

**EXIT STRAT-
EGIES AND A
STAND ALONE
COMPLEX** Peter Lem-
mens

EXIT STRAT- EGIES AND A STAND ALONE COMPLEX

Peter Lem-
mens

esprit d'escalier
(n.) the witty comeback you think of
after the time is past to use it

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*Three men walk into a bar.
They are not thirsty,
but order drinks anyways.
Then the first one starts to laugh.
The second joins in and soon
the third one is laughing as well.
All three of them are laughing out loud now.
And it's infectious, because soon
the whole bar is laughing.*

*Everybody laughing
without knowing the joke.*

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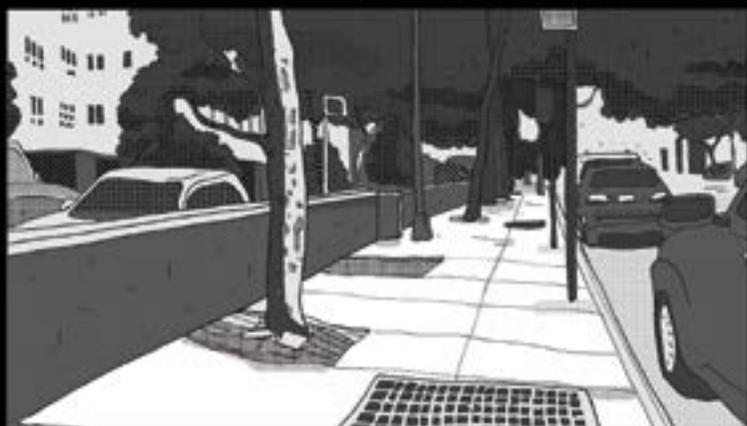
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**HOW ABOUT A GHOSTWRITER WRITING A POST-CREDIT
SCENE FOR AN OFF-SCREEN CHARACTER?**

with Karina Beumer

PREQUEL



We will be watching movie extras. Bloopers, behind the scenes, deleted scenes, cast reunions, director's commentary, alternative endings. Or location scouting test footage. Expanded narratives with extra characters, additional content and complementary storylines.



The camera will be static. It will be filming a street. Generic to the point we almost won't be able to register it.



Also we will hear some music, but it will be unclear whether this will be a soundtrack placed over the scene or something that will be a real part of the scene.



A light morning smog will remind us that we're in a big city. The view will only be two-dimensional. It will be wide and deep or wide and high or high and deep, but never all three at the same time.



The shot will take too long for comfort and contemporary movie standards. Then we will notice the camera isn't static at all. While lingering on the same scene, a soft, shaky movement will reveal the camera is being handheld.

It will make us think about the people behind the camera. Off-screen, but now clearly present.

We will imagine a film crew, just a few inches outside of the cinemascopé format. Holding boom microphones, laying wires, catering, cueing people, managing special effects, directing light designs, doing make-up, checking continuity. Participants in the story, invested, credited at the very end in white letters scrolling over a black matte.

We will remember a certain movie of which the title will elude us. At the end the credits didn't scroll bottom to top, but top to bottom. It was disorienting, scrambling the narrative as if watching a movie in rewind mode.

We will instinctively look for the film crew's reflection in the shiny surfaces. For just that nanosecond, which is a difficult unit for film. It could fall between two film frames and be lost in that space forever.

We will have the feeling we're watching a film, set in a future recently caught up by real time. We will think this because things are visibly out of sync. A set of divergences that will push things into another kind of fiction. One that will be aware of its own fictitiousness.

It will be a flash-forward rewrapped as a flashback. A future that has been overreached, disentangled from its predictive function.

The need to talk about this future as still possible, will be an indication of the situation's earnestness

We will notice a single broken pixel on the screen

We will find ourselves shouting at the television set
Yet we will know how ridiculous this looks.

A voiceover will start describing a color scheme for this scene as it will adapt to the weather in hues of ever changing green

Ocean Glass Shard to Green Tomato

Green Tomato to Amazon Dust

Amazon Dust to Ao

Ao to Kelly Green

Kelly Green to Malachite

Shamrock to Office Green

Malachite to Shamrock

Office Green to Pickle And Sage

Pickle And Sage to Parakeet

Wrapped into such ineffable words, the narrative will become suspicious, bordering on the unbelievable

Parakeet to Sacramento Sea Foam

Sacramento Sea Foam to Phtalo

Verdigris to Caledon Clay

Phtalo to Verdigris

Caledon Clay to Teal Surf

Teal Surf to

This will render the picture out-of-focus, but in high resolution. All the better to see the blurriness.

How about a ghostwriter writing a deleted scene for an off-screen character?

INTRODUC- TION

BETAVILLE or REVERSE ENGINEERING THE FUTURE (estimated reading time: 45' 32")

Go to <http://diversions.be/betaville.html>

Put on some headphones, push play.

Take a moment.

Let us tell you a story.

When looking at our official student card, it reads: “determine the future”. This is probably intended as an encouraging, positive message. However, looking around a little bit more, this narrative seems to be omnipresent. “Living tomorrow today”, announces the high-rise building being renovated. “Building the city of tomorrow”, reads the city planning’s sign at a massive construction site. “Buy now, pay tomorrow”, promises the credit card company. “Ten jobs for the future”, recommends the school flyer. “Who will be the next unicorn”, asks the financial newspaper. “Pre-order now”, reminds the online shop. “Sore today, strong tomorrow”, reassures the fitness club. “Invest in tomorrow! Now 100% safe!”, guarantees the spam mails. “National debt soars to all-time record high”, reports the news. “Prelude: Melancholy of the future”, “Potential Worlds 2: Eco-Fictions”, “Uncertain Where the Next Wind Blows”, “Tomorrow”, “Digital Cultures 2020: Imagined Futures”, “The Restless Echo of Tomorrow”, “Thinking about possible futures”, “Countryside, The Future” are some of the current and upcoming exhibitions. Do you catch our drift? These examples cover a lot of ground from economic to social to politics to art. There are many more. Something is going on here.

What could be a critical way to understand this continuous invocation of the future? We propose three keywords to help us out here: the future, narrativity and distribution. By correlating these three notions we argue that our time (e.g. chronology), systemic thinking (e.g. societal improvement) and praxis (e.g. production and distribution) have been compromised. When the future becomes a dominant structure of thinking and acting, narrativity is formatted through distribution methods. ‘The future’, ‘narrativity’ and ‘distribution’ are keywords for a neo-liberal system that thrives on probability and extraction. It’s supported

by narratives that require a critical mass remaining uncritical to the distribution of a probable, extractable future. If our present is defined by social, political and economic structures, and if these structures are in their turn implicated by narratives about the future, then how do we go about our present reality?

THE FUTURE

“Complex societies — which means more-than-human societies at scales of sociotechnical organization that surpass phenomenological determination — are those in which the past, the present, and the future enter into an economy where maybe none of these modes is primary, or where the future replaces the present as the lead structuring aspect of time.

(Avanessian & Malik, 2016)

When we hear ‘Living tomorrow today’, we may need to take this more literally than we would like to. The future is no longer a set of possibilities in front of us. It has already been determined. The future subordinates the present, because, when the future is already determined (memorised), the present loses the privilege of being a moment that can not be grasped in itself (Broeckmann & Hui, 2015). In other words, our present and society are governed by a prospectus for the future. We thought we were post-, but we are only pre-.

To enable this pre-condition, the future should be predetermined. Its uncertainty needs to be captured and reeled in with something. That lasso is probability, which differs significantly from possibility. Probability often curtails unlikely possibilities. It disregards the impact of sharp jumps or discontinuities (Taleb, 2010). The future is no future if it’s only possible; it needs to be probable. Where the future used to be an undetermined field of possibilities, it’s now truncated.. Probability flattens out ideas to match, not the average opinion, but the average opinion about what the average opinion will be (Eatwell, 2001). We might already be living on borrowed time. Another way to describe this could be: the future is prescriptive. The future is already determined and serves as a disciplinary fantasy for the present.

This probability is a narrative that keeps the complex circulation of leveraged capital operating (primarily by applying probability calculus to random or historic data) (Nestler, 2017). This incessant pushing into the future reduces everything to placeholders. By the moment we catch up with a probable future, it has already been supplanted by the next mo-

ment. The future is postponed time and time again and we are trapped in perpetual beta. It’s the old bait-and-switch. Our default condition has become one of permanent anticipation.

Once predetermined, that future is set as the default and is already mined through derivatives. What is this thing called derivative? It’s a financial instrument that allows something to be traded in the future at a fixed price. The estimated market size of derivatives exceeds the world’s GDP by twenty times. This means that a whole new field opens up for speculation. A field that is not defined by the quantitative abstraction of production, but by a quantitative abstraction of the information about all of the possible future states of a system (Wark, 2016). This derivative condition has significant implications. In such an economy, human invention increasingly makes physical resources obsolete. We’re breaking through the material conditions of existence to a world where man creates his own destiny (McClanahan, 2013). This acknowledges a materiality problem with a double dynamic. Our economic system is not only finite in physical resources, but in opportunity as well. There is a shortage of profitable investment opportunities. Less investment in the productive economy (the ‘real’ economy) means lower future growth (Magdoff, 2006). Neoliberal actors are very much aware of this finite system. Neoliberalism doesn’t offset limitations by innovative ways to manage material production, but bypasses the system completely as it shifts production through time. With the introduction of debt and financialization, production can be sidestepped completely. Material resources can be left out of the equation, while an unlimited opportunity for immaterial surplus can be generated simultaneously. For instance, investing in a yet to be constructed building promises a vibrant new community, social status and soaring real estate prices afterwards as part of the deal. In short, the strategy is to move to the one resource we have unlimited amounts of: time. It stretches out into infinity. How could such abundance not be used? It could be considered a crime not to use it. It would be a waste of time.

The role of narrativity here, can introduce our next keyword.

NARRATIVITY

We never stop telling ourselves stories, because it is how we make sense of our place in the world, what came before, where we are now, and where we are headed.

(Patterson & Monroe, 1998:319)

Everybody loves a good story. The future is ‘without form, shape, or color: it demands yet exceeds all figuration. It’s the “sublime object of ideology”’ (Hebdige as cited in Dunmire, 2005:485). Consequently, stories about the future allow us to conceptualize and examine language as ‘virtual space’ and as ‘action and event’. If we look to exploit narrativity, then we must think about the various ways in which different futures are imagined. We have to explore how particular discursive strategies open up or close down particular lines of possibility; how they invite or inhibit particular social, political and economic fractions. Here, stories can become narratives. We define narratives as stories with an agenda. As unilateral constructs they require neither dialogue nor reflection. All interaction immediately enters the narrative’s intrinsic feedback loop. And this might raise some concerns. Narrativity is the only tool we have to deal with in the future, but swinging a hammer doesn’t necessarily turn all your problems into nails.

First, these narratives are not simple ‘everything-is-possible’-fictions about what could occur in the future. On the contrary, they construct a truncated vision of the future and come with certain prescriptions. In other words these narratives are not about how the future could possibly be, but how it should be. They get distributed without dispute and reproduced as blueprints for that future. As copies that can be implemented anywhere and anytime, these probable future narratives project a standardized one size fits all future. The anticipation of that future narrative then functions as if it is sending signals back into the past, which then prompts action in the present (Dupuy, 2007 as cited in Bayly, 2013).

A second concern is that narrativity has become a super-efficient tool for leveraging and hedging future risks and opportunities. Don’t just spend time, invest it. This begs the following question: how do these narratives unfold when we actually catch up with that probable future? Narrativity does not translate well into reality. It’s in its nature to be slippery. Once we catch up with a fantasized future, it’s simply replaced by another narrative for a probable future. This might be essential to understand narrativity as a tool, because it’s the escape route from liability. There is no need to deal with the results, results are not part of the narrative. All that matters, is the probable narrative and the byproducts it creates along the way. This solves the apparent paradox of how to continue myths of economic and technical growth while embracing a future understood as finite and catastrophic.

The future and narrativity are an efficient team. Through narrativity, the

future is rephrased as a standing reserve to mine. It’s a way to bring in that future and extract it through derivatives. When that probable future is discarded at the time of arrival and narratives are replaced with new narratives about the next probable future, narrativity becomes a tool to disconnect us completely from materiality.

This brings us to another concern: in neoliberalism’s approach to economic volatility, extraction and profitability is found in a continuously deferred tomorrow (McClannahan, 2013). As mentioned, time becomes the structuring factor and narrativity is the power tool to wield. Although these narratives operate with a certain language and idiom that insists on a probable future, they are in fact not really about the future. All this talk about the future is only a decoy. It projects a fantasized future image as a preemptive strike to determine actions and extraction in the present. This mining of the future in the present changes what the present is. It’s a way to materialize derivative byproducts from that probable future in the present. And that dominates what you can, will and should do today.

Finally, we arrive at the question: whose future are these narratives talking about? The narrative does not only entail a fantasized future, but a fantasized “community” for that future as well. The narrative is simply a way to create a domesticated, disciplined community. The narrative about the future and what should be done today for that probable future, is very particular and fits our current socio-political neoliberal system. It encourages us to get a mortgage, it encourages countries into huge loans, it encourages us to support preemptive strikes against “evil”, it encourages us to buy into and construct a particular architecture in so-called beat-up areas, ... This particular kind of actions in the name of the future, are actually beneficial for the future of a particular part of society. The sugar coat is societal improvement for all, but the reality is improvement for a few, debts for many. Such narratives literally use populations as resource, medium, and testbed for new forms of development, extraction and speculation (Halpern, 2017). In other words, to extract that probable future, the fantasized community that will work towards it, should also be constructed. We understand this community as similar to the fantasized future: it’s not about how this community could be, but how it should be. It should be one that applies for loans, legitimizes wars, buys into gentrification, etc.. This community is made compliant. It’s encouraged to take actions or agree with actions today within the illusion that this will bring us closer to that fantasized future. It’s molded to the fantasized community that is necessary to construct the future narrative and will take part in the distribution of this narrative.

Edward LiPuma and Benjamin Lee connect 'the linguistic turn' of the 1970s with the shift of 'the leading edge of capitalism' from production to circulation (McClanahan, 2013:86) This might bring us to our third part. What is being circulated? How does distribution fit in here?

DISTRIBUTION

[...] *'fictitious capital,' suggesting that finance is a social fiction whose reproduction and power depends on and drives the proliferation of social fictions throughout financialized societies.* (Haiven, 2014).

As our last keyword, we want to reframe distribution. Distribution is what makes things available, the natural placement of items along a path. However, increasingly, distribution imposes prerequisites on what can be distributed. Living in the technological age, the world is already framed as a resource available for us, to be made, to be shaped for our ongoing possibilities to express our particular projects, to be whatever we are, as business people, engineers, consultants, academics, teenagers, etc. (Heidegger, 1977 as cited in Introna, 2017). But just as technology doesn't always reveal itself, neither does distribution disclose its full scope nor its intentional byproducts.

Often seen as a logical part of a logistical equation, distribution has shed its neutral skin and mutated to a covert rule-enforcer. It operates with almost imperceptible formats that narrate not only the world, i.e. space, but also the future, i.e. time, as an immediately available reserve. Distribution has become hyper-pervasive and dominant. In our contemporary society and tempo, it favors the immaterial such as ideas, information, services and relationships. These become intensely interlinked and shaped through their distribution formats that demand speed, transition and flexibility.

First, let's take a look at speed. Interactions are quickened and velocities approach fibre-optic lightspeed. These kinds of speed liquefy edges and dissolve material with an extreme movement blur. It appeals to the emergence of a new form of money governed not by the 'physically determined constraints of underlying trade' but rather by 'purely financial dynamics' of circulation (Rotman, 1993 as cited in Annie McClanahan, 2013:86). Acceleration becomes easy when matter is discarded in favor of an immaterial, probable future. Lightspeed might be possible if there is little to no mass. Lightspeed might be the only way to time-travel.

A second feature of distribution insists on keeping everything in a con-

stant state of transition. Leveraging and hedging things into a future is about continuous motion. What becomes more and more evident is that these dynamics are no longer limited to the financial department alone. They are not even limited to fields such as economics or technology. Distribution has become a ubiquitous feature that has infiltrated every layer of thinking and acting. Distribution is no longer a flat surface through which things move, but a 3D situation that reshapes whatever moves through it.

Finally, let's look at flexibility. Narrativity constantly points at a probable future with a set of placeholders. Here, narrativity is a device to make things happen, even though its subject is replaceable and of no real importance, in this case the future. To replace possibility with probability, to find acceleration and to maintain a state of transition, narratives need to be liquid and flexible. It's the Argonauts' boat that is replaced piece by piece while sailing. They speed on, only to arrive with a completely different boat by the same name. It's completely described yet fully undetermined.

This indetermination is possible as emphasis shifts from what is being distributed to the distribution itself. In this set up of probability, perpetual postponement and immateriality, divergence from the probable future might initially be treated as an error, but will ultimately be inconsequential. Divergence is what threatens current extraction. But nothing more than that. The outcome doesn't matter. The narrative of a probable outcome is what allows extraction now. It must only be projected as reality for as long as possible. When we eventually reach that probable future, the reality of that situation is already switched to the next moment. Resources become flexible standing reserves located in a deferred tomorrow that can or can't manifest. That manifestation is besides the point. Interchangeability or adaptability to replacement narratives is key.

When distribution adheres to these formats, it comes with prerequisites that reshape not only the world, but it also reshapes us. Again, narrativity is used to distribute political ideologies, social organization or technological disciplining to displace the present to a fantasized future for a fantasized community. These are the shiny surfaces that reflect the blue skies above. The present is pushed to a next moment, while derivatives are distributed from that future into the now as background activity. These derivatives are therefore the coveted byproducts of narrativity. They are the deep waters below the surface. Through a narrative leveraging, this constant displacement adds up, looming on the horizon as a form of debt. However, these days, the logic that paying your debts makes you rich seems pathetically na-

ive. We have been taught by a decade of casino capitalism that what makes you rich, is precisely the opposite. What makes you rich, fabulously rich, beyond your wildest dreams, is leveraging (Krauss, 1997). The extraction of derivatives simultaneously brings the next moment into the now as the interest rate that's owed. Both directions of debt and interest rate, disconnect real time from fantasized time and each has its own specific subjects or community. The distribution of derivatives means that when real time finally catches up with fantasized time, extraction has been completed. The future is now exhausted and can be replaced with the next probable future. These are the leverages that insert everything into a continuous distribution cycle.

ART

Art is often perceived as thriving on possibility. It can occupy a space right at the intersection of our three keywords. The creative field is ground zero for words such as temporary, pop-up, nomadic, performance, community, project, content providers, storytelling, innovative, potential, passion, work-leisure. There's also artistic production that ends up as placeholders in free ports, project-based thinking about the future as an artistic praxis, etc. First implemented by a creative field, these conditions are quickly embraced by a neoliberal language and organization as examples for the future of work and society. Are derivatives of art's structures such as city planning, cash flows, data sets, political narratives, economical models, etc. also shipped along where it steps into mass distribution? Contemporary art seems to have an ambiguous position towards this all. On the one hand it claims criticality, on the other hand its different waves of institutional critique seem to be co-opted by neoliberal narratives. Art becomes an avant-garde that refrains to look back who is following, while providing creative tools and distribution formats for fantasized futures and communities. Art should no longer automatically imply a virtuous criticality, whose ethic short-circuits economic, political or social issues. The production of yet more and different art is not a given, but should be taken seriously as a construction in concert with a hegemonic politics "at ease with a modernity of abstraction, complexity, globality, and technology" (Srnicek and Williams, 2013 as cited in Johnson, 2015).

Let us repeat here that 'the future', 'narrativity' and 'distribution' are keywords for a neoliberal system that thrives on probability and extraction. It's supported by narratives that require a critical mass remaining uncritical to the distribution of a probable, extractable future. Contemporary art is often perceived as a "counter-story", as the criti-

cal voice of our current society. But where is this voice still present or has the creative sector and art been co-opted by a creative industry? How does art grasp its own distribution and the narratives it helps distribute?

So we return to the question: if our present is defined by political-economic structures, and these structures are in their turn implicated by narratives about the future, then how do we go about our present reality? Art could sidestep the narrative impulse and fallacy. It could find a new institutional critique in the deliberate absence of a structuring narrative, controlling the reception or delivery (Malik & Phillips, 2009). This is an invitation to read back and revisit these three keywords with selected quotations from an art context.

FUTURE

"[...] the imaginary space projected by the artist will not only emerge from the formal conditions of the contradictions of a given moment of capital, but will prepare its subjects-its readers or viewers-to occupy a future real world which the work of art has already brought them to imagine, a world restructured not through the present but through the next moment in the history of capital." (Krauss, 1997:435)

"[...] artists and scholars always keep an eye on developing 'transferable skills' for a future in the 'knowledge economy'. In other words, the contemporary university seems increasingly to train subjects for life under global capitalism, initiating students into a lifetime of debt, while coercing staff into ever more burdensome forms of administrative accountability and disciplinary monitoring." (Bishop, 2012:269)

The intriguing exhibition at the Pompidou Centre in 1985 on 'The Immaterial' (an exhibition for which none other than Lyotard acted as one of the consultants) was perhaps a mirror image of the dissolution of the material representations of value under conditions of more flexible accumulation, and of the confusions as to what it might mean to say, with Paul Virilio, that time and space have disappeared as meaningful dimensions to human thought and action. (Harvey, 1990:299)

NARRATIVITY

"Then, however, the dematerialized art object turns out to be perfectly adapted to the semioticization of capital, and thus to the conceptual turn of capitalism." (Steyerl, 2012:42)

“[...] information about the artwork circulating in the world that makes it collectible. It is also the noise. As with any other financial instrument in a portfolio, the artwork in a collection gains and loses value at the volatile edge between information and noise.” (Wark, 2016)

“Any object can be enriched, however ancient or modern it is, and the enrichment can be physical—for example, exposing beams in an old house—or cultural, through the use of a narrative device that highlights certain of the object’s qualities, thereby producing and formatting differences and identities, which are primary resources of enrichment economies.” (Boltanski & Esquerre, 2016:35)

DISTRIBUTION

“The definition of artistic activity occurs, first of all, in the field of distribution.” —Marcel Broodthaers. (Price, 2008)

“On the one hand, the economy of poor images, with its immediate possibility of worldwide distribution and its ethics of remix and appropriation, enables the participation of a much larger group of producers than ever before. But this does not mean that these opportunities are only used for progressive ends.” (Steyerl, 2012:40)

“Circulationism is not about the art of making an image, but of postproducing, launching, and accelerating it. It is about the public relations of images across social networks, about advertisement and alienation [...]” (Steyerl, 2015: 20)

This set of quotations asks for a productive reading and a reassessment. It’s a way to return to a starting point while keeping in mind these questions: How to keep from replicating a center that deserves some criticality? How to create a margin that refuses its own marginality as a cynical quality? How to read while listening to music?

Take a moment.

Put on some headphones, push replay.

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WORK DOCUMENTS

FROM WHITE PAPER TO WHITEBOARD (talking points)

0 - WHITE PAPER

- art as unique / rare >< information as plenty
- music, film, literature
 - disruption
 - DIY – access to production and network
- DIY
 - = organization / distribution
 - ≠ material
- ≠ duplicate existing models
- artwork as something to possess >< artwork as something to do
> what are dependencies?
- default distribution path
- distribution = the market?
 - art = currency
 - art = derivative
- produce art for
 - exhibition
 - collection
 - distribution of derivatives
- example > collector
- questions
 - does what we produce instigate limited interactions?
 - > a new institutional critique is not enough
 - stakeholder
 - where lies potential for change?
- what to do with all these works in a collection?
- what is invested?
- new narrative
 - look inwards
 - create collaborative field
 - the long tail
- new distribution paradigm

1 - WELCOME

This evening is a stand-alone second report, a spin-off from a study group on distribution in art, entitled: distribution - From white paper to whiteboard.

First a round of thank you:

- Extra City for hosting us > Adinda Van Geystelen / Eline Verstegen
- Study Group: Timo Demollin, Laurens Otto, Nasrin Tork and Astrid Vereycken.
- Kask - Curatorial Studies: for a year of critical environment (Antony Hudek, Samuel Saelemaekers, Natalie Zonnenberg, Marijke Van Eeckhout)
- Antwerp Academy > where I'm doing this as part of a PhD in Art
- ARIA for supporting the event
- De Brakke Grond for hosting the first discussion moment entitled: What are we talking about when we talk about distribution
- Speakers: Karina Beumer and Brenda Tempelaar

I also like to mention Metropolis M that will publish an article from the first discussion.

2 - INTRODUCTION

Why distribution?

- "The definition of artistic activity occurs, first of all, in the field of distribution."
(Marcel Broodthaers)
- "This bizarre Gestalt-switch from regarding the collection as a form of cultural patrimony or as specific and irreplaceable embodiments of cultural knowledge to one of eying the collection's contents as so much capital- as stocks or assets whose value is one of pure exchange and thus only truly realized when they are put in circulation."
(Rosalind Krauss)

Distribution as the dominant interaction in contemporary society that in the last decade was seriously impacted by technology. Today we can no longer see distribution in the same way as we did a decade ago. It could be a moment for reassessment.

Definition white paper: an authoritative report or guide that informs concisely about a complex issue and presents the issuing body's philosophy on the matter. It is meant to help readers understand an issue, solve a problem, or make a decision.

Tonight we started by providing three white papers, which are on the

whiteboard and hopefully you had an opportunity to read.

We will now proceed by taking a step back, rewrite, redraw and reassess these during a visual discussion on the whiteboards.

If there are questions or remarks, please feel free to intervene, ask or write down on the whiteboards.

3 - PRESENTATION

- Can we look at some of the ways in which art as rarity interacts now with information as plenty, producing some rather striking opportunities to create value?
- Other domains such as music, film and literature have been seriously disrupted in their economical aspects but were also opened up to a DIY movement through creating networks as well as having access to production facilities.
- As a response to the coalescence of distribution vectors into monolithic structures that are rule-enforcing and have a tendency towards invisibility, DIY can envision distribution outside of that framework.
- DIY is most often about the organizational side of things and about distribution. Rarely is it ever really about breeding your own Siberian weasel in order to make your own paintbrush from Kolinsky sable or staking a land claim in Guinea to mine your own aluminum.
- An important question here is how to refrain from merely duplicating what is already there? How to create critical difference?
- Maybe, that difference and criticality lies not just in the artwork itself, but also in the logistics of artwork production and distribution? This is a work that goes along with the artwork. It's not the dematerialization of the work. It just means more work
- What if we see an artwork as something to be distributed? What are dependencies here?
- What could be a DIY distribution path of an artwork? During the first conversation at de Brakke Grond in Amsterdam the following path was laid out as the complete default. The artist makes an artwork that gets put in one or more exhibitions until it ends up with a collector. Meanwhile a gallery can step in to facilitate negotiations and public money can provide the necessary funding. This path has some wires that spark when crossed.
- When talking about distribution in art the thinking is often reduced to the market
- Art can become currency in distribution. (Hito Steyerl)
- A derivative does something different. It manages and hedges risk. What we need, then, is a theory of art as a derivative. (MacKenzie

Wark)

- Just as artists produce work made for collecting (Groys), it might be that artists now start producing work that formatted through its telos of new distribution models.
- So let's look at this terminus point of the collector for a moment.
- Or the dependency can be reframed as more reciprocal instead of a terminus.
- When thinking about this, there are some questions that could divert the usual scenario away from this terminus point.
 1. Are the artworks that are being produced, instigating this default (extracting) way of engaging with artworks? Is this extracting relationship not bilateral and may therefor a new Institutional critique not be enough? Does what we make intentionally limit the possible interactions to looking in from the outside or flash trading from the inside?
 2. If we look at stakeholder theory, how do we define people involved in production and distribution of artworks? Is there a way to shift stakes when looking at these different roles?
 3. Where to locate potential for change? Where can we divert investments away from mere extraction?
- When thinking about the collector this leads to what to do with all these works in a collection?
- Can we see collecting as more than investing money and storage?
- How does collecting become something to do instead of something to own?
- Quick responses could be:
 1. Look inwards. Make artists accountable, while also allowing for others to take accountability over the artwork.
 2. Create a collaborative field that follows working side to side instead of face to face (i.e. Scooby Doo or the Defiant Ones vs. the A-Team). To be dependent and autonomous at the same time. Create an autonomous involvement. How to involve more people without relieving them of their autonomy?
 3. These dependencies can be long-term interaction. A continuous investment and interaction with an object. The long tail.
 4. How to end up with things to do?
- Could it be about creating working and organizational methodologies. Build dependencies that allow for reciprocal interactions?
- When looking at distribution, artists could find creative ways and tools to redefine collecting within a new distribution paradigm.
- This could point towards distribution as a moment of deterrence, as ways to counter certain extracting interactions.

- We have to take this into account and see what can be critical forms and formats in an artistic practice if it wants to grasp itself as a political, social, economical or technological apparatus.
- This means engaged positions can also be staked out by reassessing distribution of artworks and not just the representational, depicting or symbolic qualities of the work.
- Can we create not radical (even more) interactions that exclude trading or other problematic interactions, but slight shifts that open parts of the work (e.g. distribution) for other more involving interactions > trading vs. distribution? Cf. fan fiction and torrents?
- Can we create, not new models, but a certain lingo for these kinds of long-term collaborative but autonomous interactions?

4 - WHITEBOARD

Back to the drawing board.

THESTOCKEXCHANGE (texts)

As a start, it might be easier to see what THESTOCKEXCHANGE is not. In mathematics this would be a proof by exhaustion, a kind of brute force method that exhausts all possibilities until what's left must be it.^[1] It's not an exhibition space, it's not a classroom, it's not a store, it's not a bar. It's also not a social space, it's not a program, a report or an annotation. It's not an institute nor is it a gallery. It's not an event, it's not a free space, it's not a white cube, it's certainly not a studio and it's not a workshop or an essay or a story. It could be a showroom, a study, an exercise or an archive, except that it's not. It's also not an invitation or an exchange, it's neither official nor professional. Neither amateur nor a diversion. It's not formal and it certainly isn't theoretical. It's not a solo show but also not a group show or a retrospective. Not logistical, virtual, chronological, in sync, etcetera... It's not alternative.

So what's left is that maybe it's all of these things simultaneously, combined into something that, at first glance, looks like a storage space.

Then there's this joke by Woody Allen where he claims that two insightful magazines have merged. One was called Dissent and the other Commentary. The new name is Dysentery.^[2]

So what we have here with THESTOCKEXCHANGE doesn't want to be a merger of two artistic practices like that. This kind of collaboration is not a collective, it's not even doing things collectively. It's more living apart together (again Woody Allen waving across Central Park to Mia Farrow). It's an uncompromising simultaneity. It's the incompatible forced together with unsound methods. Or maybe, more accurately: not necessarily agreeing by leaving the conversation unresolved, to be picked up again the next time and being aware that all forms of consensus are by necessity an act of exclusion.^[3]

The A-team is a way to organize a collaborative effort.^[4] All bases are covered with a set of complementary skills neatly compacted into a super-efficient well-oiled unit.^[5]

On the other hand there's The Defiant Ones.^[6] Two prisoners chained together, are presented with the opportunity to escape. Neither really wants the other to be there, methods differ, ideas conflict. There's no real merging in this forced collaboration. When freed from their chains, each man goes his own way again.

Also, and this is maybe very important, this stock is not a model, it's not a blueprint. It's a place that constantly wants to rethink itself

and therefor can't function as a recognizable model. It refuses each attempt at averaging out in order to reestablish itself each time it's opened up. Instead it seeks out a certain discourse that disassembles the model at the exact moment it's being constructed. It wants to impose the discursive upon itself and everything and everyone involved, from initiative over participant to audience. It thinks about the production and distribution as markers for a specific artistic practice. In a slapstick turn, it searches for the intentional trip to stumble over its own structural limits. It's aware of these and still proceeds. And in doing so it completely commits to transition. Not in a predatory aesthetic destruction mode, but more with the compacting, stretching, mirroring and folding that are the actions of the practical experiment. Like in a chair stress test^[7], it's at the same time the machine as well as the chair.

Each time, some minor points are structured along keywords, tangent issues and annotations as a way to describe what THESTOCKEX-CHANGE can be. And to begin with, it's an empty storage space.

(AN INTRODUCTION TO) FUTURES AND OPTIONS

many logos — emergent situation rebranding

In computer engineering, Halt and Catch Fire (HCF) is an instruction that causes the computer's central processing unit to cease meaningful operation, typically requiring a restart. It originally referred to a fictitious instruction, but later computer developers created real versions of it. It could consist of continuously firing all commands at the same time. The implication is that, by definition, there's no way for the system to recover without a restart. The expression "catch fire" in this context is normally used jokingly, rather than literal, referring to a total loss of CPU functionality during the current session. Mythically, the CPU chip would be switching some circuits so fast that it would cause them to overheat and burn.^{[1] [2]}

To start with, we will not go beyond the front door of THESTOCKEX-CHANGE. The first thing to do for this space is to retire the logo that was created for it. From now on, the logo will be replaced each time the space is made public. With the help of an online logo generator ^[3]

^{[4] [5] [6]} new generic logos will be produced.

It's a result that doesn't match the effort. By immediately discontinuing and forced-rebooting something that might look like a brand, it actively pushes towards its own bankruptcy and collapse. It's not the 'no logo' as a logo, but the irrational, unwarranted shift to yet another new image, refusing confirmation and consolidation that should be the driving force behind it. What's left might well be all possible logos simultaneously, combined in something that looks like a storage space.

And to begin with, it's no longer an empty storage space.

^[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halt_and_Catch_Fire

^[2] https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2543312/trivia?ref_=tt_trv_trv

^[3] <https://www.freelogodesign.org/index.html>

^[4] <https://www.graphicsprings.com/>

^[5] <https://logomakr.com/>

^[6] <https://logojoy.com/>

WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

ectoplasm — business hours — occupy

An amount of blue glow-in-the-dark pigment is poured onto the ground. It marks a spot on the floor that lights up in a bluish hue whenever the light switches off suddenly.

When switching to daylight saving time, the hour between 2:01 and 2:59 evaporates as we jump from 2 to 3 o'clock. The storage space is opened during this lost hour. Let's try and assess how this can function on three levels of difficulty.

First, in Ghostbusters, Ray Stantz attempted to hold Slimer by himself, but the ghost escaped through a wall, charged at Peter Venkman, and covered him in ectoplasmic residue.^{[1] [2]}

In Poltergeist a family discovers that the children's bedroom closet is an entrance to another dimension, while the exit is through the living room ceiling. In an attempt to rescue her daughter Carol Anne, the mother passes through the entrance, tied by a rope that has been

threaded through both portals. She manages to retrieve Carol Anne and they both drop to the floor from the ceiling, unconscious and covered in ectoplasmic residue. As they recover, a medium proclaims afterward that the house is now “clean”.^[3]

In short, ectoplasm is what stays behind. It’s tangible, physical evidence of a presence. It’s a marker for something unknown, potentially threatening, that once was there. It’s also a hoax.

Secondly, art is often willingly made to fit into the pattern of office hours, indicating it indeed easily accommodates a business model of certain capitalist capacities.

Here, as visiting times stretch way beyond the reasonable, a moment that doesn’t exist is described.

Pushing heavily on the goodwill of the initiative, the participants as well as its audience, this idea of availability is approached in an unwarranted, almost aggressive manner.

Also coffee is served.

Thirdly, again in the movie *Ghostbusters*, a team of paranormal scientists moves into a derelict building in New York^[4] (and they also drive a broke-down heresy), because they are exiled from official research. It’s only in this abandoned building they are allowed to stay, until a city official again tries to evacuate them and unleashes hell on earth (albeit in the form of a marshmallow man).

Here, a heritage building is a burden on the city and on city planning. It can’t be demolished, renovations are extremely expensive and re-designation is almost impossible due to modern comfort standards. During negotiations and pre-planning, it stays unoccupied and wears down.

And then, in a brilliant move, it gets assigned to a private surveillance company^[5]. While awaiting its real destination, the goal is to look for temporary tenants, who can be evicted on a moment’s notice and are willing to give up all rights while working as house sitter for free. Artists are grateful clients and art gets to occupy it now.

It’s part of an elaborate and refined blueprint planning. A rational planning movement after the industrial revolution that emphasized the improvement of the built environment based on key spatial factors. Examples of these factors include: exposure to direct sunlight, movement of vehicular traffic, standardized housing units, and proximity to green-space. To identify and design for these spatial factors, rational planning relied on a small group of highly specialized technicians, including architects, urban designers, and engineers. Other, less

common, but nonetheless influential groups included governmental officials, private developers, and landscape architects. Through the strategies associated with these professions, the rational planning movement developed a collection of techniques for quantitative assessment, predictive modeling and design. Due to the high level of training required to grasp these methods, however, rational planning fails to provide an avenue for public participation. In both theory and practice, this shortcoming opened rational planning to claims of social insensitivity.^[6]

Now back to the building. In a moment of self-indulgence, it’s easy to think the artist is offered a unique opportunity, while still being controlled. Except, it’s actually much worse. It’s the artist being instrumentalized, even deputized, as the controller in exchange for what seems to be a good deal. And the space has all the aesthetic qualities of a rebellious operation.

But this is the exact opposite of the possibilities of an occupation. This is not a space where artists can do whatever they want. Although such a free space might not be what artists need, this is nevertheless the seducing narrative laid over this space. In all practicality, this is just a space that needs to be controlled and what better way to do it than by art. It’s under surveillance by art. And art can be cleaned out whenever it’s not wanted anymore. It will comply, it won’t even resist as it’s hard to resist against something knowingly agreed upon.

So here, at an impossible hour, glow-in-the-dark pigment is poured onto the ground of a building marked for renovation as part of yet another city upscaling project. It will disperse and become a permanent part of the building, for long after art was allowed to occupy it. A foreign agent, a poltergeist, a remnant that will remain and become visible every time the lights go off suddenly.

It might call for a moment to be critical of certain types of urban planning, artistic compliance and control. It might also be a way to bite the hand that feeds. ^[7]

[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_hNgGVDfNs

[2] <http://ghostbusters.wikia.com/wiki/Slimer>

[3] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0Qh52Xldvs>

[4] <http://www.movie-locations.com/movies/g/ghostbusters.html#.Wsy5Y-9NubOQ>

[5] <https://www.preveda.eu/be/>

[6] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theories_of_urban_planning#Blueprint_plan-

ning

^[7] <https://genius.com/Guns-n-roses-breakdown-lyrics>

A SHIPPING CRATE (AS BROODTHAERS EXPLAINS IT)

in stock — incompatibility — secondary market

A storage space in general is not a zone of tourism. It's a place reserved for the worker only. The most contemporary or advanced storage spaces even have human-free zones. Completely operated by machines and robots, software and sensors. No human is even allowed to enter. This is a precautionary measure for human safety as well as the security of the automated distribution process.^[1]

So setting up the storage space as a public moment is difficult. Here, the open door isn't a marker for a behind-the-scenes tour of the factory. It's not intended as a voyeuristic moment to see how things work. Instead it wants to approach the storage space as problematic and address some of its specific intangible aspects of organizing work and objects in transition.

Let's entertain the idea of the logistics, not intended as solely servicing the work, but as intervening in the work, inconveniencing some obvious conventions. The storage space no longer as an art-free zone accommodating the art going on outside, no longer as the cryogenic box where art temporarily suspends its potential in some crated hypersleep^[2] before being revived again in the next exhibition.

Nor is it the stock and the crates aesthetically pushed out into the exhibition space as the artwork itself.^[3] Storage space aesthetics might not be enough.^[4]

Instead, here, it's the storage space destabilizing the artwork. No longer is the storage a safe, neutral zone, where nothing is supposed to happen to the work. Now it complicates the artwork and some of its fragile constructs. It shows work as it's not intended to be seen: in a naked, decontextualizing surroundings. The stock shows constituting material that can render the artwork invisible, difficult to read. It's contaminated, hijacked by diversionary circumstances. The storage space

might even work as a kind of kryptonite to some of the artwork's superpowers, disabling its normal capacity, forcing it somewhere between an artwork and its material.

The storage space probably raises more questions than it's equipped to answer when it refuses to become a place of presentation or at least when it clings to its own specifics with claws. It's near to impossible to install an artwork here. To define a presentation is at its best always a messy attempt. Where artworks are often closely connected to their context, here the context seems to push back and force a reboot of the system.

As artworks move in and out of spaces, there is always a certain kind of compatibility that should be maintained. Crates are made to make life easier. Stacking goes better, protection is better, handling is better. Here, by each time taking two panels of three existing crates, three new, hybrid crates are made. Its composite nature is further pointed out by a manual that seems to indicate fairly easy assembling and taking apart. These three crossbreeds, because of their diverse and incompatible origins, are riddled with holes. They are crooked, flawed, dirty, unstable, deficient, unsound. They are unfit to the task of packing yet at the same time can't seem to make the expected or maybe necessary jump to an artwork. They raise questions. But these questions are not clear demarcations of the issues at hand.

Three bastard crates among regular crates in a storage space are a difficult proposition. While at the same time it's an out of focus image in high resolution, only to better see the blurriness. It's not the telling pixelation associated with zooming in, but an endemic flou artistique, the photographic bokeh.

For the duration of opening the storage space, these three adulterated crates are put on a second hand website^[5]. So again here the questions aren't exactly clear. The work also asks vague and difficult questions of its collector. What to do with such a work, obtained from a platform that proudly boasts about the devaluation inherent to the second hand items it distributes?

This second hand market is an economy that develops alongside a regular economy. It's arguably the simplest form of a market. It's here that the exchange is most driven by a supply and demand chain.^[6] Cars are popular.

[1] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ox05Bks2Q3s>

[2] http://alienanthology.wikia.com/wiki/Hypersleep_Chamber

[3] <http://www.argosarts.org/work.jsp?workid=8c2d85c5e2204846a069457edb30871c>

[4] <http://www.morepublishers.be/edition/306>

[5] https://www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?_from=R40&_trksid=p2380057.m570.l1313.TR1.TRC0.A0.H0.Xmarcel+broodthaers.TRS0&_nkw=marcel+broodthaers&_sacat=0

[6] <https://books.google.be/books?id=ToAtfE9LAGQC&pg=PA202#v=onepage&q&f=false>

VINYL STOCK SALE

storing sound — sharing sound

In a previous work called ‘music for a library (sounds to read by)’ a sound installation was placed in a library. As for some people music while reading is a prerequisite, for others it makes it impossible to focus on a text. In this installation the books could be read as a score, redefining the sounds, functioning as liner notes, rhythm, lyrics or vice versa the music acting as a soundtrack or an annotated version of the books and the library.

Now, in a simple description, we see a storage space that is setup as a stage or as bleachers for a sound work. By stacking the crates in a specific way, a podium is made for the audio, a sitting space for an audience as well as a performing space for anyone who wants to put on a vinyl record. The construction becomes a makeshift sculpture for approaching the audio work and at the same time editing it with three factors:

1. It’s unintentionally performed by random people
2. It’s listened to in erratic sequences
3. It’s inserted into an inadequate space and setting

Listening to an audio work here is at the same time performing it for an audience. In a very direct and minimal way, the handling of the record by the audience becomes a DJ set in its most primitive form^[1]. It’s choosing and sharing with an audience something you want to hear for yourself, although in a careless fragmented and unpredictable

manner.

Vinyl records are available. This is difficult for listeners. Works can be skipped, parts can be played, succeeded by parts from other works, intermingling content, without respecting sequences such as an A- or B-side, sidestepping almost all intentions of the artworks. It’s sacrificing the sovereign autonomy and authority of the artwork to a certain layering and juxtaposing, never resolving into a full work or claiming completeness. The works are scattered into a set of impromptu trailers for works that interrupt, divert and crosstalk.

This is probably inherent to the storage space itself. A messy, imperfect location slightly falling short of presenting and representing the artwork. In this setting the space and its content could be read as visuals, redefining the sounds, functioning as music video, performance or vice versa the music acting as a soundtrack or an annotated version of the space and its content.

Here every unpacking of a work is a diversion to what else is in stock, what to unpack next, what to do next.

[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwWZI_k3Vlg

20 TIPS FOR ULTRALIGHT PACKING FROM PROFESSIONALS

unpacking the digital work — size matters

Ultralight backpacking is a style of backpacking that emphasizes carrying the lightest and simplest gear safely possible for a given trip. Base pack weight (the weight of a backpack plus the gear inside & outside it, excluding consumables such as food, water, and fuel, which vary depending on the duration and style of trip) is reduced as much as safely possible, though reduction of the weight of consumables is also applied.

Although no technical standards exist, the terms light and ultralight commonly refer to backpackers and gear who achieve a base pack weight below 9.1 kg and 4.5 kg respectively in the United States for a 3-season backpack; elsewhere the definitions are commonly given

as lightweight being under 10 kg, and ultralight under 5 kg. For comparison, traditional backpacking practices often results in base pack weights above 20 kg.^{[1] [2] [3]}

Essentially, stock management is space and weight management. No matter how much space you have, it's never enough and weight is always an issue.^[4]

Keeping things compact and light is something that doesn't seem to be relevant to a contemporary art context.

Size is sometimes even a deliberate system. Formulas can be applied. Height times width times a price coefficient. It seems like a very coherent and logical method.^[5]

Thinking about different ways to produce and distribute works results in thinking about on-demand and just-in-time production. Reducing production and material amounts and costs. The less you physically produce beforehand, the lighter the oeuvre you carry with you. Maybe the digitalization of art lies not in the digital artwork, but in the digital logistics of artwork production and distribution. Reciprocally these logistics redefine and reposition the artwork itself.

Here a series of landscape photographs are each resized to single pixels. This is smallest and lightest digital photograph possible. In storage it only takes up the size of a USB flash drive. This single pixel is a photograph that can be resized and printed as needed, ranging from that single pixel to a serious landscape poster of 40000 by 30000 pixels at 300 DPI. It's the world, or an image of the world now rendered monochrome that unfolds from the smallest possible file.

Test prints are spread out in the stock for inspection, photographing, labeling and packing.

1. Weight is everything. Buy a 5-kilo-capacity scale and write down the weight of every single item you plan to pack. When deciding between similar things, always choose the lighter one. Let the scale make all the decisions.
2. Save ounces and pennies. Ultralight doesn't have to mean ultra-expensive. Some gear swaps will actually save money. For example, disposable PET water bottle instead of heavier and more expensive canisters or a razorblade instead of a fancy, expensive and heavy Swiss knife with features you'll never use.
3. Avoid Just In Case. Don't give in to doomsday scenarios. Only pack for the worst conditions you're likely to face. The easiest

- way to get the weight down is to leave stuff behind.
4. Carry less water. Unless you're trekking across the desert, pack no more than 1.5 liters and plan your route around water stops, treating as you go with drops of water purifier (60 gr).
 5. When planning meals and snacks, target foods that pack about 35 calories per 100 grams or more. Olive oil contains 70 calories, peanut butter 47 calories, cashews is 44 calories, dark chocolate 43 calories, triscuit crackers has 34 calories and cheddar cheese about calories.
 6. Hike or bike all day. When not saddled by a heavy pack, the journey is the destination. Hike or bike from dawn 'til dusk, with lots of stops for streamside meals, coffee, even naps. Bonus? At camp, you won't miss the little luxuries you left behind. You simply lay down and fall right asleep.
 7. Do calisthenics: On chilly nights, doing jumping jacks immediately before hopping into the sack. Raising your body temperature right before bed will help you sleep warmer. If you get cold in the night, do a few minutes' worth of crunches right in your bag.
 8. Keep the big three ultralight. Sleeping bags can be 500 grams or less. However, warmer sleeping bags contain more insulation and can weigh more. Down can be light, but in moist conditions can retain water, resulting in less insulation and more weight. A Pack can be 800 grams or less for a 50 liter backpack. Shelter or tent can be 1000 grams or less for a solo tent. 500 grams or less for a tarp.
 9. Go primitive meaning go electronic-less. Goodbye cellphones, watches, iPods, kindles, GPS, chargers, etc. This is the trail. Enjoy the solitude. If you're worried about safety - tell someone ahead of time where exactly you are going and when to expect your return.
 10. Cut excess straps and labels: Compression straps, excess hip belt straps, sternum straps, shoulder straps, manufacturer's logo, anything. You can trim all of these to shed a couple grams. If you pack your gear right, you won't even need compression straps.
 11. Knowing the weather saves weight. You either need a piece of gear or you don't. This is where the importance of planning ahead comes into place. Preparing for the cold, hot or rainy weather can prevent bringing unnecessary gear and weight.
 12. Dry out your gear. Morning dew can cover the entire surface area of your shelter and, subsequently, add grams if packed up in your bag. Be sure to dry out tents, tarps, clothes, and any other

gear before packing it away. You can always hang them on your pack to dry as you hike or lay them out in a sunny spot as you pack up and eat breakfast. Quick-dry items can substantially reduce weight during traveling where dry weight is not always a reality.

13. Share the load. Most things are relatively lighter when designed for two. Also a lot of items such as cooking gear you don't need double when travelling by two.
14. Keep an open mind and enjoy the route. What you want is very different from what you need. Comfort can give ease, but the biggest comfort is an eased mentality. The biggest challenge that has to be overcome is your own attitude. Things become lighter when you're in a good mood and carry a light demeanor.
15. Swap gear for skills through reading and practice. The greater one's skills in using the environment and gear, the fewer tools one needs to carry. For example, by knowing where exactly to find water, one needs not carry as much or knowing knots replaces fasteners and binders, clutches, straps.
16. Multi-purpose. Try to find items that work well for different tasks, for example a poncho can double up as a tarp, wool socks can serve as mittens, etc. Be safe, but also be creative.
17. Get acquainted with the smell of things. When wearing a t-shirt two days in a row, you can half the amount you need to bring.
18. Hiking boots are heavy. Trail running shoes are light. People worried about their ankles need to consider what happens to a lateral force when your ankle is locked. It travels up to your knees.
19. Work out. The most weight you carry around is your body. The less there is of it, the less you need to carry around.
20. Now go back to your pack and add a single item for pleasure. It will lift you and your pack up when times get rough. Choose wisely. Efficiency is great, but is no antidote for a frown on your face.

[1] <https://www.greenbelly.co/pages/ultralight-backpacking-tips>

[2] <https://www.backpacker.com/gear/10-tips-to-go-ultralight>

[3] <http://www.hikelight.com/20201ultralightbackpackingtips.html>

[4] <https://www.istockphoto.com/be/en/video/warehouse-storing-boxes-loopable-gm472829925-16226122>

[5] <https://www.artpricecalculator.com/>

GET EACH NEXT SHOCK

cause and effect

A work titled 'catch keen ex ghost' is produced as a legitimization of the event called 'get each next shock'^[1] ^[2]. It's the inversion of production and distribution logic.

Both titles are anagrams of THESTOCKEXCHANGE.^[3]

[1] <https://be.whitewall.com/fotolab/alu-dibond/directdruk-alu-butlerfinish>

[2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ishikawa_diagram

[3] <https://new.wordsmith.org/anagram/anagram.cgi?anagram=thelstockexchange&t=500&a=n>

UN SOUND METHODS

Annemie Vermaelen

finding a parking space in a desert

Space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power.^[1]

Driving through the desert one of my companions remarked that there was so much real estate opportunity in this seemingly desolated area. Just an offhand remark one would think, but certainly one that embodies a rationale to read spaces as how they should be and not how one imagines they are. (Un)bound spaces, may it be a nation, a town, a neighborhood, a family, a desert, ... are often subjected to what one could call spatial fantasies ^[2]. These fantasies are expressed through interventions within the targeted spaces with the aim to conform them to certain standards.

Let's go back to the desert. This type of land has not been utilized or exploited, which gives it – depending one's point of view – a pristine or undeveloped character. These characteristics serve not rarely as legitimization to impose concepts upon the landscape.^[3] Another example is a tent that serves as a home to the desert dwelling population, which is not perceived as civic. So, with the distribution of brick houses spatial fantasies about "modernity" are introduced and executed. These

types of fantasies act rather disconnected from a reality. The formation of a spatial fantasy with regard to a desert entails a particular worldview whereby subjects (humans) or objects reflect upon their surrounding space and vice versa. An alteration in the landscape is supposed to alter the conditions of involved inhabitants. By bringing in brick houses — a symbol of civilization or modernity— in a semi-arid landscape, the idea is that the designated house beneficiary will “upgrade” into a more modern citizen.

The mutual representation of space and subjects is to be seen as an arena of power. Hence spatial fantasies are not left without response and create friction when “targeted spaces” are moulding themselves differently, redefining themselves differently.^[4] People create their own campsites, refuse to be connected to an expensive power grid, use their mobility, use a designated space for undesignated purposes, etc. This sheds light on a space-power relation. It shows this relation because it provokes new actions to these actions. It’s not just a matter of control or discipline; the projection of the fantasies also creates. As within this arena power is never absolute, the created frictions result in an unraveling of different ways of appropriating space, revealing the fault lines in these spatial fantasies.

What has been called spatial fantasies relates to ideas, thoughts, concepts, designs on how aspects of living one’s life should look like and function. These aspects in relation to a geographical setting are steered by social, political, economic or cultural powers that try to manage them into governable spaces^[5] and by extension governable subjects.

As with the referred deserts, other spaces that intertwine with our day-to-day lives are subjected to similar fantasies and turned into arenas of power. An exhibition space comes with a set of fantasies on how it should be organized or governed: its physical outlook, the exhibited objects and the people entering the space. A specific arrangement of each of the aforementioned components in relation to one and other manifests the fantasized exhibition space. Nevertheless (un)intentional modifications can occur with regard to the location, artwork, artist or spectators that do not correlate to the ruling format. These forms of alterations in the arrangement can make the exhibition space and subsequently the whole exhibition subject to ambiguity and provoke new actions as such. When some of the fractures in these fantasies are made visible - be it within the particular exhibition space, the general spaces of art or different living realities in a desert - one can see and

more importantly act upon the power structures inherent to them.

^[1] DE IV, 282; FR 252 as cited in S. Elden, Mapping the present: Heidegger, Foucault and the Project of a Spatial History, London/New York: Continuum, 2001, p. 119

DE: Dits et ecrits 1954–1988, edited by Daniel Defert & Francois, Ewald, Paris: Gallimard, Four Volumes, 1994 (cited by volume and page)

FR: The Foucault Reader, edited by Paul Rabinow, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991

^[2] Also Homi K. Bhabha uses the notion of spatial fantasy. The notion used here is not based on Bhabha’s, but relates to it. “This is an attempt, I would argue, to universalize the spatial fantasy of modern cultural communities as living their history “contemporaneously”, in a “homogeneous empty time” of the People-as-One that finally deprives minorities of those marginal, liminal spaces from which they can intervene in the unifying and totalizing myths of the national culture.” H. Bhabha, The location of culture, London:Routledge, 1994, p.249

^[3] W.J.T. Mitchell, ‘Holy landscape: Israel, Palestine and the American wilderness’ in Critical Inquiry, 26 (2), 2000, p.198

^[4] See A.L. Tsing, Friction: An ethnography of global connection, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005

^[5] See M.J. Watts ‘Antinomies of Community: Some Thoughts on Geography, Resources and Empire.’ in Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, vol.29 (2), 2004, pp. 195-216

DISORDERLY PRESENTATION IN STORAGE SPACE

Harvard papers on demand — ghost writer ^[1]

INTRODUCTION

Art is a wide range of human activities, ranging from creative objects to activities, used to pass a certain message to the beholders. Art includes reality expression, science representation and sometimes fiction. The creator lets known of their emotions, ideologies, religious values, and life aspects to other people through these creations. It’s, therefore, a communication tool, entertainment tool and an economic tool. It excites criticality, exploration of emotions, imaginativeness and ritual functionality. Art educates, communicates, criticizes and therefore influence decision-making. Disorderly storage of artwork is a major challenge that faces different types of artwork and results in the

destruction and mismanagement of artwork. Most work of art is delicate and this creates another reason why work of art should be well stored to avoid any possible damage. Poor storage of art work has been found to destroy the quality and also the ability of the art work to be of use to the future generations

ARTWORK PRESENTATION

Adequate measures should be put in place during storage of art to avoid damage. This is not only to the final piece but also during creation, modification and after the final product of a solid piece has been completed. For intangible art like music and poems (auditory), there should be great care to the presenters to ensure the art is presented. They should be comfortable from any strain and should undergo proper practicing for the perfection of the skills to be able to pass intended message clearly. Measures should be taken to protect these presenters from such things that would tamper with mind states like alcohol and other drugs. Their emotions and physical fitness are also vital. For the purposeful role of artwork to be adequately achieved, its storage must be objectively tailor-made to maintain the originality and functionality as intended by the original creator of the work. This is away from any potential physical damage to the artwork. Any accidental addition of unintended object or element is considered damage, as well as any extraction of an original element from the artwork.

DISORDERLY PRESENTATION OF ARTWORK IN A STORAGE SPACE

This is the conservation of artwork in a manner that would tamper with its originality. Anything that would bring color changes to the artwork would equally mean destruction, though it may be partial. Poor storage of artwork is rampant in different museums and art exhibition stores due to poor investment in art storage facilities. There is need for the expansion and also training the curators on the importance of art storage with the aim of securing art work.

It is inappropriate to store visual artifacts like paintings in the following conditions;

- a) An environment with moisture. This may destroy the used material or the color shades used.
- b) Under contact with sunlight, fading of colors is likely
- c) Stack over each other. The compression on the lowermost materials may cause damage from too much pressure.
- d) On the ground. Instead, racks should be built to avoid the materials from absorbing concrete moisture.

e) With hard objects that could cause scratching.

It is equally vital to observe proper storage during transportation to prevent events such as breakage, and any losses.

POSITION OF STORAGE OF STORAGE SPACE OF ART CONTEMPORARILY

One of the main functions of a work of art is cash generation and conveyance of specific messages. Storage period of art can be used to play all the roles intended by an art work rather than just have the object idle-sitting. During its oeuvre stages, a suitable location should be selected where people can opt to be part of the art-making process by attending the formation stages, as many would pride in having followed the creation of the material step by step. The amount charged to view this process can be used to improve and fund for the remaining parts. This would also capture people mindsets and allow the emotions flow with the design as it slowly by slowly evolves into a more meaningful piece. This will also allow people to appreciate the effort put in the making of art.

Instead of storing an art piece in a dark lone place away from human vicinity, a piece of art can be actually placed at a location where it will both be safe and at the same time be within audience reach, example having a piece in a certain gallery store accessible to people other than when completely hidden. A huge number of people will appreciate all the intended functions of the art that way. As a piece of art sits in its storage, it can at the same time be playing a vital purpose, for example having a concrete artistic wall in a park with a rooftop on it providing shade for guests.

STRUCTURING AN ARTWORK, AN EXHIBITION, A CONTEXT AND CONTENT

The above process is very vital in the progress of an artist, and the speed of these processes will determine how much a piece of art achieves regarding purpose fulfilling. An exhibit is one of the best ways to market art. A well-structured creative work should be properly exhibited for the public to appreciate its meaning and purpose after which it should be passed on to the right destination to allow room for more art work to take place. After making art, the room should be made for exhibition and display to source for space to create room for new art. The artist will, therefore, have room for new materials, creating room for a new avenue to express more artistic work. It may also give a chance for the artist to learn new things from other artists if a

joint exhibit is considered. Consistency in the above processes should be in accordance with demand; therefore the art's quality should be of appreciable standards by the consumers to ensure there is no over-stock as it would block finances and room for new work. The context of art should be therefore appealing, and its content should be easily relatable to and acceptable by the target audience.

In conclusion, poor storage of art work is a major challenge in many art work museums and institutions. There is need of more investment in different art work storage facilities that will ensure that different cultural heritages are stored and not lost through poor artwork storage which results in the destruction of important delicate art work. Different work of art require different resources and elements to ensure their safety an curators should identify the best approaches to ensure the safety of art work.

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[1] <https://speedypaper.com>

A SILENT TREATMENT

darkness falls — a hardware solution — the executive file

Until a work is handed over, it's put in storage and thereby muted. What is actually stored in this case, is a set of hardware to continue. The work doubling up as the material. Ready to be taken out of storage, hooked up and reactivated.

Handed over to a collector, let's think of the share and the shareholder. A share comes with a certain degree of responsibility to the shareholder. Or maybe stakeholder is a better description here. It's the question to safeguard something, but also to participate by taking a responsibility over something. Not the participation as one of many viewers, as a social component, but as an owner, which is a valid and valuable position and a way to be an audience.

A description of the material might be a good approach. A cardboard box containing all materials for a radio broadcast: audio on a carrier, a player and a transmitter.

Once in storage the work '0dB' that was on display, mutates to the work 'A Dark Broadcast'^[1].

It's silence as a radio station going on hiatus. The transmission is suspended indefinitely and on purpose. Put in stand-by mode, but ready to respond accordingly when the right signal comes.

There is an acknowledgement of the end of the work without having exhausted all possibilities.

It's a hardware solution to a software problem.^[2] It's the executive file^[3] as opposed to the document file. It's necessary to get work done and to keep documents active instead of inactive in a static repository. It's a way out of the claustrophobic archive and into the light (of the screen for example).

It's the question of what to do with all this hardware. It doesn't contain a manual, no instructions, yet calls out for action. It's vague yet not inaccurate. It's the (hostile) takeover as participation. Once the takeover is completed, a question of what to do next comes and steps into the foreground. How to turn this hardware into an artwork again?

Maybe the relevant question here is how to take things out of storage?

^[1] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dark_\(broadcasting\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dark_(broadcasting))

^[2] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sabV15zQQs>

^[3] <https://www.computerhope.com/jargon/e/execfile.htm>

THE LONG TAIL

a qualitative approach to a quantitative problem

A 2006 working paper titled “Goodbye Pareto Principle, Hello Long Tail”^[1] found that, by greatly lowering search costs, information technology in general and Internet markets in particular could substantially increase the collective share of hard-to-find products, thereby creating a longer tail in distribution.

In general as well as in art specifically, the long tail seems a negligible afterthought.

With artworks especially, we might see they are often given a very concentrated distribution. An exhibition, some advertisement and an article. They might be an ultimate consumer product, peaking very fast and disappearing arguably even faster, readily replaced with the next by mutual agreement.

The economics of storage and distribution can enable the advantageous use of the long tail. In aggregate, “unpopular” movies are rented more online than popular movies.^[2] ^[3] On the supply side centralized warehousing allows for more offerings, thus making it possible to cater to more varied tastes.

On the demand side, tools such as search engines, recommendation software, and sampling tools allow for finding products outside of geographic areas. Where the long tail works, minority tastes become available and individuals are presented with a wider array of choices. The long tail presents opportunities to introduce products in niche categories. These encourage the diversification of products. These niche products open opportunities for suppliers while concomitantly satisfying the demands of many individuals —therefore lengthening the tail portion of the long tail. In situations where popularity is currently determined by the lowest common denominator, a long-tail model may lead to improvement in a society’s level of culture. The opportunities that arise because of the long tail greatly affect society’s cultures when suppliers have unlimited capabilities due to infinite storage and demands that were unable to be met prior to the long tail are realized. At

the end of the long tail, the conventional profit-making business model ceases to exist; instead, people tend to come up with products for varied reasons like expression rather than monetary benefit. In this way, the long tail opens up a large space for authentic works of creativity.

^[3] ^[4]

How to generate a long tail for an artwork or an exhibition? How to make it searchable? And how to connect this to storage? How to connect this to production? How to connect this to distribution?

The storage of artworks is a difficult business as they are often fragile, heavy, big, unstable or any combination of these. So a way to think about the long tail, is bringing down storage necessities. Thinking about the object not as primary, but nonetheless very necessary, the master file seems an interesting format.

So how can we incorporate this into the work itself? An artwork that hands over a (digital) master file implies the actual production is necessary. The work is not limited to an idea, yet it’s not necessarily limited to its produced object either. There is some idea of elastic manufacturing^[4] incorporated into the DNA of the work itself. This means it’s not just a format issue, but becomes an integral part of the content. So as storage becomes less of an issue, it cannot only be kept in storage for a longer time, but also be kept in open storage. Meaning: making it searchable in data libraries to an audience and by consequence distributable.

There is a pitfall here to again reduce distribution to a quantitative parameter. How to look beyond the numbers?^[5] The long tail beyond simply redefining the popular over another, longer timeframe? It might not be about creating unlimited availability. It might be thinking about keeping at least one copy available. There is a difference here and it can be significant.

Robert Metcalfe, the inventor of the Ethernet switch, claimed in 1980 that a network’s value is ‘the number of users squared’. But in this framework of distribution how do we measure value? In terms of money saved, revenue earned or profits accrued? In 2013, the OECD’s economists agreed that it could not be captured by traditional market metrics. An information economy may not be compatible with a market economy —or at least not one dominated and regulated by market forces primarily. All the money created, all the velocity and momentum of finance built up during the last twenty-five years have to be set against the possibility that capitalism — a system based on markets, property

ownership and exchange — cannot capture the ‘value’ generated by the new technology.^{[6] [7]}

^[1] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227361691_Goodbye_Pareto_Principle_Hello_Long_Tail_The_Effect_of_Search_Costs_on_the_Concentration_of_Product_Sales

^[2] https://www.google.com/search?source=hp&ei=CuIDW_bPFs-vkwXdq4OwDA&q=ln+aggregate%2C+%E2%80%9Cunpopular%E2%80%9D+movies+are+rented+more+than+popular+movies.&oq=ln+aggregate%2C+%E2%80%9Cunpopular%E2%80%9D+movies+are+rented+more+than+popular+movies.&gs_l=psy-ab.3...1159.1159.0.4935.1.1.0.0.0.79.79.1.1.0...0...1c.2.64.psy-ab..0.0.0...0.ID1Yg1b4tM4

^[3] <https://fabricegrinda.com/the-long-tail/>

^[4] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elasticity_\(economics\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elasticity_(economics))

^[5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qualitative_property

^[6] <https://books.google.be/books?id=2yNqCAAQBAJ&pg=PT40&dq=paul+mason+postcapitalism+robert+metcalfe&hl=nl&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiWrLfmhNjcAhXEYVAKHSwuDx4Q6AEIKDAA#v=onepage&q=paul%20mason%20postcapitalism%20robert%20metcalfe&f=false>

^[7] <https://books.google.be/books?id=2yNqCAAQBAJ&pg=PT40&lpg=PT40#v=onepage&q&f=false>

DISTRIBUTION AS VALUE

on aluminum — the design stage — information

Over the last decade changes in production models have tried to keep up with fast social and economic shifts that move production into the digital domain and by expansion into the quaternary information sector. On-demand, built-to-order, mass customization, knowledge-based configurations, interoperability, ...

These models are taking over field after field as hyper-efficient, targeted, super-demographic, high yield paradigms. More and more there’s a need to understand production beyond just reshaping or assembling raw materials into finished value goods. A possibility to look beyond the distinction between handcrafted and machine-manufactured, beyond consumer, producer and distributor.

As production becomes more and more intertwined with information, it

might be distribution that drives (economic) value. It might even drive value beyond a market.^[1] If we look at recent economics, there’s a tendency that as production becomes more and more digitalized, production costs approach zero. As this happens, prices drop along with them.^[2] When looking at these economics as not limited to finance, value can take on another format or a new currency. Maybe one step further: it’s actually forced to take on another format. One not so easily quantified and expressed in numbers.^[*]

Things are only valued as long as they are available. In the Internet era, where a single click assures next day delivery, limited seems more and more beside the point. Searchability on the other hand becomes more and more relevant. What can’t be found on the first page of Google, can see its value drastically diminished. SEO is a serious business.^[3]

Aluminum, while being the third most abundant element and most abundant metal in the Earth’s crust was first considered a rare metal. Because it could not be easily extracted from ore, it was more valuable than gold. Which comes down to: although it was abundant, it was not findable. It needed to be made extractable before it could become a commodity.^[4]

So as scarcity implies difficult to find, this can be resolved by pushing things into an information sector. Information replicates and distributes easily. It requires almost no storage space. It’s easily indexed and hyperlinked. There’s abundance and redundancy.

This is a shift from exclusivity to inclusivity. Industry no longer offers exclusiveness, it offers inclusiveness. This is the new value: to be part of something. It’s reframing exclusivity with the possibility to share and take part. Tapping into a distribution system is what reveals value. The more distributed something is, the more valuable it is. Widespread acknowledgement is what backs up value the way gold used to back up currency. Real scarcity is what has no value. Maybe the classic correlation between availability and value has been disrupted. It might seem counter-intuitive but that which is widely distributed, seems to be able to gain higher and higher values.^[*]

Setting most of the social and economical consequences of this aside for a moment, we might look at art, value and distribution. It could be interesting to see how an artwork can approach this. The rise of machines and modernity raised concerns about parameters that define an artwork. It suddenly became clear that uniqueness and craftsman-

ship were no longer the only determining factors. This was actually instigated by artists themselves. Artists were the ones who went looking for this expansion in definition, shifting the producer from manual labor into a disseminator of information.^[5] [*] In dealing with how modern society produces and what it produces, they sought to question what art could be and what an artist could be or should do.

With an industry 4.0^[6] some new issues emerge. Bypassing the fact that the majority of artworks still willingly rely on being the pinnacle of uniqueness by a unique producer with unique technique, let's look at that part of the field where artworks search for other means of production and distribution. While keeping in mind this is not a call for complete reorganization. It's not a model to layer over all artworks. Instead it can be a set of singularities that point out a subset of concerns. An expansion of the field instead of a takeover. [*]

Although there always seems to be a latency between the art world and what is actually going on, some art is able to approach this topic of industry 4.0 from a different angle. One beyond efficiency and maximization. One where a classical devaluation pattern is not necessarily off limits. Where the growth-only question is not necessarily upfront and pivotal while simultaneously retaining waste, divestment and bankruptcy as problematic.

So artworks can be machine-produced and this has several consequences. Positioning the artwork in the information sector maybe dodges that question intentionally and relays another focus. Whether something is handcrafted or automated is temporarily considered beside the point.

Here it's not the product that's being distributed, but the means to a production. It looks at how this production is organized. It goes from the master to the master file, from producer to production protocols, from object to program, definition to proposal.^[☆]

This also leaves the door open to customization, shareholders, unsound methods as defining parameters. Master files can be corrupted, partially executed with substandard control and deviating intentions.^[◆]

As the work shifts from the object to the manual, it necessarily finds value in its distribution as well as the production. It's an infrastructure, a logistics that infiltrates the work. It's a focus on a design stage,

doubling up the implementation stage with dissemination. The actual implementation of the design is reframed as a necessary, but temporary stopover to move things forward. Yes, this production is —or can be— flawed and incomplete. It was actually never meant to be the perfect masterpiece. It's actually but a derivative of design. It was only meant as an extremely specific placeholder for what is to come. Prototypes continuously point forward. Here they summon their next step in a non-teleological way. We are always in a state of transition, an in-between system, an interbellum. [🌀]

[1] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQyr9l22fLE>

[2] <https://books.google.be/books?id=2yNqCAAQBAJ&pg=PT175#v=onepage&q&f=false>

[3] <https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-impact-of-SEO>

[4] <https://sciencing.com/what-abundant-metal-earth-4587197.html>

[5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Work_of_Art_in_the_Age_of_Mechanical_Reproduction

[6] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Industry_4.0

A BULLETED LIST^[1]

bulleted list aesthetics

[🌀] It might also be interesting to rethink distribution as keeping things indirectly available. As referenced by something else. We read more about books than we read books. Although a set of references might not be enough? The artistic not as putting things on display, not making things available. And maybe even disentangle the artistic from a decision making process?

[❖] The long tail as friction between production time and distribution time. The interesting timeframe of producing art may not be the most interesting timeframe of seeing art. What is on show may not be the most interesting thing and what is produced may not make it to a public yet.

[*] Value is a term that quickly takes the upper hand, even more so as it's easily reduced to money. Or how to talk about economics without reducing it to money?

[○] With new technologies, distribution enters into simultaneity and multiplicity. Data duplicates at such unfathomable speeds through copy/ paste that data mining is serious business. Distribution and production within an information framework and infinite storage favors diversification of the searchable. It seems that maybe the search supersedes the copy-paste as a more relevant action in contemporary art and society. But also note that the search is more easily controlled.

[✦] What is the difference between distribution and virality. It seems to make sense that in a democratic distribution system more is always better. But is huge numbers synonymous with democratic? How to rethink distribution beyond quantity? How to escape the numbers?

[*] Again, how to escape the numbers? The idea here might not necessarily be gaining new territory. How to see inclusivity not as expanding the artistic field, but as the field folded over itself?

[☆] The notion of the technical object. Not the artwork that's machine produced, but the artwork as the machine that produces.^[*] With the artwork it's the whole production facility that is distributed. Does this necessarily imply mass production? Or can we eliminate unwanted productions and look at just-in-time production?

[◆] How to involve others into the work, into this distribution of the master le as part of the work? The idea of the collector as a shareholder. The owner as complicit in curatorial aspects ("cura" —to take care of)? What is the different responsibility? In other words is a responsibility just limited to making sure the work is preserved? Is the idea of participation a set of predefined and harmless, limited choices? Or maybe stakeholder is a more nuanced terminology? A stakeholder vs. a plug-and-play model? Beyond that, how to keep artistic responsibility over rogue protocols?

[⊗] This could actually be the story-arc^[2] question: "What does transition look like?" It's far from the question what does the future look like or what does utopia look like? How to look at things while they are in transition? Is this the same as what does a crisis look like? Distribution as a state of transition that allows an artistic moment. Distribution as a state of transition that can have a transformative impact.^[◆] This moment is imperfect and contaminated, but it might be a way to bypass the current ambition of art to disentangle art from its self-imposed

short-term political instrumentalization.^[✦] It's thinking about exit strategies. Thinking about transition as a way to create fiction. It's becoming an institute while remaining the artist by not adopting the same institutional strategies. Reading while listening to music.

[*] What about the worker and his position in the producer / consumer relationship? "The master file vs. the master" can be a tool to dehumanize and dominate not only work but also economics as a whole, yet at the same time it seems a crucial tool to break free from this as well. It's more or less suggesting that the exit from technology is more technology.

[◆] Can dismantling the work or a show also be an artistic act? How to approach putting things in storage as a valid artistic act? Not only in the sense of preservation, but also in a discursive way. Is the artistic necessarily adding context and content or can it also be taking away?

[✦] The singularity vs. the model: how to escape the focus on models, on art as looking for alternative models for what is going on, for art and the curatorial as an ideology instrument to promote certain values.

^[1] <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/presenting-bulleted-lists/>

^[2] <http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/StoryArc>

THE EXCHANGE

asymmetrical trading

An artwork's value is often an erratic and random choice averaging out the material, the size, the labor involved, its market position, the artist's market position, its place in the oeuvre, its editions, its social capital, an educated guess, ...

Also, there's a longstanding tradition that artists exchange artworks. Especially when they are relatively unknown, which might play a part in working out a trade. What are considerations? What can be an artwork's exchange value?

Although exchange value is actually a term described in some economic theories, in modern neoclassical economics, exchange value itself is no longer explicitly theorized. The reason is that the concept of money-price is deemed sufficient in order to understand trading processes and markets.

Since the markets are driven by average opinion about what average opinion will be, an enormous premium is placed on any information or signals that might provide a guide to the swings in average opinion and as to how average opinion will react to changing events. These signals have to be simple and clear-cut. Sophisticated interpretations of the economic data would not provide a clear lead. So the money markets and foreign exchange markets become dominated by simple slogans —larger fiscal deficits lead to higher interest rates, an increased money supply results in higher inflation, public expenditure bad, private expenditure good— even when those slogans are persistently refuted by events. So “the markets” are basically a collection of overexcited young men and women, desperate to make money by guessing what everyone else in the market will do. Many have no more claim to economic rationality than tipsters at the local racetrack and probably rather less specialist knowledge.^[1]

How to avoid a simplistic reading of an artwork and its exchange value. How to allow the exchange to exchange something that can't be weighed by clear leads. How to escape a random but seemingly logical price, set by physical standards. How to go beyond financial value or a market with an artist's exchange? What can be alternative parameters in an exchange?

So here, something is added to the exchange in the form of a responsibility. A work is exchanged that asks a question to its owner. Maybe treats the owner more as a stakeholder. Asks what can be done next now that it's owned. And to do this, first the work is pushed into the information sector. So the proposed trade is not just trading a physical object, but on top of that it's trading the information to reproduce the work, to distribute the work. Although maybe still somewhat limited, it actually offers some degree of responsibility over the information or technological object^[2] that is traded. It's a stakeholdership, asking to act as its agent. It can be owning by giving away, sharing, distributing, making searchable, making available. Collecting not as keeping things, but as a way of staying connected. A stakeholder can suppress the abundance of the information, or can facilitate the abundance of

information. He or she can make searchable what has intrinsic unlimited supply, never minding the demand side.

And as an off-topic remark, maybe think about this: the search is more easily controlled than the copy-paste. It's a filter of what you can reach. What goes beyond the first page of Google stays beyond the first page.

And in doing this the work intentionally clings to its transitional stage. It keeps an asymmetrical middle between material and product. And it's with this superposition of both material and work at the same time, irreducible to either, that it finds its artistic moment.

So to come to a certain minor point: instead of merely exchanging objects, what about exchanging a shared responsibility over an artwork as its stakeholder? And the technological object can simply be a part of this. And as a stakeholder, the shared question is how to manage the artwork. How to act as its manager? How to place it in a network since you have the extreme means to do so? How to apply value?

^[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exchange_value#Exchange_value_and_the_transformation_of_values_into_prices

^[2] <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/78/82706/digital-objects-and-metadata-schemes/>

BANKRUPTCY

ending the way it started — assets

We are bankrupt. Bankruptcy is not the only status that a person may have, and the term bankruptcy is therefore not a synonym for insolvency. So if we are bankrupt but not insolvent this might simply mean we've reached another kind of exhaustion.

Maybe we've exhausted the options or maybe we simply are exhausted. The crisis here is not financial yet is economical as we bump into a deliberate and artificial shortage of material.

There's the possibility to keep adding, in a kind of feedback loop, but calling upon bankruptcy, it could be more interesting to think about restructuring, relocating and reassessing production and distribution.

It might even be better not to finish. Unfinished business is often better remembered than a completed task.^[1]

As with all bankruptcies, all assets must be disclosed whether or not it's believed the asset has a net value. And there is only one asset left to disclose: the name that was started with, along with its changing logos.

Now changed and distributed for the last time, it's again an empty storage space.^[2]

^[1] <https://www.psychmechanics.com/2015/09/the-zeigarnik-effect-why-you-think-some.html>

^[2] Lemmens, Peter, Van Dessel, Kris, THESTOCKEXCHANGE Cousin Jeffrey Publishing, Te Anau, 2018

EPILOGUE

Brenda Tempelaar

Before writing the markup of a museum's website, the developer draws up a grid of stacked boxes. Each box is a container in itself, storing placeholder images and "Lorem Ipsum" paragraphs. Later on, they will be replaced by the actual content retrieved from the database. The developer's grid represents the collection's segments, stored on shelves in the depot. The grid helps the developer to lay the foundation for a code that frames the content in a digital display. Consequently, the code functions as a distribution system that covers the space in between the database and the public.

The developer must decide what names to give to the boxes in his grid. This is important, as some elements in code language are more semantic than others. A `<header>` element for example, differs from a `<div>` in the way that both the browser and the developer know what the `<header>` might be and where it goes on the page. A `<div>` could be anything. If the developer would only use non-semantic elements, the Internet would quickly become an exclusive encounter of hypertext documents being interpreted by browsers. These would display arrays

of arbitrary content to the user, beyond the developer's control. If the Internet would be built exclusively out of reusable and general `<div>` elements — short for division — the ambiguity would be unbearable.

Contrary to the self-referential `<div>` that is difficult to control, the semantic `<header>` element quite literally mimics the top of a page. It makes a `<header>` more likely to appear on a museum's website than a `<div>`. But once the developer goes down that semantic road, he begins to reflect the institution's bureaucratic systems. He would be enhancing the authorship that the museum has been trying to avoid. In the art world's digital and physical realms, semantic or meaningful distribution systems are becoming prejudiced devices that broadcast the argument that cultural objects are important enough to maintain.

On the other hand, the unattractive `<div>` has a voice of its own. It can communicate various potential meanings, exceeding the institution's preferred frame of reference. Like all dilemma's a developer faces, the choice between semantics and non-semantics depends on what he sets out to achieve. Either way, change is inevitable. Whether the developer chooses the museum's specific arrangement or an unspecified one, every distribution of content exposes it to a reckless moment that challenges its current condition: when data is siphoned off little by little, the experience is always transformative.

Our relationships with objects are defined displacement upon displacement, until the illusion of some sort of coherent trajectory rises. Objects travel between exhibition spaces in containers that divide imagery into pragmatic segments, matching the dimensions of a truck for efficient transportation. Upon their arrival, the pieces are carefully re-edited before showing them to an audience. This process of disassembling and joining back together reminds of a tray in which objects from the database can be collected and delivered at the front office. The tray is part of an automated storage and retrieval system, commonly used in warehousing logistics but a relative novelty in the art world. It's easy to see why its use appeals to institutions, as it maximizes storage space and cleverly replaces the human hand. But as a consequence of reducing personal involvement, this system doesn't raise self-critical questions, nor does it reflect on its *raison d'être*. Instead, it preserves the storage room as much as it fails to carry it over into the future. It's a high-tech futuristic system, used for the ancient principle of preservation.

This discord between preservation and innovation presents the developer with a difficult task. If the developer loses control, institutions are likely to become concerned about their legacies falling apart. Collections could easily withdraw from the public after boxing up on themselves. The audience would be redirected to representations, mediated by tangible and digital containers within the art world's infrastructure.

It's in these moments of temporal meaninglessness, like the developer's grid, that we can ask ourselves whether we should spend so much time defending the value of semantic, meaningful elements, at the cost of the non-semantic, meaningless ones. Why do we assume that title cards stick closer to the meaning of objects than inventory numbers, when all language, coded or not, is a trace of a calculated move? Every conversion from one domain into another can have a transformative effect on the narrative of an object. And if that is the case, it becomes impossible to store and retrieve without acknowledging the possibility of deception and recovery; of meaning lost and gained in every possible transfer.

"This text was previously published, in a slightly different form, with the exhibition Timo Demollin: Constant Continuity, PuntWG, Amsterdam, November 4–19, 2017."^[1]

^[1] <https://puntwg.nl/en/constant-continuity>

THE STOCK EXCHANGE

Peter Lemmens & Kris Van Dessel

As artworks spend most of their time in storage, maybe this is the logical place to approach, think about and invest in artworks.

REVERSE ENGINEERING (scenario)

PART I

SCENE — FIN

Black matte. White text. The letters F, I, N are on the screen. The letter F disappears, then the letter N and finally the letter I. Now it's just a black matte.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed)

SCENE — SOMETHING'S OFF

Outside. Night. The main characters, a woman — N.v.B. — and a man — L.C. — are driving in a car. L.C. is wearing a hat and a raincoat. He sits in the driver's seat and is holding the steering wheel. N.v.B. is wearing a simple black dress. She sits in the passenger's seat. They are talking. Something is off about their movement. It's twitchy.

*Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Track 1 — Reversed Engineering*

SCENE — A CHOREOGRAPHY STARTS

Inside. Night. L.C. and N.v.B. arrive at a hotel with their car. They drive into a garage and get out of the car. L.C. picks up N.v.B. in his arms, who is drowsy and stumbling. He carries her through a corridor with flickering fluorescent lights. They are moving backwards. When they arrive at the lobby of the hotel he puts her down again. In the lobby people are lying on the ground. A backwards choreography starts as they proceed through the hotel lobby to the corridors.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Track 1 – Reversed Engineering (cont'd)

PART II

SCENE – THE FUTURE IS NO LONGER SOMETHING IN FRONT OF US

Inside. L.C. and N.v.B. continue walking though the hotel corridors. L.C. is supporting N.v.B., while sometimes forcefully guiding her. People are still lying on the floor or leaning up against the wall. There's a haunting atmosphere. What are we looking at?

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Track 1 – Reversed Engineering (cont'd)

--- Narrator 1 (female)

The future is no longer something in front of us. It has been abandoned somewhere along the way. Traded off as collateral damage. No force exists now strong enough to reach it again.

It has been overreached, when in a bait and switch move probability replaced possibility.

L.C. and N.v.B. arrive in an audio recording booth. It has microphones hanging from the ceiling and one wall is made of glass. L.C. holds a gun on N.v.B. She claws at the glass with her hands.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Track 1 – Reversed Engineering (cont'd)

--- Narrator 1 (female) (cont'd)

If we still feel the need to talk about the future as possible, it's applying an outdated model to newly emerging situations.

SCENE – A FLASH-FORWARD REPHRASED AS A FLASHBACK

Inside. L.C. is alone now and is walking and running backwards through a corridor of the hotel. A man is lying on the floor and stumbles to get up. L.C. carries a gun in his hand. He opens all the doors he passes to look inside. He's clearly looking for something or someone.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Track 1 – Reversed Engineering (cont'd)

--- Narrator 1 (female)

Things can only be understood looking
backwards.

There are people all around in strange positions,
acting erratically. L.C. ignores them as much as he
can, walking past them.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Track 2 – Location scouting for deleted
scenes

--- Narrator 1 (female)(cont'd)

Imagine. Imagine a. Imagine a flash-for-
ward.

Rephrased. Rephrased as a. Rephrased as a
flashback.

Imagine a flash-forward rephrased as a
flashback.

SCENE – THE FUTURE IS A GOOD TOPIC

Inside. L.C. descends a staircase with some diffi-
culty to enter another corridor, located in the base-
ment. There are technical facilities and bare con-
crete walls. He continues to check doors as he passes
them. He arrives back at the garage of the hotel. The

atmosphere is confused, hectic and eerie. Serious and
slapstick at the same time.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Track 2 – Location scouting for deleted
scenes (cont'd)

--- Narrator 1 (female)

The future is a good topic. There are no
facts to tie you down. We have no data
about it.

To deal with such matters requires a lev-
el of comfort with ambiguities. There are
huge opportunities to misunderstand each
other.

SCENE – A CAR CHASE

Outside. The streets of a city. Light snow is visi-
ble. There is no traffic. A backwards car chase in the
snow. L.C. is driving a white car. Three cars try to
block each other, bump into each other and hit police
cars. They drive down a staircase, slip and slide,
stop, reverse direction but continue the chase. They
drive around a square and end up on a parking lot in
front of a building.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Track 2 – Location scouting for deleted
scenes (cont'd)

--- Narrator 1 (female)

He will say:

--- **Man 1**
What did you do last night?

--- **Narrator 1 (female)**
She will say:

--- **Woman 1**
I went to the video store and rented a
movie.

--- **Man 1**
And?

--- **Woman 1**
And what?

--- **Man 1**
And which one was it?

--- **Woman 1**
The title eludes me now.

--- **Man 1**
What was it about?

--- **Narrator 1 (female)**

She will say:

--- **Woman 1**
Something forgettable. At the end, the
credits didn't scroll bottom to top,
but top to bottom. It was disorienting.
Scrambling the narrative as if watching a
movie in rewind mode.

--- **Narrator 1 (female)**
He will say:

--- **Man 1**
Things can only be understood looking
backwards.

--- **Woman 1**
Are you confusing the one looking with
the one understanding?

--- **Man 1**
Uhm . . . What?

--- **Woman 1**
Are you confusing the one looking with
the one understanding?

PART III

SCENE — LAUGHING WITHOUT KNOWING THE JOKE

Inside. L.C. drives his white car into an underground garage. He gets out of his car and there's a tussle with another man. The man looks official, serious. He's smoking a cigarette. L.C. backs out. He walks away and exits through a door. Inside. A corridor. Again there are people leaning up against the wall. The atmosphere is strange, but L.C. is relaxed, walking with his hands in his pockets.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed)

--- Man 1

Two men walk into a bar. They order a drink and the first one starts to laugh. Then the second one cracks a smile. Soon, both of them are laughing it up out loud.

And it's infectious, because soon the whole bar is cracking up, rolling on the floor, joining in.

Laughing without knowing the joke.

PART IV

SCENE — NARRATIVITY

Inside. A long, dark corridor. L.C. walks away into the distance. Then he turns a corner.

Outside. LC. exits a door. He is on a second floor overpass now, looking down at a police car. He walks on, up another stairs and into another corridor.

Inside. A technical control room. There are lights blinking, switch boards with wiring diagrams and symbols, buttons, gauges and clocks. It's also dark inside.

Soundtrack: Track 2 — Location scouting for deleted scenes (cont'd)

--- Narrator 1 (female)

Reality is compromised. It is compromised by narrativity.

Chronology is compromised. It is compromised by narrativity.

Narratives with a mass capable of bending time.

Through these narratives the future is severed from chronology.

SCENE — A BAIT AND SWITCH

Inside. A technical control room. There are lights blinking, switch boards with wiring diagrams and symbols, buttons, gauges and clocks. L.C. lights up

another cigarette. He looks tired, as if at the end of a journey. He's pointing his gun at another man, a scientist in a white laboratory coat. A third man enters briefly and the scientist turns to the control panel. L.C. has a heated discussion with the scientist. He grabs him to emphasize his point. Then L.C. starts walking with a group of other scientists through corridors. They pass more technical rooms with machines and pipes. All the while, L.C. is taking photographs with a flash. Eventually L.C. splits off from the group and is walking through corridors by himself.

*Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Track 2 - Location scouting for deleted scenes (cont'd)*

--- Narrator 1 (female)

Can we disentangle narratives from their predictive function?

Can we disentangle narratives from their prescriptive function?

In a bait and switch move, possibility has been replaced with probability.

In a bait and switch move, placeholder text is replaced with other placeholder text.

A placeholder replaced by a proxy...

... replaced by a Macguffin...

... replaced by a stand-in...

... replaced by a surrogate...

... replaced by indeterminacy.

This moment of transit is perpetuated. We are in perpetual beta.

The constant postponement of possibility accumulates as continuous debt, exuding by-products through probability. What's being distributed is disconnected from its object. Things become strangers to themselves in transit.

What does transition look like?

Distribution is an obfuscation.

It's imposing a movement blur.

Things become derivatives of speed. Hyper-speeds that allow for time travel. I've heard it requires weightlessness to break the time-space barrier.

PART V

SCENE — A STORY

Inside. L.C. descends some stairs and exits the building. Outside. He steps into a police car. They drive off. Then L.C. is out of the car and is talking to a man, who is sitting in the car. They are talking through the open window while L.C. holds him at gunpoint. Then L.C. leaves and goes into the hotel.

Inside. He walks through a lobby, into a corridor. He draws his gun to see two men in black suits forcefully taking N.v.B. with them through the lobby and out the front door. L.C. goes along the corridor, up some stairs to another corridor and shoots a man wearing a hat. He enters a door and finds himself in a recording booth where he starts to be questioned.

*Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Track 2 — Location scouting for deleted scenes (cont'd)*

--- Narrator 1 (female)
She will say:

--- Woman 1
Let me tell you a story.

--- Man 1
What?

--- Woman 1
Let me tell you a story.

--- Man 1
I meant what is the story.

--- Narrator 1 (female)
She will say:

--- Woman 1
Oh. Okay. Yesterday I went to the video store to return a movie I had rented. So I went in and handed the tape over to the clerk. He takes the tape out of its box, checks it and says I didn't rewind. So, I got a fine for not rewinding the movie, which you're supposed to do.

--- Narrator 1 (female)
He will say nothing.

She will say:

--- Woman 1
Then I asked the clerk: "I didn't rewind it?" You know, more to myself than to him. He said no, but nodded his head. It was confusing. It would take a lot of concentration if you wanted to do it intentionally.

--- **Man 1**
What was it?

--- **Woman 1**
What was what?

--- **Man 1**
What was the movie?

--- **Woman 1**
Some science-fiction thing. Straight-to-video. Never made it to a theatrical release.

--- **Narrator 1 (female)**
Although these straight-to-video movies seem to be contemporary in the way they embrace the pastiche, somehow they seem to be ahead of the curve where they are using that visual form to talk about more structural elements such as distribution, and logistical solutions and formats for a hyper-connected society.

Restructuring space becomes a thing. It becomes a point to be made.

These solutions enabled a long tail distribution, where we watch more movies today that we didn't watch at all yesterday than we watch today of all the movies that we did watch yesterday.

Restructuring time becomes a thing. It becomes a point to be made.

--- **Man 1**
And what else?

--- **Woman 1**
In the special interest section you can find tapes that the owner of the video store recorded from TV. News reels, a stream of stock market updates, five hour footage from a camera mounted on the front of a train, a tape with nothing but commercials, interviews but only the questions without answers.

--- **Man 1**
And what else?

--- **Woman 1**
And there is also a collection of amateur home videos. Not those funny ones, but random things people film. Typical things like their vacation or a wedding, but also an amateur remake of Raiders of the Lost Ark.

Who is the audience for this stuff?

PART III

SCENE — THE SAME JOKE TWICE

Inside. L.C. is still in the interrogation room. He is still being questioned. In the adjacent room men in white laboratory coats are occupied with tape reels and machines. Lights switch on and off.

Then L.C. is being pushed out of the room, through the door, back into the corridor.

Outside. L.C. is being pushed into a police car. The façade of the hotel is modernistic glass and aluminum structure.

Inside again. L.C. and N.v.B. are sitting in a hotel room. L.C. starts laughing, but then his face becomes real serious, real quick. N.v.B. is talking. She is flanked by two serious-looking men in black coats and hats.

Soundtrack: OOriginal Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)

--- Man 1

Let me tell you a story.

Three men walk into a bar. It's a week-night, but it's crowded anyways. They sit at a table in the back and when the waitress comes they order drinks. Then the first one starts to laugh. It starts out with a smile, but quickly becomes a laugh out loud. Then the second one starts to

chuckle. Soon, both of them are laughing it up out loud. When eventually the third one gets into it, they are whooping and chortling. They are in tears and gasping for breath, howling. And it's infectious, because before long the whole bar is joining in. Cracking up, rolling on the floor, splitting their sides. It's a serious laugh fest all around.

Everybody laughing without knowing the joke.

PART IV

SCENE — PARALYSIS THROUGH ANALYSIS

Inside. The hotel room. The atmosphere is tense. L.C. takes out a gun and ushers some men outside, while body-guarding N.v.B. They come back to the room.

N.v.B. goes to the window to look outside and L.C. sits on the bed. Then they go to the bathroom and L.C. holds his right hand on N.v.B.'s neck in a strangle. When he lets go to towel off his face, N.v.B. returns to the room and again looks out the window.

Night. It's later. L.C. and N.v.B. keep to their room. They hold each other.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)

--- Narrator 1 (female)

Narrativity and prediction are flattening the world to match not the average opinion, but the average opinion about what the average opinion will be.

--- Woman 1 & Man 1

What do you mean?

--- Narrator 1 (female)

When what drives things forwards is average opinion about what average opinion will be, an enormous premium is placed on anything that might provide a guide to the swings in average opinion and as to how average opinion will react to changing events.

These signals have to be simple and clear-cut. Sophisticated interpretations do not provide a clear lead.

So basically we have a collection of overexcited young men and women, desperate to guess what everyone else will do.

--- Woman 1 & Man 1

What do you mean?

--- Narrator 1 (female)

In such a choice architecture, everything becomes average statistics and risk calculation.

--- Woman 1 & Man 1

What do you mean?

Pause. Inside. Night. L.C. and N.v.B. are standing in the dark hotel room. They are looking out the window at the street below. N.v.B. moves to a table and turns on the table lamp. She walks around the table and turns the lamp off again.

*Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Track 7 – Paralysis through analysis
(cont'd)*

--- Woman 1 & Man 1

What do you mean?

--- Narrator 1 (female)

Paralysis through analysis.

--- Woman 1 & Man 1

What do you mean?

--- Narrator 1 (female)

Paralysis through analysis.

--- Woman 1 & Man 1

What do you mean?

--- **Narrator 1 (female)**
Paralysis through analysis.

--- **Man 1**
What do you mean?

--- **Narrator 1 (female)) & Woman 1**
Paralysis through analysis.
Paralysis through analysis?

--- **Narrator 1 (female)) & Woman 1**
Paralysis through analysis.

--- **Narrator 1 (female) & Woman 1 & Man 1**
Paralysis through analysis.
Paralysis through analysis?

--- **Narrator 1 (female) & Woman 1 & Man 1**
Paralysis through analysis.

Paralysis through analysis.

--- **Woman 1 & Man 1**
Paralysis through analysis.

--- **Narrator 1 (female)**
What do you mean?

--- **Woman 1 & Man 1**
Paralysis through analysis.

--- **Narrator 1 (female)**
What do you mean?

--- **Woman 1 & Man 1**
Constriction through fiction.

--- **Narrator 1 (female)**
What do you mean?

--- **Woman 1 & Man 1**
Stagnation through narration.

--- **Narrator 1 (female)**
What do you mean?

--- Woman 1 & Man 1
Restriction through prediction.

Pause. Inside. Day. L.C. and N.v.B. are looking out the window of the hotel room. Outside they see people getting into a police car.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)

--- Woman 1
Restriction...

through prediction.

--- Man 1
Restriction through prediction.

Constriction through fiction.

Yes?

--- Woman 1
Constriction...

through...

fiction.

--- Man 1
No?

PART VI

SCENE — WE MIGHT NEED A NEW FEAR-INDUCING NAME FOR THIS CRISIS

Inside. Morning. L.C. and N.v.B. are in the hotel room talking to each other. They are looking out of the window again. Then N.v.B. starts pacing through the room, holding a book, reading from it. L.C. smokes a cigarette and starts pacing as well.

Then they drink coffee and check the room's cupboards and drawers. N.v.B. continues reading from the book. L.C. looks at a number tattooed on the back of her neck. She opens the door to let L.C. out.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Track 7 — Paralysis through analysis

--- Narrator 1 (female)

All signs point towards a crisis. There seems to be a crisis. I mean there are certain markers for a crisis. Certain tensions. But I'm not entirely sure. It's unclear what it's about, but it could be going on and it can no longer be described.

It can only be described through some meta-language. Tags, links. Administrative mark-up language.

This is a modern guerrilla crisis.

It's mostly waiting.

Low-intensity waiting, waiting, waiting and then a sudden burst of extreme action. And we return to waiting. And victories on all sides are temporary and incapable of ending the crisis. And the crisis is developed to be irresolvable and never ending. And in the meantime, we're not entirely sure if it's still going on. And we're waiting. Playing the waiting game.

How to behave while waiting?

It no longer seems relevant to think in terms of success or failure.

We're pushing things out in front of us continuously and betting on all results simultaneously. All options are postponed and at the same time extracted. Because we can not capitalize on winning alone. This would be reaching half the potential. We also need to go short. Why limit yourself to either? The only thing that matters is continuously postponing.

It's a bait and switch. We are constantly lured in. We recognize the story, but its content has been switched. Piece by piece words are replaced by synonyms until the complete meaning has changed.

PART V

SCENE — HEY... HO... LET'S GO TO THE VIDEO STORE

Inside. Day. L.C. and N.v.B. are sitting at a table in a hotel room. They are eating breakfast and drinking coffee. L.C. is flipping through a notebook. N.v.B. stands up and starts pacing a bit. She seems to be in a good mood. She's holding a book as well and is reading from it. They are discussing things. The atmosphere is more intimate in a searching kind of way. Then they shake hands and L.C. exits room.

*Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed)
Overdub ambient sounds (cups clanking,
sound of teaspoons stirring, tea being
poured, room sound, ...)*

--- **Narrator 1 (female)**
She will say:

--- **Woman 1**
I... uhm... I went... to the video store.
I had to return a movie. I was late... to
return it.

--- Man 1
Was it good?

--- Woman 1
I don't know.

--- Narrator 1 (female)
He will say:

--- Man 1
What do you mean you don't know?

How?

--- Woman 1
I mean I haven't really seen it, because
I'd fallen asleep.

--- Man 1
And?

--- Woman 1
It was later than I expected. Once it
started, I couldn't keep my eyes open.

--- Man 1
So you don't know?

--- Woman 1

I know a little bit. I saw the beginning.
It started with a voiceover from a nar-
rator talking about a society set in the
future. Or maybe it was some other off-
screen character. Anyway, a voice stood
out.

--- Man 1
What do you mean a voice that stood out?

--- Woman 1
It was mechanical, but in a nostalgic
way.

--- Man 1
Do you mean it was cold and distant?

--- Woman 1
Maybe.

--- Man 1
Maybe?

--- Woman 1
Maybe not.

I mean that... it seemed to come... from
a future that was already decided upon,
if that makes sense?

Does it?

--- **Man 1**
Maybe.

--- **Woman 1**
Maybe?

--- **Man 1**
Do you remember what else happened?

--- **Woman 1**
The voice. It also talked in the future
tense. It made for difficult sentences.
Difficult language. And grammar.

Maybe that's why I fell asleep. I mean,
I was tired, but the film didn't really
help.

Still, I think I'll have to give it an-
other try to see where it goes, don't you
think?

--- **Man 1**
It could be something.

--- **Woman 1**
Maybe tonight?

--- **Man 1**

A film set in the future written in the
future tense. Maybe we should watch it
together? Would be something to do. I can
go and pick it up from the store.

--- **Woman 1**
But you don't know the title.

--- **Man 1**
True.

--- **Woman 1**
I guess you can give a description. How
it's a film set in the future written in
the future tense.

No?

--- **Man 1**
That sounds like a plan that could work.

Yes.

--- **Woman 1**
There shouldn't... be too many movies
like this. Movies that could fit this de-
scription. We will go to the video store
and we will see. We will go and we will
rent this movie. Will we get something to
eat before? Or... will we be able to go

right now?

Are you ready to go?

--- Man 1
We're going now?

--- Woman 1
We can go now and pick it up for tonight.

--- Man 1
I guess I'm ready to go now.

Hey... ho... let's go!

I have my coat.

Wait, I'm thinking something.

--- Woman 1
What?

--- Man 1
Uhm...

--- Woman 1
Let's go.

--- Man 1

Wait, I think I should go alone. It's better.

--- Woman 1

What do you mean it's better?

--- Man 1

I can do some errands at the same time. It will be efficient.

--- Woman 1

Hey... ho... let's go.

--- Man 1

Ho... hey... you stay?

PART I

SCENE — CHOREOGRAPHIES IN A CORRIDOR

Inside. L.C. is talking to a chambermaid, who is somewhat despondent. He feels her knee and looks at a number tattooed on the back of her neck. They walk back through the corridors. L.C. puts his coat on. The chambermaid leaves him and L.C. looks down another corridor to see a man kissing a woman. The woman also has a number tattooed in the nape of her neck.

When they see him, they walk past him. When a bellhop asks L.C. for a tip, he waves him off and continues his way down the stairs to the hotel lobby. Walking down, L.C. shines his shoes on the carpet. L.C. puts a coin in a vending machine in the lobby and enters the dining room through a revolving door, traverses the room and is out another revolving door.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Reversed Engineering (reversed)

PART II

SCENE — REGENERATION AS A LOOP AND SHINY SURFACES

Inside. A close-up of a photograph of a man. Writing in a notebook, white on black.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)

--- Narrator 1 (female)

The future will not be about preservation, but about regeneration. Not to put time to a halt, but to create a backwards loop.

Outside. A single skyscraper in an international style, all window.

Inside. A theatre. The seats are reclining into the floor via a mechanism.

Inside. N.v.B. is sitting in the hotel room. A side-board lamp lights up half her face. She smiles.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd).

--- Narrator 1 (female) (cont'd)

All these shiny surfaces reflecting each other, layering life on top of life, until it duplicates all as a fictional narrative, set in a future caught up by real time.

PART IV

SCENE — LANGUAGE WILL HAVE REACHED A NEW LEVEL OF INADEQUACY

Inside. Images of the clockwork hanging in the hotel lobby. Its lights are flickering. It seems to be malfunctioning. N.v.B. is watching.

Outside. Images of power lines.

Inside. The lobby entrance to the hotel. L.C. comes walking in. He walks through technical rooms. There are machines, computers. Some are dismantled. He ends

up in a technical room with big data recording machines. People in white coats are working the machines. Lights are blinking, tape reels start spinning. There is an overall ambience of work being done.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Going Short And The Long Tail

--- Narrator 1 (female)

Fiction serves as a new means for managing production and circulation, for facilitating the appropriation of money from past value-creation or for borrowing from the profits of future labor.

Stories seem the same because there was no way to tell them apart. Somehow this doesn't suffice anymore. It is only able to scratch at the surface while it's what's underneath that has changed. The names are the same but the thing it describes has changed.

And there is no new language to describe it. Language will have reached a new level of inadequacy. And it can no longer be described. It can only be described through some meta-language. Tags, links. Administrative mark-up language. Everything becomes jargon, the specialized language of the workplace.

We are terraforming. Not in the science-fiction far away galaxy kind of way, but in the micro-ecology kind of way. In an I O U way. Actions speak louder than words

and it's pretty quiet right now.

PART VIII

SCENE — NEON EQUATIONS

Neon equations are blinking in a dark space. They are depicting a formula or an equation on relativity.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Going Short And The Long Tail (cont'd)

PART I

SCENE — MEN IN WHITE COATS CHOREOGRAPHY

Inside. A corridor. Men in white coats close a big steel vault door with some effort. Then they walk away around the corner.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Going Short And The Long Tail (cont'd)

PART VII

SCENE — SLIPSTREAMING

Inside. The same neon equations are flickering in a dark undefined space.

Inside. L.C. and some men in white coats enter a dark room. When they turn on the light a naked woman, kneeling in a glass cage becomes visible. The men walk past the exhibit and up a staircase. When they leave the room, the light turns off.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Going Short And The Long Tail (cont'd)

--- Narrator 1 (female)

But in distribution not all information is parsed to the visible in real-time.

Sometimes things remain obscure and in code. Unrendered, these things slipstream in distribution's wake anyway.

PART I

SCENE — MEN IN WHITE COATS WALKING IN A CORRIDOR CHOREOGRAPHY

L.C. walks with some men in white coats down a corridor. The atmosphere is tense. Everybody seems to have purpose, intent. The choreography seems imposed.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)

Going Short And The Long Tail (cont'd)

PART VIII

SCENE — IN OTHER WORDS

Inside. A conference room. L.C. is talking to a man in a white coat, who sits at a big wooden conference table. There are several television screens in the room. One wall is made of windows, giving a view to the outside. L.C. is smoking a cigarette and then lights it. He starts pacing around, fiddles with a television, walks up to the window and takes a picture. Another man in a black coat and hat enters. A woman in chambermaid's attire enters and stands on top of the conference table. The man in the white coat examines her legs.

Then L.C. exits the room into the corridor. He is escorted by a man wearing a black coat. They are walking through the corridors. The tube lighting on the ceiling starts flickering before they fail and switch off completely.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Going Short And The Long Tail (cont'd)

--- Narrator 1 (female)

Capital shifts its dependence on labor to a logistics of surplus extraction, which leverages debt from past obligation towards future optionality — in other

words, into a realm where labor does not
yet exist.

We are in perpetual beta.

The constant postponement of possibility.

Or in other words, possibility as continuous debt. The present can no longer primarily be deduced from the past, nor is it an act of a pure decisionism, but it's shaped by the future.

We moved from post- to pre-.

Or in other words to a state of transit.

Or in other words to speed and acceleration.

Or in other words to another space.

Or in other words to another time.

Or in other words to the elimination of resources.

Or in other words into dematerialization.

Or in other words to the future.

Or in other words to an average of the future.

Or in other words to a prediction of the future.

Or in other words to a containment of the future.

Or in other words to fiction.

Or in other words to derivatives.

Or in other words to creating value ex nihilo.

Or in other words to debt.

Inside. L.C. is again in the recording booth. He is being questioned. Microphones are hanging from the ceiling. They keep moving as the light in the room switches on and off.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed)(cont'd)

Or in other words to creating value ex
nihilo.

Or in other words to derivatives.

Or in other words to fiction.

Or in other words to a containme...

Or in other words to a containment of...

... to a containment of the future.

Or in other words to a prediction of...

... a prediction of the...

... a prediction of the future.

Or in other...

Or in other...

Or in other words to...

Or in other words to an average of the
future.

Or in other words to...

Or in other words to an average of the
futu...

We are in perpe...

We are in perpet...

We are in perpet...

We are in perpetual beta.

PART I

SCENE — MEN IN CORRIDORS CHOREOGRAPHY

Inside. L.C. and some men in black and beige coats are walking down a corridor. The atmosphere is even more intense, the choreography even more forced.

*Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Shiny Surfaces*

PART IV

SCENE — MORE SHINY SURFACES

Outside. Night. An office building, all window and lights.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed)(cont'd)
Shiny Surfaces (cont'd)

--- Narrator 1 (female) (cont'd)

All these shiny surfaces reflecting each other, layering life on top of life, until it duplicates all as a fictional narrative, set in a future caught up by real time.

PART I

SCENE — CHOREOGRAPHY IN AN ELEVATOR

Inside. L.C. is lying on the floor. He's being pushed into an elevator by a man in a black coat. People are standing around, looking down at him, includ-

ing N.v.B. When the elevator doors close, L.C. is up and being pushed and hit from left to right and back again. The elevator stops. L.C. and two men get out to meet more people with black and beige raincoats. They talk and L.C. gets back into the elevator with one man. L.C. grabs him forcefully by the neck and again they leave the elevator, where more men are waiting. They walk down some corridors, while L.C. takes a photograph with flash.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed)(cont'd)
Shiny Surfaces (cont'd)

PART V

SCENE — A FILM SET IN THE FUTURE CAUGHT UP BY REAL TIME

Inside. An indoor swimming pool. People in military garment are watching over the pool, talking and applauding. N.v.B. is talking with a man in a black coat and hat, when L.C. storms in. He stands back while paying close attention to what's going on. Then he takes a photograph of the pool scene. There are a lot of official looking people watching the scene. There's splashing as women in white bathing suits are swimming backwards, away from a man. They jump out of the pool, leaving the man alone. Then he jumps on the springboard of the pool. He's wearing a white shirt and black pants. He makes a speech. We see a single woman in a white bathing suit swimming backstroke, doing some water gymnastics. Then a second group of swimmers surround a man in the pool. Again they jump out, as does the man. All the while, L.C. and N.v.B. are watching, along with the official looking people.

L.C. and N.v.B. talk to each other and the same pool scene again plays out. L.C. takes photographs and leaves with N.v.B.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)

--- Man 1

What did you do last night?

--- Woman 1

I went to the video store and rented a movie.

--- Man 1

And?

--- Woman 1

And what?

--- Man 1

And which one was it?

--- Woman 1

The title eludes me now.

--- Man 1

What was it about?

--- Woman 1

A film set in a future recently caught up by real time. It created a set of diver-

gences that push things into another kind of fiction. One that is aware of its own fictitiousness.

--- Man 1

And what else happened?

--- Woman 1

Once outside the video store, I remembered I wanted to buy a candy bar. I had forgotten this.

So I went back into the video store. It was a difficult decision, because I had just left. There's a tiny failure here that's somehow slightly embarrassing.

--- Man 1

And?

--- Woman 1

I went back in, because it would be stupid not to.

--- Man 1

And?

--- Woman 1

Once inside, looking over the options, I was reminded of the news item I had read in the newspaper a few years ago. A man

in his thirties who'd been eating nothing but Mars candy bars for his whole life. Said he didn't like anything else. Can you imagine this? His whole body, all made up of Mars candy bars.

Mars fingers.

Mars toenails.

Mars hair.

Mars eyes.

Mars eyelashes.

Mars skin.

Mars bellybutton.

--- Man 1

That's not just a novelty, a funny by-the-way ha-ha news item. It's deeply unsettling.

--- Woman 1

It also makes for a good story.

--- Man 1

Everybody loves a good story.

--- Woman 1

Everybody loves a good story.

PART VIII

SCENE — POTENTIAL, FANTASY, PREDICTION AND PRESCRIPTION

Inside. L.C. and N.v.B. are walking through a corridor and up a staircase. They are accompanied by people wearing formal evening attire. They take the elevator, where L.C. takes a photograph with his camera of N.v.B. and a woman in a fur coat. They leave the elevator and walk down more corridors. An armed guard is keeping watch. When they enter the hotel lobby, they again go up a winding staircase.

L.C. and N.v.B. go to a reception table in a conference room. L.C. takes more pictures as N.v.B. goes to stand by the big windows. They leave via the winding staircase again and walk through a corridor.
Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)

--- Narrator 1 (female)

Can we disentangle narratives from their predictive function?

This celebration of potentiality everywhere across the board seems to be about predicting options. However, limited only to options with potentials, it remains without actually doing anything or mobilizing the speculative present to construct a future. The future is only and just a set of potentials that must never be actualized.

Backed up by probability narratives, this fantasized future keeps accumulating as prescribed debt.

Can we disentangle narratives from their predictive function?

Can we disentangle narratives from their portending function?

Can we disentangle narratives from their prognostic function?

Can we disentangle narratives from their presaging function?

Can we disentangle narratives from their promising function?

Can we disentangle narratives from their prophesizing function?

Can we disentangle narratives from their peremptory function?

Can we disentangle narratives from their prescriptive function?

PART V

SCENE — THE OLD WAY OF DOING THINGS

Inside of a car. Night. N.v.B. and L.C. are sitting in the backseat of a car, being driven through the city. They are talking.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Wind blowing into a microphone

--- Woman 1

Well... I'm thinking about... someday, probably not too far off... this will be ... this will be considered... considered the old way of doing things.

PART III

SCENE — ENOUGH WITH THE JOKES ALREADY

Inside. L.C. and N.v.B. enter the lobby through the door of the hotel. They are wearing their coats. N.v.B. leans up against one of the pillars in the hotel lobby. Then they walk up to reception and further into the lobby. L.C. takes a photograph and sits down in a chair in the lobby as N.v.B. walks away. She ascends the winding staircase as she is joined by a man in a black coat who whispers something in her ear.
Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)

--- Man 1

Three people walk into a bar. They order drinks and the first one starts to laugh. Then the second one also starts to laugh. Soon the third one is laughing as well. All three of them are laughing now. The bartender is looking at them but after a while also joins in laughing.

Laughing without knowing the joke.

--- Woman 1

Enough with the jokes already.

PART VII

SCENE - DISTRIBUTION BECOMES VIRAL

Inside. A conference room. Dark. Tables in a squared O-shape. Slides are projected. L.C. and N.v.B. are

talking in a hushed way. Other people are present.
Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)

--- Narrator 1 (female)

Distribution was a combination of object, time and space. It was confined to these. But at great speeds things are no longer bound by laws. They become derivatives of speed. The moment of transit is perpetuated, while at the same time it exudes by-products.

What's being distributed is disconnected from its object. Extraction methods as redistribution. We tend to look at virality as distribution. There is the viral. Things spread fast and wide and involuntary.

What is slipstreaming in all this distribution?

What is piggybacking alongside?

We tend to disregard the long tail. What are long term distributions? Through improved searchability, distribution tails can grow longer. Long tails are not even an afterthought when consuming. Although distribution concentrates itself more and more to the next moment, it reaches a point of the immaterial. The immaterial has no long tail. In this liquid world, it's what's left behind and what's possible that is solid. It's the past and

future are strangely enough written in stone. But we're still in an analogue era, where we're trying to find hardware solutions to software problems. This is not a bad thing. It's not a bad thing, I think. It's just an unsound method for unsound times.

PART V

SCENE — A GENRE

Inside. The same conference room. Dark. Tables in a squared o-shape. Slides are projected. L.C. and N.v.B are watching and taking notes. Other people are present. The room becomes dark when the slides are not showing. A woman with a flashlight walks in front the projection as she helps L.C. to find the exit.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)

--- Man 1

What did you do last night?

--- Woman 1

I went to the video store and rented a movie.

--- Man 1

What was it?

--- Woman 1

The title seems to elude me now.

--- Man 1

What was it about?

--- Woman 1

Some movie from the straight-to-video section in the back of the store. This aisle that says straight-to-video as if it's a genre. But we're not talking genres here, are we? Not even all these imperceptible shifts that separate genres from subgenres. This straight-to-video has becomes a genre in itself that is defined by its format. It's a catch-all weight class that collects the uncollectable.

--- Man 1

That genre is called the garbage bin.

--- Woman 1

Maybe.

Maybe not.

It's a genre that can only be pointed at through the way it finds its dispersion.

PART V

SCENE — A SCENE DESCRIPTION RIGHT BEFORE IT HAPPENS

Inside. Hotel lobby. Night. L.C. descends the stairs. He checks his pocket for something. He approaches the desk to ask for directions to the video store because he wants to rent a movie. Then he walks away and out the door. N.v.B. is waiting outside, off-screen.

Inside. Night. L.C. is walking through a hotel lobby room while N.v.B. continues to wait Outside. There are tables and people are sitting at them. He walks with purpose through the whole room and leaves through the front door. A woman is waiting. She guides L.C. into a car. She goes to the driver's side, enters and they leave.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)

--- Narrator 1 (female)

He will descend the stairs.

He will check his pocket for something.

He will say:

Do you know where the video store is?

He will want to rent a movie.

Then he will walk away.

Down some steps and out the door.

Once outside she will be waiting for him.

She will look down the street while waiting. First to the left, then to the right. Nothing will be moving. The city will be narcotic. The plan will be to go to the video store and rent a movie. She will try to think of something to say for when he returns. Maybe she will suggest a certain movie she read some reviews of. Nothing will really come to mind. He will return and they will get into the car and leave.

PART I

SCENE — DRIVING THROUGH THE CITY

Inside. A car. L.C. is sitting in the backseat of a car, driving through the city. He holds up his notebook from which he reads out loud. The woman driver is listening, while keeping an eye on the road. Then

L.C. holds up another book.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Bankruptcy Or New Ways To Pay Old Debts

PART VIII

SCENE — AN INTEREST RATE

Inside. A small, shabby hotel room. An man is lying on the bed. He seems to be unconscious. L.C. sits besides him on the bed and wakes him. The man seems to be in pain now, trying to breathe. There's confusion in the air. A blonde woman comes to help out. The man grabs her, while ranting. L.C. hides behind the open door of a wooden cabinet. On the inside of the door hangs a relativity equation poster. He starts taking photographs. The camera's flash is on. The man starts fondling the woman in a clingy way. She stands up, they talk for a while and she leaves the room. The man then helps L.C. from behind the cabinet's door. He opens the door from the room and goes to sit on the bed. The atmosphere takes on an aggressive turn. The man stands up from the bed and L.C. grabs him by his coat with force. L.C. goes again to the cabinet and looks Inside. Then he turns his attention back to the man, who's acting submissive and shrivels against the wall. He's also drinking from a bottle now. L.C. keeps questioning him. They leave the room in better spirits. As he closes the door, the man turns off the lights.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Bankruptcy Or New Ways To Pay Old Debts
(cont'd)

--- Narrator 1 (female)

I might be paraphrasing, but the drive to speed things up has survived the shift from the manufacturing sphere to the semiotic one.

These days, when the main tool for production ceases to be material labour and becomes cognitive labour, acceleration enters another phase, another dimension, because an increase in semiocapitalist productivity comes essentially from the acceleration of the info-sphere.

Our knowledge is growing at exponential rates. Much faster than we are capable of containing. So it hurls us into a future, but one that is simultaneously being extracted by that knowledge. We are already in its debt.

This exponential rate of speed and distribution is also an interest rate. The accumulation of knowledge is also an accumulation of debt. We look for ways to hedge the risk, ways to supersede any backlash.

We are taught the future is no future if it doesn't look bright.

There's no loss that can't be negated by a rebranding. A born-again absolving of the past enlightened by a bright future. Everything will be so literal that irony

will no longer be understood. Or it will no longer be of use. The surface will no longer be a marker for a depth underneath.

What's being distributed is disconnected from its object.

PART V

SCENE — AGAIN THE VIDEO STORE

Inside. L.C. and a man are standing in a hallway. They are talking. A light bulb is hanging from the ceiling. It is swinging from left to right. The man is looking into it. Then L.C. stops the light from swinging with his hand. Then they descend the stairs.
Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)

--- Woman 1
What did you do last night?

--- Narrator 1 (female)
He will say:

--- Man 1
I went to the video store and rented a movie.

--- Narrator 1 (female)
She will say:

--- Woman 1
That's funny. I also... rented a movie. The title seems to elude me now. Some movie, that I realized... half way in... I'd seen before or at least... I'd seen something similar.

--- Man 1
What do you mean?

--- Woman 1
Turns out I had seen this... unauthorized remake. It was quickly taken out of the theater for... copyright infringement. Now, because I've seen the original only afterwards...

--- Man 1
You find it impossible to reset the timeline of which one came first?

PART VII

SCENE — SOMEBODY OFF-SCREEN WILL SAY:

Inside. A stairwell. L.C. and the man are sitting on the stairs. They are talking. L.C. is listening with intent. The man has an alarmed demeanour. Then he leans back and has some trouble breathing. He's clutching his chest, but continues to talk to L.C. who has now descended the stairs. The man follows him down, but needs L.C.'s help to walk.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Wind blowing in the microphone

--- Narrator 1 (female)
Somebody off-screen will say:

Yes, we are aware of our dependencies on limited resources. You can't awaken someone who's pretending to be asleep.

The neoliberal solution to our finite system was found, not in limiting production, but in shifting production in time. With the introduction of debt, resources could be left alone for the time being, while at the same time immaterial surplus could be generated. So, we move to the one thing we have unlimited amounts of: time. It stretches out into infinity. How could we not use such abundance? It could be considered a crime not to use it.

It would be a waste of time.

SCENE — DISTRIBUTION

Inside. L.C. and the man are standing in a staircase. They are talking. The man seems desperate. He has no energy and leans on the banister.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed)

--- Narrator 1 (female)
Somebody off-screen will say:

Where does distribution lose its neutrality?

Then they enter a shabby lobby of a shabby motel. People are waiting here, smoking. A woman is loitering around, trying to get the attention of L.C. The man talks to her and the other people sitting around. He also smokes a cigarette. He looks more nervous now. L.C. also smokes a cigarette. He talks to the woman as well and to a man, jotting something down in a ledger. The atmosphere is a jittery foreboding.
Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)

--- Narrator 1 (female) (cont'd)
Distribution is no longer a flat surface through which things move, but a 3D situation that shapes whatever moves through it. Everything will be about adaptability, innovation and mobility. Where distribution used to be a separate step, it now seems to be completely integrated into the whole production process. It has been absorbed, assimilated. Automation and nanotechnology will make all distribution unnecessary. Production will take place on a local level and immediately.

Or could it be the opposite?

Distribution is simply no longer visible while at the same time it has become more and more rule-enforcing. It redirects the aesthetic narrative. Distribution has body-snatched production and made it unnecessary. Production will be postponed. In order to maintain these hyper-speeds, things are moving towards the immaterial. Production becomes a by-product, a derivative of speed. In order to be distributed without production it needs to be easily reproducible. Which seems paradoxical. How can something be reproducible if it isn't produced in the first place? That is paradoxical indeed.

PART II

SCENE — DERIVATIVES AND DEATH BY A MILLION CUTS

Outside. Night. L.C. is standing on the street. He asks directions from a passer-by.

Inside. A room with machines. L.C. enters and goes upstairs. Here he talks to the desk clerk and enters a phone booth. A struggle ensues with a man in a black coat that is also in the phone booth. A switchblade knife is pulled. Then L.C. and the man look at each other with suspicion and L.C. dials a

phone number. He leaves the phone booth again, while looking in a notebook. The man in the black coat is now in the adjacent phone booth and crouches down as L.C. steps out.

L.C. addresses the receptionist again and descends the stairs to leave.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Wind blowing in the microphone

--- Narrator 1 (female)

Derivatives are a specific kind of future mining: an extraction from the future in the present. The dominance of the derivative is a clear example of how profits are no longer extracted on the basis of production and commodities, nor from labor and services. Even capital is no longer productive. Such things belong to traditional industrial models of accumulation, in which a factory is built, workers are employed, something is produced and sold, profits are made that in turn yield new profits.

Someday, probably not too far off, this will be considered the old way of doing things.

The crisis prophesied by fiction is not one of confidence or the imagination, nor is it a crisis of liquidity. It is a crisis of solvency, in which productive capital is massively unemployed and factories stand idle. In this semiotic future, it's not just people who are unemployed.

Also capital is unemployed. All is replaced by placeholders and proxies and we are jump-cutting all over the place.

A shift from refusing to see the emergency to accepting a constant state of emergency and shock. It's a continuous barrage of small collapses. Things we could recover from, but slowly add up to a death by a million cuts.

PART III

SCENE — NEVER MIND THE JOKE

Inside of a car. Night. L.C. and N.v.B. are sitting in the backseat of a car. They are being driven by a man in a black coat and hat. They wait before a traffic light. N.v.B. is looking at L.C. with an encouraging look. He is smoking a cigarette. He's talking with a callous seriousness.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)

--- **Woman 1**
Ha.

I know the joke already... I think.

But it's funny anyway.

If you really want... you can tell it again.

Will you?

--- **Man 1**
Two men walk into a bar.

They order drinks ... and sit at the bar.

--- **Man 2**

Isn't it supposed to be three people?

--- **Man 1**
It's two.

Never mind the joke now.

PART VIII

SCENE — OUTSIDE AND OUT OF SYNC

Outside. Night. L.C. gets out of a car. He lights a cigarette.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
A Ghostwriter

---- **Narrator 1 (female):**

Then they will be outside. Out of the confinement of the inside, events will seem to flee from a center. Diverging so it will become difficult to discern the constituting elements of the following moments. Everything will seem to be happening at the same time, yet slightly out of sync .

PART I

SCENE — ANOTHER LOBBY AND CORRIDOR CHOREOGRAPHY

Inside. L.C. and N.v.B. enter the lobby of the hotel. They take the elevator, going up. They walk down more corridors. They are talking. The atmosphere is a restrained agitation. L.C. pushes N.v.B. against the wall with some aggression. Then they continue to walk down corridors. L.C. takes off his coat. They end up at the door to a room and enter.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
A Ghostwriter (cont'd)

PART V

SCENE — A MOVIE AND AN OFF-SCREEN CHARACTER

Inside. A hotel room. L.C. and N.v.B. are talking to each other, pacing the room and bathroom. They smoke cigarettes. L.C. gives N.v.B. a light for her cigarette. There's anticipation and slight distrust in the air. They seem to be assessing each other. L.C. goes to sit on the bed and talks into a microphone.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
An Off-screen Character

--- **Woman 1**

And? What did you do last night? Did you go... to the video store?

--- **Man 1**

Yes. I went to the video store... and rented a movie.

--- **Woman 1**

And?

--- **Man 1**

And what?

--- **Woman 1**

And which one was it?

--- Man 1

The title eludes me now.

But... it had an... off-screen character.

--- Woman 1

Off-screen? Do you mean... it was... invisible? It never entered the screen? Not even a... minute? Or a second?

--- Man 1

Never.

--- Woman 1

I remember seeing a whole film like that. The main characters kept talking about their cousin. How they used to do things together. The fun they used to have or the trouble they got into. And this joke he told.

--- Man 1

What?

--- Woman 1

How he would tell this stupid joke. It was really stupid.

--- Man 1

It wasn't funny?

--- Woman 1

Nobody ever laughed. But he kept insisting on telling it all the time.

And near the end... you hear it, just his voice. He tells the stupid joke. It's not funny.

--- Man 1

It isn't?

--- Woman 1

Not even close.

But the point was that you weren't supposed to see him.

--- Man 1

You mean like the film crew that you're not supposed to see. Although sometimes they are reflected in a mirror on the left side of the screen?

--- Woman 1

Maybe. But that was the film. People sitting around a table, talking about somebody you never saw. A main character that remained out of view.

--- Man 1

How to watch a film... that one can look

next to?

--- **Woman 1**

How to make a movie... about what's not
part of the scenario.

--- **Man 1**

A film off-screen.

--- **Woman 1**

An off-screen film.

PART VIII

SCENE — AN ATTEMPT AT A SUMMARY

Inside. The same hotel room. L.C. and a blonde woman are sitting and talking. L.C. is taking photographs of her with a flash. She poses. They start walking through the room. L.C. takes out a gun, when a man in a black coat comes bursting through the room. L.C. shoots from a lying position on the bed. The man flees through the adjoin room and L.C. chases after him. In the room is a jukebox, music is softly playing in the background. L.C. goes through the next door into the bathroom. He catches the man with the shower curtain. He picks up a chair and hits the man several times. Then he walks back through an open door to the bedroom. He takes a seat on the bed with a drink in his hand. He walks back into the bathroom where the

blonde woman is now in her underwear. L.C. is talking to her.

*Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
An Off-screen Character (cont'd)
Audiotool Day 2016 (by Xtract)*

--- **Narrator 1 (female)**

In a bait and switch, production has been replaced with derivatives. A linguistic turn has moved the leading edge of capitalism from production to circulation. This transforms a society governed by the physically determined constraints of underlying production into one superseded by the unlimited narrative dynamics of circulation. Things used to get spatially displaced. In this new discourse infused with the notion of the future: there's an added dimension of the temporal shift. The paradoxical relation between the immediateness and immateriality of the now are part of a new future-oriented practice. Investing in the future, displacing things, pushing material in front of you as a way to again keep moving. It's a mobility that propels you forward, but might end up as a debt.

Given the extent of economic volatility, profitability had to be located in a just-barely deferred tomorrow. Fictitious capital serves as a new means for managing production and circulation, for facilitating the appropriation of money from past value-creation or for borrowing from the profits of future labor. It speeds up circulation. Given the extent of economic volatility, the extraction of that future happens along every possible axis. Going sh... going short is no lon-

ger in contradic... in contra...

Interlude. The blonde woman goes to the jukebox room and pushes play. A song restarts. She goes back into the bedroom and puts on her dress, before she joins L.C. again in the bathroom. L.C. puts on his coat and hat. The woman fixes the bed, L.C. takes his suitcase and they both go out the door to a living room next door. It has windows and we see a nightscape of the city. L.C. and the blonde woman walk around the room, talking. The woman flicks the lamp on and off, before they go out another door.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
An Off-screen Character (cont'd)
Audiotool Day 2016 (by Xtract) (restarted)

--- Narrator 1 (female) (cont'd)
Can I restart?

I'll restart.

Given the extent of economic volatility,
the extraction of that future happens
along every possible axis. Going short
is no longer in contradiction with going
long. A collapse of the system is just as
profitable as its prosperity. Both were
equally probable. Both were equally ex-
tracted.

The thing is there is no thing anymore.

PART VII

SCENE — COUNTING DOWN 7

Inside. An elevator. L.C. is going down.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
An Off-screen Character (cont'd)

PART VI

SCENE — COUNTING DOWN 6

Inside. An elevator. L.C. is going down.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
An Off-screen Character (cont'd)

PART V

SCENE — COUNTING DOWN 5

Inside. An elevator. L.C. is going down.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
An Off-screen Character (cont'd)

PART IV

SCENE — COUNTING DOWN 4

Inside. An elevator. L.C. is going down.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
An Off-screen Character (cont'd)

PART III

SCENE — COUNTING DOWN 3

Inside. An elevator. L.C. is going down.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
An Off-screen Character (cont'd)

PART II

SCENE — COUNTING DOWN 2

Inside. An elevator. L.C. is going down.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
An Off-screen Character (cont'd)

PART I

SCENE — IT'S HOW YOU FINISH

Inside. An elevator. L.C. is going down. He steps out of the elevator and walks through the hotel lobby to the desk. He looks around, taking in his surroundings while talking to the clerks. Then he walks to the entrance of the hotel, exits.

Outside. Night. L.C. gets in his car and drives off. We see views of a city. L.C. is driving and lights up a cigarette.

Soundtrack: Original Soundtrack (reversed) (cont'd)
Reverse Engineering

--- Man 1

It's not how you start. It's how you finish.

--- Woman 1

So, let's finish with the beginning.

START CREDITS

ANNOTATED WORK DOCU- MENTS

FROM WHITEPAPER TO WHITEBOARD (annotated talking points)

README

Annotations version 1.0.

Description

- The following is the work document 'From White Paper To Whiteboard (talking points)' by Peter Lemmens, annotated by Alicja Melzacka.
- An annotation doesn't equal description, nor interpretation. It's not a diversion strategy, a decoy, a digression. And it's certainly not a revision, nor a correction. So what's left is that maybe it's all of these things simultaneously...
- The annotations use the medium of hypertext. They draw on the style of early hypertext fiction but utilise contemporary technology: a free online tool for collaborative text processing (Google Docs). Their format is partially dictated by that technology and, partially, it mimics the formatting of each work document.
- Hypertext seems to be a somehow logical extension (even if it's based on an unsound logic) of the semantic field outlined by the three work documents. These also exhibit certain hyper- and intertextual qualities and challenge the usual notions of authorship and collaboration.

Usage notes

- It is recommended to start by reading 'From White Paper To Whiteboard (talking points)', which functions as a 'switchboard' between the work documents.
- You can navigate the annotated work documents by scrolling and clicking on links.
- The hypertext is using three different kinds of links: external links, which will lead you out of the document (mostly used as references); cross-links, which connect points across the three texts; and internal links, which bring you to another point in the same text.

- In some cases, it is possible to return to the departure point, but in others, the links are diverging further and further away.
- Google Docs functions best when opened in Chrome browser. Chrome enables additional viewing functions (i.e. 'preview mode'), which enhance the browsing experience.
- Feel free to skip as many links as you want or keep switching between the regular reading mode and following the hyperlinks. Multiple combinations are possible.
- Most probably, in one reading, you will not discover all annotations.

2020, CC BY-SA (Attribution-ShareAlike)

with Alicja Melzacka
from_white_paper_to_whiteboard_annotated_talking_points_Alicja_Melzacka.doc
— go to <http://www.diversions.be/annotated/01.html>

README

Annotations version 1.0.

Description

- The following is the work document 'From White Paper To Whiteboard (talking points)' by Peter Lemmens, annotated by Laurens Otto.
- The annotations use a reversed Q&A (asked by the artist to the curator) while reading the document back to front.
- The annotations utilise a contemporary technology: a free online tool for collaborative text processing (Google Docs).

Usage notes

- There is no recommended reading order for the annotated work documents by Laurens Otto.
- Google Docs functions best when opened in Chrome browser. Chrome enables additional viewing functions (i.e. 'preview mode'), which enhance the browsing experience.
- You can read the work document and annotations by scrolling and clicking on links. These are internal and allow you to navigate between text and annotations.
- Feel free to skip as many links as you want or keep switching between the regular reading mode and following the links.

2020, CC BY-SA (Attribution-ShareAlike)

with Laurens Otto
from_white_paper_to_whiteboard_annotated_talking_points_Laurens_Otto.doc
— go to <http://www.diversions.be/annotated/02.html>

THESTOCKEXCHANGE (annotated texts)

README

Annotations version 1.0.

Description

- The following is the work document 'THESTOCKEXCHANGE (texts)' by Peter Lemmens, annotated by Alicja Melzacka.
- An annotation doesn't equal description, nor interpretation. It's not a diversion strategy, a decoy, a digression. And it's certainly not a revision, nor a correction. So what's left is that maybe it's all of these things simultaneously...
- The annotations use the medium of hypertext. They draw on the style of early hypertext fiction but utilise contemporary technology: a free online tool for collaborative text processing (Google Docs). Their format is partially dictated by that technology and, partially, it mimics the formatting of each work document.
- Hypertext seems to be a somehow logical extension (even if it's based on an unsound logic) of the semantic field outlined by the three work documents. These also exhibit certain hyper- and inter-textual qualities and challenge the usual notions of authorship and collaboration.

Usage notes

- It is recommended to start by reading 'From White Paper To Whiteboard (talking points)', which functions as a 'switchboard' between the work documents.
- You can navigate the annotated work documents by scrolling and clicking on links.
- The hypertext is using three different kinds of links: external links, which will lead you out of the document (mostly used as references); cross-links, which connect points across the three texts; and internal links, which bring you to another point in the same text.
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- Feel free to skip as many links as you want or keep switching between the regular reading mode and following the hyperlinks. Multiple combinations are possible.
- Most probably, in one reading, you will not discover all annotations.

2020, CC BY-SA (Attribution-ShareAlike)

with Alicja Melzacka

thestockexchange_annotated_texts_Alicja_Melzacka.doc

— go to <http://www.diversions.be/annotated/03.html>

README

Annotations version 1.0.

Description

- The following is the work document 'THESTOCKEXCHANGE (annotated texts)' by Peter Lemmens, annotated by Laurens Otto.
- The annotations use a reversed Q&A (asked by the artist to the curator) while reading the document back to front.
- The annotations utilise a contemporary technology: a free online tool for collaborative text processing (Google Docs).

Usage notes

- There is no recommended reading order for the annotated work documents by Laurens Otto.
- Google Docs functions best when opened in Chrome browser. Chrome enables additional viewing functions (i.e. 'preview mode'), which enhance the browsing experience.
- You can read the work document and annotations by scrolling and clicking on links. These are internal and allow you to navigate between text and annotations.
- Feel free to skip as many links as you want or keep switching between the regular reading mode and following the links.

2020, CC BY-SA (Attribution-ShareAlike)

with Laurens Otto

thestockexchange_annotated_texts_Laurens_Otto.doc

— go to <http://www.diversions.be/annotated/04.html>

REVERSE ENGINEERING (annotated scenario)

README

Annotations version 1.0.

Description

- The following is the work document 'Reverse Engineering (scenario)' by Peter Lemmens, annotated by Alicja Melzacka.
- An annotation doesn't equal description, nor interpretation. It's not a diversion strategy, a decoy, a digression. And it's certainly not a revision, nor a correction. So what's left is that maybe it's all of these things simultaneously...
- The annotations use the medium of hypertext. They draw on the style of early hypertext fiction but utilise contemporary technology: a free online tool for collaborative text processing (Google Docs). Their format is partially dictated by that technology and, partially, it mimics the formatting of each work document.
- Hypertext seems to be a somehow logical extension (even if it's based on an unsound logic) of the semantic field outlined by the three work documents. These also exhibit certain hyper- and intertextual qualities and challenge the usual notions of authorship and collaboration.

Usage notes

- It is recommended to start by reading 'From White Paper To Whiteboard (talking points)', which functions as a 'switchboard' between the work documents.
- You can navigate the annotated work documents by scrolling and clicking on links.
- In 'Reverse Engineering (scenario)', the annotations begin on page 19.
- If, after landing on a new location, you cannot see any links, scroll down until you come across the next one.
- The hypertext is using three different kinds of links: external links,

which will lead you out of the document (mostly used as references); cross-links, which connect points across the three texts; and internal links, which bring you to another point in the same text.

- In some cases, it is possible to return to the departure point, but in others, the links are diverging further and further away.
- Google Docs functions best when opened in Chrome browser. Chrome enables additional viewing functions (i.e. 'preview mode'), which enhance the browsing experience.
- Feel free to skip as many links as you want or keep switching between the regular reading mode and following the hyperlinks. Multiple combinations are possible.
- Most probably, in one reading, you will not discover all annotations.

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with Alicja Melzacka

reverse_engineering_annotated_scenario_Alicja_Melzacka.doc

— go to <http://www.diversions.be/annotated/05.html>

README

Annotations version 1.0.

Description

- The following is the work document 'Reverse Engineering (scenario)' by Peter Lemmens, annotated by Laurens Otto.
- The following is the work document 'THESTOCKEXCHANGE (annotated texts)' by Peter Lemmens, annotated by Laurens Otto.
- The annotations use a reversed Q&A (asked by the artist to the curator) while reading the document back to front.
- The annotations utilise a contemporary technology: a free online tool for collaborative text processing (Google Docs).

Usage notes

- There is no recommended reading order for the annotated work documents by Laurens Otto.
- Google Docs functions best when opened in Chrome browser. Chrome enables additional viewing functions (i.e. 'preview mode'), which enhance the browsing experience.
- You can read the work document and annotations by scrolling and clicking on links. These are internal and allow you to navigate between text and annotations.
- Feel free to skip as many links as you want or keep switching between the regular reading mode and following the links.

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with Laurens Otto

reverse_engineering_annotated_scenarion_Laurens_Otto.doc

— go to <http://www.diversions.be/annotated/06.html>

WORKS

FROM WHITEPAPER TO WHITEBOARD

README

Annotations version 1.0.

Description

- The following is documentation of the work 'From White Paper To Whiteboard' (2019) by Peter Lemmens (in collaboration with Karina Beumer and Brenda Tempelaar).
- It contains 6 .jpg-files.
- These images show the 3 whiteboards before and after the public discussion.
- As a standalone second discussion of a study group on distribution in art, this visual thinking exercise spins off to look more at the artwork itself, its possible configurations and an artist's point of view. Artworks are often given a very concentrated distribution: an exhibition, sometimes limited to the opening of an exhibition, an article, a quick advertisement, ... They might be an ultimate consumer product, peaking very fast and disappearing arguably even faster. How can art grasp its own distribution? Which roles can distribution play in an artistic practice? How are these models of distribution feeding back into artistic practices? What does art leave slipstreaming in its wake?

The first discussion took place on May 20th at de Brakke Grond, Amsterdam. This second part starts from a white paper which will also be made available one hour before the discussion on a whiteboard.

Karina Beumer, Peter Lemmens and Brenda Tempelaar are invited to that whiteboard and redraw the premise during a visual discussion.

Usage notes

- Although there is an initial chronology, there is no recommended order for these images.
- There are 3 levels of commitment to the work:
 1. Download and share with a torrent file. Seed torrent files, so oth-

ers can download it. The more seeds, the faster the downloads.
Torrents that are not seeded, will become unavailable over time.
Please use a secure VPN connection for your torrent tracker.

2. Download a copy of the work to your computer to keep it.
3. View the work in your browser, without downloading.

2020, CC BY-SA (Attribution-ShareAlike)

with Karina Beumer & Brenda Tempelaar
documentation of a visual seminar on distribution in visual arts:
DSC09439.jpg, DSC09460.jpg, DSC09527.jpg, DSC09614.jpg,
DSC09619.jpg, DSC09624.jpg
presented at ExtraCity Kunsthal (20/06/2019)
— go to <http://www.diversions.be/downloads/01.html>

THESTOCKEXCHANGE

README

Works - version 1.0.

Description

- The following is the work 'THESTOCKEXCHANGE' (2017-2018) by Peter Lemmens (in collaboration with Kris Van Dessel).
- It contains the 2 .pdf-files of the books 'THESTOCKEXCHANGE' and 'THESTOCKEXCHANGE ANNOTATED'.
- As artworks spend most of their time in storage, maybe a storage place is the logical place to approach, think about and invest in artworks. This setting is used as a platform to unpack and discuss a work, to show a video while playing a record, to stack shipping crates and make a room divider, to discard an old work before making a new one, ...

The storage space is activated at irregular intervals to assess its artworks and things in its peripheral view. It hesitates between stock and stock market, wavers between stockpile and stock sale, negotiates between in and out of stock.

Usage notes

- 'THESTOCKEXCHANGE ANNOTATED' functions as a hard copy reference guide of online sources to 'THESTOCKEXCHANGE'.
- However, there is no recommended order for these books and you can also read both books simultaneously.
- There are 3 levels of commitment to the work:
 1. Download and share with a torrent file. Seed torrent files, so others can download it. The more seeds, the faster the downloads. Torrents that are not seeded, will become unavailable over time. Please use a secure VPN connection for your torrent tracker.
 2. Download a copy of the work to your computer to keep it.
 3. View the work in your browser, without downloading.

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with Kris Van Dessel

14 events described in 2 books:

THESTOCKEXCHANGE.pdf (Ray McKigney Publishing, 2018),

THESTOCKEXCHANGE_ANNOTATED.pdf (Corky Ramirez Publishing, 2018)

presented at THESTOCKEXCHANGE, Antwerp, Belgium (18/03/2017 - 13/03/2018)

— go to <http://www.diversions.be/downloads/02.html>

REVERSE ENGINEERING

README

Works version 1.0.

Description

- The following is the work 'Reverse Engineering' (2020-2021) by Peter Lemmens .
- It contains the .mp4-file of the feature film 'Reverse Engineering'.
- A feature film that reflects on loosely connected positions about the future, narrativity and distribution. It's a rereading of the film Alphaville by Jean-Luc Godard, which in itself displays an out of canon, fan fiction approach. Here, Alphaville is shown in reverse. It functions as a setting for a site-specific artwork that inhabits an existing film. Through text and soundtrack an annotation of interruptions and interference develops.

Usage notes

- It is recommended to view the film in a cinema or home-cinema setting with good speakers or headphones
- There are 3 levels of commitment to the work:
 1. Download and share with a torrent file. Seed torrent files, so others can download it. The more seeds, the faster the downloads. Torrents that are not seeded, will become unavailable over time. Please use a secure VPN connection for your torrent tracker.
 2. Download a copy of the work to your computer to keep it.
 3. View the work in your browser, without downloading.

2020, CC BY-SA (Attribution-ShareAlike)

a feature film

reverse_engineering_2020_2021.mp4

— go to <http://www.diversions.be/downloads/03.html>

GLOSSARY

Fringe: similar to the introduction to the book accompanying the work *THE STOCK EXCHANGE* (2017-2018), I point to a negative condition. In a circumscribing effort, I insist upon the idea of another space, another approach and another criticality: a marginal space of refusal. I position this refusal not as a separation or an alternative model, but see it as an embedded, hard to maintain interaction between fringe and center. It declines romanticizing its own marginality as well as reproducing the center in a cynical move. My research insists that such an antagonistic space is not only possible, but also necessary. This necessity is demonstrated where I adopt a logic of 'art as being not only entirely fitting to the current terms of contemporary art's affirmation and distribution but also to expose the limitations of the politics occasioned in and by art' (Suhail Malik). I embrace the work's problematic and artificial ambiguity as an intentionally inadequate setting with a lot of opportunity for misunderstanding. This could easily be interpreted as an apologetic indeterminacy, but this negative element is the absence of a structuring narrative, controlling the reception or delivery (Jacques Rancière). In other words, I see this refusal to unify the center position with the marginal romanticization in a narrative structuring element as an intentional bankruptcy. It's an interrupted, incomplete narrative that loses itself in order to create an entry into the work as well as an exit strategy from the work. In my research I

show that this interruption is a methodology that highlights discursivity.

In *From White Paper To Whiteboard* (2019) this interaction between fringe and middle is researched through stakeholderism. The discussion closes off by rephrasing the question of collaboration through a reciprocal interaction. It emphasizes a space for autonomy and refusal within a collaborative interaction. It redefines collaboration as an asymmetrical effort between unequal but responsible partners. I see this as an innovative contribution to the supersymmetry of equivalence in collaboration. This redefines the necessity of the negotiation as the central narrative.

In the work *Reverse Engineering* (2020-2021) this is stipulated through the original film's B-movie format of the hard-boiled detective story and the appropriation of the whole novel and film series. Here the fringe is a productive site that allows a certain hostile takeover as a legitimate strategy for production and distribution.

This operating from the fringe is a way to compromise the narrative. I point at narratives that are not part of the scenario. I look for simultaneity. This reciprocal mode of production and distribution was prompted by looking at organizational approaches of fan fiction.

Fan fiction: my PhD started off as a critical approach to concepts connected to fan fiction: DIY, amateurism, distribution, semi-autonomous production, meta-language and dependency. Fan fiction operates with a different set of parameters that seems to be difficult, but interesting to transfer to a visual arts setting. My approach withholds looking at fan fiction directly, but seeks out certain methods and positions as productive frameworks for a visual arts practice.

Paradoxically enough, I'm not interested in fan-fiction. I don't read it and do not particularly like it. I didn't start by deep-diving into fan fiction websites such as Archive Of Our Own, fanfiction.net, etc... The idea here is to deliberately bypass fan fiction output and look at its organization. It formulates a shifted attitude towards production and distribution in the way it looks for legitimacy and value. Fan fiction uses existing material as its production site. Value is not created ex nihilo, but embedded in a specific time and space. This interaction is simultaneously deeply interconnected as well as highly autonomous in its lack of authorization. I initially learned from fan fiction that it could be interesting to shift artistic capacity from the creation of work to also include the re-enactment and the performativity of existing work. It is an indirect dialogue about what is not part of the scenario. It enfolds a work into a labyrinth. It's uncalled for and unauthorized distribution with unsound methods under imperfect conditions

in inappropriate spaces by inept producers.

But with the adoption the new information technologies, I recognized that fan fiction also was not immune to the impact of these technologies. Fan fiction used to be amateurish. It was not only not knowing how to write, but not knowing how to write fan fiction. Then the point of fan fiction shifted from imagination to socializing (Alice Yang). Thinking about community became the dominant narrative, generated through a new meta-language. Fan fiction is no longer about the content, but about the summary, the tag, the genre and the categorization. The narrative shifted oddly enough from text to image, from literature to narrative, from story to statement, from plot to information, from biography to auto-biography and from language to meta-language. And ultimately maybe from multiplication to exclusion. Working with existing material, looking at a collaborative effort and looking at distribution methods shifted again to favor a quantitative report of perimeters with centers and fringes.

This idea of readdressing existing work as raw material was researched in *THESTOCKEXCHANGE* (2017-2019). The loss of certain artistic qualities when my work entered the storage space, allowed it to function in a different way. The work in the stock simultaneously reveals and bankrupts itself. The refusal inherent to such a fringe space asked for a different interaction and finalization, a

different performance, productivity and distribution of the work.

In *From White Paper To Whiteboard* (2019) this interaction is put into a perspective of stakeholdership. I propose a more implicated interaction where responsibilities and positions are not unified in a predefined symmetric construction.

In the work *Reverse Engineering* (2020-2021) I engage with fan fiction in the most literal way. I take an existing film to write another scenario on top of it. The decision for Alphaville by Godard is motivated by its appropriation of the existing character of Lemmy Caution from a series of hard-boiled detective films, novels and radio plays. Godard takes the character (and even the original actor) to create an out-of-canon science-fiction film. This out-of-canon part lies in its switching of genres (from detective to science-fiction) as well as its subversion of the science-fiction genre itself (in black and white). Through a simple reversed chronology, this film serves as a platform, a site that is not empty. Although the existing film can be pushed to a background, it also pushes back. It simultaneously interferes and serves a final elaboration of the research topics.

Reciprocal: each of the three works, made during my research, originates as a discussion. In my understanding of collaboration, each work juxta-

poses multiple voices and positions. They keep their reciprocal status by refusing a singular and linear result as final conclusion. The collaborative here is redefined as a difficult proposition with a lot of opportunity for misunderstanding. It's an attempt at not replicating symmetric participation as a prerequisite.

In the research output, discussion is formatted as annotations produced with two contributors. This indicates that my methodology of annotations is organized as two discussions. I see the annotation as an exchange with existing work, similar to a fan fiction interaction. These annotations are not meant as an explanatory component to guide but as an act to implicate. I see them as connective fragments, a way to enter the work, not through confirmation, but through bankruptcy. They infringe by overreaching the boundaries of the work and are therefore simultaneously an exit strategy.

As a research strategy this again talks about a multiplicity of positions. It underlines this reciprocation as an important premise to my work.

THESTOCKEXCHANGE (2017-2018) is a negotiation of how to share a storage space between two artists as well as with an audience. It also differentiates between formats and functions of a space. The work points at an interaction between artistic capacities of the work and a space without automatically assuming an artistic surplus through this

interaction.

From White Paper To Whiteboard (2019) is a juxtaposition of three public lectures (by three artists) diverging from distribution as a common starting point.

Reverse Engineering (2020-2021) is a discussion with a muted partner (an existing film). The film layers off-screen characters' narratives on top of an existing film as an emancipated dependency.

Production: I specify production here as reciprocal: a production that operates on the fringes of something else without the necessity of completely acknowledging it as an authority. This interaction is simultaneously autonomous as well as deeply connected. It is similar to fan fiction.

During the research I produced three artworks. These works highlight discourse and logistical decisions as part of an artistic production. These three works set the stage, they point at issues as a set of intermediary steps during the research. They are statements during the research period.

However, these works are presented in the PhD only in an indirect way. In a secondary production annotated versions are created to outline the three works. This methodology positions the works as the off-screen parts of the PhD. They are the Mac-

Guffins or placeholders of the research.

As an intentional displaced center, these three works are not the illustration of the research. They remain on its fringe, maintaining their autonomy while at the same time informing the research. I isolate the research from the works, while still keeping them close. In this circumscribing motion, I point to things while simultaneously pointing away from them. It is a bait and switch.

As a meta-narrative, the research outcome is formatted as a digital book that describes a reference frame, an outline, the position, a curriculum, the conditions and vocabulary.

THESTOCKEXCHANGE (2017-2018) opens up my shared artwork storage as a discursive space. Fourteen events were organized with artist Kris Van Dessel. We reflected upon the events through a series of mini-lectures, one for each event. These considered notions of distribution, materiality, collaboration, time and space. Afterwards, these events and lectures were collected in a double book. On the one hand, a documentation of the events, containing the re-edited lectures. On the other hand, hard copy annotations of online contexts and references used for the events and the first book.

From White Paper To Whiteboard (2019) is a discussion written on three whiteboards with two other artists, Karina Beumer and Brenda

Tempelaar. In a public revision and edit session, we rewrite and annotate that discussion to reflect on networks, distribution and stakeholder-ship as a different collaborative practice.

Reverse Engineering (2020-2021) is a film that reflects on loosely connected positions about the future, narrativity and distribution. My film is a rereading of the film *Alphaville* by Jean-Luc Godard, which in itself displays an out of canon, fan fiction approach. Here, *Alphaville* functions as a setting for a site-specific artwork that inhabits an existing film. Through text and soundtrack an annotation of interruptions and interference develops.

Distribution: distribution might be a dominant force in our current society. Things are dispersed as fluid inventory, ordered and produced on demand. Postponing production to the last possible moment (or even indefinitely) places a lot of emphasis on the distribution moment. Production has been superseded by distribution, that no longer requires material. This bizarre Gestalt-switch from regarding the collection as a form of cultural patrimony or as specific and irreplaceable embodiments of cultural knowledge to one of eying the collection's contents as so much capital- as stocks or assets whose value is one of pure exchange and thus only truly realized when they are put in circulation (Rosalind

Krauss). As things accelerate in distribution, simultaneously additional things are dispersed in an obfuscated background. A motion blur obscures what slipstreams in distribution's wake. What is being distributed is actually piggybacking on what appears to be distributed at first glance.

Thinking about distribution was first addressed in *THESTOCKEXCHANGE (2017-2018)* where I tried to define the value of distribution and an asymmetric exchange as well as the constant bankruptcy of a brand and its capacity of capitalizing on community creation.

In *From White Paper To Whiteboard (2019)* I place distribution at the center of interaction. Here, I discuss distribution as part of a stakeholder-ship and address a reframed network as part of the artwork's artistic capacity.

In *Reverse Engineering (2020-2021)* I think about distribution, narrativity and the future via the narrator's voice-over. The circulation method of the film (i.e. as a downloadable and shareable file) also addresses distribution and a different collaborative practice.

Defining aspects of distribution are layered over my research as it ends by making the whole PhD available through a website and sharing platforms. The PhD is published by distributing the works, their annotated versions, and the digital book a downloadable set of files. This

distribution is seen as an integral part, format and conclusion to the research. This torrent format, which allows for a long tail, decentralizes distribution. It is a DIY, semi-anonymous methodology that is not curated, while at the same time functioning as a collaborative effort. It's the redistribution of existing work through annotated, overwritten, corrupted, devalued, unsound, bastard versions.

This again positions distribution as a refusal of a singular position. When distribution is inserted into the artistic decision and thinking, it not only adopts new methods (e.g. other networks, other technologies, ...), but it also affects content (e.g. different contexts, other collaborative efforts, ...) as well as other aesthetics (e.g. performativity, different immateriality-materiality relation, ...) The refusal of the singular position within a work is an intentional decision to escape the authoritarian position and narrative. So, the point is not to distribute new formats, new narratives, but to distribute a renewed critical approach. Like this I sidestep promoting new social, economic or political blueprints in favor of a heightened sense of criticality of the social, the economic and the political arena.

Annotation: artistic organization is a background layer that continuously informs my artworks. Decisions such as edition size, production process, distribution method,

collaboration, exhibition location, availability, etc... are subverted into artistic components. They indicate a certain critical approach to their social, political, economic and artistic context. Logistical questions that are often pushed aside as inconsequential or neutral are here acknowledged as moments of resistance. By placing these aspects more to the forefront, my research takes a prolonged look at that part of my artistic work. A reflective framework connecting the methodological specifics seemed necessary to question my own practice and artistic position. Constructed through annotations, three displaced works and a digital book, this framework is also important to share as research output. I see it not as a point of reference, but as a point of discussion. My goal is not to create a model illustrated with well-defined examples, but to set up a discursive setting with flawed, blurred material about narrativity, distribution and production as it relates to artistic attitudes and current social, political and economic context.

As a finalization, the research output is distributed as a downloadable set of files through a website and sharing platforms. These distribution methods are literal sites with their own specificity relating to the terms fringe, fan fiction, reciprocal, production and distribution.

The annotations are created by rewatching and rereading the works in conversation with two separate collaborators. One set of annotations is

created in discussion with Laurens Otto (independent critic and curator). In a reversal of position, I formulate a set of questions to a curator who answers from his position. These questions and annotations are published in reverse chronological order and attached to the end of the preparatory Word documents that make up a work's final stage before presentation. Like this they offer a backwards path to return to the start of the work.

A second set of annotations is made with Alicja Melzacka (curator CIAP). Here the three preparatory Word documents that make up the work's final stage before presentation are annotated with a text, a set of references and an interfering hypertext narrative.

These annotations return a reader to the moment before and write a diverging path for the work after the facts.

In keeping with the artworks' discursive set up, these annotations are ways to review, reassess and comment. The double exposure of two annotators exacerbates a fragmented, incomplete position. It refuses the singular and instead juxtaposes works as well as a multiplicity of annotations. This underlines simultaneity as a productive method and highlights the intended discursive aspects of my research and work.

These remarks, interferences and additions function as an exposé with the methodology, format and language of the annotation. What is my

definition of annotation here? When I look at Wikipedia: an annotation is extra information associated with a particular point in a document or other piece of information. It can be a note that includes a comment or explanation. Annotations are sometimes presented in the margin of book pages (Wikipedia).

The annotation is a post-scripted reflection upon an existing text as an explanatory tool. It is an interface to make things readable, to mediate. Why is this useful for my research? It installs the reflective moment in the margins of my work. Taking place after the work is done, it enters a dialogue with the work. It's an afterthought that interacts with or even disrupts the work and sets it up for an uncertain future. I use the annotation as a dispersed, marginal, interfering tool for reflection, particularly suited to mirror the reflective methodology of the PhD. In this way, it also approximates a fan fiction approach.

In a subversion, these annotations are not used as a lucid explanatory component. The mediation here is not the same as an explanation. In a discursive turn, I use the annotation as an elaboration or a rephrasing that gives opportunities for misunderstanding. It postpones the moment of completion. It casts doubts and is a way to exit the work instead of getting deeper into the work. This exit creates a fringe position to look back at the work while simultaneously looking at other things. Through the annotations I construct the PhD around a void where three

works could or should be. In an inverse move, these annotations address these three works, made during the research period, while at the same time looking away from the center. This shifted attention, allows the works to facilitate the discussion beyond the work. Similar to how a MacGuffin or placeholder is used to structure a film, it is simultaneously a void and the opposite of the empty page as a setting.

Arts are squeezed between economic value and cultural heritage. An explanatory component does not solve the problem of interpretation. An artist's supplement is not what gives us the solution, the answer, the right insight, but rather postpones the solution, the answer, the right interpretation even more (Dieter Lesage).

Here, the annotations offer a fragmented route through the work. This intentional non-linearity refuses the one-dimensional approach as an artistic position that insists on reciprocal methods, discourse and multiplicity.

REFERENCES

This bizarre Gestalt-switch from regarding the collection as a form of cultural patrimony or as specific and irreplaceable embodiments of cultural knowledge to one of eying the collection's contents as so much capital- as stocks or assets whose value is one of pure exchange and thus only truly realized when they are put in circulation

Krauss, R. (1990). The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum. October, 54, 3 // keywords: distribution

the imaginary space projected by the artist will not only emerge from the formal conditions of the contradictions of a given moment of capital, but will prepare its subjects-its readers or viewers-to occupy a future real world which the work of art has already brought them to imagine, a world restructured not through the present but through the next moment in the history of capital.

Krauss, R. (1990). The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum. October, 54, 3 // keywords: future

from a perspective firmly situated at the end of the '80s, sometimes referred to as "the roaring '80s," the idea that paying your debts makes you rich seems pathetically naive. What makes you rich, we have been taught by a decade of casino capitalism, is precisely the opposite. What makes you rich, fabulously rich, beyond your wildest dreams, is leveraging.

Krauss, R. (1990). The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum. October, 54, 3 // keywords: debt, future

how these few in depth over the full amount of space it might take to really

experience the cumulative impact of a given oeuvre. The discursive change he was imagining is, we might say, one that switches from diachrony to synchrony. The encyclopedic museum is intent on telling a story, by arraying before its visitor a particular version of the history of art.

Krauss, R. (1990). The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum. October, 54, 3 // keywords: future, narrativity

[...] we can say that to produce this "product" efficiently will require not only the break-up of older productive units [...], but will entail the increased technologization (through computer-based data systems) and centralization of operations at every level. It will also demand the increased control of resources in the form of art objects that can be cheaply and efficiently entered into circulation.

Krauss, R. (1990). The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum. October, 54, 3 // keywords: distribution

[...] the three immediate requisites of this expansion are 1) larger inventory [...]; 2) more physical outlets through which to sell the product [...] and 3) leveraging the collection (which in this case most specifically does not mean selling it, but rather moving it into the credit sector, or the circulation of capital); the collection will thus be pressed to travel as one form of indebtedness; classically, mortgaging leveraging

Krauss, R. (1990). The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum. October, 54, 3 // keywords: storage, distribution, debt

They testify to the violent dislocation, transferrals, and displacement of images

- their acceleration and circulation within the vicious cycles of audiovisual capitalism. Poor images are dragged around the globe as commodities or their effigies, as gifts or as bounty.

Steyerl, H. & Berardi, F. (2012). *The Wretched of the Screen*. Berlin, Germany: Sternberg Press // keywords: [distribution](#)

In the class society of images, cinema takes on the role of a flagship store. In flagship stores high-end products are marketed in an upscale environment. More affordable derivatives of the same images circulate as DVDs, on broadcast television or online, as poor images.

Steyerl, H. & Berardi, F. (2012). *The Wretched of the Screen*. Berlin, Germany: Sternberg Press // keywords: [derivative](#), [distribution](#)

But the economy of poor images is about more than just downloads: you can keep the files, watch them again, even reedit or improve them if you think it necessary. And the results circulate. Blurred AVI files of half-forgotten masterpieces are exchanged on semi-secret P2P platforms.

Steyerl, H. & Berardi, F. (2012). *The Wretched of the Screen*. Berlin, Germany: Sternberg Press // keywords: [distribution](#)

their situation reveals much more than the content or appearance of the images themselves: it also reveals the conditions of their marginalization, the constellation of social forces leading to their online circulation as poor images.

Steyerl, H. & Berardi, F. (2012). *The Wretched of the Screen*. Berlin, Germany: Sternberg Press // keywords: [distribution](#)

Obviously, this condition is not only connected to the neoliberal restructuring of media production and digital technology; it also has to do with the post-socialist and postcolonial restructuring of nation states, their cultures, and their archives.

Steyerl, H. & Berardi, F. (2012). *The Wretched of the Screen*. Berlin, Germany: Sternberg Press // keywords: [distribution](#)

On the one hand, the economy of poor images, with its immediate possibility of worldwide distribution and its ethics of remix and appropriation, enables the participation of a much larger group of producers than ever before. But this does not mean that these opportunities are only used for progressive ends.

Steyerl, H. & Berardi, F. (2012). *The Wretched of the Screen*. Berlin, Germany: Sternberg Press // keywords: [distribution](#)

Poor images are poor because they are heavily compressed and travel quickly. They lose matter and gain speed. But they also express a condition of dematerialization, shared not only with the legacy of conceptual art but above all with contemporary modes of semiotic production.

Steyerl, H. & Berardi, F. (2012). *The Wretched of the Screen*. Berlin, Germany: Sternberg Press // keywords: [immaterial](#), [narrativity](#)

This flattening-out of visual content - the concept-in-becoming of the images - positions them within a general informational turn, within economies of knowledge that tear images and their captions out of context into the swirl of permanent capitalist deterritorialization.

Steyerl, H. & Berardi, F. (2012). *The Wretched of the Screen*. Berlin, Germany: Sternberg Press // keywords: [narrativity](#)

Then, however, the dematerialized art object turns out to be perfectly adapted to the semiotization of capital, and thus to the conceptual turn of capitalism.

Steyerl, H. & Berardi, F. (2012). *The Wretched of the Screen*. Berlin, Germany: Sternberg Press // keywords: [immaterial](#), [narrativity](#)

On the one hand, it operates against the fetish value of high resolution. On the other hand, this is precisely why it also ends up being perfectly integrated into an information capitalism thriving on compressed attention spans, on impression rather than immersion, on intensity rather than contemplation, on previews rather than screenings.

Steyerl, H. & Berardi, F. (2012). *The Wretched of the Screen*. Berlin, Germany: Sternberg Press // keywords: [narrativity](#), [future](#)

The poor image is no longer about the real thing - the originary original. Instead, it is about its own real conditions of existence: about swarm circulation, digital dispersion, fractured and flexible temporalities. It is about defiance and appropriation just as it is about conformism and exploitation. In short: it is about reality.

Steyerl, H. & Berardi, F. (2012). *The Wretched of the Screen*. Berlin, Germany: Sternberg Press // keywords: [distribution](#), [future](#)

[...] with the decisive role played by the culture industries in the capitalist process of valorization, the cultural and

artistic terrain has become of strategic importance. Indeed, artistic and cultural production is vital for capital reproduction. This is due to the increasing reliance of Post-Fordist capitalism on semiotic techniques in order to create the modes of subjectivation which are necessary for its reproduction.

Gielen, P. (2013). *Institutional attitudes: Instituting art in a flat world*. Valiz // keywords: [value](#), [distribution](#), [narrativity](#)

Cinema has long since been preparing us for a dystopian future it knows to be real. It's already going short.

Unknown Source // keywords: [future](#), [debt](#)

Since 2008, Vidokle has been working on Time/Bank, an ongoing initiative that enables groups and individuals to bypass money as a measure of value and instead trade time and skills for anything, including food.

Thompson, N. (2014). <https://creativimereports.org/2012/10/17/an-interview-with-anton-vidokle> // keywords: [future](#), [value](#)

The internet frames the world for its user, but it does not reveal its own framing. That opens a possibility for the exhibition of art, and, more generally, for data, that circulates on the internet. Such a form of exhibition is able to thematize the internet's hardware and software, thus revealing its hidden mechanisms of distribution and presentation.

Groys, B. (2018) <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/94/219462/curating-in-the-post-internet-age> // keywords: [distribution](#)

This is to say that artists on the internet

use the means of production and distribution prescribed by the internet to be compatible with protocols that are usually employed to spread information.

Groys, B. (2018) <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/94/219462/curating-in-the-post-internet-age> // keywords: *distribution, prescriptive*

[...] the artistic use of the means of communication presupposes the suspension, or even annulment, of information, which in the context of art means a total absorption of content by form. However, in the context of the internet, the form remains identical for all communication, thus immunizing content from this absorption.

Groys, B. (2018) <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/94/219462/curating-in-the-post-internet-age> // keywords: *narrativity, placeholder*

We all know the substantial role that the “linguistic turn” played in the emergence and development of conceptual art.

Groys, B. (2018) <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/94/219462/curating-in-the-post-internet-age> // keywords: *narrativity*

But the new orientation towards meaning and communication did not make art somehow immaterial or make its materiality less relevant, nor did its medium dissolve into message.

Groys, B. (2018) <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/94/219462/curating-in-the-post-internet-age> // keywords: *narrativity, immaterial*

There is a growing body of evidence that information technology, far from creating a new and stable form of capitalism, is dissolving it: corroding market mechanisms, eroding property rights and

destroying the old relationship between wages, work and profit.

Mason, P. (2017). *Postcapitalism: A guide to our future*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux. // keywords: *distribution*

[...] it is simply a matter of time before a generation not weaned on paper and chemicals sees the manufactured bubble of “art photography” for a what it is, and begins to explore the potential of an inclusive, affordable distribution network and its inherently interesting formal qualities for presentation and distribution.

Klein, A. & Cotton, C. (2010). *Words without pictures*. New York: Aperture, pp. 58 // keywords: *distribution*

Hal Foster (2010) summarizes the tenor of agreement among the contributors by stating that ‘the category of “contemporary art” is not a new one. What is new is the sense that, in its very heterogeneity, much present practice seems to float free of historical determination, conceptual definition, and critical judgment’.

Malik, S. & Phillips, A. (2010). *The Wrong of Contemporary Art : Aesthetics and Political Indeterminacy*. // keywords: *indeterminacy*

this ‘critical art’ range across modernism, from John Heartfield to Martha Rosler, Krzysztof Wodiczko and Hans Haacke. Such work is premised upon the assumption that the viewer is incapable of recognizing the relations between image circulation, power and capital (for example) and seeks to lead her or him to recognize (better yet) the horrors of the world (war, capital, misogyny, xenophobia, etc.).

Malik, S. & Phillips, A. (2010). *The Wrong of Contemporary Art : Aesthetics and Political Indeterminacy*. // keywords: *distribution*

a ‘tension’ between, on the one hand, a logic that maintains the separation of art from other kinds of sensory experience – all the more to have political effectivity through its autonomy from the domination of life by capitalism and so on – and, on the other, a logic that pushes art towards ‘life’ in which it becomes fully integrated as an effective and direct form of activity

Malik, S. & Phillips, A. (2010). *The Wrong of Contemporary Art : Aesthetics and Political Indeterminacy*. // keywords: *distribution*

The doubling in Meckseper’s work with the spectator’s informed or ‘emancipated’ position distinguishes it from the previous generation of critical art artists: it is the absence of a structuring narrative controlling the reception or delivery of these images in relation to the vitrine of objects that makes it exemplary of aesthetics-art.

Malik, S. & Phillips, A. (2010). *The Wrong of Contemporary Art : Aesthetics and Political Indeterminacy*. // keywords: *narrativity*

aesthetics-art observes the principle of equality that is for Rancière ‘solely’ what occasions politics in that it is equality that is instantiated by ‘whatever breaks the tangible configuration’ of a police order. That the principle of equality is the occasion of politics is understood in more familiar terms when it is rendered as the bringing community and non-community together.

Malik, S. & Phillips, A. (2010). *The Wrong of Contemporary Art : Aesthetics and Political In-*

determinacy. // keywords: *collaboration*

For aesthetics-art, the disestablishment of the account of the logos or the more general sensorium by the repartition of the sensible is assured not only by the ‘free play’ and ‘gap’ between poiesis and aisthesis but also by the absence of any narrative that binds these two aspects of the work to one another in any inevitable way.

Malik, S. & Phillips, A. (2010). *The Wrong of Contemporary Art : Aesthetics and Political Indeterminacy*. // keywords: *narrativity*

It is important to stress that in Rancière’s conceptualization of politics such an indeterminacy of political particularity is not a shortcoming of art.

Malik, S. & Phillips, A. (2010). *The Wrong of Contemporary Art : Aesthetics and Political Indeterminacy*. // keywords: *indeterminacy*

the ‘origin’ of politics is for Rancière not the principle of equality itself but its encounter with the police order since ‘it has no place or objects of its own’ (1999: 29). It cannot, as a matter of logic: if it did, it would have exactly the differentiation and hierarchy, be the kind of organizational principle, that it undoes.

Malik, S. & Phillips, A. (2010). *The Wrong of Contemporary Art : Aesthetics and Political Indeterminacy*. // keywords: *narrativity*

[...] a common sense of contemporary art as irreducibly complex, non-particular and indeterminate, whose cogency as an aesthetico-political undertaking is given by Rancière’s logic of art, which can then be understood to give an exact,

precise and lucid account of contemporary art in its criterialess heterogeneity.

Malik, S. & Phillips, A. (2010). *The Wrong of Contemporary Art: Aesthetics and Political Indeterminacy*. // keywords: **indeterminacy**

has given to artists and their mini-demonstrations, their collections of objects and traces, their dispositifs of interaction, their in situ or other provocations, a substitutive political function. **Knowing whether these 'substitutions' can reshape political spaces or whether they must be content with parodying them is without doubt an important question of our present.**

Malik, S. & Phillips, A. (2010). *The Wrong of Contemporary Art: Aesthetics and Political Indeterminacy*. // keywords: **placeholder**

make themselves seen and heard in the voicing of a claim; this claim defines a wrong and demands a share of the common good in the name of the whole community. **By making themselves seen and heard, the political subjects transform a previously depoliticized space of "circulation" or "moving-along" into a political space,** "a space for the appearance of a subject: the people, the workers, the citizens

Lampert, M. (2016). *Beyond the politics of reception: Jacques Rancière and the politics of art*. *Continental Philosophy Review*, 50(2), 181-200 // keywords: **distribution**

Thus art sets up a utopian promise which it is powerless to fulfill; **the artwork must remain an empty promise of a possible utopian future. As such, it can inspire—but, as we said above with respect to "committed" art, this inspiration cannot be predicted nor instrumentalized.**

Lampert, M. (2016). *Beyond the politics of reception: Jacques Rancière and the politics of art*. *Continental Philosophy Review*, 50(2), 181-200 // keywords: **future**

Aesthetics and politics therefore overlap in their concern for the distribution and sharing out of ideas, abilities and experiences to certain subjects – what Rancière calls *le partage du sensible*. In this framework, it is not possible to conceive of an aesthetic judgement that is not at the same time a political judgement – a comment on the 'distribution of the places and of the capacities or incapacities attached to those places'.

Bishop, C. (2012). *Artificial hells: Participatory art and the politics of spectatorship*. London: Verso Books. // keywords: **distribution**

artists and scholars always keep an eye **on developing 'transferable skills' for a future in the 'knowledge economy'**. In other words, the contemporary university seems increasingly **to train subjects for life under global capitalism, initiating students into a lifetime of debt, while coercing staff into ever more burdensome forms of administrative accountability and disciplinary monitoring.**

Bishop, C. (2012). *Artificial hells: Participatory art and the politics of spectatorship*. London: Verso Books. // keywords: **future, debt**

[...] the completion of the report, **which seems to be foiled at every 'narrative turn, has been left indefinitely delayed ('However hard you try it's always tomorrow')**, while at other moments one has the sense that the text of Discussion

Island might be that of the finished report itself, whose content is nothing more than the narration of its own frustrated (in)completion.

Roberts, B. (2012). *Burnout: Liam Gillick's Post-Fordist Aesthetics*. *Art History*, 36(1), 180-205 // keywords: **narrativity, postponement, future**

Gillick reveals his inclination towards a Gilles Deleuze-inspired **conception of the global neoliberal order as a space of unrestricted and unpredictable material and immaterial flows (of information, bodies, time and space)**; an 'intensive multiplicity' that will continually thwart our best rational attempts to track it.

Roberts, B. (2012). *Burnout: Liam Gillick's Post-Fordist Aesthetics*. *Art History*, 36(1), 180-205 // keywords: **narrativity, immaterial**

Maurizio Lazzarato argues that **the labour of communication is today all but utterly subsumed within a capitalist logic of equivalence and exchange**, directly productive of surplus-value, and the more transparent it is the better it enacts this logic.

Roberts, B. (2012). *Burnout: Liam Gillick's Post-Fordist Aesthetics*. *Art History*, 36(1), 180-205 // keywords: **narrativity, indeterminacy, distribution**

(The related noun, 'discourse', emphasizes the regularity of a system or exchange of meaning, and lacks the adjective's connotations of disorder and short-circuiting.) By way of the discursive mode, both Gillick's writing and visual practice aim **to be as elusive and slippery as their ever-displaced and displacing object, the financialized flows of capital itself.**

Roberts, B. (2012). *Burnout: Liam Gillick's Post-Fordist Aesthetics*. *Art History*, 36(1), 180-205 // keywords: **narrativity, distribution, indeterminacy**

As he states: '[the] discursive framework projects a problem just out of reach, and this is why it can also confront a socio-economic system that bases its growth upon "projections".'

Roberts, B. (2012). *Burnout: Liam Gillick's Post-Fordist Aesthetics*. *Art History*, 36(1), 180-205 // keywords: **narrativity, postponement**

There was a political bottom line to this work that incorporated a rather rarefied populism, **the hope that by dematerialising the art object we could make it accessible to a far broader audience. But, in so doing, we forgot that the audience has to want it after it is made available.**

Lippard, L. R. (2007). *Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ...* Berkeley: Univ. of California Press // keywords: **immaterial, distribution**

In 1977, Adorno wrote that **"it is not the office of art to spotlight alternatives, but to resist by its form alone the course of the world** which permanently puts a pistol to men's heads"

Gordon-Nesbitt, R. (2007). <https://shiftyparadigms.wordpress.com/policy/false-economies-time-to-take-stock> // keywords: **distribution**

As art cannot be dissociated from the conditions of its production and distribution, what happens when critique intersects with institutions, which embrace values that form the basis of that critique, must also be examined.

Gordon-Nesbitt, R. (2007). <https://shiftyparadigms.wordpress.com/policy/false-economies-time-to-take-stock> // keywords: **distribution**

In other words, **'using the label 'didactic'**

conceals the fear that something might truly be learned from art, in the sense that it might be a useful source of information.

Gordon-Nesbitt, R. (2007). <https://shiftyparadigms.wordpress.com/policy/false-economies-time-to-take-stock> // keywords: **distribution**

The Euro-wide realisation that artists are being exploited

as flexible knowledge- or brain-workers has led to claims of 'flexploitation' and demands for 'flexicurity' and prompted a consideration of (admittedly relatively privileged) artists as precarious workers,

Gordon-Nesbitt, R. (2007). <https://shiftyparadigms.wordpress.com/policy/false-economies-time-to-take-stock> // keywords: **distribution**

With 'professionalism' increasingly replacing criticality in art schools, the only viable option that confronts most emerging artists, in many cases before they have even graduated, is to tailor their work to the art market.

Gordon-Nesbitt, R. (2007). <https://shiftyparadigms.wordpress.com/policy/false-economies-time-to-take-stock> // keywords: **narrativity**

the commissioning institution (the museum or gallery) turns to an artist as a person who has the legitimacy to point out the contradictions and irregularities of which they themselves disapprove... Subversion in the service of one's own convictions finds easy transition into subversion for hire; 'criticism turns into spectacle'

Gordon-Nesbitt, R. (2007). <https://shiftyparadigms.wordpress.com/policy/false-economies-time-to-take-stock> // keywords: **narrativity**

Financialization not only refers to the incredible power of the financial sector over economics and politics. It also refers to the creep of financial ideas, metaphors, narratives and measurements throughout society and culture more broadly.

Haiven, M. (2014). *Cultures of financialization: Fictitious capital in popular culture and everyday life*. Palgrave Macmillan // keywords: **narrativity**

approaches to finance that see it as purely an imaginary realm of speculation do an injustice to the ways that financialization both preys and relies on the everyday dimensions of debt, credit and abstract monetary flows, and the ways these are stitched into the world of meaning, representation, ideology and the imagination.

Haiven, M. (2014). *Cultures of financialization: Fictitious capital in popular culture and everyday life*. Palgrave Macmillan // keywords: **narrativity, distribution**

description of financial wealth as 'fictitious capital,' suggesting that finance is a social fiction whose reproduction and power depends on and drives the proliferation of social fictions throughout financialized societies

Haiven, M. (2014). *Cultures of financialization: Fictitious capital in popular culture and everyday life*. Palgrave Macmillan // keywords: **narrativity, distribution**

the discourse of creativity over the past forty years (and especially the past fifteen) cannot be separated from the rise of financialization and the power of speculative capital. Ideas of 'creative capitalism,' 'creative destruction,' the 'creative class,' 'creative cities,' and the

economic potential of creativity are germane to an era dominated by financial speculation and the globalization of financial markets.

Haiven, M. (2014). *Cultures of financialization: Fictitious capital in popular culture and everyday life*. Palgrave Macmillan // keywords: **distribution**

[...] finance capital, while a massive and destructive force in economic, social, political and cultural life, also possesses the seeds of its own negation and its replacement. He notes the importance of reclaiming concepts like 'security,' 'debt,' 'creativity,' 'speculation' and 'play' from financialization.

Haiven, M. (2014). *Cultures of financialization: Fictitious capital in popular culture and everyday life*. Palgrave Macmillan // keywords: **narrativity**

The historical forms of the novel and, to some extent, the cinema, embody an analogic mode of temporality, one in which the narrative progresses from beginning to end in a text whose closure is determined and finite. The novelist is writing a story that must finish. The tale will not continue; the protagonists will not survive. The reader and the author, too, will go their separate ways.

Huyghe, P. (2013) *Press Kit Centre Pompidou* // keywords: **narrativity**

The fragmentation and dispersion of time zones results in an intensification of the present, obscuring the polarities of being and time, self and other. This is the time of the storyteller rather than the historian – of collective experience (shared imaginary) and of invented traditions (collaborative rituals)

Huyghe, P. (2013) *Press Kit Centre Pompidou* //

keywords: **narrativity**

The calendar future is the projection, from the present, of the past order of events. It is the possibility of treating the present as a past moment among others from a fictional point created by cutting out a segment of time past, which has been transferred from the other side of the present. The future is only the greatest non-determination possible; the maximum of absence.

Huyghe, P. (2013) *Press Kit Centre Pompidou* // keywords: **future, narrativity, immaterial**

[...] the core of capitalist production itself — the movement toward resource elimination as the necessary correlation to the expansion of capital.

Aranda, J., Wood, B. K. & Vidokle, A. (2015). *The Internet does not exist*. Berlin: Sternberg Press // keywords: **immaterial**

What the Soviet avant-garde of the twentieth century called productivism — the claim that art should enter production and the factory — could now be replaced by circulationism. Circulationism is not about the art of making an image, but of postproducing, launching, and accelerating it. It is about the public relations of images across social networks, about advertisement and alienation [...]

Aranda, J., Wood, B. K. & Vidokle, A. (2015). *The Internet does not exist*. Berlin: Sternberg Press // keywords: **distribution**

A diagram, as Deleuze and Guattari render the idea, is not a representational sketch of a single arrangement but rather an "abstract machine" that is generative

of a real that is yet to come.

Aranda, J., Wood, B. K. & Vidokle, A. (2015). *The Internet does not exist*. Berlin: Sternberg Press // keywords: **future**

What is astonishing in this is that the depletion of petroleum is naturalized as empirical fact — as if it had already happened — and in design can only be relevant by factoring in that process. This is the project's pragmatic realism. A coming decimated landscape — the end point of a process so natural that it can be accounted for before it is even set in motion become a determinant factor in the architectural production of the present.

Aranda, J., Wood, B. K. & Vidokle, A. (2015). *The Internet does not exist*. Berlin: Sternberg Press // keywords: **prescriptive**

[...] in the world in which the project has disappeared as a reference point, other logics take effect — logics of a vastly more liberated form of entrepreneurship: The exploitation of bodies, performance, and "Liveness" replaces the exploitation of labour that has previously produced objects. Objects whose Conditions of production could be negotiate.

Aranda, J., Wood, B. K. & Vidokle, A. (2015). *The Internet does not exist*. Berlin: Sternberg Press // keywords: **immaterial**

[...] and another looking beyond, to a technoscientific future always almost here, that is, to a postmodernism always in need of experimentation and hence infinitely deferred. In his writings on the postmodern, Lyotard would often qualify this wavering as an "anamnesis",

a psychoanalytic working-through (durcharbeiten) in the future anterior, "in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done".

Hui, Y., Birnbaum, D. & Broeckmann, A. (2015). *30 years after Les immatériaux*. Lüneburg: Me-son Press // keywords: **future, postponement**

The saturation of data simply means the neutralisation of events. The future subordinates the present, because, when the future is already determined (memorised), the present loses the privilege of being a moment that can not be grasped in itself. The tension of the event is simply broken in that the event is always an occurrence between a "not yet" (pas encore) of the future and an "already no more" (déjà plus) of the past.

Hui, Y., Birnbaum, D. & Broeckmann, A. (2015). *30 years after Les immatériaux*. Lüneburg: Me-son Press // keywords: **future, prescriptive**

Conventional notions of originality, authenticity, objecthood, narrative, and style were supplanted by appropriation, duplication, distribution, juxtaposition, and randomness.

Hui, Y., Birnbaum, D. & Broeckmann, A. (2015). *30 years after Les immatériaux*. Lüneburg: Me-son Press // keywords: **narrativity, distribution, indeterminacy**

What the age of immaterials promises, then, is a complexification of matter "in which energy comes to be reflected, without humans necessarily getting any benefit from this". And since immaterialisation, through its generalised coding and redistribution of material affect, also reconfigures our relation to the cultural and the aesthetic, it implies "a profound crisis of aesthetics

and therefore of the contemporary arts".

Hui, Y., Birnbaum, D. & Broeckmann, A. (2015). *30 years after Les immatériaux*. Lüneburg: Me-son Press // keywords: **immaterial, distribution**

The future is already here, it's just not very evenly distributed.

Gibson, W. (2018). <https://quoteinvestigator.com/2012/01/24/future-has-arrived> // keywords: **future, distribution**

[...] 272 of Karagarga's 21.399 users have downloaded one of the two available versions of the film, which appear to have been dubbed from a VHS copy. [...] Such unofficial forms of distribution are a central means by which experimental film and video circulate today.

Balsom, E. (2017). *After uniqueness: A history of film and video art in circulation*. New York: Columbia University Press // keywords: **distribution**

This logic of emergence – as opposed to the logic of an origin – points back to the analytic cure: nothing preconditions what emerges in the course of the narrative, and nothing else comes in to explain it.

Bourriaud, N., & Butler, E. (2016). *The exform*. London: Verso // keywords: **narrativity**

This is what ideology does: it assures social cohesion by assigning individuals predetermined places, telling the 'story' (histoire) everyone is duty-bound to believe. But 'not to indulge in storytelling' means more than just changing the course of the narrative: it means breaking the mould where the truth is fabricated

Bourriaud, N., & Butler, E. (2016). *The exform*. London: Verso // keywords: **collaboration, prescriptive, narrativity**

Althusser observes, language (le verbe) already constitutes an abstraction: 'We would have to be able to speak without words, that is, to show. This indicates the primacy of the gesture over the word, of the material trace over the sign.'

Bourriaud, N., & Butler, E. (2016). *The exform*. London: Verso // keywords: **immaterial**

The work of art operates on both directions of time: turning towards the future, it generates its own causal chain; plunging into the past, it modifies the form and content of History.

Bourriaud, N., & Butler, E. (2016). *The exform*. London: Verso // keywords: **future**

"The undecidable character of the work of art renders all teleology null and void: assigning any historical finality at all to art means denying the idea of movement and replacing it with a scenario scripted in advance. Assigning an origin involves a similar negation, for art's historical foundations "are in perpetual movement, too;

Bourriaud, N., & Butler, E. (2016). *The exform*. London: Verso // keywords: **indeterminacy, prescriptive, transition**

They declare the political and economic framework in which we are living to be immutable and definitive: a scenario in which the décor and props undergo perpetual (and superficial) transformation – but nothing else changes.

Bourriaud, N., & Butler, E. (2016). *The exform*. London: Verso // keywords: **narrativity**, **transi-
tion**

Jacques Rancière seems to draw an analogous conclusion when he writes that 'the relationship between art and politics [is] not a passage from fiction to reality, but a relationship between two ways of making a fiction.'

Bourriaud, N., & Butler, E. (2016). *The exform*. London: Verso // keywords: **narrativity**

[...] its central problematic, is organizing multiplicity: relations outweigh objects, branches points, and passages presence; paths prove more significant than the stations along the way. And so, inasmuch as they are caught up in dynamic contexts, forms naturally tend to exude (secréter) narratives: concerning first their production, then their diffusion.

Bourriaud, N., & Butler, E. (2016). *The exform*. London: Verso // keywords: **narrativity**, **distribu-
tion**

The problem can be summarized simply enough: Archive has grown extremely relevant in our time. Databases have matured into new instruments of power. But the search engines that turn data into archive are endlessly transitioning (always in migration, unlike old-fashioned 'archives'). They are risky; they often pose as liberation, but are often more like mob rule governed by wealth and risk capitalism.

Klein, N. (2011) <https://www.pagesmagazine.net/en/articles/imaginary-futures-and-the-archive> // keywords: **distribution**, **narrativity**

A frequent image: that of the ship Argo (luminous and white), each piece of which the Argonauts gradually replaced, so that they ended with an entirely new ship, without having to alter either its name or its form."

Barthes, R. (1994). *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*. University of California Press // keywords: **placeholder**

Projection is at the heart of neoliberal structures. It forms the base of attempts to predict potential future benefits to be gained through the process of rendering financial and economic relationships into abstract constructs.

Gillick, L. (2016). *Industry and Intelligence*. Columbia University Press // keywords: **future**, **narrativity**

The suggestion here, then, is that ASAP is more possible and problematic than infinite projection. If you defer continually, nothing happens, nothing changes. Everything will be fine, but you will flounder within a state of permanent projection. The difference between projection and displacement is political.

Gillick, L. (2016). *Industry and Intelligence*. Columbia University Press // keywords: **postpone-
ment**

ideologies of 'the end of history' and 'investment in the future' emerge, respectively, out of the 'new economy' of immaterial labour and the deferred temporality of financial speculation.

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **future**, **postponement**, **im-
material**

the post-1973 period must be understood not as the manifestation of a post-historical futurity but rather as evidence of capitalism's tendency towards crisis.

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **future**, **crisis**

Ronald Reagan's 1988 description of the 'new economy': In the new economy, human invention increasingly makes physical resources obsolete. We're breaking through the material conditions of existence to a world where man creates his own destiny.

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **immaterial**

Faith in Greenspan's 'virtuous cycle' depended on believing that these economic omens did not, contrary to all existing economic history, herald looming trouble.

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **narrativity**

In a 1987 speech, for instance, Reagan suggested that 'Those who are investing in the future of our economy are worried that some roadblock may be put in the way of that future.' Describing selfregulating markets as self-sustaining producers of value, Reagan implies that capitalists invest not in the market but in the future itself.

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **narrativity**, **language**, **future**

It allowed late-capitalist rhetoric to deny

that productive labour was fleeing the US for the global south and being replaced by casualized, precarious forms of administrative and service labour. The language of 'investing in the future', in turn, corresponded to a kind of 'temporal fix' enabled by financialization. Given the extent of economic volatility, profitability had to be located in a just-barely deferred tomorrow.

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **narrativity**, **immaterial**, **lan-
guage**, **future**

The abbreviated, abstract temporality of the derivative - a literal 'investment in the future' - appears as the abolition of alienation, and money is now able to separate itself both from the production process and from the material existence of the commodity

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **narrativity**, **derivative**, **immaterial**

the derivative - like the discourse of deferral that emerges alongside it - is the perfect instance of what Chris Nealon has described as the 'messianism' of contemporary economics, in which 'more and more intellectual energy is spent on theorizing the future, until the present comes to look insignificant except as [the futures'] prefiguration

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **narrativity**, **language**, **future**, **prescriptive**, **derivative**

Facing a volatile financial sector increasingly dependent on asset bubbles and debt - and a US working class dependent

on unsustainably easy credit - the **rhetic of investing in the future** imagined a form of **value dependent not on the economic production of the present but on the abstract potentiality of the future.**

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **narrativity**, **debt**, **language** **future**

In their own end-of-history moment, Hardt and Negri likewise suggest that limits to **production no longer exist: 'immaterial property' . . .** such as an idea or an image or a form of communication, is **infinitely reproducible** . . . Many[resources], particularly the newest elements of the economy, do not operate on a logic of scarcity'

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **immaterial**, **distribution**

"Understanding the particular terms and logics of this ideology - particularly understanding the ways in which it **re-narrated** deindustrialization as a 'new economy' and financialization as a system in which **belief** could magically produce its own rewards ! shows us the way in which **our fictions of history increasingly diverge from material historical facts.**

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **narrativity**

For both Reagan and Fukuyama, **the past ceases to limit the future** and 'invention', rather than the debased realm of physical production, enables a new 'abundance' of value creation.

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp.

78-93 // keywords: **future**, **narrativity**

Alan Greenspan, then Chairman of the Federal Reserve, would describe the 'virtuous cycle' of economic growth in explicitly Fukuyamian terms, noting that 'it is possible that **we have moved "beyond history"**

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **future**

The temporality imagined by the discourse of 'investing in the future' mirrors the temporality of financial instruments themselves, particularly derivatives. **Derivatives** have been described by Robin Blackburn as both the most characteristic and **the most 'temporalized' of all financial instruments ! they monetize time by separating it from the object** (or asset) with which it is associated

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **future**, **derivative**, **immaterial**

Because the value of commodities is **no longer driven by productive labour but rather by the 'intensity of desire'**, the labour theory of value is, for them, inadequate to the forms of value that characterize late capitalism

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **narrativity**

a new form of labour has emerged: a labour that is **immaterial**, affective, creative, and decidedly 'post-industrial'.

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **immaterial**

By accepting the symptomatic discourse of '**dematerialization**', both post-structuralist theories of immaterial labour and ideological encomiums to the 'end of history' reimagine US de-industrialization as the salutary **transition** to a new mode of production.

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **immaterial**, **transition**

"in **leftist theories of the 'post-capitalist' nature of 'peer-to-peer creativity'**: here too, we see the end of scarcity and of class-struggle, as a '**revolutionary**' new mode of value production does not contest but rather **adopts the labour structures of a new cognitive workforce.**

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **immaterial**, **distribution**, **transition**

Key to these arguments is the assertion that **value itself is now 'linguistic'**: drawing on Saussure's homology between the differential logic of price and the differential logic of sign systems, scholars like Jean-Joseph Goux **describe a new 'regime of value' that is, like language, 'arbitrary, differential and aleatory'**

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **narrativity**, **distribution**, **indeterminacy**

In his economic **forecast**, likewise, he (Fukuyama) anticipates the emergence of a '**technologically driven capitalism**' that is ultimately '**free of internal contradictions.**'

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp.

78-93 // keywords: **distribution**, **future**

To describe where investors were putting **surplus capital as 'the future'** has a certain truth, since FIRE investments are a form of what Peter Gowan (1999) calls 'money-dealing money': **investments in anticipated future profits or capital gains, and in various forms of speculative risk-hedging and risk exploiting.**

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **future**

As Gopal Balakrishnan puts it, in the late-twentieth century 'capitalism's culture became **an organized semblance of world-historic dynamism concealing and counteracting a secular deceleration in "the real economy"**. This false dynamism! the ostensible innovations possible in the new immaterial economy ! seemed liberated from the material conditions of the past.

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **distribution**, **acceleration**

In the end-of-history ideology of the new economy, technological development **creates endless and abundant value by drawing on human creativity without requiring human labour.** For those **investing in the future of a speculative economy, the creativity belongs to the market itself, which appears to fulfil its own hopes, to magically produce its own imagined future.**

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: **narrativity**, **immaterial**, **future**

“The language of investing in the future, like the derivative itself, assumes a future at once deferred and near, a future whose endless profitability is seemingly secured by our faith in its magical possibility.

Annie McClanahan (2013): *Investing in the Future*, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 6:1, pp. 78-93 // keywords: *derivative, narrativity, future, postponement*

it might appear that the traditional form of art is obsolete. If it has value, it is as something from a past way of life, before information technology took over. But actually, what appears to be happening is stranger than that. Let's look at some of the special ways in which art as rarity interacts now in novel ways with information as plenty, producing some rather striking opportunities to create value.

Wark, M. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/77/77374/digital-provenance-and-the-artwork-as-derivative/> // keywords: *distribution, narrativity*

information about the artwork circulating in the world that makes it collectible. It is also the noise. As with any other financial instrument in a portfolio, the artwork in a collection gains and loses value at the volatile edge between information and noise.

Wark, M. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/77/77374/digital-provenance-and-the-artwork-as-derivative/> // keywords: *distribution, narrativity*

It is the reproduction of the work, electronically rather than mechanically, that perversely enough makes it rare. The image of the GALA work in the TV show is what Hito Steyerl calls a poor image, a wretched image, compressed and degraded and available on the internet for

anyone. And its provenance comes, not from the singular place of its creation and persistence, but from the ubiquity of the image of it. It's a kind of network or distributed provenance, perhaps.

Wark, M. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/77/77374/digital-provenance-and-the-artwork-as-derivative/> // keywords: *distribution, immaterial*

Far from making the work of art obsolete, the reproducible image gives it a new kind of value. It is not quite the case that the original and the copy become indistinguishable. But it is the case that their relationship can be reversible. The copy can precede the original. You see a reproduction of something and that makes you want to go see the thing of which it is the copy.

Wark, M. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/77/77374/digital-provenance-and-the-artwork-as-derivative/> // keywords: *distribution, immaterial, derivative*

The artwork is a derivative of its simulation, or rather of its simulations, plural. This is the way the actual, particular artwork can still work as a sort of hedge. An artwork is a risky proposition. It might in the long run turn out to be worth no more than any random bit of painted canvas. But if the artwork can be a portfolio of different kinds of simulation of itself, it is possible to manage the risk

Wark, M. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/77/77374/digital-provenance-and-the-artwork-as-derivative/> // keywords: *immaterial, derivative, future*

what is most interesting about the relation between art and information is the reciprocal relation between art as rarity and information as ubiquity. It turns out

that ubiquity can be a kind of distributed provenance, of which the artwork itself is the derivative.

Wark, M. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/77/77374/digital-provenance-and-the-artwork-as-derivative/> // keywords: *narrative, distribution, derivative*

But the thing to pay attention to is that the copy creates the provenance of the original, not the other way around. The copy not only precedes but authenticates the original.

Wark, M. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/77/77374/digital-provenance-and-the-artwork-as-derivative/> // keywords: *narrativity, derivative, distribution*

The artwork, like any other financial instrument, needs nothing to exist beyond its documentation.

Wark, M. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/77/77374/digital-provenance-and-the-artwork-as-derivative/> // keywords: *narrativity, derivative*

Unlike Hito Steyerl, I don't think art is a currency. I think it's a derivative, which is not quite the same thing as a currency. A currency can store value or act as a means of exchange. A derivative does something different. It manages and hedges risk. What we need, then, is a theory of art as a derivative.

Wark, M. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/77/77374/digital-provenance-and-the-artwork-as-derivative/> // keywords: *narrativity, derivative*

The real must be fictionalized to be thought. This [Kantian/Lacanian proposition should be distinguished from any discourse] positive or negative" accord-

ing to which everything is narrative with alterations between grand narratives and minor narratives. The notion of narrative locks us into oppositions between the real and artifice where both the positivists and the constructionists are lost.

Büscher-Ulbrich, D. (2020). *Politics and the Production of Space: Downtown and Out with Rancière and Lefebvre*. // keywords: *narrativity*

The underlying and important assumption in modern day distribution is the asymmetry of the arrangement. For most entrepreneurs distribution involves piggybacking on another organization with much greater momentum.

Kawasaki, Guy (2006). https://guykawasaki.com/the_art_of_dist_1/ // keywords: *distribution*

A viral product could have no distribution, and a distributed product might not be viral.

Kawasaki, Guy (2006). https://guykawasaki.com/the_art_of_dist_1/ // keywords: *distribution*

The most logical distribution partners have "adjacent" businesses that truly need each other to function well.

Kawasaki, Guy (2006). https://guykawasaki.com/the_art_of_dist_1/ // keywords: *distribution, collaboration*

The right perspective for distribution partners is: Let's both make money. For sure, it's not: How can I ensure that we make a ton of money and stick it to our partner? I have never seen a case where only partner makes money. Either everyone makes money or no one does.

Kawasaki, Guy (2006). https://guykawasaki.com/the_art_of_dist_1/ // keywords: *distribu-*

Further down the food chain, media art, like Bitcoin, tries to manage the contradictions of digital scarcity by limiting the illimitable.

Steyerl, H. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/69732/if-you-don-t-have-bread-eat-art-contemporary-art-and-derivative-fascisms/>
// keywords: **distribution**

As to the encryption part in art: art is often encrypted to the point of sometimes being undecryptable. Encryption is routinely applied, even or especially if there is no meaning whatsoever.

Steyerl, H. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/69732/if-you-don-t-have-bread-eat-art-contemporary-art-and-derivative-fascisms/>
// keywords: **indeterminacy**

Art's economies divert investments from sustainable job creation, education, and research and externalize social cost and risk. They bleach neighborhoods, underpay, overrate, and peddle excruciating baloney.

Steyerl, H. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/69732/if-you-don-t-have-bread-eat-art-contemporary-art-and-derivative-fascisms/>
// keywords: **distribution, debt, narrativity**

Contemporary art is just a hash for all that's opaque, unintelligible, and unfair, for top-down class war and all-out inequality.

Steyerl, H. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/69732/if-you-don-t-have-bread-eat-art-contemporary-art-and-derivative-fascisms/>
// keywords: **narrativity, indeterminacy, debt**

Is art a currency? Investor Stefan Simchowicz thinks so. He wrote with uncompromising clarity about the post-Brexit era: "Art will effectively continue its structural function as an alternative currency that hedges against inflation and currency depreciation." Have silver paintings become a proxy gold standard? How did it come to this?

Steyerl, H. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/69732/if-you-don-t-have-bread-eat-art-contemporary-art-and-derivative-fascisms/>
// keywords: **derivative**

Quantitative easing eroded currency stability and depleted common resources, entrenching a precarious service economy with dismal wages, if any, eternal gigs, eternal debt, permanent doubt, and now increasing violence.

Steyerl, H. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/69732/if-you-don-t-have-bread-eat-art-contemporary-art-and-derivative-fascisms/>
// keywords: **debt**

Derivative fascisms continue to grow, wherever disenfranchised middle classes fear (and face) global competition—and choose to both punch down and suck up to reactionary oligarchies.

Steyerl, H. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/69732/if-you-don-t-have-bread-eat-art-contemporary-art-and-derivative-fascisms/>
// keywords: **derivative**

investment in art seems somehow more real. Moreover, as alternative currency, art seems to fulfill what Ethereum and Bitcoin have hitherto only promised. Rather than money issued by a nation and administered by central banks, art is a networked, decentralized, wide-spread system of value.

Steyerl, H. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/69732/if-you-don-t-have-bread-eat-art-contemporary-art-and-derivative-fascisms/>
// keywords: **narrativity, distribution**

It will be more of the same, just much worse: less pay for workers, less exchange, fewer perspectives, less circulation, and even less regulation, if such a thing is even possible. Inconvenient art will fly out the window—anything non-flat, non-huge, or remotely complex or challenging.

Steyerl, H. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/69732/if-you-don-t-have-bread-eat-art-contemporary-art-and-derivative-fascisms/>
// keywords: **distribution, immaterial**

If art is an alternative currency, its circulation also outlines an operational infrastructure.

Steyerl, H. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/69732/if-you-don-t-have-bread-eat-art-contemporary-art-and-derivative-fascisms/>
// keywords: **derivative, distribution**

—just because the infrastructure or technology exists—would be like expecting the internet to create socialism or automation to evenly benefit all humankind. The internet spawned Uber and Amazon, not the Paris Commune. The results may be called "the sharing economy," but this mostly means that the poor share with the rich, not vice versa.

Steyerl, H. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/69732/if-you-don-t-have-bread-eat-art-contemporary-art-and-derivative-fascisms/>
// keywords: **immaterial, distribution**

this autonomy is not solitary, unlinked, or isolated. Nor will it come about by some fantasy of progress in-built into

technology. On the contrary it can only emerge through both a conscious effort and exchange among diverse entities. It's an autonomy that works through circulation, transformation, and alchemy.

Steyerl, H. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/69732/if-you-don-t-have-bread-eat-art-contemporary-art-and-derivative-fascisms/>
// keywords: **distribution**

This bloated, entitled, fully superfluous, embarrassing, and most of all politically toxic overhead is subsidized by means of free labor and life time, but also by paying attention to blingstraction and circulating its spinoffs, thus creating reach and legitimacy.

Steyerl, H. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/69732/if-you-don-t-have-bread-eat-art-contemporary-art-and-derivative-fascisms/>
// keywords: **debt, derivative, narrativity**

Refusing sponsorship of this sort might be the first step towards shaking the unsustainable and mortifying dependency on speculative operations that indirectly increase authoritarian violence and division. Spend free time assisting colleagues, not working for free for bank foundations.

Steyerl, H. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/69732/if-you-don-t-have-bread-eat-art-contemporary-art-and-derivative-fascisms/>
// keywords: **derivative, collaboration**

Art's organizing role in the value-process—long overlooked, downplayed, worshipped, or fucked—is at last becoming clear enough to approach, if not rationally, than perhaps realistically.

Steyerl, H. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/69732/if-you-don-t-have-bread-eat-art-contemporary-art-and-derivative-fascisms/>
// keywords: **derivative, narrativity**

The core of its value is generated less by transaction than by endless negotiation, via gossip, criticism, hearsay, haggling, heckling, peer reviews, small talk, and shade. The result is a solid tangle of feudal loyalties and glowing enmity, rejected love and fervent envy, pooling striving, longing, and vital energies.

Steyerl, H. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/69732/if-you-don-t-have-bread-eat-art-contemporary-art-and-derivative-fascisms/> // keywords: **narrativity**

In short, the value is not in the product but in the network;

Steyerl, H. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/69732/if-you-don-t-have-bread-eat-art-contemporary-art-and-derivative-fascisms/> // keywords: **derivative, immaterial**

not in gaming or predicting the market but in creating exchange. Most importantly, art is one of the few exchanges that derivative fascists don't control—yet.

Steyerl, H. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/69732/if-you-don-t-have-bread-eat-art-contemporary-art-and-derivative-fascisms/> // keywords: **future, distribution**

But as a reserve system for dumb, mean, and greedy money, art's social value (auto)deconstructs and turns into a shell operation that ultimately just shields more empty shells and amplifies fragmentation and division.

Steyerl, H. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/69732/if-you-don-t-have-bread-eat-art-contemporary-art-and-derivative-fascisms/> // keywords: **indeterminacy, distribution**

products that are in low demand or have low sales volume can collectively make

up a market share that rivals or exceeds the relatively few current bestsellers and blockbusters, if the store or distribution channel is large enough.

Grinda, F. (2006). <https://fabricegrinda.com/the-long-tail/> // keywords: **distribution, long tail**

The key factor that determines whether a sales distribution has a Long Tail is the cost of inventory storage and distribution.

Grinda, F. (2006). <https://fabricegrinda.com/the-long-tail/> // keywords: **distribution, long tail**

implications for culture and politics. Where the opportunity cost of inventory storage and distribution is high, only the most popular products are sold. But where the Long Tail works, minority tastes are catered to, and individuals are offered greater choice. In situations where popularity is currently determined by the lowest common denominator, a Long Tail model may lead to improvement in a society's level of culture.

Grinda, F. (2006). <https://fabricegrinda.com/the-long-tail/> // keywords: **distribution, long tail, derivative**

The impossible withdrawal of conceptual art from the commodity, tried to step away from the materiality of the art work. As many examples show this was destined to be incorporated in a capitalist structure. It just expanded formats instead of dismissing them. Now what seems more interesting is the way they reframed the distribution of those commodities.

Unknown Source // keywords: **immaterial, distribution**

In an attempt to define what he saw as the 'emerging Creative Age', Florida claimed that creativity was 'the defining feature of economic life', and he proceeded to lay out a formula for economic growth by focussing on the construction of creative centres and cities.

Hill, W. (2016). *Hipster Aesthetics: Creatives with no Alternative*. *Electronic Melbourne Art Journal*, (9) // keywords: **narrativity, distribution**

In Debord's 1967 account of the Society of the Spectacle, he argued the central role of the commodity in capitalism as analysed by Marx had been superseded by the spectacle, where social relations between people are mediated by images rather than by money.

Hill, W. (2016). *Hipster Aesthetics: Creatives with no Alternative*. *Electronic Melbourne Art Journal*, (9) // keywords: **narrativity, distribution**

Bourriaud's project amounts to a theory of advanced art in the era of a putatively new service economy, a context within which, it is claimed, art abandons its prior (industrial) object forms and shifts to the immaterial form of services

Hill, W. (2016). *Hipster Aesthetics: Creatives with no Alternative*. *Electronic Melbourne Art Journal*, (9) // keywords: **immaterial**

Emerging out of a recession in Britain that began in 1989, the economic downturn fostered a D.I.Y. spirit of entrepreneurialism, and compelled emerging British artists to re-build British art in a more up-to-date image, rejecting what they saw as its elitist and provincialist legacy.

Hill, W. (2016). *Hipster Aesthetics: Creatives with no Alternative*. *Electronic Melbourne Art Journal*, (9) // keywords: **distribution, narrativity**

In Michel Foucault's lectures on biopolitics in the late 1970s, he presciently perceived the neoliberal ideal to be a new way in which people are made into subjects. Whereas in its classical liberalist form homo oeconomicus – the principle that people try to maximize their gains – represented the basis of governmental action, Foucault sees neoliberalism as a form of governance in which people effectively govern themselves.

Hill, W. (2016). *Hipster Aesthetics: Creatives with no Alternative*. *Electronic Melbourne Art Journal*, (9) // keywords: **narrativity**

Beyond the commercial exploitation of subcultural distinctiveness, what connects the YBAs and the cool hunting phenomenon is this idea of a cultural vernacular, where everyday culture in all of its diversity, particularly street culture, becomes a site for individual, creative and non-conformist identity – what Thomas Frank named in 1997 as the rise of the rebel consumer.

Hill, W. (2016). *Hipster Aesthetics: Creatives with no Alternative*. *Electronic Melbourne Art Journal*, (9) // keywords: **narrativity, language**

This other abstraction is the derivative, via which each of the component flows in commodification can be subdivided, valued, combined and sold again and again in the form of a financial instrument. On top of the quantitative abstraction of the energetics of production is a quantitative abstraction of the information about all of the possible future states of that system.

Wark, M. (2017, April 09). *After Capitalism, the Derivative*. // keywords: **derivative, distribution, narrativity, future**

Dance is a site for thinking about how the body in movement makes value. In a

factory, bodies move, products extrude, but then those commodities are alienated from their maker and enter circulation, and end up inside circulation in forms of credit and debt. Dance is different.

Wark, M. (2017, April 09). *After Capitalism, the Derivative*. // keywords: *distribution, future*

Risk management in professional fields, from health to security to energy to finance generate value from the unknown. Knowledge is now so abundant it can't all be used, and its excess can generate disaster. Knowledge is a kind of credit, but the unknown is a kind of debt. The industrialization of knowledge is like the transformation of farmers into workers. There's a loss of a particular connection to means of production.

Wark, M. (2017, April 09). *After Capitalism, the Derivative*. // keywords: *future*

Since expert knowledge can't fix 'economy,' non-knowledge has its day. Non-knowledge comes in a few flavors. The unknown known is, or was, discoverable by expertise. The known unknown is imaginable but impossible to verify. The unknown unknown is a generative absence of knowledge confronting risk and uncertainty. The burden of enduring all of these shifts onto individuals. "Non-knowledge rules in the world risk society." (47) Non-knowledge generates derivative logics. These prosper now that non-knowledge is a force of production.

Wark, M. (2017, April 09). *After Capitalism, the Derivative*. // keywords: *narrativity, derivative*

Not only is the totality of derivatives bigger than the commodity economy, it is

prior to it.

Wark, M. (2017, April 09). *After Capitalism, the Derivative*. // keywords: *derivative, distribution*

Derivatives are a kind of "meta-capital." Admittedly, "stuff still gets made and sold, even if through thickets of debt and credit"

Wark, M. (2017, April 09). *After Capitalism, the Derivative*. // keywords: *derivative, future*

The horror of Groundhog Day is not being stuck in today, but knowing the future is set.

Unknown Source // keywords: *future*

Bait-and-Switch Credits The program's opening credits promise wondrous things — its images of stupendous beauty, righteous butt-kicking, and noble heroes make it clear what's to come in the story. Except, once you get into the program, you never see those things again — and sometimes, you see the exact opposite.

<https://vtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/BaitAndSwitchCredits> // keywords: *narrativity*

Moreover, due to computer technology, many sectors that had long remained on the margins of the industrial world—small traders, education, healthcare, personal services—are now adopting the management practices of global corporations, and are subject to accounting standards that come from industry.

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: *distribution*

Newspapers with falling circulations have taken to publishing weekly or monthly supplements to bring in money from the luxury-goods sector, in an attempt to buttress themselves against the economic downturn.

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: *distribution, derivative*

These publications typically combine advertisements for luxury goods — watches, cars, jewellery, perfumes — with articles on cutting-edge life-style products, desirable locations and celebrity artists or designers; features and advertisements are presented seamlessly, as inextricable components of the same world.

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: *narrativity*

These magazines pay increasing attention not only to the objects themselves, but to the spheres in which they are designed and circulated; to the human beings surrounding them—designers, couturiers, chefs, antique dealers, hairstylists, collectors and curators—and the remarkable 'personalities' who link their name and image to these new objets d'art (as in the 'celebrity branding' of clothes or perfume).

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: *narrativity, distribution*

The rise of exceptional objects is flanked by another phenomenon: heritage creation. The heritage brand can now be stamped on buildings, monuments or

whole districts, as in 'France's most beautiful villages,' with listed areas then subject to 'protection' measures, often involving the fabrication of more or less fictional histories

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: *narrativity*

Any object can be enriched, however ancient or modern it is, and the enrichment can be physical—for example, exposing beams in an old house—or cultural, through the use of a narrative device that highlights certain of the object's qualities, thereby producing and formatting differences and identities, which are primary resources of enrichment economies.

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: *narrativity*

In enrichment economies, these status distinctions are often a function of property rights, especially for intellectual property: a limited quantity of rights-holders co-exist with a much larger number of people performing fragmentary tasks.

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: *derivative, immaterial*

We will begin with objects themselves and the modalities by which their value is established, paying close attention to the creation and destruction of value and those moments in the 'social life of things' when they change hands, whether for money or in the form of inheri-

tances or donations.

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: **value**, **distribution**

‘Value’, on the other hand, serves as the justification for prices, which may be offered prior to purchase, as in the case of an advertisement, or in response to the questioning of a price. Value is thus essentialist: **it refers to properties said to be inherent to the object in question; but it remains conjectural as long as the object has not passed the exchange test and found its price.**

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: **narrativity**, **future**, **distribution**

We will examine three of these: the ‘standard form’, on which industrial production is based; the ‘collection form’, which is used to varying degrees by enrichment economies; and the ‘asset form’, whereby **things are valued not in terms of their physical, aesthetic or historical properties, but strictly in terms of the price they are expected to fetch.**

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: **immaterial**, **narrativity**, **future**

The collection form places little emphasis on labour time [...]. **But it must take account of other costs that are often very substantial, such as conservation (storage, maintenance, restoration, insurance, etc.).** So far as waste is concerned, the collection form reverses the trajectory of objects established by the standard form: **instead of decreasing in worth as**

they grow older, they become more valuable.

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: **long tail**

Obviously, the acquisition of such commodities can serve another purpose, that of conspicuous consumption, drawing attention to one’s wealth; but they often seem to be purchased and **stockpiled without ever being displayed** before the eyes of others—or even their owner’s eyes, in the case of large-scale collectors.

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: **storage**, **immaterial**

But **a given artefact is only deemed to be a work of art after it has entered the world in which such objects are exchanged;** the obvious sign of this elevation is when the object finds its place in a collection.

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: **distribution**

The selection of one artefact from among a mass of similar items destined for oblivion—the normal fate of objects in the standard form, as we have seen—means that those who view it are asked to do so **through the eyes of posterity, treating the work as if it already belonged to the past.**

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: **future**

Building **a collection is rarely a solitary activity;** it nearly always implies the existence of a community of collectors who trade with one another, and thereby establish a system of principles governing the field as a whole.

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: **collaboration**

objects can always circulate according to principles that are neither those of the standard nor the collection form, but instead conform to constraints that could be called the ‘asset’ form, in the sense of items bought purely for the opportunity they offer to accumulate capital. **Here, the only relevant property of the object is its price.**

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: **distribution**, **value**

But other differences do come into play with the asset form, especially the ease of converting the object into hard cash: **its liquidity.**

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: **immaterial**

The first is the **transportability** of the object (or its title deed). The second is the ability to conduct transactions discreetly—to buy or sell the asset without attracting the attention of tax inspectors, for example. The last concerns the existence of **reliable tools of assessment** that can be used over a wide geographical area, so that the object can be bought or sold for a similar price in many different

places.

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: **distribution**, **narrativity**

assets that promise future profits **whose forecast takes into account a moderate risk cost,** on condition they are traded in the short term—for example, because their circulation would benefit from mimetic effects favouring speculation, as is often the case for financial assets, though also for works of art; in other words, **the preference for present profits wins out over the future.**

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: **narrativity**, **derivative**

Money earned from trading in highly volatile assets can be ‘banked’ in this fashion: **put into reserve through investments that seem particularly able to resist the test of time,** even if they offer only moderate revenue.

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: **postponement**

The process is abstract, insofar as enrichment is evaluated in accounting terms: **profits accumulated over a given period are calculated as the difference between two appraisals made at two different times;** it is therefore impossible to achieve the kind of satiation that might be expected if wealth were instead focused on consumption needs, including expensive, high-end goods.

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The eco-*

However, to grasp the changes taking place within capitalist economies, we must extend analysis of commodities beyond the world of manufacturing and get to grips with other ways of establishing the value of products that remain oriented towards exchange — as commodities are in the work of Marx — even if they are not manufactured along industrial lines.

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: **distribution**

In the case of the asset form, power over relevant differences is held by people who, regardless of whether or not they are owners—ratings agencies, for example—estimate value based on narrative projections about the future, especially about future profits: when they possess significant capital resources, these projections can become a factor in their own realization.

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles, Assets*. *New Left Review*, vol. 98, p. 31-54 // keywords: **narrativity, future, prescriptive**

This terrain, it will be conceded, is not conducive to the emergence of new social and political forces strong enough to confront unequal wealth distribution and capable of redeploying value-determination arrangements to more egalitarian ends. Nor does it suggest a landscape of social peace.

Boltanski, L. & Esquerre, A. (2016). *The economic life of things: Commodities, Collectibles,*

Narrative shapes and guides us in the constellation of desires and phenomenological “intentions” that frame our embodied experience; economic, political, ideological and religious narratives inform us at every moment of our lives.

Potter, B. D. (2014). <https://theotherjournal.com/2014/11/03/recycled-images-relational-aesthetics-and-the-sound-of-music> // keywords: **narrativity**

To be an artist is not only to be aware of the “immaterial” scenarios that manifest themselves in the objects, texts, images, and, above all, relationships which pervade our lives but also to use these “precarious structures” as tools in the pursuit of “particular narrative spaces.”

Potter, B. D. (2014). <https://theotherjournal.com/2014/11/03/recycled-images-relational-aesthetics-and-the-sound-of-music> // keywords: **immaterial**

[...] art figured prominently as an asset class used to store value and avoid taxes and restitution claims. The Panama Papers thus provided an unprecedented outlook on the deep connections between art and offshore finance, whose covert operations were instrumental in the institutionalization of the contemporary global art market in the 1990s. This demonstrates how art is not immune to market dynamics, which are in fact penetrating “ever more deeply into the texture of human life” (Cooper and Konings, 2015: 242),

Lotti, L. (2016). *Contemporary art, capitalization and the blockchain*, 2(2): 96-110 // keywords: **value**

Acknowledging the fundamental role that automated computational methods play in both cultural and financial dynamics, I engage instead with the algorithmic infrastructure underlying both global finance and contemporary art’s “informational milieu” – the “dynamic process of exchange among artist, artwork, and network” (Moss, 2013: para. 1) that encompasses cultural and technical, but also institutional and financial relations.

Lotti, L. (2016). *Contemporary art, capitalization and the blockchain*, 2(2): 96-110 // keywords: **distribution**

According to Bryan and Rafferty (2006), the logic of derivatives proceeds according to a double movement of temporal binding and blending that erases the differences between money, capital, and commodities. In doing so, it flattens the heterogeneity of things and relations onto the computational plane of the market

Lotti, L. (2016). *Contemporary art, capitalization and the blockchain*, 2(2): 96-110 // keywords: **derivative**

My argument is not that this is due to contemporary art’s stylistic choices or metaphorical appropriations; rather, it is because valuation methods in contemporary art increasingly mirror liquidity as the architectural principle of contemporary finance and foundation of capitalization. This, in turn, is directly related to the computational infrastructure that underlies both financial markets and contemporary art’s informational milieu.

Lotti, L. (2016). *Contemporary art, capitalization and the blockchain*, 2(2): 96-110 // keywords: **value**

The way in which the liquid logic of derivatives impacts the cultural realm is particularly evident in the post-Internet condition of contemporary art, affecting notions of objecthood, authorship, and the cycle of production, distribution, and consumption in art.

Lotti, L. (2016). *Contemporary art, capitalization and the blockchain*, 2(2): 96-110 // keywords: **derivative, immaterial, distribution**

through complex correlations among datasets that involve Google Trends and Instagram data, in addition to “Internet presence, auction results, market saturation, market support and CV data – education, representation, et cetera” (Goldstein, 2015: para. 58). In other words, ArtRank treats artists’ names as commodities, and sorts them according to hype on the basis of the circulatory logic of the market. As Bloomberg puts it: “ArtRank gives art the stock market treatment”

Lotti, L. (2016). *Contemporary art, capitalization and the blockchain*, 2(2): 96-110 // keywords: **narrativity, distribution**

In this way, ArtRank exacerbates the condition of ‘Artists Without Art’ identified by Brad Troemel et al. (2012: para. 4). This is the condition by which artists are clustered into homogenous groups according to the activity of sorting, ranking, and matching algorithms, ultimately turning contemporary art into self-referential closed loops, so that “the artist-viewer and other artist-viewers are caught in a sphere of perpetual reception and distribution”

Lotti, L. (2016). *Contemporary art, capitalization and the blockchain*, 2(2): 96-110 // keywords: **distribution**

At the same time, the condition of Artists Without Art is matched by 'Art Without Artists,' which indicates the subsumption of art into 'the Curatorial' (Vidokle, 2010). This refers not only to the making of exhibitions, but also to the increasingly determining role of curators as intermediaries between artists and institutions, foregrounding the tendency to "automate the process of art production to render artists redundant"

Lotti, L. (2016). *Contemporary art, capitalization and the blockchain*, 2(2): 96-110 // keywords: *derivative*

From this perspective, the 'value' of contemporary art becomes subsumed into pricing mechanisms and loses any ontological primacy. Stefan Heidenreich's (2016: para. 15) comment on this dynamic is particularly revealing: "Assessing a 'real' value [of contemporary art] is impossible, because reality is an effect of the transaction".

Lotti, L. (2016). *Contemporary art, capitalization and the blockchain*, 2(2): 96-110 // keywords: *prescriptive, distribution*

Dash observes that "physical artists" have traditionally availed themselves of two instruments to "invent value around their work". These are the provenance of an artwork, and the verification of its originality. In the digital realm, artists cannot use these devices, with important repercussions for the value, format, and visibility of their work.

Lotti, L. (2016). *Contemporary art, capitalization and the blockchain*, 2(2): 96-110 // keywords: *derivative*

By pursuing the dream of authenticity and institutional autonomy, Monegraph

points to a future in which art may indeed become a currency, but one that is privatized, hyperfinancialized, and hypercapitalized. Monegraph "uses cryptography to bring meatspace scarcity to online art", thereby repositing the immaterial commodity paradigm characteristic of liquid assets identified by Amato and Fantacci.

Lotti, L. (2016). *Contemporary art, capitalization and the blockchain*, 2(2): 96-110 // keywords: *future, immaterial*

Instead of activating supposedly inactive spectators, significant political art works "suspend the ordinary coordinates of sensory experience and reframe the network of relationships between spaces and times, subjects and objects, the common and the singular" in order to transform "the landscape of the possible."

Kanouse S. (2007), *Tactical Irrelevance: Art and Politics at Play*, *Democratic Communiqué* 21, No. 2, pp. 23 - 39 // keywords: *distribution*

It was not important to me whether people at the events "got" the theoretical arguments the project as a whole proposed concerning the constitution of public space, understood the project in light of traditions of socially-engaged art, or thought it to be art at all. What was more important was that participants engaged an ordinary space—such as the mall—in new ways, as in bartering, that reflected their shifting expectations about how that space and the people in it could operate in the future.

Kanouse S. (2007), *Tactical Irrelevance: Art and Politics at Play*, *Democratic Communiqué* 21, No. 2, pp. 23 - 39 // keywords: *distribution, future*

[...] a discourse of ethical absolutism whereby collaborative work is always "better" than non-collaborative work because of the intentions and process of the artists, regardless of how it actually functions aesthetically. She charges that this critical framework unconsciously reinscribes a Judeo-Christian morality of self-sacrifice "in which art is valued for its truthfulness and educational efficacy rather than for inviting us...to confront darker, more painfully complicated considerations of our predicament."

Kanouse S. (2007), *Tactical Irrelevance: Art and Politics at Play*, *Democratic Communiqué* 21, No. 2, pp. 23 - 39 // keywords: *collaboration, value*

For cultural theorist Randy Martin, this shift has been marked by finance's imperative to comprehensively map the future through sophisticated techniques for measuring and manipulating probability. The derivative is the archetypal "technology" of this paradigm, one that allows for the commodification of future uncertainty as present day "risk" and so thrusts capital's reach toward eternity.

Haiven, M. (2013). *The Creative and the Derivative*, *Radical History Review*, #118 // keywords: *future, derivative*

The revenue-starved state treats the welfare of its citizens less in terms of any democratic responsibility and more through the financial logic of risk-management, a kind of economic triage. Health, education and civil infrastructure projects comes to be assessed for their returns on investment and their potential to be "leveraged" toward economic growth or future government savings.

Haiven, M. (2013). *The Creative and the Derivative*, *Radical History Review*, #118 // keywords: *future*

Whereas debt before this time was seen as a moral and social ill and the mark of bad character, by the 1970s, with the rise of new forms of student debt, mortgages, credit cards and car loans, debt was a normal and expected part of economic subjectivity.

Haiven, M. (2013). *The Creative and the Derivative*, *Radical History Review*, #118 // keywords: *debt*

Debt's normalcy and its ubiquity reveal the cultural dimensions of financialization—a process made commonplace as the ideas and tropes of financial management have seeped into our everyday parlance.

Haiven, M. (2013). *The Creative and the Derivative*, *Radical History Review*, #118 // keywords: *debt, narrativity*

The appearance of "creativity" as the partner of destruction here is no accident, or more accurately, it is no accident that Schumpeter's initially pessimistic and academic term became a crucial element of financial self-representation.

Haiven, M. (2013). *The Creative and the Derivative*, *Radical History Review*, #118 // keywords: *narrativity*

To demonstrate their quality to investors, firms need to prove not merely profitability but also innovation, a capacity to stay ahead of the curve, to constantly revolutionize their means of production (and distribution, and sales). Financialization, then, drives and is driven by an economy pathologically addicted to the performance of creativity.

Haiven, M. (2013). *The Creative and the Derivative*, *Radical History Review*, #118 // keywords: *narrativity*

We are not only encouraged to imagine our subjectivities as “portfolios” of traits, skills, experiences, and competencies that we might rent out, but we are also expected to see this as the expression of inherent creativity. Here, the model portfolio is not only that of the financier but also of the artist.

Haiven, M. (2013). *The Creative and the Derivative*, *Radical History Review*, #118 // keywords: *narrativity*

Finance permits the commodification of these creative commons indirectly, selling individuals and firms access to unique and attractive neighborhoods along with the promise of higher future returns as property prices increase. While capital cannot directly capture the neighborhood’s common creativity, financialization offers a means by which capital can derive value and help shape this collective creative labor.

Haiven, M. (2013). *The Creative and the Derivative*, *Radical History Review*, #118 // keywords: *narrativity, future, derivative*

[...] the implications of the derivative go deeper. At the heart of the derivative is the imperative to manage risk, to leverage small investments into huge returns by making more bets on expected windfalls, and a logic of “preemptive” futurity, which seeks to transform future uncertainty into present-day risk commodities.

Haiven, M. (2013). *The Creative and the Derivative*, *Radical History Review*, #118 // keywords: *derivative, future, prescriptive*

The derivative represents a new contagious logic or pattern of social and institutional cognition and organization,

one that spreads through and influences various social, economic, and governmental spheres.

Haiven, M. (2013). *The Creative and the Derivative*, *Radical History Review*, #118 // keywords: *distribution*

Discounting recognizes that both individuals and societies prefer to get benefits sooner and to postpone any costs until later. Discounting gives lesser weight to benefits and costs that occur in future years. Thus, for each year that either costs or benefits are delayed, their value is reduced by the annual discount rate.

Goklany, I. (n.d.). *Discounting the future*. (2009), https://www.academia.edu/4232816/Discounting_the_future // keywords: *future*

Human agency and experience lose their primacy in the complexity and scale of social organization today. The leading actors are instead complex systems, infrastructures and networks in which the future replaces the present as the structuring condition of time. As the political Left and Right struggle to deal with this new situation, we are increasingly wholly pre-empted and post-everything.

Avanessian, A. & Malik, S. (2016). *The time complex: Post-contemporary*. Miami, FL: Publications. // keywords: *distribution, future*

Complex societies — which means more-than-human societies at scales of sociotechnical organization that surpass phenomenological determination — are those in which the past, the present, and the future enter into an economy where maybe none of these modes is primary, or where the future replaces the present

as the lead structuring aspect of time.

Avanessian, A. & Malik, S. (2016). *The time complex: Post-contemporary*. Miami, FL: Publications. // keywords: *future*

the politics of preemptive strikes, which is also a new phenomenon of the 21st century. Brian Massumi and others have written about the kind of recursive truth they produce: you bomb somewhere and then afterwards you will find the enemy you expected. You produce a situation that was initially a speculation.

Avanessian, A. & Malik, S. (2016). *The time complex: Post-contemporary*. Miami, FL: Publications. // keywords: *prescriptive*

Rather, what happens in the present is based on a preemption of the future, and of course this is also linked to what has been called a tendency towards premediation in the media.

Avanessian, A. & Malik, S. (2016). *The time complex: Post-contemporary*. Miami, FL: Publications. // keywords: *future, prescriptive*

While the “pre-” indexes a kind of anticipatory deduction of the future that is acting in the present — so that future is already working within the now, again indicating how the present isn’t the primary category but is understood to be organized by the future

Avanessian, A. & Malik, S. (2016). *The time complex: Post-contemporary*. Miami, FL: Publications. // keywords: *prescriptive, future*

The derivative is a clear example of how profits are not extracted on the basis of production or from fixed capital like equipment, plant and construction, all of which depend upon the history of in-

vestment, nor from variable capital like labor or wages.

Avanessian, A. & Malik, S. (2016). *The time complex: Post-contemporary*. Miami, FL: Publications. // keywords: *derivative*

Derivatives are, in Natalia Zuluaga’s phrase, a specific kind of future mining, an extraction from the future in the present. But this mining of the future in the present changes what the present is. The present isn’t the one that you started with.

Avanessian, A. & Malik, S. (2016). *The time complex: Post-contemporary*. Miami, FL: Publications. // keywords: *derivative, future*

The point is rather that “experience” of time and the construction of something like chronological time are only effects of grammar, not a representation of the direction of time or of what time really is. It’s the tenses in language that create an ontology of chronological time for us, and we live this time as the illusion of having a biography.

Avanessian, A. & Malik, S. (2016). *The time complex: Post-contemporary*. Miami, FL: Publications. // keywords: *future, language*

contemporary art is integrated into neoliberalism’s enrichment of experience for its elite beneficiaries, and those thereabouts, in a way that promotes change and revision. This is part of the complexity of the speculative present of neoliberal capitalist development: it looks like a personal good, an enrichment of experiment by aestheticization, by promoting change while maintaining a certain stability.

Avanessian, A. & Malik, S. (2016). *The time complex: Post-contemporary*. Miami, FL: Publications.

cations. // keywords: **narrativity**

Contemporary art is both a symptom and surrogate of that futurelessness, with its constant celebration of experience: aesthetic experience, criticality, presentness and so on.

Avanessian, A. & Malik, S. (2016). *The time complex: Post-contemporary*. Miami, FL: Publications. // keywords: **future**, **placeholder**

The impossible withdrawal of conceptual art from the commodity, tried to step away from the materiality of the art work. As many examples show this was destined to be incorporated in a capitalist structure. It just expanded formats instead of dismissing them. Now what seems more interesting is the way they reframed the distribution of those commodities.

Unknown Source // keywords: **immaterial**, **distribution**

The definition of artistic activity occurs, first of all, in the field of distribution.

Price, S. (2008). *Dispersion*. New York, NY: 38th Street. // keywords: **distribution**

However radical the work, it amounts to a proposal enacted within an arena of peer-review, in dialogue with the community and its history. Reflecting on his experience running a gallery in the 1960s, Dan Graham observed: "if a work of art wasn't written about and reproduced in a magazine it would have difficulty attaining the status of 'art'."

Price, S. (2008). *Dispersion*. New York, NY: 38th Street. // keywords: **distribution**

The genius of the bourgeoisie manifests itself in the circuits of power and money that regulate the flow of culture.

Price, S. (2008). *Dispersion*. New York, NY: 38th Street. // keywords: **distribution**

Distributed media can be defined as social information circulating in theoretically unlimited quantities in the common market, stored or accessed via portable devices such as books and magazines, records and compact discs, videotapes and DVDs, personal computers and data diskettes.

Price, S. (2008). *Dispersion*. New York, NY: 38th Street. // keywords: **distribution**

If distribution and public are so important, isn't this, in a sense, a debate about "public art"? It's a useful way to frame the discussion, but only if one underlines the historical deficiencies of that discourse, and acknowledges the fact that the public has changed.

Price, S. (2008). *Dispersion*. New York, NY: 38th Street. // keywords: **distribution**

a popular album could be regarded as a more successful instance of public art than a monument tucked away in an urban plaza. The album is available everywhere, since it employs the mechanisms of free market capitalism, history's most sophisticated distribution system to date.

Price, S. (2008). *Dispersion*. New York, NY: 38th Street. // keywords: **distribution**

An art grounded in distributed media can be seen as a political art and an art of communicative action, not least be-

cause it is a reaction to the fact that the merging of art and life has been effected most successfully by the "consciousness industry". The field of culture is a public sphere and a site of struggle, and all of its manifestations are ideological.

Price, S. (2008). *Dispersion*. New York, NY: 38th Street. // keywords: **distribution**, **narrativity**

With more and more media readily available through this unruly archive, the task becomes one of packaging, producing, reframing, and distributing; a mode of production analogous not to the creation of material goods, but to the production of social contexts, using existing material. Anything on the internet is a fragment, provisional, pointing elsewhere. Nothing is finished.

Price, S. (2008). *Dispersion*. New York, NY: 38th Street. // keywords: **distribution**, **narrativity**, **placeholder**

One must return to Fountain, the most notorious and most interesting of the readymades, to see that the gesture does not simply raise epistemological questions about the nature of art, but enacts the dispersion of objects into discourse.

Price, S. (2008). *Dispersion*. New York, NY: 38th Street. // keywords: **distribution**, **narrativity**

"The definition of artistic activity occurs, first of all, in the field of distribution."

— Marcel Broodthaers

Price, S. (2008). *Dispersion*. New York, NY: 38th Street. // keywords: **distribution**

Their appearance often simply gestures toward a theoretically engaged position, such that a representation of space or

structure is figured as an ipso facto critique of administered society and the social, while engagement with design codes is seen as a comment on advertising and the commodity.

Price, S. (2008). *Dispersion*. New York, NY: 38th Street. // keywords: **narrativity**

[...] all the traditional criteria of aesthetic judgment - of taste and of connoisseurship - have been programmatically voided. The result of this is that the definition of the aesthetic becomes on the one hand a matter of linguistic convention and on the other the function of both the legal contract and an institutional discourse (a discourse of power rather than taste).

Buchloch, B. (1990). *Conceptual Art 1962-1969*. October, vol. 55, pp. 105-143 // keywords: **narrativity**

[...] the Conceptual Art came to displace even that image of the mass-produced object and its aestheticized forms in Pop Art, replacing an aesthetic of industrial production and consumption with an aesthetic of administrative and legal organization and institutional validation.

Buchloch, B. (1990). *Conceptual Art 1962-1969*. October, vol. 55, pp. 105-143 // keywords: **narrativity**, **distribution**

What Conceptual Art achieved at least temporarily, however, was to subject the last residues of artistic aspiration toward transcendence (by means of traditional studio skills and privileged modes of experience) to the rigorous and relentless order of the vernacular of administration.

Buchloch, B. (1990). *Conceptual Art 1962-1969*. October, vol. 55, pp. 105-143 // keywords: **narrativity**

Paradoxically, then it would appear that Conceptual Art truly became the most significant paradigmatic change of post-war artistic production at the very moment that it mimed the operating logic of late capitalism and its positivist instrumentality in an effort to place its auto-critical investigations at the service of liquidating even the last remnants of traditional aesthetic experience.

Buchloch, B. (1990). *Conceptual Art 1962-1969*. October, vol. 55, pp. 105-143 // keywords: *distribution*

Or worse yet, that the Enlightenment-triumph of Conceptual Art — its transformation of audiences and distribution, its abolition of object status and commodity form — would most of all only be shortlives, almost immediately giving away to the ghostlike reappearances of (prematurely?) displaced painterly and sculptural paradigms of the past.

Buchloch, B. (1990). *Conceptual Art 1962-1969*. October, vol. 55, pp. 105-143 // keywords: *distribution, immaterial*

Harry Magdoff and Paul Sweezy proposed that the general economic tendency of mature capitalism is toward stagnation. A shortage of profitable investment opportunities is the primary cause of this tendency. Less investment in the productive economy (the “real economy”) means lower future growth.

Magdoff, F. (2018). *The Explosion of Debt and Speculation*. <https://monthlyreview.org/2006/11/01/the-explosion-of-debt-and-speculation> // keywords: *future*

Perhaps this is impossible, when you believe that the future emerges mechanically from the past. The idea that the

world is a conglomerate of predictable algorithms, allows no deviating options.

Rasch, M. (2020). *Ethics in times of dataism*. De Groene Amsterdammer — 14/05/2020 // keywords: *narrativity, future, prescriptive*

“Electronic announcement service” thus does not begin to encompass the breadth of e-flux activity, given its vast reach of distribution, the accumulative quantity of its announcements, its widespread effect on availability of material on contemporary art, and its unique position as itself a critical art. “Distribution” is a key factor for analyzing e-flux as such.

Voorhies, J. T. (2017). *Beyond objecthood: The exhibition as a critical form since 1968*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. // keywords: *distribution*

In the context of the current “data-cultural revolution,” as one NSA official recently dubbed the current totalitarianism of data, unknowns are foreclosed already as part of the expected procedure of capture and classification. Data is intercepted and gathered with the aim of generating “activity-based intelligence,” which means that any anomaly triggers an alert for the paranoid techno-industrial apparatus. Its default state is permanent anticipation. It is eager to strike anywhere and everywhere the unknown appears.

Majaca, A. & Parisi, L. (2020). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/77/76322/the-incomputable-and-instrumental-possibility> // keywords: *narrativity, future*

Austin argues that words are not purely descriptive representations, but agents able to bring about change.

Steyerl, H. (2019). *Duty free art: Art in the age of planetary civil war*. London: Verso. // keywords: *narrativity*

[...] any system, economic or other—that at every given point of time fully utilizes its possibilities to the best advantage may yet in the long run be inferior to a system that does so at no given point of time, because the latter’s failure to do so may be a condition for the level or speed of long-term performance. This notion of long-term, inefficient, but ultimately superior performance applies exactly to the kind of artists I want to discuss.

Scanlan, J. (2008). <https://www.artforum.com/print/200804/modest-proposals-19749> // keywords: *distribution, long tail*

In any wall drawing, the network of idea, institution, local draftsmen, and LeWitt (if not in body, then in spirit) determines the value of the work, a value that does not rest on any one substantiation but gets remade and recalibrated over time. Which is not to say that distribution and profit margin were LeWitt’s guiding principles, but that his instinct for how an artwork might “be” in the world embodies a fundamental shift in how and where we assign value. Like the best aspects of the Internet economy, LeWitt’s starburst Wall Drawing #273: Lines to points on a grid, 1975, collects and makes sense of diverse points in space without privileging any of them, creating value (and income) out of the relations between things rather than out of the things themselves.

Scanlan, J. (2008). <https://www.artforum.com/print/200804/modest-proposals-19749> // keywords: *value, distribution*

It is also that categorization becomes productive. It produces objects in their own right, like Kant’s concepts, and these objects are both real and material. In this sense we can talk about the ontogenesis of digital objects.

Hui, Y., & Lovink, G. (2016). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/78/82706/digital-objects-and-metadata-schemes> // keywords: *narrativity*

[...] art’s portential to generate science-fictional times zones [...]

Huyghe, P., Barikin, A., & Lynn, V. (2015). *Pierre Huyghe: TarraWarra International 2015*. Healesville: TarraWarra Museum of Art, Limited. // *narrativity*

Conscious of this failing, analysts have turned to techniques such as scenario planning that involve exploring different possible futures rather than gambling on a single prediction. As an example, in 1995 the Global Scenario Group, convened by the Stockholm Environment Institutes, developed three scenario families.

Popper, S. W., Lempert, R. J., & Bankes, S. C. (2005). *Shaping the future*. New York: Scientific American. // keywords: *future*

Our approach is to look not for optimal strategies but for robust ones. A robust strategy performs well when compared with the alternatives across a wide range of plausible futures. It need not be the optimal strategy in any future; it will, however, yield satisfactory outcomes in both easy-to-envision futures and hard-to-anticipate contingencies.

Popper, S. W., Lempert, R. J., & Bankes, S. C. (2005). *Shaping the future*. New York: Scientific American. // keywords: *future, narrativity*

*A police man, a tourist and a cab driver
walk into a bar.
They are not thirsty,
but order drinks anyways.
Then the cabbie starts to laugh.
The tourist joins in and soon
the police man is laughing as well.
All three of them are laughing out loud now.
And it's infectious, because soon
the whole bar is laughing.*

*Everybody laughing
without knowing the joke.*

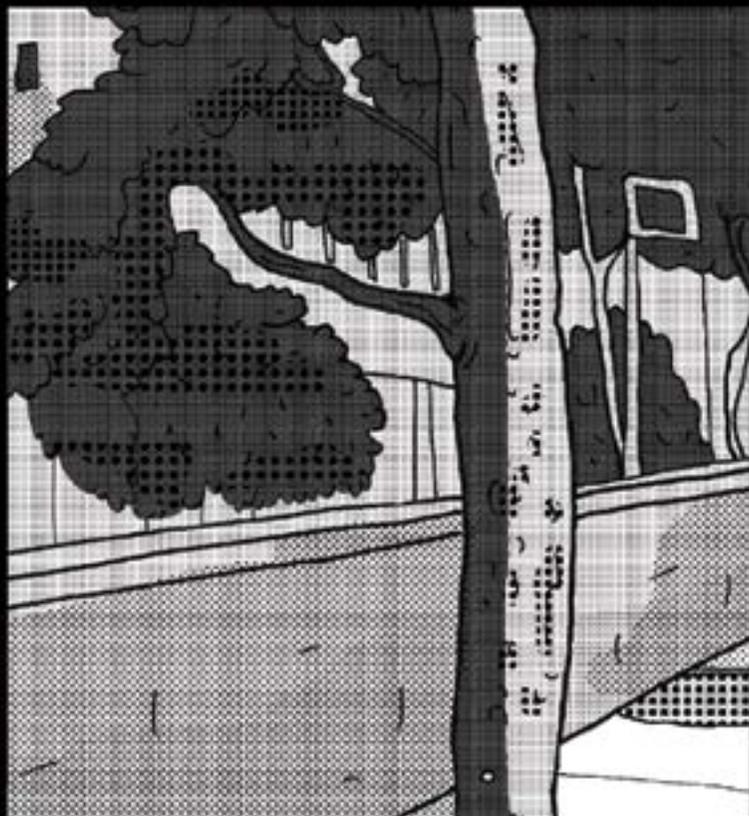
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after the time is past to use it*

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We will be looking at an extra scene. It will appear after the credits. In film vernacular this is called a credit cookie.



The scene appears when you least expect it. The last credits have just scrolled over a black matte. This is not part of the story, but introduces a next one. It announces a sequel, remarks on a storyline, gives a surprise plot twist, ... Something that keeps your eye on the horizon. And even if nothing ever comes, it will install anticipation.

Instead of getting on with business, somebody off-screen will tell a joke you think you've heard before. A postponed punchline that turns the whole film into a slapstick comedy.



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