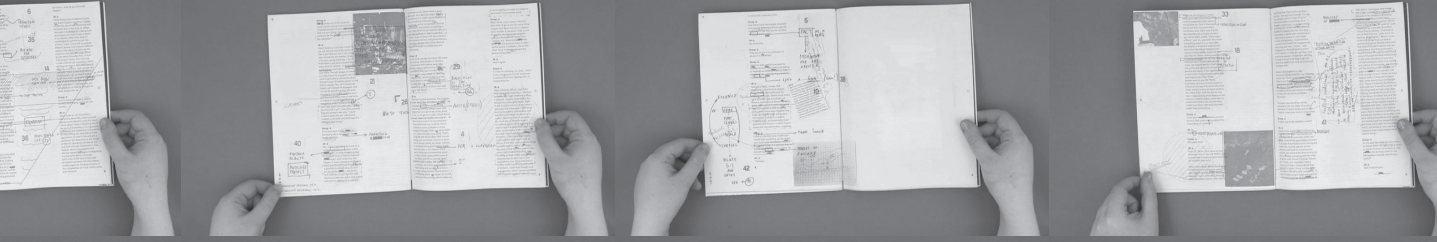


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**Introduction:****The Manual for Useful Art**

This special edition newspaper from the Autonomy Project presents Autonomy School 3 and Mobile Art School that took place at Liverpool School of Art and Design October 2012. Students from The University of Hildesheim, The Dutch Art Institute, and Liverpool School of Art and Design worked together toward a simple (yet deceptively complicated) brief – to produce, design and print a Draft Manual for Useful Art. The material produced during this week forms the foundation for this special edition Autonomy Project Newspaper. The newspaper itself is not a genuine 'manual' in the direct sense of the term, but more seeks to bring together a series of reflections and projects that aspire to be seen not only in and for themselves, but hope to contribute to a broader discussion on the possible 'use' of art today.

The newspaper itself is divided in three segments. It first offers three points of inspiration for the discussion on art and use. It starts with a reflection on Grizedal Arts, which is partly situated in the old Mechanics Institute that John Ruskin, author of our second article, worked with himself. The article by John Byrne in this section was previously published in *Afterall Journal*. Second point of inspiration is the work and research done by artist Tania Bruguera, on what she herself calls 'Arte Útil'. This part is introduced by a short reflection from Autonomy School participant Julia Tietjens. This first section ends with a poetic and playful reflection by Cahal Argue, also a participant of the Autonomy School, on the lecture given by Franco Berardi during the Mobile Art School. In the second part you will find a series of projects produced either during the Autonomy School 3 or by the participants of either the School or the Mobile Art School. In the last section there is material brought together that presents the Autonomy School 3 itself and gives an insight into the discussions and working methodology that was used.

Autonomy School 3 was contextualized by the presence of Alistair Hudson (Deputy Director of Grizedale Arts), Annie Fletcher (Curator), Antony Hudek (Archivist), Paul Sullivan (Artist) and John Byrne (writer). The Mobile Art School took place in the weekend of 13/10/12 and 14/10/12, and was run as part of Liverpool Biennial 2012.

This event was situated in the Copperas Hill building in Liverpool – itself a collaboration between Liverpool John Moores University/ Liverpool School of Art and Design and Liverpool Biennial. The theme of this Mobile Art School was 'Use Value: The Future of the Art School in Society'. We genuinely hope this Mobile Art School will act as a catalyst for radical re-imaginings of art schools based around use value and the historical re-thinking of Mechanics Institutes. The Manual for Useful Art (Draft 1) was presented as part of this event. On behalf of those who have taken part in the production of the Manual for Useful Art (Draft 1), Autonomy School 3 and the Mobile Art School, may we extend our warm thanks: these include Charles Esche, Prof. Juan Cruz, Sean Kaye, Islington Mill, ex-students of Liverpool Fine BA (Hons) Fine Art, Franco Berardi, Melissa Gronlund, Antony Hudek and Alistair Hudson.

Special thanks to Ian Mitchell (Programme Leader Graphic Arts at Liverpool School of Art and Design) and his BA (Hons) Students (who have designed and printed this Manual). Also to Prof. Juan Cruz, without whose help this would not have happened. Also to Paul Domela at Liverpool Biennial for helping to make the Mobile Art School take place and, of course, all of our collaborators and supporters on the Autonomy Project ([www.theautonomyproject.org](http://www.theautonomyproject.org)).

■  
**John Byrne**  
**Programme Leader Fine Art**  
**Member of the Autonomy Project**  
**Editorial Board**

# INSPIRATION

## THE

I'm usually averse to starting anything with a quote, but in the process of writing this I was sent a passage by Steven ten Thije of the Van Abbe Museum. To avoid breaking a habit I include it as a quoted quote from the email:

*I had to think of your idea of disappearing the art institute into society, which in inversion could be read as allowing society to 'absorb the work into itself'. It becomes especially powerful if you combine it with a reading of Benjamin's theory of distraction, but that's too hard to summarize here. If you're interested in that I can bring a text that is very clear on this matter, when we come to Grizedale. But in general this paragraph of the artwork-essay, number XV, the last one, is really something for you. Could be a motto for the Institute in a sense:*

**"Distraction and concentration form an antithesis, which may be formulated as follows. A person who concentrates before a work of art is absorbed by it; he enters into the work, just as, according to legend, a Chinese painter entered his completed painting while beholding it. By contrast, the distracted masses absorb the work of art into themselves."**

Steven and his colleagues visited me here in the English Lake District as part of a project we have been developing to look at creating new models for museums and new systems for evaluating art and its history.

They were keen to see the work that we had been undertaking at Grizedale Arts in our local village of Coniston, where we have been working with the villagers to revise and refurbish the Coniston Mechanics Institute. The Institute was established in the 19th Century for this rural mining community and later, with the input of resident artist and social reformer John Ruskin, rebuilt as a proto-civic institute of art and education. It had been rather neglected in recent years, as social conditions had changed, but there was nevertheless a need for something like it, if as yet undefined or vocalised.

Our strategy has been to work with the village, as residents with particular skills, rather than curators, to collectively repurpose the building, based on its earlier usage, as a place of production and sociality and distinctly not one for the consumption of art.

In this process it has also become apparent that the future of our organisation lies not in the endless expansion of its premises and infrastructure, but in dissolving the institution into the community; in effect to make the community (or civic structure) and its resources become the institution. Central to this has been a progressive shift over recent years towards art or art-like projects that were an enhancement of existing conditions and a preference for artist projects that have an effect, and which can be valued outside of the value systems of the established art order – close to the term given by Stephen Wright as double ontological status.

With the concept of an absorbed institution, we put aside the idea of the gallery as an autonomous or neutral zone and along with this the related construction of the Romantic artist above and beyond society as prescribed by a post-Kantian condition. Within the absorbed institution the artist and organization are seen as active, subjective and contributive citizens.

The current state of art galleries and museums is still determined by the framework marked out by economic and truth values; where value is ascribed to works of art based upon their operation within a market system and their perceived ability to reveal or lead us to seeing the world as it really is. In this scheme (from around 1848 onwards) the third value of art, based upon its

utility or usage, has been largely suppressed, or diverted into the arena of craft, activism, politics and so on.

Under these present conditions the art institution is inevitably drawn into a dual mode of exhibition and advocacy – displaying works of art according to a consensus of what constitutes a work of value and then to advocate this value to the museum or gallery's constituency. This advocacy takes many forms, including publishing, education programmes, public relations, symposia, research and the celebratory dinner or reception.

There have of course been many attempts to circumnavigate this system or even break it. Recent tendencies in art have offered a multitude of approaches to widen its social function. However the support structure for artists is so well bound in the structures of cultural capital that the gravitational pull of the market and the appetite for 'meaning' allows the momentum of the romantic model to be maintained that little bit further. Any attempt to escape this gravitational pull results in a life outside the performative frame of art, which could be argued as no bad thing, but perhaps a missed opportunity for art and artists to stake a claim for currency in society.

The fall of the Berlin wall is read as the watershed moment when free market capitalism appeared to have won out and gave license to the deregulation that has culminated in the current economic crisis. Until now the post-89 landscape has provided well for the contemporary art industry – with the wealthy elite in good health and buying into the art market and governing bodies (state or corporate) happily holding art aloft as a standard of aspiration, success and democracy, or at least mobility.

However since the crash of 2008 and the ensuing austerity in the West, the

value of art to society has been left exposed and vulnerable. With the idea of art stripped of any essential utility, public support of culture has been withdrawn in favor of the more vitally perceived organs of hospitals, schools and banks (although even this is over-generous). In turn public art institutions have increasingly looked to the plutocracy to support our cultural assets, which in turn has led to our public art institutions being steered from 'above' rather than 'below', or more accurately a broad ecology that encompasses both.

As we enter an era of de-growth, it seems more evident that the institutional forms we have inherited and are still working with were formed for an age of growth and prosperity. The current crisis amplifies this as the art world retreats in the last enclaves of wealth – art fairs, private collections and the clamour for the support of high net worth individuals. So what kind of institution can we shape that will be most useful to us in a moment of transition to a starkly different geopolitical landscape, one that will have relevance and be valued across society?

As a response to this global question and to specific local needs in our own constituency here in Coniston, we have been looking at the history of the Mechanics Institutes (of which there is a fine example here in the village) as a key to developing a new model of artistic production and dissemination that emphasises the usage value of art and aesthetics in civic society. These Institutes arose out of the emerging conditions of the Industrial revolution in the English-speaking world and provided the seedbed for cultural, economic, social, educational and political development in an era of rapid expansion and re-organization.

The Mechanics Institutes were purposely constructed as the vehicle for communities, large and small, urban and rural, to adjust to social change. Therefore it seems pertinent to imagine a new form of institution in response that would help us to adapt to the new and uncertain circumstances.

If we imagine ourselves on the downward side of a parabolic arc of Modernity, we might draw a line across and meet the West in its ascendancy around the year 1800, a year in the midst of the Machinery Question and the year that George Birkbeck began his evening classes in technical subjects at the Andersonian University in Glasgow. These classes were set up to provide the working population (for whom the university was out of reach) with free lectures on arts, sciences and technical subjects. As the country moved from an economy of agrarian and craft-based industries built on apprenticeships to mechanized production, the classes were seen as a way to teach the expanding

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population in the new sciences of industry and create a more productive workforce that was also more educated and contented. The classes proved enormously popular and the idea spread quickly across the country, ultimately leading to the formation of the first Mechanics' Institute in Edinburgh in 1821, followed by Glasgow, Liverpool and London in 1823 and Manchester in 1824, all of which later became universities. By 1850 there were over 700 Institutes in the UK with equal numbers in the United States, Canada and Australia. Wherever there was industry there was an Institute to support and nurture its workforce and community.

Whilst the Mechanics Institutes were created predominantly by the industrialists and were, for a large part, instrumental to improve knowledge and efficiency and keep the workers away from drink, they were also philanthropic; conceived in tandem with a pervasive social consciousness, to provide stimulation, culture, learning and enrichment to a society that was still in the early stages of reorganization towards industrial production. In the Institutes arts and sciences were taught side by side as part of a holistic ambition to improve. Complimenting the classes and libraries of technical subjects there were art classes, literature clubs, craft workshops, social events, fashion shows, theatres, studios, bath houses, games rooms and science laboratories. This was not merely a case of instruction and control but an endeavor to create a culture of intrinsic participation, learning and self development that would in turn be far more productive for society. And in due course the Institutes were producing a new generation of educated, free thinking, productive and entrepreneurial citizens, who were genuinely creative and full of ideas to benefit the whole as well as the self.

However this environment also led to the Mechanics Institutes gaining a role as a crucible for self-organization. It is no co-incidence that the Institutes, with their educational, democratic and social ambitions, became the seed bed for co-operative movements, the secret ballot, unionization, the emancipation of women, friendly societies and education for all. Indeed it has been suggested that the reason Britain did not, like most of Europe, turn to revolution in 1848, was because the Institutes had instilled in the population the belief that it was in their capabilities to change society from within.

From this we can see that the Institutes, in all their varieties of form, were valued by a broad spectrum of society for all they had to offer and that was of use to the citizen: whether for personal improvement, civic cohesion, financial security, creative development or social

advancement. This was to the extent that an individual would pay a small subscription in return for all the Institute had to offer.

With the redevelopment of the Coniston Institute this has been at the forefront of our minds, in creating functionality and activity that is valued by the community for how they can use it, as part of a general way of living, rather than an institution that provides a specific, rarefied occasion, experience or object into which they will lose themselves. Furthermore with the communal programme of classes, clubs, library, markets, events, dinners, fairs and exhibitions and so on, this is starting to organically expand across the village to include working with the churches, schools, farms, councils and the resources of the valley and consequently the dissolution of the Institution, and art, into civic society. At this point we might return again to Walter Benjamin's passage in the Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction where he talks of architecture:

**In contrast, the distracted mass absorbs the work of art. This is most obvious with regard to buildings. Architecture has always represented the prototype of a work of art the reception of which is consummated by a collectivity in a state of distraction.**

Benjamin continues to describe how with architecture habit and, you might say usage, determines optical reception.

We can extend this line of thinking now to encompass a broad conception of aesthetics, built on Ruskin's teachings on arts functionality and civic function of the institute, that would allow for the re-integration of art into society that was habitual rather than exceptional, and encompassed economics, science, politics, sociality and creativity under one roof.

**Three (draft) declarative statements on Use Value and Art (which I pledge to work on and test over the next 5 years).**

→ The job (or the work) of art is to produce forms and processes of radical autonomy which are capable of challenging the uni-accentuality and equivalence of global neo-liberal capital.

→ All forms of radical autonomy are inherently social in their construct.

→ The possibility of radical autonomy is entirely contingent upon use-value.

John Byrne ( 10 ■ 10 ■ 12 )

# P | L | E | D | G | E

ART TO USE

THE RELATION OF

LITERATURE

TO



# John Ruskin

Lectures on Art : delivered before the  
University of Oxford in Hilary term, 1870.

**97. Our subject of enquiry to-day, you will remember, is the mode in which fine art is founded upon, or may contribute to, the practical requirements of human life.**

Its offices in this respect are mainly twofold: it gives Form to knowledge, and Grace to utility; that is to say, it makes permanently visible to us things which otherwise could neither be described by our science, nor retained by our memory; and it gives delightfulness and worth to the implements of daily use, and materials of dress, furniture and lodging. In the first of these offices it gives precision and charm to truth; in the second it gives precision and charm to service. For, the moment we make anything useful thoroughly, it is a law of nature that we shall be pleased with ourselves, and with the thing we have made; and become desirous therefore to adorn or complete it, in some dainty way, with finer art expressive of our pleasure.

**And the point I wish chiefly to bring before you to-day is this close and healthy connection of the fine arts with material use; but I must first try briefly to put in clear light the function of art in giving Form to truth.**

**98.** Much that I have hitherto tried to teach has been disputed on the ground that I have attached too much importance to art as representing natural facts, and too little to it as a source of pleasure. And I wish, in the close of these four prefatory lectures, strongly to assert to you, and, so far as I can in the time, convince you, that the entire vitality of art depends upon its being either full of truth, or full of use; and that, however pleasant, wonderful or impressive it may be in itself, it must yet be of inferior kind, and tend to [Pg 67] deeper inferiority, unless it has clearly one of these main objects,—either to state a true thing, or to adorn a serviceable one. It must never exist alone—never for itself; it exists rightly only when it is the means of knowledge, or the grace of agency for life.

**99. Now, I pray you to observe—for though I have said this often before, I have never yet said it clearly enough—every good piece of art, to whichever of these ends it may be directed, involves first essentially the evidence of human skill and the formation of an actually beautiful thing by it.**

Skill, and beauty, always then; and, beyond these, the formative arts have always one or other of the two objects which I have just defined to you—truth, or serviceableness; and without these aims neither the skill nor their beauty will avail; only by these can either legitimately reign. All the graphic arts begin in keeping the outline of shadow that we have loved, and they end in giving to it the aspect of life; and all the architectural arts begin in the shaping of the cup and the platter, and they end in a glorified roof.

**Therefore, you see, in the graphic arts you have Skill, Beauty, and Likeness; and in the architectural arts, Skill, Beauty, and Use; and you must have the three in each group, balanced and co-ordinate; and all the chief errors of art consist in losing or exaggerating one of these elements.**

**100.** For instance, almost the whole system and hope of modern life are founded on the notion that you may substitute mechanism for skill, photograph for picture, cast-iron for sculpture. That is your main nineteenth-century faith, or infidelity. You think you can get everything by grinding—music, literature, and painting. You will find it grievously not so; you can get nothing but dust by mere grinding. Even to have the barley-meal out of it, you must have the barley first; and that comes by growth, not grinding. But essentially, we have lost our delight in Skill; in that majesty of it which I was trying to make clear to you in my last address, and which long ago I tried to express, under the head of ideas of power.

The entire sense of that, we have lost, [Pg 68] because we ourselves do not take pains enough to do right, and have no conception of what the right costs; so that all the joy and reverence we ought to feel in looking at a strong man's work have ceased in us. We keep them yet a little in looking at a honeycomb or a bird's-nest; we understand that these differ, by divinity of skill, from a lump of wax or a cluster of sticks. But a picture, which is a much more wonderful thing than a honeycomb or a bird's-nest,—have we not known people, and sensible people too, who expected to be taught to produce that, in six lessons?

**101.** Well, you must have the skill, you must have the beauty, which is the highest moral element; and then, lastly, you must have the verity or utility, which is not the moral, but the vital element; and this desire for verity and use is the one aim of the three that always leads in great schools, and in the minds of great masters, without any exception. They will permit themselves in awkwardness, they will permit themselves in ugliness; but they will never permit themselves in uselessness or in unveracity.

**102. And farther, as their skill increases, and as their grace, so much more, their desire for truth.**

It is impossible to find the three motives in fairer balance and harmony than in our own Reynolds. He rejoices in showing you his skill; and those of you who succeed in learning what painter's work really is, will one day rejoice also, even to laughter—that highest laughter which springs of pure delight, in watching the fortitude and the fire of a hand which strikes forth its will upon the canvas as easily as the wind strikes it on the sea. He rejoices in all abstract beauty and rhythm and melody of design; he will never give



you a colour that is not lovely, nor a shade that is unnecessary, nor a line that is ungraceful. But all his power and all his invention are held by him subordinate,—and the more obediently because of their nobleness,—to his true leading purpose of setting before you such likeness of the living presence of an English gentleman or an English lady, as shall be worthy of being looked upon for ever.[Pg 69]

103.

But farther, you remember, I hope—for I said it in a way that I thought would shock you a little, that you might remember it—my statement, that art had never done more than this, never more than given the likeness of a noble human being. Not only so, but it very seldom does so much as this; and the best pictures that exist of the great schools are all portraits, or groups of portraits, often of very simple and no wise noble persons.

**You may have much more brilliant and impressive qualities in imaginative pictures; you may have figures scattered like clouds, or garlanded like flowers; you may have light and shade, as of a tempest, and colour, as of the rainbow; but all that is child's play to the great men, though it is astonishment to us.**

14

Their real strength is tried to the utmost, and as far as I know, it is never elsewhere brought out so thoroughly, as in painting one man or woman, and the soul that was in them; nor that always the highest soul, but often only a thwarted one that was capable of height; or perhaps not even that, but faultful and poor, yet seen through, to the poor best of it, by the masterful sight. So that in order to put before you in your Standard series, the best art possible,

I am obliged, even from the very strongest men, to take portraits, before I take the idealism. Nay, whatever is best in the great compositions themselves has depended on portraiture; and the study necessary to enable you to understand invention will also convince you that the mind of man never invented a greater thing than the form of man, animated by faithful life. Every attempt to refine or exalt such healthy humanity has weakened or caricatured it; or else consists only in giving it, to please our fancy, the wings of birds, or the eyes of antelopes. Whatever is truly great in either Greek or Christian art, is also restrictedly human; and even the raptures of the redeemed souls who enter, "celestemente ballando," the gate of Angelico's Paradise, were seen first in the terrestrial, yet most pure, mirth of Florentine maidens.

104.

I am aware that this cannot but at present appear gravely questionable to those of my audience who are strictly[Pg 70] cognisant of the phases of Greek art; for they know that the moment of its decline is accurately marked, by its turning from abstract form to portraiture.

But the reason of this is simple. The progressive course of Greek art was in subduing monstrous conceptions to natural ones; it did this by general laws; it reached absolute truth of generic human form, and if this ethical force had remained, would have advanced into healthy portraiture.

But at the moment of change the national life ended in Greece; and portraiture, there, meant insult to her religion, and flattery to her tyrants. And her skill perished, not because she became true in sight, but because she became vile at heart.

**105. And now let us think of our own work, and ask how that may become, in its own poor measure, active in some verity of representation.**

We certainly cannot begin by drawing kings or queens; but we must try, even in our earliest work, if it is to prosper, to draw something that will convey true knowledge both to ourselves and others. And I think you will find greatest advantage in the endeavour to give more life and educational power to the simpler branches of natural science: for the great scientific men are all so eager in advance that they have no time to popularise their discoveries, and if we can glean after them a little, and make pictures of the things which science describes, we shall find the service a worthy one. Not only so, but we may even be helpful to science herself; for she has suffered by her proud severance from the arts; and having made too little effort to realise her discoveries to vulgar eyes, has herself lost true measure of what was chiefly precious in them.

106.

Take Botany, for instance. Our scientific botanists are, I think, chiefly at present occupied in distinguishing species, which perfect methods of distinction will probably in the future show to be indistinct;—in inventing descriptive names of which a more advanced science and more fastidious scholarship will show some to be unnecessary, and others inadmissible;—and in microscopic investigations of structure, which through many alternate links of triumphant discovery[Pg 71] that tissue is composed of vessels, and that vessels are composed of tissue, have not hitherto completely explained to us either the origin, the energy, or the course of the sap; and which however subtle or successful, bear to the real natural history of plants only the relation that anatomy and organic chemistry bear to the history of men.

In the meantime, our artists are so generally convinced of the truth of the Darwinian theory that they do not always think it necessary to show any difference between the foliage of an elm and an oak; and the gift-books of Christmas have every page surrounded with laboriously engraved garlands of rose, shamrock, thistle, and forget-me-not, without its being thought proper by the draughtsman, or desirable by the public, even in the case of those uncommon flowers, to observe the real shape of the petals of any one of them.

107.

Now what we especially need at present for educational purposes is to know, not the anatomy of plants, but their biography—how and where they live and die, their tempers, benevolences, malignities, distresses, and virtues.

We want them drawn from their youth to their age, from bud to fruit. We ought to see the various forms of their diminished but hardy growth in cold climates, or poor soils; and their rank or wild luxuriance, when full-fed, and warmly nursed. And all this we ought to have drawn so accurately, that we might at once compare any given part of a plant with the same part of any other, drawn on the like conditions. Now, is not this a work which we may set about here in Oxford, with good hope and much pleasure? I think it is so important, that the first exercise in drawing I shall put before you will be an outline of a laurel leaf. You will find in the opening sentence of Lionardo's treatise, our present text-book,

**that you must not at first draw from nature, but from a good master's work, "per assuefarsi a buone membra,"**

to accustom yourselves, that is, to entirely good representative organic forms. So your first exercise shall be the top of the laurel sceptre of Apollo, drawn by an Italian engraver of Lionardo's own time; then we will draw a laurel leaf itself; [Pg 72] and little by little, I think we may both learn ourselves, and teach to many besides, somewhat more than we know yet, of the wild olives of Greece, and the wild roses of England.

108.

Next, in Geology, which I will take leave to consider as an entirely separate science from the zoology of the past, which has lately usurped its name and interest.

In geology itself we find the strength of many able men occupied in debating questions of which there are yet no data even for the clear statement; and in seizing advanced theoretical positions on the mere contingency of their being afterwards tenable; while, in the meantime, no simple person, taking a holiday in Cumberland, can get an intelligible section of Skiddaw, or a clear account of the origin of the Skiddaw slates; and while, though half the educated society of London travel every summer over the great plain of Switzerland, none know, or care to know, why that is a plain, and the Alps to the south of it are Alps; and whether or not the gravel of the one has anything to do with the rocks of the other.

**And though every palace in Europe owes part of its decoration to variegated marbles, and nearly every woman in Europe part of her decoration to pieces of jasper or chalcedony, I do not think any geologist could at this moment with authority tell us either how a piece of marble is stained, or what causes the streaks in a Scotch pebble.**

109.

Now, as soon as you have obtained the power of drawing, I do not say a mountain, but even a stone, accurately, every question of this kind will become to you at once attractive and definite;

**you will find that in the grain, the lustre, and the cleavage-lines of the smallest fragment of rock, there are recorded forces of every order and magnitude,**

from those which raise a continent by one volcanic effort, to those which at every instant are polishing the apparently complete crystal in its nest, and conducting the apparently motionless metal in its vein; and that only by the art of your own hand, and fidelity of sight which it develops, you can obtain true perception of these invincible and inimitable arts of the earth herself; while the comparatively [Pg 73] slight effort necessary to obtain so much skill as may serviceably draw mountains in distant effect will be instantly rewarded by what is almost equivalent to a new sense of the conditions of their structure.

110.

And, because it is well at once to know some direction in which our work may be definite, let me suggest to those of you who may intend passing their vacation in Switzerland, and who care about mountains, that if they will first qualify themselves to take angles of position and elevation with correctness, and to draw outlines with approximate fidelity, there are a series of problems of the highest interest to be worked out on the southern edge of the Swiss plain, in the study of the relations of its molasse beds to the rocks which are characteristically developed in the chain of the Stockhorn, Beatenberg, Pilate, Mythen above Schwytz, and High Sentis of Appenzell, the pursuit of which may lead

them into many pleasant, as well as creditably dangerous, walks, and curious discoveries; and will be good for the discipline of their fingers in the pencilling of crag form.

111.

I wish I could ask you to draw, instead of the Alps, the crests of Parnassus and Olympus, and the ravines of Delphi and of Tempe. I have not loved the arts of Greece as others have; yet I love them, and her, so much, that it is to me simply a standing marvel how scholars can endure for all these centuries, during which their chief education has been in the language and policy of Greece, to have only the names of her hills and rivers upon their lips, and never one line of conception of them in their mind's sight.

Which of us knows what the valley of Sparta is like, or the great mountain vase of Arcadia? which of us, except in mere airy syllabbling of names, knows aught of "sandy Ladon's liliated banks, or old Lycæus, or Cyllene hoar"? "You cannot travel in Greece?"—I know it; nor in Magna Græcia. But, gentlemen of England, you had better find out why you cannot, and put an end to that horror of European shame, before you hope to learn Greek art.

112.

I scarcely know whether to place among the things [Pg 74] useful to art, or to science, the systematic record, by drawing, of phenomena of the sky. But I am quite sure that your work cannot in any direction be more useful to yourselves, than in enabling you to perceive the quite unparalleled subtleties of colour and inorganic form, which occur on any ordinarily fine morning or evening horizon; and I will even confess to you another of my perhaps too sanguine expectations, that in some far distant time it may come to pass, that young Englishmen and Englishwomen may think the breath of the morning sky pleasanter than that of midnight, and its light prettier than that of candles.

113.

Lastly, in Zoology. What the Greeks did for the horse, and what, as far as regards domestic and expressional character, Landseer has done for the dog and the deer, remains to be done by art for nearly all other animals of high organisation. There are few birds or beasts that have not a range of character which, if not equal to that of the horse or dog, is yet as interesting within narrower limits, and often in grotesqueness, intensity, or wild and timid pathos, more singular and mysterious. Whatever love of humour you have,—whatever sympathy with imperfect, but most subtle, feeling,—whatever perception of sublimity in conditions of fatal power, may here find fullest occupation: all these being joined, in the strong animal races, to a variable and fantastic beauty far beyond anything that merely formative art has yet conceived.

I have placed in your Educational series a wing by Albert Dürer, which goes as far as art yet has reached in delineation of plumage; while for the simple action of the pinion it is impossible to go beyond what has been done already by Titian and Tintoret;

**but you cannot so much as once look at the rufflings of the plumes of a pelican pluming itself after it has been in the water, or carefully draw the contours of the wing either of a vulture or a common swift, or paint the rose and vermilion on that of a flamingo, without receiving almost a new conception of the meaning of form and colour in creation.**

114.

Lastly. Your work, in all directions I have hitherto[Pg 75] indicated, may be as deliberate as you choose; there is no immediate fear of the extinction of many species of flowers or animals; and the Alps, and valley of Sparta, will wait your leisure, I fear too long. But the feudal and monastic buildings of Europe, and still more the streets of her ancient cities, are vanishing like dreams: and it is difficult to imagine the mingled envy and contempt with which future generations will look back to us, who still possessed such things, yet made no effort to preserve, and scarcely any to delineate them: for when used as material of landscape by the modern artist, they are nearly always superficially or flatteringly represented, without zeal enough to penetrate their character, or patience enough to render it in modest harmony.

As for places of traditional interest, I do not know an entirely faithful drawing of any historical site, except one or two studies made by enthusiastic young painters in Palestine and Egypt: for which, thanks to them always: but we want work nearer home.

115.

Now it is quite probable that some of you, who will not care to go through the labour necessary to draw flowers or animals, may yet have pleasure in attaining some moderately accurate skill of sketching architecture, and greater pleasure still in directing it usefully. Suppose, for instance, we were to take up the historical scenery in Carlyle's "Frederick." Too justly the historian accuses the genius of past art, in that, types of too many such elsewhere, the galleries of Berlin—"are made up, like other galleries, of goat-footed Pan, Europa's Bull, Romulus's She-Wolf, and the Correggiosity of Correggio, and contain, for instance, no portrait of Friedrich the Great,—no likeness at all, or next to none at all, of the noble series of Human Realities, or any part of them, who have sprung, not from the idle brains of dreaming dilettanti, but from

the head of God Almighty, to make this poor authentic earth a little memorable for us, and to do a little work that may be eternal there." So Carlyle tells us—too truly! We cannot now draw Friedrich for him, but we can draw some of the old castles and cities that were the[Pg 76] cradles of German life—Hohenzollern, Hapsburg, Marburg, and such others;—we may keep some authentic likeness of these for the future.

Suppose we were to take up that first volume of "Friedrich," and put outlines to it: shall we begin by looking for Henry the Fowler's tomb—Carlyle himself asks if he has any—at Quedlinburgh, and so downwards, rescuing what we can? That would certainly be making our work of some true use.

**116. But I have told you enough, it seems to me, at least to-day, of this function of art in recording fact; let me now finally, and with all distinctness possible to me, state to you its main business of all;—its service in the actual uses of daily life.**

You are surprised, perhaps, to hear me call this its main business. That is indeed so, however. The giving brightness to picture is much, but the giving brightness to life more. And remember, were it as patterns only, you cannot, without the realities, have the pictures. You cannot have a landscape by Turner, without a country for him to paint; you cannot have a portrait by Titian, without a man to be portrayed. I need not prove that to you, I suppose, in these short terms; but in the outcome I can get no soul to believe that the beginning of art is in getting our country clean, and our people beautiful. I have been ten years trying to get this very plain certainty—I do not say believed—but even thought of, as anything but a monstrous proposition.

**To get your country clean, and your people lovely;—I assure you that is a necessary work of art to begin with!**

There has indeed been art in countries where people lived in dirt to serve God, but never in countries where they lived in dirt to serve the devil. There has indeed been art where the people were not all lovely—where even their lips were thick—and their skins black, because the sun had looked upon them; but never in a country where the people were pale with miserable toil and deadly shade, and where the lips of youth, instead of being full with blood, were pinched by famine, or warped with poison. And now, therefore, note this well, the[Pg 77] gist of all these long prefatory talks. I said that the two great moral instincts were those of Order and Kindness. Now, all the arts are founded on agriculture by the hand, and on the graces, and kindness of feeding, and dressing, and lodging your people. Greek art begins in the gardens of Alcinous—perfect order, leeks in beds, and fountains in pipes. And Christian art, as it arose out of chivalry, was only possible so far as chivalry compelled both kings and knights to care for the right personal training of their people; it perished utterly when those kings and knights became δημοβόροι, devourers of the people. And it will become possible

again only, when, literally, the sword is beaten into the ploughshare, when your St. George of England shall justify his name, and Christian art shall be known as its Master was, in breaking of bread.

## 117.

Now look at the working out of this broad principle in minor detail; observe how, from highest to lowest, health of art has first depended on reference to industrial use. There is first the need of cup and platter, especially of cup; for you can put your meat on the Harpies', [10] or on any other, tables; but you must have your cup to drink from. And to hold it conveniently, you must put a handle to it; and to fill it when it is empty you must have a large pitcher of some sort; and to carry the pitcher you may most advisably have two handles.

Modify the forms of these needful possessions according to the various requirements of drinking largely and drinking delicately; of pouring easily out, or of keeping for years the perfume in; of storing in cellars, or bearing from fountains; of sacrificial libation, of Panathenaic treasure of oil, and sepulchral treasure of ashes,—and you have a resultant series of beautiful form and decoration, from the rude amphora of red earth up to Cellini's vases of gems and crystal, in which series, but especially in the more simple conditions of it, are developed the most beautiful lines and most perfect types of severe composition which have yet been attained by art.  
[Pg 78]

## 118.

But again, that you may fill your cup with pure water, you must go to the well or spring; you need a fence round the well; you need some tube or trough, or other means of confining the stream at the spring. For the conveyance of the current to any distance you must build either enclosed or open aqueduct; and in the hot square of the city where you set it free, you find it good for health and pleasantness to let it leap into a fountain. On these several needs you have a school of sculpture founded; in the decoration of the walls of wells in level countries, and of the sources of springs in mountainous ones, and chiefly of all, where the women of household or market meet at the city fountain.

**There is, however, a farther reason for the use of art here than in any other material service, so far as we may, by art, express our reverence or thankfulness.**

Whenever a nation is in its right mind, it always has a deep sense of divinity in the gift of rain from heaven, filling its heart with food and gladness; and all the more when that gift becomes gentle and perennial in the flowing of springs.

It literally is not possible that any fruitful power of the Muses should be put forth upon a people which disdains their Helicon; still less is it possible that any Christian nation should grow up "tanquam lignum quod plantatum est secus decursus aquarum," which cannot recognise the lesson meant in their being told of the places where Rebekah was met;—where Rachel,—where Zipporah,—and she who was asked for water under Mount Gerizim by a Stranger, weary, who had nothing to draw with.

## 119.

And truly, when our mountain springs are set apart in vale or craggy glen, or glade of wood green through the drought of summer, far from cities, then it is best to let them stay in their own happy peace; but if near towns, and liable therefore to be defiled by common usage, we could not use the loveliest art more worthily than by sheltering the spring and its first pools with precious marbles: nor ought anything to be esteemed more important, as a means of healthy education, than the care to keep the streams of it afterwards, to [Pg 79] as great a distance as possible, pure, full of fish, and easily accessible to children.

There used to be, thirty years ago, a little rivulet of the Wandel, about an inch deep, which ran over the carriage-road and under a foot-bridge just under the last chalk hill near Croydon. Alas! men came and went; and it did not go on for ever. It has long since been bricked over by the parish authorities; but there was more education in that stream with its minnows than you could get out of a thousand pounds spent yearly in the parish schools, even though you were to spend every farthing of it in teaching the nature of oxygen and hydrogen, and the names, and rate per minute, of all the rivers in Asia and America.

## 120.

Well, the gist of this matter lies here then. Suppose we want a school of pottery again in England, all we poor artists are ready to do the best we can, to show you how pretty a line may be that is twisted first to one side, and then to the other; and how a plain household-blue will make a pattern on white; and how ideal art may be got out of the spaniel's colours of black and tan.

But I tell you beforehand, all that we can do will be utterly useless, unless you teach your peasant to say grace, not only before meat, but before drink; and having provided him with Greek cups and platters, provide him also with something that is not poisoned to put into them.

## 121.

There cannot be any need that I should trace for you the conditions of art that are directly founded on serviceableness of dress, and of armour; but it is my duty to affirm to you, in the most positive manner, that after recovering, for the poor, wholesomeness of food, your next step towards founding schools of art in England must be in recovering, for the poor, decency and wholesomeness of dress; thoroughly good in substance, fitted for their daily work, becoming to their rank in life, and worn with order and dignity. ↓

And this order and dignity must be taught them by the women of the upper and middle classes, whose minds can be in nothing right, as long as they are so wrong in this matter as to endure the squalor of the poor, while they themselves dress gaily. And on the proper pride and comfort of both poor and rich in dress, must be founded the true arts of dress; carried on by masters of manufacture no less careful of the perfectness and beauty of their tissues, and of all that in substance and design can be bestowed upon them, than ever the armourers of Milan and Damascus were careful of their steel.

of wood or stone; and secondly, take care that in every town the little roofs are built before the large ones, and that everybody who wants one has got one. And we must try also to make everybody want one. That is to say, at some not very advanced period of life, men should desire to have a home, which they do not wish to quit any more, suited to their habits of life, and likely to be more and more suitable to them until their death. And men must desire to have these their dwelling-places built as strongly as possible, and furnished and decorated daintily, and set in pleasant places, in bright light, and good air, being able to choose for themselves that at least as well as swallows.

And when the [Pg 81] houses are grouped together in cities, men must have so much civic fellowship as to subject their architecture to a common law, and so much civic pride as to desire that the whole gathered group of human dwellings should be a lovely thing, not a frightful one, on the face of the earth. Not many weeks ago an English clergyman, [11] a master of this University, a man not given to sentiment, but of middle age, and great practical sense, told me, by accident, and wholly without reference to the subject now before us, that he never could enter London from his country parsonage but with closed eyes, lest the sight of the blocks of houses which the railroad intersected in the suburbs should unfit him, by the horror of it, for his day's work.

possible to have any right morality, happiness, or art, in any country where the cities are thus built, or thus, let me rather say, clotted and coagulated; spots of a dreadful mildew, spreading by patches and blotches over the country they consume. You must have lovely cities, crystallised, not coagulated, into form; limited in size, and not casting out the scum and scurf of them into an encircling eruption of shame, but girded each with its sacred pomarium, and with garlands of gardens full of blossoming trees and softly guided streams.

**That is impossible, you say! it may be so. I have nothing to do with its possibility, but only with its indispensability.**

More than that must be possible, however, before you can have a school of art; namely, that you find places elsewhere than in England, or at least in otherwise unserviceable parts of England, for the establishment of manufactories needing the help of fire, that is to say, of all the η τναι βανασζικα and π ρρηγοι, of which it was long ago known to be the constant nature that " ζτολ ας μαλιζηα τοσζι κα π λεως ζονεπιμε λε ζθαι," and to reduce such manufactures to their lowest [Pg 82] limit, so that nothing may ever be made of iron that can as effectually be made of wood or stone; and nothing moved by steam that can be as effectually moved by natural forces. And observe, that for all mechanical effort required in social life and in cities, water power is infinitely more than enough; for anchored mills on the large rivers, and mills moved by sluices from reservoirs filled by the tide, will give you command of any quantity of constant motive power you need.

Agriculture by the hand, then, and absolute refusal or banishment of unnecessary igneous force, are the first conditions of a school of art in any country. And until you do this, be it soon or late, things will continue in that triumphant state to which, for want of finer art, your mechanism has brought them;—that, though England is deafened with spinning wheels, her people have not clothes—though she is black with digging of fuel, they die of cold—and though she has sold her soul for gain, they die of hunger. Stay in that triumph, if you choose; but be assured of this, it is not one which the fine arts will ever share with you.

**123.** Now, it is not possible—and I repeat to you, only in more deliberate assertion, what I wrote just twenty-two years ago in the last chapter of the "Seven Lamps of Architecture"—it is not

**124.** Now, I have given you my message, containing, as I know, offence enough, and itself, it may seem to many, unnecessary enough. But just in proportion to its apparent non-necessity, and to its certain offence, was its real need, and my real duty to speak it. The study of the fine arts could not be rightly associated with the grave work of English Universities, without due and clear protest against the misdirection of national energy, which for the present renders all good results of such study on a great scale, impossible.

More than that—as I have tried all through "The Stories of Venice" to show,—the lovely forms of these were every one of them developed in civil and domestic building, and only after their invention, employed ecclesiastically on the grandest scale. I think you cannot but have noticed here in Oxford, as elsewhere, that our modern architects never seem to know what to do with their roofs.

Be assured, until the roofs are right, nothing else will be; and there are just two ways of keeping them right. Never build them of iron, but only

I can easily teach you, as any other moderately good draughtsman could, how to hold your pencils, and how to lay your colours; but it is little use my doing that, while the nation is spending millions of money in the destruction of all that pencil or colour has to represent, and in the promotion of false forms of art, which are only the costliest and the least enjoyable of follies.

And therefore these are the things that I have first and last to tell you in this place;

**that the fine arts are not to be learned by Locomotion, but by making. [Pg 83]**

The homes we live in lovely, and by staying in them;—that the fine arts are not to be learned by Competition, but by doing our quiet best in our own way;—that the fine arts are not to be learned by Exhibition, but by doing what is right, and making what is honest, whether it be exhibited or not;—and, for the sum of all, that men must paint and build neither for pride nor for money, but for love; for love of their art, for love of their neighbour, and whatever better love may be than these, founded on these. I know that I gave some pain, which I was most unwilling to give, in speaking of the possible abuses of religious art; but there can be no danger of any, so long as we remember that God inhabits cottages as well as churches, and ought to be well lodged there also.

Begin with wooden floors; the tessellated ones will take care of themselves; begin with thatching roofs, and you shall end by splendidly vaulting them; begin by taking care that no old eyes fail over their Bibles, nor young ones over their needles, for want of rushlight, and then you may have whatever true good is to be got out of coloured glass or wax candles. And in thus putting the arts to universal use, you will find also their universal inspiration, their universal benediction. I told you there was no evidence of a special Divineness in any application of them; that they were always equally human and equally Divine; and in closing this inaugural series of lectures, into which I have endeavoured to compress the principles that are to be the foundations of your future work, it is my last duty to say some positive words as to the Divinity of all art, when it is truly fair, or truly serviceable.

**125.**

Every seventh day, if not oftener, the greater number of well-meaning persons in England thankfully receive from their teachers a benediction, couched in those terms:—"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you." Now I do not know precisely what sense is attached in the English public mind to those expressions. But what I have to tell you positively is that the three things do actually exist, and can be known if you care to know them, and possessed if you care to possess them; and that another thing exists, besides these, of which we already know too much.

First, by simply obeying the orders of the Founder of your religion, all grace, graciousness, or beauty and favour of gentle life, will be given to you in mind and body, in work and in rest. The Grace of Christ exists, and can be had if you will. Secondly, as you know more and more of the created world, you will find that the true will of its Maker is that its creatures should be happy;—that He has made everything beautiful in its time and its place, and

that it is chiefly by the fault of men, when they are allowed the liberty of thwarting His laws, that Creation groans or travails in pain. The Love of God exists, and you may see it, and live in it if you will. Lastly, a Spirit does actually exist which teaches the ant her path, the bird her building, and men, in an instinctive and marvellous way, whatever lovely arts and noble deeds are possible to them. Without it you can do no good thing. To the grief of it you can do many bad ones. In the possession of it is your peace and your power.

**And there is a fourth thing, of which we already know too much. There is an evil spirit whose dominion is in blindness and in cowardice, as the dominion of the Spirit of wisdom is in clear sight and in courage.**

And this blind and cowardly spirit is for ever telling you that evil things are pardonable, and you shall not die for them, and that good things are impossible, and you need not live for them; and that gospel of his is now the loudest that is preached in your Saxon tongue. You will find some day, to your cost, if you believe the first part of it, that it is not true; but you may never, if you believe the second part of it, find, to your gain, that also, untrue; and therefore I pray you with all earnestness to prove, and know within your hearts, that all things lovely and righteous are possible for those who believe in their possibility, and who determine that, for their part, they will make every day's work contribute to them. Let every dawn of morning be to you as the beginning of life, and every setting sun be to you as its [Pg 85] close:—then let every one of these short lives leave its sure record of some kindly thing done for others—some goodly strength or knowledge gained for yourselves; so, from day to day, and strength to strength, you shall build up indeed, by Art, by Thought, and by Just Will, an Ecclesia of England, of which it shall not be said, "See what manner of stones are here," but, "See what manner of men."



# G R I Z E D A L E A R T I S T S

## USE VALUE & THE LITTLE SOCIETY



John Byrne looks at the commissioning agency Grizedale Arts' social remit and its challenge to dominant notions of art's use value.



There is a photograph on the website of Grizedale Arts, in the north of England, that depicts the organisation's director, Adam Sutherland, in working overalls and mounted on a horse. In the photograph Sutherland wears an oversized commedia dell'arte-style head of the nineteenth-century critic, thinker, philanthropist and social reformer John Ruskin, while wielding a baton, of the type usually associated with mounted riot police. The baton carries the inscription 'Fors Clavigera', which was the name Ruskin gave to the monthly pamphlets he self-published from 1871 until 1884.<sup>1</sup>

During his lifetime, a period in which art and artists were gravitating towards new ideas of autonomy and art for art's sake,

**Ruskin was concerned that art should remain firmly rooted within the society in which it was produced.<sup>2</sup>**

Consequently he came to be seen as a reactionary – a kind of Victorian King Canute, attempting to turn back the incoming tide of self-referential modern art.

However, for Grizedale Arts Ruskin provides an unlikely rhetorical figure through which neoconservative reconstructions of history, as well as neoliberal reconstructions of work and labour, can be challenged and re-imagined. More specifically, Grizedale Arts are keen to resuscitate Ruskin's role as an activist in early workers' education movements, or 'Mechanics Institutes', as they were called, where art played an integral role in a multidisciplinary approach to learning and social improvement.

In light of this, Grizedale Arts have been developing a series of collaborations with the Coniston Institute, a community centre in the village closest to Grizedale Arts' base at Lawson Park Farm, a site overlooking Lake Coniston in one of the UK's designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Coniston Institute was itself originally built in 1878 as a Mechanics Institute with Ruskin's financial help.<sup>3</sup> Over the last decade, Grizedale Arts have worked closely with both the Coniston Institute and the villagers of Coniston in an attempt to 'make it a connected place' and to 're-work it as a contemporary arts facility in the village' by bringing in the participation of local inhabitants.<sup>4</sup> For example, Grizedale Arts recently commissioned Child's Play (2011), a musical written by singer, songwriter and former Kinks frontman Ray Davis, which aimed to provide 'a commentary on the aspirations and disappointments through the decades of modern Britain since the Festival of Britain in 1951'.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fors Clavigera: Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain were originally published monthly by Ruskin as a series of Pamphlets, the first of which was written on January 1 1871. Fors Clavigera were later published as Volume Sets.

<sup>2</sup> In letter 79 of Fors Clavigera (1878), Ruskin famously accused the painter James McNeil Whistler of 'flinging a pot of paint in the face of the public'. Whistler subsequently sued Ruskin for libel and won the case, receiving damages of only a farthing (Whistler also had to pay court costs which contributed to his bankruptcy). This case, which was played out in the public eye of Victorian England, came to be seen as a watershed moment, a move from away from the moral imperatives of Victorian art and towards the development of self-referential modernism. For a brief but telling account of this case and its implications, see 'Introduction', in Charles Harrison, *English Art and Modernism 1900-1939*, London: Allan Lane, 1981.

<sup>3</sup> Ruskin moved to Coniston in 1872. His house, Brantwood, is now a popular tourist attraction and is close to Grizedale Arts' base at Lawson Park Farm.

<sup>4</sup> From an interview with Adam Sutherland, director of Grizedale Arts, available at [www.artplayer.tv/video/83/childs-play-written-composed-by-ray-davies](http://www.artplayer.tv/video/83/childs-play-written-composed-by-ray-davies) (last accessed on 5 March 2012).

<sup>5</sup> See Grizedale Arts' web page for 'Child's Play', available at <http://www.grizedale.org/projects/childs-play.1> (last accessed on 5 March 2012). The Festival of Britain was a national exhibition that celebrated the country's arts and culture in the immediate post-War period. It led to the creation of the South Bank Centre arts complex in London.

Image → Adam Sutherland, Director of Grizedale Art's wearing a John Ruskin Head and wielding a stick with the legend 'Fors Clavigera' written on it.



6 Claire Bishop, 'The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents', *Artforum*, vol.XLIV, no.6, February 2006, pp.179-85. Bishop was on the directorial board of Grizedale Arts at the time, and it is worth mentioning that Grizedale Arts are absent from the 'catalogue of projects' with which she begins her article.

7 See Grizedale Arts' 'About' page: 'Underpinning the programme is a philosophy that emphasises the use value of art, or at least promotes the usage of art as a way to make art and artists more effective in wider culture and society.' From <http://www.grizedale.org/about/> (last accessed on 29 March 2012).

8 Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, *After the Future* (ed. Gary Genosko and Nicholas Thoburn, trans. Arianna Bove et al.), Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2011.

9 See also Alberto Lopez Cuenca, 'title tk', in this issue... [I will fill this out]

10 Liam Gillick, 'The Good of Work', *e-flux Journal* [online journal], issue 16, May 2010, available at [www.e-flux.com/journal/view/142](http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/142) (last accessed on 5 March 2012).

11 Alistair Hudson, 'Happy Stacking Theory' [blog], 22 July 2008, available at [www.happystacking.tv](http://www.happystacking.tv) (last accessed on 21 March 2012).

Image → Ray Davis and the cast of 'Child's Play'.



For Davis, Child's Play offered an opportunity to assess shifting class relationships in Britain whilst celebrating the role that community can still play in small villages and urban settings alike. Performed by a group of ex-students from the John Ruskin School, a secondary school in Coniston, Child's Play forms part of a larger project (initially proposed by one of Grizedale Arts' artists-in-residence, Alexandre Singh) for artists to write and perform plays for children. At the time of writing, there are additional plays in development, by Liam Gillick, Rita Sobral Campos and the musician Momus.

For Grizedale Arts, the production of such projects, as well as their location within an ongoing reclamation of Ruskin's work, is part of an attempt to think beyond the current deadlock of a social decline and to collaboratively re-imagine economic and ecological anxiety in ways that make a case for the value of art in society.

At first glance, such initiatives could simply appear to be symptomatic of what Claire Bishop has referred to as the 'social turn' in art – a tendency for socially engaged artistic practice to lapse into ethically driven forms of social work (where the quest to do good and the need for social integration go hand in hand at the expense of aesthetic imperatives or artistic prerogatives).<sup>6</sup> This would seem to be even more the case when one takes into account the fact that as a commissioning agency Grizedale Arts ask all of their artists to try and make work that is useful.<sup>7</sup>

Bishop's concerns, voiced just before the economic collapse of 2007, were based on a growing realisation in the art world that even the most radical forms of socially extended practice were being instrumentalised by a neoliberal economy in which contemporary art had become the leitmotif of the flexible worker. As Franco 'Bifo' Berardi has pointed out, the language of the historical

and contemporary avant-gardes has grown ever closer to that of neoliberal discourse.<sup>8</sup> Artists, critics, theorists, curators, gallerists and art historians alike are now faced with the task of pinpointing just what it is that makes art special in a world in which contemporary art has become indistinguishable from other forms of popular culture and mass media.

The emancipatory discourses of self-help, self-determination, self-organisation and global networking have now become interchangeable with the smooth rhetoric of multinational capitalism. An example of this can be seen in the 2010 Big Society election pledge made by UK Prime Minister David Cameron, to give further autonomy to citizens in the governance of their own lives, by encouraging the breakdown of government offices and councils into independent small businesses and by allowing communities to establish self-help charities. Whilst it may be clear that such promises simply gloss over new forms of centralised capital deregulation, and contribute to the continued erosion of the power and rights of under-represented and vulnerable individuals, the proximity of such rhetoric to the utopian dream of the avant-garde is striking.

To further complicate the situation, it has become increasingly difficult to separate the kind of work that constitutes the work of art from other forms of labour in an integrated marketplace. The working practices of artists (which were once dissimilar enough from the working practices of blue- and white-collar workers to appear special) are now shared and understood by the majority of people who look at artworks in galleries or assist artists in the production of their work.<sup>9</sup>

The problem for contemporary art is that artists have become more than simply implicated within the very regimes of capitalisation they try to resist – like everybody else they have become complicit with it. Art now shares the very procedures which neoliberal economies have deployed to produce the false freedoms of the creative economies. As long-term Grizedale collaborator Gillick recently put it:

**The accusation [...] is that artists are at best the ultimate freelance knowledge workers and at worst barely capable of distinguishing themselves from the consuming desire to work at all times, neurotic people who deploy a series of practices that coincide quite neatly with the requirements of neoliberal, predatory, continually mutating capitalism of the every moment. Artists are people who behave, communicate and innovate in the same manner as those who spend their days trying to capitalise every moment and exchange of daily life. They offer no alternative to this.**<sup>10</sup>

Gillick's concerns, over the shifting role and function of the artist and the kind of work or labour art has become, are clearly echoed by Grizedale Arts' deputy director Alistair Hudson:

**Grizedale Arts is a broad and dispersed network of activity which connects concentrated points of sociocultural change.**

**The purpose of this is ultimately to make art and artists useful and stop standing around at the edges smoking roll ups and talking about defining/describing space.**

**In order to help its own community in the Lake District it is necessary to relate this and interact it with the current global conditions, and to see rural places such as its own, as part of a contemporary complex that is shaping the way we all live and work.**<sup>11</sup>

Such operations, which ask artists to reconfigure meaning and uncover complexity in a necessarily sited arena, are central to Grizedale Arts' commissioning and curatorial practice. In this sense the projects undertaken by Grizedale Arts, as well as their insistence on artists' making themselves useful should not be read as surrendering to the neoliberal rhetoric of instrumentalised social emancipation. Instead, they attempt to sabotage accepted ways of living and organising community through the collaborative production of new meaning and possibility.

Grizedale Arts are both physically and ideologically located at an intersection of historical rupture and gradual change. England's Lake District is a deceptively precarious and contested site of conflicting interests, stakeholders and mythologies. It has a legitimate claim as the birthplace of English Romanticism: William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Thomas De Quincey, Thomas Arnold and Ruskin all made their homes there for periods during the nineteenth century, whilst Percy Bysshe Shelley, Walter Scott, Thomas Carlyle, John Keats, Alfred Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Felicia Hemans and Gerald Massey were frequent visitors. By way of postmodern homage, the University of Cumbria now runs a master's degree programme in 'Literature, Romanticism and the Lake District'. Due to the rapid expansion of rail networks across the UK during the mid-nineteenth century, the Lake District can also lay claim to being one of the world's first destinations for mass tourism.

Today, the Lake District is managed and fought over by the National Trust, the Forestry Commission, an amalgam of local councils, local and national business interests and local and national environmental groups. It is a place where a dwindling community of local farmers and agricultural workers now relies, often begrudgingly, on the income generated by a constant flood of hillwalkers, mountain bikers, campers, potholers, rock climbers, hang-gliders, sailing enthusiasts, city-based day trippers and weekend



want-away-ers. Grizedale Arts were born out of this overdetermined complex when, in 1977, they began life as a residency-based public sculpture park located within Grizedale Forest. Initially, artists such as David Nash and Andy Goldsworthy were commissioned to live on-site and to use the forest as a studio, producing environmental sculptures in response to the landscape.

However, with the appointment of Sutherland as director in 1999, Grizedale Arts began to move away from these sculpture park roots.<sup>12</sup> Instead, Grizedale's commissioning process started to experiment with a range of strategies to support artists who work across geographical and cultural zones, to enable them to create projects that challenge the conventions and dominance of metropolitan culture. As a result, Grizedale Arts have developed into a complex network of international alliances, affinities and programmes that emanate from the hub at Lawson Park Farm and the Coniston Institute

Some of the complexities and implications involved in this multilayered approach can be seen in The São Paulo Mechanics Institute, an ongoing project which Grizedale Arts recently undertook in collaboration with Jeremy Deller for the 2010 São Paulo Bienal.

The project consists of three interrelated parts. The first is a film produced by Deller, called *So Many Ways to Hurt You*, the Life and Times of Adrian Street. This is a 'true-life' documentary about a transvestite bodybuilder, who runs away from his life as a miner in his native Yorkshire to seek fame and fortune as a professional wrestler – a picaresque narrative that mirrors the economic shifts that have occurred since the 1960s.

In the context of Grizedale Arts, Adrian Street's story reflects some of the ideas expounded by Ruskin on self-improvement through the life lived creatively. As Street travels, first to London and then to the US, his camp wrestling persona apparently has a palpable influence on both glam rock and performance art during the late 60s and 70s, while his current venture – making professional wrestling costumes that he sells online – reflects the shift from manufacturing to tertiary industry that many European economies are presently undergoing.

The second component of the project, 'An Extended Lecture on Twigs: A Preter-Ruskinian Education', was an educational programme held at Grizedale Arts for Portuguese-speaking pupils of the Lilian Baylis Technology School in London. It also sat within Grizedale Arts' continual re-thinking of Ruskin's legacy, providing an opportunity for a group of inner-city youths to spend a week drawing in the Lake District. The work they produced was shown with Deller's film in the third component of the São Paulo project, which consisted of the construction and installation of a working Mechanics Institute at the Bienal. Deller's film was mounted on the external wall of a purpose-built classroom, whose interior was based on the original Coniston Institute, and set into a mural by local graffiti artist Raphael.

As mentioned above, the Coniston Institute had originally been intended by Ruskin as a social and educational environment within which artworks would function as transformative tools and not as objects in their own right. The Institute's twenty-first century São Paulo manifestation was intended to be a working environment that would be used to explore ground-up initiatives and the impact that individual and group self-organisations can have on society. School groups, societies, clubs, community groups and adult education centres were invited to give demonstrations and lectures on topics of their choice. These included how to make a recipe, how to grow plants, how to edit in html, how to upload videos and how to use mobile phones. A dedicated YouTube site was set up to allow children to produce and upload educational videos, which would in turn form an alternative teaching resource and laboratory.

Thus Grizedale Arts worked with the inhabitants of São Paulo but avoided presenting any single piece of work that directly researched, referenced or responded to the city as a vague concept. Instead, the idea was to provide a project and a context which worked alongside the aims of the São Paulo educational team, which would have applications and a legacy beyond the Bienal itself – providing use value in the Marxian sense of the term. According to the press material furnished by Grizedale Arts, this kind of project 'picks up the baton from Ruskin and applies it in our information

age, the new craft as digital media, the new tools to self-improvement through homespun skills, with all the embedded misfirings and accidents along the way'.<sup>13</sup>

By re-evaluating Ruskin's legacy in this way, Grizedale Arts are also insisting on the historical reclamation of a complex body of work that prefigures many of the issues that now surround social reform, environment, ecology, capital, aesthetics and politics.

Ruskin's original project unfolded against a backdrop of nineteenth-century industrialisation and notions of art for art's sake, and sought to re-connect art and education with the politicisation of the rural, the ecological and the peripheral. Through the activity of encouraging artists, critics, historians and thinkers to re-work Ruskin as a contested site of historical struggle, Grizedale Arts offer new insights into the role and function of current art. It could be argued that Grizedale Arts' commitment to use value offers the possibility of subverting those forms of critical evaluation that, as Bishop has pointed out,<sup>14</sup> tend to rely on the overly simple bifurcation of aesthetics and ethics.

<sup>12</sup> For a full account of Grizedale Arts' work since 1999, see Jonathan Griffin (ed.), *Grizedale Arts: Adding Complexity to Confusion*, Coniston: Grizedale Books, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Grizedale Arts, 'São Paulo Bienal', available at [www.grizedale.org/projects/sao-paulo-bienal/the-sao-paulo-mechanics-institute](http://www.grizedale.org/projects/sao-paulo-bienal/the-sao-paulo-mechanics-institute) (last accessed 28 March 2012).

<sup>14</sup> C. Bishop, 'The Social Turn', op. cit.

Image → Lawson Park Farm, Grizedale Art's home in the Lake District.



For Jameson:

**Use value is therefore quality; it is the life of the body, of existential or phenomenological experience, of the consumption of physical products, but also the very texture of physical work and physical time [...]**

Quality is human time itself, whether in labour or in the life outside of labour; and it is this deep existential constant that justifies that Utopian strain in Marxism which anticipates the transformation of work into aesthetic activity (from Ruskin to Morris, from Marcuse to Paulo Virno's notion of virtuosity), a tradition somewhat different from the Hegelian delight in activity and the more orthodox celebration of work or productivity as a central human drive.<sup>15</sup>

Seen in this light, it could be argued that the foregrounding of use value in Grizedale's Ruskin project works on two corresponding levels. On one, Grizedale Arts attempt to release the latent use value held within the social radicalism of Ruskin – where his legacy is conceived as an aggregate of possibilities for the consideration of contemporary social change – through the implementation of projects such as Child's Play. In this sense Child's Play offered the opportunity to re-look at the origins of our current era – in this case the history of working-class relations in a small village since the Festival of Britain in 1951 – as a means to re-present history whilst simultaneously re-thinking the ways in which art and culture can work.

On the second, Grizedale Arts' non-utilitarian reconsideration of use value – as a necessary component in the production of art that is capable of a useful role in a rounded and functioning society – becomes key to imagining a way beyond the impasse that seems to be opening up between aesthetics and ethics in current art practice. Here, a complex re-configuration of use value – as well as of the relationship of such forms of use value to the kind of work that is now the work of art – becomes an open-ended line of resistance to the commodification and delimitation of contemporary art practice within a globalised neoliberal economy. In this sense, the use value of Grizedale's commissioned artworks resides

in the continual processes of re-articulation by which they allow artists to challenge established forms of the Big Society and to re-circuit dominant impositions of fixed meaning and power. Their re-imagining of the role of art, and of its continual productive capacity within society, point toward new ecologies of living, which, like the Mechanics Institutes of the past, view art as an integral component in any attempt to construct sustainable autonomous communities.

It could be argued that the curatorial programme of Grizedale Arts subverts the relationship of the work or labour of art to commodity value, which holds that art's primary measure of quality, be it aesthetic or otherwise, is inevitably reducible to its market value. It does this by returning the use value of art to a multiple and contested existence, partially and temporarily releasing it from the signifying chain of capital.

In the commissioning activities of Grizedale Arts, ethics is never simply reduced to the moral imperative of the doing good, nor is history simply reduced to the operation of undifferentiated possible antecedents for our current situation. In projects such as Child's Play and The São Paulo Mechanics Institute, local activists were given the opportunity to share knowledge and practical solutions to daily problems within the structure of an international art biennale. The re-location of art as a tool for social transformation within the broader framework of education and social activism.

As a result, Grizedale Arts' insistence on positioning the artist firmly within the re-constitution of a common sociality – and of pitting 'useful art' against the production and abstraction of language into a technocratic framework for the propagation of instrumentalised individuals – also places the work they commission firmly within a lineage of artistic and political radicalism. As Fredric Jameson recently reminded us in *Representing Capital*, this lineage (whose origins he gives as Ruskin and William Morris) has its origins in Marx's attempted separation of use value from commodity value in *Capital*. Marx was keen to bracket off use value from exchange value through processes of collaborative reimagination. In any consideration of the commodity form, arguing that use value did not matter to the capitalist who wished to use his skills as a musician to sell commodities. Instead, Marx claimed that the capitalist would only ever consider use value as a means to the profitable sale of units. As Jameson points out, this argument belies a more fundamental and metaphysical distinction in Marx's work between quality and body on the one hand and quantity and mind (or soul) on the other. Marx tended to equate quality with the body and physicality – as the positive term in the materialist sense – and quantity with the vagaries of the mind – in a negative and idealist sense.

Images → 'Child's Play', written by former 'Kinks' front man Ray Davies, being performed at the Coniston Institute by former pupils of the John Ruskin Secondary School.

<sup>15</sup> Fredric Jameson, *Representing Capital: A Reading of Volume One*, New York: Verso, 2018, pp.19–20.



Image → Rehearsals for 'Child's Play', with Ray Davis at Coniston Institute.

The activity of returning use value to the production of current art in an otherwise self-alienated neoliberal society is a means by which we can begin to re-think ourselves, our futures and each other. In this sense, the use value of Grizedale Arts's projects is to be found in the realignment of provisional positions within the formation of a 'Little Society' – their production of flexible and recombinant communities that, of necessity, occupy the same space and modalities as neoliberalism, but which nevertheless seek to differentiate themselves from the ideological forms of a deregulated Big Society. The staging of projects such as Child's Play or The São Paulo Mechanics Institute becomes a means to systematically cast doubt on the logics and impositions of neoliberal economics. As such, the work that Grizedale Arts undertakes with the Coniston Institute, and their reconfiguration of Ruskin's legacy, imagines futures which are capable of becoming sustainable: of re-connecting and re-combining social, political, ethical and aesthetic imperatives in the production of a new socius. To ask artists to be useful in this way is to propose the production of a radical body politic, in which new forms of art (or at least new roles for art) could become fault lines within the boom and bust cycle of neoliberal deregulation.

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THE MUSEUM OF ARTS ÚTIL

Annie Fletcher's presentation to the Summer School detailed some of the various projects the Van Abbemuseum have been involved in – and stressed the urgency for a radical rethink of the role and function of museums...epitomised by the Van Abbemuseum's Museum of Arte Útil developed together with Tania Bruguera...

→ “No longer a place for signalling problems... but the place from which to create proposals... and the implementation of possible solutions... It's not just pointing at a problem... but to investigate the possible solution...”

→ Annie Fletcher

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## Julia Tietjens, Summer School participant, reflects on the talks and discussions:

→ There have been many attempts to make useful art. But one of the things almost everyone agrees with is that it has to have a socio-political impact and must, in a way, be radical.

Tania Bruguera, an artist trying to do useful art says:

**“All art is useful, yes, but the usefulness we are talking about is the immersion of art directly into society with all our resources.”<sup>1</sup>**

By developing special shoes to cross a border more easily, by joining demonstrations or by playing with signs in the streets, artists try to make people aware of social problems and not only raise their attention, but also give possible solutions.

When this is the new task of an artist, what then is the difference between an artist intervening in society, doing “useful”, socially relevant work and a political activist or a social worker?

Initially, there is none. Both try to make the public aware of problems, and give answers to issues concerning

everyday life and to confront people with the problems that arise in an increasingly complex, globalised and mobilised society.

There is a strange difference between a social worker making a film with the youth of a village, confronting the residents with the environmental problems their local companies produce, and an artist doing the same thing.

### **But what kind of difference is felt?**

The difference I see is the image an artist still has in our society. Even though the concept of useful art tries to include the artist as part of the society and doesn't want him to be the sad outsider any more, sitting in his quiet room and producing artistic things, this is the picture people have fixed in their minds. The special position of artists, philosophers and other theoretical thinkers has been instilled in the minds of the people. They are therefore expected to be able to see through the structures that bind our daily life and make us aware of the chains a “normal” person can't see any more, because he is surrounded by the codes that commerce and economy produce. The artists task therefore is to “make the blind see again”, to decode the binding structures and to offer a way out of this situation by showing different possibilities.

And this is the point, where I think useful art can actually work: By an

artist sharing his ideas with other people who want to change things. If the social worker and the artist connect, they will be able to reach the people and produce something of actual value. When the artist reaches out, to schools, bakeries, NGO's etc. and shares his creativity with the knowledge of the institutions and craftsmen, there will be a truly useful connection that can have an impact that reaches more than just the artworld.

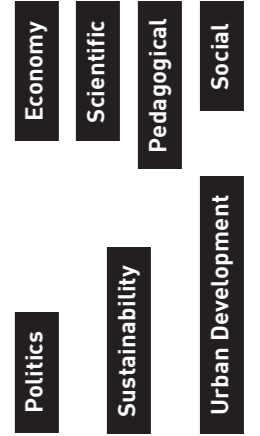
This is where I see the value in useful art: as a concept that develops structures to break up the ones given by a capitalist society; and one that connects people on a different level.

<sup>1</sup> - <http://www.taniabruquera.com/cms/528-0-Introduction+on+Useful+Art.htm>

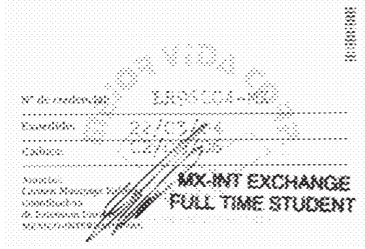
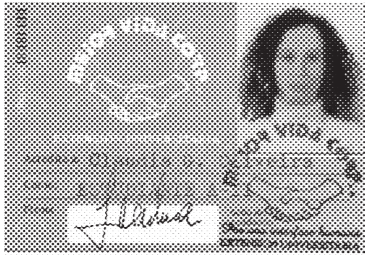
→ To be useful, it has to...

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|---|---|
| → be a tool   | → be a bridge between informed and non informed audiences because of its usefulness   |
| → have some consequences  | → give the possibility to be useful for the public after it's finished, it could be used and implemented again for others without the artist's intervention |
| → give people a beneficial outcome                                    |   |
| → be an implementation vs applying                                    |   |
| → be done for others  | → have no more author/audience dynamics, both are co-authors  |
| → be an immersion with social/political issues                        | → be a way for the audience to experience how the world could be if the "ideas" or "proposals" became real  |
| → be long time or short experiences, or fragmented                    |   |
|   | → have a real social commitment   |
| → be useful since the beginning, not instrumentalised as useful after | → have a specific political, social or scientific timing  |
| → be urgent (politically speaking)                                    |   |
| → have two temporalities: during development and after finished       | → be seen not as "perception" (looking at something), but an "appreciation" (doing something)   |

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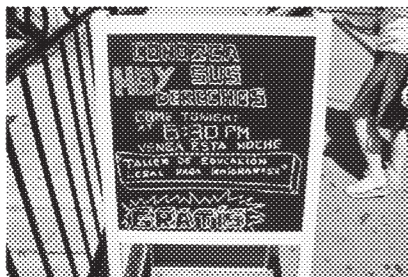
## Economy



**Major Vida Corp**  
**Minerva Cuevas**  
**Mexico D.F**  
**2000**

Major Vida Corp is a non-profit corporation that creates, promotes and distributes world wide, products and services for free. M.V.C doesn't discriminate against any person on gender, race, religion, sexual preferences or economic status.

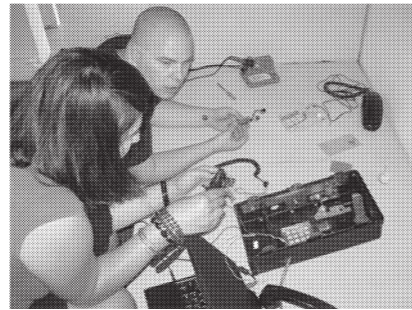
## Politics



**Immigrant International Movement**  
**Tania Bruguera**  
**Corona, Queens New York**

Explores who is defined as an immigrant and the values they share, focusing on the larger question of what it means to be a citizen of the world.

## Scientific



**Transborder Immigrant Tool**  
**EDT / b.a.n.g. Lab**  
**USA/Mexico border**  
**2007**

Mobile phone technology that provides poetry to immigrants crossing the U.S Mexico border while leading them to water caches in the southern California desert.

## Sustainability



**Solar-Powered Desalination Device**  
**Marjetica Potrc**  
**Sharjah (UAE)**  
**2007**

A small desalination device powered by solar energy is installed in a public school in Al Dhaid. It provides fresh drinking water for the students.

## Pedagogical



**Enemy Kitchen**  
**Michael Rakowitz**  
**Chelsea, US**  
**2004**

The project functioned as a social sculpture: while cooking and eating, the students engaged each other on the topic of war and drew parallels with their own lives, at times making comparisons with bullies in relation to how they perceive the conflict.

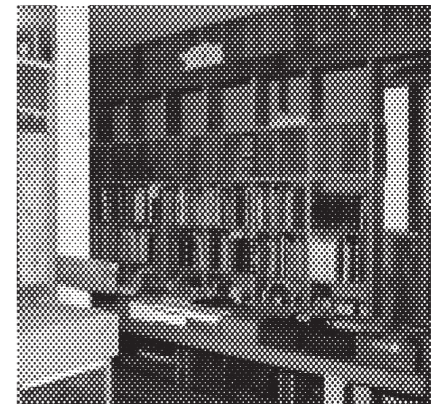
## Urban Development



**Recetas Urbanas (Urban prescriptions)**  
**Santiago Cirugeda**  
**Sevilla (Spain)**  
**1996**

From systematic occupations of public spaces made with containers to the construction of prosthesis for facades, backyards, roofs and empty lots. All done through a negotiation process between legality and illegality, as a way to remember the enormous control we are subjected to.

## Social



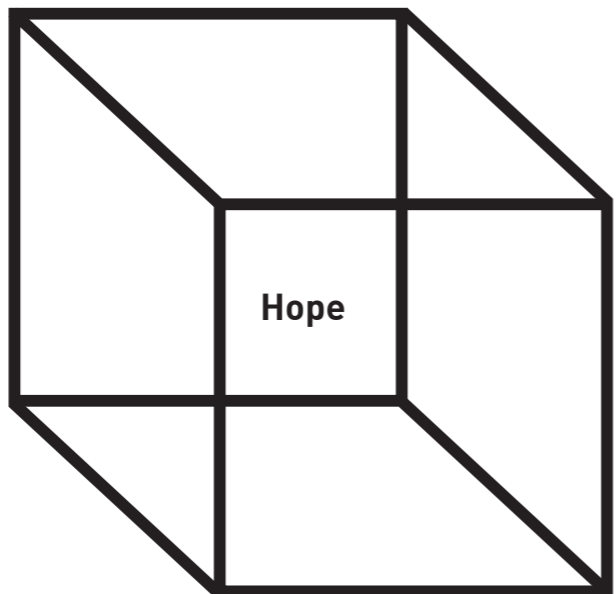
**Dorchester Project**  
**Theaster Gates**  
**South Dorchester, Chicago**

Dorchester Projects encompasses a cluster of formerly abandoned buildings on Chicago's South Side that Theaster Gates renovated from sites of neglect into a vibrant cultural locus. Acquisition of an Abandoned 2 story property for reuse as a Library, Slide Archive and Soul Food Kitchen.



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Summer School participant  
Cahal Argue considers  
Berardi.



“Language has an infinite potency, but the exercise of language happens in finite conditions of history and existence. Thanks to the establishment of a limit, the world comes into existence as a world of language. Grammar, logic, and ethics are based on the establishment of a limit. But infinity remains immeasurable. Poetry is the reopening of the indefinite, the ironic act of exceeding the established meaning of words...”

“Irony, the ethical form of the excessive power of language, is the infinite game words play to create, disrupt, and shuffle meaning. A social movement, at the end of the day, should use irony as semiotic insolvency, as a mechanism to untangle language, behavior, and action from the limits of symbolic debt.”

Franco Berardi

[[www.e-flux.com/journal/emancipation-of-the-sign-poetry-and-finance-during-the-twentieth-century/](http://www.e-flux.com/journal/emancipation-of-the-sign-poetry-and-finance-during-the-twentieth-century/)]

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Where are you?

You are nowhere  
You are always  
Now here  
Now hear this  
And taste this  
Tongue in your ear  
With your eyes  
Lick Beckett's  
stained silence  
Somewhere, sometime, somehow  
So me where?  
So me time?  
So me how?

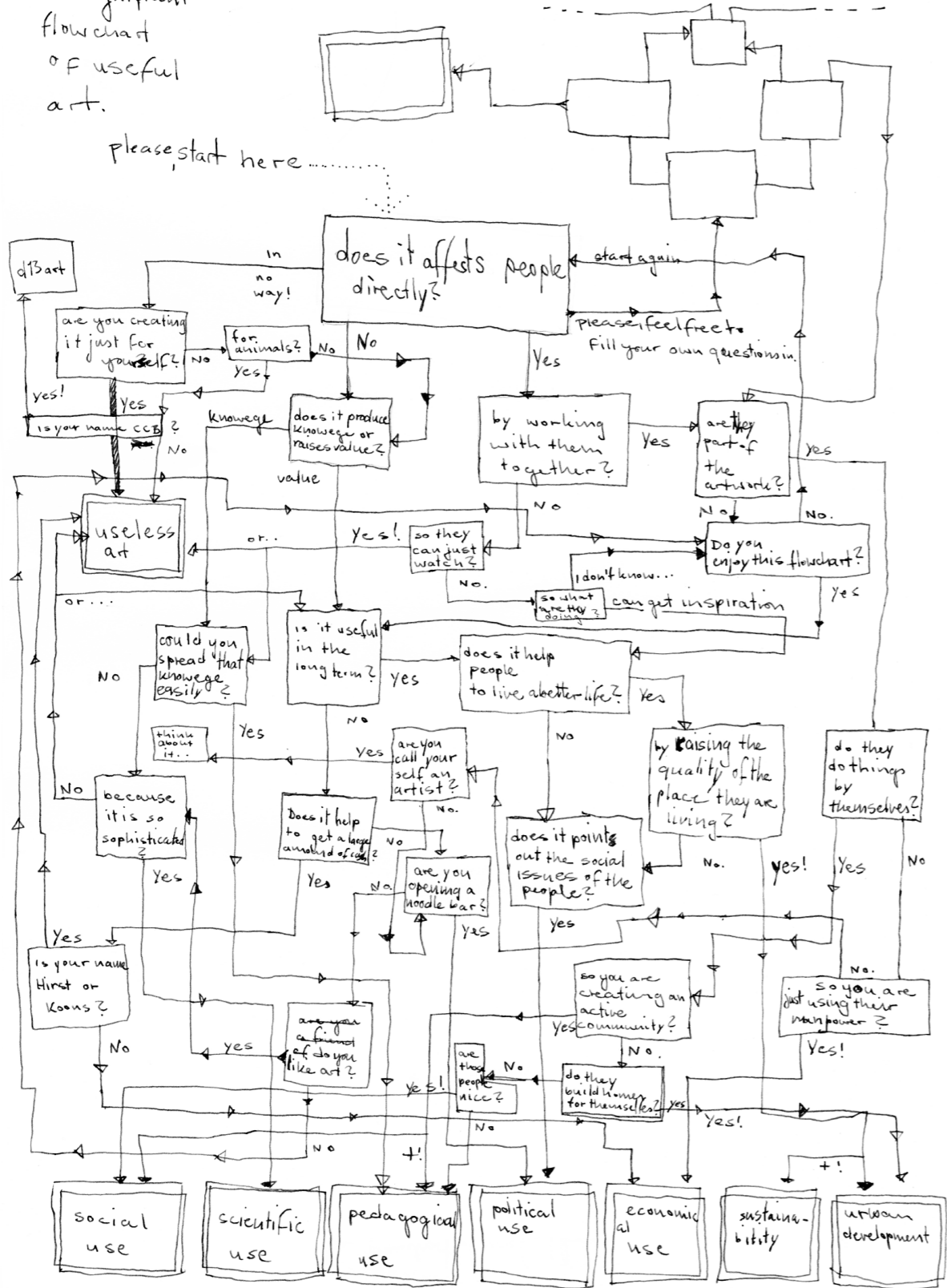
Berardi's becoming  
is self actualisation  
self-realisation

Self is social.

P|R|R|O|J|E|C|T|S|  
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The magnificent flow chart of useful art.

please start here.....



The Magnificent Flow Chart of Useful Art

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CVS1 (ERA)  
Rev 10/11

**NOTICE OF IMMIGRATION DECISION**  
 In compliance with the Immigration (Notices) Regulations 2003 made under section 105 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002  
**REFUSAL OF ENTRY CLEARANCE**

Post reference: UKVISA SECTION\131203

To: PNDAR NABIPOUR

Date of Birth: 05/07/1985

Nationality: Iran

**Your Application**

You have applied for an entry clearance to visit the United Kingdom for 11 days. I have considered your application under Paragraph 41 of the United Kingdom Immigration Rules. You can find these rules at: [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/policyandlaw/immigrationlaw/immigrationrules/](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/policyandlaw/immigrationlaw/immigrationrules/)

Guidance that explains the types of documents, in addition to the application form, which might give a visa applicant the best opportunity to show that their circumstances are as they have set out is available at <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/>

In assessing your individual application, it has not been necessary to interview you. However I have taken account of:

- the financial and employment information as declared by you on your application
- your passport and travel history
- the supporting documents you provided.

I have used all the information presented to determine if the Immigration Rules have been met. In reaching my decision, which has been made on the balance of probabilities, I note the following points:

**The Decision**

- You state that you wish to visit your friends in the UK for 11 days and that you will stay in a hotel. You state you are a student in Netherlands however you have failed to provide any documentary evidence in support of your application to show what you do, how you are supported or to show what funds you have available for your visit. As a result, I am unable to assess your personal and economic circumstances to satisfy myself that you are genuinely seeking entry as a visitor for a limited period and that you could maintain and accommodate yourself and your family adequately as well as finance your onward or return journey without recourse to employment or public funds. Paragraph 41(i), (ii), (vi) and (vii) of HC 395.





**Checklist for a UK Visa Application**

**Steps you should follow to apply for a Visa (according to the World Bridge Service)**

- 1 → Visit the UK Border Agency website and complete your application.
- 2 → Make an appointment to visit either a Visa Application Centre or Mobile Biometric Clinic (where available).
- 3 → Attend your appointment to submit your biometrics information (and any required documentation).
- 4 → Your visa application and documents will be reviewed by the UK Border Agency and they will make a decision on issuing a visa.

Your documents are ready to be returned to you.

**What does that actually mean for you?**

(According to two people who have been through the process)

Suggestions for your planned visit to the UK

- 1 → In the application form you will be asked to provide your financial situation, information about your accommodation and your status.

**Just to let you know: You won't get personal support when applying for a visa, so be prepared that you'll only be in contact with the Immigration Agency in a digital way.**

- 2 → You will find that in some cases information about the amount of money you have will not be enough. \$10,000 should be enough though.

**If you are from Iran there could possibly be some difficulties facing you, On the one hand the embassy in Iran is closed and on the other hand proof of your bank account is impossible due to international sanctions.**

- 3 → When you provide details about the hotel you are going to be staying in make sure you have some detailed information about the number of visitors... or book a fancy hotel.

- 4 → The more you have traveled to the EU or the United States the more likely you're visa is going to be approved

**Visiting countries like Iraq, Pakistan and Lebanon can affect future visa approvals - so you should be aware of the fact that maybe attending a conference or something like that might not be the best idea for your further travels.**

- 5 → When you attend your visa appointment be prepared to pay between \$50 and \$150 (depending on the country you apply for your visa in) to get your application reviewed, in no case will you get your money back. Make sure you're smiling all the time and be polite even if you're not treated with the respect you want.

- 6 → If you are an artist or work in the culture industry and you know someone from the culture sector of the country you are living in now get them to write you a recommendation letter and tell them to send it to the visa office. If you know someone from the country you want to go to it will most certainly help your application to get a letter of recommendation from them too.

- 7 → When you attend your appointment you will again only be asked for the papers and it won't be possible for you to ask further questions. In case you don't have a letter of recommendation from an institution be aware that you'll be treated with no respect. Also, be aware that it can take up to two months before your documents are sent back and you find out if you get your visa...Or not.

- 8 → You should probably apply for your visa about six months before actually starting your trip.

■

# The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights



## Article 13.

**(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.**

**(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.**







The proposition to include border control as a new venue of Liverpool Biennial was an attempt to pose questions and explore possibilities of solving some of the problems with artists gaining the permission to travel across British borders.



Positions on the universal right to travel for purposes of education and cultural exchange were addressed to the border control office in Liverpool. Addressing the problems and investigating the position of Liverpool border control and posing questions was to stage a physical act in a form of performance, with positioning the sign of Liverpool Biennial in front of the border control office of Liverpool.



## A look at how institutions play a useful role in helping artists cross borders...

→→ Screen shot from the Liverpool Biennial website\*

Many *Institutions* are classed as a certified sponsoring agency...

...a status that helps artists navigate the immigration procedure and thereby gain entry to the UK.

Part of the demands placed on the Institution is their need to demonstrate that the project is bona fide and worthwhile.

The 'red-tape', system, regulations and process can make things very difficult for international artists who are coming here to work.

Often it is less difficult for those who are not coming here to work...eg. tourists...

### Annie Fletcher, curator, Van Abbe Museum

When Charles Esche took over the Van Abbe Museum he was immediately interested in breaking down hegemonic western based art interests, and one of the ways to do this was by inviting guest curators to the museum from around the world.

For a woman curator from Turkey the visa process took nine months to complete. That investment of time and effort in a process without any guarantees, puts off a lot of institutions from even beginning the application process.

"A real cultural apartheid starts in a way because if you don't pursue it then people get left out," explains Annie. "It's got worse in the Netherlands, but the whole visa process everywhere is so tough. It's crazy because it's all down to an accident of birth."

The Picasso to Ramallah project successfully navigated a multitude of obstacles to exhibit an art work in a country that doesn't officially exist. One of the many problems, Annie revealed, were immigration issues faced by Khaled Horani (director of the International Art Academy in Ramallah) who often wasn't able to make meetings at the last minute because of visa issues.

### Not to be missed!

*Our apologies. The demands of the UK visa regulations unfortunately mean that Fatima Al Qadiri had to cancel her show.*

QADIRI

Featuring

There are also political ramifications for the artist, and not only due to having visa stamps in their passports from certain countries. "There are problems for artists from the Middle East working with Israeli artists

and vice versa when they return to their own countries," said Annie.

One way to get around this, so that these artists can meet and work together is not to announce or advertise the projects, meetings, events, etc that they are involved in.

"In some instances, the elasticity of the term 'art' has been really helpful in being able to invite people to attend art events, which has helped them to secure visas," said Annie, highlighting the role of Galit Eliat, a guest curator at Van Abbe Museum, who repeatedly comments on "using art to get people across borders."

### Liverpool Biennial:

Artists invited to the UK from outside the European Economic Agreement area need to apply for a visa.

To invite an artist over from a non-EEA country, you need to become a sponsor and obtain a sponsor licence. Liverpool Biennial is such a sponsor and is 'A' rated. Liverpool Biennial went through an application process to achieve this sponsor licence. The licence is reviewed annually.

Artists are defined as 'painters, sculptors, photographers of international artistic standing and cartoonists and illustrators whose work has been published or exhibited for its artistic merit'. Prior entry clearance for artists is mandatory and applicants must satisfy the following criteria:

- They must be established outside the UK and primarily engaged in producing original work that has been exhibited for its artistic merit;
- They do not intend to work except as a self-employed artist (CoS are required if they work for a fee);
- They have, for the preceding year, supported and accommodated themselves

(and any dependents) from their own resources without working except as an artist;

• They are able to support and accommodate themselves in the UK without reliance on public funds. Visas indicate:

- Purpose of travel
- Length of stay in the UK
- The latest date that a person can enter and/or be in the UK

### Paul Sullivan, director of Static Gallery, Liverpool

"When we work with artists from the EU there's no problem, they can just come straight over," said Paul. "It's a different story when you work with non-EU citizens."

For the 2008 Biennial, Static set up a Noodle Bar. Shortly afterwards, visa applications changed the classification of artists to that of business people.

"For the Noodle Bar project we specifically wanted chefs, so we didn't invite artists. We applied for permits for the two Korean chefs we invited and after a two month process we received letters of rejection for the work permits. The grounds for rejection were that 'people from this country could do that job'. Whoever decided to reject the application either didn't look at the particularities or specific nature of the project, or just ignored it. Basically, we didn't tick their boxes."

Undeterred, Static appropriated an official Biennial letter of invitation to international artists, scanned it, changed the letter heading, names and other pertinent details and emailed it to the two chefs. They printed it out and ten days later arrived at Manchester Airport where they were both granted clearance for 12 months...

\*Fatima Al Qadiri is the only artist unable to appear at the Liverpool Biennial 2012 because of UK visa regulations.

(Report compiled from interviews conducted during the Autonomy School project)

# HOW TO USE

# INAPPROPRIATELY CAPITALISM

→ Buy advertising space and place an advert in that space that advertises only itself.

→ Tell no one who you are and make it impossible for any contact to be made.

→ Sit back and enjoy the success of the campaign.

Mobile Art School contributors - Leeds United is a collective, also operating under a number of pseudonyms such as L Foundation and MOMA, whose work examines the operation of the art world through the appropriation of other artists' practices.



The Angle of Incidence by Leeds United



Family Values

# FIRE IS SLIPPERY

## Free Speech™

→ "OFS Group is selling the rights to the phrase "Man of the Match". The trademark could fetch millions, as the owner will be able to sue companies who are using the phrase without their consent. It seems odd that such a well known phrase can be bought and sold, but it's not an isolated case..."

[<http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/business/2012/09/man-match-keep-calm-and-carry-and-other-phrases-you-might-get-sued-using>]

"In The Birth of Biopolitics, Michel Foucault foresees the process by which neoliberal transformation would later construct the homo

economicus—translating every idea and every act into economic terms and abolishing the autonomy of knowledge as economy fully takes hold of social life."

Franco Berardi [<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/i-want-to-think-post-u/>]

It costs £200 to register a trademark (£170 online).

The fee is non-refundable.

It takes approximately four months to complete the process.

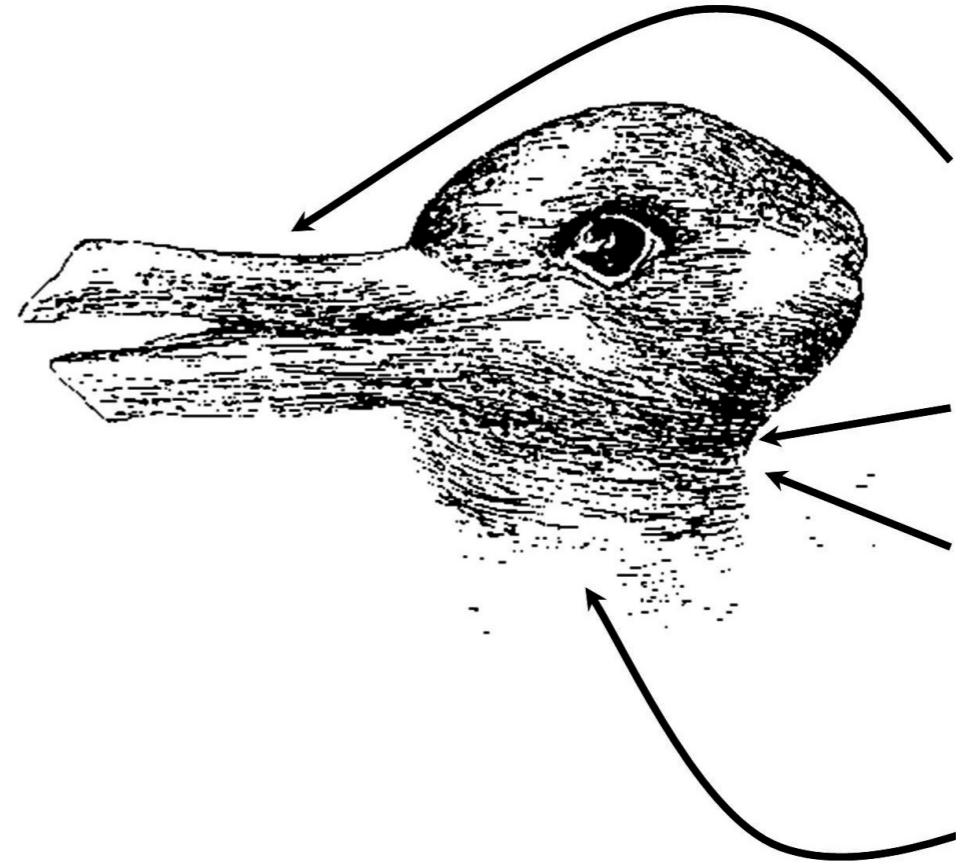
[<http://www.ipo.gov.uk/types/tm/t-applying/t-before/t-cost.htm>]

Trade Mark No.	Mark Text	File Date	Status	Nice Classes	Image	Short List
UK00001088513	FREE SPEECH	21/12/1977	Dead	03		<a href="#">Add</a>
UK00002278569	FREE SPEECH	21/08/2001	Dead	09 36		<a href="#">Add</a>
UK00002278568	FREESPEECH	21/08/2001	Dead	09 36		<a href="#">Add</a>
UK00002322950	THE HONEST SAUSAGE FREE RANGE - FREE SPEECH' SPEAKERS CORNER HYDE PARK LONDON	05/02/2003	Expired	43		<a href="#">Add</a>
UK00002511445	SUNTALK - THE HOME OF FREE SPEECH	18/03/2009	Registered	09 16 35 36 38 39 41 43		<a href="#">Add</a>
WO0000000708024	FreeSpeech	18/12/1998	Protected	09		<a href="#">Add</a>
UK00003015353	FREE CHEESE FRIDAY	25/07/2013	Examination	29		<a href="#">Add</a>

→ For Valentin Voloshinov (1895-1936), language is the medium of ideology. Language is a socially constructed sign-system, a material reality which is the necessary preconditions for consciousness. Voloshinov criticised Saussure's unhistorical structuralism, claiming that words are dynamic social signs, which take different meanings for different social classes in different historical contexts. Meaning therefore includes the active participation of both the speaker (or writer) and hearer (or reader).

While every word is a sign taken from among available signs, the manipulation of the word contained in each individual utterance is regulated by social relations. Voloshinov claims that there is a continuous class struggle over the meaning of words. Because the 'struggle for meaning' coincides with class struggle, Voloshinov can be seen as anticipating Gramsci's conception of ideology and language.

[<http://www.marxists.org/glossary/people/v/o.htm> accessed 21.9.'12]



Here  
Ear  
Hear  
Here  
Hair  
Here  
Hare  
Hear

... my apologies  
... it's a duck

# SOLA

Sola Art is a community arts and non-for profit organisation based in Toxteth, Liverpool., focused on integration, education + empowerment through the arts, working with of all kinds of people + communities. In 2006 SOLA ARTS set up 'Connecting Cultures: Art a message to humanity' - a group of artists from the refugee and asylum seeker communities who live and work in Merseyside.

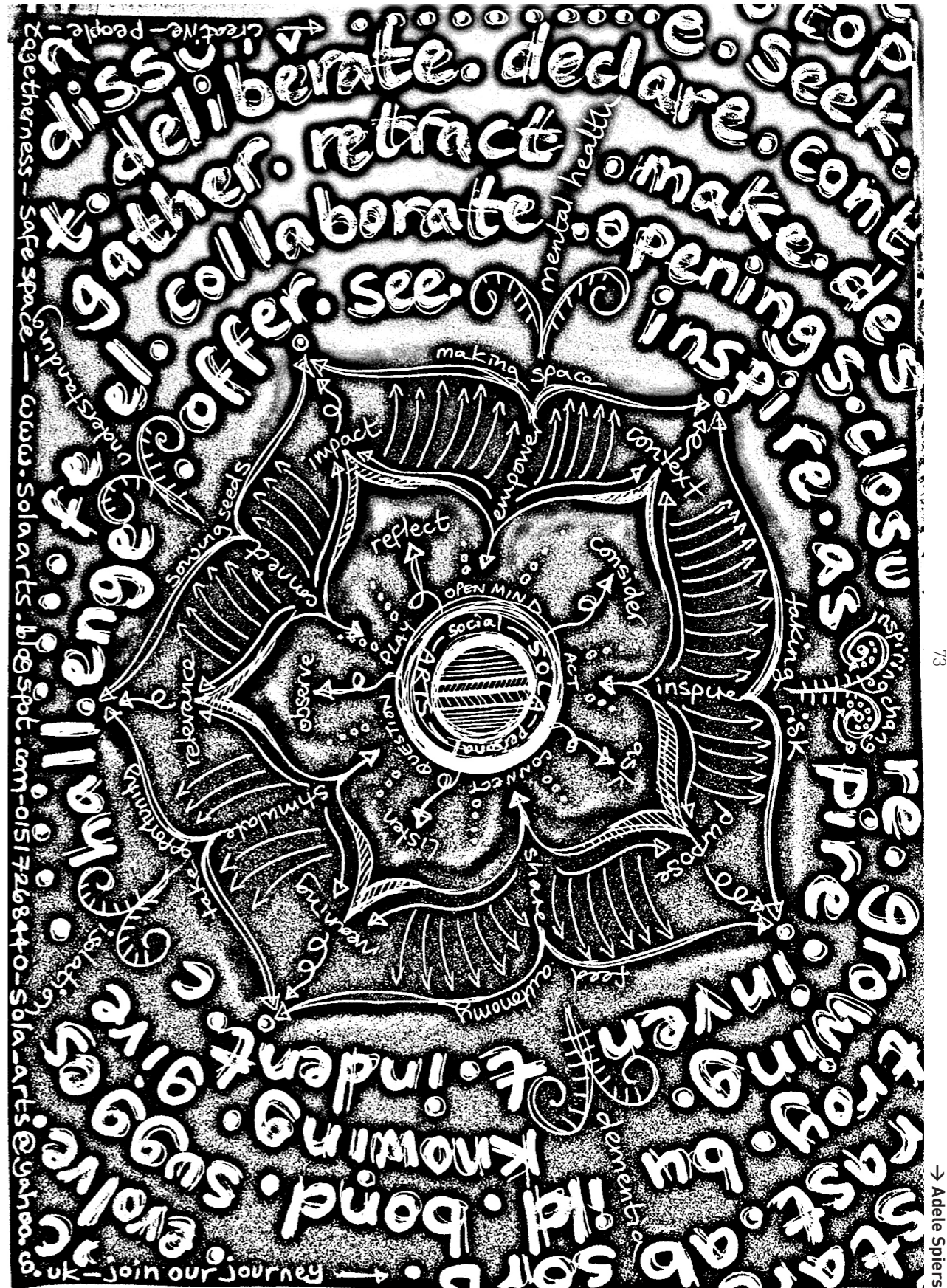
Drawing opposite by Solar Art member and Mobile Art School participant Adele Spiers

"Useful Art = Use-Full Art.

Art with a purpose, art with a function. Images to help us remember our keys when we leave the house, self-expression to help our minds balance, art that brings us together and not existing in isolation, art to help us understand life...just a few uses of art.

Use-Full Art = a tool for life..."

# ARTI



# M A K I N G U S E

For the Dutch Art Institute participants the Summer School was the first step in a year long seminar taught by the Van Abbemuseum on 'useful art'. It culminated in an exhibition at the Van Abbemuseum this summer, called Making Use.

For Making Use the museum asked the students to "use" the museum, drawing on elements of the institution to inform their practice. Some responded directly to particular works in the collection whilst others decided to use the people and space of the museum to explore different possibilities.

Here, Making Use is represented by one project of this exhibition by Fotini Gouseti.

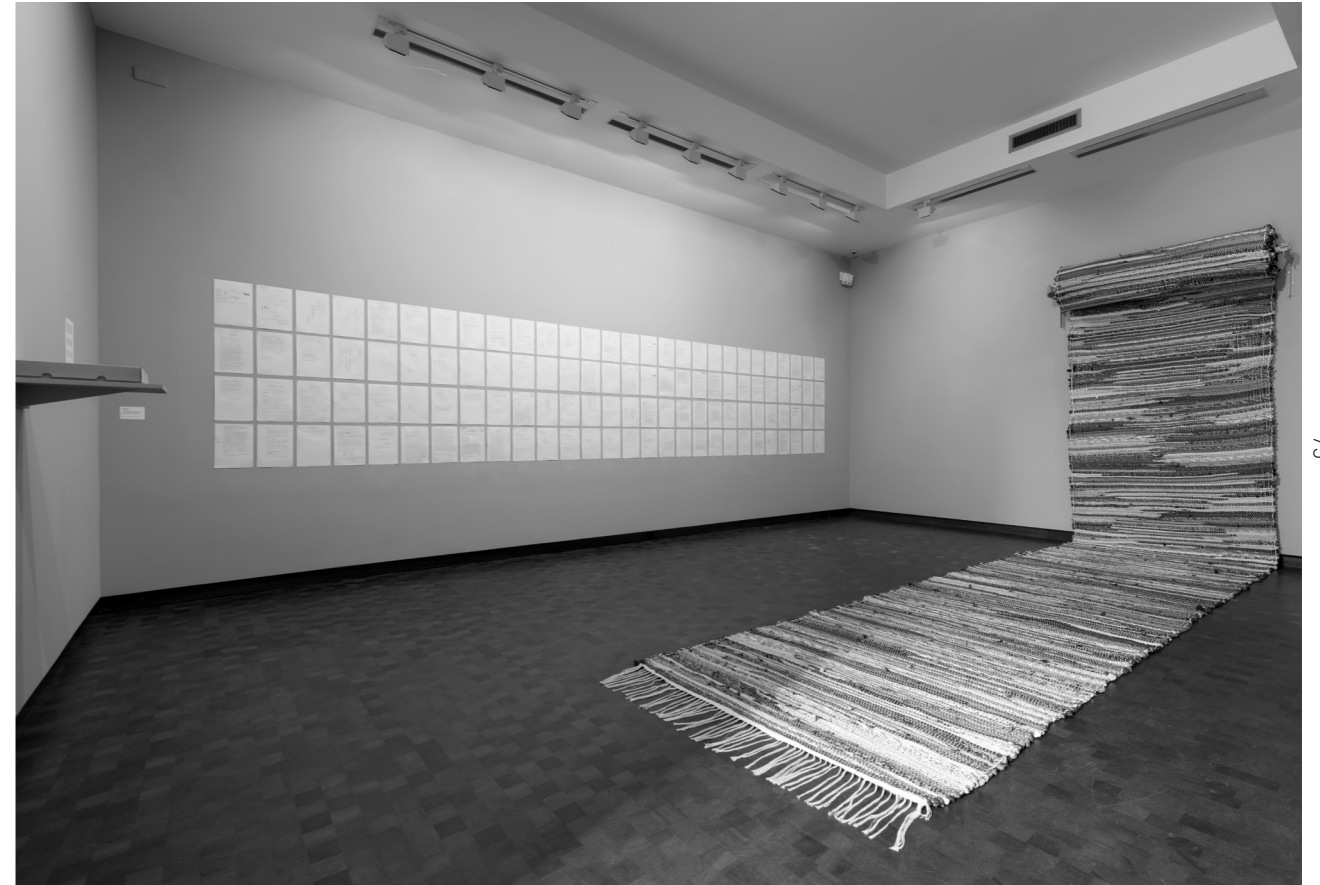
Exhibition wall text for Fotini's 'Kalavryta 2012' :

The village Kalavryta has a unique charge within modern Greek history. On December 13, 1943 the Wehrmacht burned down the village, destroyed the food reserves and executed all male inhabitants above the age of 14. It was one of the most tragic events to take place in Greece after the Second World War. Today the village is grappling with both it's past and the current economical, social and ideological crisis, bringing renewed attention to this dark chapter.

This work reflects on one episode from the post-war history of Kalavryta. After the war the village received supplies from the Red Cross and UNNRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitations Administration). The Vagia family one day received a huge package that contained over two thousand neckties. Not knowing what to do with them, the mother of the family used them to make a traditional "kourelou" carpet. "We were starving, but walking on silk," her son recalled laughing. For this artwork, Fotini Gouseti collaborated with people from the village and a group of volunteers with knowledge of the traditional weaving technique to recreate the carpet using about two thousand neckties.

Fotini Gouseti would specially like to thank Kostas Manavis, Kyriakos Tsoukalas and Aris Kousidis, all members of the "'Taxideutes Politismou" community for the materialization of this work.

■



Fotini Gouseti, 'Kalavryta 2012', 2013, carpet made of 2000 neck-ties, on the wall Anna Dasovic, 'CABR 86939 [PRA Amsterdam, 24509], CABR 62654 [BG Amsterdam 809/47], NBI 95005, CABR 75745 [BRC 764/47], Iteration number one 2013', 2013, 112 A4 sheets with pencil plus archive box with 112 xerox copies.  
Image courtesy of Peter Cox

# PERFORMANCE CULTURE IS A DISCIPLINE VOYAGERS

Taxideutes Politismou (Culture Voyagers) and I met due to "Kalavryta 2012", which is a work charged with elements from history, the present and the financial crisis. This work consists of a carpet, made of 2,000 ties, made using a traditional technique, meaning it had to be made by specialists. Taxideutes Politismou are a community based in Athens, founded two years ago by young people seeking solutions to help their neighborhood out of the frustration and the problems of the contemporary crisis.

Now they are about 250 people of all ages. They organize activities and they use culture and tradition as their medium. They believe the only way to find ways out of crisis is through solidarity. They look for humanity, as they believe an element of it has ceased existing in contemporary life. They state companionship as their god and strongly support each other.

For that reason they also supported me, as our goals and interests are in parallel, by weaving the carpet voluntarily. A big part of the community was involved and contributed in different ways. In that way I was also involved in the community. For Taxideutes Politismou art and culture is a tool that provides solutions for their society.

[www.taxideutes-politismou.gr/index.php/en/](http://www.taxideutes-politismou.gr/index.php/en/)





# W O R K I N G

# OUR TASK

→ To chew over and unpack the ideas introduced by the speakers:

What is useful art?

How is it useful?

Why is it?

→ To produce the first version of this, a Draft Manual for Useful Art.

With the three groups; we splintered off to chew these starting points, soon roving onto the questions and quarrels we had with the speaker of the day.

The week hinged on doing something - production through dialogue - with the group as a hub to co-ordinate responses and collectively produce.

Lucy Somers, Summer School participant and assistant organiser

# WHY USEFUL ART?

Why not?

Because contemporary life requires everything and everyone to have

...a role

...a purpose

...a function,

...everything and everyone is under a pressure to justify themselves.

Art is no different.

Art has to justify itself and one way it does this is by being 'useful'.

**So why Useful Art?**

It provides a means to challenge, interpret and explore the challenges, issues and problems of contemporary life.

It is a way to discuss these problems without assuming any answers...

As a means to search for alternative answers and responses to the contemporary problems arising from neo-liberal global capitalism locally and globally, as an individual and as a society.

It is a way to reinvest and reinvigorate and waken people to their potential to be transformative agents in their own lives and their wider society.

It is useful as a way to react to these issues and concerns and for providing a role for artists to contribute usefully to society.

**Art's autonomy...**

Art's space enables wider and more comprehensive questions about an object or subject to be explored, investigated, considered and addressed...

**Art is USEFUL...**

→ because it satisfies agendas: government, businesses, individuals and duplicates roles.

→ because it addresses issues that are often ignored or neglected.

→ because it provides an opportunity for expression.

→ because it redefines notions of value and importance beyond uniaxential and neo-liberal notions of value as profit and commodity.

→ because art sees the gaps in knowledge, in systems, in philosophies, and social/political-economic models and theories

→ because it exposes these gaps, challenges them, tries to fill and bridge them and create new ones.

→ because it asks more questions than it answers.

→ because it provides a space to think.

**Why USEFUL art?**

What other alternative is there?

"for thinking ourselves otherwise..."

?

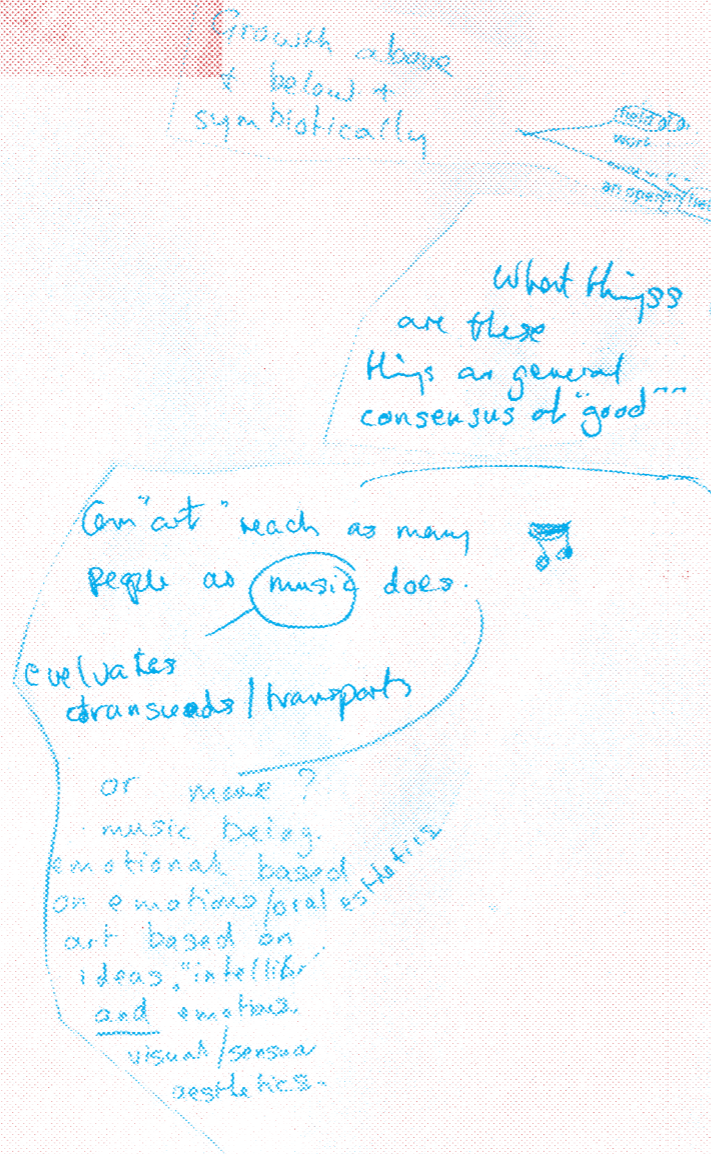
■

# THE BYRNE ARTIFACTS

→ The following project, The Byrne Artefacts, came out of this process of untangling meaning from each speakers' specific and personal language. Dealing with this as a multi-national, multi-lingual audience, we were keen to expose these layers of translation, and for a concrete material we recorded a conversation with John Byrne.

From there we began the first of many translations; the task of transcription, teasing words from muffled sounds, crunchy and unsure to foreign ears, phrases interrupted by laughter or hesitation. Once the conversation found some solid form on the page we began to excavate it, make sense by picking apart phrases, decorating the surface with summoned thoughts or linked ideas, meanings unearthed and excavated. Almost immediately the same text is buried by the multiple readings, the ideas that sought to elucidate, immediately begin to obscure.

→ Excavated material from the interview with John Byrne.



Group → What drives you to work in the field of art?

JB → What drives me to work in the field of art? I've always thought that the field of art genuinely allows me to work on projects that can have some kind of effect. I find it, frustratingly an open field, on certain levels, but also an area in which you really can get together with people and try and make things happen, even if it's only in a small way. That can appear to be quite a utopian sentiment, but I've had opportunities to work in other fields, but the creativity and the kind counter-cultural way of thinking that art offers, has always really appealed to me. It's kind of like being in a band without the music that constantly changes with the different people that come and go, but you're always trying to communicate I suppose, have some effect and also listen to people who come and join you and think in different ways. I've always found art a really interesting field to work with 'cause without being at all indecisive (I'm quite a decisive person) it always pursues you and chases you to rethink your ideas and change your position.

Group → Your own position also?

JB → Yeah, which I've found incredibly valuable. I've put those couple of points up [...] that would be interesting to look at, but I know in the act of looking at that I'll rethink and change positions. It's flexibility and the necessity to keep thinking and keep changing and the possibility to have some ... some real effect even on some small level.

Group → But did you grow into thinking like this?

Left ART SCHOOL

English ART education.

Artist as outside the system more than a glorified portfolio careers... Olafur Eliasson + Little Sun that's life surely... R artists just people who keep making things to exhibit in galleries... what's the point of that without the gallery, dogma, bureaucracy pyramid... it's use?

curly haired teenager in a band

EDUCATION

JB → Yeah, I think I grew into thinking like that when I went to art school. It was a very traditional English art education that Juan [Cruz] was also describing yesterday. You went along, primarily most people were painters, and there was still a big legacy amongst staff who taught at art schools during that period, of modernism and abstract expressionism.

Group → What period was it actually? When were you in art school?

JB → I was in art school in the mid nineteen-eighties and not all art schools were like that, some of them were more progressive than others but they were quite fixed and also there wasn't, during that period, there wasn't anywhere near the kind of arts infrastructure that exists at the moment. So you just went to art school, you hoped that one day you might become a famous artist, maybe before you were dead. There were galleries in cities like London that you'd send slides to and hoped that you will be picked up. Or you went into education as I have and most of the, I suppose famous artists, all also worked in art education. You know, people like Richard Hamilton and Peter Blake, so there were those kind of trajectories. As the post '89 global art worlds developed, there have been increasingly more and more opportunities and more and more people have met. They've helped me change my way of thinking and position, and on occasions I've helped them think differently as well. So that kind of quite flexible position has evolved I guess over the period of ten or fifteen years.

Group → So could you tell us about the Autonomy Project a little, and about your role in it?

JB → Yeah, the Autonomy Project, as an idea, started in Cork in 2008 after a conversation around the publication of a book that went with a project that Charles Esche and Annie Fletcher had curated called Cork Caucus (which happened in the city of Cork in Ireland in 2005 which was the Capital of Culture that year). And it was a really interesting three week/month long discursive project that brought all kinds of artists and projects together in and around the base - a disused primary school.

Group → You were there also?

JB → Yeah, I went along there - initially to do a quite short project called Exit Review at STATIC gallery and I just became a Cork Caucus addict immediately and I asked if I could come back. Annie [Fletcher] kindly said yeah, if you come back we'll find you some accommodation. So I kind of spent the best part of the month there, kind of just interacting with things - I found it a really exciting environment. Because of that really, STATIC had several links with Cork, we returned to do our Exit Review project a couple of times. We worked on the Andy Warhol Project with the Glucksman Gallery and I happened to be in Cork when there was this conversation around the publication that went a couple of years later about Cork Caucus.

It was during that conversation that Charles Esche was talking a lot about difficulties of creating and curating in the world in which the forces of instrumentalization are becoming more manifest and apparent, having to answer questions about visitor figures, having to generate income etc... and through that this term of autonomy, which kept raising its head, was really interesting and was a word that nobody really used anymore. It had taken on this... appearance



86

Pat and Doors

23

IN ESCHENCE

M F U A

12  
TOTALLY IMMOVABILITY  
8  
creating a self-sustaining world of manifest instrumentalization of period of...  
definitions that are never



would be the wrong word, it had taken on a loaded meaning. It referred to Greenbergian modernism, it referred to a particular way of thinking about a self-referential art that we all thought we had moved on from but we could not, in this conversation, do without the term autonomy. Yet it's linked to so many other things like freedom and how to act differently and think differently. So we started to think perhaps there is a project in there - to think about this word autonomy, to reinvent it, to return it to the world as a more sticky and visceral complex term.

Group → So you were involved in it from the beginning?

JB → Yeah, yeah.

Group → In what's sense?

JB → Literally, we had a discussion the next day, with Lucy saying we should do an autonomy project.

Then I was invited over to the Van Abbe museum to discuss it with Steven Ten Thijs and we began to formulate what could be a project. My role in the autonomy project has been one of several members of an editorial board, along with people like Sven Lütticken, Thomas Lange, Jeroen Boomgaard, Annie Fletcher and Charles Esche. It's been a great project, a joy to be part of. I think one of the keys to the project was something that Charles Esche were instrumental in, was to let it grow really slowly over time, they let it evolve. They said, right we are going to do this project, that it is going to be that or the other, or have this - they let it breathe. Without the Van Abbe museum and the museum's resources, communication networks - it

S.L.Y

Constantly Rethinking Relationships  
Annie/Charles

27

JOYFUL

39

VPS  
DOWNS  
"BIFO"

CIA SH

LIVERPOOL SCHOOL OF ART

PLACE T. PLAYCEFFULNESS

2

Location	Start Date	To Date
Cork, Ireland	Unknown	Unknown

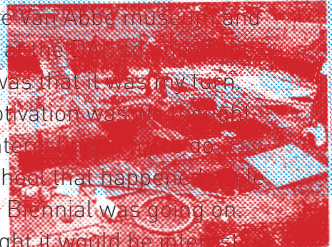
wouldn't have been possible. But also without the Van Abbe museum's and Charles and Annie's foresight to let it bubble away, it wouldn't be half as interesting.

You had big influence in bringing the Autonomy project into the Liverpool School of Art. What was your motivation for this?

JB → We already had two Autonomy Schools and one at the Van Abbe museum and one last year. The other motivation was that it would be interesting to see if the Autonomy School that happened at the Liverpool Biennial was going on. We also thought it would be interesting

to do an Autonomy School which integrated into the possibility of doing a Mobile Art School, which started to look at these emerging issues of use value. One of the key things for me, of the autonomy project right from the start is: we always envisaged that we would have two overlapping and self-sustaining strands. One, in which we would try to get some of the world's leading critics, theorists and artists to help us re-think autonomy. But the other was that, more importantly, we would work with under graduates, post graduates and career artists to get their voice, and that we would find ways and mechanisms, however elegant or clumsy, to get these two spheres that usually exist in separation to bump into each other.

One of these really successful vehicles has been doing summer schools, and then having an autonomy newspaper, so, undergraduates and post graduates who got to the autonomy school can propose pieces of writing or work that can get published along side people like Charles Esche or Sven or an interview with Franco Berardi. And clearly also, the thought that comes out of these Summer



Schools is something that we've always seriously reflected upon, and which helps shape and form the questions that we ask of these key thinkers, so there is always... One of the successes of the Autonomy Project as a model, perhaps for future projects, is that those two spheres which are usually kept separate, have

ways perhaps not perfect ways to actually interact. Which is one of the motivations of doing the draft manual for the art. It's an odd project in

ways because it is demanding something gets done but also it's actually it is just a gift in a sense, there is an opportunity to think something through in the general way and to give them a public kind of think about to see what happens to see what fires

And then opportunity to reflect on things because there is no one individual that can think about everything. I am sure this week and weekend there will be ideas that come along which will help everybody, including myself, re-think our positions.

Group -> So, going to back art, and your interest in art. You already mentioned this morning you are big fan of Andy Warhol. Could you tell us something about which artists have influenced you, and how they relate to us art?

JB -> That's interesting question. I have always been interested in that quite... firstly I was very influenced when I was a student by the work of the abstract expressionists particularly Jackson Pollock. Because I was fortunate enough to be educated by people like Charles Harrison and Frances Frasina, I had very different view of their practices. One that was based around their struggle communicate complex ideas in a post-WW2 environment, one that was influenced by their early political allegiances,

FROM MODUS MANNER

SELF REFERENCE

24

relationships between art and everyday life every 30

Excavation Sites

STATS

LJMU

Van Abbe

Dutch Art Inst.

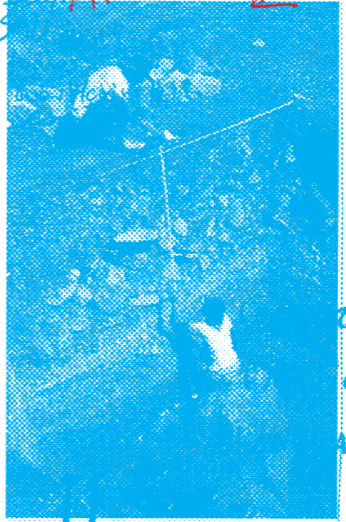
Hildersheim

Athens

Van Abbe Cork Caucus Hildersheim

AT IN ROCKET SCIENCE

ROCKET SA ATHENS



RIPPLING VAN ABBE

ref.

their knowledge of early Mexican mural art etc. Pollock's struggle to try to articulate and say what couldn't be said, in a sense. I never really had an interest in their work in the purely formal terms, that it was usually cased in. I just naturally became quickly interested, as soon as I found out about it, in that trajectory that happened I suppose through Dada, through Surrealism, to Russian Constructivism that kind of counter-strand of art practice that tended to...eh, at once to adopt much more of the relationships between art and everyday life.

Group -> Art and everyday life?

JB -> Eh, yeah, that's just always been a kind of a fascination for me. I mean it's my motivation for liking Andy Warhol. Usually when people find out that I like Andy Warhol, they're kind of like: You? You like Andy Warhol? It's down one side of the work, its that blurring of practises, its his lack of authorship, its this incredible stuff happened, most of it demonstrably he didn't have anything to do with. And all the complexities that's caused afterwards

Yes, thats Andy Warhol's work, no, that's not Andy Warhol's work

Group -> So, and could you try to relate that to useful art? Like the factory of Andy Warhol? Could you - is there a relationship, -or?

JB -> Hm, I think, I think for me there is, I think for me the factory is only one example, of which there are several, it was an example in which for a short period of time, around those four years...in which different people came together, to often randomly think through and produce different kinds of work, and different forms of work. I was always interested in the work that

Benjamin

15

DEEP THOUGHT

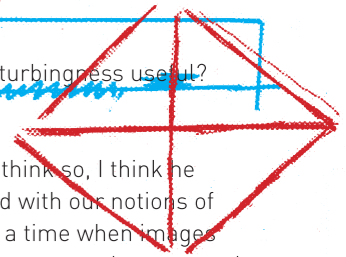
he did with the Velvet Underground, and the Exploding Plastic Inevitable. The films that got made, those endless films, whether it was people just coming in and sitting down, and doing the screen tests where he often wouldn't even be there, he'd just put a reel in a film and let it unravel. And if you've seen any of those they're actually quite remarkable pieces, they're very disturbing, actually went to see the show in Ireland with a leading psychotherapist, and he found them really quite disturbing pieces.

What you tend to get, you may have seen them, kind of quite incredible pieces you tend to get people kind of adopted a pose, and you know, when you make videos yourself, a couple of seconds is a really long time, three to four minutes is a really long time. And there is something psychologically disturbing, really quite intriguing about these portraits, that you kind of see people's kind-of fixed attitudes, relax. Then you start to see them and manoeuvre and almost kind of communicating something else about themselves and people begin burst into tears during them, its really quite odd.

There's hundreds of them, hundreds and hundreds ...

Group -> But is this disturbingness useful?

JB -> Yeah, I think I think so, I think he usefully played with our notions of image, and at a time when images becoming the syntax and grammar, by which we now all live. I think some of the ways that happened in the factory, as I've said somewhere else, almost provides the Rosetta Stone of how we can understand our world of image. You know his tongue-in-cheek obsession with mimicking Hollywood, and the superstars that were in



the factory etc. One of the most Demonstrable outcomes from the factory was, there was a great documentary on a couple of years ago, by the BBC, called "Seven Ages of Rock" and, eh, and what was really interesting about it is, is how little the Beatles influenced anybody and how much the Velvet Underground influenced everybody, especially the way that the Velvet Underground were filmed by people in the factory, where cameras were thrown around and close ups happened etc, that's now the syntax and grammar of how every band is portrayed. If you oppose that to the kind of fixity of camerawork that was happening in the 1960s people went to see the Plastic Inevitable, and that directly began to influence the way that bands like Pink Floyd started to be portrayed etcetera. So I think that's how the factory has had a really lasting visual legacy in our culture, it also provides some keys to understand where we are and what might have been right and also what might have gone wrong.

Group →

Could you maybe then name another project, that convinced you about the importance of useful art?

JB →

Grizedale Arts.

Group →

Grizedale Arts?

JB →

Yeah. Eh, When I first came across Grizedale Arts in the mid 2000s I just immediately resonated with what they did and why they did it.

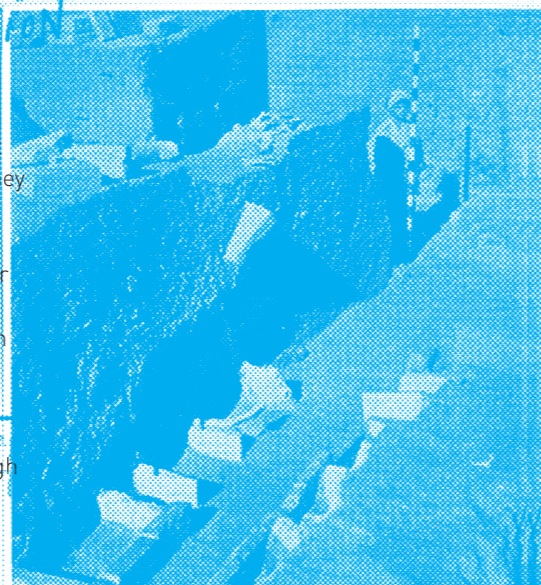
Adam Sutherland, who is the director of Grizedale Arts, was very open about working with people And Adam was quite open to thinking through some possible projects. And, ehm, I just found that their work and their position, the way they thought through the complex relationships of art to

33

INDUSTRIALISATION

18

THE SYNTAX OF PORTRAYAL



their immediate community, to a broader community, to, to something that might be called the Art World, to the kind of responsibilities that they have within a particular environment. They really provided a continually moving and growing, a very kind of sophisticated model for engagement. They intrigued me... I think... and continues to, they are getting more and more popular and people starting to think through how they might do, what they want to do next by looking at Grizedale Arts.

Alistair would refuse to offer themselves as a model in any definitive sense, but I think some of the things they're now thinking through with their relationship to reinventing Ruskin and the ideas of the Mechanics Institutes, to really provide interesting of models for how we can think ourselves otherwise.

The other one would be, would actually be the Van Abbe museum, with what Charles Esche and Annie Fletcher have done and accomplished.

Group →

In what way is the vanAbbe useful?

JB →

I think there were several articles by Charles Esche that I read before he took over the directorship of the van Abbe, in which he speculates on how a European Kunsthalle could reintegrate itself into a social sphere and to rethink itself and its mechanisms, and he was offered the directorship of the van Abbe and along with the help of great staff, Annie Fletcher, Steven ten Thije, and countless others they've put their money where their mouth is really. I think the Van Abbe museum offered a very successful way of beginning to open out ways of rethinking what we do and why we do them within institutions. And I think that's been valuable and useful as well because it has allowed a rethinking

MINISTRY OF

Thinking, usefulness otherwise.  
This  
Lack of usefulness  
ESO  
Mentioned museums and galleries  
not open later  
"Over the top" - "Over the top" - "Over the top"  
be "normal" - "normal" - "normal"  
keeping things open: these should be  
41  
CONFIRMATION  
BAHNHOF

of what's good about institutions, rather than knee-jerk reaction, which I once suffered from, of "yeah let's just blow them up. Let's get rid of them 'cause they're useless". That kind of sort of Post Futurist, "yeah, if it's not working, drag it down". Which is one of the first things that you tend to want to do if you're related to the arts, that kind of counter tradition that we talked about. But they've started to kind of rethink through actually much more of its sophisticated relationships of arts and institutions to very very complex dialogues about civic society and notions of citizenship, and identity, and the very important role that art plays in that, the very complex role that art plays in that. I think has been hugely useful. If they had not done that I never would have not thought of it. 'Cause it's beyond the thinking of one person. It would be some sort of strange kind of crazy mind, kind of thing, somebody has to do it, try it. You know, Grizedale arts and Van Abbe museum have done it and the other one is Paul Sullivan's work in Liverpool with Static. Static which I've been a co-director for several years, Paul's methods of working very loosely and openly as an architect with art to rethink boundaries and spaces and borders and has allowed me to, you know, the project he has involved me in, and allowed me to work on to influence have really helped me to rethink things.

Group →

So the past few years you have been occupied within the autonomy project on think of notions of autonomy. And we have the feeling a shift is now taking place towards rethinking a useful?

JB →

Yeah I would agree

Group →

Have you come up with you own definition of useful art yet?

POSITION

Run out of time.

JB → No the closest I got to doing that, the closest I have been prepared to do that, were those three points which I showed this morning, which I'm prepared to nail to a mast as we say in England and to work on for the next coming years, both in terms of my activities as writer and also as an educationalist.

Group → So do you think maybe there is a danger in defining useful art?

JB → I think there is always a danger in trying to come up of definitive explanation for anything. I know that can sometimes actually be a very shifty notion that can be used to never actually get down to the nub of things. But I think it is important to use use value as means to rethink what we're doing and why we're doing it. It seems to offer a very capable vehicle for really beginning to test some of the borders and boundaries that currently confine us.

Group → And why do you think it's so important to name it useful art.

JB → I think once again it's so we've got a set of terms that we can, on the one hand we can share and we can individually apply and pull apart and test I suppose. And I think there are several reasons. One, it has an historical and critical legacy that we can revisit and review on our own terms now. Like the Mechanics Institute Ruskin etc etc, things that happened around 1848. On the other hand, it seems to be to be such a contradiction in terms, useful art. It makes people uncomfortable, it makes people instantly think of utilitarian art and something that is actually instrumentalized, something that has been confined, something that has been corralled, and I think anything

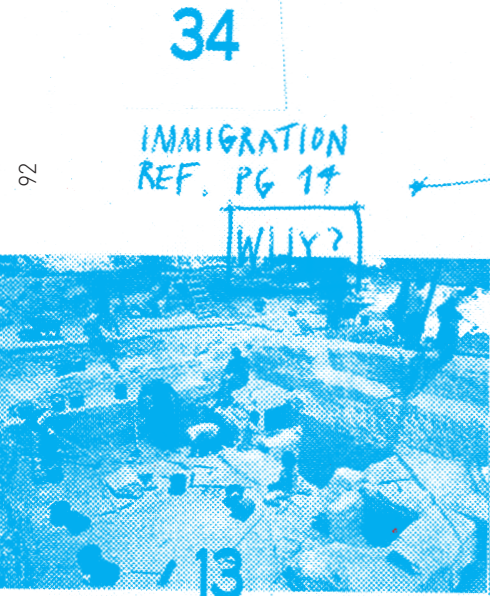
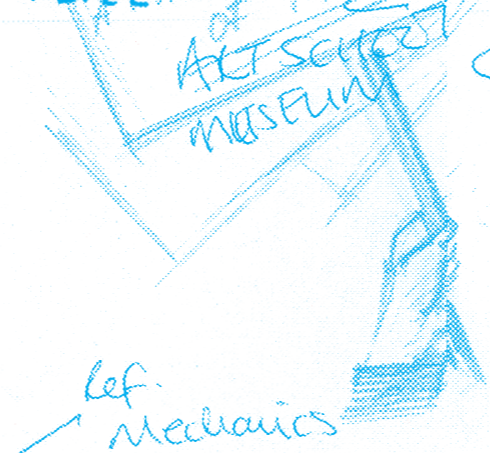
Useful art:  
1. The job of art is to produce forward processes of radical autonomy which are capable of challenging the uni-accental and equivalence of global neo-liberal capital  
2. All forms of radical autonomy are inherently social in their drift  
3. The possibility of radical autonomy is entirely contingent upon value. John Byrne, Liverpool, 1992

that causes those knee-jerk reactions can also be used as a vehicle for rethinking those reactions. You know often art leads to thinking that, well, art can't be useful, because it's about freedom. And you start thinking of, so what's free about our free art and you actually rub up against some of its well entrenched parameters which we take as common sense, that they are actually about securing a particular set activities for a particular type of people that we probably call the art world, that Alistair was talking about in his interview. Not all of them bad, you know, you never want to throw the baby out of the bath-water, but you kind of get to the point of saying, you know, come on, who does understand this and why?

Group → So this morning we talked about the different positions towards this notion of useful art, that an artist has a different position than an institute or an Art School or a museum. Do you think every artist should be able to define what is the use of art or what is useful art?

JB → I think...to be...honest it...and this might be a tautological answer, but it depends how you define artists. If you define artists as, which can be a useless word, as people who are engaged with trying to think things through, and change things and propose oppositions, then I think each instance of art practice and each instance of artistic activity, whether that's from an institution or from an individual artist or from a group of people, kind of deserves thinking through on its own terms, during every manifestation. There are some people who call themselves artists who, well, kind of carry on happily making things for a particular kind of art world and never really want to worry about whether that is useful or not. But you know, there might be a way of defining them as not being artists.

BATTLE OF AESTHETICS



Group → Because what would be in it for an reartist to define what's its use?

JB → I think once again, that act of trying to define is about trying to engage with the process, rather than find a definitive answer.

Group → So it is not about right or wrong?

JB → No, It's not about trying to find a uni-accental consensus that this is useful art, we've got a plan now, and we should all stick to that, everyone could be happy, rosy the garden, it is about, it is much more about saying, you know, there are some problems with the terms and conditions of how we practice art, it's dangers of the kind of very apparent implication of contemporary art with a very early emerging form of neo-liberal Capitalism, which is demonstrably and significantly different from earlier forms of capitalism, it's still in it's infancy, it's only 10 to 20 years old and seems to have survived quite robustly in the first major shock to it's system. You know, it's an opportunity to, and there's an urgency about that, perhaps it's an opportunity to think about that before it is too late, and art just does become quite uni-accental, and become a form of slightly provocative decoration.

Group → So that's what you would say is the relationship between the art market and usefulness.

JB → I think the relationship between the art market and usefulness would be a very sophisticated one. I think you can run the danger of grossly simplifying notions of what the art market might be, what the art market is about, the very high level of Sotheby sales, or Whitehall gallery spaces, that



Run out of time

exchange works with oligarchs, paying lot's and lot's of money, and that everything else is somehow not the art market, and the art market is bad and everything else is potentially good. If you've got a more sophisticated view of the art market which sees that that's just one side, one end of the art market. The art market is about galleries, exhibitions, discourses, writings, communications, etcetera. then we are all part of the art market. Its what we want do with that art market and how we want to change it, review it, keep it visible...and keep it in check. Perhaps try to force distances from it

MADE TO BE SOPHIST

Group → But is defining what art also an attempt to influence the art market or, I mean are we distancing ourselves more by defining this or are we getting closer?

JB → That's a really good question. I think it's, I think one part of it is probably of thinking in terms of use. art is trying to escape the gravity of the art market, but it allows you to escape the gravity of the art market by really beginning to understand how sophisticated the art market is. And to pose some possible alternatives from it. In my experience just saying that the art market is definitely doubting, it's over there somewhere and we don't have anything to do with it, and because of that we do a different kind of art, we're kind of free somehow. Is actually the royal road to ending up right back in the art market. You just do these things that are very visible, can be commodified, can be distributed, can be put into different kinds of places and actually form a part of that art market very quickly. You know, there is no more greater advocate of individual autonomy, that set against the world doing something radical and different, than the art market itself. Those books about Jackson Pollock being a drunk. There's no

useful?

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EHM CULTURE

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SOBER AUTHORITY

more greater advocate of art not being part of society than an art market that makes it part of society. What becomes really interesting is recognizing the two points of that oscillation, and trying to attempt to do something different and interesting between them.

Group → Because when talking about the museum or the art institute or even the artist dissolving in society, over the past few days, would you like to see institutions or even artists dissolve from the art market?

JB → I suppose that the punk in me does. The punk in me would like to see that part just disappear, and become much more of a creative and fluid ehm, culture, but that's a hugely utopian vision which would also mean that kind of that the way that society functions at the moment would have to shift and change radically in ways that are beyond my capabilities to imagine. Ehm, so, the realist in me ah, thinks that the job is to try and to attempt to stave off the complete absorption of art into an entirely market led system. I think that's part of where that tension happens, y'know the act of trying to dissolve something like Grizedale arts into a project which is about it's social function. Erm, you know, makes one think about the integration of art, or something that could comfortably be called art, into a market led economy. I don't think either are going to happen completely, but I think its about keeping that possibility of rethinking their lives.

Group → But talking to the realist in you; what do you think will happen with the project that Grizedale Arts is doing right now with the Frieze Art Fair, because this is actually a very useful project, as you stated earlier, and its actually in the heart of the art market right now...how is it being perceived

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QUANTUM LEVEL

INSTITUTE 35

ASPIRIN FOR SOTHEBYS

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INTO YOUR OWN LOOP

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DIRECTIONAL SEE 29

by visitors, what do you think will happen?

JB → I think there's lots of different levels that that'll happen, that that'll come. I think that one of the interesting with Grizedale arts is that they've always managed to find ways of making work which plays on a hub of lots of levels of complexity, where they kind-of come together and this is just one of them I think. There will be several different people from several different walks of life which will perceive the project in very different ways. What I do like about Grizedale Arts, is that if the project works then the local cricket club will get a pavillion, which will then be used in different kinds of ways, by, as Alisdair says, people who really don't give a care at all about contemporary art, or how it works. And I think that's quite a nice loop, it'll kind of work with people who really don't care about contemporary art, and give a lot of food for thought for those people who do.

a nice loop

Group → So it is trying to trigger a shift in society, by bringing useful art into society...

JB → Yeah I think its, uh, that what's interesting about the, there's an old Marxist term about to raise it's head, I think what's really interesting about the work of Grizedale is it's rigorously dialectical. Not dialectical in the sense of, like, posing two very entrenched oppositions in order to try and get a synthesis, but dialectical in the sense of Marxist operations of how we try and think through Capitalism in Das Kapital, which is to pinpoint and identify several shifting and integrating mechanisms which influence each other at the same time, and Grizedale's projects, for me anyway, enable ways into thinking of some of the complexities of those relationships and influence.

Group →

But because one of the students made a quite cynical comment about Grizedale being at Frieze, but is it like they are also going to serve as like a cafeteria for the hipsters, would that be a problem?

JB →

I don't think so, I just don't think for me, no. For me one of the points of that is just that you can't just simply step outside the art market. Or as Juan was saying yesterday, I don't think there's any kind of possibility of some kind of "alterity" or temporary autonomous zone that is somehow over there. You will always be linked, you will always be engaged, and I think what's particularly interesting about this particular Grizedale project is that they're saying "Yep, we'll always be linked, we'll always be engaged: how can we do something that will work on several interesting layers at once" and don't just either step in one form, or totally try to resist and become something else. Y'know as Alisdair also said, when someone asks "why do you still call it art?", one of his seemingly flippant answers was also "cause I kind of quite like art". Because it enables us to think and do things in a different kind of way.

Group →

So do you want to see useful art becoming like a new -ism? Like an avant-garde, or..

JB →

No, I don't. I just think its a way of, a terribly tautologous answer is that, useful art is a really interesting way of trying to think of how to make art useful again, and I think that will happen in many myriad and different ways, even if that's just to give people a grounds to rethink why on earth art should be useful. I just think its a vehicle, a very rigorous and strenuous vehicle, and a very urgent vehicle for getting us to address



some key issues about what's good about art. In a world in which what's good about art might risk disappearing into something fixed and unaccidental, which completely satisfies the market, and leaves us nothing or very little left of those reasons why art has always been an area in which a whole range of ideas and assumptions and representations and presentations have been fought over, from ideas of identity through to censorship and citizenship.

Group →

So we have one last question: We were discussing John Ruskin in relation to Grizedale Arts before, and John Ruskin defines something useful as something that has intrinsic value, but used in a way which is "availing towards life", which is also in a way good, which is very dialectical, would you say that use value is always something good or is there also bad use or bad value?

JB →

Oh that's a great question. The utopian in me would like to think use value is always good. The realist in me would say that it's always open and dialectical enough to be, to be, to be, to be not so good as well. I think there was a, there's probably one side of Marx that's kind of an essentialism that would lead one to think, which underpins some of Ruskin's more wayward thought, that use value itself is in some intrinsic way, good. That's aligned with those ideas that human beings are somehow intrinsically good, which would satisfy as religic notions of mankind being good before a fore, and the cynic in me doesn't think we're necessarily essentially good or bad, I think I agree with some of the doors that Marx opened for us: Which says actually, we produce ourselves, we produce each other, historically and socially. And that's a huge responsibility. I think what's interesting about use value is it could be one of those things which helps us

to work together to make ourselves at least better if not entirely good.

Group →

Well I think, I don't know, I wouldn't deny that I'd like to see the same thing happen, but it just sounds so Utopian. And I wonder if, because I read in one of articles we have to get past this question of notions of 'useful' and 'useless' but I think this will, at one point, yes, because you have to open up this space in between, but on the other hand it's always going to be perceived like that.

JB →

Yeah, I agree

Group →

It's like Yin and yang. So, yeah...I don't know, this is also part of the issues we as artists have been dealing with, in pinpointing this.

JB →

Yeah, I think so. When I said that I was trying point towards a... this was probably why I was attracted to Marx I suppose, actually it's probably the reason why I was attracted to Marx in the first place is, you know I was a teenager and it was about difference and the possibility of revolution and overthrow, but Marx has become a really interesting kind of resource for me in lots of different ways. I completely agree if one opposes in a very simple and dialectical way, use value as something that's useless, less and then tries to get beyond it to a third term. That's probably not the most sophisticated way to look at things, if one then views useless being opposed against useful, perhaps the relationship between them is far more sophisticated than that, and thinking through those sophisticated relationships enables you to get somewhere else. Then that seems to be a more kind of sufficient form of dialectic, dialectical thought and engagement, which I agree just takes lots of people in lots of different ways.

CAYERS

21

(T)

26

WHITE SPACE

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DIALECTICAL IS THE DIRECTION

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AESTH (ETHICS)

4

FOR S CLAVIGERA

"L"

40

FURTHER DEBATE

AUTOLOGY PROJECT

WORDCOUNT RETHINK : 15 X

WORDCOUNT GRIZEDALE : 15 X

to kind of be contending with.

Group →

And there's also the danger of people who carry a different political agenda, to abuse the fact that we are actually defining what's useful...

JB →

Yes absolutely..

Group →

They would use it in a different, or abuse it in a different..

Group →

Useful is only useful if you want to achieve an aim, how useful something is depends on what your aim is. Like how good can useful be if you want to kill someone...

5  
FACT AS A DRUG

PSYCHIATRY FOR ART ADDICTS.

LIKE A GUN (GOODS?) 38

JB →

Yeah absolutely, I mean, that goes back to that kind of utopian essentialism that underpins the thought of Ruskin, where there is this kind of dream that somehow use-value is some kind of almost religious good, and I'm much more interested in the processes of how societies and communities work together and begin to think through and govern themselves in order to imagine, think through, and potentially reach presents and future's in which those aims are less destructive, I suppose.

JB → Yeah absolutely, I mean, that goes back to that kind of utopian essentialism that underpins the thought of Ruskin, where there is this kind of dream that somehow use-value is some kind of almost religious good, and I'm much more interested in the processes of how societies and communities work together and begin to think through and govern themselves in order to imagine, think through, and potentially reach presents and future's in which those aims are less destructive, I suppose.

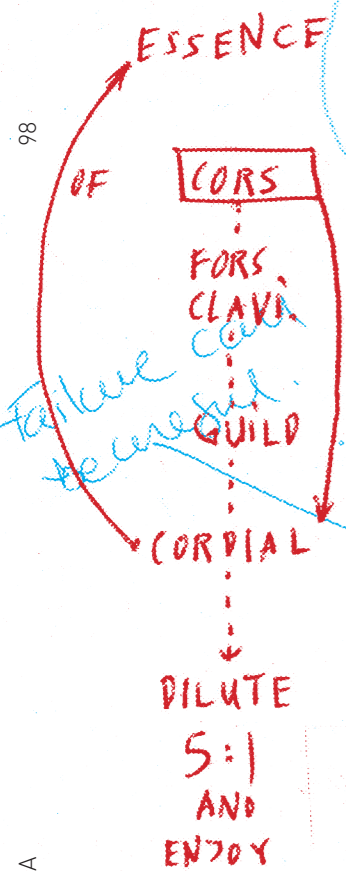
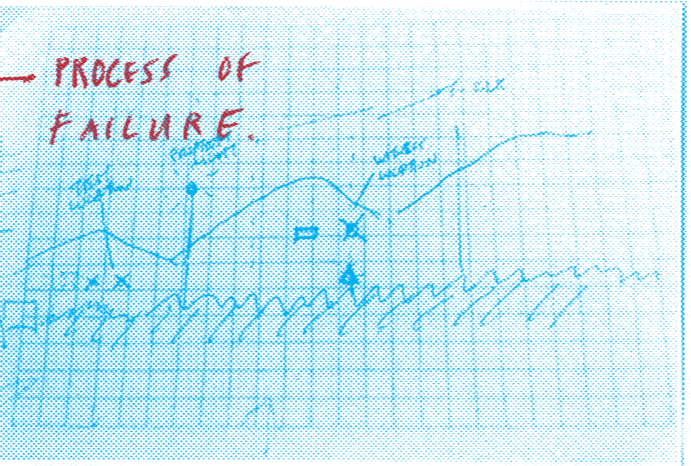
Group →

I kind of hold that view maybe also myself that everything can be useful, even looking at something causes a thought process, or a process that, in a way, even failure can be useful. So everything is useful.

FROM AIMER

All →

Thankyou



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SEE ← 15

# T H E

# R E S I S T I S

### The results may be obvious or not

i've never written a poem before  
so this is my chance  
to write about what the notion of usefulness in art could mean

it is something that someone can introduce and communicate  
but there could be limitations in teaching it  
that are getting stronger when it turns to persuading  
it is a personal perception of  
what each individual's understanding of its existence on the globe is

### **i'm a useful artist because i'm a useful person**

being an artist is my job  
and I contribute in society anyway anyhow  
where a need emerges  
and I feel like serving it  
the way that this happens has to do with the circumstances  
I have to understand what is going on  
and try to eavesdrop on needs

to share the procedure with the persons that are involved  
to lose control of the result  
to be a part of their reality  
and be trusted  
and treat with respect every part and everyone that is involved

not to think only of my visibility but the common willing and  
consequences  
The results some times look like art  
sometimes not  
they are not only mine  
but they are part of the every day life  
and the procedure turns to lifestyle

### **art is a way to deal with life sometimes**

by not trying to invent reasons to do things  
but being active when running through emerging situations  
of the kind that strap my throat.

■



# U S E F U L I S T H E M A N U A L F O R A R T I S T S U S E F U L ?

Perhaps

a sliver as elusive as a moment  
of happiness  
Shimmering in the wasteland.

A writhing conceived from the tangible,  
tactile thoughts we'd batted around  
like lifebelts

Perhaps it will coalesce,  
perhaps it will dissolve

perhaps  
it stirred a bubbling euphoria, perhaps  
a kind of hope.



# MANUAL FOR USEFUL ART

Manual For Useful Art  
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Onomatopee 43.3

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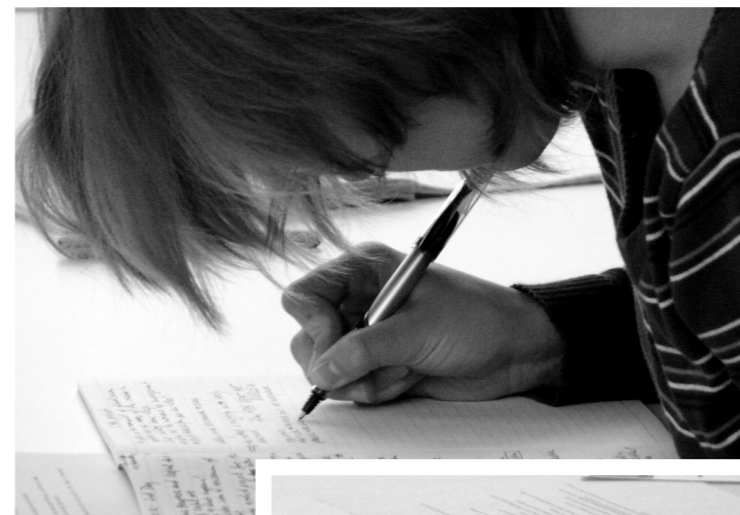
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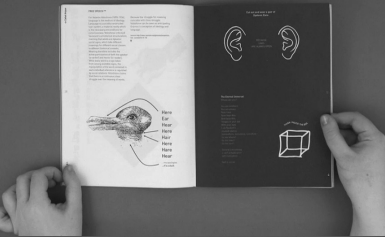
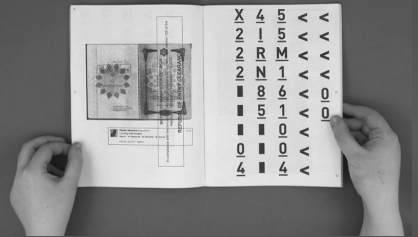
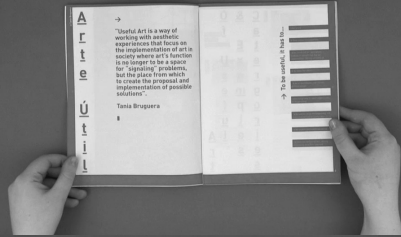
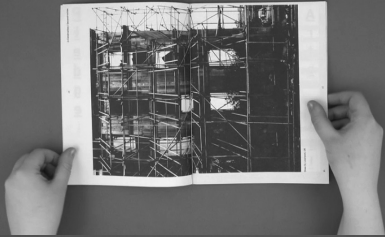
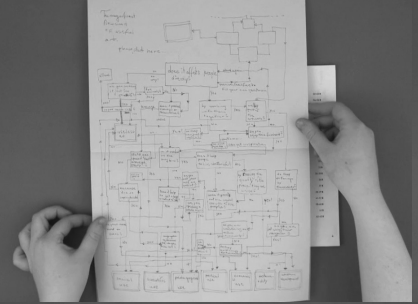
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