Ctrl+Pdf

Journal of Contemporary Art

A journal of contemporary art published digitally for easy reproduction and circulation by anyone and everyone around the world

www.ctrlp-artjournal.org

Ego Duo by Lena Eriksson and Chris Regn

Uploaded Issue No. 16
February 2011
Essays No. 107-116

Editorial/P1
Varsha Nair and Katherine Olston

FTQ: Frequently Thought of Questions/P3
Eva Kietzmann and Sonya Schönberger

On Collaboration/P5
Damien March

Should the original
have to consider its reproduction?/P9
Muda Mathis and Sus Zwick
in conversation with Chris Regn

Art Works/P43
Mrat, Moe, Zeyar

A Collaborative Practice and Ways of Knowing
Notes on Zariyein Amit Mahanti, Ruchika Negi/P44
Frame Works

Videoklub/P48

Art Works:
Friends/P4
You and Me/P15
Journey/P31
Lena Eriksson and Chris Regn

About Ctrl+P's Contributors/P50

Squaring Off; 7.9 Cubic Metres/P15
Eliza Tan and James Carrigan

Announcement by the Archives
of the Museum of Memories/P19

HerMe(s)/P23
Judy Freya Sibayan

mellifera as described by Andrew Burrel/P31
Andrew Burrel

Collage/P35
Simon Cooper and Siying Zhou

The Ethics of Collaboration in
Sunaptic Sculpture/P36
Patricia J. Flanagan

Art is not for beautification but a means
of evoking, connecting, and provoking/P40
Wu Mali

Issue Editors
Varsha Nair
Katherine Olston

Editorial Board
Flaudette May V. Datuin
Varsha Nair
Judy Freya Sibayan

VARSHA NAIR AND KATHERINE OLSTON

Collaborating is essential to conducting a wide range of life's activities. Whether for the purpose of subsistence, raising children, performing religious rites, enacting cultural activities or even waging wars, it has always been central to our species' existence. Comparative to this aeonian historical backdrop, the relatively recent emphasis on 'collaboration' within the discourse of contemporary art may seem somewhat redundant. However, the very fact that 'collaboration' as an artistic approach is now being explicitly highlighted —through the agendas of governments, councils, arts funders and through the desires of artists themselves—is perhaps a reaction against the increasingly individualistic and alienated society in which we find ourselves.

Ironically, in the contemporary art world it is due to this very desire to claim or assign individual authorship, that the act of collaboration is often not fully comprehended or understood by art professionals including artists, gallerists, writers and, at times, even curators.

Although artists collaborate with many different people, for many different reasons and in many different ways, the most successful partnerships or projects have come, not from a self-interested desire to further one's own career or repertoire, but from a real desire to create a work *together*. Where putting aside claims to individual authorship, and the willingness to pool skills, expertise, perspectives and knowledge is important, mutual respect and a genuine personal connection is imperative.

Engaging in artistic collaboration promises the potential to create a work that is *more* than the sum of its parts, allowing possibilities beyond the scope of individual participants to be realised. Implicit to successful collaborations, then, is the necessity for all parties to share, contribute, communicate, trust and, most importantly, to relinquish ultimate control and ownership over the creative process; and, herein lies the challenging nature of collaborations.

Just as the collaborative practices of the past took a myriad of forms, the collaborative endeavours of contemporary art manifest in a diverse array of projects and approaches with a variety of motivations.

Throughout the texts offered in this issue of Ctrl+P common themes continuously surface. Eva Kietzmann and Sonya Schönberger's *Frequently Thought Questions* (FTQ) presents an interior monologue where uncertainties and insecurities that often attend working collaboratively are voiced. Raising key points related to the start of any kind of relationship, they ask, "Are you open minded? Are you flexible?…Can you change? Am I in or out? Do you want to be involved?" and later, more explicitly, "Do you trust me?" Thus it appears that establishing trust is inextricably linked and dependent on the understanding that participants share certain approaches or attitudes to the process.

These issues are elaborated upon in Patricia Flanagan's *The Ethics of Collaboration in Sunaptic Sculpture*, where she writes of the necessity of shared ideologies and genuine person to person relationships in collaborative projects, pointing out that trust is an essential component to be won through long-term commitment. The importance of these aspects in meaningful collaboration is further reinforced in a number of the texts. In *Squaring Off: 7.9 Cubic Metres*, a project initiated by artist James Carrigan who collaborated with Eliza Tan as the project's curator, Carrigan refers to the project as "primarily a series of relationships" and Tan points out that he had talked about the project as "a means of locating …[his]…own practice within a network of social relations." In Damien March's *On Collaboration*, he highlights the intimate, multi-layered connection of the 'artist couple,' and in Judy Freya Sibayan's text *HerMe(s)*, she places great value on the kind of spiritual or 'pre-destined' connection she experiences with her collaborators.

Furthermore, the artist duo Sus Zwick and Muda Mathis appear to take strength from the fact that they have developed together as friends and as artists over a long period of time and as a result now have an "intuitive understanding" of one another. Also working regularly with a women's band, they talk of the empowerment that being part of a group enables; as Sus Zwick puts it, "From all this work and our cooperative projects, relationships and friendships are forged and endure long after the work is finished."

Mrat Lunn Htwann's collaboration with Moe Way and Zeyar Lynn also underscores the primacy of trust. Being in different geographical locations the work came about after a phone conversation where each artist decided to spend an hour to 'collaborate' in their individual spaces, following the conversation. To work in this way suggests close friendship in which each person's commitment to input individually whilst also keeping the group in mind, must be trusted. Simon Cooper and Siying Zhou worked in a similar way, producing their contribution at different sites and then merging them together in the final work. Lena Eriksson and Chris Regn, on the other hand, produced their drawings whilst sitting together, in the same location, in conversation. Interestingly, the drawings address issues such as friendship, patience and the ego, bringing into play aspects of negotiations particularly relevant when working in partnership or collectively. While in Andrew Burrell's account of his and Trish Adams' project *mellifera*, he does not emphasise the importance of their personal relationship but highlights their shared conceptual concerns, and in doing so offers a pertinent example of the dynamism of artists from different fields of enquiry coming together to investigate a shared interest.

In contrast to collaborations borne from a more personal history, community-based collaborations such as Frame Works' project *Zariyein* and the community-based projects led by Wu Mali focus not so much on shared ideologies and personal relationships but more on being catalysts and initiating a process within communities, and, as Frame Works stresses—on being careful not to "predetermine meanings so as to ensure that a multi-layered understanding of the context could emerge." Frame Works writes of the success of the project when they observed their role as artists diminish as the community took up and became key in instrumentalising the project's activities. In this way "Zariyein" also raised questions of authorship and representation.

Likewise, the artist collective Videoklub challenges the notion of individual authorship by transferring authorship of the individual video works produced by its members to the local collective, of which specific names are unknown. In the announcement presented here, Axel Töpfer of Videoklub, Leipzig, invites our readers to set up similar Videoklubs in their own environments and become part of the network. The Videoklub is devoted to expressions of individual aesthetics but in the form of group authorship.

Finally, Andrew Burrell draws our attention to yet another aspect of collaboration in terms of establishing or utilising networks when he writes of "a whole other level of collaboration that has taken place in this project...[one which]... is often overlooked by those who are not practitioners when they write about practice, though it is most highly prized by practitioners themselves—that is the online-networked community."

Indeed, without this very community and connections-on-line or the direct face-to-face kind-a number of the projects mentioned in this issue and even the issue itself would not have been possible.

Thus, artists may collaborate with community groups, with scientists, with friends, with lovers, with each other; collaborations can last a lifetime or endure only for a short period. Where some community projects may seek to draw our focus to diverse social issues, both the obvious and the less obvious ones, empower disadvantaged and disenfranchised peoples, or renew interest in local cultural traditions and crafts, other collective projects aim to challenge accepted modes of artistic production, notions of authorship and of representation. *Ctrl+P: Collaborations* brings together a collection of texts and on-page collaborative works which investigate these issues and present just some of the countless ways collaborations are made manifest.

FTQ: Frequently Thought Questions
A question-guide through an artistic group project-in-progress

EVA KIETZMANN AND SONYA SCHONBERGER

Why do you need so much attention? Do you understand my English? Do you want to be my best friend? Do I have to find a boyfriend? What is your favourite bread for breakfast? How was your childhood? Are you rather clean or dirty? How much is this coat? Do you want to collaborate with me? How do you communicate with the public? Do you like cooking for many people? Am I getting deconstructed or am I getting constructed? How do you read me? How does it feel leading a group? Do drugs make my life richer? Can you see me? How can I behave so everyone likes me? What is your favourite movie? Can I be perfect? Do we have to work in a fixed group? How would you describe yourself? Can I become your friend? Do I need to have a position? How much time do I need to know you? Is it possible to criticise? How much do I have to open myself? Are you authentic? Does this look real? Is this politically correct? Will you come to my funeral? Do you think this is funny? How many hours of sleep do you need? What will happen to us in the future? Do you think I am very German? Why are you in this group? How much time do you need? Can you behave like a grown up? May I touch your hair? Are you happy? May I hug you? Will I ever be an It-girl? What do you want from life? Who do you like? Do you want to be me, or can I be you? Are you looking forward? Is it possible to loose myself and find myself one day after? Are shopping malls always the same? Do you like mass events? Will we ever meet again? What is your favourite music? How can I reflect on myself? How old are you? What can you expect from the other? Do you think we are very different? What is an image? What do your parents think about you? Do you live in the past or in the present? Do you like yourself? Do you think it's a personal question? Shall I give you my email address? May I take a picture of you? Do I have to find a position? Are you really a professional? What do you know about Middle Eastern Art? Do we have to work on a clear project? Shall we make plans? When will I find the time to reflect? Will this be satisfying? Will it be profitable to collaborate with you? Do you believe we have several lives? How often do you take a shower? Are you an artist or a spy? May I show you my studio? Have you heard about critical theory? Can I use your idea? Will this project support my career? Are you interested in my work? How can I survive? Where did I spend my time? Do I need a fixed thesis to take part in this? Can you explain your goal to me? How do you want me to be? What shall I do tomorrow? Did you experience a tragedy? Is it possible to understand? Are you flirting with me? Do you think I am heterosexual? Am I unfair? Has my work any value here? Am I generalizing? Can you say that in general? Are my qualities important here? How much time did you spend waiting? Why aren't you coming to meetings? Why haven't you been to Documenta? How can I explain myself? What does it mean on a structural level? What did you expect? Is this offensive? Have you worked with a group before? What do you think group work is? Do I have to give up my individuality? Am I special? Do you want to continue? Are you open minded? Are you flexible? Do you need any information? Can you change? Am I in or out? Do you want to be involved? What is your context? Do you like theoretical discourses? Do you understand my critique? Am I too superficial? Do you eat meat? Are you working at night? How should I behave as an artist? Did I loose or gain weight? How do you know what I am working on? Why did you come here tonight? Are you afraid? Will you take part in a group project again? Can I be alone somewhere for 2 minutes? Do you spread gossip? Are you passive or active? Why did you decide to be an artist? Which artist influenced you? Do you like this space? Do you trust me? How did you deal with people? Can you come closer? Do you like mainstream? Is it about art or is it about sex? Is it about culture or is it about

class? How much money do you need? Are you part of the artmarket? Do you want to become famous? Are you able to express yourself? Do you need an audience? What is your background? Is this inspiring? Can I trust you? Are you in love?

ꕥ

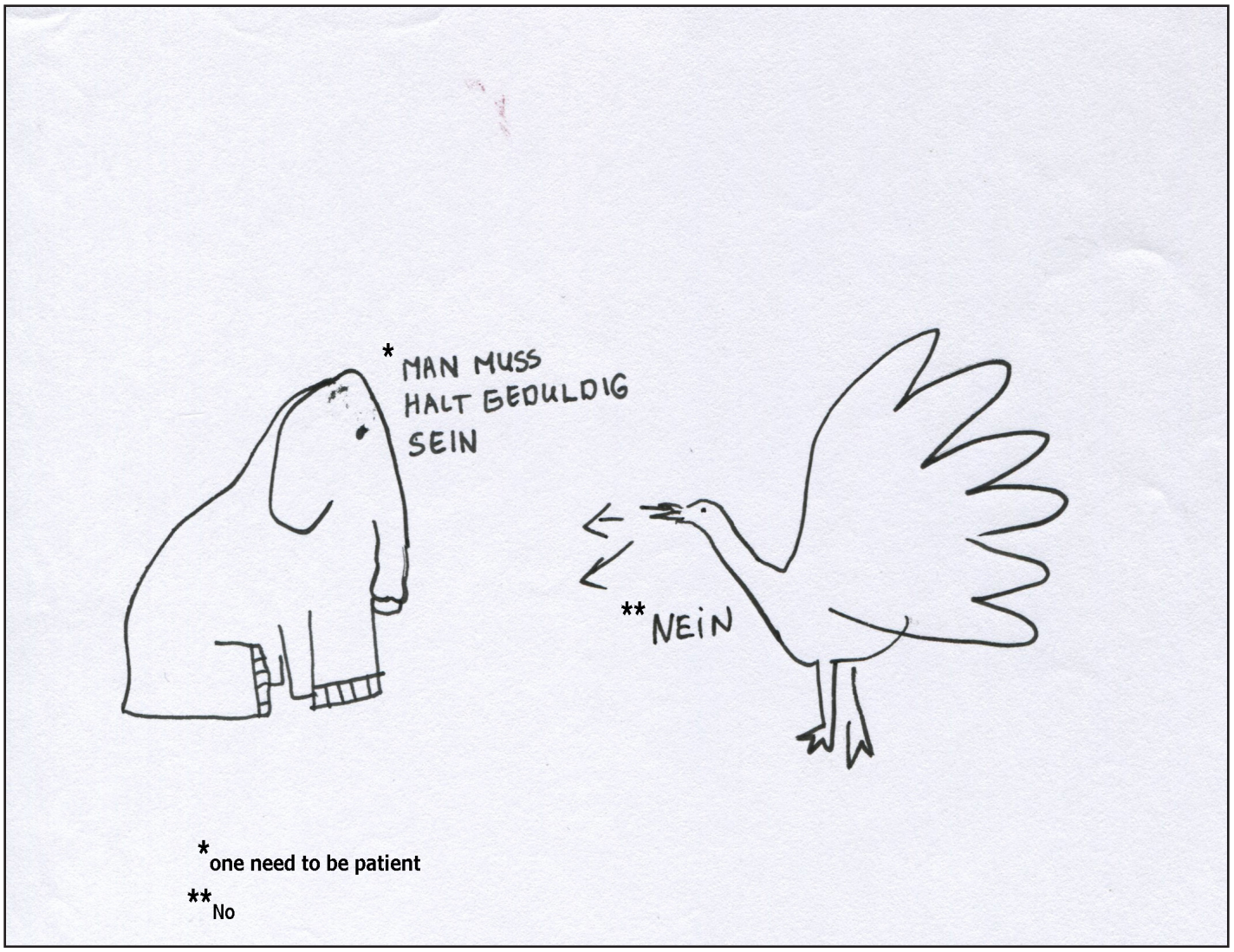
The Question Guide by Eva Kietzmann and Sonya Schönberger raises questions regarding possible personal experiences and conflicts in an art group during art production and its attitude. The guide was originally conceptualised as an exhibition-audioguide. The questions heard were put together during the artist exchange "Reloading Images Tehran-Berlin, Work in Progress 2007." It was meant to guide the visitor through the exhibition following the project. Unlike an ordinary audio-guide, this guide reveals personal questions which came up through contradictions of the own presence on "foreign" ground; as a tourist, an artist and a member of a community.* Do we need to know each other as private persons to be able to act together?** With this text the questions are taken further for a possible ongoing usage.

* cf. Kaya Behkalam/eigenart n. 69/2008
** cf. Richard Sennett / The Fall of Public Man /1974

FTQ - frequently thought questions
Audioguide, 15:00 min, 2007. Loop.
www.evakietzmann.net and
www.sonyhof.de

Friends

LENA ERIKSSON AND CHRIS REGN



On Collaboration

DAMIEN MARCH

Reciprocity is one of the fundamentals of our species' history. The fact that *homo sapiens sapiens* have—over the past one hundred millennia—come to dominate the planet testifies to the intrinsic presence of both communality and communion. Without at least some semblance of periodic, or cyclical *caritas*, the founding social organisational entities (the family/tribe/*commune* bound by genetic and/or interpersonal bonds) could not have supported the rise and coagulation of what we routinely refer to as "civilisation." However, the devastating effects our behaviour has had, and continues to have, upon innumerable human beings equally testifies to the inordinate *lack* of reciprocity in the complex, miasmic nexus of psycho-social and socio-political practices that comprise our species' past and present. For better and for worse, the multitude of global, lived realities manifest the constant of collaboration; this nebulous, shape-shifting phantasm is a lineage that courses across space-time, and both creates and transgresses divides and barriers with an efficacy that few other paradigms of behaviour can be said to possess.

Collaboration—in all of its guises—has been both the object and subject of our species' representational practices for as long as we have been able to collectively divine. In "the Dawn of Man" sequence of Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), a tribe of non-specified proto-humans come into contact with a black monolith of unknown origin. Following the patriarch's encouragement to commune with the monolith, the tribe's ascendancy over their own as well as other species—and as a result, the means of subsistence—begins. The enlightenment seemingly bestowed after communing with the black monolith allows them to hunt (the patriarch kills a tapir and shares it with his tribe) and to murder (he bludgeons the leader of another tribe wanting to drink from their watering hole). The love and reciprocity that governs the tribe had until that point been humbled by their place in the hierarchy within the ecosphere; now this very same love and reciprocity leads them to seek and maintain a position of power, initiating their rise up the Darwinian pyramid. Before continuing, we must acknowledge the potential of representational problematics that accompany "the Dawn of Man" sequence. For example, despite Kubrick's humanist intentions, the socio-political substrata of these scenes do not only speak of our species' complex evolutionary history; due to the dislocated embodiment of higher intelligence (the black monolith) this sequence may—simultaneously—be alikened to the practices of Eurocentric anthropology where the unstated, yet overriding aim is not to produce tempered self-reflections on the workings of post-Enlightenment, Age of Reason European society, but rather implicitly valorise "progressed and progressive civilisation" and justify its position as the global hegemon, dominating "primitive" and "regressive" societies they neither desire to understand nor commune with as equals. They are *tabula rasa*—conceived as devoid of self-reflexivity and the powers of analytical enquiry—integral to the geo-political West's complex self-deification. However, it would be base, instrumentalised hubris to deny that violence and inequity are as much features of our species—along with love and symbiotic collaboration—and not defects solely found in dysfunctional social formations. The state of global affairs singularly attests to this.

The importance of this specific contextualisation of collaboration is to instil the recognition that representational practices such as contemporary art are as equally governed by strictly interpersonal, human affairs as they are by aesthetic and socio-cultural praxis. And further, to contend that disloyalty and betrayal pervade (or, at minimum, hold the inherent potentiality to readily do so) artistic collaboration in conjunction with reciprocity and affirmation irrespective of our praxis of collaboration, and this praxis' attempts to mollify interpersonal politics. A highly instructive locus and interpretive filter is the artistic couple. Although the complex nexus of *frisson* and disjuncture that comprises collaboration finds resonance in it's numerous incarnations, few render the multitude of

intersecting practices, their meanings and ramifications quite as starkly as that of an artist whose life partner—lover, confidant, muse, most intimate friend, litmus test of ethics, morality, behaviour and commitment—is also an artist. The enrichment made possible by collaboration is arguably intensified, magnified by the resonance it finds in aspects of their life that have little if anything to do with art; however, this very resonance can have dire effects when the predominant results of collaboration are existential fracture and debasement.

I will focus on two couples, one who are no longer together, and the other who are. The former is Marina Abramovic and Ulay (Uwe Laysiepen); the latter is myself and my partner, Katherine Olston. The dominant assumption when approaching artistic collaboration is that both the goal and its sign is the creation of a mutli-authored artistic object (in all of its amorphous, expanded forms). In this respect Abramovic and Ulay took this process far past its epistemological and ontological limits; their work together was an unending, unforgiving interrogation of the existential ground that gives rise to the act of communion within the vista of psycho-social and socio-political fields between two human beings where reciprocity is a *duty of care*, an omnipotent responsibility. Many aspects that discernibly characterised their relationship also exist between my partner and I—as they do for most couples. However, the collaborative nexus diverges profoundly when it comes to the realisation of the products of Olston's and my respective practices: there are two trajectories of artistic production that maintain respective, individual authorship. How could this be said to be collaboration in either an aesthetically or socio-culturally meaningful way? And further, how are the two respective couples' praxis related? In beginning to answer these nuanced questions, we will see that the conventional discursive trope held to represent and convey collaboration in many ways obfuscates as much as it illuminates.

Figures 1 and 2. Courtesy of the artist.

In 1980, Abramovic and Ulay performed *Rest Energy*: "Performance/Together we held a taut bow and a poised arrow./The weight of our bodies put tension on the bow. /The arrow pointed at Marina's heart./Small microphones were attached to both our hearts recording the increasing number of heartbeats./*duration*: 4min 10sec."[1] The potential for violence in *Rest Energy*, even of death, is negotiated by the multivalent, interpolating psychological relationships between Abramovic and Ulay. This is not only both the cerebral and existential connections of two artists creating a third entity, but also the very real action performed between two life partners. Though much of the formal delimitations of their praxis sought to divest their work of identified/authored subjectivity, it is their very public intimate life that made this work both possible, and of a profundity in excess to that if it had been performed by two individuals purely associated through common vocation.

Although it is ostensibly Ulay in the ultimate position of power—as it is he who holds the poised arrow in his hands—the power is in fact shared with Abramovic, for the potential for violence is dictated by the tension placed on the bow by their reciprocating weight. The performance evokes the energy of their intimate relationship: the intense gaze into one another's eyes is an overt manifestation of a complex empathic dialogue. They are inextricably linked in their psychological and physiological space-time. Just as Ulay must remain vigilant

of his endurance of grip and strength, so too must Abramovic, for she must exact her weight in unison with the potential exhibited by Ulay's body and known to her through her intimate knowledge of his capacity for endurance and maintaining trust. If she senses that he is beginning to tire or lacking resolve, it is completely within her control to remove all tension from the bow and thus end the potential for violence. The internal logic of the task the artists have set for themselves is to finish the work precisely when both are unable to continue: through the *psychological* dynamic the continued potential for violence and its removal is negotiated. To misjudge or give up on the other is to enact a betrayal or lack of faith—they fulfill the work's potential only together through the necessitated near-telepathic connection that exists between them, between all couples whose level of intimacy is of great depth.

Figures 3 and 4. Courtesy of the artist.

In 2009, Katherine Olston and I performed together in *Communion after the Arrival-Beuys Pt II.*[2]. (Fig.1-4) It is a three-channel video installation displayed as a triptych. The central channel consists of the two performers undertaking actions where they enforce duress and pain upon the other. This takes place in four *mise en scéne*: 1) the woman is kneeling in front of the male as if posing for a portrait. The male's left hand his clasped around the side of her face, pulling as hard as possible so as to wrench her head back; the female's stress and effort to resist this is plainly evident as the action transpires; 2) the male and female kneel in front of each other staring intensely into the other's eyes; each has one hand clasped around the other's neck, the other just below the larynx, pressing firmly. As time passes the respective hand each has pressed to the other's neck is slowly moved up the neck before being pressed into the other's mouth so as to both asphyxiate and choke; 3) the female stands behind the seated male with a hand clasping the side of his mouth and cheek, pulling it back as hard as she can. The inability to swallow causes the male to begin to choke on his own saliva; 4) the female is again standing behind the seated male; this time she stands over him, with one hand over his mouth, the other holding his nose closed. She does so until his diaphragm begins to repeatedly spasm as it attempts to draw breath; her hands slowly move down from his face to his neck where they begin to tighten.

Whereas Abramovic and Ulay's aesthetic self-reflexivity was taken to such extremes that their private life was usurped by an aestheic spatio-temporality in which their performances took place, *Communion* utilised numerous strategies to create transfigured identities wholly distant (both in space-time and existentially) from that of our lives of the everyday. And yet the very same dynamics found in *Rest Energy* between Abramovic and Ulay are equally extant between Olston and myself. It is only through the profound, lived intimacy of the everyday—the trust, faith, reciprocity, and symbiotic understanding of our respective virtues and points of fallibility—that allows for the precise aesthetic instrumentalisation of violence. And now we must account for the most overt and seemingly profound divergence: the authorial identity of *Communion* is singular. It exists in the greater socio-cultural sphere as being part of the *oeurve* of Damien March. Why should this be so when the founding processes for the work's realisation are similar to that of *Rest Energy*, or indeed, all of Abramovic and Ulay's work?

The spatio-temporal transfiguration of personal identity into one purely aesthetic/socio-political via the *Communion*'s overt conceptual concerns provides an occluded, liminal space where the intense, revealing and intimate collaborative process has a haven which insulates our personal lives from the interpersonal politics that pervade and dominate any activity central to humanity and it's societies. Within the trajectory of the Western canon, the paradigm of the singular Artist—the latest pronounced *uber*—is still so firmly entrenched and rehearsed (despite five decades of post-structuralist/modern/colonial practice) that the single authorial voice's identity is functionally opaque. The egress into the respective artist's lived, personal life is largely controlled by the individual. If the artist professes that their work stems from the personal, then there they will be followed. This explains, precisely, the difference between Tracey Emin and Anselm Kiefer, for example. The collaboration between Olston and myself is a constant, the respective processes of our works' realisation are intertwined; the enrichment the aesthetic objects-of-communication produced need not declare the specificities of conjoined authorial origin for their sovereign identity and functionality to become extant. The persistence in separate artistic identities not only allows for a functional *doppelganger*, it also functions as a bulwark shielding our love from objectification, from aesthetic dismemberment. Why are we spotlighting something that our species cannot exist without, on any level? To self-reflexively foster the humanisation of the Other, to disarm difference? The unchanging, fraught nature of the everyday can only but render this specific praxis highly—if not fatally—problematic. Difference is for all intensive purposes enshrined in the psycho-social and socio-political practices of the Social—it has no discernible genetic basis. We *are* a congenitally communal species; the interpolation of the Other and the Familiar within our existential and Social subjectivity is so pervasive and intrinsic that to announce "collaboration" as the dominant object and subject of a cultural practice or act necessarily raises the spectre of—in this case, that of art—*real politik*: what is—the declared rationale for explicitly self-reflexive collaboration, and how does it correlate with its generative agendas?

Though rarely admitted to, let alone openly discussed, within the contexts of the art world's international surveys, conferences, projects and administrative/fiscal hierarchies, the omnipresent prestige of *van garde* cultural praxis—enthralling the ego's of individuals, institutions and nation-states alike—exacts a fraught labyrinth of ambivalence and malevolence that at minimum equals that of benevolence, of reciprocity. What became Abramovic and Ulay's final work—*The Lovers*, *the Great Wall Walk* (1988)—was originally conceived as a consecration of their union within the now-inseparable crucible of "performing life, living art". It was to be a self-reflexive, secular marriage ceremony that simultaneously examined and represented the complex nexus of existential reciprocity and communion. Instead their relationship disintegrated upon the *real-politik* of the work's generative negotiations and logistics.[3] When they finally met at the half-way point along the wall, their life together was over. Through their exacting, almost tyrannical self-reflexivity, they lost their everyday subjectivity to the objectification of aesthetics, cultural practice and the juggernaut of the still extant Canon. If collaboration is to be understood in any sense of its perceived and actual praxis, its theoretic conception and examination must move past the instrumentalised hermeneutics that so often dominate contemporary art.

1. Marina Abramovic, *Artists Body*, (Charta, 1998), p. 226.

2. Part of the author's ongoing contemporary art /terra nullius project; *Communion after the Arrival—Beuys Prt II* creates an interpretive field whereby the colonial foundations of Australia are explored through the notion of the enlightened artist and the power dynamics implicit in pressured, or dysfunctional, relationships and patriarchal gender relations.

Communion is a companion piece to one of the projects' earlier works, *Arrival of the Enlightenment—Beuys Prt I*. This work overtly aligns the elevated and revered socio-cultural position often granted to artists with the colonial praxis of European imperialism. The work overtly references Joseph Beuys, casting him as saint, or martyr, in a retelling of a chosen (or anointed) individual's enlightenment as passage through suffering as a means to bring spiritual, or moral, advancement to others, to society. By doing so, I aim to draw attention to the complexities that arise from the disparity between Enlightenment ideals and the realities of Western culture and geo-politics.

Communion takes this position as a point of departure, contextualising the artist within the Everyday of a colonial couple. The violent and malevolent tone of the work is not concerned with signalling the suffering of the Other but, rather, the full breadth of European ('the West') society and culture. The images themselves are intended to evoke the dramatic and epic qualities of 16th-19th century European painting, thus positioning colonialism alongside the cultural achievements and activities of post-Enlightenment civilisation. How are we to reconcile these inextricably linked, yet alienated paradigms?

3. Thomas McEvilley, *Art, Love, and Friendship: Marina Abramovic and Ulay, Together and Apart*, (McPherson & Co, 2010).

Should the original have to consider its possible reproduction?

MUDA MATHIS AND SUS ZWICK IN CONVERSATION WITH CHRIS REGN

Chris: What interests me in particular about your work is the function that language and the concept underpinning your work serve when writing your performances. Like for other artists such as John Cage, new forms of notation and the interpretation of events, written instructions and event scores become works in their own right. Here the idea of the uniqueness, experience, action, presence, the shared space and the non-illustrative aspect of the performance are confronted with basic guidelines. My initial question is relevant to you both as an artistic pairing and to the various forms that your artistic output takes: From where do you get inspiration for your installations, videos, performances, photography and music?

Muda: When you mentioned Cage, I immediately thought of Fluxus. This was a whole new approach to art for me, one that was not product-centric per se and did not prize off-putting values like virtuosity, talent or finesse. It suddenly became completely natural to create art using our rationale, by adopting a conceptual approach to it. That was a revelation to me.

I began studying art in 1977 at the F + F in Zurich, which allowed me to explore entirely new fields. 10 years later, I embarked on a video-making course in Basle, which opened up entirely new avenues for me. Suddenly, the aesthetic, the formal, the medial were more important. Precision became key. Of interest was not the fact *that* your artistic output has a demonstrable impact, but rather the type of impact it had. It wasn't simply about *that* I create art and *how* I do it, but more about what it generates. That helped me engage in my own work, equipping me to manage emotion, form and language, as well as to adopt an intentional approach to the creative process.

Sus: I'm not from an artistic background. My roots and drive are in the women's movement and political activism. I threw myself into learning how to take, develop and enlarge photos through the "learning by doing" approach and mutual assistance, which was the customary way of doing things in women's groups.

In 1980 I found myself, by pure chance, in a really male-dominated video association. Video was an entirely new medium for me. Although it involved complex, expensive and heavy equipment, this medium made it possible to record events quickly and project them almost instantaneously. This was great because I wanted to expose those things that were important to me. I also liked the fact that, besides letting me define my work, video allowed me always to be part of the work. I learnt to use the equipment properly and familiarised myself with filmmaking and editing techniques.

It wasn't until I reached the ripe old age of 35 that I started studying video properly. That was also my first exposure to art history. I was the only one in the class who, folding chair in hand, would visit art galleries with our lecturer, Mr. Jehle. Everyone else in my class had been there before. These classes really opened my eyes and I realised the incredible potential that video could offer me. As a result, I began to explore image. Besides content that had been so important in my work before, light, structure, processes suddenly began to play a greater role. I learnt a great deal from the others in my class about sound, music and imagery/visual language.

Chris: What for you constitutes a work—what remains?

Muda: For me, elegance is best found in the ephemeral, even though it's fair to say that it tends not to be at the forefront in the visual arts tradition. I believe that material is no

more important than the process itself, despite my roots in sculpture. Even then I was really fascinated by the exhibition space, especially because we didn't have to take it with us once the exhibition is over. We try not to put too much in storage.

Sus: For me, elegance is when the material used to create the artwork can then be used for a practical purpose. For example, to mend a garden shed.

Chris: What do you think endures from your work?

Sus: Works created as part of percent-for-art projects endure and remain accessible, like the light/noise installation "Der Getränkeautomat lebt" (the soda machine is alive), which we created in 1999 for the Frassnacht waterworks on Lake Constance. Every first and third Friday evening of the month, the public can stand outside and view it.

Muda: Also installations which are acquired by institutions. In the canton of Thurgau, the Kartause Ittingen has our work "Das Paradies".

Sus: And videos, of course, which we keep in our archives and which we always convert to the newest video format. These can also be ordered online.

Chris: Yet, exhibitions, installations and stage appearances can be experienced and recounted.

Muda: The concert programmes, which can be repeated, are not unlike products, as are the CDs and records by *Les Reines Prochaines*, catalogues, limited editions of video stills, light displays and postcards.

Les Reines Prochaines "Protest und Vasen" Photo credits: Tobias Madörin

Sus: Our documentation videos and websites are important and we constantly maintain and update them. Our posters and photos are held in archives like *Bildwechsel*. Last but not least, from all this work and our cooperative projects, relationships and friendships are forged and endure long after the work is finished.

Chris: It's often difficult to produce something, to withhold judgment on it and to show what you have done. How much of the creative process is difficult to take?

Muda: Every second work must succeed...while one quarter is locked away somewhere.

Sus: Actually, every work has its moments of tension and conflict.

Muda: Having said that, exasperation can also prove to be a turning point. The concentration, the transition from lots of ideas to the *chosen one*, channeling means leaving your emotional attachment behind. As the idea takes concrete shape, something is always lost in the process.

Chris: You've been working together since 1989, when you met at a video making course. Both of you were already working artists: Muda as a performance and installation artist, Sus as a documentary maker.

Sus: Our first collaborative piece came after the video making course was over. I was spending the summer in the mountains and Muda came to visit me, hoping to make a video. The tiny remote mountain cabin I was staying in had a washing machine, which

was a bit weird because here was this modern machine plonked right in the middle of a traditional alpine cabin with its open fire and cheese kettle. The washing machine just stood there like some foreign body or futuristic feminist work of art.

Muda: It was actually Sus that came up with that observation, but it was one that immediately struck a chord with me. All that was left for me to do was to film the machine in action, which was how our 1990 video "Der Waschtag" (wash day) came about.

Chris: Have you developed your own form of communication or codes, like a secret language?

Muda: I don't think so, but we have developed our own methods that we like to experiment with.

Sus: Yes, we have an intuitive understanding of how to deal with one other.

Muda: The verbal aspect of our work has a lot to do with story telling and reporting, in the sense of collecting and bringing things together, identifying interests and ideas, depicting that which has been seen. However, we rarely develop individual images, contexts and even the entire structure of a work by talking about it. These tend to come about by experimenting with the material itself.

Sus: We never make decisions on a purely conceptual basis. They're reached by trying things out directly, by looking at what it produces. We observe one another... it's a sort of two-way process.

Chris: Was the Prix Meret Oppenheim, which you won in 2009, your first joint award?

Muda: Yes. It led us to define ourselves much more clearly as an artistic partnership, to out ourselves, once and for all.

Sus: We had already worked together before, but many didn't realise this, attributing much of our work to the "Muda Mathis" label.

Muda: Indeed. In nearly all of our joint work, such as "Die Erfindung der Welt" (discovery of the world), "Das ideale Atelier" (the perfect artist's studio), and "Das Paradies", we make it quite clear that these are the product of a shared vision.

Les Reines Prochaines.
"Protest und Vasen" Videostill.

Chris: Do your costumes constitute a sort of magic cloak that allows you to morph into different characters? Or do you see yourselves as abstract bodies, like many performers strive to be?

Muda: Strangely, yes.

Sus: I think so, because we don't always work together. Let's get something straight: we are an artist duo that enjoys an open and polygamous working relationship. But we always help each other out, even when we are working with someone else. We don't need joint authorship to confirm our status as a pair.

Chris: What is special about working as a pair? What do you find interesting?

Muda: You're not alone. You've got four hands, two brains, four eyes and 20 fingers, only one feeling of doubt and twice as much courage.

Sus: There's also greater continuity, which means that things always keep moving, the thread doesn't break, there's a never-ending dialogue.

Muda: The major advantage of working as a couple is the fact that you can emerge as *a single* author: one work from one mouth, if you like. You're less prone to ego trips and less confined by the limitations of your own personality. It's different from a collective, which celebrates and prizes diversity.

Sus: Also, even though you are a pair, each person in the pair remains an individual. You enjoy complete mutual trust and each one is responsible for and defines individual parts of a work. You're just two individuals with different capabilities.

Chris: Does love inform your work?

Muda: Love informs our lives and life informs our work.

Chris: So, what's your day-to-day life like?

Sus: We share a home in a really beautiful area of Alsace, which is always a great source of inspiration for us. We've a wonderful loft next door that offers us endless possibilities. It's not only a storage room but also a place where we can experiment and try out different things. We've also been part of a community of artists, VIA, for 20 years now. This group of artists, female and male, share a studio and infrastructure. For example, there is a recording studio where we can rehearse and record sounds, and has much of the equipment we need.

Muda: I work at the Northwest Switzerland School of Art and Design (FHNW HGK) and I am always being asked to sit on juries and committees.

Sus: Nearly every weekend we get together with our band, *Reines Prochaines*, who have been around for a long time.

Muda: Indeed. This is also a long-term project, just like the group of artists, with whom we have written a manifesto as a contribution to it. We now sit down together as a group to discuss, work and carry out projects under the name of *Tischgespräche* (table talks). *Tischgespräche* is an ever-changing pro-active discussion group of artists and art promoters, who value the oral transmission of knowledge (around a table). We are involved in many collectives, which sometimes overlap. We like to take part in events and there's also the *Performance Chronik Basel* , an Internet platform where users can actively contribute to documenting performance art in the Basle area or find out what's on.

Chris: You describe your relationship as a never-ending discussion, where neither of you shirk away from engaging with one another and from being inchoate. You refer to it as a workshop. And then you talk of a given point, of a decision, which makes everything clear, framed and amenable. Do you still adhere to this?

Muda: No, this is something we learned...that's what project work is all about, after all! It's also a form of organisation, a simplification that has also proved worthwhile for many people, for collectives. The "external" planning and a binding formal structure allow all

participants to get their bearings and, ultimately, to immerse themselves in the "not-yet" of a collaborative project.

Sus: A lot becomes possible when you have a clear frame of reference. To start with, we establish that it is a project with such and such conditions, possibilities and expectations, such as cooperation with curators/event organisers, context, medium, authorship, collaboration, the architectural space, time frames, and financial resources...

Muda: ...and then ... it all makes sense! Here is the empty ballroom. Now we can embark on our uncertain adventure. Now it starts…hauling the invisible into the tangible.

Chris: Is it about drawing on the sum of your collective experiences? To begin with, trust, thinking about it together, the idea becomes sacred, the situational... then the emergence of a single idea – surprise, secrets, the tangible?

Muda: Absolutely!

Chris: Does the gang pave the way to happiness?

Muda: Yes. The gang can do more because it can accumulate and multiply ideas and actions. This means that we start creating larger boxes, which you might not do if you were on your own, perhaps because of a lack of energy, ability, know-how and courage. You're more daring when you're part of a group. As we all know, who dares wins.

Sus: Many shared experiences create a basis of trust. That is why it is worthwhile investing in and sticking with a group. A well-functioning gang is a veritable powerhouse.

Muda: The high art of cooperation is not worried by the loss of self. Beginners often make mistakes, finding it difficult to say, 'good, then we'll run with your idea!' and then taking it back. Striking a balance between making a contribution, biding your time, taking something back in order to win the ball again takes practice—it's not all sweetness and light. The best scenario is when everyone is 100% behind the idea.

Sus: You can't surrender control. If you don't have trust though, that's easier said than done. It needs discipline, but it is also incredibly important because control deprives the creative process of its dynamic force.

Muda: If there is a lack of trust, the motto is: remain cool, do not identify with the authorship of others, and take responsibility for your own ideas.

Sus: Yes, indeed. And there are also rules that help. It should not be seen as a competition of ideas. Start negotiating as soon as possible. Do not set out to seek consensus! Ideas aren't discussed, everything's tried out and transformed. This makes change possible, change which is informed by shared experience, and which also does not cut off any sources of energy during the implementation of the project. When trust is there and functions well and you carry things together, then you get a lot back in return.

Muda: It is the multiplicity of capabilities that produces something bigger, something new. The potential of the group, not just the abilities of each individual, is decisive. That's really satisfying. Groups are popular because they are an expression of the desire for togetherness. The group and the sharing of responsibility, as well as the action of each individual member can vary. The collective is subject to a great deal of demands, expectations and misunderstandings, which are counterproductive. The collective is also sometimes confused with direct democracy and competition can become an issue.

Chris: What is your view of the unexpected, the third party involved in cooperation?

Sus: That which no one has done before generates added value.

Chris: In discussions on documentarism in art, the question arises as to the blueprints and utopias that transport such work. What does it mean to you?
Muda: For us it's about professing and naming that which is desirable. We try to look and listen and to enhance that which is found through music and other realities. The "Babette" video recounts a disaster, interposed with pleasing and beautiful images of a flower-filled field. We always endeavour to describe ambivalences and to take another look at what is possible.

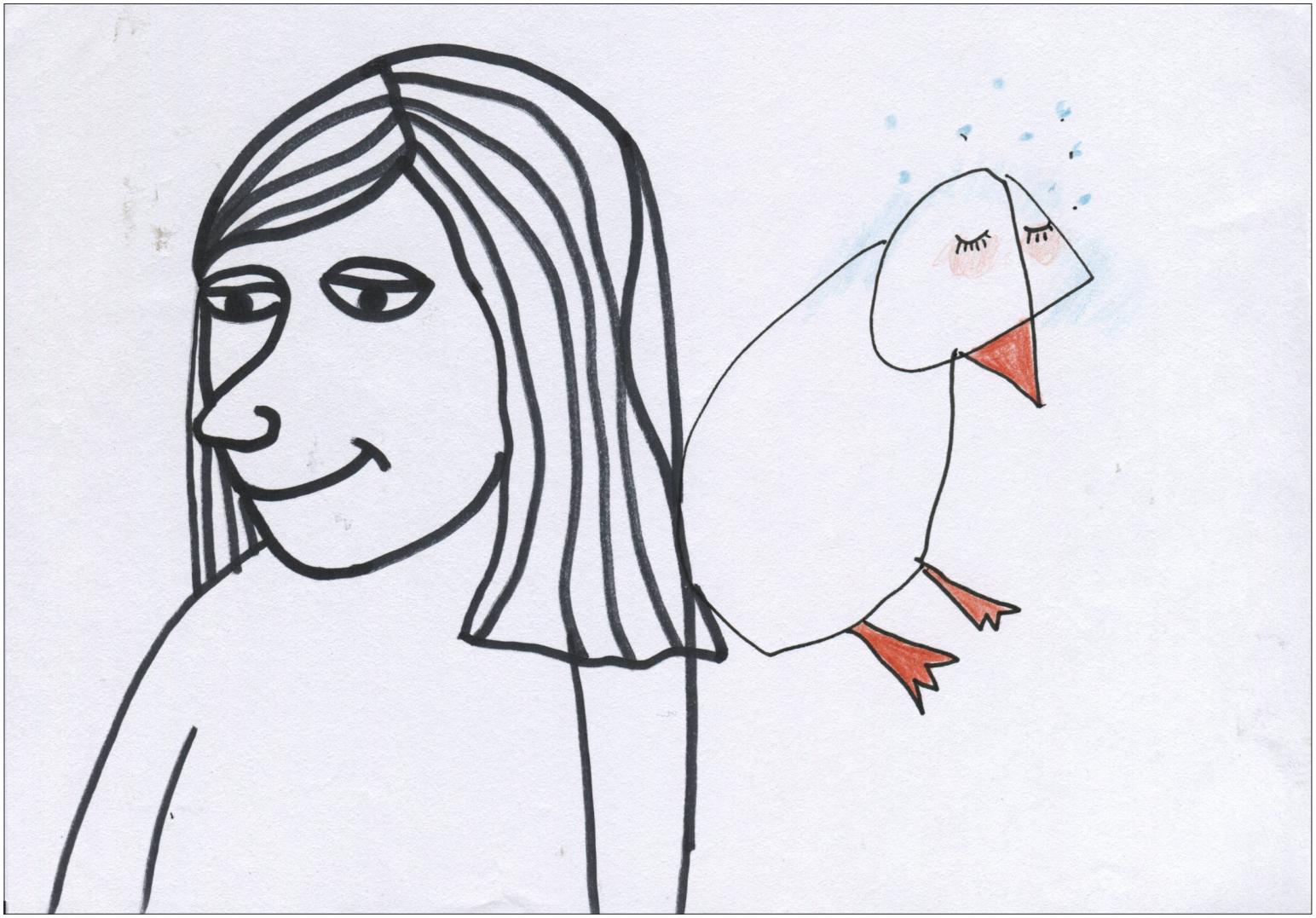
Chris: You talk of the search for the desirable...

Sus: It's about getting closer to things which still aren't there. Work as a door opener, as a chance to encounter the world, that notion's been around since time immemorial. There are artists who reproduce the world as an attempt to understand it. We belong to those who create a world by postulating it. There is an underlying political motivation here, as well as a feminist imperative.

Performance "Meine Logopädin heisst Sus Zwick." Photo: Daniel Lochmann and Myrtha Reusser, Muda Mathis, Sus Zwick

You and Me

LENA ERIKSSON AND CHRIS REGN



Squaring Off: 7.9 Cubic Metres

ELIZA TAN AND JAMES CARRIGAN IN CONVERSATION

7.9 Cubic Meters, a project initiated by artist James Carrigan, functioned as a gallery-within-a-gallery from its inception in early 2009 to June 2010. Conceived as a sculptural insert, a socio-cultural experiment and collaborative work, it consisted of a 7.9m3 construct erected within its first larger host organisation, Stanley Picker Gallery, London.

Carrigan's parameters for the project were that a program for the space would be proposed by a curator, following which all exhibitions would be based on an open-call for submissions, and that the structure along with the documentation of its activities would in the end be returned to him as a fully formed artwork in and of itself.

Over 250 proposals were received from artists based in the UK and internationally. The participating artists were: Adam Knight, Alexandra Hughes, Matthew MacKisack, Tom Richards, Pierre d'Alancaisez & AK Dolven, David Berridge & Compulsive Holdings, Flávia Müller Medeiros, Trong G Nguyen, AK Dolven, Jeremy Millar, Sinta Tantra and Judy Freya Sibayan.

Curated by Eliza Tan, the program, consisted of 12 monthly exhibitions revolving around 4 indexical themes:

1. The nature of the 'White cube' – Space, Symbolism and Iconoclasm
2. Roles and relationships between artists and curators
3. Artists' positions in relation to image, spectacle and audience
4. Archival work and documentation

The following contains excerpts from a discussion between James Carrigan and Eliza Tan about the collaborative nature of the project.

Eliza: We started off at the very beginning of the project discussing how it was an attempt to explore the co-existence of different exhibition models, modes of production and reception. We were concerned about conditions of 'visibility' and 'invisibility', 'institutional opacity' and 'transparency', 'independent access' and 'organisational exclusion'.

The project was an attempt to draw an erasable blueprint of artistic positions and mapping an adaptative means of working from both within and outside of institutionalized practices. 7.9 Cubic Metres was also very much an on-going conversation about navigating one's own processes of production in relation to that of other participating producers.

You stated from the beginning that the 7.9 Cubic Metre space and the documents resulting from its active life would eventually be returned to yourself as an artwork in and of itself, with an intention of underscoring the social processes involved in producing art as the object of the entire project. This placed certain emphasis on the multiple-authorship involved in its production. Where, at what point, and with whom does this idea, the work of art, and this project begin or end?

I found myself constantly questioning the nature of the project throughout my involvement. On the one hand, I played along with what you had resolved 7.9 Cubic Metres to be from the outset. On the other, I was aware that the project was also an attempt to resist closure; the 7.9 cube itself served a utilitarian function as an object but was at the same time a symbolic gesture. In collaborating to realize 7.9 Cubic Metres, I chose a position of complicity rather than distance.

James: I guess that I would like to adopt the perspective that we simply hold ideas momentarily as they evolve, implying that there is no real start point as such. In relation to the project, if considered as a whole, it has a very dispersed authorship but can then be seen as a collection of parts where authorship is more easily assigned. In that sense, nothing exists without everything else.

When developing this project, I was very much drawn to the layers of authors involved, it can be tricky to decipher in this respect, but I found that I was drawn to being able to take a back seat, that the work didn't look like a work, it looks more real world. In one sense it took a lot of pressure off me as an artist, I passed a lot of the risk over to you as your curatorial agenda was pretty much what people saw first, that or the specific work on display at any given time. Aside from that, I think the project would be read aesthetically before the viewer would even begin to consider the gallery as an artists' project. Hmmm, I guess here I am saying that I was hiding and tried to defer authorship, maybe I was curious to see if it could be possible for me to claim authorship!

The project has many layers for me; primarily it is a series of relationships, the everyday aspects of the work over the last year and a half or two years. I find it incredibly difficult to step back and just consider the work, I can never focus on one aspect, my mind races from one aspect to another and I can't pin anything down.

Your involvement in the project is so deep that you seem to race between several different positions, all of which are relevant and valid. It's interesting that you title this conversation "squaring off", I really don't think that you will achieve this, you are too close, and this is pretty key. Because the gallery is constructed as an artists' project, you have a heightened sense of your contribution and your relationships with the different elements of the work, I think you feel very much an author of the work because your involvement actively activates the subjects of the work...

Eliza: Ideas constantly evolve, as you've pointed out, and such evolution moves along a path dictated by how it's communicated and received. In some of our earliest conversations, you'd described 7.9 Cubic Metres as a reflexive attempt, a means of locating your own practice within a network of social relations. While the realization of the idea involved active feedback and participation from all collaborators, to what extent is 7.9 introspective? The idea was carried along, discussed and actualized by practitioners for practitioners. Many of the works exhibited within that tiny space were quiet, hardly offering any visual spectacle, while a work like Sinta Tantra's played on the idea of visual excess. In either case, these were responses by artists who were mutually interested in questioning the conditions of exhibition: What space? What institution? Whose call? How do I show what I make? What kind of opportunity is this? What are the critical parameters? How will my work be received in such a context?

While the content of the works shown is of interest to general audiences when framed pedagogically, the project's inherent concerns (or layers, as you put it) speak to those directly involved in making and showing art, and to critical audiences interested in reading the project as a sum, i.e 'initiated by James Carrigan', rather than as component parts, i.e individual exhibitions.

James: With curating, your frame is, in some respects, quite temporary, but possibly has the same validity as the artist's intention. If an interpretation can change, I wonder if the artist's intention is ever particularly important? In some respects, it is really down to the viewer to read a work, or to give it meaning, which of course instantly jumps back to the fact that the work is framed in the first instance. For me this difficulty to pin something down is a core aspect of 7.9. Can the work exist without the frame? And, what frames what?

Your point is great, it is difficult to understand where to position yourself in the reading of the work, is an individual show important or should I just consider the project as a whole? It is necessary that this is an active questioning. This switching between individual exhibitions and the overall work is a really important aspect of the conundrum at the heart of the project.

To what extent is the project introspective? This is tricky, it is wholly introspective, but it is simultaneously looking outwards and to the same extent! While developing the project it was important to achieve this duality; that 7.9 could be both a gallery and a work of art at the same time. I am quite relieved as your question suggests that I have achieved this.

I am thrilled that my project has a relevance to other artists. I know that to make a work of art takes a great deal of time and effort and to have so many people engage at that level is fantastic.

It is interesting that you suggest that work needs to be framed pedagogically for general audiences, and that this work is primarily of interest to those directly involved and critical audiences. I wonder how the general audiences would respond to the work if it were to be shown as part of a group show, or if it were situated within the main gallery space of an institution. I completely agree with your point, it is a bit of a frustration for me but I do hope that the future of the project allows me the opportunity to push this a bit further and to draw the general audiences a bit closer to the core themes.

I guess I should mention here that the project has been renamed The Commensal Gallery and that it will travel to a new institution every year….

The statement that begins with: "Ideas constantly evolve". Yes, I suppose you could say that it is introspective. But this subject is not intended to be of interest only once when framed pedagogically. I would like to think that the subject of the work, and in turn the work positioned within it can be of interest to the general viewing public. I think this is really a question of how transparent these issues are made by the respective artist.

When developing 7.9, I was conscious of how to construct the operational parameters of the work so that it would be intelligible to participating artists, curators, institutions and the viewing public as much as I was conscious of constructing the language of the object of the gallery itself. For me accessibility and transparency were pretty key. So, yeah, it is introspective but not opaque. At least I hope not.

7.9 Cubic Metres
"Sinta Tantra: Politics of Desire"
(installation shot). Image courtesy
of the artist.

Eliza: Let's look at an example. David Berridge's Guess Work / Guest Work explored exhibitions as semiotic spaces, a 'work' in itself authored by 'personal working lexicons' and platform to investigate the notion of mis-reading – in David's words "using it as a form of engagement both with curatorial history and my own practice." His presentation was accompanied by two 'Writing Exhibitions' workshops involving artists, fiction writers, theorists, architects and film-makers who got together to discuss the relationship between writing and exhibition making. The participant-producers were each other's audiences and critics, presenting short 5-15 minute, unrehearsed sequences of micro-exhibitions, performances and actions.

I think David's contribution was important in the way that it crucially mirrored questions on the shifting positions that authors and their audiences assume in the process of making meaning. While 'Guess Work / Guest Work', like 7.9 Cubic Metres as a whole, was a collaborative effort which hinged upon the organic realization of a work by multiple reader-authors. Collaboration and multiple-authorship simultaneously entails ownership and individual intention.

This component, which was guest curated by Berridge is an example of how activities developed with and without me, even if I had written the curatorial framework which influenced the project's outcomes only to an extent and not in totality. Working backwards again, the curatorial agenda was implicitly guided by the project parameters you had described, where I had positioned myself in complicity with you.

James: The project is a collection of different aspects of art production and to me, it's more interesting to consider art via these aspects rather than considering art as a solitary activity. I want to activate every element in the production of a single work, and it is for this reason that I need to disperse authorship.

You mentioned hearing David out and not making interventions, when you consider that your curatorial agenda is what he responded to in the first place, your involvement is pretty significant already. I'm curious to know how important authorship is to you?

It seems that we had in part the same experience, "things happening with or without you". This is an interesting challenge to an "author", our roles are about framing something and not about making it. This opens up something quite interesting, and something that is critical to the project. I believe that art is not made by artists but rather by those that frame art. Without this framing, there is nothing. Without the entire world around art there is no art.

In this respect, when I think back to what I set up, I was conscious to mimic the traditional formalities of galleries so as to become as invisible as possible, I wonder if I am an author of anything?

Eliza: Yes, an artwork might not exist if it is never seen and framed by certain symbolic structures, the white cube, critical discourse, historical narratives and so on. Art, as you refer to it, in relation to you, doesn't exist in a vacuum, is not self-contained. Its realization is dependent on a series of physical, intellectual and social interactions and observations, and, in some cases, the failure to engage some of these relations. An idea and intention realized as an artistic gesture may also remain unseen until it subsequently surfaces through circulation, making its way into visible sight. Bruce Naumen's studio experiments were made in blindsight, in the privacy of his studio but filmed, edited and then shown in the museum. How do we trace the ontology of what we end up calling a work of art, its function, position and value within a wider culture? Practice is also as much about 'making' as it is about framing, even when the critical or non-critical consumption of the work by audiences, collectors, those who give the work a frame and a certain degree of purchase, remains an uncertainty.

Announcement by the Archives of the Museum of Memories

The following is a report of the events
having occured on 21 January 2011:

On the border between Switzerland and Germany,
between the cities of Basel and Weil a.R.,
a refugee boat appeared in the forest.

A number of eye witnesses, residents of the nearby
refugee center, walkers and forest workers
described the situation as follows:

It seemed as if the whole area lit up like of an evening glow,
no matter whether supernaturally or really early day dawned.
The boat had been buried deep into the forest floor,
as if stranded at high speed. Too, it did not touch the ground
at any point. It seemed as if the background
and the boat were abnormally distant,
as if a mean focus had taken place to direct any viewing.
Deaf noise of silence. For a short time following the length
of the appearance, birds whistled their wings as chorus cry.
Even the leaves of the trees did not seem to rustle.
(Despite the ones too far from being heard). Only the T-shaped
door of a little cabin on the boat creaked a single time
at 4.12 pm. This was meant to be the signal to an observer
who wished to be the single one. True, there was only one
from the beginning. True, that other observers were
remaining same: In distance. In disbelief. Of the miraculous
Look! Here! of that occurance. Imagining a signal, all of them
went slowly to the boat to touch its parts of grey lacquer.
At the same moment, just a single observer was seen walking
to the boat to stare at a bone of thumb she discovered.
To stare at her hands.

As it has been reported by some, who closed their eyes to look again
and again to that place, hoping it would dissolve things,
hoping not to see it again. As hard as it was to interrupt the view,
as hard as it seemed to move away from the noise which was more
evident with closed eyes: The forest seemed to inhale the unobserved
ship. Following sentence was reported: "I guess all this happened
before as it already floated on deaf ears among them treetops."
Another visitor recalled a fugitive in the summer of 2010,
who, hiding his heavy breathing, assimilated in a grilling
in the evening sun secretly having adopted the group's skin color
in a second. He, as it was further discussed, must have been the scout
of the event. That evening, namely, he touched the surface
of the forest with the inside of his thumb, muttering something that
sounded like a murmur of waves.

ꝏ

As we continued to archive these reports, not one was confirmed in the testimony
of others, things seen and heard were getting increasingly diverse.
Then we thought the eye color of the observers could give answers.
Following a hint, we found the eye color of the observers' dye as if through dialect
in the complementarity with the color of the boat each in their own story.
Beginning with that, its shape and size changed from memory to memory.

But: The loss of an engine was not reported.
Similarly, no trace of the occupants.
Nor of tracks, how they got there.
Fact is: There appeared a refugee boat.
And: It did not appear.

Several eyewitnesses came forward with us with a double disappointment:
They were on rumor flowed out into the forest, drawn by the
attempt of a witness. But they saw nothing but trees.
Asking other people, it seemed, as they departed from them,
as if that sentence, in which they asked for it, was the one that had
inquired about the incident disappear.
Some listened to their descriptions and asked back whether
a communal desire for a picture all that very well could create.

Despite all: Nothing had been reported officially. When we asked out for it, we
had get back in-holiday emails, listened to waiting tunes in telephone receivers
for hours and were confronted with unusual lunch breaks of the institutions.
As close we will focus on the subjective observations of the people! Fully aware
of the curse of the archivist, not looking up from his records, we insist on common
rather selfless completion, as adding our own subjective perception.

Please provide information to our archive
www.museumsarchiv.info

If it helps, You can follow these questions:
What do You have observed that is related to the described phenomenon?
Do You feel connected to the event in any way?
Does it feel like You were the originator of this phenomenon? etc.
Each note will help to clarify the event until it is described
variously enough it can easily modify its shape to become invisible.
At this point we will see our task to be fulfilled.

Signed: The on-duty archivists of the Museum of Memories.
Thinking of: The brave following generations of archivists.
Thanks to the stuff at the Museum of Memories.

The first sound is already the lamentation about the interruption of silence. It will remain until it ends in a cry that bursts the eardrum. Silence.

ଓ

As a local independent archive, where reports are given in various kinds of languages and dialects, we do disagree to use a so called common english. Not only that of course we have the experience, any translation will de- and reform the content - the origin of the worldwide use of this language is based on conquest, annexation, and finally on objectivation: The suppression of the subjective expression of the individual. Our archive works according to the way people whisper, stammer, stutter. Our report will be sent as an expression of anger through the toothless translation of the Google Translator machine (October 2010).

JUDY FREYA SIBAYAN

Fast/f/light forward

Two years into curating, and performing my Scapular Gallery Nomad, a gallery I wore daily for five years, HerMe(s), my plural self, my psychopomp, guided me again through a dream so I could go on being a voleuse—on being a "woman bird-robber," a woman who Hélène Cixous refers to as a woman of fluid flight crossings; violating borders, and breaking walls.[1]

In this dream, HerMe(s) sent me the uber curator Hans Ulrich Obrist.[2] In recognizing my nomadic scapular gallery as like his Nano Museum (his shirt pocket was his exhibition space),Obrist invited me to take part in the exhibition *Cities on the Move* that crossed borders, that traveled to many cities: Vienna, Bordeaux, Copenhagen, Helsinki, New York, London, Bangkok. His Nano and my Scapular were exhibition spaces-on-the-move of fluid border crossings! Confident that my gallery is as powerful as any white cube, I went in and out of any mausoleum without fear of being co-opted. Scapular existed independent of these white cubes. And when I did enter a white cube, it was to speak truth to power.

In the dream, Obrist and I are inside the second floor of a very white, very modern museum. He throws something out into the cantilevered terrace of this very white modern museum. I run out to pick up the object. It is a boomerang which strangely enough did not return to Obrist. It is wrapped tightly in white gauze where the words "The visible is made visible by the invisible" are written. Obrist approaches me and says, "It works better out here."

In order to keep me going with curating upon my body, to keep alive my healing re-voleuse-ion, and in anticipation of the ending of my Scapular work, you generously sent me a *curare*, a curator: "one charged with the *care* of other selves, those imaginary citizens populating the mandates of public culture... the critical intervention of a curator can function like those of healers...a surgeon acting on inert, (anaesthetised) bodies for various effects, a homeopath which provides for awareness, a therapist [whose] intersubjective encounters…might resemble a talking *cure*…One whose practice is that of a critical "dynamic entailing those processes of becoming implicit to mobilising the spaces between art's discourses, objects, personalities, audiences and institutions."[3]

HerMe(s), Hélène, you both would love his name,[4] Ob ris[k]t, Ob [g]rist. Ob, a long and powerful river (rivers are symbolic of the creative power of nature and time…and signify fertility and the irrigation of the soil). Ob—opposite, out of, away from, indicating inverse shape or attachment. Risk. Grist, ground grain, a material for brewing, something that can be used to one's advantage. Grist for the mill—useful material, experience or knowledge.

Precisely, as a curator, Obrist lays down the groundwork, takes risks and helps brew ideas of other creators. In changing, reformulating, reinventing and breaking the rules of the game, he moves away from, out of, towards the opposite of the usual way of thinking and doing things. He inverts the shape of things in art. Obrist: "in exhibitions almost every single rule of the game has been invented. The whole 20th century is a permanent invention of new ways of doing exhibitions. Almost every radical gallery gesture has been tested, from the full gallery, to the empty gallery—everything… I think there is a huge potential to change the rules of the game."[5] Obrist listens to the dreams of artists, scientists, architects (he refers to these dreams as unrealized

projects). And allows himself to be useful to those who wish to realize their projects. He says, "I feel very often with my projects that we cannot force things. One cannot engineer human relations. One can set the conditions under which things can happen… For me, it is very important to trigger these possible sparks, and it is very organic."[6]

HerMe(s), you sent nothing less than someone like you, like Cixous,
Obrist is a voleus!

ଔ

A boomerang thrown into the terrace, into an inside-outside structure;
A killing object which in figurative language (to boomerang), means to return
to the originator with negative consequences, it is perceived as an object that works
better "inside-outside" the museum by this *curare* who throws this hunting weapon.
HerMe(s), in sending me a *curare*, you guided me towards the future work,
this critical work will be the work of curatorship. A curatorial performance,
it is a work of healing

Boom! Rang! C[h]ant. Lever. Terra. Ace.
I heard this dream clearly. It sang to me. Pushed me to action.
Assured me that in art, I was on firm ground in believing that
the visible is made visible by the invisible." A cantilever!
I heard this dream clearly. It sang to me. Pushed me to action.
Assured me that to continue making transparent the workings of a cantilever
(the artworld as a universe of belief), is the work at hand.
I heard this dream clearly. It sang to me. Pushed me to action.
Assured me that any art critical of the institution of art works better if the originator (the artist) is fully aware of her place in the institution of art, the very thing she is critical of. It is best to work as an inside-outsider. Outside yet inside. Critical yet implicated within that which is being critiqued. The work as an auto-critique.

ଔ

I woke up with this dream-seed inside my mouth.
This seed, this dream, I immediately recognized as my guide
to help me grow a project in conversation with
this other curator who came into my life, via Obrist; 7
another *curare* who became my friend, my co-curator, my co-creator,
A younger curator, with the name of
Matt Price. Matthew. Middle English *Mathew*, from Norman French *Mathiu*,
from Old French *Matheu*, from Latin *Matthaeus*, from Greek *Matthaios*,
from Hebrew *Mattathayah*, "gift of Jehovah,"
mattat, gift, from a root, to give + *yah*, Yah (Jehovah).[8]
Matt was another precious gift!

With this seedream, with Obrist, with Matt, I was again in the Realm of the Gift! In the realm of fluid conversations/exchanges. In the realm of giving and receiving. In the realm of collaborations.

And to prosper this project,
I took my cue from Cixous who asks "With whom do I write?...Cixous responds with 'She who accompanied me.' Friendship…is understood as an intellectual concept. He or she who thinks along similar lines, doubles the self, and encourages him or her to write…Cixous searches for a you, another who would free her, deliver her, make her come to writing through life."[9]

With whom do I make art? I respond with "He who thinks along similar lines, doubles my self, and encourages me to make art. Matt found me,[10] but I found him to free me, deliver me, make me continue making art through life."
I took my cue from Obrist who believes in long conversations with others to help materialize their dreams, to bring to fruition unrealized projects and in the process bridge many disciplines resulting in what he calls the "pooling of knowledge." Obrist: "One of the key aspects of my trajectory has always been conversations with artists…For me, it is very important to work on these things as if it were long distance running, over many years. Little by little, new ramifications happen. So, the answer to your question of how one can bring these things together is by, first of all, not rushing them, and, secondly, not jumping from one project to the next, but instead having sustained projects that evolve over a long time, through different chapters…What I have experienced is that very often these things take a lot of time."[11]

In conversation with a friend to collaborate on/realize a dream/project
HerMe(s), guided by your gift/dream,
I began a long conversation with a *mattat*
with the desire to have a friend accompany me to search for magic:
what we see is made possible by what we do not see:
the visible is made visible by the invisible!

Matt and I emailed and wrote letters to each other, talked over the phone within the course of fifteen months to realize a dream/project. And in our conversation, Cixous who believes that "writing 'approaches,' 'loves,' 'reads,' 'listens,' 'celebrates,' 'keeps' "[12] was there. Early in our conversation I was quoting Cixous to Matt:

> July 4, 2009, Sunday, 11:05pm. I finally finished reading Hélène Cixous' *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*, the one book I brought for the journey. Going home, in transit at Heathrow for five hours (I really wished you were there), the best thing I could do was read the writer Derrida considers the greatest in their language. And a lot of things struck me that may inform our work. Reading her gave me a great sense of the essence of inner truths. Cixous: "That is the definition of truth, it is the thing you must not say. 'The miracle into which the child and the poet walk' (she quotes Tsetaeva) as if walking home, and home is there. And for this home this foreign home, about which we know nothing and which looks like a black thing moving, for this we give up all our family homes. The thing that is both known and unknown, the most unknown and the best unknown, this is what we are looking for when we write. We go to the best known unknown thing, where knowing and not knowing touch, where we hope we will know what is unknown. Where we hope we will not be afraid of understanding the incomprehensible which is of course: thinking. Thinking is trying to think the unthinkable: thinking the thinkable is not worth the effort. Painting is painting what you cannot paint and writing is writing what you cannot know before you have written; it is preknowing and not knowing, blindly with words. It occurs at the point where blindness and light meet."[13] This must read beautiful in French. Her writing really excites me. If you come across this book, I'd love you to read her here. I know you read her too. Did you ever read her in French? What have you read of hers?
>
> I think this is where we have been groping to go, to search.
>
> You wrote of memory and invisibility. I like your observation that "without memory, nothing we see around us would make sense, yet what we do see is disconnected from memory because it is visible." A paradox, the palpable only becomes palpable because of the impalpable? We are but memory? We are what we see? But do you mean by making sense, in fact as seeing? As in when someone says "I see" they mean, they understand. They see beyond the visible? Two levels of seeing; Or is seeing always beyond what is in front of us because

of who we are. I know seeing the world is cultural. But there are basic truths we sense, intuit, know deep within, I hope.

Is it a stretch to connect your idea of memory to Cixous' idea of pre-knowing? She cites her favorite artists as those who wrote with this pre-knowing, dreamers, sleepwalking scribes: Kafka, Lispector, Tsvetaeva, Genet. I too see with my eyes wide shut in the dark since I sleep dream a lot, and since I saw our project in a dream I had the second Friday I met you, (remember the Obrist/ terrace/wrapped object dream? where I saw that the more things are hidden the more things get articulated, visible). Cixous again: "Dreams remind us that there is a treasure locked away somewhere, and writing is the means to try to approach the treasure. And as we know the treasure is in the searching, not the finding...If we have lost everything in reality, dreams enable us to restore those moments when we are greatest, strongest in strength and in weakness—when we are magic."[14]

I can't help but connect this idea to my dream, to our project. Is the locked treasure what we wish to search for? and since it is locked away, (hidden, invisible), and a treasure, we know that it is exquisitely whole, magical, therefore able to bring forth profound art, objects of clarity, of visibility. Both passages point to that which will exist only if the artist has the courage to go where these things exist a place where no one has gone, a place where we "take everything off,"[15] a place where the author dies. Cixous could never comfortably lay claim to being the author of her all her texts.

So where does all this leave us?..Evidences of "cantilevers?" Should we now look into artists who created with this pre-knowing, who created with the courage to leave their family homes? I think we were thrown off by Susan Hiller's book. But this is good. Untethered in the sea of all things, it's a great way to find our moorings. I find Hiller's project problematic vis-a-vis ours. Since she has the pretext of the artist as anthropologist, she can pretty much reclaim/ recreate objects by reinterpreting/ recontextualizing them within the constructs of art, thereby "remythifying" them again. We however, based on your list of ideas and how I understood them, are more attracted to the deconstructivist project. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think we want to expose precisely the workings of the system that make possible certain things as visible and other things invisible which brings us right into the heart of representing systems in art. But not to worry. The most elegant solutions will strike us at the most "unclever of moments" as you put it. All we need is to let things simmer in the meantime.

The Cantilever, the stuff of curatorship

About a year into the conversation, Matt and I arrived at some workable conceptual framework. We concluded, the enigma "the visible is made visible by the invisible" a cantilever of sorts, is the stuff of curatorship. We are in the business making things visible as art. We are in the business of displaying, exhibiting, exposing objects in a way that we are able to create see-ers, those who can be educated, "cultured" to perceive these objects as worthy of their gaze and respect; that these objects are of great value to one's culture and to our "being cultured." As a result of this process, these objects eventually become commodity fetishes par excellence. For the only art that is free from the powers of the debasing system of commodity production[16] is the art that is invisible.[17] But the art that never gets processed by and within the art system and therefore never made visible or seen within and by this system, never gets counted as art!

Art's simple tautology seems to be thus: object proposed as art or even art whose object is to critique art will only become visible once comprehended and made known by the gatekeepers (curators, critics, dealers, collectors and artists themselves) making it highly saleable! We decided that if we were to be critical of our practice as curators and artists we needed to work within this tautology. We asked ourselves to what extent do we have to remove the object from the art structures and systems that make

it comprehensible, thus visible, thus commodifiable? How much do we have to deplete the object of its determinants as a visible object within the art system? Or taking our cue from Yves Klein who removed the paintings from one of the galleries in MoMA Paris in 1961 and exhibited the context itself (the museum space) as the determining factor of what becomes art, do we now lose the site all together? Do we not ever create a space to house any thing? Thus we conceived the Museum of Mental Objects. We conceived MoMO. The phrase "mental object" was appropriated from art critic Thomas McEvilley, a phrase he coined to describe the works of James Lee Byars, an artist who refused, as much as possible, to make palpable art objects.[18] It took two more years of incubating the idea before we arrived at the final form of the museum.

A whisper, a birthing voice

Working as close as possible to the unconscious without censorship, I was confident we were going to arrive at final form of being this museum of mental objects. Quietly going about my daily life, one day in quiet stealth, I heard you outside and inside my head HerMe(s), you whispered: "Art objects need to be whispered to you; accept and install these whispered objects inside you; become a museum of imagined objects." HerMe(s), you whispered and whispering became the process of creating invisible art objects, of installing these objects inside our heads. Your own words inside my head were mental objects! A birthing voice, a guidance. And never once doubting your voice, we followed your bidding and acting with great speed, in an instant we became a museum.

It had to be you HerMe(s) to guide us in this work of creating a "space" for invisible art objects. This ludic MoMO. It had to be you, trickster-thief of winged sandals and winged cap "of many shifts (polystropos), a robber who appropriates with cunning…a bringer of dreams. Patron of stealthy action, master of magic words, seducer and whisperer, and giver of good things."[19] "Born as a latecomer," [you] negotiated "a preexisting order and found ways to open up space within this order"[20] for yourself.

In ironically inverting with mirth the entombing museum into two living bodies, we became like you HerMe(s), trickster/thief-artists, creators of conceptual space for art. Like you we negotiated a preexisting order and found a way to open up space within this order for ourselves and for others.

Conceiving a third body: The Museum of Mental Objects

We stole, we appropriated what conventionally a museum is and in a series of ironic inversions, in parodying it, we took flight with laughter. And again we stole, we appropriated the words "mental object" to construct our name and conceive of ourselves as a museum. We became a voleus/e: we flew the coop, took "pleasure in jumbling the order of space, in disorienting it, in changing around the furniture, dislocating things and values, breaking them all up, emptying structures, and turning propriety upside down."[21]

The work of the voleuse "is to knock down walls, to fly and to render transparent"[22] the workings of the art institution:

It is a question of leave-takings and negotiations,
it is a question of all that can exceed our walls and our limits
and to follow with our eyes shut wide open the dream, the flight of that artist who says yes and merci the instant the muse voices/whispers its bidding:
"Parody the *musée de imaginaire*, become a museum of mental objects!"
The same way, sees words/whispers/dreams open their doors of flesh
and reveal their treasures, their only music.

"For this we have to walk, to use our whole body to enable the world to become flesh exactly as this happens in our dreams. In dreams…our body is alive; we either use the whole of it, or depending on the dream, a part. We must embark on a body-to-body journey in order to discover the body."[23]

Hélène distinguishes this art as "works of being,"—art made in the instant. Somatised.[24] The creation of art in the instant, of performing as the Museum of Mental Objects is art made always in the present with Matt's and my body with other bodies. No art is made, collected, installed, and stored unless there is an artist whispering art to Matt or me. There is no art exhibited unless there is an audience listening to and imagining the art being mouthed/ exhibited by the body-museum.

MoMO privileges life over death; over mausoleums, over monolithic museums—over physical art spaces that privilege/house/entomb physically embodied art objects. Matt and I in parodying Malraux's *musée de imaginaire*, flew with his idea; we became a museum where artists exhibited what they could only imagine, what our audience could only imagine and what Matt and I as museum could only collect, install, exhibit and store in our memory as imagined objects, as mental objects. With the purpose of rendering transparent the workings of the institution of art.

The museum as body, as myself, as Matt, as both of us,
as parody, as a series of ironic inversions
brought art to the here-and-now and away from the eternal;
to the open and away from the walled-in;
to the humble, messy and the sordid
and away from the clean, the unshadowed, and the sanitized;
to the quotidian, the dull, the rote, the repetitive, and the habitual
and away from the unique, the new, the precious and singular;
to the common, the ordinary, the infra-ordinary, and the demotic and vernacular,
to the din and the noisy and away from deep silence and stillness;
to life and the living and away from the entomb;
to the variegated, the textured, the heterogeneous
and away from the homologous and the very white;
to the unseen, the invisible, the only-imagined
and away from spectacle, the spectacular and the large scale;
to the inconsequential and away from the significant, the valorized and momentous;
to the profane and the secular and away from the sacred and sacramental;
to the humble and away from power and influence;
to active, whole and fully present conversing bodies
and away from the silenced, fragmented audience of disembodied eyes;
to mostly the margins, borders and the periphery
and away from the center most of the time;
to the rhizomatic, the moving and away from the hierarchical;
to the accidental, random and aleatory, serendipitous and providential
and away from closed and controlling systems.

The Museum of Mental Objects in practice as remembered by an audience[25]

> At mid-morning people gather quietly in the lobby of the Timms Centre for the Performing Arts on the University of Alberta Campus. I bump into Judy Freya Sibayan in the cloakroom as I go to hang up my coat. She is holding a carrot muffin but says she is too nervous to eat it right away. She is about to give a performance of her work, Museum of Mental Objects or MoMO, in the lobby at 11 o'clock. She places her muffin on a ledge and says she will get it later. She is a small woman but does not go unnoticed. She is wearing a long, floor length skirt with a consistent black and white plaid pattern and a train that is raised from the ground by a strap on her wrist. While the skirt seems to anchor her to the ground, it also opens and closes as she speaks—her arm lifting the train like a wing flapping this way and that. The voluminous skirt is her MoMO attire she explains and later, in the performance, tells us it was woven by her 93 year old aunt when she was just a young

Footnotes:
1. Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," *New French Feminism*, eds. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, New York: Schocken, 1981, 259.
2. Hans Ulrich Obrist is ranked number one by the London based magazine *ArtReview* in their 2010 list called "Power 100," a list of artists, curators, collectors, dealers and other personas producing the value of art.
3. Jennifer Fisher, "Trick or Treat: Naming Curatorial Ethics," *Sometime/s 2 Brief Histories of Time*, ed. Sunil Gupta (London: The Organization for Visual Arts Limited, 1995) 9.
4. Cixous loves to find meanings in the names of her beloved writers by formulating words from their names. For example for Clarice Lispector, she writes: "If one takes her name in delicate hands if one unfolds it and unpeels if following attentively the directions of the shells, in accordance to its intimate nature, there are dozen of small glittering crystals, which reflect each other in all the tongues where women pass. Claricelispector. Clar. Ricelis. Celis. Lisp. Clasp. Clarisp. Clarilisp—Clar—Spec—Tor—Lis—Icelis—Isp—Larice—Ricepector—clarispector—claror—listor—rire—clarire—respect—rispect—clarispect—Ice—Clarici—O Clarice you are yourself the voices of the light, the iris, the regard, the flash [éclair] the orange flashing [éclairs orange] around our window" (Sellers 210-211).
5. "A Rule of the Game, a Talk with Hans Ulrich Obrist," *Edge, The Third Culture*, edge.org <http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/obrist08/obrist08_index.html> Retrieved May 2, 2010.
6. Ibid.
7. Obrist curates exhibitions and usually engages many various art communities not necessarily involved directly with his projects. In London for example, the graduate school art administration program of the Royal College of Art sent a few of their senior students to assist and learn from the exhibiting artists.
8. "Matthew," The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, ed. William Morris, Boston: American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., 1970, 807.
9. Verena Andermatt Conley, *Hélène Cixous*, New York: Harvestser Wheatsheaf, 1992, 71.
10. Matthew Price was one of the graduate students of the Royal College of Art who volunteered to assist an artist in "Cities on the Move London." He chose me.
11. "A Talk with Obrist," edge.org.
12. Susan Sellers, ed. *The Hélène Cixous Reader*, London: Routledge, 1994, 95.
13. Hélèn Cixous, *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*, trans. Sarah Cornell and Susan Sellers, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993, 38.
14. Ibid., 88.
15. Ibid., 90.

woman. Sibayan now owns the loom it was made on.
In the centre of the lobby a long scroll has been unrolled on the floor. There are pictures of Sibayan at various venues around the world and lines drawn to link the events. This is a map of sorts of her peripatetic travels to art centers around the world. People mingle around the scroll reading as they sip coffee, eat muffins and chat. Gradually, a performance space is defined as people seat themselves on benches that surround the scroll.

Finally, Sibayan is introduced by the hosts of the performance and then steps onto the scroll, situating herself in the centre. She announces that MoMO is now open and asks that no photos, video, recordings or documentation be made of MoMO's exhibits. MoMO's exhibits are to be retained through memory only. Like any museum she provides an introduction to MoMO, its origins and its collecting practices. There are actually two MoMO's, the Judy MoMO and the Matt MoMO . MoMO is a collaborative project between Sibayan and British writer and curator, Matt Price who operates a MoMO branch gallery out of Birmingham, England. It contains a totally different collection of works.

Finally, Sibayan displays, one by one, the 10 pieces in the museum's collection. She cites the artist's name, provides some background on the work and the artist, and recites the work in the words passed on to her by the exhibiting artist. She then gives the spectators a few moments to envision the work. The descriptive words form images in my mind but there is not enough time to savor them. Sibayan moves too quickly on and each work is duly displayed barring some gaps and glitches as Sibayan searches her memory to bring each work to presence (problems with installation, she notes). She seems to speak, unscripted adding phatic phrases (let me think, how did that go again? let me see) that make her words stop and start instead of flowing steadily like water. She moves about like someone having a casual conversation – turning this way and that, bending her body, lifting her arm, tripping on her skirt, and then correcting her step.

In honour of her first appearance in Canada, Sibayan accessions a new work, now the 11th in her collection, from Edmonton performance artist, Tanya Lukin-Linklater. Holding her young baby against her shoulder, Lukin-Linklater joins Sibayan on the scroll. They stand close together, three heads leaning into one another as Lukin-Linklater whispers her artwork to Sibayan. It takes a few minutes and some repetition back and forth before Sibayan has retained and "installed" the work in her memory. Lukin-Linklater moves away and Sibayan haltingly presents the new work.

After the exhibit, MoMO invites questions from he spectators. How does MoMO choose what to collects? (MoMO has to like the person). Does she curate shows, exhibiting only part of the collection? (No she exhibits all the work although sometimes MoMO forgets parts and has lost two works so far). Does she have a personal attachment to any of the works? (At first she says no and then reconsiders, mentioning one of the works she responds to more emotionally). Does MoMO retain artists' statements? (No, but MoMO always gives some background when presenting a work). What about art critics who want to critique or interpret the works—how can they do this without describing the works? (MoMO asks people not to describe the works but they can choose to do otherwise). Can an artist like Lukin-Linklater cite the MoMO exhibit on her resume? (Yes, Tanya can say she has a work in the MoMO collection—it is available as a "performance on demand"). When does MoMO open and how? (At dinner, with friends, in galleries and on the street —the museum can be opened on demand). Finally, before closing MoMO,

someone requests that Lukin-Linklater's new work be displayed again. Sibayan, as MoMO, begins to recite the work but stalls on a line. It wasn't installed properly she giggles and approaches Lukin-Linklater for her to whisper the phrases to her again. One last try and the words finally hang freely in the space.

This is a memory of Marie Leduc of her visit to MoMO.

The laughter of the trickster, the laughter of the parodist

HerMe(s), "laughter acknowledged and welcome[d] the world that [you made] mutable" in your successful attempt "to open new space in the cosmos." With your birth, "the world became a place that eludes simple interpretation. It entere[d] a slippery space inhabited by humor" which presented "us with surplus satisfaction, something pleasant that we never had to ask for. Though the cosmos may have seemed complete," HerMe(s), you made "a claim that there is more to enjoy in the world than we initially thought. Into a static world, [you] introduced "a dynamic flexibility that helps realize additional potentials." You looked "at the slow-footed tortoise and realized its potential as a lyre. By making a lumbering tortoise the companion to the swift movements of the feast," you brought "laughter to the world…"As we laugh, we come to approve of the changes [you have] made to the world. Where once there was a world in which a tortoise was simply a tortoise, a new potential has materialized in the form of a lyre." With this trick, we now recognize "the benefits that can come from understanding the world as one that has room for flux. Flux is no longer "seen as a problem that needs to be nailed down. Instead, the humor associated with" [you HerMe(s)] "suggests, this flux" this fluidity "is what enables positive changes to the world."[26] This is the same humor associated with the parodist. "The comic element present in parody…renders self-criticism compulsory" with the parodist inevitably becoming "an agent in the evolution of forms."[27] Indeed, MoMO is a comical retelling/rendition/ performance/ re-interpretation and transformation of the white cube—the modern or contemporary museum of art.

Agency and the transformation of the art institution

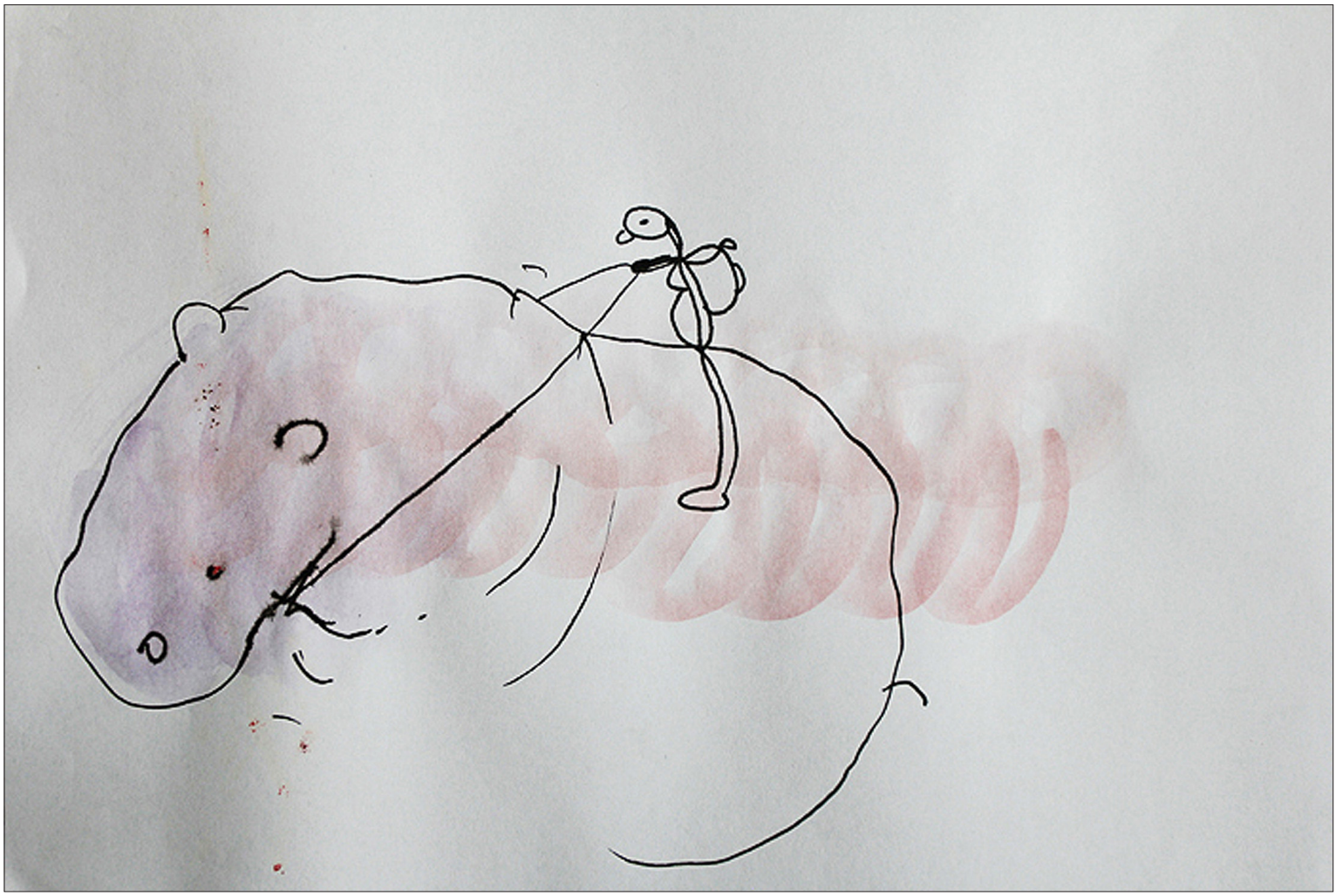
Birthed in the realm of the gift, in the fifteen months of writing to each other, of conversation, Matt and I went beyond the self-interests of our ego, toward each other. We understood Cixous in her belief that "the other is heralded as crucial in effecting a self-transformation."[29] Because of each other, we were able to transform ourselves into a third body—the museum conceived as two living bodies. In transforming ourselves into a living museum, we constituted ourselves necessarily as persons capable of losing a part of ourselves without losing integrity. "But secretly, silently, deep down inside,"[29] we grow and multiply.

And if we understood humor as the process of realizing surplus potentials, then Matt and I were able to easily open ourselves to the laughter that is brought about by MoMO as self-parody. As MoMO, we constantly perform one of HerMe(s)' tricks: we cross and violate "boundaries…through fluidity of form and irreverent behavior [violating] symbolic and cultural codes and thus embody[ing]…the liberating 'joke' of the trickster."[30] Where once there was a world in which a museum was simply a mausoleum, a new potential has materialized in the form of a museum in the form of two living bodies as "space" of invisible art objects, of merely imagined objects. MoMO as self-parody does not merely question or challenge the validity of the present condition of the art institution, but proposes the unimpeded opportunity for renewing and changing art praxes if they are to remain relevant and critical. MoMO lives in and because of a world that has room for flux that enables us to transform the institution of art to our liking. MoMO makes us self-aware of how to actively take part in the struggle over the production of our art and the production of ourselves as artists. An art of giving and receiving, MoMO places us in the realm of collaborations, thus in the Realm of the Gift, in the realm of gratitude, in the realm *Mercis*!

16. Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Malden: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1990, 2.
17. Victor Burgin, *The End of Art Theory,* London: Macmillan, 1986, 190.
18. Thomas McEvilley, "James Lee Byars, The Atmosphere of Question," *Artforum*, Summer 1981: 53.
19. The Ambrosia Society.org <http://www.ambrosiasociety.org/hermes__hermeticism.html> Retrieved September 11, 2009.
20. Christopher W. Bungard, "Lies, Lyres, and Laughter in the Homeric Hymn to Hermes," Digital Commons @ Butler University <http://digitalcommons.butler.edu/facsch_papers/86> Retrieved November 6, 2009.
21. Cixous, "Medusa," *French Feminism* 258-259.
22. The passage from which I patterned mine: "…the work of the angel is to knock down walls, to fly and render transparent: It is a question of evasion and negation, it is a question of all that can exceed, our walls and our bones, and to follow with eyes in the text of the sky, the flight of that woman who climbs the hill, at the hour when the dragon flies make space for the mosquitoes…The same way, sees languages open their doors of flesh and reveal their treasures, their only music" (in Conley 126).
23. Cixous, *Ladder* 65.
24. Conley 122.
25. Marie Leduc, "The Visible and the Invisible: The Parodic Performances of Judy Freya Sibayan," Unpublished manuscript, 2008. Marie Leduc was a MoMO audience when it was performed at the Timms Center Lobby of the University of Alberta, Edmonton Canada on March 14, 2008.
26. Bungard, *Hymn to Hermes*.
27. Michelle Hanoosh, "The Reflexive Function of Parody," *Comparative Literature*, Spring, 1989: 114.
28. Sellers 95.
29. Cixous, "Medusa," *French Feminism 258.*
30. Clara Juncker, "Black Magic: Woman(ist) as Artist in Alice Walker's The Temple of My Familiar," *American Studies in Scandinavia*, Vol. 24, 1992: 40-41.

Journey

LENA ERIKSSON AND CHRIS REGN



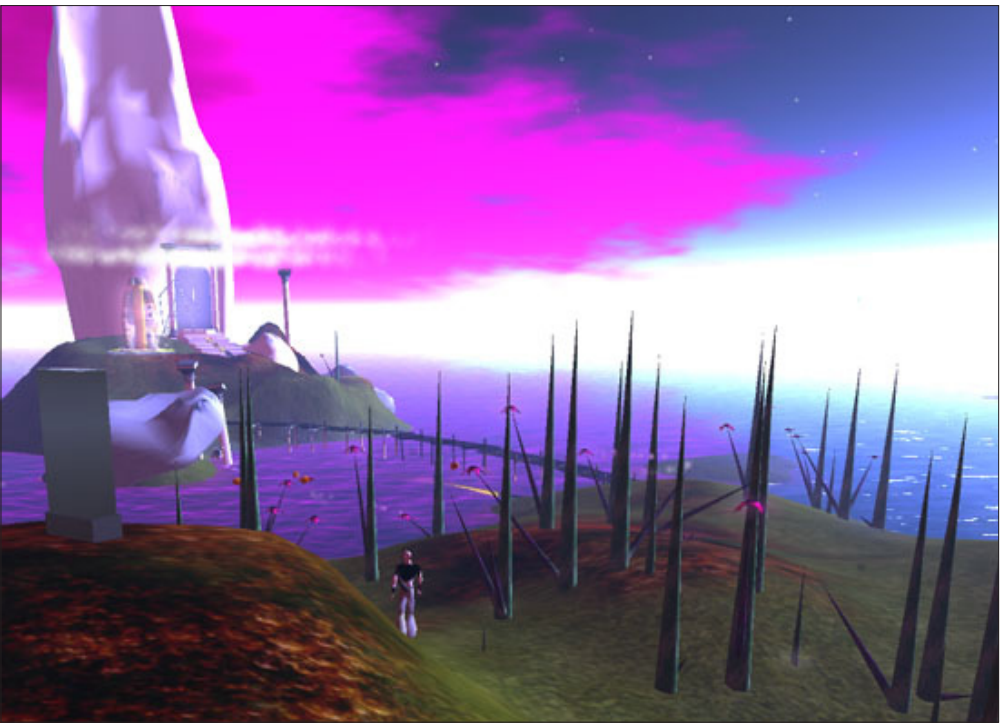
mellifera: a collaboration as described by Andrew Burell

ANDREW BURELL AND TRISH ADAMS

1. About mellifera

mellifera is a mixed reality artwork that consists of an on-line interactive environment in Second Life which is linked to a complimentary series of real-time exhibitions in gallery and museum spaces. (Later iterations of the project have been developed in Second Life's open source cousin—OpenSim). In all the versions of the *mellifera* environment we created a virtual eco-system and central to the formation of this bourgeoning artificial life world was our direct engagement with various aspects of bee behavior at Queensland Brain Institute. Here researchers investigate cognition, navigation and communications in the honeybee. Thus our poetic, artistic, experiential and experimental interactions with the bees inspired the development of *mellifera*'s aesthetic and conceptual core.

In the physical exhibitions, visitors are able to interact with the artificial life via direct physical engagement by manipulating and interacting with custom-built physical interfaces—literally affecting the entire ecology and stability of the *mellifera* environment. Participation is also possible virtually as an avatar—both the physical and virtual viewer becomes the ultimate collaborator in our work—their very presence bringing about change in the structure of the environment and their mediating interactions affecting the ebb and flow of the system.



mellifera environment, OpenSim version. Image courtesy of the artist.

2. The collaborative framework

From the outset, *mellifera* was to be a project that involved collaboration on numerous levels. The two artists involved, Trish Adams and myself, have a history of collaboration—but in very different ways. Before *mellifera* I had worked on "networked collaborations" with other artists in which a nodal based system would allow artists to collaborate remotely over the Internet to create artworks in real time—usually these projects were based around distributed and streamed audio and performative events. Trish on the other hand came to *mellifera* with a history of collaborating, not with other artists, but with scientists and technicians. During the process of creating the work, we would come to find that while we were both dedicated to the collaborative process we had very different, yet equally valid ways of working collaboratively—I was used to working with and within networked communities to find resources to gain the skills necessary to produce a desired result and Trish worked by finding collaborators with the skills to work on aspects of the project themselves.

Trish and I met at a new media arts residency in 2005 and had since then worked together on several smaller projects. We came to understand that we both shared an interest in investigating concepts of the self—and from the very outset of *mellifera* we knew that this shared interest would become central to our efforts. We wrote the initial proposal for *mellifera* with this in mind, knowing we wanted to create for ourselves an opportunity to investigate the "self" as constructed through narratives, the physicality of self as well as

Trish and Andrew's avatars meeting and working on the project. Image courtesy of the artist.

the implications of the tripartite relationship between the self, avatar and artificial life. These concerns formed an integral part of both of our practices however we did come to this collaborative relationship from quite different directions. Trish has spent a number of years exploring corporeality and identity through experimenting on cells from her own body and immersing herself in art/science research in the role of a "human guinea pig" and I brought a long-standing interest in virtual worlds and artificial life forms and the construction of identities through narrative.

One vital thing that I believe needs addressing from the outset, is that I firmly believe that at no stage during a successful collaborative project should the individual artists involved lose sight of their own subjective intent—to the artist, an objective "greater good" does not and should not exist. This obviously brings with it its own hurdles, but also should make it self evident, that a paper written on the collaborative processes of *mellifera* by Trish, might be very different from the one I am now writing. One thing I am sure of, however, is that we both share a remarkably similar vision of the nature of our role as artists—and as we shall see it is this very role that necessitates collaboration.

3. The rise of the amateur and the notion of the hybrid entity

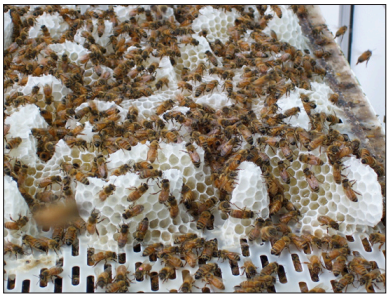
I have spent a lot of time inside the "academy" where the role of the artist is in somewhat of a confused state competing for research dollars—usually on another disciplines' terms—whilst justifying itself on its own terms. Consequently I needed to define my own place as an artist. I began to see myself as an amateur working across a broad selection of disciplines, the combination of which created the distinct discipline of the professional artist. This rise of a return to amateurism I view as a wonderfully positive thing stepping (and I apologise for indulging in a romanticised view of history) in the footsteps of heroes such as Giordano Bruno and Charles Darwin. For me, the artist has an open book in which to place their research allegiances. One of the most empowering aspects of this role is that it enables a form of research that is based upon the artists own subjective passions and drives. However, generally, this position necessitates interdisciplinary collaboration, where artist/researchers seek out expertise to bolster their skills and knowledge.Sometime after our collaboration started it came as a great eye opener to me when I read an essay Trish had written that touched on a similar theme. She had come to define the artist as a "hybrid entity." To quote Trish:

> This construct of a 'hybrid entity' is invaluable to artists, such as myself, who engage with cutting-edge scientific research developments since it offers liberating alternative strategies for collaborations that facilitate imaginative, open-ended project outcomes. When I initially considered collaborating with a leader in the field of biomedical engineering, I had misgivings about the potential of my participation to generate a meaningful contribution. I was concerned that this potential would be perceived to be quite limited if it were measured in terms of more proscribed research paradigms. …this hybrid, experimental methodology enables an artist to enter a very different, specialist domain – in my case that of pioneering biomedical engineering—bringing to it the creative, disparate skills of a visual artist. Rather than seeking to emulate the established, modernist, scientific model, an open-ended flexible dialogic research relationship affords a reinterpretation of the research paradigm and a reappraisal of the structuring and meaning of 'knowledge' in this situation.

4. The scientists and the bees

At the beginning of the *mellifera* project Trish and I spent time observing and experimenting with research scientists at the Visual and Sensory Neuroscience group, Queensland Brain Institute (QBI), where Trish was artist-in-residence. Through our engagement with these scientists we had the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the honey bee. The scientists took on a collaborative role in the project, and we found that the relationship flowed both ways, in particular our own research into the use of sound and vibration as a means of communication within the hive was of particular interest to the scientists. We were actually able to place microphones into the hives, the bees then built their comb around the microphones allowing us to take direct recordings of the messages being passed through the hive. We both like to think that the bees themselves were collaborators in our project, they always seemed willing to co-operate and the only time we wore protective outfits was when we disturbed their hive to insert the microphones.

The collaborating bees.
Image courtesy of the artist.



Inserting a microphone into a hive.
Image courtesy of the artist.

5. Virtual world as collaborative space

Significantly, Second Life became not only the media in which we were creating this project, but also the site of our collaboration; since Trish was in Brisbane and I was in Sydney. The actual process of collaborating in the virtual environment was an interesting one since the lab, the studio, the exhibition space, the library and art supply store are all merged into one. We chose to communicate in Second Life using Instant Messaging (IM), as these conversations were self-archiving so we had a permanent record of our meetings to refer to when needed. The nature of our collaboration was a complex one. We incorporated discussion at each stage of the project; every change and stage in the work's development was the outcome of debate and mutual agreement. It is interesting to note that while I had been exploring the possibilities of virtual worlds for some time, this was a relatively new platform for Trish. This was actually a very important strength of the collaboration as Trish was able to not only view the work as it was created without any preconceptions of what the media was, but was also able to push the work technically without any preconceived notion of the media capabilities. Conceptual, technical and aesthetic choices were all discussed at length, We were able to test out many of these choices in real time, though for larger pieces of work, in particular programming, I would then spend time alone working through a problem, before we would meet up again. We tried and tested updates to the project and reappraised how the new addition fitted the overall work. Each and every element that eventually made it into the project is the result of this process. It was also important to us that we had a "master document" that was based on our original proposal that we could keep referring back to, to keep us within the scope of the project. This is not to say that we allowed this document to limit it, it was definitely a document that evolved over time and had room to grow with our discoveries and flights of fancy along the way. For example, we were not initially interested in introducing a human style artificial intelligence into our system, but the more we worked on the project the more it became apparent that our world needed some sort of mythical gardener, an artificial agent who could tend to the needs of the other inhabitants of the space and also act as an intermediary between the work's audience and the artificial life itself. As an adjunct to our collaboration in Second Life, we also spent some time together in the physical world, working through aspects of the physical exhibition.

Installation view of *mellifera.*
Image courtesy of the artist.

6. Networked communities as collaborative spaces

As I have mentioned, there is a whole other level of collaboration that has taken placein this project, it is often overlooked by those who are not practitioners when they write about practice, though it is most highly prized by practitioners themselves—that is the online-networked community. Online forums and e-lists are virtual worlds of their own, text worlds, often inhabited through necessity; they also provide a sense of community. What is really important here though, is that they also provide the professional artists (as amateur in multiple fields) access to experts in any field.

7. Conclusions

In many ways, one of the driving tropes of the project is the gestalt nature of the artificial eco system. Each element was designed and crafted by us, though the final nature of the work evolved into something much greater than these parts as they all came into being and began to interact with each other. None of this could have taken place without the various collaborative components—without the scientists, without the support of the online forums and communities, without the bees and their inspiring life processes, but most of all, without the hardened driving force of the personal and subjective vision of the two artists, the whole would certainly be very much a lesser thing.

8. Credits and URLS

mellifera has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body through the Inter-Arts Board MMUVE it! initiative. The aims of this initiative were to support artists experimenting within virtual environments and relating these experiments to real-time physical interactions. We were encouraged to collaborate and develop new interfaces for real-time and virtual interaction as well as exhibition opportunities for the project in Australia and abroad. For further supporters of the project please visit the artists' and the *mellifera* project websites: www.mellifera.cc; Andrew Burell's site: www.miscellanea.com; Trish Adams' site: www.trishadams.tv

Users interfacing with *mellifera* interface devices. Photo credit: Keith Novak.

SIMON COOPER AND ZIYING ZHOU

The Ethics of Collaboration in Sunaptic Sculpture

PATRICIA J. FLANAGAN

Keywords: Collaboration, art, public art, sculpture, dialogue, relational aesthetics, Littoral art, social sculpture, community art, regional communities, remote communities, New South Wales, RMB 2329 Merriwa Public Art Project, Denman Creek Interpretative Signage Walk, Hyde Park Public Art Project, Singleton, Hunter River Sculpture, Gloucester, Ten Thousand Steps Interpretative Sculpture Walk, Tricia Flanagan.

Abstract: Collaboration is back on the agenda as a key feature in artistic practice. Producing artwork in collaboration with others represents an alternative to the prevailing view in the art world of the artist as individual genius. Rather, collaboration represents multi-faceted work practices replacing singularity and duality with plurality. The act of working together questions notions of value and authorship and the accepted hegemonic order of the art industry.

Denman Creek Interpretative Signage Walk

This paper is an inquiry into this phenomenon. It presents and describes, from a number of perspectives, the rationale behind collaborative practice as a tactic in the production of public art projects.

The author writes from her experience as an artist having produced public art projects with diverse communities in Australia, Germany, Ireland and China. This paper is limited to examples from five projects completed in partnership with four regional and remote communities in New South Wales: Merriwa (RMB 2329, Merriwa Public Art Project), Denman (Denman Creek Interpretative Signage Walk and Hyde Park Public Art Project), Singleton (Hunter River Sculpture), and Gloucester (Ten Thousand Steps Interpretative Sculpture Walk). The scope of this paper cannot discuss these works individually but attempts to present some generic findings.

Fundamental to the author's art practice is the notion that the essence of art is not to be found in unique objects created through acts of genius, but rather in the process of cogitation and action involved in creation, innovation, invention, play, and in the course of transformation as an open-ended practice.

The fundamental disparity between the former and the later views of the art making process are enhanced by a written tradition of Eurocentric art history based on museum objects and strictly defined semiotic codes. So deeply entrenched is the dominant order that it is capable of relegating creative practices that lay outside this system as novel, exotic, naïve or illegitimate—dismissed as "failed art." Art practices which emanate from the 'other'—ethnic minorities, marginal groups, disenfranchised people, migrants or fringe dwellers—become sub-categories viewed in terms of anthropology or sociology rather than legitimate art. This serves to deny the particular psychosocial history of the artist as well as the local vernaculars or experience of place and therefore the potentially endless nuances of meaning that the artwork can have to individuals who come into contact with it. Rather than focus on the experience of the work, art criticism tends to deal with the final product or outcome in terms of its commodifiable context.

An acute awareness of this hegemony led the author to seek alternative sites and purpose for art-making practice, a commitment she has maintained working largely outside the gallery system for over ten years. Although the author acknowledges that her own history is one of privilege—that of a white Australian woman born into a middle-class migrant English family. The disparity between the Eurocentric art history printed in her

Hunter River Sculpture in Singelton, New South Wales

Australian school textbooks and the experience of growing up in the Australian landscape engendered a scepticism that developed into a belief that Western culture's view of itself as dominant amongst many others is one of utter parochialism.

Nevertheless, when engaged in collaboration, notions of status that have attached themselves to certain peoples or professions must be acknowledged and handled carefully to ensure a balanced level of equality, respect and trust between participants. The notion of trust is a key element in this inquiry that we will return to, but now let us follow another trajectory.

To collaborate is an innately human trait. Among the earliest hunter-gatherer societies collaboration aided survival. With the foundation of agriculture about 10,000 years ago in Western Asia, Egypt and India collaboration provided the means of subsistence to support higher density human populations. Through the act of working together civilisation was cultivated. According to Prof Cao Xuan Pho collaboration was the basis of solidarity in Asia. The people of the Far East had something in common in that they all ate rice and had to work together to build irrigation systems for wet rice cultivation. "The consequent tradition of peasant 'solidarity' is seen as a distinctive feature of most east and south-east Asian societies." Communism he claims was rooted in the communal labour of tending the rice paddies.

Not only in food production do we find collaborative practices, but in the arts and crafts traditions of most societies. In festivals, costume and rituals associated with cultural identity, material culture of society is richly embellished with artefacts evidencing collaborative cultural practice. Mary Jane Jacob cites the Mexican Day of the Dead festivals and the prehistoric Paleolithic cave paintings of Lascaux as ancient forms of community art—forms that are pre-museum rather than anti-museum.

It is only in relatively modern times, since industrialisation and the rise of capitalist society, that the concept of the entrepreneur and individualism has come to dominate, particularly in the Western world. But art and design are still fundamentally collaborative activities. Just as the workshops of the Italian Renaissance painters were full of communities of apprentices, today art making often involves large numbers of people, but they have become anonymous in the modern world where only the artist's or designer's name bear the unique stamp of originality and merit value.

Any discussion about collaboration brings authorship into question. To what level of contribution must one engage to be entitled to claim authorship? How can one distinguish between contributors and coauthors? These are questions that first entered academic debate in the film industry. Theorists such as Berys Gaut, Paisley Livingston and C. Paul Sellors challenged the dominant "auteur theory" which posits that the director use a camera in the same fashion as a writer use a pen. The extension of this is found in law where the auteur is said to be the creator of a film as a work of art and therefore holds copyright.

Of the many film theorists engaged in the debate about authorship Margaret Gilbert's concept of pluralism seems most appropriate to apply to collaborative arts practice. Put simply, Gilbert acknowledges that social groups form through various kinds of joint commitments with an aspiration toward an end goal. "To be an author is to be a sort of agent, and agency is not a uni-dimensional phenomenon involving simply an intention to communicate. Agency involves beliefs, goals, desires, values, and so on."

And so it was in each of the five public art projects the author's role was unique dependant on the level of participant engagement and the desires of the local partnerships. In some cases the author's role was to guide local artists through the process of designing and producing a public artwork based on a theme of their choice (Singleton).

In other cases the author worked as the sole artist collaborating with the community, gathering local stories and materials, editing sound-scapes and building sculptures based on the information and objects collected (Merriwa).

In Denman the collaboration was with retirees who formed the Denman Creek Committee, in this case the art was left to the author who collaborated with local school children to collect over 1,000 signatures from the community, which became the basis of the work. The execution was carried out with a team of unemployed residents, who, though at first reluctant, through the hard labour of its production became engaged and ultimately shared the celebration of its achievement.

While in the mountain village of Gloucester the project evolved through much dialogue and debate, the resulting artworks reflected successful multi-layered collaborations between diverse participants. For example, people searched for historical photos. Texts were written or local stories verified by the historical society, materials were donated from farms, workshops were conducted in peoples homes, the local school's photography studio was used for an etching session, engraving was done by another local craftsperson and council helped with welding and the installation on site as well as with press releases publicising the activities.

It is in dialogue and exchange that the foundations of democracy were forged in the public space of the ancient Greek arenas (polis) and markets (agora). Working with communities in public space engages them in public dialogue and enables them to take charge of what they want to do with their public space. Artists are involved in practices that are more like curatorship or deejaying culture.

Networked society is collaborative society and art itself is a system within society that is under scrutiny. In the postmodernist period, modernity is no longer conceived of in terms of production but consumption, in this environment plurality gains recognition because of its relevance to globalism—to post-colonial, migrant and multi-cultural communities and displaced or peripatetic people. In this environment individualistic aims are under scrutiny as they are weighed against ethical, environmental and sustainability issues.

But the tropes of modernism still underline the function of art, where capitalism has the capacity to absorb every kind of object and activity, so there is often a tenuous, but problematic link between any art project and its benefit, between individual or community gain.

Looking back to earlier methods of arts practice, there have been many societies in which individuals are charged with cultural duties, for example, the seanchaithe in Ireland – the travelling storyteller , or Australian indigenous artists.

The traditional value system of Australian Aboriginal society is collective and communal, which is totally incompatible with that of the art market. Michael Rae describes the difference as the "superstar versus the generic" approach. To aboriginal Australians one person's representation of a Dreaming story is no more valued than that of another.

Emily Kame Kngwarreye, an Anmatyerre artist from Alhalkere country, in particular has received "star" attention that unsettled traditional values and created economic and social inequities in her community to the extent that Kngwarreye, aged eighty-five, declared her intention to give up painting.

Recent research findings indicate that humans are ethical by nature. We are homo-empathic as a biological trait to ensure our survival. In 1990 a group of neuroscientists discovered mirror neurons in the premotor cortex through which the motor activity of the brain can mirror the action of others. "These brain circuits can keep us from seeing other individuals as something 'out there.' Indeed we are able to feel their actions, sensations, and emotions inside us, as if we were in their shoes… If I eat all the food, I will not only witness but also share my companion's suffering, whereas if I divide the food I will share his joy and thankfulness. My decision is no longer guided only by my hunger but also by the real pain and pleasure my companion's pain and pleasure will give me."

Collaboration as an aspect of the author's work ranges from intense partnerships with other artists on location in real time to virtual studios connected by electronic superhighways and video streamed conference call to working with communities defined

by geographic location or occupation. For example in the public art project in Merriwa collaboration involved the parasitic co-opting of an already formed community—that of local farmers. In other cases provisional communities came together in the form of public art committees. The declaration of a formal collaboration to local council represented a tangible way for groups to negotiate the use of public space.

These experimental formations can live for the duration of the project or continue on long after the initial project is complete. The author's most recent projects are based on multi-cultural dialogues between dispersed communities linked by poignant questions, revealing rich ethno-tapestries of multicultural perspectives.

The degrees of collaboration vary according to the partnerships that develop in each location. Tactics such as adopting the materials of the place engages communities and establishes a language of materials that are deeply connected to the place where the artwork is produced. The artist becomes engaged in a process of learning and evaluating what 'things' mean to people in their lives—the interconnected understanding of material culture. As an artist, to misplace or intervene in these relationships can cause reflection and new perspectives.

When an artist is an outsider to a community it enables people to communicate in ways outside socially expected norms. The ambiguous position artists have in society is an advantage but it can also present a dilemma for collaboration.

A way to reach and engage communities is to develop strategic partnerships with institutions and authorities, which can provide contact, funding or knowledge resources. Artists are often employed by councils and corporations to bridge the gap between society and institutional structures, to develop cultural (social) capital. Working within these roles is often difficult because of the dual identity that the artist, who is perceived by participants on the one hand as an extended member of the community, exploring ways of working together to create a better environment in which to live, and on the other hand as an arm of the authority which is funding their placement. But espousing social benefits to the community in some cases—particularly in poorly-resourced projects or where the funding body has lost a sense of trust with community—means no matter how well intentioned the artist is, rhetoric falls upon sceptical ears. If participants do not engage in the creative process they may only understand their role as that of volunteer labour, or at worst may feel exploited.

Establishing trust involves participants having prior knowledge of each other or it simply takes time. Socially engaged projects require what the author calls 'durational commitment', which takes time and which equates to money. Process is as important as product when working closely with communities, but it is often hard to convince sponsors of this. Artistic tactics that establish trust and "durational commitment" have become part of the author's work methodology.

Within the author's arts practice there is an evident evolution in methodology from the early gallery installations such as Token, to later relational projects such as Löcher Stopfen, or Mole Observation Institute, to the more recent projects with Australian remote communities, which represent a fusion of tactics emerging from social sculpture, Littoral practice and post-relational aesthetics. The emphasis is not only on the dialogical but a renewed interest in the haptic: a focus on phenomenology, empathy, embodiment and materiality, for want of a better term "sunaptic sculpture."

To recognise space, to recognise what "takes place" there and what it is used for, is to resume the dialectic; analysis will reveal the contradictions of space. It is naive to believe that dialogical and relational arts projects within communities are the solution to social problems. This reality exists for many reasons, but largely because of the underlying political hierarchy of any project and because "recourse to the production, release and exchange of singularity within community as an oppositional stance tends to get caught up in its own aestheticist presumptions and compensations."

The greater potential of working with dialogical and relational techniques is that through the aestheticisation of politics and the re-politicisation of aesthetics, new unanticipated forms of knowledge are generated, developing politically coherent communities. It is through the relational aesthetics of the dialectic, that contemporary public art projects find their material form in space.

Bibliography:

BACHARACH, S. T., DEBORAH (2010) We Did It: From Mere Contributors to Coauthors. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 68, no. 1, Pp. 23–32.

BOURRIAUD, N. (2005) *Postproduction - Culture as a Screenplay : How Art Reprograms the World*, New York, Lukas & Sternberg.

BRODY, A., GOOCH, R., ROBERT HOLMES Á COURT COLLECTION. & CAAMA SHOP. (1990) *Utopia : a picture story : 88 silk batiks from the Robert Holmes á Court Collection*, Perth [W.A.], Heytesbury Holdings Ltd. for the Robert Holmes á Court Collection.

DOWNEY, A. (2009) *An Ethics of Engagement: Collaborative Art Practices and the Return of the Ethnographer. Third Text - Part of a special issue: Art: A Vision of the Future*, Vol. 23, , Pp. 593 –603.

FIELD, J. (2003) *Social capital*, London ; New York, Routledge.

FISHER, J. (2005) The Syncretic Turn: Cross-Cultural Practices in the Age of Multiculturalism. IN KOCUR, Z. & LEUNG, S. (Eds.) *Theory in contemporary art since 1985*. Malden, MA, Blackwell Pub.

KEAY, J. (1997) *Last post : the end of empire in the Far East*, London, John Murray.

KEYSERS, C. (2009) Mirrow Neurons – Are we Ethical by Nature. IN BROCKMAN, M. (Ed.) *What's next? : dispatches on the future of science : original essays from a new generation of scientists*. New York, Vintage Books.

ROBERTS, J. (2009) Art, 'Enclave Theory' and the communist Imaginary. *Third Text – Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture, Special Issue: Art, Praxis and the Community to Come*., Vol. 23, 353–367.

ULLRICH, P. (1996) Art for the public. *Fiberarts*, 23, 30-5.

Sections of this text have been adapted from Flanagan, J. Patricia (2009) *Public Art and Alternative Tactics in Post-Acquisitive Society*. The University of Newcastle, Australia.

Art is not for beautification, but a means of evoking, connecting, and provoking

WU MALI

As an artist, I have carried out projects incorporating collaboration with various social groups. These projects included *Awake in Your Skin* with the Taipei Women's Awakening Association from 2000 to 2004; *Art as Environment—A Cultural Action on the Tropic of Cancer* with the Chiayi County government between 2005 and 2007; *Trekking the Plum-tree Stream*, a work in progress, with the Bamboo Curtain Studio initiated in 2010. These projects arose through different happenstances and presented individual challenges. In their development, I inspected and revised my ideas and practices with regard to the community and social groupings.

Prior to projects with a cooperative nature, my works investigated gender politics and were presented as installations. The works consist of a collection of interviews, recitations, and documentation of information, in which I express my point of view through the experience of another (for example, in the works, *Stories of Women from Hsing-Chung*, and *Epitaph*, both in 1997). While conversing with various social groups I began to ponder on questions of art and ethics; I felt I was made whole through sharing in the lives of these people and wanted to be of some kind of help in return. It was a similar moment like this when the Taipei Awakening Association asked me to assist them in promoting the recently initiated *Creative Textile Workshop*.

Taipei Awakening Association offered the Workshop for housewives mainly from traditional communities to participate in. While the art of textile was the central focus, it was also an opportunity to pique women's interests about public concerns. However, the result of the workshop was not as expected, in that it failed to empower the women enough to start to air their concerns, and challenge their set roles and norms vis-à-vis their position in a male-dominated society, Subsequently I developed a process reflecting on one's life experiences via the familiar act of stitching. I have termed this process, 'subversive stitching'.

Awake in Your Skin is the project that arose as a result of my work with Taipei Awakening Association and is collectively known as my collaborative work with those women using "subversive stitching." This series included three pieces, *Bed Sheets of the Soul*, *Theater under the Skirt*, and *Empress' New Dresses*. The works explored the realm of women's experiences, passions, and self-identity through fabric, a material that is intimate to the body. I saw the wondrous power of art in this experience; contrary to my past works, people's lives were transformed by the soft persuasions of the art medium; the sharing of stories and experiences offered a new possibility for constructing perceptions of self.

Empress' New Dresses, 1994,
© Wu Mali

This experience also made me reflect on art education and questions concerning the women's movement. In the past, both sides focused on the elite and were not successful at being genuinely popular. As a result, I gained a different perspective on the avant-garde and on how to engage people with art, and some friends and I decided to collaborate in translating Suzanne Lacy's *Mapping the Terrain—New Genre Public Art* and Grant Kester's *Community and Communication in Modern Art*. These

classics have since become influential in the development of social intervention art and the aesthetic discourse in Taiwan.

Another collaborative project I was involved in was *Art as Environment—A Cultural Action on the Tropic of Cancer* that was commissioned by the Chiayi County government (an agricultural area in the south of Taiwan where the emphasis and priority is on agriculture, not on cultural activities). This inspired me to reconsider the relationship between everyday life and art. More specifically, I was interested in alternative methods of art education and using art to respond to the vanishing way of life in rural villages in Taiwan.

Consequently, instead of having artists present their work at exhibitions, from 2005-2007 I invited more than 30 artists to participate in residencies set up in 20 local villages in Chiayi County, to dialogue directly with the residents, mutually learn from each other and to develop possible collaborative works. The resultant works took a number of forms and each artist responded to different aspects present in the community. This project also made a significant impact on federal cultural policy and inspired people to consider different ways to activate community building. It also resulted in a series of conferences and dialogues organised by NGOs on how art could be an efficient tool in engaging the public on social issues.

Varsha Nair in Hsing-Kang community, 2007, © Chiayi County Government

The core residents of the rural villages mainly consist of the elderly and the young. Thus, by teaching young children photography and drawing, we also provided them ways of seeing and recording their lives and the circumstances that surround them. In addition, with the cooperation of day care centers, we taught the elderly pottery, dance, drumming, and art as a way to better maintain their health. All told, activities such as the making of ceremonial props integrated traditional handicrafts to retell the story, historiography and the changing livelihood and environment of the rural villages, we presented an alternative attempt for the residents to confront traditional culture. These activities yielded rich results and great responses. For example, residencies by artists Shiao-Mei Wen and Juan Wu succeeded in transforming the traditional ceremony in a creative and fun way. Artist Ming-Si Lu and Jian-Long Tsai helped people understand the ecological importance of their living environment and brought a new perspective to villagers. Artists from other countries, such as Varsha Nair, from India but based in Bangkok, was eager to understand the local history. Incorporating this into her project, she asked people to use traditional Cochin ceramic technique that the town of Hsing-Kang is famous for, to tell stories of the town on ceramic tiles that were embedded in discarded railway sleepers and installed as memory markers in the railway park. Yung-Chia and Min-Hua Chang, visiting from Malaysia, invited people to stitch images of the most memorable person in their life. All these projects have been very inspiring and brought people together to share and exchange their memories and experiences.

Children learn to know about the birds, 2007, © Chiayi County Government

However, the project was not without its challenges. While the residency was successful in encouraging new perspectives for locals and an appreciation of their local culture and place, what rural people really need is to find ways to make a living, to support their families. They need the input of government

Final presentation of Juan Wu's work in Hsin-Zu community, 2007, © Chiayi County Government

in the long-term development of infrastructure that can help them to face the challenges of globalization. But despite this, in the three years of the project we have demonstrated to the local and federal government what art can provide to various levels of society, and potentially encouraged them to consider focusing their resources on including art in community work in the future.

The aforementioned limitations I experienced with the above project caused me to return to the place of my own residence, Taipei, with the aim of spending more time interacting with my immediate community and to focus directly on issues that concern us collectively. Since 2010, I have actively been cooperating with the Bamboo Curtain Studios and professor Rui-Mao Huang from the department of architecture, Tamkang Universty. Together with students, we are working on the possibility of transforming Zhuwei (where we live) into a creative urban village.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, there has been rapid development of the suburbs around the Taipei metropolitan area. Residential buildings were built one after another and the Zhuwei area developed into a high-density residential environment with poor living standards. The main river of the Zhuwei area is the Plum Tree stream, and the source of the stream is the pure waters of the Datun mountain range. Many senior members of the Zhuwei community have childhood memories of looking for clams in the stream while doing their washing and appreciating the beautiful plum trees on the banks of the stream. Today, the Plum Tree stream is heavily polluted due to inappropriate development and the growing transportation network; water has nowhere to go which causes flooding. It is now impossible to see the plum trees that once lined the banks of the stream.

Why have we let the source of our childhood memories slip away? And what can we do to reinstate what has now become a filthy and overflowing drain? And last but not least, since Zhuwei is close to the sea, how will it survive the rapidly changing climate of our planet?

With these questions we have begun to develop workshops and treks which follow the stream. We are collecting stories and memories from locals, and discussing the issue with water resource professionals and city planners in the hope of developing strategies toward conserving the futures of this place.

Trekking the plum-tree-stream, 2010, © Wu Mali

MRAT, MOE, ZEHAR

Collaborative Practice and Ways of Knowing, Notes on Zariyein Amit Mahanti, Ruchika Negi

As researchers and visual artists, one of our main concerns has been the question of representation, given the fact that much of our work is based on collaborative authorship. *Zariyein* (Urdu for 'through') was one such exercise that allowed us to explore this question in some detail. *Zariyein* was a community based art intervention that used images and conversations as a medium to understand diverse social contexts. It sought an interaction between people and their spaces/experiences where local community members were invited to record impressions of their everyday using the medium of photography and sound. Spread over a period of three years, *Zariyein* was carried out in three different contexts—Khirki, an urban working class colony in New Delhi (2006), Shillong and villages of the East Khasi Hills District in Meghalaya in the northeastern part of India (2007) and in the Tehri Garhwal area of Uttarakhand in the north-western Himalayas (2008). Mediated by individual perspectives, *Zariyein* attempted to arrive at a collective representation of lived contexts, while also allowing for diverse realities to emerge organically through a blurring of the boundaries that existed between the researcher and the researched, between the artist and his or her subject. *Zariyein* also raised many other questions for us—How is a 'community' fashioned within a particular context through the doing of an 'art intervention'? What really constitutes the 'artwork' in such process-based work? Who can stake ownership over work that is the outcome of a collaborative process? To what extent can the artist claim editorial license, especially once the work is removed from that context and exhibited in a neutral space? These questions and many more, were a necessary corollary of much of the work that went in to *Zariyein*.

Iewduh Market, Shillong. William, the caretaker of the public toilet at the East Khasi Hills Bus Stand in Shillong took this photograph of the wholesale market in Shillong where people from different villages come to sell vegetables.

Zariyein tried to map out diverse social contexts by inviting community members to record impressions of their everyday realities through photographs. These photographs became a medium to begin conversations about their relationships/experiences with their spaces. They were circulated among the wider public that the photographers were a part of, and this led to many more conversations. These narratives further created layered insights into the lived realities of communities in those particular contexts. Rather than "looking at" a place and its people, *Zariyein* was an attempt to dislocate (or shift) perspective by creating a space for "looking within," where the visual and oral narratives produced by communities became reflective of what constituted their everyday context. While our role as artists was that of facilitators in these processes, our external position allowed for the probing and interrogation of seemingly insignificant details of the context, of re-looking, perhaps, at the banal. In a sense, *Zariyein* was an attempt to create an interface between the outsider/insider, where the collaborative processes of 'knowing' informed the collective representation of people and their contexts.

Zariyein I (2006) was carried out in Khirki, a working class colony in New Delhi. Khirki is host to a migrant population and is characterized by a constant flow of people who come to the city in search of work. Places like Khirki stand on the periphery—although they cater to the city's work needs, they are near invisible in the development discourse of an urban metropolis like Delhi. *Zariyein I* tried to use multiple perspectives through photographs & conversations to create a layered narrative of personal and local histories that could enable a re-viewing of the area and its existence within the metropolis. A few residents of Khirki recorded impressions of their spaces/lives through photographs—parts of Khirki that were important to them, experiences that they wanted to share with others, life on the streets, patterns of work, spaces of rest and leisure. The photographs were then circulated amongst other residents of the locality. Conversations were not restricted to simply what each photograph depicted; rather each image became a point of engagement to discuss something more than what it portrayed. As photographs exchanged hands, they became distinct images of Khirki imbued with personal meanings. Discussions around images were reflective of Khirki's tenuous relationship with the city. These ranged from conversations around different work cultures embodied in the place, to stories of constant dislocation and movement that the urban poor are subject to, to conversations about the state of neglect that places like Khirki are relegated to within the larger urban landscape. On the one hand, photographs became personal stories, associations with a territory or space, a reflection, a memory and sometimes, a comment on the city. Yet, at the same time, narratives of Khirki could also be read more generally as a sub-text of the larger city that it was a part of. One of the most important stages of *Zariyein* has been to open out the work to the larger community through public intervention. In *Zariyein I*, people were invited to engage with photographs of their context through an interactive installation that was put up in a public place in Khirki. This led to further conversations, a further layering of the space that we were trying to know.

At Smit, Meghalaya. Bah Deng Nicholas took this photograph en route to his village, Pashang, from Shillong (*Zariyein II*)

East Khasi Hills Bus Stand, Shillong. This photograph taken by William shows a dai (porter) unloading farm produce from one of the bazaar buses.

In *Zariyein II*, however, we altered our approach. In 2007, we were doing a research project on a network of bazaar buses that connect rural villages in the East Khasi Hills District of Meghalaya to the capital city of Shillong. These buses are the lifelines for many villages in the area—their only point of connection to the outside world. While the fundamental components of *Zariyein*—images and conversations produced by communities - remained the same, the project also became a key methodological tool to push our research inquiries. The main objective was to understand the significance of the bus in the lives of people as well as the personal and ephemeral sense of attachment that people have for their bus. Photographs were taken by various people associated with the bus—drivers, conductors, passengers, bus-stand workers and others in Shillong, and their reasons for choosing particular subject matter in their photographs were recorded. A selection of these photographs was assembled in a photo-scrap book—two such books were circulated for three months in Shillong and in the villages where *Zariyein* was being carried out. People were free to engage with them in whatever form they wished—writing, drawing, adding

Chamba Town, Tehri District, Uttarkhand.
Public installation of *Zariyein III*

more photographs, explaining their affinity for the bus or recounting their experience of life in the village. The intention behind circulating these books was to allow for people's impressions and associations with the bus to emerge from within two distinct milieus—the urban and the rural. At the same time, it also gave us a window into understanding how the bus facilitates an imagining of the urban for people who live in these villages and conversely, how it facilitates an imagining of the rural for people in urban Shillong. In order to share *Zariyein II* with communities where it was located, we also travelled with a small-scale installation to villages in that particular area. Photographs of the bus and life around it became a starting point to talk about many other issues concerning people in this part of the East Khasi Hills—issues of health, water, livelihood, sanitation and accessibility. Information generated through *Zariyein II* was widely disseminated to various civil society and local media groups to bring to light the adverse socio-economic conditions faced by these villages.

Zariyein III (2008) was undertaken in Tehri Garhwal in collaboration with Henval Vani, a community radio group based in Chamba, near New Tehri town. The historical town of Old Tehri has been submerged by a dam since 2006. Large numbers of people have been dislocated because of this; many personal histories have been erased. *Zariyein III* explored the idea of what it means when a place ceases to exist and also documented memories and perceptions of people associated with the town of Tehri. Members of Henval Vani created individual audio-visual pieces based on a sharing of these experiences and interactions. All the pieces, though distinct, were thematically connected and eventually came together to create *Zariyein III*—a remembrance of a town through diverse experiences and stories of various people. *Zariyein III* was also shown at various local sites through an interactive installation, which created a space for further dialogue. In some places, the work evoked a longing for the past; in others, people felt it was futile to revisit painful memories. Some narrated personal experiences of how they were forcibly moved out of their homes, how little or no compensation was paid to those who did not have any information about it, and how they would have protested vehemently against the dam if they had known the actual truth behind it. Subsequently, *Zariyein III* was also aired on the local cable television network, eliciting many responses from local audiences.

Although premised on the same principle, *Zariyein* evolved in very different ways in all the three contexts. While in Khirki, it became a starting point to talk about shared/contested territories and explore alternative narratives of the city, in Meghalaya, *Zariyein*

was a tool of 'intervention', a device to interrogate and throw light on the issues and struggles facing people in their everyday lives. In Tehri Garhwal, *Zariyein* was a way of revisiting a past, an expression of collective loss of a community. Various questions arose in doing *Zariyein*, quandaries that are reflective of the inherent challenges that lie in collaborative practices. For example, what really constitutes the artwork in such processes? Constant dialogue between the community and the artists was central to the project. The process of engagement itself became intrinsic to the work. For us, the local production of images, that in turn sparked conversations on patterns of life and living within that community, allowed for simultaneous representational forms to emerge at various stages of the process. From the initial stages where community photographers recorded their images, to subsequent conversations with them and the larger community in which the photographs were situated—all these became various representations of the context that we were trying to understand. Photographs became referents to a larger reality and conversations became the narratives for those particular contexts. Collaboration and constant dialoguing between the artists and community therefore allowed for assorted stories to emerge rather than fixing the onus of representation on the artist-as-storyteller alone. On the flip side, however, every answer throws up a new set of questions insofar as this kind of collaborative work is concerned. What happens, for instance, when, as artists we decide to "show" this work outside the context where it was carried out? The responsibility for 'representing' the work then shifts solely to us. The fact, too, that such work is so heavily process-based complicates this issue further.

Another central question for us was how to determine the terms of such collaborations between artists and the communities of the art intervention. How do artists transcend the inherent imbalance of power between them (given that they are the initiators of an idea) and an unknown context within which they choose to work? In doing *Zariyein*, we attempted to constantly negotiate these terms of engagement in the hope that it would allow for a dynamic exchange of knowledge, thoughts and ideas to emerge on an equal plane. And within such a collaborative process, we were careful not to pre-determine meanings so as to ensure that a multi-layered understanding of the context could emerge. The intent behind constantly opening up the work to wider public scrutiny at every stage and finally installing the work within the local context was to invite people to question, reexamine and discuss the shared realities that the work was trying to address. It was interesting for us to note that our role as artists kept diminishing with each *Zariyein*. We slowly became only the initiators of this idea in different contexts, while the community groups we were collaborating with became more and more instrumental in carrying it forward and executing it. But it is difficult to completely deny the agency of the artist no matter how marginal their role. Whether local communities read artistic interventions like *Zariyein* as being 'relevant' to their lives is a moot question simply because it is difficult to assess the value of a conversation, an exchange, or any everyday human interaction for that matter. However, as outsiders choosing to 'intervene' in a context, it is important for us to think about these questions, not to find solutions, but to problematize our own positions and hope that it will lend a degree of self-reflectivity to our work.

Zariyein was carried out with support from Khoj International Artists' Association, New Delhi, India: http://www.khojworkshop.org/book/zariyein

VIDEOKLUB / POLICY

Videoklub is the meeting-point for various groups of people to deal with video production.
These local chapters build and maintain contact by sending their videos to each other.
The local chapters stand as the author of their video productions.
Each local chapter is recognized by a name, as well as a recognizable segment
at the beginning of their videos.

The activities of Videoklub members are to:
RECORD, VIEW and REVIEW their own videos following the Videoklub policy.

RECORDING entails:
Recordings made with a videocamera.
The beginning of the video must be set with the recognizable segment of the local chapter.
Recorded is recorded: no parts can be added or deleted afterwards.
During recording all decisions are irretractable
(that means the start, the duration and the end of the entire video and the individual scenes*).
Therefore, every video beginning necessitates its completion. No giving up, no destroying.
The video is completed when the recording processes has ended.
The time and date of the video completion must be written down.
Post-production in any form is not allowed.

The first viewing of the completed videos happens only at meetings of the local chapter.

VIEWING entails:
At this meeting, the order of videos are first set based on the time and date of their completion.
The videos are then numbered. The number is the title.
By this act - the numbering of the videos - authorship of the individual videos is
transferred to the local chapter of the Videoklub.

Each video will be reviewed by the members of the local chapter.

REVIEWING entails:
Videos become material available for concrete critique. Group authorship creates
a shared base allowing de-individualised, invested critique.

After local review, the videos are released for free use by all Videoklub chapters and members.

Videoklub Membership
Membership requires entering a local Videoklub chapter or creating your own.
Each group that decides to work within the Videoklub policy is
thereby required to be in exchange with other local chapters.
Each local chapter is free to make its own decisions regarding new members.

Videoldub expansion is intended.

* Rewinding forbidden!

About Ctrl+P Journal of Contemporary Art

Ctrl+P was founded in 2006 by Flaudette May V. Datuin and Judy Freya Sibayan as a response to the dearth of critical art publications in the Philippines. It is produced in Manila and published on the Web with zero funding. Contributors write gratis for *Ctrl+P*. Circulated as a PDF file via the Net, it is a downloadable and printable publication that takes advantage of the digital medium's fluidity, immediacy, ease and accessibility. *Ctrl+P* provides a testing ground for a whole new culture and praxis of publishing that addresses very specifically the difficulties of publishing art writing and criticism in the Philippines. It took part in the *documenta 12 magazines* project, a journal of 97 journals from all over the world. (http://magazines.documenta.de/frontend/)

About Ctrl+P's Contributors

Trish Adams has been working at the nexus of art and science for several years. Her doctoral thesis explored the impact on expressions and representations of corporeality of experimental techniques in biomedical engineering and involved a cross-disciplinary collaboration with a biomedical scientist at The University of Queensland. Here Trish explored the impact of recent groundbreaking techniques in stem cell research. With the aid of her scientific collaborator, adult stem cells from her blood sample were changed to beating cardiac cells in vitro; creating an innovative model where Trish became at once both artist/researcher and "human guinea pig." Through her observations of cellular behaviours under the microscope, Trish explored the nature of consciousness and pursued this area of interest as artist in residence with the Visual & Sensory Neuroscience Group, Queensland Brain Institute, The University of Queensland. ● **Andrew Burrell** has a strong history in real time 3d and interactive audio installation. He completed a PhD in Fine Arts by thesis at the University of Sydney in 2005. His research focused on philosophical and poetic connections between memory, the collected object and narrative. One of the defining aspects of his work is an investigation into the construction of self with regard to the interrelationship of personal identity with memory and imagination, and the way in which real time networked virtual spaces influence these interactions. He is very interested in using the unique position and voice of the contemporary artists to traverse the boundaries of art, science, poetics and academic enquiry. ● Born 1975 in Ireland, **James Carrigan** lives and works in London. Founder of 7.9 Cubic Metres, an artwork/artists project and gallery model in one, James has recently renamed the project "The Commensal Gallery" and plans to find a host institution every year through open submission. Evolving the project from a single tenure at one institution to an open-ended traveling artwork, the project blurs real world art realities with ideas of provenance, authorship and artefact. Carrigan's interest lies in producing art developed from the principle that nothing exists without everything else. ● Based in Darwin, **Simon Cooper** is a multi-disciplinary artist who works primarily in sculpture. He has participated in residencies and exhibitions in Australia and abroad, including Thailand, India and Iran. Cooper completed his Masters at the College of Fine Art, Sydney, in 2007 and currently teaches in the School of Creative Art and Humanities, Charles Darwin University. He is also the secretary of 24HR Art: Northern Territory Centre for Contemporary Art. ● **Lena Eriksson** (born 1971, Switzerland) studied Visual Arts at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Sierre. Calling her practice 'polymorphic', which includes developing works in close collaboration, she works with drawing, video, installation, performance and concepts. From 2004-2009 she established and managed "Lodypop," an independent art space in Basel using the idea, "work without pressure, projects without panic": www.lodypop.ch ● **Tricia Flanagan** is an artist and academic. Her work is held in public and private collections internationally and has been exhibited in Australia, Germany, Ireland, Italy and China. Since completing a Masters degree in Public Art and New Artistic Strategies at the Bauhaus University, Weimar in 2003, her practice has focused on work in the public sphere. Flanagan's work is published in numerous books and journals including articles in Germany's leading arts journal *Kunstforum*, *Irish Sculpture Society Journal* and *ArtReach NSW Regional Arts Magazine*. Her work has been acknowledged through awards, grants and scholarships including an Australian Postgraduate Research Award for doctoral research in the field of Public Art. She lectures for the Bauhaus University Weimar, Germany; the University of Newcastle, Australia and is currently an assistant professor and director of the Wearables Lab at the Academy of Visual Art Hong Kong Baptist University: www.triciaflanagan.com. ● **Frame Works Collective** adopts interdisciplinary practices to explore development issues and social processes. They use varied research techniques and media forms in their work–from ethnography and documentary film to public art and community media. Frame Works is based in New Delhi, India, and comprises Ruchika Negi and Amit Mahanti. Often termed in his homeland art community as naïve, out-of-place, theatrical, impulsive and sarcastic, **Mrat Lunn Htwann** (born 1981) is a committed performance artist and a poet. He also works for the Yangon-based art collective, theart.com. For the time being he is attempting to write a comic book about a fictional performance artist. ● **Eva Kietzmann** was born 1977 in Mainz, Germany. She lives in Berlin as an artist, organizer of filmprograms and Bildwechsel Agent (www.bildwechsel.org). Since 2002 she works in self-organised and collective artistic structures. The artistic work includes film and video productions, art in and about public space, performance and action. She is interested in an artistic analysis of constructions of social and everyday-life phenomena. She studied film, video and performance at the Offenbach Academy of Art and Design and did her postgraduate master with a focus on Art in Public Space and Art in Context of Image Production in science and media. ● **Zeyar Lynn** (b 1958) is a poet, installation artist, assemblagist, performance,

writer, English language teacher, editor, and translator. **Wu Mali** is an artist and academic who lives and works in Taipei and Kaohsiung, Taiwan, and teaches at National Kaohsiung Normal University. After graduating from the National Art Academy, Dusseldorf, she returned to Taiwan in 1985 where she then developed an interest in socially engaged practice. Her works have been presented at Venice Biennial 1995, 1997, Taipei Biennial 1998, 2008; Asian Pacific Triennial 1999, and Fukuoka Asian Art Triennial 2005. Since 2000 she has been producing community-based projects such as *Awake in Your Skin*, 2000–2004; *By the River, on the River, of the River*, 2006, engaging several community universities to trace the four rivers that surround Taipei; *Art as Environment, A Cultural Action on Tropic of Cancer*, 2005-2007. Wu Mali jointly created the "Taipei Tomorrow as A Lake Again" project for the 2008 Taipei Biennial with OURs, The Organization of Urban Re's, intervening in Taiwan's policies on ecological development and urban planning. Currently, she is working with Margaret Shiu, director of Bamboo Curtain Studio, on *Trekking the Plum Tree Stream.* ● **Damien March**'s practice is interdisciplinary, working with performance, video, installation, sculpture, and drawing. During the last six years, he has been principally focused on an ongoing project: *contemporary art/terra nullius.* This project is concerned with art and the artist's function as a socio-political agent of 1) the dominant culture's self-mythologising, and 2) maintaining it's desired relations of power and identity, as well as a possible vehicle for cultural resistance or revelation. He has performed and exhibited in Australia. March has studied Fine Arts at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level, and completed his Doctorate at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales. ● Born in Zurich, Switzerland, **Muda Mathis** lives and works in Basel. She teaches performance and media, at the Institute of art, Academy of Art and Design, HGK Basel and is part of the artists' cooperative, VIA VideoAudioFotoKunst, Basel, and a member of Les Reines Prochaines, a women's Performance Band. Since 1982 she has produced performances, videos, installations and music, exhibitions, festivals, concerts, art in public spaces, collective works, and audio editions. Muda Mathis studied at F+F School of Experimentell Art, Zurich; Sigurd Leeder School of Dance, Herisau; Video Art, Academy of Art and Design, HGK Basel. ● **Katherine Olston** is a Sydney-based artist who lived and worked extensively in Thailand between 1999 and 2006. Her work explores socially constructed notions of femininity and otherness with an acute awareness of the influence specific cultural environments have on these concepts. Incorporating sculpture, and performance through video and installation, her practice remains heavily informed by the production techniques, aesthetic sensibility and experiences encountered whilst in Thailand. In addition, collaborative processes have long formed an integral part of her practice, from projects such as *Beauty Suit*, (Asialink Performing Arts Residency 2003), *Beautyform Unisuit*, an artists' collective with Estelle Cohenny and Chakkrit Chimnok (*Fly With Me Project*, Thailand, 2006), *Mirror Room*, a collaborative performance/installation (National Review of Live Arts, Glasgow, 2006), the web-based project *No Man's Land* (Womanifesto, 2006), to the more recent collaboration with Thai artist Phaptawan Suwannakudt for 24HR Art, NT Centre for Contemporary Art (2010). ● **Chris Regn** (born 1964, Germany) works as conceptual artist and curator presenting events, drawings, video-works and interviews with the umbrella organisation and archive, *bildwechsel*, in Hamburg Germany, and the space for experimental art and performance–*Kaskadenkondensator* in Basel. They have collaborated with each other, and with artists and professionals from other disciplines such as on the Internet project *Galerie Helga Broll: love money adventure*, and the art space Lodypop (www.kasko.ch; www.ilovebildwechsel.org; www.bildwechsel.org; www.galerie-broll.com; www.performancesaga.ch ● **Sonya Schönberger** born in 1975, is a Berlin based visual artist working with video, photography, performance, installation and stitching. She Studied Social Anthropology and Philosophy in Berlin and Zürich, Visual Art at the Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam and Experimental Mediadesign at the University of Arts Berlin. Her artistic work is usually influenced by her anthropological background. She mainly asks questions about the everyday, the banality of being and is curious about the uncounted possibilities of how to lead a life. ● **Eliza Tan** is a London-based writer and curator from Singapore. A regular contributor to the *Ctrl+P Journal of Contemporary Art*, she has also written for various art magazines including *Art Asia Pacific*, the *Singapore Biennale Review*, as well as for exhibition publications by Galerie Invaliden1, Berlin, Vera Cortes Art Agency, Lisbon, and Galerie Sans Titre, Brussels. Her recent curatorial projects include *Ming Wong's Life and Death in Venice* at Galerie Invaliden1, Berlin, *7.9 Cubic Metres* at Stanley Picker Gallery and *Murmur* at Waterside Project Space, London. Her current research interest centres on hauntology and spectral space in relation to alternative film, video art and expanded cinema. ● **Videoklub** was founded in Leipzig with the first local group Das Gefummel das kann ich nicht leiden (I cannot handle these fiddlings) in 2004. It is now an expanding international network with local groups in Leipzig, Berlin, Basel, Hamburg, Vienna, Catania, New York, Lyon, Bucharest, and Vancouver. Devoted to the expression of individual aesthetics, it works hard on the techniques of storytelling. Videoklub sets out the following rules: only group authorship exists. Editing of videos after recording is not allowed. Anyone is free to make up a new local group: only by accepting the rules and by working together in the network–sending and receiving videos, and joining meetings (screenings/workshops) within the network. Once the videos are discussed within a group, they are open to public viewing. ● **Moe Way** (b 1969) is a contemporary poet in Burma. He founded a publishing house, which focuses on poetry. He has published three books. ● **Siying Zhou** was born in 1980 in China. She obtained a Bachelor of Visual Arts degree from Nanjing Institute of Arts (2003) and a Master of Multimedia Design from Sydney College of Arts, University of Sydney. She also holds a Postgraduate Diploma of Interactive Media from the University of Technology of Sydney. Her recent

works include *Phoenix tails and flies* (2008) at DVAA (Darwin Visual Art Association), *Grass is Greener in Alice Springs* (2009) at Watch This Space inc. funded by Arts NT, Specimen of a glove (2009) in Hayley West, and Tobias Richardson's curated exhibition "The Gleaners – a lost glove project" at DVAA. Siying currently works as Program Manager at 24HR Art – Northern Territory Centre for Contemporary Art (www.singmedia.wordpress.com) ● **Sus Zwick** was born in Fribourg, Switzerland, and lives and works in Basel. She is part of the artists' cooperative VIA VideoAudioFotoKunst, Basel, and a member of Les Reines Prochaines, a women's performance band. Since 1979 she has produced videos, documentaries, performances, installations and music, festivals, exhibitions, concerts, art in public space, collective works and audio editions.Sus Zwick studies included in Education, Speech Therapy and Remedial Teaching at University of Fribourg, and Video Art at Academy of Art and Design, HGK Basel.

About Ctrl+P's Editorial Board Members

Flaudette May V. Datuin, associate professor at the Department of Art Studies, UP Diliman, is co-founding editor of *Ctrl+P*; co-founder and current chair of the House of Comfort Art Network or ARTHOC, a non-profit organization that conducts art workshops for the underprivileged and the afflicted. A 2008 Visiting Fellow (with grant) in the Research School of Humanities at the Australian National University (2008), Datuin is also recipient of the Asian Scholarship Foundation (ASF) and Asian Public Intellectual (API) fellowships, which enabled her to conduct research on contemporary women artists of China and Korea (2002-2003) and Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and Japan (2004-2005). Author of *Home Body Memory: Filipina Artists in the Visual Arts, 19th Century to the Present* (University of the Philippines Press, (2002), she also curates and organizes international and local exhibits and publishes here and abroad. Datuin currently teaches graduate and undergraduate courses on Art Theory and Aesthetics, Art History, Philippine Art and Society, and Art and Society, Asian contemporary art and aesthetics and gender issues in the arts. She obtained her MA and PhD in Philippines Studies from the University of the Philippines. ● **Varsha Nair** lives in Bangkok, Thailand. Her selected shows include *Still Moving Image*, Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi, 2008; *A Proper Place*, Ryllega Gallery, Hanoi, 2007; *Art as Environment: Cultural Actions on Tropic of Cancer* 007, Taiwan; *Exquisite Crisis & Encounters*, NYU, New York, 2007; *Subjected Culture-Interruptions* and *resistances on femaleness*, *venues* in Argentina 2007-2008; *Sub-Contingent: The Indian Subcontinent in Contemporary Art*, Fondazion Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy, 2006; *In-between places, meeting point*, Si-am Art Space, Bangkok, 2005; *Video as Urban Condition*, Austrian Culture Forum, London, UK, 2004, *With(in)*, Art In General, New York, 2002; *Home/Dom*, Collegium Artisticum, Sarajevo, Bosnia Herzegovina, 2002; Free Parking, Art Center, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, 2002. She performed at *On the Move*, Hong Kong, 2008; Khoj Live Performance Festival, Delhi, 2008; *Saturday Live*, Tate Modern London, 2006; *National Review of Live Art*, 2006 and 2004; *National Review of Live Art Midland*, Perth, Australia, 2005.Since 1997, Nair has also curated and organized *Womanifesto* (www.womanifesto.com) and other art related activities, and has been invited as speaker at various international symposia. She was the Bangkok curator of *600 Images/60 artists/6 curators/6 cities: Bangkok/Berlin/London/Los Angeles/Manila/Saigon*, an exhibition that was simultaneously exhibited in all 6 cities in 2005. Born in Kampala, Uganda, Nair has a BFA from Faculty of Fine Arts, Maharaja Sayaji Rao University, Baroda, India. ● **Judy Freya Sibayan**, co-founding editor of *Ctrl+P*, has an MFA from Otis Art Institute of Parsons School of Design and a Doctor of Fine Arts from De La Salle Universty. She is former director of the erstwhile Contemporary Art Museum of the Philippines. She performed and curated *Scapular Gallery Nomad*, (www.asa.de/magazine/iss4/17sibayan.htm) a gallery she wore daily for five years (1997-2002), and is currently co-curator and the *Museum of Mental Objects* (MoMO), a performance art proposing that the artist's body be the museum itself (http://www.trauma-interrupted.org/judy/writing1.pdf). Although Sibayan's major body of work is an institutional critique of art, she has also exhibited and performed in museums, galleries and performance venues such as Latitude 53, Edmonton, Canada; PEER Gallery Space, London; Privatladen in Berlin; The Tramway, Glasgow; the Vienna Secession; the Hayward Gallery, PS1 Contemporary Art Center, The Farm in San Francisco; Sternersenmuseet; The Photographers' Gallery, London; ArtSpace Sydney; The Kiasma Contemporary Art Center, The Mori Art Museum, The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Nikolaj Contemporary Art Center, Fukuoka Art Museum; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Hong Kong Art Centre; Museum of Contemporary Art and Design, Manila; and at the capcMusée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux. She has participated in two international art biennales, the 1986 *3rd Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh* and the *2002 Gwangju Biennale*. Also an independent curator, she curated *The Community Archives: Documenting Artists Collectively, Openly* held at Latitude 53 (Edmonton, Alberta Canada). She also conceived and was lead-curator of *xsXL Expanding Art* held at Sculpture Square, Singapore in 2002 and *600 Images/60 Artists/6 Curators/6 Cities: Bangkok/Berlin/London/Los Angeles/Manila/Saigon* in 2005. The latter two projects investigated the possibilities of developing large scale international exhibitions mounted with very modest resources. She currently teaches as an Assistant Professor of the Department of Communication, De La Salle University (www.dlsu.edu.ph).