

WHITE PAGES: DARK MATTER

THE WELLINGTON COLLABORATORIUM WITH GREGORY SHOLETTE

Published on the occasion of the Wellington Collaboratorium
Gregory Sholette's Winter Residency project at Enjoy, June 2010.

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The Wellington Collaboratorium

Dr. Sondra Bacharach

The production of art often derives from a collaborative process—single artworks result from collective processes among artists, and many other practitioners, working together. But what is collaboration? How do we make sense of collaborative art and the social nature of artistic production? And just what impact do the implications of collaborative art practices have on the artwork or its interpretation? Gregory Sholette's Wellington Collaboratorium provides an opportunity to reflect on these and related questions—collaboratively, of course.

Consider film, ballet, theater, or architecture, where people from all different backgrounds and areas of expertise come together to create work. Contemporary art is no different. Artists work with non-artists behind the scenes and increasingly rely on others to help realise their projects. Artists reach out to their audiences, researchers, engineers, technicians, designers, curators and writers; but also to each other, forming collaborations, collectives, groups, initiatives and communities. Moreover, artists don't just work together—they live together, experience the world together, and shape that world collectively. Their lives and works are intertwined in the most intimate of ways.

Art's collaborative nature seems glaringly obvious. But, what does this mean? How does the act of collaborating change the viewer's appreciation of art? What impact do collaborative practices have on the way art critics, curators and historians think and interpret art? How does it change the direction of art, the practices of those involved in art-making, and the future of artistic practice?

The Wellington Collaboratorium aims to provide an open forum and supportive environment, fuelled by, and in which to exchange ideas about, collaborative artistic practices. It also serves as a starting point for an investigation into the philosophical foundation of collaboration.

Published on the occasion of the Wellington Collaboratorium, these *White Pages* invite discussion, introduce a theoretical framework for consideration during the project and Public Seminar, and provide context for some of the works that make up the *Imaginary Archive*; a public art project that brings together the works of artists from around the world, made possible by Gregory Sholette, collaborator par excellence and Winter Artist-in-Residence at Enjoy Public Art Gallery.

Twelve notes on collectivism and dark matter

Gregory Sholette

I

“As a set of rules that define the events of discourse, the archive is situated between *Langue*, as the system of construction of possible sentences—that is, of possibilities of speaking—and the *corpus* that unites the set of what has been said, the things actually uttered or written. The archive is thus the mass of the non-semantic inscribed in every meaningful discourse as a function of enunciation; it is the dark margin encircling and limiting every concrete act of speech.”

Giorgio Agamben, Remnants of Auschwitz.
The Witness and the Archive, 144.

II

From the swipe of a plastic debit card to the surveillance of so-called public spaces, an administered collectivity hides everywhere in plain sight. Every “I” conceals an involuntary “belongingness,” every gesture a statistic about purchasing power, education levels, and the market potential of your desire. We are effectively and involuntarily collectivised already, from within and without. The only question left therefore is: Do we accept this mechanised and serialised form of collectivity imposed by mass marketing or do we actively seek to self-organise in coherent structures even if it is apparent that full autonomy and freedom are unreachable goals? This is not merely another strategy to ponder among others. Nor is it strictly a challenge to artists. It is a fundamental issue of free cooperation at every level of lived experience within what Gilles Deleuze termed the society of control.

III

Evidence that collective practice, often politicised in nature, has been and remains fundamental to modern and contemporary culture is overwhelming. Within the plastic arts however, collectivity resembles the creative equivalent of dark matter—the 96% of unknown mass that makes up the visible universe and keeps it from flying apart. At once figuratively amorphous and pragmatically indispensable collectivism appears abject when compared to properly framed and institutionally discernible forms of art. Yet its indispensability functions at several levels.

IV

Structurally, as a *corpus* or archive of all previously realised group practices, collectivism the archive surrounds every individual articulation. Each new claim of authorial originality and every artistic gesture is dependent on the persistence of its shadowy trace. (In Agamben’s terms it is the dark margin that encircles all concrete acts of enunciation.)

V

At the level of narrative, whether calling for the radical elimination of individual authorship, as many early 20th Century collectives asserted, or through the embodiment of diverse subject positions and multiple aesthetic vernacular as in the case of many contemporary art collectives, self-organised, collective practice forms a representational boundary as well as a specific horizon from within which conventional cultural narratives are constructed and beyond which they break apart.

VI

Finally, in pragmatic terms, collectivism, and by extension all species of dark creativity including amateur and informal art that by definition or inclination remain invisible to institutional high culture, provides the unseen but necessary verification that specific artistic acts are more than merely idiosyncratic occurrences. This is so no matter how unique or autonomous the accomplishment appears to be. And in this sense the archive of creative dark matter evinces the necessary presence of an artistic *Langue*, but in the broadest possible sense: a preexisting set of visual-organisational rules that always already threatens to radiate away from the narrow field of recognised artistry and dissipate into the uneven heterogeneity of the social sphere itself. This link between the corpus of collectivism and the generalised creativity of the multitude also explains why so many self-defined artistic collectives—from the Constructivists to Situationists, from Fluxus to Las Agencias—have called for the dissolution of art directly into everyday life.

VII

Lacking neither a distinct history, nor an adequate explanatory theory, collective artistic activity nevertheless bears down on the familiar cannon of proper names, stylistic innovations and formal typologies that populate the institutional art world. As part of the art world's structural shadow realm collectivism invisibly transforms the culture industry, its discourse and even its fondness for categorical and ultimately collectible brands of discrete cultural products. Yet because collective activity is in the first and last instance driven by social formations, economic circumstances and occasionally even organised political movements that are external to art world interests the occasional appearance of collectivism within art historical discourse typically falls within two broad representational modes: the curious anecdote or the vestigial stain. That is to say, either collective art making serves as a backdrop or way station for individual artists whose careers have permitted them to mature beyond participation in group activity. Or, far less decorously, collectivism is demonised. Its recurring expression within artistic circles viewed as a remnant of the early 20th Century avant-garde's affiliation with European totalitarian politics. Still nothing so volatile as self-organised human associations, especially those populated by artists and intellectuals, could possibly remain fixed in time, nostalgically recapitulating past ideological dogma. Instead, collective artistic practice is as complex and unpredictable as the social and aesthetic forces upon which it is contingent. In recent years the transformation within collective activity is so dramatic as to represent a virtual paradigm shift.

VIII

Contemporary artistic collectivism is typically characterised by its aesthetic informality, political anarchism and its performative approach to the expression of collective identity itself. In practice, its inter-disciplinary approach is also frequently interventionist. Examples of this include the creation of works that tactically infiltrate high schools, flea markets, public squares, corporate websites, city streets,

housing projects, and local political machines in ways that do not set out to recover a specific meaning or use-value for art world discourse or private interests. Indeed, many of these activities operate using economies based on pleasure, generosity and the free dispersal of goods and services, rather than the construction of objects and product scarcity that are essential to art world economics. *But above all else what the activist art collective makes tangible, and no doubt what is so anathema to the art market and its discourse, is the capacity for self-regulation over one's production and distribution.* Certainly this capacity is available and suppressed within all productive activity. Understandably, it is also viewed as a danger to system regulators who recognise the promise collective self-determination has held out to each successive generation.

IX

What can be said of dark matter in general is that either by choice or circumstance it displays a degree of autonomy from the critical and economic structures of the art world and moves instead in-between its meshes. But this independence is not risk free. Increasingly inexpensive technologies of communication, replication, display and transmission that allow informal and activist artists to network with each other have also made the denizens of this shadowy world ever more conspicuous to the very institutions that once sought to exclude them. In short, dark matter is no longer as dark as it once was. Yet, neither the art world nor enterprise culture can do little more than immobilise specific instances of this shadow activity by converting it into a fixed consumable or lifestyle branding.

X

For example groups such as Forcefield, Derraindrop, Paper Rad, Gelatin, The Royal Art Lodge, HobbypopMuseum whose names flicker impishly across the otherwise dull screen of the contemporary art world invoke not so much the plastic arts as the loopy cheer of techno music and its nostalgia for a make-believe 1960s epitomised by LSD, free love and day-glo—instead of civil rights, feminism and SDS. As Alison M Gingeras tells us in the March edition of Artforum this new collectivity is not at all solemn. It is “insouciant.” It eschews the “sociopolitical agenda associated with collective art making” and reflects “a juvenile disregard for historical veracity.” But why this sudden rush to revamp the political rebelliousness of group artistic practice? To re-package it as “tribal,” “exuberant,” “insouciant”? Because when compared to almost every previous collective and many new ones, the recent crop of gallery sponsored art *grouppettes* is unmistakably a product of *enterprise culture*. As put forward by historian Chin-tao Wu enterprise culture is the near total privatisation of everything up to and including that which once stood outside or against the reach of capitalism including avant-garde and radical art. If communal activity, collaboration, egalitarian cooperation run directly opposite individuated forms of individualistic greed, enterprise culture will not aim to overtly repress this tendency, but instead seek a way of branding and packaging contradiction in order to sell it back to us. No surprise then that this new collectivity is organised around fashion with its members sharing “nothing more than vacant facial expressions and good taste in casual clothes.”

XI

Cut the power and storm the museum. Barricade its entrance with Richard Serra's sculpture. Cover its windows with Gerhard Richter paintings. Transform the sculpture garden into an organic produce cooperative; refurbish the boardroom to serve as a day care facility; place the cafeteria under the supervision of homeless people. Yet, in spite of this hypothetical uprising it is apparent that institutional

power persists. Like gravity issuing from a collapsed star it draws us into the very orbit of what we once sought to escape, because despite our protestations we continue to love it—or at least the unselfish image it projects—more than it could ever love itself. For no matter how imperfectly actually existing museums fulfill their social obligations, the symbolic position of the museum remains inseparable from notions of public space, democratic culture, and citizenship itself. Nevertheless, exploring what a liberated, post-revolutionary museum might look like, how it would function, and what its revitalised role within the local community would be, is an approach often taken up today by younger, socially committed artists who have grown apprehensive of the virtually conventional form of institutional critique. Collectives that operate within the contradictions of the bourgeois public sphere, openly and playfully expose its imaginary fault-lines dividing private from public, individual from collective, and the light from the dark matter. But while such groups offer important models for cultural resistance, it would be disingenuous to suggest such collectives and dark creativity can provide a totally satisfactory solution to the quest for freedom now or in the future. Instead, these groups and practices are characterised by their discontinuous nature, by repetitions and instability, by tactics rather than long-range strategies. What is effective in the short run remains untested on an extended scale. And that is the point we appear to be approaching rapidly.

XII

To paraphrase the cosmologists: there is perhaps no current problem of greater importance to cultural radicals than that of the “dark matter.”

First published in the *Journal for Northeast Issues*, Hamburg, Germany, 2003, and again in the catalogue *2006 Issue Fighters: Thought is made in the mouth* organised by Insa Art Space of the Arts Council Korea.

Constructing the Archive. Image by Sarah Hudson



An Imaginary Archive

Gregory Sholette

The cultural economy of art is dependent upon a sphere of hidden social production involving cooperative networks and collaborative production—systems of gift exchange, unremunerated group labour, collective forms of practice—all of which resemble a species of missing mass or cultural dark that nonetheless anchors aesthetic value within the formal art world. Despite being entangled with this other, shadowy productivity, the art world refuses to acknowledge its presence. Recently this relationship began to radically change. Thanks in large part to the spread of digital networks dark matter is getting brighter. The once hidden archive has split open, its ragged contents are spilling out into view. This missing cultural mass is both a metaphor of something vast, unnameable and essentially inert, as well as a phantasmagoric proposition for what might be possible at this moment of epistemological crisis in the arts and structural crisis in global capital.

Sholette's *Imaginary Archive* is a public art project that explores this realm including collectivised and collaborative cultural practices that have been at the centre of this shift in dark matter; from dark to light. Graphics, text-based artworks, imaginary books and other speculative objects produced by the artist along with other collaborators, explore the splintering of cultural memory into a series of alternative historical possibilities and desires. Ultimately this installation/research project asks the following question: How are socially-based cultural practices perceived, shaped, limited, or liberated by their relation to historical memory?

Notes from the Collaborators

Dara Greenwald

Free Space/Alternate U Course Catalogue, #13, 1975 was found through examining the history of how free schools contributed to the development of radical culture. During this session of the Alternate U, it was located at the Muste Building/339 Lafayette Street in New York City. The building is also known as the Peace Pentagon and it is now slated for destruction. Although not fictive, the object feels like a possible fiction of a past when a free school had offerings every day of the week and offered courses like Soho Art Through Anarchist Eyes. This piece comes out of my primary source research into the cultures of social movements which is part of a larger project entitled *The Interference Archive* (with Josh MacPhee).

White Fungus

Blank Canvas was a short-lived Wellington political zine sparked by local events. The first issue, Kerry Prendergast and the Creativity Hoax, was published in 2007 in the lead-up to local body elections. The publication was an unrestrained attack on incumbent mayor Kerry Prendergast and her business interests, including surveillance technology company Surveylab, whose clients include the US military.

The second issue was a response to the 2008 mass arrests of activists across the country—including Tuhoe, Māori sovereignty, environmental and peace activists—and the invocation, for the first time, of new anti terrorism laws imported from the US. The issue examined the local arrests in relation to the “Global War On Terror”. Plans for two further issues of *Blank*

Canvas were shelved after the zine's producer, White Fungus, relocated to Taiwan in 2009. Now for the 2010 Wellington Collaboratorium, White Fungus has produced the covers only for these two non-existent issues.

Blank Canvas Issue 3 – *Blow Massey: A Creative Campus Expose Issue* would have been an unsparing look at Wellington's Massey University and the commercialisation of New Zealand education.

Blank Canvas Issue 4 – *The Henry Kissinger and John Lennon Issue* would have looked at the culture and politics of the 1970s in New Zealand and abroad.

Jeremy Booth

I've used the tactile, experiential nature of the wider Archive to anchor a series of subtle interventions within it. My project sees a number of papers, copies and notes inserted into other books. Seemingly unrelated, and undoctored, the inserted material positions the environmental evolution of New Zealand as key to its present social, cultural and political direction. The material speculates as to the possibilities that may have unfolded if British-born Thomas Shepherd would have stayed on in the fledgling colony, after his brief visit to Wellington Harbour and the Auckland region in the mid-1820s. Shepherd was an associate of the famed English landscape designer Capability Brown. A surveyor for the New Zealand Company, he professed views on ecology, conservation, and the integration of natural and social environments that would not be considered in the country for another century, at least.

Johan Lundh and Danna Vajda

Focusing on the material conduit of a 1980 vintage french military jacket, RED FRED works with the extent of cultural memory embedded within the loaded history of everyday objects. We will send a French military jacket to be hung within the archive, that will become its own infrastructure for a pocket sized archive of its personal history. This archive includes a "pocket recorder" playing a strange audio of a past-life hypnotist, regressing the jacket to an exploration of its past incarnations, and a text analysing the theoretical implications of this peculiar method of hypnosis. Invoking multiple incarnations of the French military jacket both as an object and a signifier. These incarnations include the design and subsequent factory production of the jacket in rural France; the jacket as worn by a soldier (by the peculiar nick-name of "Red Fred") involved in the French Nuclear Tests conducted off the Polynesian coast of Moruroa (and the subsequent controversies between France and New Zealand over the tests conducted in the 90s); the following adoption of the jacket by Green Peace activists, artists, "fashionistas". The past-life narratives are interspersed and not told in historical chronology. This anti-chronology is meant to complicate any straight forward semiotic development but rather show the jacket as an object embedded in numerous contradictions, conflicts and personal and political struggles.

Malcolm Doidge and Grant Corbishley

Collaboratorium (definition): is a decentralised and egalitarian environment where collaborative projects within the three practice arenas—conceptual, participatory and industry—are fostered. And methodologies such as recursive processes, consensual decision-making and holistic approaches are explored. Collaboratoriums acknowledge local contexts: in this case, Aotearoa, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and indigenous systems such as Awhitanga, Te Ohu, Kotahitanga and Kaitiakitanga, and support trans-discipline practitioners.

The space that the Wellington Collaboratorium inhabits is not a neutral space; Enjoy is a locality that comes with a received history and established identity. "If a collaboratorium emerges within [such] an existing hierarchical structure, a redistribution of pre-existing territories is necessary, via dialogic processes including listening." The philosopher Gemma Corradi Fiumara argues that "Western philosophy and art must, rather than concentrate on assertive saying, begin to acknowledge the role of listening as a creative practice." (Fiumara, *The Other Side of Language*, 1990), p.26)

We would like to explore steps to ensure robust exchange, regardless of disciplines and territories and to employ a dialogic approach to cut up, and redistribute these existing territories.

Maureen Connor

My project begins with the discovery of a book, *The Making of a Modern Bank*, a self-promotional hardback, published in 1923 by the Continental and Commercial National Bank of Chicago. Although the illustrations, fonts and layout as well as the language of the book have a distinctly Edwardian, "Boston Brahmin" style long absent from contemporary book design, the reassuringly upper class quality of the text is used to this day in the advertising copy of banks and finance companies. And there are other parallels to recent financial episodes. Despite their apparent fiscal strength and expertise, Continental and Commercial National Bank announced in this publication, they had to be rescued just a few years later, in 1930s, by a \$50 million loan from Reconstruction Finance Corp. (a federal agency) and became Continental Illinois National Bank and Trust Co.

For my contribution to *Imaginary Archive* I'm picturing what might have happened if this "bail out" had not occurred. Instead, what if the bank's enormous building, which takes up an entire city block in downtown Chicago's financial district, was given over to housing the indigent, specifically to the organisation Hull House, begun by Jane Addams as a Settlement House in 1889? By the 1920s, Hull House had itself expanded to include most of another city block, one on Chicago's south side, they could shelter only a small fraction of those left homeless by

the Great Depression. What if the \$50 million loan to Continental and Commercial National Bank had instead been granted to Hull House to shelter these “forgotten” men and women, as they were called at the time?

Bank Book, describes the possible outcome of such government largesse. Using the form of a pop-up book to “document” the transformation of the bank into a communal homestead for Chicago residents down on their luck, each turn of the page represents a different stage in the conversion of the Continental and Commercial National Bank building from business to domestic space. The primary models for these transformations are the floor plans, spacial proportions and cooperative arrangements developed by “material feminists”, who are described by Dolores Hayden in her 1981 book, *The Grand Domestic Revolution*, as “women who identified the economic exploitation of women’s domestic labour by men as the most basic cause of women’s inequality.”*. Starting in the 1870s, a time when larger U.S. cities began to build multiple dwellings, material feminists proposed ideas such as communal cooking and childcare, as a way to turn isolated domestic work into social labour while still preserving private living quarters for individual families.

- Hayden, Dolores, *The Grand Domestic Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T., 1981) p. 3

Murray Hewitt

My contribution was two fold. First being the “local knowledge” helping Greg with the install of the structure in the gallery. And second I have contributed a spiral bound travel guide, *Must sees for all Kiwis*, containing stills of 60 sites from the New Zealand wars.

Oliver Ressler

Alternative Economics, Alternative Societies

After the loss of a counter-model for capitalism—which socialism, in its real, existing form had presented until its collapse—alternative concepts for economic and social development face hard times at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In the industrial nations, broadly discussed are only those “alternatives” that do not question the existing power relations of the capitalist system and representative democracies. Other socio-economic approaches are labeled utopian, devalued, and excluded from serious discussion, if even considered at all.

The thematic installation, *Alternative Economics, Alternative Societies*, focuses on diverse concepts and models for alternative economies and societies, which all share a rejection of the capitalist system of rule. An interview was carried out for each concept. Interview partners include economists, political scientists, authors, and historians. From these interviews, a video in English was produced. In the exhibition, these single-channel 20- to 37-minute videos are each shown on a separate monitor, thus forming the central element of the artistic installation.

The project presents alternative social and economic models such as “Inclusive Democracy” from Takis Fotopoulos (GB/GR), “Participatory Economy” from Michael Albert (U.S.A.) and “Anarchist Consensual Democracy” from Ralf Burnicki (D). Chaia Heller (U.S.A.) presents “Libertarian Municipalism”, Paul Cockshott (GB) “Towards a New Socialism”, Heinz Dieterich (MX) “The Socialism of the 21st Century”, Marge Piercy (U.S.A.) the feminist-anarchist utopias of her social fantasies, and the underground author p.m. (CH), the ideas of his concept “bolo’bolo.”

Other videos focus on certain principles that might be of importance when discussing alternative economics and societies: Nancy Folbre (U.S.A.) speaks about

“Caring Labor,” Christoph Spehr (D) about “Free Cooperation”, Maria Mies (D) about the subsistence perspective and John Holloway (MX/IE) about his ideas of how to “Change the World Without Taking Power.”

As interesting historical models, Todor Kuljic (SCG), thematizes workers’ self-management in Yugoslavia in the 1960s and 1970s, Salomé Moltó (E) talks about the workers’ collectives during the Spanish Civil War (1936–38), and Alain Dalotel (F) discusses the Paris Commune of 1871. One of the videos discusses the Zapatist Good Government Junta, a self-governing, direct democracy network, which is currently present in certain rural areas of Chiapas, Mexico.

Chosen from each of these 16 videos is one quotation significant for the alternative model that it presents. The quote is placed directly on the floor of the exhibition room as a several meter long text piece. This floor lettering, made from adhesive film, leads exhibition visitors directly to the corresponding videos and thereby provides a kind of orientation within this non-hierarchically arranged pool of videos. These videos offer stimulus and suggestions for contemplating social alternatives and possibilities for action.

Yevgeniy Fiks

My contribution to the Wellington Collaboratorium consists of several fictional publications (sometimes with content, sometimes just cover), which present several (im)possible narratives of cultural politics in the Soviet Union and the United States. These publications present as factual, several events in Soviet and American art history of the Cold War and post-Cold War era. These cultural occurrences (such as an official exhibition of Soviet Non-Objective Art in Moscow in 1947 or the 1977 art album *Trotsky in Soviet Art* published by the official Soviet publishing house) question “the impossible” of history. What this project addresses is not what could have happened but rather what has never materialised, for as viewed from 1917–1919 these events were possible, awaited, even expected to happen in the future. For a Russian revolutionary subject of 1918–1919 a statement “by 1947 Soviet non-objective painting WILL HAVE ACHIEVED great progress” was a real historical truth. Not wishful thinking but a fact. The events and occurrences that found materialisation in these publications present alternative historical trajectories as imaginable.

Call for Papers

Essays are invited from writers in arts-related disciplines on the topic of artistic collaborations and collective practices. Authors are invited to interpret these issues broadly, and we welcome their treatment from a variety of different perspectives: the artist, the collective voice, the curator, the art critic, the art historian, or philosopher, cultural historian and critic. Examples of suitable topics include, but are not limited to: the nature or function of collectives in art; challenges in different artistic media facing collaborations; issues involved in forming, establishing, promoting collectives; the disenfranchisement of artists and the rise of collectivism. We also welcome papers about particular artworks or art groups as a springboard for discussing larger issues about collaborations and collectives.

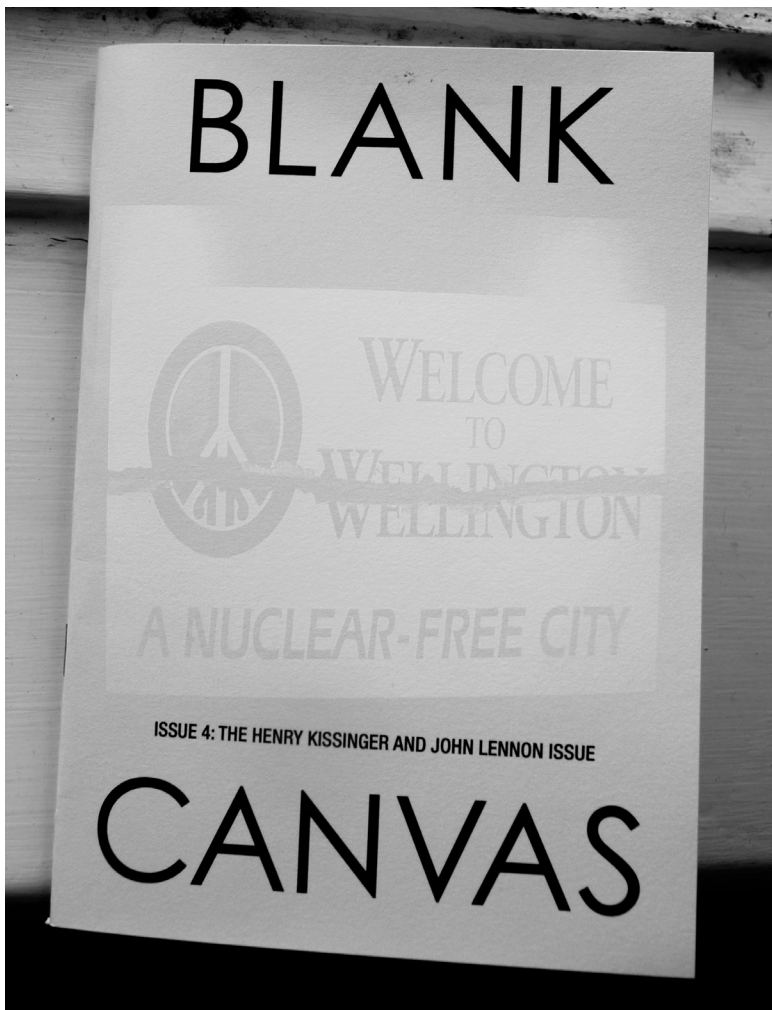
Abstracts should be 500 words, and if selected, final essays should be 2000–4000 words, in a style and format that makes them accessible to artists, art critics, curators and art historians, and written in a way to encourage serious and focused academic thought.

Abstracts and papers will be refereed blind by a member of the editorial advisory board. Please direct all submissions and editorial questions to sondra.bacharach@vuw.ac.nz.

Abstracts and papers should be prepared for blind referee and submitted in Word or Rich Text Format, via email to: sondra.bacharach@vuw.ac.nz.

Deadline for abstracts (500 words): 1 August 2010.

Deadline for final papers (2000–4000 words): 1 November 2010.



Blank Canvas, by White Fungus. Image courtesy of Enjoy

Collaboration on Local Time

Local Time

Local Time has been named as a collective for four years, and our working relationships with each other stretch back over a decade. Yet when we began our series of interviews with other practitioners on the topic of collaboration, a curator voiced some suspicion. How could we even begin to define collaborative practice or to “research” it? After all, every practitioner collaborates in her or his own way. For us, however, it was precisely the naming of collaboration that it was interesting to question: What is a collaboration? What is a collective? Who shares our values about it? Can we learn from them to support our own work?

Both naming ourselves and undertaking this research have been useful ways to evade our own formalisation. Another curator once pressed us for details on “what we were doing.” Why was it hard to answer? We do lots of things. Clearly implied in the well-intentioned probe was that if we could make ourselves and our trajectory recognisable, we could perhaps find a role in bigger plans. No doubt this might bring resources and opportunity, but how could the—at that stage and still—deliberately indeterminate nature of our collective survive the professionalising forces activated by institutional engagement? Our ongoing project to find our own protocols was clearly at odds with them.

Our peculiar sensitivity about protecting our working practices from professionalisation may be explained by the way that we work in both the highly-regulated “public” language of institutional discourse (in the universities where we usually work, and in the art world where we often practice) and in communities who have not only been excluded from that public, but who also, in the indigenous setting, have a distinctly different philosophy around public and private, the collective and the individual. Here the otherwise inspirational existing histories of collaborative practice within Western art history provide few guides.

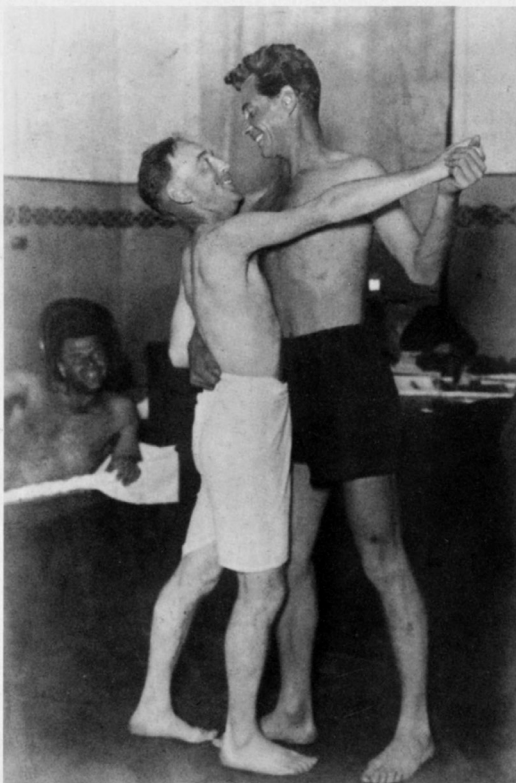
Our basic working question is: How can we effectively work at what Martin Nakata calls the “cultural interface”? The gaps between the histories of Maori and Pakeha (to take the relations negotiated in our own group) and their scale increasingly provide more questions than answers. We may be becoming less sure of what we can do, just because we are more certain about the way we want to do it. This situation resembles what Spivak describes as “permanent fieldwork”, in which we are always taking notes on our impressions, but rarely reporting back findings. “If your energies are focused toward [digesting the material for production], you are constantly processing, and you are processing it into what you already know. You’re not learning something,” she cautions, flatteringly enough. Our experiences always leak into our individual practices, of course, whether we document or not, but perhaps general answers are more likely to be found by practitioners to come, for whom navigating the multiple contexts will likely be a default mode.

Sometimes it seems that the bulk of what we do is just conversation, and in other ways, the language to describe those conversations is only beginning to exist.



The Archive, Enjoy Public Art Gallery. Image courtesy of Enjoy

* *



John Heartfield dancing a fox-trot with the Russian photoreporter Max Alpert, Batumi, USSR, 1931

The Museum of Modern Art Archiv

AHB 7.9.a

U. Gamm.



Art work by Gregory Sholette, installed at Arty Bees Bookshop, Manners Street, Wellington. Image courtesy of the artist



The Archive installed at Quilters Bookshop, Ghuznee Street, Wellington. Image courtesy of Enjoy

Collaborator Biographies

Danna Vajda is a Canadian artist and writer. She is presently attending the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York City.

Dara Greenwald is a media artist and researcher. Dara has participated in collaborative cultural production for many years. Her recent work has been collaborative, public/outdoor, situated and about histories of social movements. She is currently a PhD candidate in Electronic Arts at RPI. She holds a BA from Oberlin College in Women's Studies, an MFA in Writing from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and an MFA in Electronic Art from RPI.

Ellen Rothenberg's public project and installations are informed by social movements, politics, and history. Rothenberg lives and works in Chicago and teaches at The School of the Art Institute. www.ellenrothenberg.com

Since 1986 **Grant Corbishley** has been involved in multi-discipline collaborative projects that have been exhibited in many countries. He was awarded an MFA from RMIT in 2000 and is currently engaged in PhD research that involves participatory cartography, wireless and mobile technologies, environmental activism, and community concepts of stewardship. Grant is interested in new technologies that will assist his local community adapt to climate change by improving human coexistence, and community presence. Grant is a senior lecturer and coordinator of the Trans-discipline Collaborative Projects Program at WelTec, Wellington, NZ.

Jeffrey Skoller is a filmmaker and writer. He teaches film/video production and the theory and practice of counter-cinema at University of California at Berkeley. His work focuses on experimental/avant-garde film and video art, documentary/non-fiction film, Third Cinema, and tactical and activist media practices.

Gregory Sholette is a New York-based artist, writer, and founding member of the artists' collectives Political Art Documentation/Distribution and REPOhistory. He is also the co-author of several key publications: *Collectivism After Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination after 1945* with Blake Stimson (2007), and *The Interventionists: A Users Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life* with Nato Thompson (2004, 2006).

Jeremy Booth is an artist and writer living in Wellington. He studied Fine Arts at Massey University and is currently Enjoy's Publications and Communications Manager.

Johan Lundh is an independent curator and writer, dividing his time between Stockholm and New York. Together with artists, curators and writers, he engineers frameworks for artistic and discursive actions.

Lee Harrop was born in Taranaki, has an MFA (1st Class Honours), and a Dip Pol. She recently moved to New Plymouth with partner David and dog Daniel. Artwork is text-based and non-medium specific. Collaborates with a variety of professional services to realise projects.

Since the 1990s **Malcolm Doidge** has been developing a practice concerned with sustainability and work in secondary materials. Involvement with the Australasian

Redesigning Resources conferences, led to Malcolm's selection for the 2006 Australasian tour of the *New Alchemists*, work in secondary materials. Malcolm lives in Wellington and is actively involved in conservation and sustainability issues locally and in the Manawatu. Malcolm works as a 3D Lecturer at WelTec and is also a martial arts instructor.

Maureen Connor is a New York artist who combines video, interior design, ethnography, human resources, feminism and social justice. Her current project *Personnel*, explores attitudes, needs and desires of staff in the workplace.

Murray Hewitt was born in Hastings New Zealand. His own practice centres mainly on video. He works casually as a technician for Enjoy Public Art Gallery and the Adam Art Gallery at Victoria University in Wellington.

Olga Kopenkina is a writer and curator of contemporary art born in Minsk, Belarus who now lives and works in New York City. A pioneer in the field of contemporary art in Belarus and a regular contributor to MOSCOW ART JOURNAL her curatorial work focuses on the cultural legacy of artistic expression after the fall of communism and modernism.

Oliver Ressler (born 1970 in Austria) produces exhibitions, projects in public space and videos which blur the boundaries between art and activism. His projects have been exhibited in solo exhibitions worldwide. www.ressler.at

Yevgeniy Fiks was born in Moscow in 1972 and has been living in New York since 1994. Fiks produces projects on the subject of the Post-Soviet dialogue in the West.

White Fungus is a magazine and arts collective now based in Taichung City, Taiwan. The publication White Fungus began in Wellington in 2004 as a free photocopied handout attacking mayor Kerry Prendergast and her business connections, including Surveylab.

The Wellington Collaboratorium White Pages Listings

Andrew Gryf Paterson, artist organiser working between fields of media/ network/ environmental arts and activism, invites others to be involved via workshops, performative events and storytelling. <http://agryfp.info/>

Ben Pearce Sculptor. Makes work that explores the landscape of memory. www.benpearce.co.nz benpearceart@gmail.com

Central Glass – Wanganui, John Sanderson; Sandblasting, Lead lighting, Plastic, Marine glazing. Glass, Autoglass, Mirrors, Reglazing, Tinting, repairs.
24 hrs 0800 80 90 80 Central.glass.ins@xtra.co.nz

Craig Foltz is a writer and multimedia artist. Collaborations slide the scale from readings to co-written works. pencil. ink. lead. view at www.craigfoltz.com. craig.foltz@gmail.com

D.A.N.C.E facilitates art exhibitions & social gatherings, in which the event organisation is considered as relevant as the objects on display. 027 200 3040 dance.artklub@gmail.com

Dara Greenwald is a media artist and researcher. Dara has participated in collaborative cultural production for many years. www.spectresofliberty.com, www.daragreenwald.com, www.justseeds.org

David Brown – MA(hons) in Anthropology. I have an interest in experimental painting projects and express myself through; figurative, geometric and abstract compositions. davidhbrownstudio.com

Fiona Mail adopts the postures of conceptual performance artists as a platform for absurd task-based activities that border on or blatantly fall into parody. www.fionamail.com

FINE artist seeks wealthy patron for project funding in exchange for art world credibility. Old young gay or straight. Must be open minded and keen to experiment. Email Simon at artworldcredibility@gmail.com

Frugal with the **Bruegel**, **Bethwyn Littler** and **Meliors Simms** collaborate making altered books. bethonslow@gmail.com

Habeas Corpus is **Jude Nye**, **Donna Sarten**, **Bernie Harfleet**, **Dusty Rabjohn** (USA). Habeas Corpus is committed to making social and political art in order to raise awareness, and act as a catalyst for debate amongst audiences. <http://www.coca.org.nz/exhibitions/206/>, legg.nye@ihug.co.nz

H.E.P.T (Help Each Other Pass Together) – We are an artists' collective of Pacific Island men, who use our combined skills and creative abilities to provide free assistance to struggling emerging artists. 0210327156 hept911@hotmail.com

Johan Lundh has collaborated with **Danna Vajda**, to uncover the secret life of Red Fred. Website: www.firtheaglandlundh.net

Kirsty Lillico and **Pippa Sanderson's** collaboration straddles painting, process and performance art. <http://www.artbash.co.nz/article.asp?id=1227>, <http://www.blindside.org.au/2010/surface.shtml>, www.pippasanderson.info, kirstylillico@gmail.com, pippasan@xtra.co.nz

Kristin D'Agostino – jeweller, is interested in alternative forms of exchange, investigating forms of collaborative making and the psychology of wearing. kristindagostino.com kristin.dagostino@gmail.com

Laxmi Jhunjhnuwala – Painting, sculpture, contemporary, abstract, culture, history, simplicity. www.laxmijhunjhnuwala.com

Lee Harrop New Plymouth MFA (1st Class Honours), Dip Pol. Collaborator. leeharrop@xtra.co.nz

Leo Gene Peters – a slightly isolated dog, Theatre (& other stuff) Wellington, NZ. Transformation and playfulness building towards communal reflection. Multiplatform. Various media. leo23@paradise.net.nz

Louise Lever – Filmmaker; experiment films that explore issues of performativity, interpellation and sexuality. Looking for other performers to collaborate with. www.louiselever.com, louise@louiselever.com

Lucy Hughes – I practice mostly within the photographic medium. My work is based upon personal histories, memories, and narrative from members of my community. lucyjbhughes@gmail.com 027 416 50 89

Max Bellamy – looking to establish remote collaborations that facilitate the making of progressive video works with a professional production standard. Pacific flavour. www.maxbellamy.co.nz

MAXILAB – **Ian & Yvonne Jones**; Photo, Film & Digital, Photo Enlargements, Poster Prints, Laser copies, Photo copying, Photos to CD. Whanganui. www.maxilab.co.nz, maxilab@xtra.co.nz

Meliors Simms – collaborative book artist Bibliophilia
www.meliors.net, meliors6@gmail.com

Michele Irving – Creating with colourful fabrics, embroidery, applique, beads and buttons, a dream world of animals who dance and play. epidog@paradise.net.nz

Murray Hewitt – I work in video, music and performance from Wellington in NZ. Any collaboration would be excellent. I like religion, cats, crochet and walking. murray.hewitt@gmail.com

Natalie Ellen-Eliza and **Rachel Johnstone** are developing a collaborative social practice. We enjoy making awesome artworks, expanding our collaborative network and working in real time/space. <http://ellenelizaandjohnstone.blogspot.com/untitledaccount@live.com>

Number 8 Collective – **Ana Terry** & **Don Hunter** and others, collaborate to initiate wider community dialogue and to challenge conventions of their individual practices. Medical Body (2005), Fair Game (2008), Platform China Projects (2010–11). Contact: number8collective@gmail.com, www.anaterry.com
www.artcrew.co.nz.

OutdoorKnit – NZ's original knit graffiti group. Specialising in guerilla installations using crafty processes in public spaces.
tash@outdoorknit.com / outdoorknit.blogspot.com

Paper Does Not Refuse Ink – **Taarati Taiaroa** and **Tracey Williams**; a research-based project documenting local histories, via a critical approach to the history of print ephemera in New Zealand and related discourses. excerpts are presented as exhibitions, discussions and papers. www.paperdoesnotrefuseink.blogspot.com, taarati.ts@gmail.com, tracewilliams@actrix.co.nz

Pro-Vision – **Video Production & Photography Edward Aish** 021 53 53 19 www.tvcommercials.co.nz

Sam Broad – Manufacturer: Woodcut Prints, Automata, Paintings, Illustration, Conservation Picture Framing. Enquiries Always Welcome. www.sambroad.co.nz. Studio: 103 Randwick Crescent, Moera, Lower Hutt .(04)9731793.

Sian Torrington – experimental, imaginative colourful maker of temporary drawing and sculptural interventions seeks structural, solid connective maker to create temporary shelters outdoors.
queensian@yahoo.co.uk

Simon Glaister – See 'Fine artist' in this listing.

Sondra Bacharach – Philosopher of art interested in collaborative arts of all sorts (and in the arts of all kinds)
sondra.bacharach@vuw.ac.nz

The Friendly Girls Society – **Tracey Williams, Amanda A'Hara** and **Poppy Stenzel**; social sculpture; an ongoing series of community-focused, interactive happenings that operate as sites for discussion around value systems and/or local histories.
www.thefriendlygirlssociety.org, tracewilliams@actrix.co.nz, amandaahara@gmail.com

The SIGN SHOP New Plymouth **Kylie Liddall**; Graphic Designer, Computer Operator. Signs, Computer Cut Lettering, Wide Format Exterior/Interior Full Colour Printing.
www.thesignshop.co.nz

Toi Pōneke Arts Centre – studios, project space, gallery, and the Hub. Get resources, advice or connect and collaborate. 61 Abel Smith St, Wellington. toiponekehub.wcc.govt.nz

Wellington Institute of Technology, Collaborative Projects 3 year programme – Aimed at informing students cross discipline collaboration, in the collaborative practice arenas, i.e., Conceptual, Participatory and Industry. grant.corbishley@weltec.ac.nz

White Fungus is a magazine and arts collective now based in Taichung City, Taiwan.
www.whitefungus.com, mail@whitefungus.com

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