

Floating Ghost

At Manifesta 10 On Board & What Is Monumental Today? Symposium, 2014

In relation to the current geopolitical situation, a strong dichotomy between Russia and the Western world has gained new value as a means to articulate cultural and political differences in European discussions. Debates in the art field around Manifesta 10 in St. Petersburg also seem to highlight differences and antagonisms between conditions for art and artists in St. Petersburg and the Western art field. Europe however still seems to be under a regime of globalized and networked finance capitalism. Finnish foreign minister Erkki Tuomioja recently stated that market forces have already punished Russia.

Floating Ghost is a performance and video program curated by Jussi Koitela for the Manifesta 10 On Board project and What is Monumental Today? Symposium. The project addresses the neoliberal condition of freedom and obligation from the perspective of current challenges in daily life conditions and development of immaterial technologies in the Northern and Eastern Europe through works by Anna Breu, Tero Nauha and Anna Johansson. The second part of the project is being conducted at What Is Monumental Today? Symposium at European University at St. Petersburg/Smolny Institute, St. Petersburg showing video works by Tero Nauha, Pekka Niskanen and Anna Johansson .

The development of the neoliberal capital in the last few decades has introduced us to a floating currency, floating share prices, and other "floating" economic instruments that have translated to general living conditions and value systems making daily life precarious and unreliable. This "floating" life style and the accelerating abstraction of capital combined and the development of digital communication imposes a new suspicions on freedom and obligation. Are there rights beyond economical rights? What are our obligations to the material and immaterial conditions of daily life?

Part 1

Manifesta 10 On Board

Performances by Tero Nauha and Anna Breu, video by Anna Johansson

Part 2

What Is Monumental Today? Symposium

Videos by Tero Nauha, Pekka Niskanen and Anna Johansson

EVENT DOCUMENTATION



Skills of Economy – Post Models: Ore.e Refineries

SIC Space, Helsinki

June 2014

Skills of Economy – Post Models: Ore.e Refineries is the first in a series of exhibitions and events that will seek to understand the meaning of artistic practice at a time when the welfare state is in the process of being dismantled. This exhibition explores the work of the Ore.e Refineries organisation spanning the past eight years. The exhibition is part of curator Jussi Koitela's Skills of Economy project.

Over the past two decades, neo-liberalism has sought to turn the state into a corporation, devoid of values other than those of financial success. This has changed, and will continue to change, the state's relationship with art, artists and cultural institutions alike and forces the art field to justify its activities and access to funding in a completely new way.

In Finland, the post-welfare state has adopted a neo-liberal model that places prime responsibility for the individual's welfare on the individuals themselves, alongside outsourced global and local providers. The objective of this model is to establish a service provider corps consisting of commercial enterprises tasked to operate as efficiently as possible and, ultimately, provide all public services in lieu of the state. It is, the argument goes, the only effective option currently available and, as such, the only possible means of delivering public services in the current and future demographic context.

"Post-model" is a term used to describe a time when the economy and public administrations along with politics itself will have become fully de-politicised entities, as if we were living in a time devoid of ideologies and the societal models and ideas they engender. The management of our shared public affairs through parliamentary democracy is reduced to a managerial, care taker-like activity governed by rationality, in which values must not be allowed to interfere with the business of actual decision-making.

Seen from a different perspective, the "post-model" in the title of this exhibition could also be taken to mean a time post the model described above. What forms might artistic activity take in the future and what sort of societal models might that activity open up? How can art make a critical contribution to ensuring the equal delivery of services such as transport, manufacturing, planning and archiving in the society of the future?

Ore.e Refineries was founded by artist Eero Yli-Vakkuri and blacksmith and designer Jesse Sipola and focuses on promoting craftsmanship in the digital era. It operates somewhere in the middle ground between art, design and service provision to create both artworks and services that seek at once to resolve and understand the challenges arising from the current neo-liberal, global and digital reality in the areas of precarious labour, commodities, production, consumption, environmentalism and transport.

The organisation's activities are characterised by their highly speculative nature. Rather than creating art, design and services in keeping with the implicit demands of the current climate, their work generates meaning through an imagined set of new social, environmental and economic circumstances.

www.oree.storijapan.net

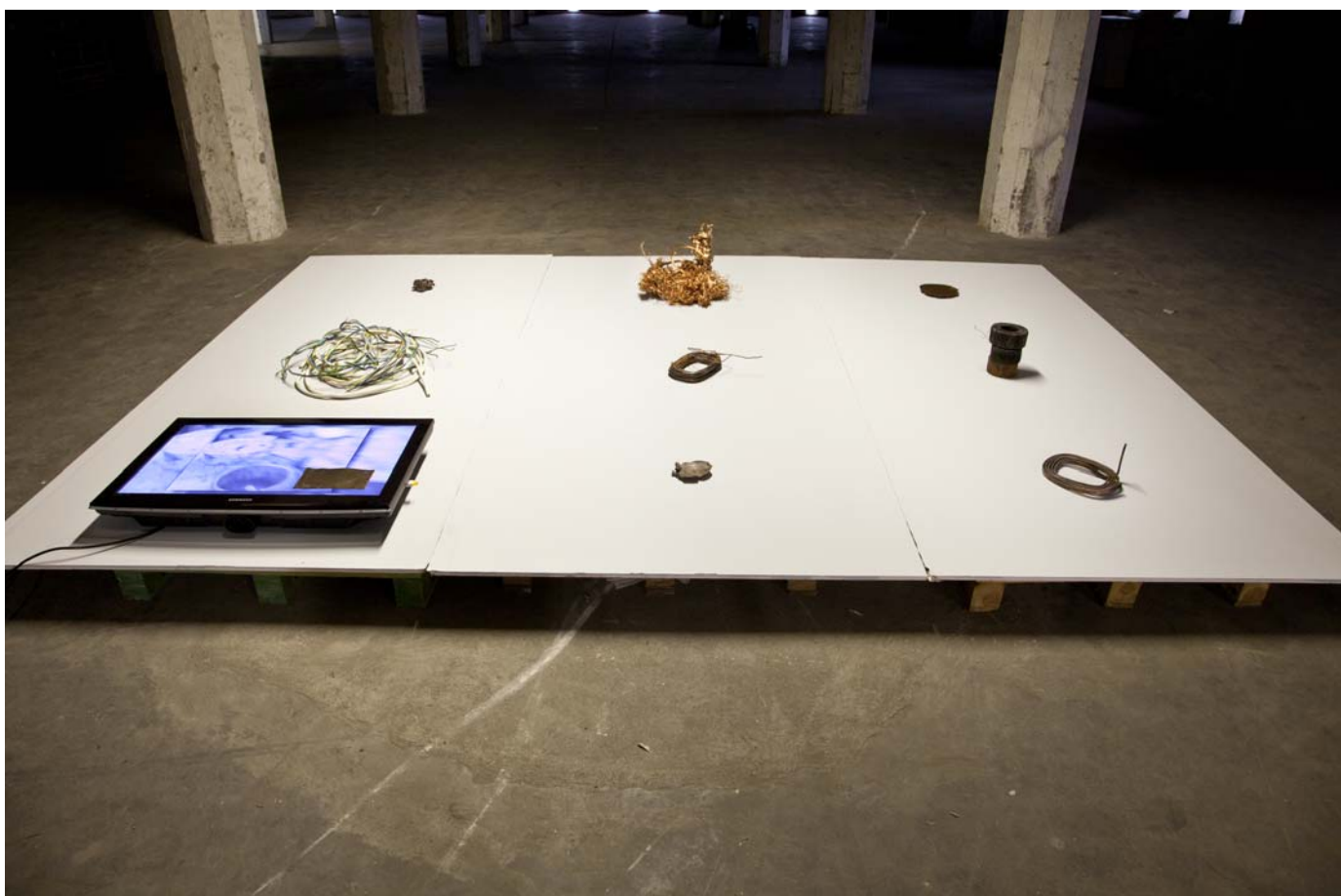
www.sicspace.net

EXHIBITION VIEW

Skills of Economy – Post Models: Ore.e Refineries

SIC Space, Helsinki

June 2014



To Use As a Capital

One Night Only Gallery / Kunstneres Hus, Oslo
April 2014

The most important mission that capital has given to itself is expansion. The history of capital is characterized by conquering one chapter after another of new physical areas and species, simultaneously capturing the human body and mind. Capital is constantly aiming for the discovery of new areas, technologies and creatures for its expansion. This expanding is the only thing that keeps capital alive and developing.

After the immaterial economy in a Post-Fordist society, artists and other actors of the art field have become the most efficient and well-suited operators for capital. In the present world capital needs labor to connect meanings to symbols, symbols to events, events to materials and materials to meanings. The artist and the curator are the perfect characters for this job. This puts them at the heart of the contemporary capitalizing process.

Here lies the paradox of present artistic work. Freedom and flexibility to connect meanings and shape the public image of oneself are no longer privileges that put the artist and curator in a position outside regular work. Instead it gives them more power and possibilities to create a counter-capitalizing process or, at the end, to occupy present capitalism.

Artists

Alma Heikkilä, Saara-Maria Kariranta, Iain Griffin

Curated and text written by
Jussi Koitela

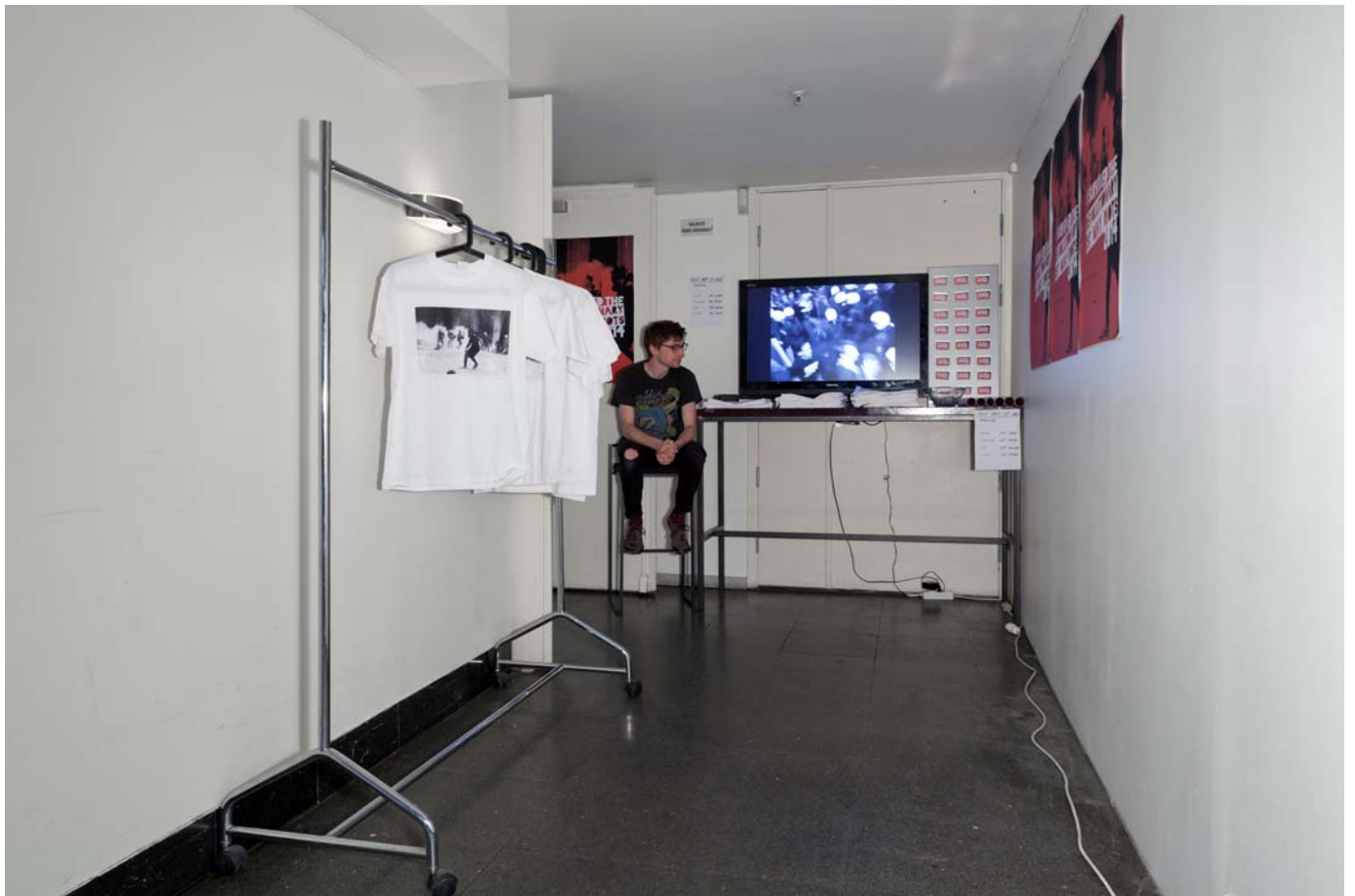
<http://www.onogallery.com/2014.html>

EXHIBITION VIEW

To Use As a Capital

One Night Only Gallery / Kunstnernes Hus, Oslo

April 2014



Skills of Economy Event

Skills of Economy is a curatorial concept focused on contemporary artists' actions towards the current economy and economic rhetorics. Economy and economic rhetorics fill up media space in the Western world. Economy has become the most important way of describing the world and measuring its progress. Skills of Economy is a project that researches and archives contemporary artistic reactions in this societal situation.

The Skills of Economy Event creates a flow of views from artists, curators, activists and theorists on current artistic production and different ideas on how mainstream and hegemonic economic thinking and reality can be challenged through artistic and activist practices. These ways can be roughly divided into symbolic and direct actions. Symbolic actions can create new representations of the visualization of economy or re-perform economic concepts, situations and habits. On the other hand, direct actions, such as time banking, may be giving form to local ways of organizing change. The effects of these actions are neither purely symbolic nor direct, instead they are in dialogue with economical rhetorics as well as with different realities and politics connected to these. The event highlights art and economy both as strong targets of politics and as media of politics.

Seminar presentations:

Jenna Sutela
New Degrees of Freedom

Ore.e Refineries
About Copper

Ruby van der Wekken
Take Back the Economy!

Société Réaliste
Swindling Futurity

Syrago Tsiara
Value Revisited

Ville-Pekka Sorsa
Counter-performing economies?

Visible Solutions LLC
Overview of the Visible Solutions LLC's practices and artwork-products.

Screenings at Kaiku Gallery:

Zachary Formwalt, unsupported transit, 2011, 14 min 25 sec

Société Réaliste, The Fountainhead, 2010, 111 min

Olivar Ressler, The Plundering, 2013, 41 min

"Jesse Sipola, Seppä | Blacksmith" (Parallel Ads 2), 2011, Production: Eero Yli-Vakkuri (Ore.e Refineries)
Camera: Alexandre Riviello, 08 min 6 sec

"Pneumatic Forging by Jesse Sipola", 2011, Camera: Eero Yli-Vakkuri, Alexandre Riviello, Edit: Jesse Sipola, 1,5 min

Teemu Takatalo, The Gospel of the Enlightened Consumer, 2012, 50 min

SEMINAR DOCUMENTATION



Dissolving Frontiers

HIAP/Gallery Augustus, Helsinki
Summer 2014

The artists of the exhibition: Brett Bloom & Bonnie Fortune (Copenhagen), Fernando Garcia-Dory (Madrid, Mallorca), Tue Greenfort (Berlin), Khaled Ramadan (Beirut, Nicosia), Hanna Husberg (Stockholm) & Laura McLean (London), Mari Keski-Korsu (Helsinki, Sulkava), Tonka Maleković (Zagreb), Nestori Syrjälä (Helsinki).

The exhibition is co-curated by Jenni Nurmenniemi (HIAP, Helsinki) and Jussi Koitela (Helsinki).

There is widespread belief in the capability of “modern” societies’ to rationally solve complex social, political, and economic problems and to correct the miscalculations of earlier generations. These societies are seen to have developed through progressive steps from primitive to more advanced modes of existence, with the fruits of this civilization process – modern science and technological innovations – having provided the tools for continuing the progress of the members of these societies on Earth.

This assumed progress has taken place within the framework of nation states. Their success has been measured by economic growth derived from consuming the resources of Nature. An understanding of Nature as separate from human culture has provided an endless source of otherness, and a plethora of specialized disciplines have promised to offer humankind all the knowledge needed to benefit from it.

Paradoxically, in light of observations and research from over the last four decades, it seems that these assumptions have brought the ecosystem, of which the human species is a part, into a drastic state of imbalance. Despite signals on a planetary scale of transformations caused by human activities, the mainstream mind-set is still set in the mode of endless economic growth and progress. However, the conviction of human capability to handle ecological, social, and cultural crisis, has begun to waver. This brings about an increasing sense of urgency for new approaches, understandings and skills. Space has to be made for speculation and uncertainty, instead of trying to cling on to existing truths.

The exhibition Dissolving Frontiers at HIAP Gallery Augustus finds its structure from the tension between modernist modes of organising human life and the need for new perspectives that require decomposing and unlearning its assumed truths, as well as the adoption of more speculative approaches.

The rear exhibition hall is dedicated to artworks by Khaled Ramadan, Hanna Husberg & Laura McLean, Nestori Syrjälä and Tonka Maleković. In their different ways, they deal with disappearance, either anticipated or actualised, as well as with roots, traditions and traces of what remains after something that has once existed will dissolve into something else.

In Malekovic’s Garden Circles a nearly 40-year-old community garden of one of the largest apartment blocks in Europe is bulldozed in one day without warning. Ramadan, with his documentary Maldives to be or not (2013), provides perspectives on the modernisation project of the Maldives and its politicised ecology. In their collaborative video work, also Husberg and McLean take a look at the Maldives and speculate on possible futures for this nation state anticipated to dissolve into the ocean within the next century. Nestori Syrjälä’s new video focuses on a subjective, embodied experience of ecological crisis.

The front space provides an open platform for new approaches and speculation. Over the course of the summer 2014, artists Tue Greenfort, Fernando Garcia-Dory, Mari Keski-Korsu, and Brett Bloom & Bonnie Fortune will make their marks and leave traces in the space. Their contributions open up new perspectives on existence on Earth by looking at questions of new technologies and territory, the dynamic of the urban and the rural, the secrets of the plant world, communication between humans and other species, and through finding new ways of listening to and being embedded in our environment.

EXHIBITION VIEWS



EXHIBITION VIEWS



For Your Health Only!

Kuva/Tila, Helsinki
March 2014

Art may not be able to prevent catastrophes or fix the problems of the welfare state – but it does tell, record, state things and remember. And does focus on problem areas. The desire to be understood is central to all communication. It is important from the perspective of society as hearing and listening to many voices and the widening understanding it brings of what is good and right is central in everyone's wellbeing.

Art may increase wellbeing but is it necessary for it to always do so in order to remain an active and financial supported part of changing society? It's not very meaningful to evaluate art for it's profitable or any other benefits. Even though there aren't any general measuring systems for art, art is still evaluated in many different ways.

Does art and artists have a role in the changing society? How does the scarcity of funds affect the funding of art? Does all activity need to be financially profitable in order for it to be of importance? Will art become an aspect of the health services? Can art make people more well? What is artist's work?

For Your Health Only! exhibition deals with a topical subject. The demands for art to be instrumentalized, the changing position of the artist and the employment of artists for their livelihoods has created plenty of discussion lately. There are many unanswered questions and to look into those questions we invited a group of artists and students of The Finnish Academy of Art.

The exhibition is formed of two aspects: works that have been shown previously and new works which comment on them in some way or the subject matter in a more general way. We wanted to highlight a variety of procedures, solutions and possibilities that art and artists have to offer. We intend to continue the discussion, not trying to offer any answers. It is difficult to see into the future but let us look into what's happening now. We might then have a glimpse of what's coming.

Artist: Art & Process, Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen and Tellervo Kalleinen, Veera Jalava, Kaisa Salmi, Timo Tähkänen, Océane Bruel, Iiris Kaarlehto, Josefina Nelimarkka, Joakim Pusenius, Mikko Tapio

Working Group: Saara Hannus, Miina Hujala, Maija Kasvinen, Mikael Kinanen, Jussi Koitela, Iina Kuusimäki, Katriina Rosavaara and professor Maaretta Jaukkuri ja lecturer Martta Heikkilä

EXHIBITION VIEWS



Work It Out

Vapaan taiteen tila, Helsinki
November 2013

Work It Out is a five-day workshop event at Space for Free Arts that evolves around questions about showing/performing contemporary art. Different approaches and questions are tested in practice through collective work. Before each working session there will be an introduction/presentation for stimulating the appearance of the works in time and space. The focus of the workshop will be on the question of what defines the meaning of the artwork/act: is it time, space or other works around it? Is it the artist, curator, institution or the audience who dominates it?

The invited presenters are artist Diego Agulló, curator Clare Butcher, choreographer and artist Maija Hirvanen and curators/organizers from One Night Only gallery. Each participant brings their own artwork/act in the workshop. The aim is to make connections between the different practices and search for new ways of presenting/performing/showing performing arts and contemporary art, so the works participating can be diverse.

Work It Out is organized by Saara Hannus, Satu Herrala, Miina Hujala and Jussi Koitela.

WORKSHOP DOCUMENTATION



Essay

Beyond Politicized Economy

By JUSSI KOITELA

POLITICIZING ECONOMY THROUGH ECONOMY Recently, one of the most popular models describing current neoliberal capitalism and the living conditions it has produced, is the capitalist realism described by cultural theorist Mark Fisher in his book *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* In the book, Fisher analyses and defines the neoliberal condition as a lack of any alternatives; capitalism does not leave room to conceive of alternative social structures. One this basis, philosopher and critic Slavoj Žižek has claimed that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism. This notion reflects the desperation of socialist movements and their failure to improve the living conditions of most people in the world

for the last 30 years. Neither parliamentary democracies nor other forms of governance have offered an arena for formulating movements to counter the neoliberal economic hegemony.

In recent economic discussions throughout Europe, comments increasingly centre on how the current economic crisis is not going to be solved solely through budget cuts and austerity measures. Commentators and researchers from the Keynesian tradition – long the minority voice in economic debates – state that European nations actually are spending too little money. They argue that in a national economy, it is actually possible to take up more loans and thus spend more. Saying aloud that government economy and household economy do not and should not operate in similar ways is essential to politicize the economic discussion, where rhetoric consistently employs metaphors based on household economy, which frame austerity measures as rational and normal steps in European progress. Independent and EU member states can actually borrow larger sums than they currently do, and use these funds as an stimulus to increase people's spending and thereby their living conditions.

Keynesian economical stimulus seems to be the only relevant counter-narrative and effective means to combat the enduring economical crisis. Keynesian tradition has

also offered the political economy ways to rethink the relationship between economy and other areas of politics, emphasizing that economy has to be seen as an equal and separate sphere of politics, alongside society, culture, and energy.

These individual, autonomous spheres also form the basis of the Nordic welfare system and its representational model; every discipline and individual sphere has its professional scientific knowledge producers, interest groups, and lobbyists. Thus, in a democratic society, different ways of producing knowledge and representing interests are connected to individual fields that represent aspects of society. Experts from all fields negotiate and struggle to produce knowledge hegemonies that in turn affect parliamentary decision-making.

NEEDS AND DEMANDS: AUTONOMY AND INSTRUMENTALIZATION So, we seem to have ended up in a situation where we need to rethink economic rhetoric. We should endeavour to understand economy through other disciplines, such as art, in order to re-include it as part of the democratic process. This seems to be an ongoing trend also in the art world; contemporary art and the art world as a whole work by renewing themselves through absorbing rhetoric from other disciplines and areas of society. Lately,

we have witnessed this happen at increased speed, as art moves toward the educational, documentary, and choreographic, the latest wave of which is based on object-oriented and speculative philosophy. A quick glance would seem to indicate how the changes in how we think about contemporary art and culture seem to be emanate from contemporary art field itself, and that the demand for them originates from within the field. However, there are also needs and demands that come from outside the field of art.

Under the neoliberal paradigm, public funding for contemporary art in Finland has focussed more and more on certain instrumentalization processes. Two main programmes have received funding: one to establish and help artists turn their practices into financially viable efforts; and one which makes use of artists in the welfare sector, in some cases almost as social workers. Both models are based on the fact that the effects of arts funding have to be economically calculable.

Recently, some social efforts have been undertaken by institutions on the Finnish art scene: Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art organized the *Heimo Project*, which saw seven artists working together with the aim of improving the city environment through contemporary art practices; another was the *Ars Fennica Prize* being awarded to Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen.



Skills of Economy - Post Models: Ore.e Refineries, exhibition view, 2014. Photo: SIC space



To Use As a Capital, Exhibition View, One Night Only Gallery/Kunstneres Hus. Works from left to right: Alma Heikkilä, Portrait Two: 5 cent euro coin (Ross 508: Possibly designed to sufferin order to move less and grow more), 2014, Portrait One: 10€ (Money only refers to it self), 2014; Saara-Maria Kariranta, Proposal For Business Institutions Logo, 2013, Proposal For Finance Companies Logo, 2013, Proposal For Credit Rating Agencies Logo, 2013; Alma Heikkilä, Portrait Three: Gmail (Perfect image of the user), 2014. Photo: One Night Only Gallery / Jon Benjamin Talléräs

Institutionalizing certain socially engaged practices helps the state make use of artists also within the social sector. Of course, these developments are not limited to Finland. There is a lot of Finnish and Nordic funding aimed at creative entrepreneurship and innovation, like the Nordic Culture Point's KreaNord programme.

Looking back on the history of public funding for the arts in Finland and elsewhere, it is hard to find situations where art and culture have been autonomous or the artist completely free to express him- or herself outside the extant economic and social structures. For example, during 'Finlandization', the arts were part of the political movement and served as a way to build relations with other countries. Now, the arts have become a tool driving financial competition and efficiency. So, it seems that creative autonomy without links to other social spheres is a myth deeply intertwined with and limited to artistic academia. Academia seeks to engage public funding for the arts in order to protect creative freedom. The same argument is also used when the system of peer reviewing grants is threatened by politicians.

POLITICIZING ECONOMY THROUGH ARTISTIC PRACTICES: RE-PRACTICING AUTONOMY AND INSTRUMENTALIZATION At this point, we recognize the situation where the Keynesian tradition and political economy emphasize the need to understand economy more as an instrument, and less as an autonomous societal sphere. Art is stuck in this autonomy/instrumentalization dichotomy. Both seem to be struggling

against neoliberal developments and offer anti-neoliberal rhetoric for debating against austerity measures in free arts funding and nationalised social and welfare funding. Yet, that same rhetoric strengthens the image of a reality produced by the Enlightenment tradition, wherein the world is divided into specialized autonomous areas that can only be understood with specialized sciences.

Lately, this thinking has met considerable criticism, especially in the context of the egocentrist thought. Sociologist Bruno Latour argued in the early 90s that we do not actually act very modern. The aforementioned division of the world into disciplines has never been performed in actual situations involving thought and action. Actual lived situations produces hybrids, where it is not possible say whether the active role is human, nature, or technology.

*"Yet, no one seems to find this troubling. Headings like Economy, Politics, Science, Books, Culture, Religion, and Local Events remain in place as if there were nothing odd going on. The smallest AIDS virus takes you from sex to the unconscious, then to Africa, tissue cultures, DNA and San Francisco, but the analysts, thinkers, journalists, and decision-makers will slice the delicate network traced by the virus for you into tidy compartments where you will find only science, only economy, only social phenomena, only local news, only sentiment, only sex."*³

My curatorial project *Skills of Economy* has focussed on how to understand current artistic reactions and actions to the prevailing rhetoric on economy and its developments.

One of the key questions has been how contemporary artistic practices are part of global neoliberal capitalism, economic rhetoric, commodities production, and so on, trying to understand artistic production as a hybrid of different cultural, political, scientific, and aesthetic aspects.

One of the interesting lines of thought that has emanated from this project is that in the context of the Finnish – not to mention the broader field of Western art in general – it seems that the questions regarding symbolism and practicality on one side, and autonomy and instrumentalization on the other, are parallel. Autonomous artistic practices tend to focus more on a symbolic level, whilst so-called instrumentalized art focuses more

on solving practical questions, for example, those related to small urban communities.

The latest project in the context of the *Skills of Economy* project is the exhibition *Skills of Economy – Post Models: Ore.e Refineries* at SIC space, presented in cooperation with the Helsinki-based art organization Ore e. Refineries. The organization was established by artist Eero Yli-Vakkuri (who also contributed to the Heimo-project), and blacksmith Jesse Sipola. It has operated somewhere between art, design, and service work, in order to create both works of art and services that seek both to resolve and to understand the challenges arising from the current neo-liberal, global and digital reality in the areas of day labour, commodities, consumption, environmentalism and transport.



Trans-Horse HKI-TKU-HKI, 2014. Photo: Ore.e Refineries



Skills of Economy - Post Models: Ore.e Refineries, exhibition view, 2014. Photo: SIC space



Iain Griffin, I survived, 2014. To Use As a Capital, exhibition view, One Night Only Gallery, Kunstnernes Hus, Oslo. Photo: One Night Only Gallery / Jon Benjamin Tallerås

Their current project, *Trans-Horse: Helsinki – Turku – Helsinki*, studies contemporary horse culture and promotes travel by horse from Helsinki to Turku. This project and their earlier work can easily be seen as a Latourian practice, producing hybrid actions. The project's aim is not only to produce documentation and imagery to be used in an artistic context, but to create new knowledge on horse culture and thus offer a platform for exchange and possibilities for future innovations. Ore e. Refineries' practice is based on an understanding of the world as a hybrid, which cannot be understood through

aesthetic, scientific, economic or technic work alone, but which has to be understood through all of these practices. This also puts their body of work in a position where it can't be understood through *either* autonomy or instrumentalization, but both at the same time. In a world of hybrids, actions are simultaneously autonomous and instrumentalized.

CURATING, ART INSTITUTIONS AND HYBRIDS There have been some exhibition projects that have dealt with political economy through artistic and activist practices, such as the touring exhibition *It's Political*

Economy, Stupid! (quoting Žižek), curated by Oliver Ressler and Gregory Sholette. The exhibition showed artwork trying to politicise economy through artistic means such as performance, video, and social interaction. In this case, and many others, political economy is seen merely as a theme on which to pontificate, not as a structure governing artistic practice.

So, what curatorial and institutional practices might nurture and present us with hybrid artistic practices, ones that go beyond just politicizing the economy? Curator Miguel Ángel Hernández-Navarro sees curation as a negotiation between the ethical demands of institutions, the art itself, and the public. Based on the ideas of philosopher Simon Critchley, Hernández-Navarro sees these infinite, ethical demands as ultimately unfeasible. Moreover, institutions that would allow for the creation of hybrid art must offer a space that deals with the needs and demands of actions that cannot be strictly said to be the actions of human, nature, or technology alone.

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Note

- 1 Keynesian economics is the view that in the short run, especially during recessions, economic output is strongly influenced by aggregate demand (total spending in the economy). In the Keynesian view, aggregate demand does not necessarily equal the productive capacity of the economy; instead, it is influenced by a host of factors and sometimes behaves erratically, affecting production, employment, and inflation.
- 2 The term literally means «to become like Finland» referring to the influence of the Soviet Union on Finland's policies during the Cold War.
- 3 Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 1991

ON BEING ABLE TO DO ETHICS

text by Jussi Koitela

WHO
ARE YOU?
I am a curator
and visual
artist based
in Helsinki,
Finland.
As a curator
I am currently
focused on
artists' reactions
to economic
discourses.

FLEXIBILITY, self-management, competitiveness, short-time working relations, problems with bureaucracy and taxation, low fees, instability, no health insurance... this is the normal liturgy of contemporary working conditions. You could, of course, add some concepts used to fight against these conditions, like multitude, occupy and peer-to-peer help, but these are only concepts popping up from contemporary literature discussing conditions of current living and working conditions, and often offer no solutions with any real effect.

Vocabulary for the endless statements and pamphlets on precarious life without connections to lived experiences seems to produce nothing but literature for a lost generation of leftist thinkers, the labor party and art workers. We — artist, curators — the precarious actors of the art field, are organizing seminars, talks and publications on work, it's current repression and inequality. After all this, we feel satisfied; at least something has been said publicly. We can feel even more satisfied if those events have been organized in well-established institutions as then we can add one more nice line to our CVs.

In a recent debate on curatorial discourses and the lack of them in the Finnish contemporary art scene, caused partly by my article *Taiteilija maksaa? Kuratoinnin uhka ja muut pelot* in *Mustekala* web journal (16.1.2014) and followed by a public discussion titled *Kuratointi — häiriöitä vai välitystä?* at *Frame Visual Arts Finland* (4.2.2014), rather basic and traditional fears that often circle around the relations of curators and artists were brought up; for example, some assumed that curators are only interested in creating their own concepts, walking over artists as well as their practises. Another, more present fear was lurking in the background of the conversations; a question of how there can be enough funding for curatorial activities if there is not enough for artistic ones? There are, of course, several ways to go if thinking about how much

artistic and curatorial activity there should be in the society in the first place, but if we bypass this, we seem to end up with one question: is there enough work for everyone?

If all roads and discussions lead us to the issue of work in the precarious art field, how should we deal with it in real life conditions? Nobody seems to have an answer for this. At the moment I am listening to a radio program about the low income of visual artists in Finland. Two of the speakers, artist **Antti Majava** and Dean of The Finnish Academy of Fine Arts **Markus Konttinen**, are claiming that institutional money should be given straight to artists and that trust should be put more to artists' expertise in public matters. Here one can hear the same fear of institutional actors as in the recent curatorial discourse.

Why is the Finnish contemporary art field so split between the institutions and the independent actors? Why is everything here so depended on the representational use of power? Everybody seems to represent some larger group of people whose interests they are fighting for at the cost of someone else's. If we are gaining something, does it really mean that it's always out of someone else's pockets? Ofcourse there are lots of historical reasons for this, when the welfare society is structured with strong interest groups and unions.

In an era when it is hard to tell if someone is working inside or outside institutions and when precarious working conditions seem to be everyone's present reality, or at least the future, how would it be possible to create common field and find new ideas? Many of the established institutions are forced to find their funding through projects; Finnish National Gallery, for example, was driven to become a foundation and it is now expected to get more funding from private sources.

Curator and educator **Nora Sternfeld** writes in her article *Being Able to Do Something* (2013)¹

¹ Nora Sternfeld, *Being Able to Do Something*, *The Curatorial: A Philosophy of Curating*, 2013

about **Gaytri Spivak's** readings of Derrida and Foucault, stating that they make us understand that *pouvoir* (power) and *savoir* (knowledge) are not just substantives but powerful verbs. *Pouvoir* means being able to and *savoir* means knowing how to do something. Combining these words in Foucault's sense as *savoir-pouvoir* means, for Spivak, being able to do something. Looking at and taking part in these discussions about precarious (cultural) work, it feels that we have lost our capacity of being able to do something.

On the other hand, after Deconstruction and Foucault, postmodern philosophy and sociology have filled our heads with ideas of there being no common values or narratives anymore; our life is no more based on a shared understanding about a universal reality. Reality is referred to only in its present time and traditions have been lost. In their article *Swarm/Disruption/Arbitrary Power* (2010)², **Franco Berardi** and **Akseli Virtanen** state that economical governing, on which the neoliberal precariousness is based on, is indeed pure governing that does not refer to any meanings outside of its own limits. Berardi and Virtanen believe that in the present situation ethics has become an impossible subject to reach.

I was asked to write about the possibilities of increasing openness and collectivity within the Finnish art world and I am ending up doing almost the exact thing I criticised earlier in this text: proposing one more concept for the fight against precarious working conditions. But I will add a request to activate ethics from a substantive to a verb, though at the same time I am afraid that we are not capable of doing this. The key question, in my opinion, is the following: how to active ethics from a substantive to a verb simultaneously both in the institutional as the individual areas of daily working conditions? One hopeful answer to this question has been given by curator **Miguel Ángel Hernández-Navarro**³, who sees curating

² Franco Berardi and Akseli Virtanen, *Parvi/Häiriö/Mielivalta (Swarm/Disruption/Arbitrary Power)*, Niin & Näin, 3/2010

as a negotiation between the ethical demands of institutions, the work of art and the audience. Based on the ideas of philosopher **Simon Critchley**, Hernández-Navarro sees these infinite, ethical demands as never satisfied, and this is what makes them so powerful; it activates ethics as an infinite state of doing something.

³Miguel Ángel Hernández-Navarro, *The Curator's Demands: Towards an Ethics of Commitment*, *Manifesta Journal* 12