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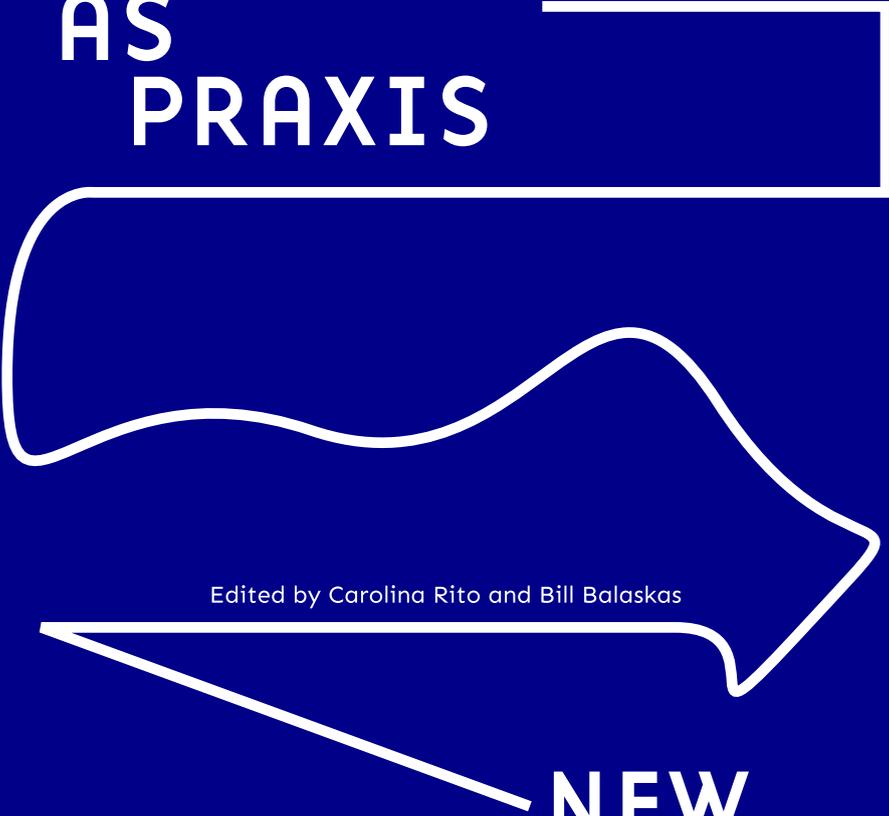
Edited by Carolina Rito and Bill Balaskas

NEW CURATORIAL DIRECTIONS FOR COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

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Carolina Rito and Bill Balaskas
(Eds.)

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NETWORKED MEDIA AND THE RISE OF ALTERNATIVE INSTITUTIONS:

ART AND COLLABORATION AFTER 2008

Bill Balaskas

The aftermath of the global financial crisis of 2008 found culture in a perilous state. Art organisations started implementing severe cuts, with a lot of them closing down, while artists—particularly the young—faced great difficulties in the production and exhibition of new work. At the same time, however, cultural producers have not evaded their social responsibility. On the contrary, many have been working both within and against society's puzzlement when faced with the problems of demystifying the nature of the crisis, and finding a way out of it. The discourses developed around such initiatives have regularly placed at their core the idea of the "commons" and its capacity to subvert neoliberal consciousness.[1]

Notably, in the post-2008 context, the "commons" should no longer be conceptualised merely in terms of what we have inherited from the past and what we are required to protect and pass on to future generations—the natural environment and its resources; cultural and intellectual products; public goods, such as infrastructures, public education, or health systems. Rather, the definition of this term has radically expanded over the last decade in order to include everything that we are in a position to jointly research, create, and share—particularly through the production and dissemination tools offered by networked technologies.

1 — A key exploration of the "commons" is provided by the American political economist Elinor Ostrom, who won the Nobel Prize for Economics in 2009. In her works, Ostrom rejected the negative perception or "tragedy" of the commons, instead highlighting, through a variety of case studies from across the world, how societies can confront the dangers generated by diminishing supplies (e.g., limited natural resources) thanks to cooperation and collective action in the management of "common-pool resources" (CPR). See Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

This essay explores the construction of material and immaterial micro-economies by artists and cultural organisations in the aftermath of 2008, and how they have both been informed by and resulted in new modes of collaborative research. The latter employ the shared value of the commons as a starting point in order to oppose the ramifications of "data capitalism"—a particularly harsh phase in the development of the capitalist economic model.[2] This essay documents this shift in the social function of contemporary cultural production, exposing the paradigmatic role of the web in the effort to collaborate differently for the common good.

FROM PUBLIC SPACE TO HACKERSPACE

One of the most important objectives of the political movements that emerged following the crisis of 2008 was the effort to "reclaim" and "re-appropriate." This aspiration referred not only to economic resources, but also to social roles, democratic functions, human rights, and—last, but not least—urban spaces. Syntagma Square in Athens, Saint Paul's Cathedral in London, Puerta del Sol in Madrid, Zuccotti Park in New York, and some of the most iconic public locations around the world saw crowds gather, demanding change. Within the reality of neoliberal

capital, people felt that they had been deprived of a place both in socioeconomic terms and, literally, of public spaces that were being rapidly privatised, gentrified, and commodified. Inspired by this context, and by the key role of online media in the formation of the new movements of dissent, many politically engaged artists adopted the internet as a creative tool capable of catalysing the re-appropriation of public spaces in different forms. Some of them used urban space as a means to project wider social anxieties and struggles, while others have viewed public space as an active producer of socioeconomic and cultural alternatives.[3]

In spite of the subversive political dispositions of such initiatives, it is important to note their often-ephemeral character. As exhibitions, performances, public interventions, or "protests," their duration could span from only a few hours to a few months. In addition, even when such events were accompanied by a strong online component, which allowed them to "survive" beyond their original finite duration, institutional engagement with the social contexts catalysed by the crisis became problematic once an exhibition or intervention had finished. In other words, in such cases, artists and cultural institutions appeared to be addressing the crisis in isolated contexts: they were raising questions about the origins and/or the consequences of the crisis without offering a framework within which potential answers could be systematically explored. Yet, as the crisis persisted, a considerable number

2 — Data capitalism is defined by the author as an economic system whose main input and output is programmable corporate-owned information (data). It constitutes a particular stage in the development of late capitalism, catalysed by the launch of the World Wide Web in the 1990s (early phase) and the general introduction of Web 2.0 applications in the mid 2000s (maturity phase). Its main characteristics are datatization, the algorithmic control of the economy, and the passage from consumption to production as the principal agent of economic expansion (production in the form of user-generated content and data). See Bill Balaskas, "Mapping Utopian Art: Alternative Political Imaginaries in New Media Art (2008–2015)," (PhD diss., Royal College of Art, London, 2017); and Lanfranco Aceti, Bill Balaskas, Susanne Jaschko and Julian Stallabrass, eds., "Red Art: New Utopias in Data Capitalism," *Leonardo Electronic Almanac* 20, no. 1 (January 2014).

3 — Relevant projects that use public space to project social anxieties include: Maurice Benayoun's *Occupy Wall Screens* (2011); *Uncommon Land* (2011–12) by Éilís Murphy; and Conor McGarrigle's *NAMAland* (2010). Relevant projects that use public space to enact alternative social realities include: "Mapping the Commons" (2010) by the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens (EMST); Liam Young's *Electronic Countermeasures* (2011); and *The Artvertiser* (2008–) by Julian Oliver, Damian Stewart, and Arturo Castro.

of artists, museums, independent art spaces, and socially engaged collectives gradually realised that there should be more strategic and long-term responses.

The revamping of the role of art post-crisis materialised, on an institutional level, through three distinct trajectories: firstly, by creating new programmes or departments within cultural institutions' existing structures; secondly, by reinforcing initiatives that were already established; and, finally, to directly support independent schemes, which would be able to take on, on a more long-term basis, the role that temporary new media exhibitions and projects had been fulfilling. Not surprisingly, perhaps, these three approaches have been particularly pertinent in countries that found themselves at the epicentre of the global financial meltdown, such as Greece, Ireland, and Spain. More specifically, in the case of Spain in 2010, the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (Centre of Contemporary Culture Barcelona, CCCB) established the CCCB LAB, in order to explore new forms of public exhibition that use the internet, data journalism, and science.[4] At the same time, the Centre aimed to integrate techno-cultural advances with philosophy, literature, and art through a variety of events, in an attempt to underline the richness and diversity of technology's impact on art theory and intellectual production at large. In addition, many of the LAB's activities have had a strong educational orientation through various "open education" activities—similar to those of another Barcelona-based organisation, Platoniq.[5]

Supported by the Department de Cultura (Department of Culture) Catalonia, and Consell Nacional de la Cultura i de les Arts (National Council for Culture and the Arts, CoNCA), Platoniq has largely based its new, post-crisis identity on its 2006 project "Banco Común de Conocimientos" (BCC; or "Bank of Common Knowledge," BCK), which researched "new ways of enhancing the distribution channels for practical and informal knowledge, as well as how to share it."[6] Remaining within this context of practice, Platoniq has created a variety of collaborative outputs that apply the working methods of the internet and peer-to-peer networks to education, economics, and social innovation. In Madrid, Medialab-Prado opened its new headquarters in 2013 in order to fulfil more successfully its role as a citizens' laboratory for the production, research, and dissemination of collaborative cultural projects. Its main focus has been on practices such as data visualisation and new social and artistic strategies, such as the transdisciplinary development of commons.[7]

Finally, ColaBoraBora constitutes a prominent case from a slightly smaller Spanish city, Bilbao.[8] With the support of the local government, ColaBoraBora has established itself as an experimental platform fostering both online and offline discussions that involve a large number of local partners through regular meetings. Following the outbreak of the financial crisis, the aim of such interactions and exchanges has been specifically to propose new models of social organisation based on the commons, activism, open

4 — "CCCB Department Dedicated to Research and Innovation in the Cultural Sphere," *Cccb.org,* accessed October 27, 2019, http://blogs.cccb.org/ veus/?lang=en.

5 — "What We Do," *Platoniq.net,* accessed December 16, 2019, http://platoniq.net/en/.

6 — "Bank of Commons," *Platoniq.net,* accessed December 16, 2019, http://platoniq.net/en/bcc/.

7 — "Medialab", *Medialab-prado.es,* accessed December 16, 2019, https://www.medialab-prado.es/en/medialab.

8 — "ColaBoraBora," *Colaborabora.org,* accessed December 16, 2019, https://www.colaborabora.org/colaborabora/.

modes of cultural production, and the mediation of new technologies.

In all the aforementioned cases, we should not fail to recognise the impact of their curatorial programmes on reimagining the dominant modes of social being through a variety of new, collaborative, research-based activities. In this context, their most important contributions should not be sought in the content of such activities (which is not explicitly "aggressive" towards the agents of data capitalism), but mainly in the fact that they all established a permanent *physical* presence within the city, in parallel to their permanent *online* presence. In other words, they have not been ephemeral exhibition projects hosted within a larger institution but, rather, independent entities with their own "headquarters" or "basis."

These conditions are part and parcel of the new legitimacy that was given to the hackerspace model as a result of the crisis. The proliferation of such community-based, nonprofit spaces, where people with shared interests in technology, science, and digital art could socialise and collaborate, has been a manifestation of the need of many creative communities in crisis-hit countries to find new tools of communication, research, and common expression.[9] The transition from the performative character of "tactical

media" to hackerspaces should not be seen as "confinement" away from the public (although this danger always exists in any kind of studio or workspace structure). Rather, this development could be considered an effort to give a more permanent and concrete form to the alternatives that have been proposed as antidotes to the global crisis of data capitalism: a research-based production of commons on a regular and sustainable basis.

Nevertheless, even in countries in which the impact of the crisis has been felt to a lesser extent than in Southern Europe, similar principles have characterised the function of most hackerspaces and their initiatives. London-based art space Furtherfield has been at the forefront of the new media art scene in the UK since its foundation by artists Ruth Catlow and Marc Garrett in 1996. Furtherfield has produced, over the years, a range of participatory exhibitions and events that encourage members of the public to "become active co-creators of their cultures and societies."[10] Amid the economic crisis and the rise of inequality that it has brought about, Furtherfield developed a series of workshops titled "Zero Dollar Laptop," which were accompanied by a programme of public debates and exhibitions, all inspired by the "Zero Dollar Laptop Manifesto" (2007). Published by artist, educator, and free software advocate James Wallbank, the manifesto begins with the striking

9 — For an overview of the hacker culture ethos, see McKenzie Wark, *A Hacker Manifesto* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004). For an analysis of hackerspace models, see Vasilis Kostakis, Vasilis Niaros, Vasilis and Christos Giotitsas, "Production and Governance in Hackerspaces: A Manifestation of Commons-based Peer Production in the Physical Realm?," in *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 18, no. 5 (February 2014): 555–73. An indicative list of hackerspaces around the world can be found at https://hackerspaces.org/. On a basic conceptual level, we could trace the roots of hackerspaces to the early period of post-revolutionary Russia and the studios of the Constructivists. In Rodchenko's famous laboratory, for instance, artists, designers, and architects were able to work in conditions of extensive

experimentation and interdisciplinary collaboration, often combined with a strong sense of social and political mission, in order to produce a variety of speculative projects. See Maria Gough, *The Artist as Producer: Russian Constructivism in Revolution* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005); Victor Margolin, *The Struggle for Utopia: Rodchenko, Lissitzky, Moholy-Nagy, 1917–1946* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); and Briony Fer, "Metaphor and Modernity: Russian Constructivism," *Oxford Art Journal* 12, no. 1 (1989): 14–30.

10 — "About", *Archive.furtherfield.org*, accessed December 16, 2019, http://archive.furtherfield.org/content/about.

declaration "The zero dollar laptop is here!"[11] Following this first statement, the writer goes on to describe the technical details of the "already distributed" laptop ("You weren't told about it at the time of distribution"), highlighting the fact that it is a device that is constantly being upgraded and that it uses free, open-source software.

The zero dollar laptop is not intended primarily for multi-media entertainment; rather, its role is to educate and become a tool of production for individual users, NGOs, local charities, and small businesses, whilst having zero carbon footprint. Accordingly, the major question emerges: "where is the zero dollar laptop?" The answer provided by Wallbank is unexpectedly simple: it is probably sitting on a shelf, unused, as we have already upgraded to a new, more powerful machine. Accordingly, the manifesto becomes an open call to install free, open-source operating systems, such as Linux, on our unused computers, and to familiarise ourselves with the communication capacities offered by open-source software and its communities. For Wallbank, the localised, decentralised, and do-it-yourself character of open-source software applications can be a catalyst in developing new skills that are capable of transforming our social reality. This potentiality is vividly reflected in the final recommendation made in the manifesto: to freely distribute our zero dollar laptops to people living nearby. In this way, the zero dollar laptop shall become "a key computing platform for empowering individuals, stimulating creativity, overcoming poverty and enriching our shared culture […] without any additional research, design, or manufacture."

The "Zero Dollar Laptop" workshops have been, in many ways, the materialisation of Wallbank's manifesto. The project was launched by Furtherfield in January 2010 in collaboration with St Mungo's charity for the homeless and Access Space, Sheffield, the UK's longest running free, open access digital media lab.[12] The workshops used recycled laptops donated by different communities in order to teach homeless people, who had been excluded from formal education, core computer and new media skills. All zero dollar laptops have been running "free and open-source software" (FOSS) to create music, graphics, and videos, with a special focus on distribution over the internet. Once they completed their studies, the homeless participants left the programme with basic technological skills as well as one of the wireless-enabled laptops, some of which they had, in collaboration with their tutors, modified during the workshops. Notably, the attendance rates on the Zero Dollar Laptop course were high and enrolment very close to the actual completion rate.[13] This positive response could be attributed to the development of an innovative and supportive learning environment, which combined the tuition of technological skills with the creative experimentation offered by working with and researching different types of media applications. Finally, it is important to note that the programme promoted a sustainable model of technology-based education, in accordance with Furtherfield's ambition to develop "a critical view of growth economics and patterns of consumption."[14]

11 — James Wallbank, "James Wallbank Says: The Zero Dollar Laptop Manifesto," *Robvankranenburgs.wordpress.com* (blog), accessed December 16, 2019, https://robvankranenburgs.wordpress.com/2007/10/11/james-wallbank-says-the-zero-dollar-laptop-manifesto/.

12 — St Mungo's: https://www.mungos.org/; Access Space: https://access-space.org/.

13 — "Zero Dollar Laptop Workshops," *Archive.furtherfield.org*, accessed December 16, 2019, http://archive.furtherfield.org/outreach/zero-dollar-laptop-workshops.

14 — "Furtherfield Media Art Ecologies 2009–12," *Archive.furtherfield.org*, accessed December 16, 2019, http://archive.furtherfield.org/projects/furtherfield-media-art-ecologies-2009-12.

The cases that we have briefly examined in this section collectively indicate that one of the most distinct aspects of the rise of hackerspaces—both as physical entities and as a cultural paradigm—has been their strong commitment to fighting the commercialised and profit-driven exploitation of scientific research and technological progress. This privatisation of knowledge is often the result of the privileged access and exclusive ownership of technological innovations by large corporations. Consequently, efforts to re-appropriate science and technology bear very strong political characteristics, as they aim to democratise some of the most important means of production and exploitation that are fuelling data capitalism.

EXCHANGE BEYOND MONEY

The immateriality of flows that characterises data capitalism has inevitably raised questions about the ways in which value can be estimated with precision in the current historical conjuncture. On the one hand, the neoliberal ideology that dominates a thoroughly globalised economy demands quantifiable results for any commercial or non-commercial endeavour; and, on the other hand, "quantity" can be rather nebulous in its conceptualisation within an increasingly immaterial economic environment. Reflecting on this dichotomy, cultural producers have often attempted to think of new ways to capture and articulate value. Amongst them, several have been focusing on time as an essential form of capital and, more specifically, as capital that should be re-appropriated. This effort is organically connected to a networked economy that has made appropriation of a worker's time easier than ever, albeit in a highly concealed manner (e.g., affective labour).

The challenge produced in this context is how time could be transformed from a unit of economic exchange—as it is *culturally* portrayed at the moment—into a unit of social exchange. A very prominent response to this challenge can be found in the shape of time banks.

In general, time banking covers a wide variety of practices through which people can exchange time and skills, instead of acquiring goods and services with money or any other kind of state-backed system of exchange value.[15] This spirit of defiant communality has been a consistent characteristic of time banks ever since the time of the Industrial Revolution. The global economic crisis of 2008 quickly revitalised this ethos, with many initiatives employing the tools offered by the web in order to find more creative and enriching means of exchange based on the asset of time. In 2010, the artistic, curatorial, and publishing platform *e-flux* launched "Time/Bank," an online platform inspired by already existing, successful models of time banks.[16] Initiated by Julieta Aranda and Anton Vidokle, the project's website featured an extensive list of time banking advertisements that covered several countries. Online users could search on the basis of different categories and skillsets, and by registering on the website they had the opportunity to post advertisements of their own. Categories included art (the most extensive category), communication, education, shelter, and transportation; and skills varied from drawing

15 — Not surprisingly, the right conditions for the creation of time banks first emerged after the Industrial Revolution and the widespread implementation of capitalist modes of production. As a reaction to those and to the (over-) exploitation of workers, utopian theorists and practitioners such as Robert Owen (1771–1858) and Josiah Warren (1798–1874) created "time currencies" through which time became the principal measure of different goods or activities (labour).

16 — "Time/Bank," *E-flux.com*, September 15, 2010, https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/36461/time-bank/. As of October 2019, the project's website is no longer live.

to graphic design, and from translation between different languages to yoga and dance classes. Furthermore, Time/Bank established a network of temporary and long-term local branches in several cities around the world.[17]

These "offspring" functioned as physical spaces where time-banking exchanges could take place, with a view to building connections between people and strengthening social cohesion in local communities thanks to the introduction of an alternative economic model.[18] In accordance with this extrovert, internationalist approach, the credit hours earned by performing a certain time banking activity could be used at any location around the world and for any service. This was possible thanks to the common framework of "Hour Notes," which were issued in half-hour, one hour, six, twelve, and twenty-four hour denominations.[19]

Arguably, this opportunity has been of particular importance to culture at a time of austerity. As Aranda and Vidokle have emphasised, Time/Bank created "a sense of worth for many of the exchanges that already

take place within our field—particularly those that do not produce commodities and often escape the structures that validate only certain forms of exchange as significant or profitable."[20] Therefore, Time/Bank did not simply enhance the links between artists and their local communities; rather, it created a new basis for collaboration and mutual support within the artistic community itself, *liberated* from the conceptual and practical restraints produced by the use of normative forms of money, such as currencies.

The connections between time banks and artistic production have also been explored in recent years through the format of artists' residencies. A good example of such an amalgamation is the "Neighbourhood Time Exchange" residency, which was initiated in autumn 2014 in West Philadelphia, USA.[21] Based in one of Philadelphia's most deprived areas, the Lancaster Avenue neighbourhood, the scheme provides its resident artists with a studio space, a fee, and some basic tools. In exchange—and for every hour of working in the studio—the artists are required to provide an hour of service to the local community, by working on projects that have been proposed by the residents themselves and various community-based organisations. For the realisation of those projects, artists are encouraged to make use of the often-invisible resources of the neighbourhood—namely, Lancaster Avenue's commons, in the form of public spaces, materials, objects, histories, knowledge, skills, languages, etc. In this way, Neighbourhood Time Exchange "offers an opportunity to explore the ways in which forms of value and exchange are

17 — As of November 2014, those cities were: Berlin, Bristol, Den Haag, Frankfurt, Leuven, Ljubljana, Moscow, New York, Sherbrooke, Sydney, and Warsaw.

18 — For a thorough evaluation of the benefits of time banks to local communities, see Anna Coote, Josh Ryan-Collins and Lucie Stephens, "The New Wealth of Time: How Timebanking Helps People Build Better Public Services," PDF, (London: New Economics Foundation, 2008), https://nwi.pdx.edu/webinars/webinar13-materials1.pdf; Ed Collom, Corinne Kyriacou and Judith N. Lasker, *Equal Time, Equal Value: Community Currencies and Time Banking in the US* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing,

2012); and Abby S. Letcher and Kathy M. Perlow, "Community-Based Participatory Research Shows How a Community Initiative Creates Networks to Improve Well-Being," *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 37, no. 6: S292–S299, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2009.08.008.

19 — In 2009, e-flux asked a group of artists, architects, writers, activists, and designers to propose a design for a symbolic currency representing the exchange of time: "e-flux presents TIME CURRENCY, CURRENT TIMES…," *E-flux.com*, October 15, 2009, https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/37598/e-flux-presents-time-currency-current-times/.

20 — "Time/Bank," "Announcements," *Artandeducation.net*, September 22, 2010, https://www.artandeducation.net/announcements/110542/time-bank.

21 — "Bringing Together Artists and Community Members to Dream Up Creative Community-Led Projects for the Neighborhood," *Neighborhoodtime.exchange*, accessed December 16, 2019, http://www.neighborhoodtime.exchange/.

identified and distributed, and the boundaries between public and private might be blurred."[22] Expanding the scope of works such as Christian Nold's *Bijlmer Euro* (2010), which aimed to change the culture of transactions in a particular area, projects such as Time/Bank and Neighbourhood Time Exchange residency reinterpret the construction of micro-economies (both material and immaterial) through artistic initiatives.[23] Moving beyond monetary value—and in their own distinct ways—they integrate the concept of the transaction with that of social change, starting from the level of the community. The latter appears to emerge "naturally" as the birthplace of any transformative action, both in politics and in art.

22 — "West Philadephia Artist Residency," *Neighborhoodtime. exchange*, accessed December 20, 2019, PDF, http://www. neighborhoodtime.exchange/app/ uploads/2018/10/2019-Time-Exchange-RFQ-FINAL.pdf.

23 — British artist Christian Nold launched "Bijlmer Euro" in January 2010 in the Bijlmer area of southeastern Amsterdam, as a project that lasted for three months. Residents of the Bijlmer area were given the opportunity to create their own "breed" of euros by simply sticking on them a special, recycled radio frequency identification (RFID) sticker, which had a unique electronic tag. Stickers could be obtained for free from a "Mobile Bicycle Bank" that toured the whole area, with a schedule of dates and locations that could be found on the project's website. Shops

that participated in the Bijlmer Euro scheme scanned the hybrid notes and offered small discounts for using the Bijlmer Euro instead of standard currency. Furthermore, thanks to the notes' RFID component, money flows could be traced through a real-time data visualisation that was accessible to anyone, on a dedicated website. This function provided a more transparent image of the way in which the local economy worked and, especially, about the importance of small businesses. In deprived areas like Bijlmer, such businesses may operate as effective agents against gentrification—a phenomenon that is capable of changing radically a community's socioeconomic character. See the project's website: *Bijlmereuro. net*, accessed October 27, 2019, http://www.bijlmereuro.net/?page_id=25&lang=en.

CONCLUSION:
COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH AS "COMMONING"

The connections established between political activism and art after the global financial crisis of 2008 have been indicative of the need of artists and cultural organisations to engage in more depth with practices that might have been considered of marginal interest, or special scope, just a few years ago. The emergence of the "commons" as a key concern for many cultural producers is a testament to this realignment of consciousness. The spirit of creativity engendered by the online and offline collaborations between artists, thinkers, curators, scientists, programmers, and hardware engineers has produced new modes of research that not only encourage a shift in our mentality towards the commons, but, also, a transformation in what several art organisations perceive to be their social role.[24] Such new artistic, curatorial, and institutional approaches to collaboration demonstrate the potential for reclaiming information and knowledge, with a view to producing wealth for the majority of people; not just for those who already control capital and its flows. In that sense, the conditions nurtured by the crisis of 2008 have revealed "the possibilities of re-appropriation of knowledge that may occur only through knowledge itself."[25]

Often inspired by hacker culture, the aims of many post-2008 cultural initiatives have, thus, been to combine the transformative effects of new technologies on physical spaces and the creation of social networks both online and

24 — Daphne Dragona, "Artists as the New Producers of the Common (?)" in Lanfranco Aceti et al., eds., "Red Art: New Utopias in Data Capitalism": 164–73.

25 — "Esse, Nosse, Posse: Common Wealth for Common People," *Emst.gr*, accessed December 16, 2019, http:// www.emst.gr/en/exhibitions-en/ esse-nosse-posse-common-wealth-for-common-people.

offline. According to Greek curator Daphne Dragona, the new cultural and curatorial practices that have emerged in this context have displayed four main characteristics: the formation of new online and physical spaces enabling social encounter and interaction; the provision, endorsement, and reinforcement of social and artistic tools that are—quite often—already available; the emergence of a new ethos of collectiveness and communality; and, finally, the creation of a new system of values, beyond exclusions and the profit-based understanding of social progress.[26] This more democratic redefinition of cultural praxis can be traced back to the simple fact that there is no commons without commoning; in other words, there is no commons without the human agency that brings it and its dormant potentialities to life. The rise of alternative cultural institutions and the development of new modes of collaborative research since the Great Recession have been responses to this very fact—namely, reactions to the urgent need to creatively re-introduce the human factor into a system that had abandoned the very notion of humanity for a long time.[27]

26 — Dragona, "Artists as the New Producers," op. cit., 170–71.

27 — The "Great Recession" of 2007–9 was the most severe financial and economic downturn since the "Great Depression" of the 1930s. See International Monetary Fund Research Dept., "World Economic Outlook, April 2009: Crisis and Recovery," *World Economic Outlook, World Economic and Financial Surveys*, PDF (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund Publication Services, 2009), https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2016/12/31/World-Economic-Outlook-April-2009-Crisis-and-Recovery-22575.
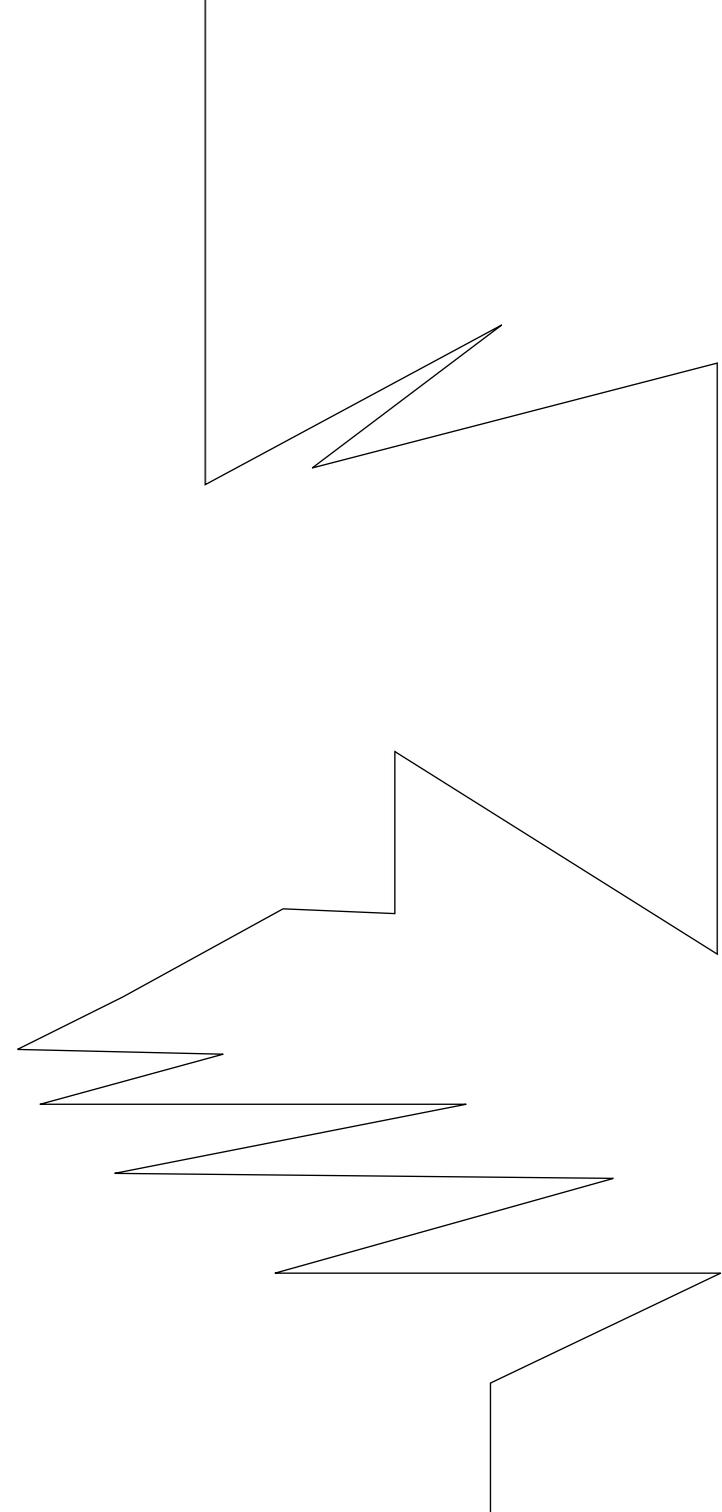
BIOGRAPHIES

Bill Balaskas is an artist, theorist, and educator, whose research is located at the intersection of politics, new media, and contemporary visual culture. He is an Associate Professor and Director of Research, Business and Innovation at the School of Art & Architecture, Kingston University, London. His works have been widely exhibited internationally, in galleries, museums, festivals, and public spaces. He has received awards and grants from: the European Investment Bank (EIB) Institute; Comité International d'Histoire de l'Art (CIHA); Open Society Foundations; European Cultural Foundation; National Sculpture Factory (Ireland); and the Association for Art History (UK), amongst others. He is an Editor of the *Leonardo Electronic Almanac* (LEA), published by MIT Press. His writings have also appeared in edited books and other publications such as: *Journal of Visual Culture*, *Third Text*, and *Revista ARTA*. Originally trained as an economist, he holds a PhD in Critical Writing in Art & Design and an MA in Communication Art & Design from the Royal College of Art.

Leonhard Bartolomeus is a curator, researcher, and passionate teacher. He graduated from the Jakarta Institute of Arts, with a degree in ceramic craft. In 2012, he joined an Art Critics and visual culture Writers' workshop organised by ruangrupa and, later on, he became involved in many more of the collective's programmes and events. From 2013 to 2017, he was actively working as a member of ruangrupa, publishing books, managing a gallery, undertaking art research, and organising karaoke events, amongst other activities. In 2014, he received a grant from the Japan Foundation to undertake an internship as an Assistant Curator at the Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA). Aside from his work with ruangrupa, he has also undertaken research and exhibited with different partners, such as Jakarta Arts Council and various NGOs, and he has taught in an art school. Since 2019, he has been a Curator at the Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media (YCAM).

Michael Birchall is Curator of Public Practice at Tate Liverpool and a Senior Lecturer in Exhibition Studies at Liverpool John Moores University. His curatorial practice and research concerns socially engaged art, performance, exhibition histories, and notions of publicness in museums. He has previously held curatorial appointments at: Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre, Alberta; Western Front, Vancouver; and Künstlerhaus, Stuttgart. He has lectured at Zurich University of the Arts and his writing has appeared in: *Frieze*; *ARKEN Bulletin*; *On Curating*; *Modern Painters*; *C Magazine*; *Art & the Public Sphere*; as well as various catalogues and monographs, such as *Collective Good/Collaborative Efforts* (Stavanger: Rogaland Kunstsenter, 2017). He co-curated "O.K. – The Musical," a socially-engaged long-term work by Christopher Kline at Tate Liverpool in 2017.

Mélanie Bouteloup is Co-founder and the current Director of Bétonsalon – Centre for Art and Research and Villa Vassilieff. Over the last fifteen years, she has curated numerous projects in various forms that anchor research in society on process-based, collaborative, and discursive levels, following different time spans, in cooperation with various local, national, and international organisations. In 2012, Bouteloup was an Associate Curator, alongside Artistic Director Okwui Enwezor, of La Triennale, Paris—an event organised on the initiative of the Ministry of Culture and Communication/Directorate-General for Artistic Creation (DGCA), the Centre national des arts plastiques (CNAP), and the Palais de Tokyo. In 2014, she was conferred with the French honour, Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters.

Carolina Cerón works and lives in Bogotá, Colombia. She is currently an Assistant Professor in Curating at the Art Department of Universidad de los Andes. She is interested in initiatives on experimental ephemera and alternative sites for curatorial discourse. She also performs—from an eminently self-reflexive position—the task of organising, exposing, interpreting, reading, and writing about art and the metabolisation of other sorts of viscosities. She holds a BFA from the Universidad de los Andes, a postgraduate diploma in exhibition format design from the Elisava School, Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, and an MA in Culture Industry from Goldsmiths, University of London.

Anthony Downey is Professor of Visual Culture in the Middle East and North Africa, Birmingham City University. He sits on the editorial boards of *Third Text* and *Digital War*, and is affiliated with several research projects exploring pedagogy, digital cultures, and human rights in the Middle East. Recent and upcoming publications include: *Unbearable States: Digital Media, Cultural Activism and Human Rights* (forthcoming, 2021); *Displacement Activities: Contemporary Art and the Refugee Condition* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2020); *Critique in Practice: Renzo Martens' Episode III (Enjoy Poverty)* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2019); *Don't Shrink Me to the Size of a Bullet: The Works of Hiwa K* (London: Koenig Books, 2017); and *Future Imperfect: Contemporary Art Practices and Cultural Institutions in the Middle East* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016). In 2019, he launched a new series of books, *Research/Practice* (Sternberg Press) with individual volumes on the work of Michael Rakowitz, Heba Y. Amin, and Larissa Sansour.

Pujita Guha and **Abhijan Toto** founded and co-direct the Forest Curriculum, which is an itinerant and nomadic platform for "indisciplinary" research and mutual co-learning. It proposes to assemble a located critique of the Anthropocene via the "naturecultures" of Zomia, the forested belt that connects south and southeast Asia. The Forest Curriculum works with artists, researchers, indigenous organisations and thinkers, musicians, and activists. Abhijan Toto is an independent curator and researcher, who has previously worked with the Dhaka Art Summit; Bellas Artes Projects, Manila; and Council, Paris. He is the recipient of the 2019 Lorenzo Bonaldi Award for Art, GAMeC, Bergamo. Pujita Guha is currently a GCLR Fellow at the University of California, Santa Barbara and is widely published on south and southeast Asian cultures and "ecosophical" thought. The Forest

Curriculum organises exhibitions, talks, film programmes, and other public activities in addition to leading and conducting research groups and independent investigations. It also indulges in new forms of research in addition to teaching and developing programmes for academic institutions. The Forest Curriculum collaborates with institutions and organisations in south and southeast Asia and beyond, including: the Arts Network Asia (ANA) for "The Forest As School" Summer Academy programme; SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin; Ghost:2561 art series, Bangkok; SUGAR Contemporary, Toronto; Hanoi DocLab; and IdeasCity, New Museum, New York.

Joasia Krysa is a curator and scholar whose research spans contemporary art, curating, and digital culture. She is Professor of Exhibition Research and Lab Leader of Exhibition Research Lab (ERL) at Liverpool John Moores University, in partnership with Liverpool Biennial. She has curated exhibitions at the intersection of art and technology and commissioned online projects as part of the curatorial team for documenta 13, 2012; as Artistic Director of Kunsthal Aarhus, Denmark, 2012–15; and as Co-curator of Liverpool Biennial 2016 and 2018, amongst others. Her first "software-kurator" experiment was presented at Tate Modern in 2005 and published in *Curating Immateriality: In Search for Spaces of The Curatorial* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2006). Recent publications include the edited books *Systemics (or, Exhibition as a Series)* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2017) and *Writing and Unwriting Media Art History: Erkki Kurenniemi in 2048* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015) as well as chapters in *Networks* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014)

and *The Routledge Companion to Art and Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015). She has been appointed as an international Advisor for the first edition of the Helsinki Biennial, 2020, and Sapporo International Art Festival (SIAF), 2020, Japan.

Vali Mahlouji is a curator, Advisor to the British Museum and the Bahman Mohassess Estate, and Director of the Kaveh Golestan Estate. In 2010, he founded Archaeology of the Final Decade (AOTFD), a nonprofit curatorial platform which excavates cultural materials that have been subjected to erasure, censorship, and destruction. AOTFD has placed artworks in international collections including: Tate Modern, Smithsonian Institution, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (MAM), British Museum, and Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). Mahlouji's recent curatorial work includes exhibitions at: the Dhaka Art Summit, 2018; Whitechapel Gallery, London; Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow; SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin; FOAM, Amsterdam; MAXXI, Rome; Bergen Assembly; Sursock Museum, Beirut. An upcoming exhibition will take place at the Asia Art Centre (ACC), Gwangju. He has been published by various institutions and publishers, including: Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Asia Society Museum, New York; and Yale University Press. His upcoming book is being published by the Whitechapel Gallery, London, in 2020.

Je Yun Moon is a curator and writer from South Korea. She has worked in the fields of art, architecture, and performance at: the Sonje Art Center, Seoul; Anyang Public Art Project;

Venice Architecture Biennale; Nam June Paik Art Center, Yongin; and the Korean Cultural Centre (KCCUK), London. From 2017 to 2018, she ran the visual arts programme of the Korea/UK season, a programme of extensive cultural activities in collaboration with twenty-one arts institutions in the UK, including: "I Believe My Works Are Still Valid" by Kim Yong Ik, Spike Island, Bristol; "Jewyo Rhii and Jihyun Jung: Dawn Breaks," The Showroom, London; "Rehearsals from the Korean Avant-Garde Performance Archive," KCCUK, London. She is currently the Head of Programmes at Liverpool Biennial. She holds a doctorate in Curatorial/Knowledge from Goldsmiths, University of London, where her doctoral research delved into contemporary choreographic practice as a particular strategy of performing exhibitions.

Andrea Phillips is BALTIC Professor and Director of BxNU Research Institute, Northumbria University & BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art. Andrea lectures and writes about the economic and social construction of public value within contemporary art, the manipulation of forms of participation, and the potential of forms of political, architectural, and social reorganisation within artistic and curatorial culture.

Emily Pringle's undergraduate and postgraduate training was in Fine Art. During her doctoral research at the University of London, she focused on the relationship between artistic ways of knowing and teaching. She joined Tate in 2009, following ten years as a researcher and writer on museum education, creative learning, and socially-engaged art practice. From 2010 to 2019 she was Head of Learning Practice and Research during

which time she established the Tate Research Centre: Learning. In 2017, she was awarded an AHRC Leadership Fellowship, which allowed her to take a sabbatical to examine how collaborative, practice-led research can be embedded within art museums. Her research has been brought together in the publication, *Rethinking Research in the Art Museum* (London and New York: Routledge, 2019). In February 2019, she was appointed Head of Research at Tate.

farid rakun was trained as an architect (B.Arch, Universitas Indonesia; M.Arch, Cranbrook Academy of Art), and wears different hats, depending on who is asking. A visiting lecturer in the Department of Architecture, Universitas Indonesia, he is also a member of the artists' collective ruangrupa, with whom he co-curated Sonsbeek 2016's transACTION, Arnhem, Netherlands. As an instigator, he has permeated various global institutions such as: Le Centre Pompidou, Paris; Venice Biennale; National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMCA), Seoul; Sharjah Biennial; São Paulo Biennial; Harun Farocki Institut (HaFI), Dutch Art Institute (DAI); Creative Time, New York; Haute école d'art et de design (HEAD), Geneva; and BAK basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht. He has worked for Jakarta Biennale in different capacities since 2013, and currently serves as an Advisor.

Carolina Rito is a researcher and curator whose work is situated at the intersection between knowledge production, the curatorial, and contested historical narratives. She is Professor of Creative Practice Research, Research Centre for Arts, Memory, and Communities, Coventry University; an Executive Board Member

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ruangrupa is a Jakarta-based artists' collective established in 2000. It is a nonprofit organisation that strives to support art within urban and cultural contexts by encouraging artists and individuals from other disciplines—such as social sciences, politics, technology, and media, amongst others—to foster critical views in relation to Indonesian urban contemporary issues. ruangrupa also produces collaborative works in the form of art projects, such as exhibitions, festivals, art labs, workshops, and research, as well as books, magazines, and online journal publications. ruangrupa has been involved in many collaborative and exchange projects, including participating in: Gwangju Biennale, 2002 & 2018; Istanbul Biennial, 2005; Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Brisbane, 2012; Singapore Biennale, 2011; São Paulo Biennial, 2014; Aichi Triennale, Nagoya, 2016; and Cosmopolis #1 Le Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2017. In 2016, ruangrupa curated Sonsbeek 2016's transACTION, Arnhem, Netherlands. ruangrupa is the curator of documenta 15, 2022.

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Sian Vaughan is a Reader in Research Practice at Birmingham School of Art, Birmingham City University. Broadly, her research interests concern the pedagogies that underpin research in art and design and the mediation of public engagement with contemporary art as well as its interpretation. Her research focuses on artistic practices that involve archives, history, and institutions, with a particular focus on creative research methods as knowledge generation. Her educational research is focused on the practices and pedagogies of doctoral education and, in particular, how these respond to creative practice in research. She enjoys working collaboratively and across disciplines and has disseminated her work widely through peer-reviewed chapters, journal articles, and conference papers on the subject of public art, museum studies, archives, and education.

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