg, young and old, turned out to carry a phone number in their pocket or handbag, and told me stories about friends or relatives who had been cured by the Secret. Interestingly, the Secret functions through a sort of Chinese whispers; you will never hear a first-hand story of someone who was healed, only ever a friend or relative. However, the practice is deeply entangled in the local society. Even hospitals in Fribourg often have lists of phone numbers for *faiseurs de Secret* in case of severe burns or bleedings. Within this context, *Building Therapy*, a project that took place in the public space, revealed a lot about the texture of the city of Fribourg. Not in a concrete way, but it implicitly unveiled knowledge of unofficial healing practices in a tacit way, and instigated debate about it.



Figure 4. Thomas Bratzke, *Building Therapy*, Festival Belluard Bollwerk International 2010. Photo: Nicolas Brodard.

Quite often the art projects produced in the public realm of Fribourg incited discussions. In the frame of the Belluard Festival 2008, local artist Alexander Hana decided to make a detour with Fribourg's famous tourist train *Tschou-Tschou*. As an alternative to the original tour that takes visitors to the picturesque old town of Fribourg, Hana meticulously planned a route into the outskirts of the city, past the old slaughterhouse, the ice hockey stadium, several shopping malls, the Ibis Hotel with the adjacent casino and a meadow with the last farm house, soon bound to disappear to make way for more city development. The passengers, a mixture of festival visitors and real tourists, had an audio-guide that was reminiscent of the original one in its construction, except that it described the amount of stones and years it took to build the unattractive exhibition hall Forum Fribourg instead of the Cathedral.

With the project *Tschou-Tschou* Hana subtly revealed how the public space is not just an urban but also a political and social space, determined by material and immaterial laws, by drastic processes of globalization and dominant frames of privatization, created by governments, by the free market, architects, city planners... As with *The Digging Project*, *Die Insel* and *Building Therapy*, *Tschou-Tschou* created a space, time and moment in the public realm that allowed the visitors to see, think and produce themselves. Such fundamental political questions as what belongs to who and what belongs to everyone were asked. These projects did not make concrete political or social claims; their agency consisted within their presence, in their friction, their disturbance of the order of the everyday. All three reached a sort of *modus vivendi* in which it was the visitors, neighbours, citizens that really created a public space.



Figure 5. Alexander Hana, *Tschou-Tschou*, Festival Belluard Bollwerk International 2008. Photo: Alexander Hana.

In a conversation with artist Thomas Hirschorn, about his project *Bijlmer Spinoza Festival*, which took place over a few months in 2009–2010 in the multicultural neighbourhood of De Bijlmer in Amsterdam, Jacques Rancière argues that the condition for a public space is the creation of a space that does justice to everyone's ability to see, to produce and to think (Seydel 2013, 7). He claims that art receives its political power not so much from teaching, provoking or mobilizing, as from its capacity to create public spaces. To achieve that, art should leave the spaces that are traditionally dedicated to it. The forms of our cultural organizations have not been conceived for the time we are now living in. As Pontbriand (2013, 120) writes: 'Our cultural institutions don't correspond to the need to feel, to disturb the order, to explore the flaws in our ways of doing things'.

The idea to leave the traditional spaces for art is echoed in *Conflict Kitchen*, a project started a few years ago in Pittsburgh, US, by artists Jon Rubin and Dawn Weleski. *Conflict Kitchen* is a restaurant that only serves cuisine from countries with which the United States is in conflict. Each *Conflict Kitchen* iteration is augmented by events, performances and discussions that seek to expand the engagement the public has with the culture, politics and issues at stake within the focus country (<http://conflictkitchen.org>). The restaurant rotates countries every few months in relation to current geopolitical events. Operating seven days a week in the middle of the city, *Conflict Kitchen* uses the social relations of food and economic exchange to engage the general public in discussions about countries, cultures and people that they might know little about outside of the polarizing rhetoric of governmental politics and the narrow lens of media headlines. In addition, the restaurant creates a constantly changing site for ethnic diversity in post-industrial Pittsburgh, as it has presented the only Iranian, Afghan, Venezuelan, Cuban and North Korean restaurants the city has ever seen.

In 2011 I invited Jon Rubin and Dawn Weleski for a *Conflict Kitchen* event in Fribourg, together with their Afghan and Iranian partners, filmmaker Hamed Alizadeh from Kabul and visual artist/independent gallery owner Sohrab Kashani from Tehran. It was the first time all of them met in real life, a reunion made possible only on 'neutral' Swiss territory. As the geopolitical context of Switzerland is different from that of the US, we decided to install a temporary *Conflict Kitchen* with long tables in the space adjacent to the *KITCHAIN*, for a one-off event. Rubin and Weleski, Alizadeh and Kashani held lectures about *Conflict Kitchen* and their own practice, while referring to the dishes from their respective countries, prepared in collaboration with the *KITCHAIN* chefs. The food served to the audience became as such a vector of communication and dialogue, in an unusual way that exceeded the media discourse that usually surrounds these countries, and proposed another form of meeting, social commitment and exchange of ideas.

Although established artists like Rirkrit Tiravanija have changed the canon with regards to activities of preparing food in museums, galleries and various other settings, and although the in situ today incorporates notions of geopolitics, we must admit that, often, deviant practices are still not acknowledged as 'art'. And though critics like Pontbriand (2013, 24) laud the 'aesthetic of the everyday', where the social and political boundaries of reality are explored, the aesthetics at stake are turned upside down and hybrid forms and means and heterogeneous exhibition modes are taking over our daily environment, it seems the art versus life debate that typifies the twentieth century has not yet become widespread. In a Skype dialogue I



Figure 6. *Conflict Kitchen*, Festival Belluard Bollwerk International 2011. Photo: Charlotte Walker.

had with her, German artist Maria Guggenbichler, whose work is idea-based and often finds its form in spaces and situations that push for fluid circulation of knowledge and non-knowledge between people, admits to finding it very difficult to establish such a practice:

Because – and I think this comes from a certain kind of ego-boosting and relentless self-promotion which is expected from every actor in the professional artistic field – a practice that is generous and takes the other into account as much as oneself, is considered as a weak failure to perform the role of the hyper-individual, genius artist [...]. The (quite ridiculous) situation is that everybody with a deviant practice is almost busier with defending and establishing that practice as an art practice than actually making, creating or producing work (De Kunst 2013, 44).

She argues further: ‘the challenge for future art and art institutions would be to INCLUDE other art, activities and practices, without naming it any other than ART’ (44). Jelinek (2013, 104) points out that other forms of art-making are often misrecognized as ‘documentary’ or ‘ethnographic’. These statements – along with many other examples – indicate that social and artistic judgements still do not easily merge in our post-political society, despite Rancière’s claim for a zone of indistinction of art and life.

In his book *Conversation Pieces*, Grant Kester (2004, 12) argues that consultative and dialogic art necessitates a shift in our understanding of what art is – away from the visual and sensory and towards discursive exchange and negotiation. However, as Claire Bishop (2012, 25) points out, this should not become a consensual dialogue, as this risks becoming a new kind of repressive form, ‘one in which artistic strategies

of disruption, intervention or over-identification are immediately ruled out as “unethical” because all forms of authorship are equated with authority and indicted as totalising’. At the Belluard Festival we were not looking for the politically correct or for a didactic critical position, but rather for rupture or ambiguity. I agree with Bishop (2012, 26) when she claims that participants – and I would add spectators – ‘are more than capable of dealing with artists who reject Aristotelian moderation in favour of providing a more complicated access to social truth, however eccentric, extreme or irrational this might be’. The underpinning ethical framework she is referring to, and which I can assent to, is a Lacanian fidelity to the singularity of each project, ‘and the ideas and affects it generates for participants and viewers, rather than deferring to the social pressure of a pre-agreed tribunal in which a cautious, self-censoring pragmatism will always hold sway’ (Bishop 2012, 26).

I dealt with the issue of self-censorship a couple of times during my direction of the Belluard Festival. Mostly it had to do with ethical questions. When self-confessed addict to the cheap thrill of online browser-based games Keith Lim proposed to *retoxify* himself for 64 hours non-stop, after having gone cold turkey for one year, I admit that I had many doubts. His performance *Achievement Achieved* dealt with addiction to video games and the ‘gamification’ of society. Unlike games for consoles, online multiplayer video games cost virtually nothing and are accessible in just a few clicks, which makes them acclaimed for their highly addictive nature. Would the Australian artist’s ‘achievement’ be a testament of human endurance, a rite of exodus or a notch in the belt of a gaming career? Was it a moralizing attempt to condemn online video games or rather a glorification of gaming culture? Would we encourage him to get addicted again? And – most importantly – would he survive? It has been medically proven that long exposure to computer screens can be fatal: it can provoke severe epileptic attacks and even cardiac arrest. After having had Lim screened by specialists, who subjected him to several medical tests, we agreed to go on with the project. Under the supervision of a team of professional nurses who tested his bodily functions every hour, Lim gamed non-stop over an entire weekend, from 5 pm on Friday 29 June 2012 to 9 am on Monday 2 July 2012, as such referring to the frame of LAN parties, which consist of people bringing their computers over to each other’s houses to host and play multiplayer games for several days. However, the fact that his performance installation took place in a white cube, in the context of a contemporary art festival, turned it into a ready-made that stirred as much admiration as critique, and as such disrupted rather than creating a consensual dialogue.

Nonetheless, the productive friction of art projects should still allow the invention of social linkage, which is an increasing global concern. As Pontbriand (2013, 103) argues: ‘The question of commonality, relationality, how to connect with the Other is crucial in the current context’. The subject of community touches all aspects of artistic practice. According to Pontbriand (2013, 22) it manifests itself in various forms:

the search for identity in relation to the other, methods of working or modalities of exhibition, taking reality into account or elaborating fictions. At the heart of the most influential practices are the ideas of community, self, and the world in which we live. This development is brought about by a number of changes in the values and lifestyles in our time, which are influenced by globalization, the resulting increase in cultural cross-fertilizations, and technological evolution.



Figure 7. Keith Lim, *Achievement Achieved*, Festival Belluard Bollwerk International 2012. Photo: Nicolas Brodard.

In an essay about the public space, art and the common, Jorinde Seydel (2013, 4) refers to Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's book *Commonwealth*, when she points out that the common is in our age becoming more and more immaterial and affective (knowledge, information, communication, images, codes), and that it is exactly that which is expropriated and privatized by the neoliberal market. Peter Barnes (2006) describes commons as a set of assets that have two characteristics: they are all gifts, and they are all shared, as opposed to individually. The commons cannot be commodified; if they are, they cease to be commons. Unlike private property, the commons are inclusive rather than exclusive. Their nature is to share ownership as widely as possible. The assets in commons are meant to be preserved regardless of their return of capital. Examples include air, water, ecosystems, languages, music, money, law, parks and the internet. Many people have access, for example, to the internet as a resource and a scholarly tool, however it is privatized. To gain access to the internet you need an internet service provider that you have to pay. This common is in that sense not accessible to everyone, as not everyone is involved in the cooperation and the social encounters it has developed out of.

Artists Christoph Wachter and Mathias Jud interrogate this situation in their projects and propose new forms of interconnection that bridge the gaps of language, politics and socio-cultural divides, giving voice to marginalized communities. Under the title *TOOLS FOR THE NEXT REVOLUTION* they created different projects, such as *Picidae* (since 2007), *New Nations* (since 2009) and *qaul.net* (since 2012) that make internet censorship visible and provide the tools ready to bypass it and create completely independent communications networks. Central to their work is the issue of free access and the use of cheap and accessible materials (<http://www.wachter-jud.net>).

During the Belluard Festival 2013, Wachter and Jud gave a lecture-performance about their *TOOLS FOR THE NEXT REVOLUTION* and about their project *Hotel Gelem* according to the principles of *qaul.net*, a redundant, open communication principle in which wireless-enabled computers and mobile devices can directly form a spontaneous network. The term ‘qaul’ (pronounced like the English word ‘call’) is Arabic and means ‘opinion’, ‘say’, ‘talk’ or ‘word’. Chat, twitter functions and movie streaming is possible thanks to *qaul.net*, independent of the internet and cellular networks. The network can spread like a virus: the users gain access via a wi-fi device. Those who access *qaul.net* directly receive the installable software through the link, and can then immediately use *qaul.net* and simultaneously pass along access to others. An Open Source Community can modify it freely. It has been used, among others, in China, Syria, by Roma communities in Paris and Bucharest, and recently, in March 2014, in Turkey (<http://www.qaul.net>).

In a second event at the Belluard Festival 2013, Wachter and Jud explored the possibilities and limits of our communication devices in a hands-on workshop, in which the participants tailored antennas for *qaul.net* out of tin cans. The artists had used this procedure before in the project # *GLM* [*Grassroot Local Meshnet*], an extension of *Hotel Gelem*, in the Roma community in Montreuil, in the suburbs of Paris.

Although Wachter and Jud do not claim their art to be political, their projects have a strong political impact, in the ‘dissensus’¹ they create, in the way they deal with the tension between the physical and virtual public space, and in their sustainability and usefulness (Rancière 1991, 5). Seydel (2013, 5) refers to Rancière when she states that the political conflict is that (rare) event when those who are not perceived break the sanctioned principles that guarantee participation in society, and as such undermine the consensus about perception. With # *GLM* [*Grassroot Local Meshnet*] Wachter and Jud allowed the Roma community in Montreuil, with whom they have been working since 2011 and who they claim to be ‘excluded from public perception and self-justification by social exclusion and structural power’, to have access to the internet, and enabled them to engage online in ‘politically explosive discussions regarding exclusion’. Furthermore, the effect of the interaction between the physical and digital space is important in Wachter and Jud’s projects. In the virtual era we live in, space is not merely three-dimensional and time linear, but is the time-space a flow with several levels, writes Seydel (2013, 5), in reference to media theoretician Joss Hands. Wachter and Jud’s projects are products of our decentralized network-era, and as such deal with sustainability and inclusion. The collaborative strategies that they use in their projects are each adapted to a situation that is the starting point for small subversive gestures and direct actions that have a real impact. These strategies for disobedience are not merely critical, but useful and propose democratic alternatives in a constructive way.

In her essay ‘Arte Útil’ (‘Useful Art’) Tania Bruguera (2014, 299–300) suggests that political art is not about the unrealistic and desired spectacular ‘change’ created by such art, because change is not something clearly tangible but rather a subtle, long-term process of growth. Furthermore, she goes on to say that art that works politically is about all the tools that we have in art to challenge things outside of art: it is making art useful for those who are not trained artists, for both informed and uninformed people with the same levels of interest and engagement.



Figure 8. Christoph Wachter and Mathias Jud, *TOOLS FOR THE NEXT REVOLUTION*, Festival Belluard Bollwerk International 2013. Photo: Charlotte Walker.

In my opinion Bruguera's definition of political art is reminiscent of the concept of *communities of practice*. According to the cognitive anthropologist Etienne Wenger (1998), communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern, interest or profession, and learn how to do this better as they regularly interact. The groups can develop naturally through means of sharing and exchanging knowledge. However, they can also be purposely formed in order to gain a particular knowledge or experience. In his writings Wenger mainly deals with business, government, education, development projects, knowledge management and civic life. He does not refer to art at all. However, the exchange of knowledge in communities of practice is not necessarily an explicit expertise but can also be seen as a tacit knowledge: a valuable context-based experience that cannot easily be captured, codified or stored – in other words that is often archetypical for contemporary art practice. The characteristics of communities of practice – autonomy, practitioner-orientation, informality, crossing boundaries – are also the characteristics of artistic projects. In my opinion many artists these days, and certainly the ones mentioned above, develop their projects on the periphery of communities of practice, situated at the limit where a community is in contact with the world around it and with other communities of practice. In the above-mentioned art projects the learning did not take place in a traditional, hierarchical way, with a master, but rather peer-to-peer, which is typical for communities of practice.

As such, the idea of communities of practice alludes to Rancière's 'communities of intelligence', as described in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*: the role of a teacher is

only to ‘oblige’ the student to realize his or her capacity with a mutual acceptance of the equality of intelligence of all humans (Rancière 1991, 35). In that sense, learning is about emancipation, about ‘each man becoming conscious of his nature as an intellectual subject’ (58). This is, according to Rancière (36), a question of observing, comparing and combining, of making and noticing how one has done it. This is also characteristic of the described art projects.

In an interview about political art, Rancière implicitly refers back to his claims from *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* and points out that many artistic proposals that pretend to be revolutionary and progressive and are critical of alienation, consumption or media are based on the same reactionary premise that irrigates the philosophy of Plato (Rousset 2009). Those artistic propositions reflect the old distinction between those who know and those who don’t know, as described in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*. And, in my opinion, the problem is that many of these kind of artistic proposals primarily only reach an ‘art audience’. On the other hand, Jelinek (2013, 159) points out that many things glossed as art are nothing other than commodities or instances of social amelioration. Ideally art projects are the interlocking of extreme popularity and the rarefaction of criticism, as defined by Cuauhtémoc Medina (2010, 13): ‘Contemporary art is [...] a form of aristocratic populism – a dialogical structure in which extreme subtlety and the utmost simplicity collide, forcing individuals of varying class, ethnic, and ideological affiliations – which might have otherwise kept them separated – to smell each other in artistic structures’.

To conclude, I can say that during my six years’ leadership at the Belluard Festival I have tried to create such an interface, allowing a dialogue between artists and a versatile audience. Art institutions like the Belluard Festival should host and produce projects that permit the creation of public spaces, as indicated by Rancière: spaces that do justice to everyone’s ability to see, to produce and to think; zones of ‘indistinction between life and art’ that allow the tacit exchange of knowledge, emancipation and empowerment of different actors. Those projects should not make concrete political or social claims; their agency should consist rather in their presence, in their friction or ambiguity, or in their proposal of useful, democratic alternatives. As Jelinek (2013, 160) writes in the conclusion of her book *This Is Not Art*, ‘art does something more than invent new, nuanced or more complex stories: it enacts the plurality inherent in this process and, in doing so challenges orthodoxy’. Therefore openness and a critical attitude are required.

Which leads me to end with Rancière (1991, 33): ‘Whoever looks finds. He doesn’t necessarily find what he was looking for, and even less what he was supposed to find. But he finds something new to relate to the thing he already knows’.

Note

1. Rancière emphasizes our differences as the basis of our humanity rather than our commonalities and this leads to a politics of ‘dissensus’ rather than ‘consensus’.

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Sally De Kunst (Belgium, 1974) is the director of the artist residency ARC in Romainmôtier (CH). Between 2007 and 2013 she was the director of the Belluard Bollwerk International, an arts festival in Fribourg (CH). After a BA in Graphic Design at St. Lukas in Brussels (BE),

a BA in Art History at the University of Ghent (BE) and an MA in Theatre Studies at the Universities of Glasgow (UK) and Ghent (BE), Sally De Kunst worked from 2000 until 2003 as a dance, theatre and film critic for the Belgian newspaper *De Morgen*. From 2003 until 2006 she was the dance and performance curator at arts centre STUK and the international festival international exchange platforms: Monsoon, an Asian-European exchange, which took place Klapstuk in Leuven (BE). In 2006–2007 she worked as a coorganizer for two in Seoul in December 2006, and Expedition, a residency in three stages for artists organized by Frascati (Amsterdam) in collaboration with Brut (Vienna) and Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers (Paris). In 2010, 2011 and 2012 Sally De Kunst hosted Watch & Talk, a discursive residency-workshop for young artists at the festival Theaterspektakel in Zurich (CH). She has also been a contributor for different magazines and publication.

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