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Social Art Practices as Feminist Manifestos: Radical Hospitality in the Archive

Caroline Gausden

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Contents

Abstract

The research presents a practice-based examination of the politics and poetics of the manifesto form, drawing on feminist theoretical writing and activism alongside contemporary iterations of socially engaged art. It offers feminist manifestos as a lens through which to reconsider the form and intentions of socially engaged art, which is reframed in the light of these feminist insights as social art practice (Ross, 2000). To draw feminism alongside social art practice the research occupies the metaphorical territory of the manifesto in order to open up a dialogue with, and directly experience, unfolding forms of social art practice.

The thesis is structured in the form of an archive, consisting of three distinct but interrelated concepts – the manifesto, hospitality and archives. This structure sets out to highlight the relational and political nature of archives suggesting their potential to be reimagined as manifesto forms. In addition the structure reveals how both manifesto and archive function as explicit, politically radical forms of hospitality. These topics are discretely contained in physical form within three archival boxes, one for each concept, and in an online audio archive 'giving voice' to each of the concepts.

Taken as a whole the thesis articulates a missing feminist history within current critical discourse around social art practice - despite the early presence of important feminist artists like Lacy and Ukeles. This research explores the implications of this absence, seeking to acknowledge the effects it could have not only on feminism as a political and intellectual practice but on the criticality and depth of social art practice.

It is possible to encounter the archive as a cartography that can be laid out, navigated and read in any order. This movement between forms of knowledge mirrors the subjects it approaches which are conceived as interstitial forms, negotiating multiple perspectives to produce active subjectivity. Each section juxtaposes knowledge *about* practice, engaging with history to search for precedents, and knowledge *with* practice as a generative method, curating events and producing written contributions. Moving between these two methodologies the research sets out to find an appropriate voice to articulate the complexities of social art practice and its feminist histories.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

Welcome to the feminist manifesto and social art practice archive. This archive consists of three archival boxes, Manifesto, Hospitality and Archive, containing documents that cohere around the subject of feminist manifesto and social art practice and one online audio archive.[1] They do not present a complete history of the subject but instead, something necessarily selective, guided by the particular and embedded position of the researcher. The hard to shake subjectivity of the archive is supplemented, but not forgotten, by its openness to future encounters over time. Somewhat unusually the Introduction also contains a contextual review, methodology and conclusions. These elements sit outside the individual collections in order to help visitors navigate and approach different parts without limiting the experience to predefined beginning and ends.

This Introduction also contains a timeline of events, activities and conversations that have been significant moments in gathering together the archive. The timeline indicates where descriptions of each event or collaboration can be found in the main thesis. Along with the timeline is a layered diagram of the research, which similarly indicates where practices and theoretical texts are situated in the thesis, as well as acting to map out the relationships between each individual archive box. This diagram or cartography helps to guide the reader and takes the physical form of six acetates. Beginning with manifesto and working through to archive, each transparency provides a perspective that will be covered in the respective boxes, which in turn have two parts, in a repeating framework. Through each added layer it is possible to see where research themes reappear and repeat in the individual sections. Consequently, the research map illustrates a conversation, mapping a reoccurring structure or refrain that may be kept in mind when reading each individual part of the research. The refrain, like the research, begins with the manifesto layer. Consequently a more detailed explanation and summary of the research map can be found in the section of the Introduction that offers a definition for feminist manifesto. As the layers accumulate a list of practices and theoretical texts also populate the map. Gathered together in this way it is possible to understand how and where individual examples fit into overall theoretical perspective offered by the research.

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[1] www.feministmanifesto.co.uk

Research Position

The archive is my response to four years of research in various feminist archival contexts and also to my situation within the On the Edge research community in Aberdeen. I have worked in a number of archive contexts including Re-Act Feminism in Berlin, The Women's Slide Library/MAKE archive in London and Glasgow Women's Library. I have also worked extensively within virtual archives, including the 1984 Dinners archive devised by artist and curator Sophie Hope and The Women's Audio Archive set up by artist Marysia Lewandowska. This last archive has had a significant impact, helping me to think through connections between feminist discourse and social art practice in relation to a diverse range of voices and providing an appropriate methodology for the research, over thirty years on from the original recording dates.

My situation within the research community in Aberdeen, with connections to other important networks, has also had a profound impact on the shape of the research. The research is positioned within a broader enquiry around 'the changing relationships of visual arts practice to wider cultural life' (Douglas, 2013, p.9). This enquiry includes practice-based contributions from a range of highly experienced artists who have directly influenced my thinking around social art practice, including Sophie Hope (2011) (see With Archives), Chu Chu Yuan (2013), Suzanne Lacy (2013) (see About Hospitality) and Helen Smith (2015)(See With Manifestos). These contributions intersect with Alexandra Kokoli's feminist critical perspective, which offers further insights, also generated within an extended network of experienced practitioners. Beyond written contributions I have had a chance to be in conversation with these and many others connected to the research environment. From these conversations the collaborations and curatorial interventions that will be detailed in the archive have emerged. It is in acknowledgement of this situated position that the archive's claims take shape. This decision to consciously write from a particular position follows on from Rosi Braidotti's assertion that we should 'begin from where we are' (2014). In *Transpositions* Braidotti defines this embedded feminist position as 'grounded, partial and accountable, according to the micro-political model also favoured by poststructuralism' (Braidotti, 2006, p.18).

Given the importance of position and the acknowledgment of the generative nature of embodied conversational knowledge, alongside written discourse, the research draws

equally from spoken and written contributions to the fields of knowledge that it engages with.

Personal Position

The original brief for the research, filtered as it is through my situation in the context of Aberdeen and the Gray's research community, is also inevitably filtered through past and personal experiences. Prior to the research studentship I was based in Glasgow, working in different capacities at the Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA), as an artist in the education department, as a researcher in the archive and also as a 'maintenance worker', managing different spaces in the building (Ukeles, 1969). I also worked somehow on the edge of these art world spaces. An interest in the carnivalesque and in ecological issues pushed me to make work in more marginal communities. This work culminated in becoming an artist founder for the Govanhill based ecological charity South Seeds, which was initiated to spark a 'guerrilla gardening' movement in the area.

The history of my experience lies between different worlds. I bring with me the increasing privilege of an art school education, combined with training in Art History, as well as considerable experience working outside of the white cube spaces. While the white cube has long been considered as the ideal destination to follow art education my career trajectory has involved considerable detour from this path. Despite living and working in areas that offer a rich array of minority experience I am not in a minority. I speak from the position of a white woman and consequently bring certain cultural privileges to the research. It is important, if difficult, to acknowledge that this is the case. At the same time that I do not speak from a minority cultural position I also have considerable experience within a less than comfortable majority. Through my work in the cultural sector I am part of what Gregory Sholette (2011) terms a class of dark matter. I am one of many intimately acquainted with the invisible, hospitable work it takes to run a cultural space. Coupled with this labour I am also familiar with the work its takes to be a mother. Inevitably these personal co-ordinates, as a mother, dark matter and still somehow as person on the edge, colour the choices made in this research and the methodologies employed.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of the research is to expand and problematize understandings of feminist manifestos and social art practice drawing current examples of practice alongside feminist history with a view to reconnecting social art practice to its feminist roots. The research develops and implements a framework of three perspectives that include the manifesto as a form and feminist practice, the archive and hospitality. These three perspectives function in dialogue with each other, the one forming the other dynamically. The research begins with the hypothesis that certain works of art function as feminist manifestos due to their intentions, reception and interpretation, using this starting point to explore social art practice through a different lens. In relation to this beginning the important issue of hospitality arises as a concern for both feminism and social art practice. In exploring this concern it is evident that hospitality is also an important if often hidden aspect to the manifesto form. Alongside hospitality the archival aspects of the research, which explored particular moments of feminist history in the UK, brought the politics of archive to the fore adding a third important perspective..

Research objectives include:

1. To create a form for the inquiry that resonates with/embodies the research issues (hence the thesis itself functions as an archive with a dialogic structure)

2. To create a methodological approach that draws on two ways of knowing as identified by social practice artist Chu Chu Yuan – knowing as information that exists outside of the experience of the researcher: aboutness knowing and knowing as experience, the researcher's own curatorial and conversational practice: withness knowing (Shotter, 2005)

3. To test the hypothesis that certain works of art function as feminist manifestos through an exploration of relevant current and historical social and curatorial practices.

4. To raise the question of feminist history within discourses of socially engaged practice.

5. To provide a broad theoretical framework that critically engages with the three perspectives of the framework: hospitality (Ahmed, Derrida, Irigaray,), Archive (Eichhorn, Freeman, Withers) and Manifesto (Kristeva, Lyon, Pollock)

This approach has led to a number of insights:

The archive's open, multi-directional nature is both a vulnerability, producing an expanded and unruly form, but also a strength, suggesting multiple relationships between the included material. The aim to give three perspectives on the subject of feminist manifestos and social art, has produced expanded and generative definitions for both these areas of practice and suggests also that the subjects work in dialogue with each other. Through dialogue it is possible to reimagine particular social art practices as functioning manifestos. It is also possible to see moments of feminist commitment to dialogical and relational forms, equally evident in social art practice. This commitment has led to reimagining the manifesto genre as something that hides hospitable intentions beneath an angry surface. Tracing this movement between extremes of hostility and hospitality is a key component of the thesis. Significant feminist re-imaginings of the form are discussed and also seen as early precursors to social art practice. By staging an encounter between certain feminist histories and social art practice the intention is to critically evaluate the balance between the vital elements of hostility and hospitality. To acknowledge feminist understanding as part of social art practice is to remember the usefulness of criticality and some rage. In looking at this balance it is equally important to concede that there are histories and experiences of feminism that may unfold differently. Particularly in relation to the feminist archive it is important to acknowledge it as a profoundly contested space. In facing this contestation too much rage may lead to spaces that are less than open to encounters with difference. This difficulty, through which marginal and excluded communities can, in themselves, evolve into exclusionary spaces is also faced in different places in the archive.[2] It should be acknowledged that different forms of feminism are not immune to such slippages. In relation to this another aim of the work is to consider where carefully attuned social art practices may contribute insights, positing a form of hospitality that doesn't shy away from difficult meetings with other subjectivities that can inform feminist practice going forward.

The conceptual work done by the research is to suggest that feminist manifestos are a kind of hospitality, delivered by sometimes unwelcome guests, and so is social practice. It is also to argue that the outsider perspective offered by feminism is of considerable consequence to praxis as it develops. Through considerations of hospitality the work

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[2] Not least through my discussions with curatorial team Mother Tongue, whose interventions bring to light the exclusionary nature of the 'Glasgow Miracle' narrative, tracing the movement of a tightly woven group of artists from margins to mainstream.

also approaches questions of the home and archive offering the further suggestion that the archive too, in feminist hands, may become both a social practice and a manifesto.

In offering these different metaphorical and conceptual frames for social art practice and feminist manifestos the research aims to produced a layered critical framework. It works to provide an alternative pedagogical discourse for artists, educators and curators in the field, offering a feminist voice and history to an area of practice which is expanding rapidly, within an institutional support system set up to accommodate a very different conception of art practice.[3] It is argued that as a historical outsider to these systems feminist discourse not only offers precedents for social art practice, but also tools for resisting the constraints in a given system and imagining alternative ways of working. One of the working methods explored is that suggested by art historian Griselda Pollock, as a reading across disciplines. In relation to this type of reading, across history, politics and contemporary art practice, the research asks: can we express and pass on practice better when we understand its function as a kind of politics and poetics? Equally, could we be in a better position to produce feminist manifestos when we understand them as art practices, exhibiting an ambivalent form of hospitality? Finally, what are the consequences of reimagining the archive as a place of hospitality, a home, which is not simply a container of pre-existing knowledge but a relational space that produces new ways of knowing and feeds activist praxis? How can we work with the archive form as a political and poetic space, a dwelling place for art(chiv)ists with social practices?

Archive Structure

The three boxes that make up the archive are listed here in alphabetical order as Archives, Hospitality and Manifesto. The boxes can be accessed in any order. The audio recordings in the online archive are also catalogued according to these concepts and are discussed at different places within the narrative. Physical copies of these recordings are included in the three boxes along with other appendices. By taking this form the research offers an archival experience, so that it is possible not only to think *about* the function of archives, but *with* the archive and its materials. As an archive, the documents

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[3] The institutional support system I am referring to in this case is a combination of art education, the intersecting public and private gallery systems and art history which have all been set up structurally to think about artists as singular individuals that operate outwith social networks.

become a cartography that you can lay out and navigate through, according to your position, negotiating a relationship. In being a cartography they also take up space. The expanded size of the research is a result of the form, which in places requires some repetition.[4] In order to open up the possibility for a negotiated relationship, which is distinct from one that is decided in advanced and fixed, it is necessary to break with the conventions of linear narrative. This break accounts for the repeating forms and size of the archive, enabling users to approach the archive from different beginnings. Rather than one thing after the other, time in the archive is layered, like a kind of compost (Withers, 2015) and multi-voiced. Each element in the archive should inform and add perspectives onto other elements. It is possible for different events in a given chronology to be extracted and placed alongside each other. In this way we are not divided by the times we live in but are in conversation with other times. It is through these conversations, back and forth, that it becomes possible to imagine different futures. In this way an argument is made for the relational nature of the archive, viewed in parallel to the relational art works that it contains. Both social practice and the feminist archive provide hosting spaces, gathering together different elements to offer alternative methods of resistance and inspiration for different possible worlds. By offering de/re constructions these hospitable places are manifesto-like, retooling participants for social change.

This partial break with the linear not only attempts to imagine time as a conversation but also as a form of radical hospitality, handing over the keys to knowledge and allowing the guest to become a kind of host. This is not to say that you, the guest becoming host, will have to face a chaos of voices without support. The research also acknowledges the archive is a kind of home, a shelter in difficult times and a ritual performed to balance forces of chaos, holding things in tension. In the archive things are brought to a precarious, fallible kind of order. The ritual of putting things in order works towards survival in an uncertain place, creating a safe space so that it is possible to move forwards. As Kate Eichhorn (2013) asserts, it is necessary to put our 'outrage in order' to gather momentum for action in the present moment. Consequently, each box provides a thread of narrative through two folders, approaching its subject from different perspectives, two interrelated yet distinct ways of knowing, described below.

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[4] For example each collection has its own bibliography so that they stand alone, despite the inevitable repetition of some sources this produces throughout the whole thesis.

'Aboutness' and 'Withness' Knowledge

Once inside each box the narrative thread is split into two folders. The first folder provides knowledge *about* the subject whilst the second offers knowledge *with* the subject.

In the conceptual framework to her PhD thesis Chu Chu Yuan draws a distinction between two forms of knowledge. She defines these terms as 'withness' and 'aboutness' knowledge in relation to the writings of intercommunication theorist John Shotter. Shotter offers a critique of Cartesian dualism, which, he argues, leads to a form of knowledge that works from outside of a subject, describing 'a world to which we are related only as spectators at a distance, not as involved participants' (Shotter, 2005, p.134). He contrasts this way of knowing *about* a subject to a way of knowing that is a kind of 'becoming' *with* as a result of embodied experiential meetings with others and otherness around us' (Ibid, p.132). *Withness* knowledge has responsive and anticipatory qualities that move us towards action, Shotter writes:

> 'In short, we are spontaneously "moved," bodily, toward specific possibilities for action in this kind of thinking. They provide us with both an evaluative sense of "where" we are placed in relation to our surroundings, as well as an anticipatory sense of where next we might move.' (Ibid, p.146)

The possibilities for action and movement are important considerations in relation to the topic of feminist manifestos. In movement there is also friction. Chu points out that friction is 'the condition for realising the sense of difference' when we come 'into contact with other persons' utterances, bodily expressions, words and works' (Chu, 2013, p.33). Friction is a kind of ethics that enables us to perceive difference and move with it. Understanding and acting ethically in relation to these encounters with others and otherness is at the heart of social practice.

Chu offers two important additions to Shotter's writing that have directly influenced my use of this conceptual framework to structure the archive. First, she draws his insights alongside Taoist thought using the traditional Chinese saying 'to cross a river by feeling its bed' as an evocative analogy to describe *withness* knowledge. She interprets this within her practice as the idea that 'one needs to become immersed in the river before one can figure out how to cross it' (Chu, 2013, p.32). This embodied example converts

an abstract conceptual proposition into something I can relate to through my own experiential memories. It also acknowledges that other systems of thought, outside the western philosophical tradition that Shotter locates himself in, have contributed theories of embodied understanding.

Second, Chu offers an important modification. Where Shotter prioritises *withness* over *aboutness* thinking, simply reversing the perceived hierarchy in the Cartesian tradition, Chu argues for a movement between these ways of knowing. She states 'I think both *withness* and *aboutness* positions are important, and are both operative within immersive involvement' (Ibid, p.42). *Aboutness* knowledge is not excluded from an immersed perspective. Finally, it is possible to say that I arrive at this framework through a combination of these ways of knowing. I know *about* Chu's work from a distance, having read both her own account and from the critical perspectives of others (Kester, 2011; Koh, 2015). I also know *with* Chu, through conversations within the research environment that we both shared.

In relation to this conceptual framework I also propose a movement between these forms of knowledge. Each archive box begins with a folder that contains knowledge *about* the subject and continues into a second folder that describes a journey made *with* that subject. The sequential nature of these folders produces the thread of argument, moving through the subject to arrive at a position. It is also possible, while reading, to place sections from each folder alongside each other, in order to read across the sections picking up relational nuance. To reflect this possibility titles often repeat between sections adding layers of meaning. It is my argument that this kind of relational movement back and forth through the archive is not only how artists learn and an ethical form of hospitality, but also a way of moving through the archive.

Contextual Review

Writing on the counter cultural, citizen's rights and feminist movements in the US in the 1960s, Tom Finkelpearl (2013) locates the beginnings of a movement in art to embrace the social, directly inspired by political activities outwith the field of art. He writes:

'artists were adopting, adapting and translating this sort of collectively imagined, cooperatively created political theater in the aesthetic realm, even as the aesthetics began to blur with social action.' (Ibid, p.19)

In this vein artist Suzanne Lacy is described by Finkelpearl as having developed a form of political theatre out of communicative structures evident in the women's movement, including consciousness-raising. Lacy acknowledges this debt and contribution to feminist forms also crediting art world figure Alan Kaprow as an important precedent for her work through his blurring of art and life categories. In this way she is one of a number of artists to cross the line between politics and art in a tradition that could arguably be drawn back to the Suffragettes, who still struggle to be defined by history as existing in both categories.[5] In the UK context the community arts movement extracted itself from art world discourse in order to work in more directly collaborative and interventionist ways with different communities, providing important histories for practitioners like Sophie Hope and Lorraine Leeson, two generations of artists with an interest in art as a social form. In parallel to this Barbara Steveni and John Latham of the Artist Placement Group were working more formally within art world discourse, negotiating artists' placements in industrial and political contexts. Like Lacy many artists with contemporary social practices draw inspiration from genealogies that are more or less accepted within art historical narratives. Beyond the much discussed geography of the US and contextually significant work in the UK many histories could be added to this short account to arrive at the conclusion that for some time now artists have been working against and moving the boundaries of art discourse, redefining the practice along social lines. Helen Smith writes:

'it no longer seems acceptable or even interesting for the unique contribution artists make to society to be purely symbolic.' (Smith, 2015, p.9)

Instead, as an artist, she feels motivated to be embedded in social contexts, intervening in operating systems *as well as* offering a symbolic response.[6]

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[5] Janet Lyon (1999) writes extensively on this issue in *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern*, offering an account of the Suffragettes' reception within high modernist artistic circles. Despite producing what Lyon describes as 'public and discursive art' Suffragettes were defined in the political field as bad artists and in the artistic field as simple militants lacking aesthetic lucidity (Lyon, 1999, pp. 104–109).

[6] Italics here indicate the importance of stressing the realisation that it is not necessary to divide artists into symbolic and non-symbolic categories but instead acknowledge the possibility that artist might work between these categories. This assertion was reiterated by artist Rick Lowe in

It is also evident from the growing pool of theory on collaborative, relational, site-specific and participatory art that discourse is responding. In responding the first struggle is with naming. I recently wrote to artist Jay Koh who had given me a copy of his book *Art-Led Participative Processes* (2015). I asked him why he offered a new name, *Art-Led Participative Processes* (2015). This name emerges in a field that already has so many ways of referring to art embedded in social relations: including New Genre Public Art (Lacy et al., 1995), Relational Aesthetics (Bourriaud et al., 2002), Dialogical Practice (Kester, 2004), Art with Communities (Leeson, 2009), Social Co-operation (Finklepearl, 2012), Participatory Art (Bishop, 2012) and Socially Engaged Art as well as the less fashionable Community Art (Kelly, 1984).[7] He replied that the existing names were 'too general and don't point to the critical differences in the concepts of the practitioners' (Koh, personal communication by email, June 2015). His own practice was more engaged with shared authorship than art*ist* led projects and with a greater 'concern for accountability to others and nonspecific human relationships' (Ibid) than practices developed from 'modernist' trajectories. For Koh the language in which to narrate a practice is important and affects its form. A name can suggest a different history affecting its reception in the present moment and its future. Language and practice co-exist and shape each other continuously. Writing earlier, Lorraine Leeson remembers a moment in the UK when artists, working in the social sphere, were vilified by the 'art establishment' leaving them in an extremely precarious position (Leeson, 2009, p.106). The fallout from this establishment disapproval can still be seen around the term community art, which, detached from its association as a radical political response, has become shorthand for weak practice in the margins of the art world.[8] For Leeson a change in discourse that could accommodate her practice was a matter of survival.

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response to Tanja Bruguera's sentiment that she wants her art 'to be the thing rather than point at the thing' with Lowe asserting his art is both a practical intervention and a poetic gesture that draws from symbolic traditions (Creative time summit, 2013, 23.00 - 26.45 mins).

[7] Socially engaged art is particularly ubiquitous in a European context and consequently difficult to accredit to one particular artist, curator or critic. Beyond this authors like Claire Bishop quite often switch between terms making citation or attachment of one term to one specific writer difficult. Bishop in fact offers her own list to illustrate the diversity of names accumulating around practice: 'This expanded field of relational practices currently goes by a variety of names: socially engaged art, community-based art, experimental communities, dialogic art, littoral art, participatory, interventionist, research-based, or collaborative art' (Bishop, 2006).

[8] To hear Leeson in more detail on this subject listen to category ten within the London Dinner as part of Hope's 1984 Dinner archive. For an interesting perspective on the gentrifying process from community art to current models of socially engaged practice see Larne Abse Gogarty (2014).

It is with a similar awareness of language, history and survival that I choose the term social art practice to refer to art practices throughout this thesis. This term is not a new addition to the above list but one that has some traction in art discourse, particularly in the US and UK contexts where it is possible to undertake an MFA in Social Practice.[9]

However I have chosen the name with a different genealogy in mind, referencing the work of performance artist Monica Ross. Ross used both these terms to highlight a missing history of practice, a feminist past that you can see if you look carefully in 'the social art practices of artists and curators now' (Ross, 2000, p.7). In pointing out a missing history her performance becomes a manifesto suggesting an important knowledge gap. The term social art practice signifies a particular history that has not been articulated. It is also a name that will be recognisable to an expanded field of practice and enable participation in the conversation. This difficult balance between unthought and recognisable language helps to accommodate a missing voice in the language of an established discourse. It is also the task set out by the manifesto, to speak within a tradition that has failed to recognise it, to play with language, to reproduce it but with a difference.

For Ross social art is a matter of making 'art*work* as communication not as commodity' (Ibid, p.5). This definition, which she cites as an aim for feminist practitioners in the UK from the 1970s onwards, falls in line with histories like Lucy Lippard's *Dematerialization of the Art Object* (Lippard, 1997). Where Lippard's account registers an engagement with context and a resistance to art's commodification, her curatorial practice, developing exhibitions like *Social Strategies by Women Artists* (1980), also acknowledges art as a social strategy. This important intersection between resistance to market forces and an interest in the communicative and social qualities of art meets in Ross' analysis of art's *work* and equally in her practice as an artist. Her politically engaged and radical practice joins many narratives, beginning as early as Michael Fried's *Art and Objecthood* (1963), that challenge ideas of passive spectatorship, offering art that moves towards relationships, encounters and public affairs. Through these developments marginalised feminist voices offered consistent political reminders of the consequences these challenges could have: more than simply new trends within a system that remains resolutely market driven, making art work for Ross meant working

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[9] In the US there is an MFA in social practice at Queens College, New York and an MA in Social Practice and Public Forms at California College of Arts whilst as of 2016/2017 Middlesex University will be offering a course in Art and Social Practice headed by Leeson.

on consciousness in a revolutionary way. Without losing its personal, expressive and subjective qualities, art, in feminist hands, had become a political and social act.

This move not only suggests art's changing relationship to spectatorship but also a fierce debate around questions of authorship and autonomy. At the heart of this debate are the critical voices of Grant Kester and Claire Bishop. Kester writes supportively on artists in more facilitative roles, suggesting their technique is a finely calibrated oscillation between self-loss and self-expression. Bishop, on the other hand, remains wary of more collaborative work and keen to lament a loss of aesthetic quality in the histories of shared authorship she selects. In Bishop's more traditional art historical stance, autonomy is elided into individualism, keeping art's relationship to neoliberal economics intact. For artists like Leeson this is unacceptable, she writes:

> 'the individualism that has emerged over the last five hundred years of visual art in western society has not encompassed the tools and processes required for effective social intervention, since its economic role was to create capital.' (Leeson, 2009, p.98)

Through these debates a binary is set up between utility and aesthetics in an ouroboros like argument around autonomy that all social art practices must try to answer anew, in seeking evaluation of their practice.

In relation to this binary, this thesis is concerned with a feminist position, not adequately represented in either side of the debate. It suggests knowledge of feminist theory, which often works to show invisible elements obscured by binary representations, could move us past the deadlock.[10] While Kester posits an oscillating position for artists that could balance aesthetics and utility, feminism has a more radical solution. It suggests the possibility and necessity of collectivity without self-loss, removing the assumed contradiction between artistic (written in art history as individual) and political (collective foregoing individualism) ways of being in the world. It argues self-expression is enhanced by collectivity, and that all artists draw on invisible networks of support to sustain their practices. Feminist art historians like Griselda Pollock, Lisa Tickner and Carol Duncan assert that all art is socially produced, a condition that is largely obscured by art history's emphasis on a few canonical artists.

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[10] In feminist theory Irigaray's (1985) writing is an exemplary example of thinking beyond binary positions.

Within this discourse loss of self is an everyday condition for the many, who work to sustain the recognition of a few creative individuals. Where feminist critique seeks to make this condition visible social art practice also announces and aspires towards a visible collectivity in the name of social change. It tries to think of a world where other forms of work can be valued and where invisible support systems can be acknowledged. This collectivity goes against the grain of many potent supporting myths around art history and capital, becoming an autonomous and extremely precarious activity.

In acknowledging feminism I join Shannon Jackson (2011) and Greg Sholette (2011) who have both written on the activist and performative aspects of social art practice that relate to feminist questions around labour and support. Through analysis of feminist manifesto forms in relation to social art practice I propose that these feminist questions are not only the content of certain activist practices but also more broadly they can be related to the form of practice as it has developed. Feminist manifestos are a metaphorical tool in the research that enables me to describe the particular sociality that is part of a feminist critical framework. The innovations feminism makes to the manifesto form can also be seen as innovations to the shape of art now as a social form. The focus on performance and archive in Jackson and Sholette's work respectively is expanded in this research through a consideration of feminist manifestos to think of the archive as a performative and hospitable political strategy in feminist hands. In this way feminist positions on archives and hospitality can become critical frameworks in order to reconsider the form of social practice.

Finally, besides Jackson and Sholette, Tom Finkelpearl (2013) also writes that feminist activists, working with techniques like consciousness-raising, were 'pioneers in American Cooperative Art' (Ibid, p.20). He credits feminism with 'surviving relentlessly' where other communal experiments failed (Ibid). In this he seems to suggest Lucy Lippard's assertion:

> 'The fact that feminism has something to offer the left that the left needs badly is as inarguable in art as it is in political organization. The transformation of society, at the heart of both feminism and socialism, will not take place until feminist strategies are acknowledged and fully integrated into the struggle.' (Lippard, 2004, p.115 in Ed. Harris)

In describing the different forms of social practice for the *Encyclopaedia of Aesthetics* (2014) Finkelpearl lays out a taxonomy with three categories of social art: relational, activist and antagonistic. In this way the binary set up by Bishop and Kester is expanded to include an explicitly political genealogy for some categories of practice. Though Finkelpearl's analysis is invaluable the specific lens of feminist manifestos offers another suggestion. It argues that when social art practice functions as a manifesto it does away with this taxonomy by being relational, activist and antagonistic in equal measure. The metaphor of manifesto offers a different way to evaluate a social practice that is neither exclusively concerned with its utility or its aesthetics. Instead the critical model suggests that we may read social practice evocatively and supportively through analysis of it as a poetic form which may be compelling enough to encourage us to reimagine the world.

Manifesto Definition

The opening premise tested by this research is that certain works of art may be considered as feminist manifestos in terms of their function, reception and interpretation. As such they can become a lens through which to view social art practices differently. Given this, the first move is to establish a definition for the feminist manifesto, drawn from pivotal feminist examples and theoretical perspectives on the manifesto form. This acts as a lens or guiding metaphor through which to reconsider social art practice. In this way the research is not a definitive guide to feminist manifestos but a way to inhabit manifesto as a metaphor, teasing out the radical political potential of social art practice and its feminist histories. Given the focus on social art practice I was interested in exploring manifesto as a conversational form that emerges from social relations, as well as producing new ones. I argue that it can also be perceived to be in dialogue with accepted historical narratives, voicing missing histories of oppression. The research is not simply about these dialogues. It also initiates one itself in as much as it aims to voice a missing feminist history in critical narratives of social art practice. Through this dialogue the thesis offers its own form of 'withness' knowledge, being a manifesto performance as much as a definition (Shotter, 2005). The conceptual work to situate manifesto as a metaphorical lens appears primarily in the About Manifesto section, which works as a poetic score for the rest of the archive, with motifs developed reoccurring elsewhere in different forms to produce a layered cartography and research methodology. This territory, beginning with feminist manifestos, can be

approached from different directions and is included in this Introduction as a number of transparent configurations (acetates) that map onto each other to form a complex geography (p.38). This research map relates directly to the manifesto definition explored here. With this cartography and description in mind the reader is asked to consider the manifesto form and by extension the thesis as a kind of poetics, keeping the whole in mind while looking at the individual parts.

At the heart of the manifesto definition or score is the understanding that manifestos are interstitial forms, holding a number of seemingly contradictory things in tension. For example, as can be seen in the first layer of the research map, in relation to time there is a balance of myth and history. Manifestos are historical to the extent that they are embedded in their particular contexts and demand change now, often signifying missing or repressed histories, which erupt into their contexts. Yet they are also, in a way, outside of historical time linking up with other moments through repetition of the form and representing a kind of timeless myth making. It is through poetry, defined recently by feminist art historian Angela Dimitrakaki as a collective intervention (not 'a thing done to you')(Dimitrakaki, 2013, p.5), that the manifesto holds these things in balance evocatively presenting bundles of related events, repeating motifs. Poetry is like myth. It plays with time, drawing together events that are somehow generatively interconnected with each other. These poetic myths spill into the social world affecting its form.

As well as myth and history manifestos also sit between critique and affirmation. Jenny Holzer explores this quality in her *Inflammatory Essay* (1979-82) series as a balance of rage and utopia, which appear on the first manifesto layer of the research map. Holzer's recognition of this in-between status is fundamental to the manifesto score that plays throughout the thesis. The research expands the balancing act she evokes to include, amongst other things deconstruction/reconstruction and hospitality/hostility through a consideration of the interstitial territory that joins them. Holzer's manifestos stage a deconstruction of political domination through language and then on the broken ground invite us to consider the endless relational possibilities for different futures that could emerge from this uncertainty. The logic around the unexpected potential of uncertain positioning is repeated elsewhere in the thesis: when all is lost all is possible. Here and elsewhere the holding in tension of uncertainty and relational possibility overturns the perceived order of things, reversing the hierarchical understanding of uncertainty as a weak position. On the first layer of the research map this overlapping territory, where oppositional concepts meet, is marked out as the space of dissensus. As I move into

encounters with practice, the second layer of the map records this knowledge *with* signalling the contents of the With Manifestos collection. Artists like Smith, Jelinek and Sollfrank are marked for the different ways they navigate this broken ground, creating shared time and dialogue.

Besides the interstitial nature of manifestos, the score describes them as taking up a non-exclusive, moving position. This position, on the move, is at the heart of many iconic feminist manifestos, reoccurring through time, in contributions from Monique Wittig (1969), Donna Haraway (1991) and Jenny Holzer (1979-82) who identifies the invisible movement of power and ideology. Holzer's response to this pervasive threat is to keep moving. In this, her tactic echoes art historian Griselda Pollock's writing around the Women's Movement (Pollock, 1999). For Pollock movement across discourses and historical texts, identifying repetitions and repressions in different discourses, is essential feminist work. For this reason movement is marked out at the centre of the research map and symbolised by the soundwave, which expresses the important movement of voices between bodies. The collection also moves back and forth between an exploration of pivotal feminist manifestos, feminist history and contemporary social practice – threading numerous lines of connection between the apparently discrete topics. These different areas are expressed as a triangle framing the circular areas of tension on the research map with the various practices that become important appearing at relevant co-ordinates on each layer. Pivotal practices like Mierle Laderman Ukeles in Manifesto and later, in hospitality, Marysia Lewandowska (WAA) and Monica Ross (Valentine), are on the move between each point of the triangle. Through this configuration of topics and practices the map provides the basis for readers to make a perceptual shift, to start to read feminist theory in contemporary social practice and visa versa. Equally, feminist manifestos are reflected in both spheres as a theoretical and performative praxis. By moving between discreet areas a response is offered to Pollock's deconstructive impulse, a set of relational possibilities.

The feminist manifesto's deployment of movement as a guerrilla tactic is seen in relation to Julia Kristeva's theory of the dialogic, which draws on Bahktin, to describe a poetic paradigm that offers a multiplicity of meaning, expressed by the mathematics 'that extends from zero to two' (Kristeva et al., 1981, p.69). This ambiguous poetic strategy rewrites monological understanding, framed by Kristeva, as an unequal binary relationship between one (God) and zero. In the face of this oppressive equation that fixes the giver (1) and receiver (0) of knowledge in place, poetry replies with an active,

moving reading of the world that is always at least double. Kristeva's analysis of poetry as a kind of doubling links in with the research definition of the manifesto as a doubled structure, symbolised on the map as the two interlinked but opposed circles of action. It also forms the basis for the double structure of the research, which lies between affirmation and critique. Growing from this doubled structure the layers of the map attest to the multiplicity created within a dialogic paradigm. Through poetic recoding, which often works as mimesis, one of many doubling strategies, the feminist manifesto finds a way to accommodate a multiplicity of numerous, often isolated, outsider positions. These positions, on the margins, in spaces defined by traditional rhetoric as outside of political possibility, are brought together through poetics to produce a collective politics that does not reduce the complexity of multiple voices.

In approaching movement I also discuss Jacques Rancière's definition of the politics of *dissensus* (2015). He describes *dissensus* as the placing of one world in another and relates this particularly to early feminist tactics of moving private space into public view. This placing of one world in another is also Rancière's definition of political action, which reimagines 'the distribution of the sensible' through the inclusion of voices that have been confined to places outside of accepted institutional discourse (Rancière, 2006, p.7). The space of Dissensus is marked out as part of the interstitial territory occupied by the artists that begin to populate the research map as we move between sections of the archive.

The question of outsider voices raised by Rancière's consideration of politics reverberates elsewhere through an examination of the domestic sphere as an excluding and excluded space. The Hospitality section plays these questions of home alongside perspectives on the move, through the important reversal suggested by Jacques Derrida: perhaps it is only one who has endured the experience of being deprived a home – the refugee/guest/outsider - can offer hospitality. This kind of reversal again defies fixed positioning, this time of the guest and host, bringing into question the model where the head of the household, owning space, permits people to cross the threshold. The move suggests another doubling. The manifesto (and by extension artist with a social practice) is simultaneously a guest, making strange, disruptive proclamations AND a host setting up safe spaces for disaffected subjectivities. By doubling up as guests and hosts feminist manifesto performances create a space and time of radical hospitality, this is signified by the red hospitality layer on the interstitial space of the research map. This unorthodox claim to hospitality in the definition acknowledges that while the manifesto is clearly

against a number of things it also gathers strength by hosting a broad array of supporters, moving between different subjectivities in a compelling yet barely visible way.[11] Consequently where the score includes a rewriting of hospitality it also exposes it as a significant internal secret, suggesting that acknowledging the support it offers could lead to a more vulnerable, fundamentally interdependent view of ourselves.

This view is approached through a consideration of practices like Marysia Lewandowska's Women's Audio Archive (WAA). Through the archive Lewandowska insists on a kind of imperfect communication, including moments of loss and failure, as an important alternative to the violence of absolute coherence. Twenty years on Lewandowska's methodology is seen besides durational social art performances, particularly the practice of Chu Chu Yuan and Jay Koh who also move through unfamiliar territories, embracing the possibility of being at a loss yet, like Lewandowska, endeavouring to create shared time in encounters with difference. This poetic doubling of guest/host created through a sense of movement, a kind of hospitality practiced by strange guests, seamlessly links up marginalised subjectivities to create a common sense of struggle.

By defining the manifesto as a movement between, the thesis also draws on Braidotti's notion of transposition (2006). Using the metaphor of music she writes:

> 'Transposition indicates variations and shifts of scale in a discontinuous but harmonious pattern. It is thus created as an in-between space of zigzagging and of crossing: non-linear, but not chaotic; nomadic, yet accountable and committed; creative but also cognitively valid; discursive and also materially embedded.' (Braidotti, 2006, p.5)

This metaphor, that draws on the notion of in-between space, is useful in relation to the three collections in the archive, it resonates with the movement between and across different, interlinked but singular perspectives on a subject that the archive requires. This movement in-between is both an action employed in the labour of hospitality and by the manifesto that links up different subjectivities in order to produce 'a prolific in-

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[11] The association of manifesto with hospitality flies in the face of much manifesto theory, which emphasises the loud, madness inherent in the form. For example in her study of manifestos written, almost exclusively by men, within the modernist *avant-garde*, Mary Ann Caws writes 'stripped to the bare bones, clean as a whistle and as piercing the manifesto immodest and forceful, exuberant and vivid, attention grabbing' (Caws, 2001, xxi).

between space' (Ibid, p.6). By placing the manifesto in dialogue with hospitality the research moves into new territory, complicating the common perception of manifesto as simply a loud unwanted guest to focus on its less visible hosting qualities. This different perspective develops in the hospitality section by offering a combination of feminist critique of existing modes of hospitality and suggestions of affirmative alternatives. On the research Map layer signifiying *With* hospitality practices like Jonathan Baxter's meet the rage of Tanja Ostojic's critique to produce a space of radical hospitality within the larger framework of the SCAN events. These curatorial strategies are seen alongside Maria Hlavajova's suggestion of a new institutional paradigm.

The final green layers of the map relates this basis for a paradigm shift, which complicates the fixed positioning of guest and host, to the archive. Conceptual work around hospitality is used to reimagine the impossibly constrained space of the archive laid out by deconstructive analysis as an open activist space. In the *About* layer various feminist theoretical voices are added to be joined in the final layer by the examples of archival practice exemplified by artists like Hope and Lewandowska as well as institutions like the Women Slide Library and Glasgow Women's Library.

On Voice

It is no coincidence that this form of outsider politics, producing and practicing in a generative in-between space, is often described as voice. Working in this space, the poetics of manifesto are seen as resounding, when written they are perceived as texts on the verge of speech, close to action and embodied. Consequently two important theoretical explorations of the acoustic sphere and the spoken word by Adriana Cavarero and Mladen Dolar are important in relation to the thesis' definition of manifesto. In *For More Than One Voice* (Cavarero, 2005) and *A Voice and Nothing More* (Dolar, 2006), both writers chart an extensive consideration of voice, suggesting it as a medium that derives radical political potential from its occupation of a space in-between. Journeying through linguistics, metaphysics, ethics and politics, Dolar charts a poetic course for voice that parallels Freud's developments in psychoanalysis and Kafka's in literature. In relation to linguistics Dolar notes the dramatic tension between the word, part of symbolic order, and the voice, which is linked to various pre-symbolic sounds and in excess of meaning. As opposed to the logic of structural difference in semantics, the excess offered by voice works through similarities and reverberations, producing a poetic fold in language. This focus on repetition and resonance takes us not

only into psychoanalysis, but also into manifesto territory. This in turn is bound up with the science and politics of remembering in response to contextual adversity.

Arguably it is these folds in language that Pollock also suggests we search for, a subversive undercurrent of unconscious voices that may tell other histories. Similarly, Cavarero writes on these unconscious folds provided by voice. She relates a history from Aristotle to Habermas where the vocal has been consistently marginalised by western philosophical traditions and their interest in eternal, immovable categories. The vocal becomes a minor form in this history. In response Cavarero takes up Arendt's (1958) critique of philosophy as failing to deal with the contingent and relational world of politics. She anchors Arendt's critique to a consideration of voice, which unlike the fixed world of sight is always moving, changing becoming. She asserts:

> 'for a radical rethinking of the classical connection between speech and politics, especially from a feminist perspective, recuperating the theme of the voice is therefore an obligatory strategic gesture.' (Cavarero, 2005, p.207)

Like Dolar, Cavarero argues that voice is usefully ambiguous, crossing between body, the territory of the feminine in western metaphysics, and language. She asserts we must hold this tension, neither sacrificing voice to the universal laws of semantics nor semantics to the animal pleasures of pure voice. The former sacrifice of voice risks the loss of poetics with all its political potential, whilst the latter disregard for meaning leaves us outside of political systems. Caverero asserts that through maintenance of this tension the minor poetics of voice offer an outsider politics both foundational and disruptive. Her argument also holds a tension between two important aspects of voice: its relatedness and its uniqueness.

Like Braidotti, Cavarero explores the embodied and embedded politics of voice partially through the metaphor of music, describing a subversive, rhythmic undercurrent to language that also pervades written texts. Through Kristeva's materialist critique Cavarero relates a connection between the history of voice and the mother, who offers a first voice. This mother tongue opens up the relational joy of passing pre-symbolic sounds back and forth, making generative connections. This play of sound occurs prior to becoming an individual within symbolic systems of language. The acoustic sphere of primary care, normally performed by the mother, consequently offers a first experience of relational proximity, delivered through voice and rooted in the rhythmic drives of the

body. This experience is defined by Kristeva with reference to Plato's term *chora* in *Timaeus*. While for Plato the term functions as a kind of negative space to the positives of the masculine realms of the father and the son, in Kristeva's *Revolutions in Poetic Language* (1984) the semiotic *chora* is both a foundational, unconscious support for systems of language and a disruptive excess that can be traced through the pleasure of reverberating sounds in poetic texts. In these poetic spaces 'voice and writing come together against a certain systemic and normative concept of language' (Cavarero, 2005, p.132). The invisible work performed by Plato's *chora*, a primal form of hospitality, finds voice in Kristeva's analysis. Sounds emerging from the semiotic *chora* remind us that we are more than isolated individuals and this reminder disrupts fixed systems of power. We are related, our voices meet and sound off of each other to create an ethics of proximity. This memory is of significant importance to the politics of manifestos, which also attempt to engender collective resistance to oppressive systems and change.

Despite the call to belonging and collectivity offered by poetic texts Cavarero insists meaning is altered by each voice and by each location. Though the unconscious rhythms of voice suggest we are more than ourselves the specific sounds of voice, travelling through specific bodies, ensure we remain unique. Cavarero frames voice as the medium for a politics that avoids the abstract and universal categories of western metaphysical thought. This politics is conceptualised by Arendt as a field of action (1958). Arendt argues that while thought is solitary, speech occurs between particular bodies. Speech consequently requires a non-generalisable ethics that is responsive to the particular context and individuals within a field of action. This conceptualisation reframes the *polis* less as a territory and more as a moving contingent space, generated by interaction. This space is described in Italian feminism as an absolutely local, embodied community of women (Dominijanni, 2000).[12] It is an in-between space, differently voiced by Lewandowska, who, in WAA, sounds out a community of women around questions delivered in a 'crippled voice', which speaks of her particular history and context.

The plurality of voices, encountered at different moments by the research, speaks of a situated and relational politics that resonate well with key principles in social art practice. Given this resonance and the generative nature of embodied conversational knowledge, voice presents itself as an important medium within the thesis with

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[12] Cavarero acknowledges Italian Feminism as a broad tradition of thought and quotes particularly from Ida Dominijanni 'La parola e nostra political' in *Duemilaeuna: Donne che cambiano l'Italia*, ed. Annarosa Buttarelli, Luisa Murano and Liliana Rampello (Milan: Practiche, 2000, p. 210).

research drawing equally from spoken and written forms throughout. Finally, the significance of conversation as an unacknowledged cultural form emerges through the online audio component of the research archive, which draws inspiration from Lewandowska's earlier methodology.

For Cavarero, Hélène Cixous meets Kristeva's conception of the semiotic *chora* producing a writing that 'reverberates' in the drive of speech and countering an oppositional economy that privileges the semantic (Cavarero, 2005, p.143). Comparing Cixous to Derrida, Cavarero describes two writers who speak their native language as guests or outsiders. Her description recalls Deleuze and Guattarri's assertion in *Kafka Towards a Minor Literature* (1986):

> 'a minor literature doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language.' (p.16)

Accordingly Cixous subverts and penetrates the dominant language performing a 'dynamic contamination'(Cavarero, 2005, p.147). Deleuze and Guattarri assert the political and collective nature of what they identify as a minor literature:

> 'It is literature that produces an active solidarity in spite of scepticism, and if the writer is in the margins or completely outside his or her fragile community, this situation allows the writer all the more possibility to express another possible community and to forge the means for another possible consciousness and another sensibility.' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986, p.19)

These characteristics of a minor literature suggest it as an important conceptualisation to consider in a discussion on manifestos. Not all 'minor literature' performs as a manifesto but as the example of Cixous, placed within a history of voice itself as a minor form, proves, there is fertile ground between Deleuze and Guattari's description and the research topic.

A Minor Methodology

The definition of manifesto used in this thesis is a moving, poetic form that performs the politics of voice, holding a number of things in tension to create a generative, relational in-between space constructed through contingent and interactive forms. The definition

situates feminist manifestos within the realm of Kristeva's analysis of poetics asserting that feminist manifestos are dialogical forms that are always at least doubled. They are forms that demand to be spoken and play host to multiple outsider voices. Finally, as hosts to these outsiders, that exist in the cracks, they can also be considered to work as a minor literature. By associating these theoretical perspectives with feminist manifestos the research offers an expansive view, opening up a path to imagine new forms of political action.

More than an immovable description what is offered in this summary is the beginning of a methodology that functions less as a definition, more of a becoming. My practice has involved inhabiting the metaphorical forms of manifesto, archive and hospitality suggested by the initial generative premise; that certain works of art may be considered as feminist manifestos thanks to their reception function and interpretation. The research tested this premise against the field of social art, looking for examples of practice that resonated with the manifesto score I had created. Given the importance of Braidotti's assertion that knowledge should 'begin from where you are' the choices of social practice were determined by my situated position, which nevertheless offered a rich resource of carefully considered work (2014). Through knowledge of specific social practices that I encountered within the research environment I identified two distinct ways of knowing, *about* and *with*, through which to proceed. Consequently where knowledge about manifestos contributed to the score detailed above my choices of practices to consider were very much based on 'withness' knowledge. It was important to arrive, like the social practice artist, without knowing in advance, to enter into conversation with artists, opening a dialogue between feminist manifestos and their work, without offering answers. In this way I negotiated a path in unfamiliar territories through the same question Lewandowska asked in her recorded conversations – what is missing (WAA. 013)? In approaching artists and curators this key question of missing history was often a common concern that offered a point of departure. From this point, to use Arendt's terms, a local community of action opened up around the research.

 The interactions with contemporary practice formed the basis of an improvisational strategy that matched the form and the content of the research. In writing on Helen Mayer and Newton Harrisons' lifelong ecological art practice Anne Douglas and Chris Fremantle describe a poetic process of directed attention practiced by the artists in order to create stimulus towards the 'improvising of new futures' (Douglas & Fremantle, 2016, p.455). In discussing seminal works by the artist duo, Douglas and Fremantle

approach the idea of improvisation not as a specialist art practice, but in life, as a form of 'conversational drift' (Ibid, 457). They write:

> 'The drift references the unplanned journey and emphasizes that as authors of the artwork, while they do not know where or how, it is their intention that the work or its lessons will be taken up by others.' (Ibid)

The improvisation of new futures is drawn from attention to a particular moment of experience and, importantly as in my research, from using the materials at hand. In the case of the Harrisons this improvisation grows from a careful balance of words, images and conceptual storytelling, meant to be read out loud, like a 'chant', that will stay with participants in the work for a long time (Ibid, p.456). The form hosts in a fundamental way, offering space also for breath. This breathing space provides time to change positions. On writing of the Harrisons' hospitable poetics, Douglas and Fremantle reference Gary Peters' (2009) conception of improvisation as an engagement with the past that imagines it not as something closed, that simply repeats itself, but as something the improviser re-opens and reimagines in the present. This opening is a conversation that invites multiple voices around a shared issue, without resolving the tensions between perspectives. Instead tension is reimagined as a generative force, a point of departure. The holding in tension is the work's poetics.

This form of improvisation, a working with the materials to hand, plays out again and again in the feminist histories I have encountered. In *Feministo* (1975-77) it manifests as the imperfect aesthetic of household items strung together, falling apart. Or elsewhere Holzer creates space for improvisation from everyday words and expressions, recognising the tensions and contradictions in oppressive language systems. Finally, with Mierle Laderman Ukeles, whose work represents a fertile meeting point between social art practice and manifesto, the tension between the positions of maintenance and development work becomes the starting point for a lifelong project to counter cultural amnesia around maintenance work, inhabiting it to reimagine conceptions of time and waste in contemporary culture.

Alongside these significant historical examples I was interested in experiencing contemporary practices that work with improvisation and looking for points of connection with the manifesto score. I used the score to draw out similarities and differences between a given practice and my definition of feminist manifesto. Rather

than being a rigid framework I worked with it in a way that was responsive to the context allowing it to enter specific conversations with artists where and when it was relevant whilst always drawing on concerns that arose from larger debates in feminist discourse. Through this improvisational process I was searching in practice for moments of resonance and found them in work that approached history, memory and the ethics of relationships.

While dialogues with practice involved improvising around a score the written thesis sought to represents poetics as a kind of intransitive writing, on the move between different moments to tease out and share common attributes. Replaying Holzer's formula of rage and utopia the methodology has sought out these elements where they occur in feminism and social art practice, not only holding a tension between affirmation and critique but between historical moments that recall each other. Through the methodology an underlying question arises and repeats: what is different between now and then? What is the same? Not only did I ask these questions of historical practice but I also found others similarly searching, from Sophie Hope's work in the Archives to Balkind and Edbrooks' reading group in Manifesto, artists were looking backwards to move forward. Their methodologies improvised with past materials and memories in a similar way to Peters' description. Consequently this improvised strategy presented itself as an extremely relevant and generative methodology.

As well as playing the score alongside social art it also played out in my own practice. Beginning as guest in the manifesto section by initiating conversations with artists like Jelinek, Smith, Sollfrank, Balkind and Edbrook I aimed to be present in the wider conversations their practices provoke and also to raise the question of missing feminist histories. Through theoretical work to make the connection between guest and host positions the research journey also evolved to see me take on a hosting role in the Scottish Contemporary Art (SCAN) events that appear in the hospitality and archive sections. [13] In line with the development of a theory of radical hospitality the curatorial work is not only to host but to make hospitality visible, announcing it as the framework for the event series and acting also as a guest to the North East.

As a guest/host to the region I occupied a space on the edge of mainstream discourse in many respects. In this way my forms of improvisation were also practiced from the

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[13] www.sca-net.org

minor position sketched out by Deleuze and Guattarri, which emerged as another facet in the curatorial methodology described by the thesis. My first point of call in thinking about curatorial practice was to initiate a conversation with the curatorial team Mother Tongue whose work is detailed in the opening With Hospitality section. Their practice raised urgent questions around missing history and the imperatives of hospitality from the perspectives of those excluded so fitted well into manifesto territory. Conversations with the duo brought up important questions around the ethics of curatorial work, which formed the groundwork to my own practice and helped link me to a wider network.

In the opening event of the Hospitality series this question of curating was approached obliquely. In the series it was important to work with artists emerging from, or connected to, the specific community in Aberdeen. To curate the series I moved through this process of conversational drift described by The Harrison's work. Improvising 'with the materials to hand' I turned the question of missing narrative to face the context of Aberdeen. Although artists were invited to speak from many other contexts in one way or another, each had links with Aberdeenshire and the artists and cultural activists working here. The speculative conversational process that led up to the events carried through into the public moments. These were organised as intentionally open spaces, in support of unexpected conversational encounters. This curatorial process both spoke to the situated and relational politics described above, aiming to create that generative in-between space that Arendt imagines, and it was a matter of necessity given the demands of the SCAN brief and my own relatively powerless position in relation to institutional networks. Both Alana Jelinek and David Blyth, artists who participated in the first SCAN event I curated, offered different, strange perspectives on the process of gathering together and creating collections. Blyth's work favoured the imperfect and acknowledged that his creative acts were contingent and often emerged as a result of chance occurrence, while Jelinek offered a critique of the act of collecting from the position of those collected. I felt that their work met around a preoccupation with exploring other perspectives and meeting with difference. It also combined to offer a critique of curating as a process that implements a certain hierarchy by cherry picking the 'best' examples under conceptual headings that say more about the power of the authoring curator than the environments they find themselves in.

From this beginning the series offered conversations from the margins that emerged from the specific community I found myself in. Through SCAN I was able to explore the

art of curating as a minor form, a kind of improvisation that grows from careful attention to the available materials, seeking out generative connections between practices around the increasingly urgent shared concern presented to us by questions of hospitality.

I also witnessed this form of curating play out in the archives that I visited. Early on at a conference on archives that I attended in order to hear more about Mother Tongue's curatorial practice – Edinburgh based curator Richard Demarco asked a room full of archivists – who here is an artist? His critical provocation attempted to illustrate something missing from the room and possibly the discourse. Contrary to his belief that archivists were not artists, my experience offered a different perspective. The archivist quite literally works with the materials to hand, shaping the particular form of the archive from the contents that present themselves and drawing out its rich potential in the process. Given this realisation the SCAN series also approached archiving as a curatorial methodology and social practice, which is all too often invisible. Where time, history and memory revealed themselves as important concerns for many artists in social practice rich parallels between archival methodologies and artistic ones began to open up as the research progressed, suggesting new possibilities for the thesis. More than simply presenting itself as a home for feminist manifestos it seemed important to consider the archive itself as an alternative political space that would also offer unique perspectives on the art of hospitality. These realisations, again developed through being with various relevant archives and radical archivists, created the final research imperative to bring attention not only to the contents of the archive but to interrogate the possible political potential of its forms.

In summary the methodology involved bringing the theoretical underpinning in Kristeva, Pollock and others and the resulting definition for feminist manifesto into conversation with social art practice. I did this in private and personal conversations with social practice artists like Helen Smith and in public talks and workshops. The crossing between private and public was an important part of my strategy. As mentioned the basis of my selection revolved around my situated position within the research community in Aberdeen and the wider connections it offered. Furthermore I was looking for practices that embodied a balance between criticality and hospitality highlighted by the theoretical framework. My curatorial strategy also developed out of this definition. Again, working from a situated position, I paired up critical and utopic practices in an attempt to find ways for events to embody manifesto spaces. In relation

to the work on hospitality I was also interested in an exchange between home and other perspectives that blurred these boundaries.

The final form of the thesis developed out of Marysia Lewandowska's conversational model that made use of the archive as a hosting space. As well as the form the methodology draws from Lewandowska's careful distinction between an interview and a conversation; whilst an interview is initiated to find out something a conversation is a method to find out how to be with, an improvised and personal way to understand context and to create a community of support. It is a method to create and explore common ground. This definition underpins my methodological choice of conversation as a means to find out how and if the feminist theoretical and historical work I was committed to could sit within a contemporary community of practice. In this way the form became another way to test the possibilities of practice (in this case archive as art work) as a manifesto performance: something open and generative, creating political consciousness within its group of users.

Conclusions

'When I write I have a sense that there is a perfect way to express what you want to express but fortunately you never achieve it.'

Marlene Nourbese Philip in WAA 05

At the core of my aims and objectives is the intention to offer three conceptual perspectives on social art practice as a feminist manifesto and, through staging an encounter between these perspectives, to reach an expanded and generative definition of both areas of practice. This chosen framework, of three perspectives that cross cut each other, is not the only way to look at the relationship of manifestos to archives and to rethink the roots of socially engaged practice. In fact it is a highly idiosyncratic approach. It is important first to acknowledge the relativity of how the research has been undertaken, which is only one of other possible approaches to the subject.

The thesis explores encounter as a minor form and returns the conclusion that there is little doubt as to its generative nature as a methodology. It also tests the hypothesis that certain social art practices function as feminist manifestos, creating a score, which can

be played in encounters with practice. Through conversations, presentations and curated events the hypothesis has presented itself as an important and missing critical frame for social practice soliciting positive responses and continued dialogue from many artists and curators in the field. The hypothesis urges us to remember the critical edge provided by the rage of a manifesto and offers a new pedagogical perspective on social practice centred on its politics and poetics. This reading is not only expansive but creates movement within a critical discourse polarised around issue of aesthetics and utility.

In this way, like a manifesto, it offers a missing history or perspective, it does not, however, provide an extensive survey of the history of social art practice. An alternative more conventional historical review would have offered the reader a different kind of foundation from which to arrive at a position. Consequently the research is limited in terms of what it offers as a comprehensive survey and what it may say about the whole field of socially engaged practice. In some senses by pointing to what is missing it questions the very idea that a comprehensive survey and offers instead something partial and situated, running the risk that other positions fail to identify. The research uses the lens of feminist manifesto to look carefully at a number of practices from within, this perspective is offered instead of a view of the whole field.

This feminist lens on practice also suggests a closer look at the politics of hospitality. Raising the question of hospitality in encounters with social practice has revealed a nuanced approached that sees experienced artists adopt a double posture as guests and hosts in conflicted terrain. Knowledge of these guest/host strategies gained through the research methodologies feeds back into discourse around manifestos suggesting their hidden hospitable aspects and consequently enriching discourse on the subject. Furthermore these strategies offer possible methodologies with which to navigate the contested terrain of feminist archives going forward. Finally, the thesis tests the possibility of archive as a place of encounter by adopting it as a form. This move is a practice-based response, following the impulse expressed by social practice artists to know by being immersed within a context. As with the field of social art practice this immersed perspective also has limitations. The research does not present an exhaustive account of feminist archives or complete survey of feminist contributions to the manifesto genre. Consequently, there are other research projects that would compliment the thesis and offer a broader view of feminism's many and varied

contribution to the manifesto genre.[14] What it offers instead is a view from an intersection of two subject areas, and work to unearth historical connections between them, which combine to shed new insights on each other in the present moment.

Beyond this meeting between feminist manifesto and social art practice, and the limitations of scope the methodological position presents, each part also represents its own configuration of the different perspectives, staging its own encounter. In returning to the archive I have tried to assess how this main encounter works, where it fails and also how the smaller configurations represented inside each collection play out. I am struck by the differences between each part and the difficulty these differences present going forward in relation to the coherence of the whole. I think of the collections in relation to specific readers, often one collection seems to be most relevant. There is an impulse to share or hand it over in small parts, to break up the whole. This impulse recognises the complexity and volume of materials created by an approach that foregrounds encounter. Conversational approaches tend to produce a volume of material and a lot of loose ends. The staging of encounter produces the kind of complexity that is arguably inherent to the 'layered critical framework' aimed at and is, as noted above, a testimony to the generative nature of encounter. Yet this layering is also a limitation. It poses the risk that visitors may find the archive difficult to navigate due to its volume and complexity. My work has been in thinking through the connection between parts of the research yet some of the navigational difficulty could be countered by a different index or contents system, which could enable readers to simply select a relevant part. The need for an index is partially answered by the timeline and research map, which are colour coded to indicate different parts of the archive, yet a more complete index would provide the building blocks of an alternative pedagogical discourse, focusing less on the journey or connection between parts. By considering navigation there is a return to the question of hospitality, also raised in the aims and objectives. Undoubtedly the writing suggests a different kind of hospitality but does it also enact it? The possibility of handing over the keys to knowledge are limited by the size and complexity of the form.

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[14] One hugely interesting example of a different approach is Laura Guy's PhD Thesis *Manifestos: Aesthetics and politics in queer times* (2017) which focuses on the temporalities of the manifesto form in order to map intersections between aesthetics and politics in histories of queer social movements since 1960s. Despite a similar subject area Guy's approach pulls out many other interesting examples of manifesto forms not covered in this research.

Tracing back to the earlier section that lays out a score for becoming feminist manifesto, it is also the work of the conclusion to consider how effective this guiding metaphor has been. The research has aimed to use this metaphor to live with and enact the social practices it encounters, producing a kind of ghosting, which goes between *withness* and *aboutness* knowledge. Already, in going between these two ways of knowing, the research plays out the movement of a manifesto and a social art practice. The thesis, as archive, represents a number of crossings, between feminist history and contemporary practice, between hostility and hospitality, affirmation and critique, between time frames and differing conceptions of history. In crossing, the aim of the work is to balance hostility and hospitality. The thesis also archives a number of pivotal feminist crossings, the small back and forth movements of letters in the post, recording shared meals and hardships. As well as this it records the larger movement of worlds, turning houses and housework inside out to become public displays of resistance. These gestures are by nature frequently multiple and fragmented, small threads that link isolated subjectivities. In recognition of this Deborah Withers suggests feminism itself is an earthquake territory (2015). Rather than seeking to smooth over this broken ground, or occupy a singular position, the artists included often embrace multiplicity, creating as Holzer does, an urgent gathering of words on the move, asking for multiple responses. It is through this multiplicity, that the form of the archive suggests itself, reframed by historian Carolyn Steedman (2002), as a place of fragments offering endless possibilities for reconfiguration. Does the form hold this multiplicity together without reducing the necessary complexity of each part? Where above I have considered the danger of lack of coherence between parts another limitation is centred around the opposite effect; that manifesto might be too dominant a metaphor, in danger of over determining the connections between different elements.

Riffing off of multiple displays of affirmation and resistance the research derives its poetry from the resonances produced between different gestures. It suggests that this poetry is a revolutionary praxis. Yet the imperative to hold things in tension requires dissonance as well as resonance. Althea Greenan's exploration of the Women's Art Slide Library asserts that it should be possible to feel the fabric of place in a political archive and for each example to offer some traction to the overriding ideas of the whole. In crossing it is important not to erase the differences between elements. The form moves through friction, which is also a form of critical reflexivity. Equally, critical reflexivity is needed in relation to individual parts. Dissonance is created not only in noticing where the guiding metaphor fails but also in being able to balance the affirmation in each

example with critical reflection. Is there enough critical reflection on where individual examples fail to fit with the metaphor? Equally, where the research has most often focused on affirmative examples of feminist and social praxis this focus is only one position and cannot speak for all experiences of feminism or social practice. In recognising the significance of feminism as a missing history there is a danger that the research offers a utopic vision of feminism as a unified terrain. To focus on manifesto is to focus on what Withers describes as a bridge (2015). The limitation of this focus is that it risks simplifying or forgetting the earthquake territory it crosses.

The extent to which the research achieves the necessary balance of affirmation and critique is a pertinent question to consider in the conclusion. The methodology has been essentially dialogic. Contemporary artists and voices from feminist history have suggested that consciousness-raising is not a polished monologue. Rather it is a back and forth *process*, a restless, uncertain conversation on different possibilities for living together. In the face of these questions it could be important to refer to the writing of Mikhail Bahktin whose work is also a kind of bridge between the 'paranoid' territories of Julia Kristeva and the reconstructive approach Grant Kester associates with the work of socially engaged practice (2011). In writing on Dostoyevsky's poetics Bahktin introduces the concept of the 'unfinalizable' in order to describe a quality of dialogue, an unending relationship between individuals, artworks and communities (Bahktin, 1984, p.58). To answer this question of how the research holds things in tension it is necessary to offer more questions and listen for the voices that are returned. This suggestion adds an element of uncertainty to my concluding statements. In looking for responses, both from those included and others, the work of the research continues. This dialogical facet is compelling to the extent that it works on my own consciousness as a researcher and practitioner, moving the work forward and taking a risk by probing for failures as well as moments of success. By remembering Bahktin in the conclusion I approach the idea not only of limitation but of failure.

As noted the archive texts spin out in multiple directions consciously crossing the borders between taxonomies. This play in multiple directions creates navigational challenges that relate to the archives' important function as a holding space, a place of gathering and shelter (Derrida, 1996; Eichhorn, 2013). To be an effective shelter an archive must hold its form. Kristeva (1982) and Holzer (1979-82) remind us that failure to maintain any borders is to slip into abjection.

These failures of maintenance are a central preoccupation for Mierle Laderman Ukeles, who offers the research archive a novel way to consider this balance between multiplicity, inclusion and safe space. To understand something about this maintaining aspect of archiving we have to return, enacting an archival impulse, to a moment before the artist produced the *Maintenance Manifesto* (1969). Prior to the moment of writing the manifesto Ukeles was involved in the process of producing other holding spaces, inflatable forms and tightly wrapped cloth works, energy pods that spoke of unencumbered creativity and forward momentum. These forms failed to hold. Their leaking borders tell a story similarly told by work in feminist archives. Ukeles relates a minimalist art that forgets a whole culture of maintenance labour that contributes to its forms. To work with feminist archives is to differently remember this leaking. Rather than cover over these gaps the feminist archives I have worked in start, like Antigone, from this place of loss. They are engaged with the politics of memory reminding us that the archive begins at the point where memory fails, it is supplementary to but not identical to, spontaneous living memory. In this way the archive that follows is no different, it offers one view of the past that may be very different to other living memories of feminism and contemporary practice. The possibility of this difference is a limitation, a risk that this gathering of knowledge will not hang together or relate to the lived experiences that it approaches. Yet feminist archival theory suggests that in the archive it is possible to create a productive dissensus this way. One world into another becomes one time, dragged into another, in order to trouble us with the questions it asks. Many may not agree with the feminist pasts on offer but the challenge is to make it possible for them to stay despite these differences, to disagree productively by conceding failures as well as successes.

If maintenance is also a 'drag', Ukeles both acknowledges the drudgery in this work and embraces it as a repetitive process that keeps us alive (Ukeles, 1969). In living the drag she turns the process of archiving and collecting on its head, interrupting the unequal binary between what is collected and what is thrown away. Her work suggests that even this simple and essential hierarchy can be recoded, that it is possible to move between the apparent opposites of waste and art, revealing them as interconnected, one leaking into the other. Acknowledging this the artist offers her own unfinalizable poetics and vision of productive failure. This moment of leakage is troubling, yet Ukeles chooses not to sew it up. Instead, she remains on the threshold converting cold fury into energy and creative potential through small, carefully considered and repeated rituals of encounter that begin with a handshake. Her work is key to this research because it moves between

the three points noted on the layered diagram – feminist manifesto, contemporary social practice and feminist theoretical writing. As well as creating linking threads she also offers a reminder that is useful in approaching the research limitations; that the ability to acknowledge failure can in itself be a generative act.

This question of where the archive leaks is also a question of how it hosts and what it fails to include. The balance is between creating a place of safety and allowing for openings. These elements combine to host in a certain way, cultivating and testing the resilience of various guests who also exist on the edges of larger systems. Steedman writes of the archive as 'Memory's potential space' (Steedman, 2002, p.83). She relates this potential space, between the individual and the environment, to Donald Winnicott's analysis of play, as a vital and paradoxical state of being alone in the presence of someone. This someone is 'available and continues to be available after being forgotten. This person is felt to reflect back what happens in playing' (Winnicott, 1971, pp.112-21). Equally, Jonathan Baxter refers to Winnicott, associating the social practice of the 'good enough mother' with that of his own practice as an artist, creating a holding space where uncertainty is possible (in personal correspondence by email, October 2015). The research has offered an extensive exploration of what this hosting might look like, arguing that this holding is also, in places, a loosening or failure to grasp. Through being at a loss hosting becomes a radical form, working through moments of failure as well as success. In that way hospitality is fundamentally a movement between the guest and host positions, a transfer or, to use Ukeles' symbolism, a handover of knowledge and power. As Dufourmantelle notes in *Of Hospitality,* to make time there have to be two of you (2000, p.76).

In relation to this Art(chiv)ist Adele Patrick asserts she has no intention of being alone in the archive commanding all aspects. Her position derives from a struggle to be recognised by mainstream cultural narratives, consequently she brings a view of hospitality from the outside. Practicing from this different consciousness is a matter of both repeating institutional forms of power, as imperfect copies, and recoding them so that power becomes a form of responsibility to the other. Chantel Mouffe sees this recoding as a radical political project that admits to its own failures to include and limitations(Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). Being in process it offers a horizon of possible communities. Arguably this perspective that defines limitations also offers us a different, more vulnerable view of ourselves. To return to Philip this works as a kind of call and response:

'I know what I want to say and then I give the words a chance to say what they want to say and its not always what I think I want to say – there is a tension and out of that process the poem comes for me.' (Philips, WAA.05)

This different view of the thesis hopes to acknowledge where it fails, either to include, or to hold a balance, or to provide a suitably hospitable territory. The hope is that notwithstanding these failures the work is 'good enough' (Winnicott, 1971). To conclude and also continue I am required to hand over the keys in the hope that by doing so I add a 'little' history and small contribution towards the poetry of a different future (Pia Arke, 2012).

Chapter Summaries

The Archive Collection
About Archives

This section begins by considering Jacques Derrida's theory of archives, arguing for a feminist performance of the archive that both draws on his deconstructive insights and reimagines the archival form for activist politics. Central to this reimagining is Kate Eichhorn's account of the *Archival Turn in Feminism* (2013). This account describes the relational and generative functions of feminist archives, which provide a place of shelter in difficult political times. Importantly, Eichhorn argues for a dialogical rather than competitive, linear historical imagination played out in the archive, which becomes a space for unlikely encounters and new political collectivities through time. As a shelter and gathering space the archive offers a radical form of hospitality.

Eichhorn draws on Elizabeth Freeman's (2010) concept of temporal drag, which sets up a non-linear, non-teleological way of being in time. Freeman describes a form of queer archiving that thrives on the unresolved and discarded moments of the past, dragging them into the present moment to create productive friction. These theoretical perceptions of the past are nuanced by contributions by Sam McBean (2015) and Griselda Pollock (2007), among others, who contribute to a particular understanding of archiving as a poetic encounter with the past that is suggestively similar to encounters set up by social art practice. Deborah Withers (2015) and Victoria Browne (2014) both

describe a way of being *with* the archive that is open to listening carefully and being surprised by the complexities that emerge. Withers' description is also the most clearly a manifesto, conveying the feminist archive as a bridge between generations and geographies of feminism, and as fertile ground for a movement whose time has come. By overlaying ideas on archives, manifestos, and social practice the writing in this section suggests not only coincidental similarities between the forms but also a core political intent, all three forms expressing a desire to negotiate a precarious collectivity and to initiate change in the present moment.

With Archives

This second section details examples of archival interventions from my own experiences. The focus is on four collections: Glasgow Women's Library (GWL), the Women's Art Library (WAL), the Women's Audio Archive (WAA) and Sophie Hope's 1984 Dinners archive. Initially, I approached these archives to search for traces of feminist history that could be related to current practices in social art and to discover examples of feminist manifestos from the UK context. Archives like WAL in Goldsmiths, London, and GWL offered documentation of important early feminist examples of social art practice, like *Castlemilk Womenhouse* (1990) and *Feministo* (1975-77) which were also expanded conceptions of the manifesto form. These early works focused on redrawing the home through acknowledgement of its more oppressive aspects. In thinking on the labour of home-making this section voices concerns raised in the Hospitality Collection and also draws the home close to the archive which is similarly perceived as a domicile or shelter.

The Women's Audio Archive (1983-92) also appeared as a kind of shelter constructed by artist Marysia Lewandowska to support herself in alienating cultural circumstances. Next to this Sophie Hope's, also travelling, 1984 Dinners archive takes a form associated with home and hospitality, constructing safe spaces within which to host memories of resistance and movements for social change. Hope and Lewandowska's moving archives not only challenge conceptions of the form as static depository but also conceptions of the host, who in both cases becomes a kind of guest in different cultural narratives. The immediacy of voice in the audio archives spoke to me suggesting persistent conditions and the possibility of political collectivity through time, enabled by encounters in the archive. The possibility of a shared responses generated within these four collections

suggested the archive itself as a manifesto, working through a catalogue of marginalised histories to produce situated interventions in the present moment.

The Hospitality Collection

About Hospitality

This section begins with the proposition put forward by Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle that it is only those who have been deprived a home that are in the position to offer hospitality (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000). Through this lens on hospitality it is possible to see the feminist manifesto as a hosting space, offering shelter to outsider subjectivities whilst also entering mainstream cultural and political space as a stranger, bringing these spaces into question. In this vein the feminist theoretical positions of Judith Butler (1993) and Luce Irigaray (1985) are positioned as hostile guests within the western philosophical tradition, repeating its forms in order to highlight gaps in its narratives and places where it fails to accommodate difference. The section goes on to define these theoretical definitions of hospitality in relation to social art practice revealing a similar play with mimesis, simultaneous and different, in Chu Chu Yuan and Jay Koh's performative practice. Moving between theoretical and artistic positions the section describes a number of subjects in motion, performing the roles of guest *and* host simultaneously, balancing hostile and hospitable intentions. The revolutionary potential of this balancing act is made explicit in Monica Ross' artistic and theoretical praxis. Through Ross' work hospitality is reimagined as a particular moment of shared time that has affirmative relational effects.

From affirmation to critique the writing moves between two visions of hospitality, placing affirmative social practices next to feminist critique in the art practices of Tanja Ostojić, Lucy Beech and Suzanne Lacy. Through examination of these practices it becomes possible to define and then redraw the material labour involved in hospitality, imagining a series of unspectacular acts around consumption and expectation that combine to produce indomitable structures of organisation to be honoured and destroyed.

With Hospitality

This section outlines a conversational methodology and a curatorial strategy, which works through a number of events loosely framed around the question of hospitality. The conversational approach adopted by the research is derived from engagement with the Women's Audio Archive, which is identified as a significant early form of social practice. Here conversation is a distinct form, that lacking a pre-decided agenda allows for a certain relational navigation towards definitions in alien circumstances. Using Lewandowska's question of missing histories I approached curatorial duo Mother Tongue to discuss their practice in relation to the politics of hospitality and collective memory. Our conversation generated a number of events beginning in Aberdeen with an acknowledgement, to undergraduate students, of invisible curatorial labour. I also travelled to Glasgow to be part of a larger collaborative project involving Maria Hlavajova among other guests. Speaking as a guest in the CCA space in Glasgow, Hlavajova brought up the possibility of reimagining the institution as a hosting space for various precarious subjectivities, a kind of go-between that could connect care to power.

The second half of the section involves a consideration of my own work as both a guest and host in the unfamiliar territory of the North East of Scotland, detailing curatorial interventions commissioned by the Scottish Contemporary Art Network, in which I set up encounters between feminism, social practice and other forms of institutional critique. These interventions approach the labour of hospitality as it plays out in particular social practices and in my own work where I move between the role of hostile guest and supportive host in order to try and create events that act with and on the contexts they enter. The work tests the possibility of reimagining the manifesto as a discursive, participatory space of exchange, where other histories can be tentatively shared.

The Manifesto Collection

About Manifesto

About Manifesto presents a dialogue between important theoretical writing on the manifesto form and examples of social art practice, both contemporary and historical, that I have not experienced directly. This section seeks to weave together three

discourses: writing on feminist manifestos, social art practice and feminist history, suggesting an interrelation not previously accounted for. By moving between discourses I set up examples to suggest certain practices function like manifestos, sharing similarities in form and intention. The section considers the important question of language, which presents a difficulty for both feminism and social practice. Through language it is possible to uncover hidden theoretical genealogies in social practice, including the work of Kristeva who not only wrote extensively on the poetics of dialogue and its revolutionary potential but also practiced a dialogical kind of theory. The chapter ends with a meeting between feminist manifesto and social art practice in the work of Mierle Laderman Ukeles who wrote the pivotal *Manifesto for Maintenance Art* in 1969. Ukeles' framing of maintenance as a baseline for her practice allowed her to produce over forty years of situated dialogical interventions. More than the manifesto as frame for practice though, the suggestion is that each ritual she performs is itself a manifesto, suggesting both rage and utopia, or rage becoming utopia through social interaction that remakes the world.

With Manifesto

Using the score of manifesto characteristics written on in About Manifesto, With Manifesto tests this framework against a broad range of social art practices that I have experienced directly. Being *with* social art practice takes a number of forms throughout the section. I move between participation, collaboration, and conversation following the intention to be *with* practice, producing events in an activist vein. I begin by detailing my collaboration with artist Alana Jelinek, interrogating her practice over a number of events to question the extent to which it enacts Rancière's definition of dissensus and equally where it plays out as a form of prefigurative politics. In bringing to light parallels with feminist practice the section grapples with the question of core orientation leading the artist to think through how feminist politics could be voiced as a dynamic and influential part of her art practice.

While the About Manifesto section approaches the question of language, With Manifesto parallels this interest through my participation in a feminist reading group, reassessing questions of personal subjectivity in relation to institutional discourse. Through the lens of feminist writing my participation enables a view on social practice as something similarly radical, turning given hierarchies upside down to negotiate space and

acknowledging collectivity as a creative source. Through these practices the section approaches the idea of support either as a community of readers or as a place of refuge and safety. Support is seen as a kind of gathering together and a form of hospitality.

Finally, the section deals with the artist's relationship to, and interest in, wider operating systems, which plays out in feminist hacking cultures and in Helen Smith's organisational interventions. Through a durational dialogue with Smith the section ends on a consideration of time and memory as important tactics, materials used by both manifestos and social praxis, asking: how we can share time, and the memories we bring with us into encounters? Touching on memory, the section ends where hospitality and archives begin, raising memories of home and questions of social memory and their joint relationship with political control.
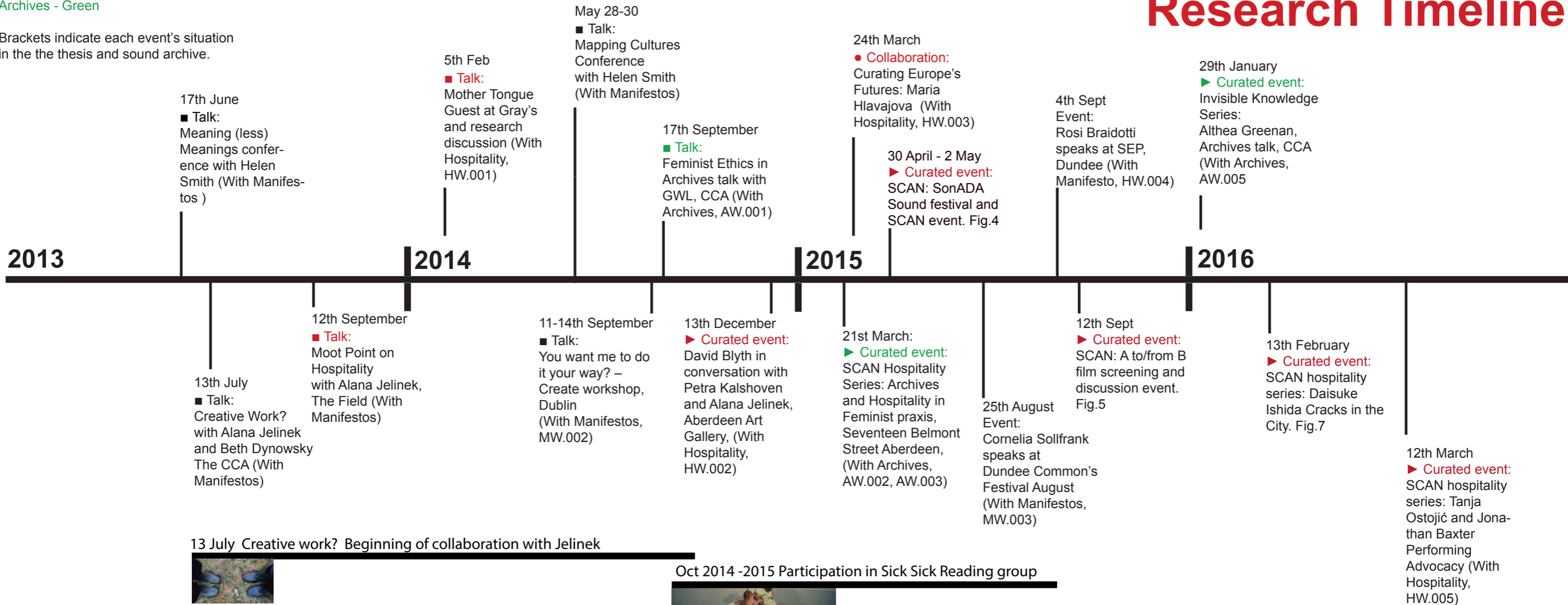
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Research Timeline

Hospitality - Red
Manifesto - Black
Archives - Green

Brackets indicate each event's situation in the the thesis and sound archive.

2013 **2014** **2015** **2016**

17th June
■ Talk:
Meaning (less) Meanings conference with Helen Smith (With Manifestos)

5th Feb
■ Talk:
Mother Tongue Guest at Gray's and research discussion (With Hospitality, HW.001)

May 28-30
■ Talk:
Mapping Cultures Conference with Helen Smith (With Manifestos)

17th September
■ Talk:
Feminist Ethics in Archives talk with GWL, CCA (With Archives, AW.001)

24th March
● Collaboration:
Curating Europe's Futures: Maria Hlavajova (With Hospitality, HW.003)

30 April - 2 May
► Curated event:
SCAN: SonADA Sound festival and SCAN event. Fig.4

4th Sept
Event:
Rosi Braidotti speaks at SEP, Dundee (With Manifesto, HW.004)

29th January
► Curated event:
Invisible Knowledge Series:
Althea Greenan, Archives talk, CCA (With Archives, AW.005)

13th July
■ Talk:
Creative Work? with Alana Jelinek and Beth Dynowsky The CCA (With Manifestos)

12th September
■ Talk:
Moot Point on Hospitality with Alana Jelinek, The Field (With Manifestos)

11-14th September
■ Talk:
You want me to do it your way? – Create workshop, Dublin (With Manifestos, MW.002)

13th December
► Curated event:
David Blyth in conversation with Petra Kalshoven and Alana Jelinek, Aberdeen Art Gallery, (With Hospitality, HW.002)

21st March:
► Curated event:
SCAN Hospitality Series: Archives and Hospitality in Feminist praxis, Seventeen Belmont Street Aberdeen, (With Archives, AW.002, AW.003)

25th August
Event:
Cornelia Sollfrank speaks at Dundee Common's Festival August (With Manifestos, MW.003)

12th Sept
► Curated event:
SCAN: A to/from B film screening and discussion event. Fig.5

13th February
► Curated event:
SCAN hospitality series: Daisuke Ishida Cracks in the City. Fig.7

12th March
► Curated event:
SCAN hospitality series: Tanja Ostojić and Jonathan Baxter Performing Advocacy (With Hospitality, HW.005)

13 July Creative work? Beginning of collaboration with Jelinek

Oct 2014 -2015 Participation in Sick Sick Reading group

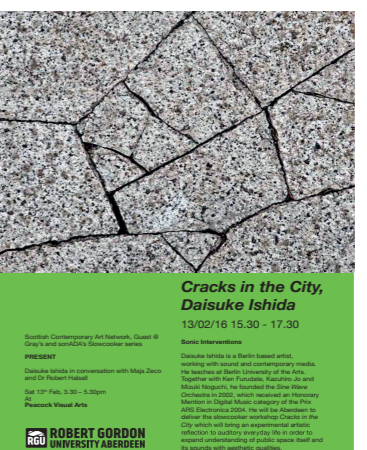Feb 2014 Ongoing collaboration with Mother Tongue

Ongoing collaboration with Helen Smith

Fig. 1 Fig. 2 Fig. 3 Fig. 4 Fig. 5 Fig. 6 Fig. 7 Fig. 8

Mother Tongue

David Blyth
Strange Attractor
27/09/14 –11/01/15

Merlyn Riggs
Invites you for tea
21/03/15 13.30 - 16.00

sonADA 2015:
What a Mess! How Interesting
30 April – 2 May

A to/from B

CCA: Public Engagement
Invisible Knowledge

Cracks in the City,
Daisuke Ishida
13/02/16 15.30 - 17.30

Performing Advocacy
Tanja Ostojić
12/03/16 15.00 - 18.00

ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY ABERDEEN

ABOUT MANIFESTO

FEMINIST MANIFESTO

HOLZER, WITTIG,
HARAWAY, DE GOUGES

RAGE

UTOPIA

affirmative relational

Abjection
Death instinct

Maintenance

INTERSTITIAL SPACE

shared time

MOVEMENT ———— BETWEEN

historical critique

dialogue

PRIVATE ←——— *dissensus* ——→ PUBLIC

HISTORY

MYTH

UKELES

UKELES

POLLOCK
ROWBOTHAM
SEGAL

CONTEMPORARY
SOCIAL
PRACTICE

UKELES

FEMINIST
HISTORY

JAY KOH & CHU CHU YUAN

ABOUT MANIFESTO
WITH MANIFESTO

FEMINIST MANIFESTO

HOLZER, WITTIG,
HARAWAY, DE GOUGES

SUBROSA

JELINEK

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INTERSTITIAL SPACE

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BETWEEN

dialogue

SOLLFRANK

UKELES

historical critique

PRIVATE

dissensus

PUBLIC

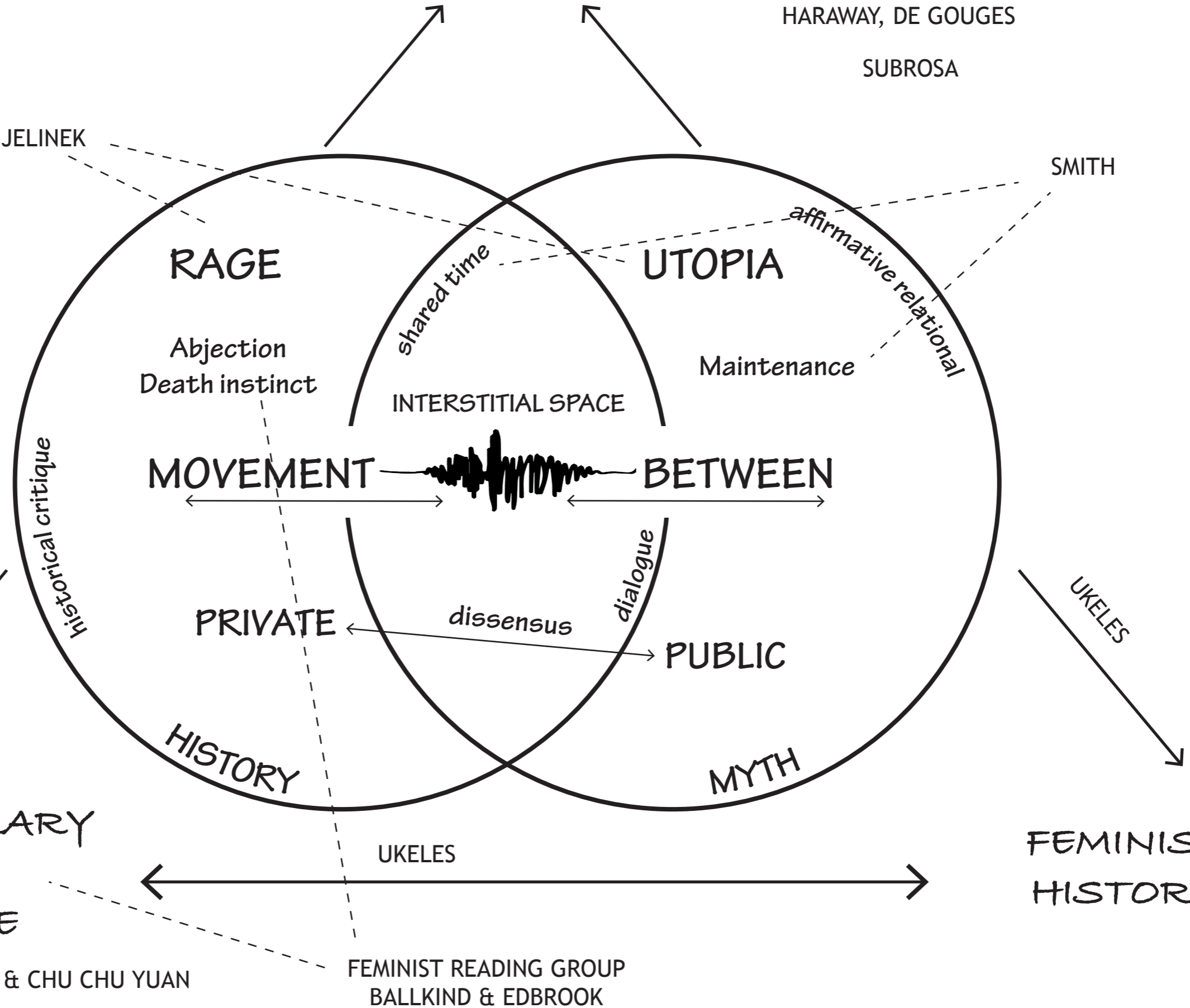UKELES

POLLOCK
ROWBOTHAM
SEGAL

HISTORY

MYTH

CONTEMPORARY
SOCIAL
PRACTICE

UKELES

FEMINIST
HISTORY

JAY KOH & CHU CHU YUAN

FEMINIST READING GROUP
BALLKIND & EDBROOK

ABOUT MANIFESTO
WITH MANIFESTO
ABOUT HOSPITALITY

HOSPITALITY AS:
FEMINIST MANIFESTO

HOLZER, WITTIG,
HARAWAY, DE GOUGES

SUBROSA

JELINEK

SMITH

WAA

WAA

RAGE
HOSTILITY
Abjection
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shared time

safe holding space

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historical critique

the angel in the house

MOVEMENT

BETWEEN

space of radical hospitality

dialogue

PRIVATE

dissensus

PUBLIC

nomadic becoming

SOLLFRANK

UKELES

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UKELES   WAA, VALENTINE

FEMINIST
HISTORY
/ THEORY

JAY KOH & CHU CHU YUAN
ROSS, LEWANDOWSKA

FEMINIST READING GROUP
BALLKIND & EDBROOK

BUTLER, IRIGARAY, AHMED

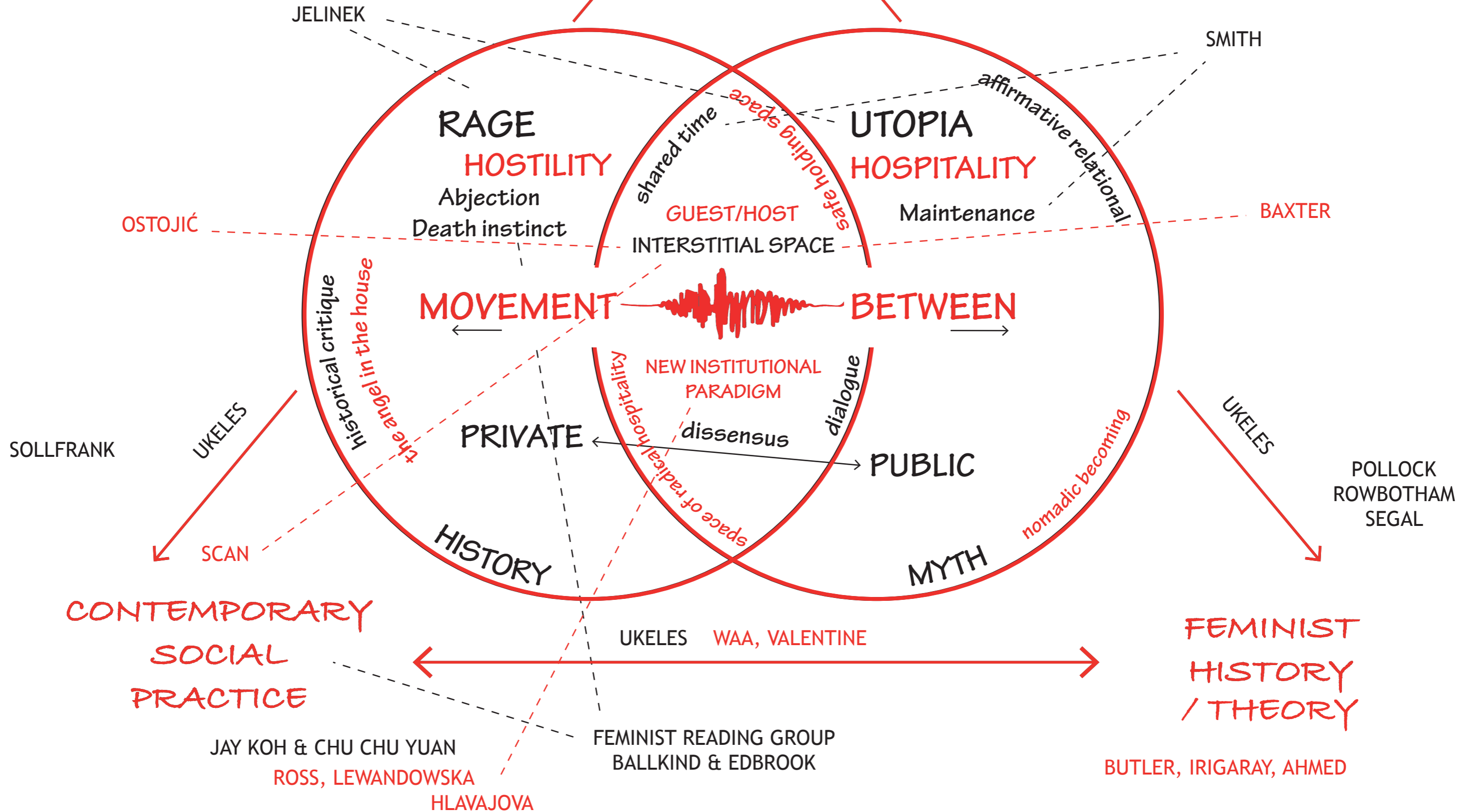ABOUT MANIFESTO
WITH MANIFESTO
ABOUT HOSPITALITY
WITH HOSPITALITY

HOSPITALITY AS:
FEMINIST MANIFESTO

HOLZER, WITTIG,
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WAA   WAA

RAGE
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UTOPIA
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affirmative relational

shared time   safe holding space

GUEST/HOST
INTERSTITIAL SPACE

OSTOJIĆ   BAXTER

MOVEMENT   BETWEEN

historical critique   the angel in the house

NEW INSTITUTIONAL
PARADIGM

space of radical hospitality   dialogue   nomadic becoming

UKELES   UKELES

SOLLFRANK

PRIVATE   dissensus   PUBLIC

POLLOCK
ROWBOTHAM
SEGAL

HISTORY   MYTH

SCAN

CONTEMPORARY
SOCIAL
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UKELES   WAA, VALENTINE
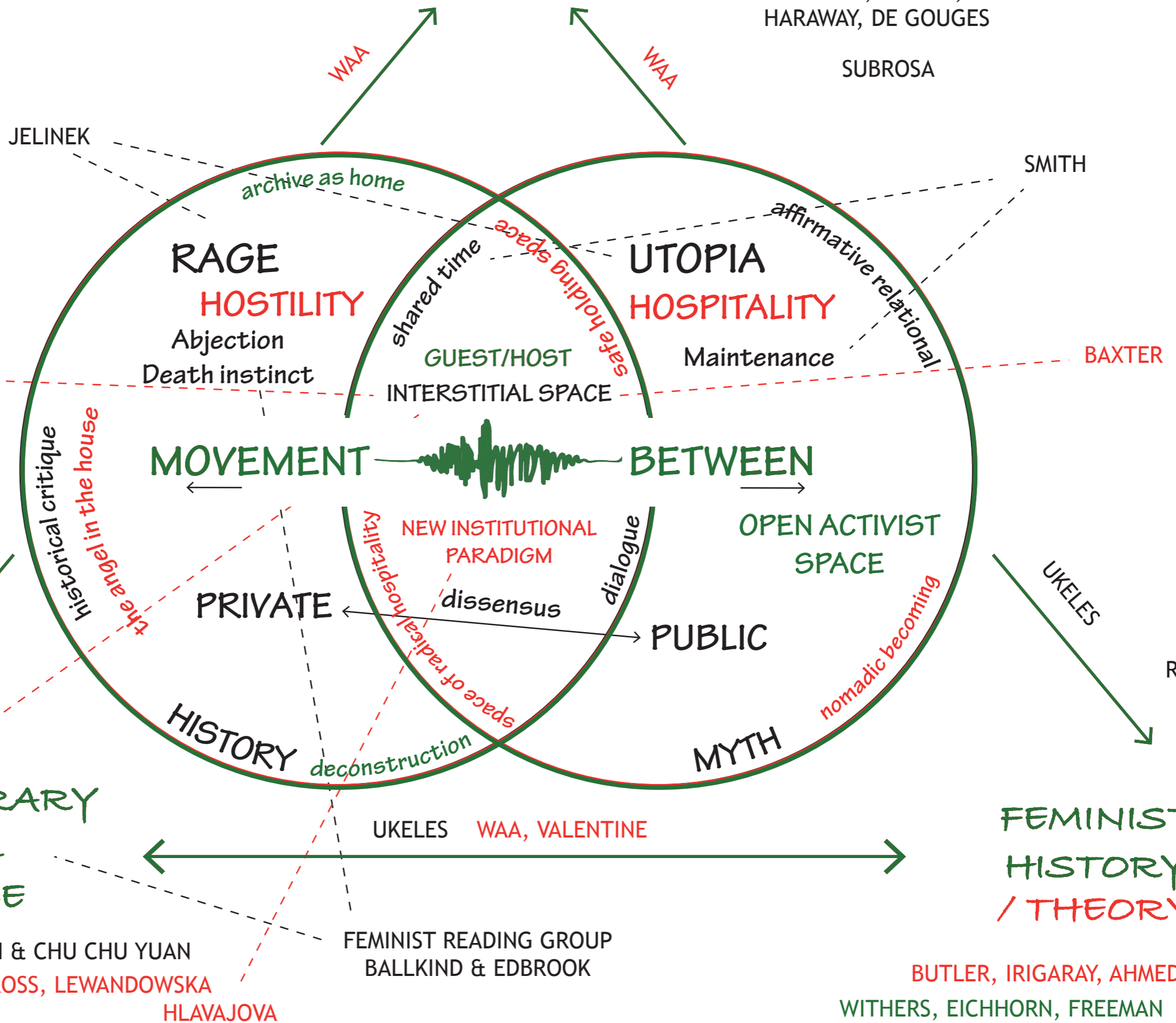
FEMINIST
HISTORY
/ THEORY

JAY KOH & CHU CHU YUAN
ROSS, LEWANDOWSKA
HLAVAJOVA

FEMINIST READING GROUP
BALLKIND & EDBROOK

BUTLER, IRIGARAY, AHMED

ABOUT MANIFESTO
WITH MANIFESTO

ABOUT HOSPITALITY
WITH HOSPITALITY

ABOUT ARCHIVES

HOSPITALITY AS: ARCHIVES AS:
FEMINIST MANIFESTO

HOLZER, WITTIG,
HARAWAY, DE GOUGES

SUBROSA

WAA   WAA

JELINEK

SMITH

archive as home

safe holding space

RAGE
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INTERSTITIAL SPACE

BAXTER

MOVEMENT   BETWEEN

historical critique

the angel in the house

space of radical hospitality

NEW INSTITUTIONAL
PARADIGM

dialogue

OPEN ACTIVIST
SPACE

nomadic becoming

SOLLFRANK   UKELES

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dissensus
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ROWBOTHAM
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SCAN

HISTORY

deconstruction

MYTH

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FEMINIST
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JAY KOH & CHU CHU YUAN

ROSS, LEWANDOWSKA
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FEMINIST READING GROUP
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BUTLER, IRIGARAY, AHMED

WITHERS, EICHHORN, FREEMAN

ABOUT MANIFESTO
WITH MANIFESTO

ABOUT HOSPITALITY
WITH HOSPITALITY

ABOUT ARCHIVES
WITH ARCHIVES

HOSPITALITY AS: ARCHIVES AS:
FEMINIST MANIFESTO

HOLZER, WITTIG,
HARAWAY, DE GOUGES

SUBROSA

HARRIS

FEMINISTO

HOPE

WAA   WAA

JELINEK

SMITH

archive as home

RAGE
HOSTILITY
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UTOPIA
HOSPITALITY
Maintenance

affirmative relational

BAXTER

OSTOJIĆ

GUEST/HOST
INTERSTITIAL SPACE

GLASGOW
WOMENS
LIBRARY

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MOVEMENT

BETWEEN

WOMENS
ART SLIDE
LIBRARY

NEW INSTITUTIONAL
PARADIGM

OPEN ACTIVIST
SPACE

UKELES

space of radical hospitality

dialogue

nomadic becoming

UKELES

SOLLFRANK

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FEMINIST
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GWL,
HOPE

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FEMINIST READING GROUP
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WITHERS, EICHHORN, FREEMAN

Archives

The Archive Collection

Contents

About Archives

Introduction

The focus of this collection is archives, approaching feminist experiments and theoretical writing to move from vital deconstructions of the form towards positing the archive as a political intervention, a holding space for different voices and ways of knowing. The work is to create an expanded conception of the archive - to say that it may be more than a static and infallible depository for knowledge. The two sections combined reimagine archives as activist spaces that generate vital support networks and allow collectivities to form. As holding spaces, feminist archives contain missing histories of praxis that become fertile ground for new collaborations in the present moment. As generative spaces feminist archives are social, hospitable places. Through this hospitality, and the type of encounters it encourages, archives become living examples of social art practice. They not only contain feminist histories of social art practice but also operate through its forms. They are political spaces, offering possibilities for relational encounters. The potential suggested by these encounters, which are related to a shared perception of missing history, brings the feminist archive close to the manifesto form. Finally, the archive is reimagined as a type of hospitality, a feminist manifesto and a social art practice.

The collection moves between an exploration of feminist theoretical texts that approach, critique and reimagine the archival space and experiential descriptions of archives that situate knowledge of the subject in relation to my position as a researcher embedded in particular contexts. This commitment to knowing in an embedded way, *with* the archive, is a commitment to feminist analysis, which asserts the value of personal, critically self-reflexive, subjective perspectives, deconstructing claims which speak beyond these positions, abstracting knowledge from its particular political context. This way of knowing *with*, along the archival grain, aligns feminist analysis with many artists in social practice.

The movement between two ways of knowing in this collection is also a dialogic impulse replicated by the feminist archives the collection approaches. These archives both deconstruct and move away from the commanding, set apart form of the archive, which Derrida evocatively describes in his text *Archive Fever* (1996). Derrida's focus is on the patriarchal archive, which hides its vulnerability and relationship to forgetfulness.

Derrida's archive offers security and a straightforward relationship to representation, which conceals its function as a tool of social and political control. Next to this deconstructive glimpse of the archive feminism offers a view from the forgotten outsides, positing the potential of a more dialogic, multiple archival praxis. This praxis manifests multiple other archives, existing in excess of the singular one representing state power, both mimicking its forms and reversing its systems of value. These archives repeat and recode, becoming both archive and its fever, re-conceptualising what was marked as wasted to perceive something more potent that never goes away.

These offerings refute the understanding of archive as a static depository, an authority that both protects and delivers knowledge intact to a passively receiving audience. Instead, the feminist archive offers a less certain conversational encounter, something that remains closer to the experience of memory, performed by fallible bodies. It offers a shared account and concern for discarded histories and gathers an audience around a collective experience of precarity that comes from the loss of historical account. The vulnerability of this alternative, an embodied and embedded praxis, cracks open the archive in a generative way. These outsider archives play with the concept of commencement and consignation that Derrida writes of in relation to the archive, allowing the politics of origins to be open to creative encounters with future users who are invited to respond and participate in the forms of the archive. The political power of the archive is reimagined to become a shared responsibility. In this way the feminist archive asserts that the beginning of a different way to live is not a distant past, guarded by a privileged few, but now. Responsibility for this *now* is negotiated between multiple voices. So the function of the archive as an institution that gathers together is powerfully redeployed for a feminist political project: a wish for the future.

Derrida writes of the archive as a topology, more specifically he draws the word back through Greek language to reveal it as '*Arkheion*, initially a home, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the *archons*, those who commanded' (1996, p.2). This home is a shelter for the traces of memory and the archivists, these 'lawmakers and *archon* without which one could not have archives' (Ibid), who are seen as acting to gather together and consign. Sheltering is also an act of setting apart, in solitude, which Derrida describes as a form of violence that produces a totality. In *Dust* (2002) feminist historian Carolyn Steedman, registers Derrida's description as encompassing something broader than simply the place where documents are kept. She writes that it expresses 'all the ways and means of state power' (Steedman, 2001, p.6).

As power this totality is a singular form, which excludes others and consequently produces outsides. As well as these outsides Steedman suggests that inside this place, that Derrida depicts, we suffer a kind of 'house arrest' (Ibid, p.11).

In sheltering, Derrida states the archive conceals certain secrets about itself. Furthermore, this setting apart is both an act of survival and a command. Through command Derrida considers the 'patriarchic function' (Derrida, 1996, p.3) of the archive, which enacts a politics of naming and repetition. The archive does not simply exist as a storage house for past events, it also speaks to the future, reproducing itself under a name. In a footnote of considerable importance to feminist epistemologies Derrida asserts 'there is no political control without control of the archive, if not memory' (Ibid, p.4). In this way the archive attempts to capitalize on memory. Beyond this, in political terms having an archive is an act of survival, without an archive it is hard to exist in the present moment.

While the archive commands the future it also depends on it in a way that makes it vulnerable and open. Derrida's descriptions in *Archive Fever* (1996) are bound up with explorations of psychoanalysis, the so-called 'science of the archive'. In relation to this he reflects that the archive's commanding function is around producing a repetition. This impulse to repeat, so central to the form of the archive, compels us 'to remember that repetition itself, the logic of repetition, indeed the repetition compulsion, remains, according to Freud, indissociable from the death drive' (Ibid, p.12). Repetition reflects the desire to return to origins and something that has already gone, leaving only traces. By making this association between Freudian theory and the archive, Derrida registers a death drive at the heart of the conservative archive, something he refers to as an 'Archive fever'.

Steedman meets Derrida's text with a micro-political analysis of archival space which is grounded in a lifetime of experience as a historian in archives, allowing her narrative to trace the sources of labour and hardship that produce the dust we might find in these places, through histories of paper and leather production, humorously proclaiming these as the real cause of fever in archives. Rather than beginnings she sees the archive as a place of fragments. The playful attention Steedman pays to dust is much more than anecdotal, it frames a moment where, in the archive, history plays into the politics of imagination. By alighting on dust Steedman provides an answer to the cultural question of waste, all those outsides produced by stories of power, asserting that nothing goes

away. Instead she weaves together fragmentary narratives to show the intricately connected and circular nature of existence, which is her answer to the impossible search for origins that Derrida's text registers.

For Derrida and Steedman the future appears to haunt the present moment, exerting a pressure to secure its texts for a time to come. It is depicted by Derrida, as an archivist, who not only haunts the past, but is also a scholar capable of 'conversing with ghosts'. Equally, for Steedman it is the historians' task, in the archive, to let the dead speak, naming the archive as a place of longing and appropriation. Through these conversational encounters time in the archive is not a simple linear progression but a meeting between different temporalities that haunt each other. These hauntings are not always easy or agreeable conversations. For both writers the archive is a kind of holding space. Moving from house arrest Steedman describes the expansive poetics and freedom possible in this space. She refers to the work of D. W. Winnicott, who identified the freedom to play in 'a space of potential', as an activity that occurs with invisible support; to be alone in play Winnicott asserts someone else must be present. It is this presence, allusive in Steedman's text, which converts the archive from a 'carefully constructed, hard won place', to 'a limitless, boundless space' (Steedman, 2001, p.83). This space that Steedman describes through Winnicott is a safe space that nevertheless operates through a degree of failure. Somehow the space is not airtight and this loosening, that allows the dangers of the world into a 'carefully constructed space' enabling uncertainty, is a facilitated process.

Feminist Archives

Derrida's text registers archival desires and repressions, straying far from the territory of real archives that Steedman maps out, yet meeting it at points. In careful detail Steedman shows that these secrets of the archive also relate a concern for feminist perspectives, which have often played outsider roles to the totality of memory represented by traditional archival structures. It is from this more vulnerable outsider position that the politics of the archive become apparent, as well as its relationship to survival in the present moment and the future. Writing on archives, Julie Bacon picks up on Derrida's metaphorical archive, presented as a depository of sacred facts, arguing that what is repressed through this presentation is the subjective and selective nature of the archive. As Steedman says more often it is a place of fragments, nevertheless

through a kind of molecular vision, she argues even what is not represented is still there. For Bacon this presence is a fever that hides beneath a commanding surface complicating claims to power and authority.

While Steedman's work is to undo the sense of house arrest feminists might feel in traditional archives, other feminist perspectives have also disputed this vision of the archive arguing for a more precarious redrawing that no longer seeks to conceal the archive's partial and subjective nature. This feminist performance of the archive is a repetition of the form but with a difference. In this argument the archive is not a discrete, isolated, total body of knowledge that we visit to extract wisdom. It is not even an imperfect hall of fragments that can be pieced together by isolated individuals to reveal other histories that won't go away. Instead, the archive is imagined as a knowledge-producing space, generating relational understandings that work towards a collective re-configuration of the world. This redrawing of the archival space imagines it as open, not only in relation to what came before, but to conversations in the future and to the production of new knowledge. Being open in this way and social arguably makes feminist archive space into a highly contested terrain. In some cases they have themselves become battlegrounds, hosting disputes around not only what is forgotten but what some perceive should be. A very recent example of this can be seen in the conflict that arose during the opening of the Vancouver Women's library which saw protests from transactivists and sex workers angry at certain second wave feminist texts including the SCUM manifesto. Similar conflicts have arisen in the UK around the working class movement library in Salford. It is precisely these growing tensions that make the archive so interesting in relation to social practice, with artists recognising and reconfiguring tension as the friction necessary for movement to occur. In the space between what appear to be immovable positions certain artists flourish, working with the tension to negotiate difficult relationships between the politics of the past and present. Similarly it is the aim of About Archives to explore theoretical positions that examine and reconfigure these tensions in an earthquake territory.

An Archival Turn

How can Derrida's 'impressions' of the archive as a patriarchic form be related to feminist archival experiments? Can this understanding of the ossified body of

knowledge that commands from an isolated place of power, that is iterative, reproducible and conservative be related to the study of the revolutionary outsider form that is a manifesto? I have argued that the manifesto is often said to play with mimesis, reproducing the language of constraining structures with a difference (About Manifesto, p.6). Writing on the *Archival Turn in Feminism* (2013) Kate Eichhorn tellingly subtitles her study *Outrage in Order*, which could also be one way to refer to the practice of writing a manifesto. Using Foucault's writing in the *The Order of Things* (1989) Eichhorn sets up a similar juxtaposition to Steedman, turning to the other side of the oppressively real politics of archival discourse that Foucault describes, to focus on its function as an imaginary and generative fiction. Through a number of pivotal case studies and personal experiences within archival spaces Eichhorn reimagines the archive as a generative, relational space of feminist activism. Where Steedman imagines a lone historian Eichhorn evokes a collective movement of archivists producing new and evocative holding spaces. She describes these archives as enacting a gathering together of historical and present day outsiders that at its core has the same political intentions as a manifesto. Like the manifesto the feminist archive employs history as a catalyst, producing collectivity and activism in the present moment. Feminism adopts and adapts these traditional and commanding forms, transforming their monologic aspects into relational, negotiated and conversational forms.

At the centre of Eichhorn's reimagination is the figure of the archivist. Eichhorn stresses she is interested in considering women less as subjects and more as 'central agents' of the archive. She notes the rise of feminist archives in times when there was a low interest in feminism. Here the archive performs the kind of sheltering action that Derrida describes. Seen in this light, forming archives is an act of survival in the present moment. These acts of survival are grounded in an acute awareness of the politics of memory. They express a desire to represent complexity in the face of totalizing views that act to erase alternative perspectives. She cites the World Center for Women's Archives, launched in 1935 by 'stateless feminist activist' Rosika Schwimmer, in New York, as a case in point. Eichhorn writes:

> 'An immigrant herself, Schwimmer had connections to feminist activists in Europe and subsequently was aware that the archive could also operate as a powerful instrument of state control.' (Eichhorn, 2013, p.36)

She goes on to describe Nazi mobilization of the archive as an arbiter of historical existence, with the Jewish community prohibited from using German archives and most of their own archives pillaged or destroyed by the end of the war. In relation to the International Archive for the Women's Movement, Eichhorn tells the story of the archive's seizure first by the Nazis and then by the Red Army as a telling sign that it was perceived as threatening to at least two regimes. The combination of these histories serves to illustrate Eichhorn's point around the political efficacy of archives, as well as Derrida's assertion that there is no political control without control of the archive. Both archives and manifestos grasp the politics of memory as it works collectively through the articulation of history.

Eichhorn depicts her own relationship with the archive initially as a kind of 'dirty secret' where she is out of time, a position she relates to Elizabeth Freeman's notion of temporal drag. Later the archive is seen as a kind of shelter from the dominant temporality of neoliberalism. In this way, Eichhorn engages with the archive through spatial and temporal metaphors. She also starts her study with the death drive, facing accusations by Susan Faludi of feminism's 'self-inflicted death drive', a matricidal impulse based, not as Derrida frames it in repetition, but in a failure of transmission with 'feminism's heritage repeatedly hurled onto the scrap heap' (Faludi, 2010). In this way Faludi's frustration is in the failure of memory between generations with the actions of one generation disavowed by the next; this disavowal is framed as a mother-daughter plot. Eichhorn disputes these accusations through what she defines as a queer experience of time and history. Through this queering she highlights the importance of intergenerational relationships within her feminist experience that exist in multiple forms beyond the confines of familial roles. Where Faludi sees matricide Eichhorn describes networks of friendship, support and respect between different generations that are played out on archival ground. Where Faludi is appalled by the scrap heap Eichhorn reclaims it, like Steedman who conjures the positive connotations of dust. Eichhorn asserts it as 'my research material, my entertainment, and sometimes my template for imagining other ways of being in the world' (Eichhorn, 2013, p.26). This existence in the archive is not conveyed as a simple reproduction of feminist orthodoxy, it is instead a being with the archive that is wide open to appreciate the complexities of feminist pasts.

Like the material that is gathered together in a manifesto, a kind of rage at what history has missed, feminist archives also provide materials for a different possible future, now

in the present moment. Archivists are seen as haunting the past, from the perspective of not being there, and conversing with ghosts. In Derrida we are reminded that haunting is a sign that something is repressed. This resonates with Eichhorn's metaphor of 'mining the present for signs of undetonated energy from past revolutions ' (Eichhorn, 2013 p.28). There is an ambivalence in Eichhorn's descriptions of the 'scrap heap' which is posed as both a site of abjection and a rethinking (Ibid, p.29).

From the outset the feminist archival turn is related not merely to preservation but to a complex set of desires around education and activism for 'other possible worlds' (Ibid, preface, x). These desires could be framed around Derrida's term commencement. More than simply a survival mechanism Eichhorn relates a productive politics located in the archive and founded on relationality, not dissimilar to Steedman's belief in the intricate and powerful connections between things. Eichhorn's relationality defies linear notions of temporality and teleological versions of history. She sees resistance to linear models of history as related to the vulnerable beginnings of many feminist archives, which were founded in periods of decline rather than political progress for feminist politics.[1] In such periods assumptions of inevitable progress that a linear reading of history implies were questioned and reassessed. In line with this her own engagement in the archive produces a nonlinear response. She cautions:

> 'the archival stories that follow are told from multiple temporal standpoints and exhibit little regard for the linear passage of time. Like the archive, they are informed and structured by unanticipated proximities and by the connections such unanticipated proximities can foster.' (Ibid, p.56)

Eichhorn argues the archive spirals outwards from texts, to bodies, to contexts, producing connections between social agents rarely imagined as occupying the same space and time. She gives the example of relatively unknown feminist zine producer, Lizard Amazon, whose DIY publication from the 1990s contains a reproduction of Joreen Freeman's *Bitch Manifesto* (1968). Through its presence in the Sarah Dyer Collection, at the Sallie Bingham Centre for Women's History and Culture, the zine is brought into

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[1] In an interview on the subject Eichhorn (2014) talks specifically on a decline in feminist cultural production in the 1990s when small press publications, feminist community newspapers and bookstores established in the 1970s and 80s were closing. She speaks from a North American perspective but it is also true of the Scottish context where this decline in information around feminist praxis marked the beginning of hugely significant archival projects like Glasgow Women's Library (GWL).

proximity with Freeman herself in a social network of conversations between archivist and works. This network of connections negotiated by the archivist opens up possibilities for generations of feminists to converse through archival proximity. In this way the archive supports afterlives for the works of its subjects, countering Bourdieu's (1993) hypothesis that, in the *avant-garde*, generations *displace* each other with the suggestion that generations may use the archive to take positions *alongside* predecessors, thereby securing survival through cultural memory.[2] Where linear perceptions of history point out the differences between the present moment and the past, Eichhorn is keen to point out the possible connections between different times. This includes how 'uncannily present the present may be in the past' (Eichhorn, 2013 p.30). So that situations of oppression from previous generations may still resonate now. These resonating histories of oppression are also harnessed by the manifesto, which reminds us of other marginalised voices that have spoken through the same form in different generations. She motions towards a solidarity created by the archive that is out of time, with archivists acting to drag the past into the present in a way that offers resistance 'to existing orders and entrenched institutional ways of operating' (Ibid). The dragging action Eichhorn describes is characterised as both a productive and destructive force. In a positive sense it produces alliances through history. In a destructive way these solidarities sit within larger conservative institutions and systems offering resistance. This double function complicates Derrida's notion of the death drive in the archive, conserving and linking up other histories whilst also acting against established institutional methodologies. For Eichhorn repetition of archival forms points out the gaps in larger systems of knowledge and generates new spaces for encounters towards the production of feminist knowledge.

Feminist archives are seen to 'exceed preservationist objectives' that may be traditionally associated with the archive, exhibiting a concern for the needs of women in the present (Ibid, p.31). They often simultaneously serve researchers of women's history and provide a catalyst for activism. In this way they speak less to Derrida's vision of the archive as place of solitary confinement and more to a different idea of commencement, a kind of opening out to the future through care of the present moment. They also replicate the double function that Janet Lyon notes in the manifesto as a tool and a trace (Lyon, 1999, p.16). Lyon argues that manifestos both offer a trace for

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[2] Eichhorn uses the example of the Riot Grrrl collection to make this point arguing that the group's choice to gift their archive to the New York University Fales Library was a strategic alliance that allowed them to realign themselves as a cultural rather than subcultural phenomenon.

historical research and are active in the process of making history, offering compelling narratives, which become the tools to imagine other realities (About Hospitality, p.4).

One example of this is the Lesbian Herstory Archive (LHA), which is noted for its firm loyalty towards a community of independent volunteers who support and maintain the collection outwith larger institutional agendas. LHA is a site not only of archivisation, but also of education and community organising, combining public spaces and private areas with sofas and kitchens for community members. Eichhorn does not pit community archives against those that have relocated to the academy, instead, in interviewing professionally trained librarians and archivists who work in institutional settings she sees them acknowledging spaces like LHA as important precedents to their practices. Her understanding of archives draws from Foucault's (1989) realisation that order is both a deeply essential, restrictive mechanism that determines the relationship between things and a purely imaginative speculation: 'that which one cannot escape and that which enables us to imagine possible worlds' (Eichhorn, 2013 p.151). This leads to a rejection of the simple binary between order as innately conservative and revolution as a chaotic force. Instead, Eichhorn suggests that it is through order that a resistance to conservative forces of patriarchy and capital can be staged. She continues:

> 'order is not opposed to resistance but always already what might make the rejection of existing systems of thought and established grids of intelligibility possible.' (Ibid)

In this way feminist archives are subversive by mimicking and recoding the systems they face. Archivists and researchers are presented as Haraway's (1991) 'tricksters and coders, feminist cyborgs' working to recode 'communication and intelligence to subvert command and control' (Ibid, p.175).

Eichhorn's analysis also approaches the politics of failure, highlighting feminist positions that have ambivalent relationships to radical pasts. Using Laurent Berlant's (1994) article '*68, or something* as an example Eichhorn depicts Berlant as uncomfortably out of time in yearning after the concrete utopian interventions of 1968. She continues to give a list of apparently irreconcilable positions pertinent to the time of Berlant's article:

'To be properly in *that* moment was to be on the side of tactics not strategies, ambivalence not doctrine, subjectivity not collectivity, and certainly *not* community or anything else remotely pointing to a mass movement.' (Eichhorn, 2013, p.51)

In relation to social practice Grant Kester (2011) seems to take up Berlant's unfashionable interest, 18 years later, arguing that his critical position is a progressive turn away from post-1968 paranoid thinking. Given this, Berlant's article could be reframed as a feminist precedent to Kester that adds complexity to his critical dismissal of much feminist thought as operating in a paranoid paradigm. More than that Eichhorn argues for a move against the binaries created by a progressive view of events. She sees Berlant's attachment to a failed political moment as a political strategy in itself and a way of developing a relationship to history that is not teleological or unquestioningly linear. Instead of being ahead of time or displacing past certainties with oppositional truths Berlant is out of time, replaying past attempts at revolution in a profound engagement with the question of how 'past political moments might be used to understand social change in the present' (ibid).

Queer Archiving

A key reference for Eichhorn is Elizabeth Freeman whose theory on time informs her position in the archive as one that acts to drag time, looking back to historical moments that might appear suppressed in the present and offering resistance to dominant temporalities. In *Time Binds* (2010) Freeman describes time as a material manipulated to produce relationships and bodies. Expanding on this she cites Bourdieu's (1977) notion of *habitus* to suggest that there are culturally and institutionally enforced temporal rhythms and that 'cultural competence and thus belonging itself are a matter of timing' (Freeman, 2010, p.4). We achieve comfort and power to the extent that we internalise given cultural tempos, coming to inhabit a culture's expectations around mastering time, delay, surprise and pause in an economics of exchange around getting and giving. In the face of this cultural imperative, which is bound up with the capitalist logic of time as productive and in short supply, Freeman suggests a kind of queer

temporality that seeks to put time out of joint or 'catch it short'.[3] This kind of temporality is associated with feelings of uncanniness, untimeliness, belatedness, delay and failure.

By dealing with these untimely feelings Freeman approaches Freud in a similar manner to Derrida, through the persistence of repressed things which could be considered as a kind of haunting. This persistence manifests itself in camp acts, with drag framed as a kind of channelling of another body, and of another time. She asserts that camp acts as a kind of bodily archiving:

> 'Camp is a mode of archiving, in that it lovingly, sadistically, even masochistically brings back dominant culture's junk and displays the performer's fierce attachment to it.' (Ibid, p.68)

Importantly, this is not an archive of culture's dominant modalities but one which cares for undervalued and discarded outsiders. So we are returned to the scrap heap that both Eichhorn and, differently, second wave feminist artist Meirle Laderman Ukeles (About Manifestos, pp.32-37) both lovingly attend to.[4] More broadly the scrap heap is the kind of 'unthought history' that Janet Lyon (1999) sees championed by the manifesto form, which enables throwaway histories to resurface. Freeman frames this retrieval of repressed histories as a process whereby, 'the material by-products of past failures write the poetry of a different future' (Freeman, 2010, p.68).

Particularly, Freeman discusses Elisabeth Subrin's short experimental video *Shulie* (1997), which remakes an unreleased 1967 documentary film with the same title. The film revisits the pioneering radical feminist Shulamirth Firestone (Shulie), prolific organiser within the New York feminist scene, who published the groundbreaking feminist manifesto *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970). More particularly it revisits the 1967 documentary, a film portrait of Firestone as a 22-year-old student at the Art Institute in Chicago, before she achieved notoriety in New York as organiser of the New York Radical Women in 1967 and the Redstockings in 1969. Freeman uses the video to rethink and confront 'the problematic relationship between feminist history and queer

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[3] Monica Ross writes an evocative description of institutional time in *Valentine* (2000) as something we are always running to catch up with, so that we seem to be on a treadmill (About Hospitality, p.29).
[4] Ukeles is also importantly linked to Steedman by her assertion, in relation to an actual landfill site, that we attend to each mote of dust.

theory' (Freeman, 2010, p.68) with second wave feminism often seen as displaced by and oppositional to the development of queer theory in the nineties. Rather than replay this linear, oppositional account Freeman sees the two as brought together, becoming a conversation between form and content in Subrin's film. For Freeman, Subrin's film expresses camp through its attachment to this small piece of non-history, discarded by mainstream cultural memory.

As a mode of camp archiving the film shows an ambiguous 'willingness to redeploy radical feminism as a failed yet incomplete project' (Ibid). The video takes place at a moment *before*, when Shulie is on the edge, poised before a future of radical activism. By offering a window onto this historical loose end, a prehistory of second wave feminism, we are given a glimpse of Shulie before her opinions were fixed into a polemical discourse that could be passed on as 'an intact political programme' (Ibid, p.66). Freeman argues that the viewer is forced to confront the similarities between this moment *before* and the moment afterwards. Rather than progress through struggle Freeman asserts that Subrin redelivers 'a series of throwaway observations and minor incidents' that reveal the similarities between now and then in terms of the 'struggles women still face around issues of lower wages, housework, childcare, unwanted pregnancy and other "personal" problems '(Ibid, p.67). We must confront the realisation that there have been no collective solutions to these issues. In the film and Subrin's archival work we are able to feel Firestone's uncertainty and to relate her moment with our own, equally precarious one. Through the debris of the archive, where Subrin locates her material, a precarious solidarity is negotiated and a sense of urgency produced.

In this way Subrin's remix partakes in the love of failure that Eichhorn also identifies in Berlant's writing, and in the camp act of rescuing ephemera from archival scrap heaps. The film functions like an allegory, being in two times at once, 'telling an older story through a new one, suturing two times but leaving both times visible' (Ibid, p.69). Through this process Freeman argues Subrin acts 'to reincarnate the lost, non-dominant past in the present and to pass it on with a difference' (Ibid, p.71). Freeman focuses on a moment in the footage where Shulamirth disputes the suggestion that she belongs to a generation, instead she expresses a desire to 'catch time short' (Ibid, p.77). To Freeman this aspiration is 'a way of forcing the present to touch its own disavowed past or seemingly outlandish possible future' (Ibid, p.78). What is suggested is a complex trans-temporal solidarity. This is not about either total reverence or rejection of the past.

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Instead the film suggests a dialogic meeting or equal exchange enabled by the archive, taking place before Firestone's (Shulie) legacy is fixed. This idea of solidarity produced through occupying uncertain and marginalized positions could be seen as feminism's major contribution to the politics of collectivity. Like Shulie, Subrin also motions towards trying to catch time short by returning to a moment that is not yet, a kind of messy, transitional space that discourse has not caught up with and is consequently open for alternative possibilities. Here revolution is a conversation through time described as a turning back.

Time and the Archive: Persistent and Repressed Histories

Freeman positions this turning back in relation to Derrida's position in *Specters of Marx* (1994). Writing in 2010, Freeman locates queer theory in a chain of thought passed from Marx to Derrida who:

> 'theorizes an ethics of responsibility towards the other across time-towards the dead or towards that which was impossible in a given historical moment, each understood as calls for a different future to which we cannot but answer with imperfect and incomplete reparations.' (Freeman, 2010. p.9)

As Steedman writes, quoting French historian Jules Michelet, the work is to pacify 'the dead, exorcising them by finding the meaning in their brief existences' (Steedman, 2002, p.71). The other, across time, is delivered to us in the form of the repressed archive, which could be seen as enacting a haunted dialogue with archivists and researchers, calling them to respond. The archive collects past histories offering compelling unfinished stories. This ethics of responsibility is a detour from forward moving agency, depicting, instead a call and response between now and then, a meeting with historical others. This meeting is related as a kind of recurring trauma or *Nachträglichkeit* where memory traces from other times become deferred actions played out on other bodies and lives. They reoccur and are, quite literally felt, in other times. Beyond Derrida, Freeman lists other theorists who have also argued for this kind of *felt* history. She includes particularly Raymond Williams who referred to 'structures of feeling', 'suggesting that social change can be felt as well as cognitively apprehended'. (Williams, 1977, p.127) Steedman goes further to imagine how we might breathe in their dust, experiencing them in our physiology.

As well as asserting the importance of feeling and the uncanny return of history Freeman sees trauma as somehow productive. She describes the shock and confusion that accompany a moment of loss in a similar way to artists like Chu Chu Yuan working in social practice (About Hospitality, p.16). In both cases emerging insights related to loss and to being lost become catalytic moments that lead to new ways of knowing and perceiving the world. Renegotiations with the present moment are spurred on by encounters with other historical narratives that we *feel* strongly in the present. Through this comparison, those working in archives, both as hosts (archivists) and guests (researchers, artists) could be seen as enacting a kind of social practice, encountering and being with a complex nexus of voices that are delivered through time. These guests and hosts are committed to not knowing history in advance, but being surprised by the complexity they discover. The difficultly in negotiating these voices is related to their unfinished or repressed quality, which emerges painfully in the experience to produce 'new social relations' and 'forms of justice' (Freeman, 2010, p.10). In this way time is a kind of medium that can be worked with to produce new forms. This work is facilitated by the archive. Missing and repressed voices create an urgency around the need for change that is dispelled by narratives that depict feminism as progressing. Instead of a progress narrative, what is produced by an attention to the missing and repressed is a kind of solidarity with other histories that are out of joint. In dispelling the inevitability of change that progress narratives achieve there is also a sense that we cannot wait for change but must try to bring it about. In this way archival dragging plays with time to catch it short, to demand change now. Sometimes new, uncertain manifestos are produced out of the possibilities presented by the archive and at other times the archive itself is a manifesto, compelling new forms of solidarity and new subjectivities through the nexus of relationships and proximities it suggests to its guests.

In *Encounters in the Virtual Feminist Museum: time space and the archive* (2007) Griselda Pollock also works with the idea of recurring and persistent cultural memories through Aby Warberg's exploration of *Nachleben* (Pollock, 2007, p.18). Warberg's study is a historical story not organised around chronology, nationalism or even schools of form but is instead concerned with encountering what returns and repeats in an archive of images. Pollock suggests that this approach could be used as a way to move in the archive, plotting 'relationships between things and transformative interactions' to create a virtual museum, described by Pollock as 'a poiesis of the future' (Ibid, p.10). This virtual museum is an evocation of what an archive could be in feminist hands. It is

similar to Steedman's potential space. Pollock's suggestion of the surprise encounter set up by configurations in the virtual museum also resonates with Eichhorn's notion of archival proximity, with the hosting space of the archive becoming a meeting place where new alliances may form between different generations of actors. Pollock also resists the linear structure of history asserting, 'we have increasingly come to recognise that there are other temporalities at play' (Ibid, p.18). She describes the archive not as a scrap heap but a storehouse for the past, which can be reconstructed with a similar attention to fragments. These fragments come to stand in for what is missing, unknown histories of women at moments of cultural radicalism. She speaks of negotiating between conscious expressions (artists working in a time and place with historically specific materials and conditions) and unconscious conditions (structural, persistent, formative) offering feminist re-readings that work in the interval between these two elements. Pollock posits a being *with* other temporalities, drawing together fragments, in order to try to arrive at a relational understanding that could produce different possibilities in the future. Her description of this historical negotiation is striking in its similarity to narratives of social practice. This positioning in between conscious and unconscious, between the act and its shadow, the archive and its fever, relates a holding in tension of contradictory things. This place between antagonistic elements is something, for example, artist Jonathan Baxter writes about in relation to his practice (With Hospitality, p.80), whilst her emphasis on being *with* other temporalities echoes the language Chu Chu Yuan uses around her methodology (Introduction, p.3).

Rewriting Mythology: A Collective Archive

The question of returning histories also informs Sam McBean's (2015) account of feminist narratives. McBean writes extensively on the figure of Antigone as a myth that keeps returning in feminist discourse. As a disputed icon the figure of Antigone has consistently contained many conflicting desires for feminism as a political praxis. McBean traces a path through these multiple feminist engagements with her story, through Virginia Woolf, Luce Irigaray and Judith Butler. Through encounters with these writers McBean asserts these:

> 'frequent backwards iterations of Antigone in feminism refuse to leave her be, to properly bury her, and instead, through consistently bringing her into various presents, insist on keeping the past a contested ground.' (Ibid, p.28)

This archival glance backwards is not only a matter of contesting the past, but also of challenging mythology. Anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1978) describes mythology as the building blocks of the social world. Equally, it could also be described as a kind of cultural unconscious. Feminist re-writings of myth act to undo the imaginary constructions of a dominant symbolic order. Writers like Irigaray, for example, engage with mythology offering interventions into both a cultural unconscious and, consequently, following Lévi-Strauss, the terrain on which the social takes place.

McBean describes Antigone as dragged through numerous sites. Even from her beginning she is declared by Creon as already dead in eyes of the state and coherent historical narrative, denied a present, becoming a ghost in her own time. She haunts the present, performing resistance. She refuses to become a forgotten history by answering the ethical call for burial in a proper place. In this way her story is around the politics of memory. She is both a ghost, her actions repressed by the commands of the state, and speaks to ghosts, trying to negotiate a different relationship between the past and present. Is it a step too far to reimagine Antigone as a feminist archivist? Or a guest in the archive who, like Steedman, asserts 'nothing goes away' (Steedman, 2002, p.79). This question of the past's relationship to the present is key for feminist theorists, like Eichhorn, Freeman, Pollock and McBean, who suggest that the archive can provide the tools to reimagine this relationship and offer resistance to dominant ideologies in the present. This question is also suggested, more broadly, through the form of myth. It is precisely through myth that we are able to perceive commonalities between the past and present. The manifesto's mythological capacity is in drawing energy from these commonalities, evoking a sense of collectivity in forms that repeat through time.

McBean constructs feminist readings of Antigone as a collective archive. This archive presents a different idea of a feminist community. She describes this as a community without linearity, exhibiting a temporality that refuses to let the past be past instead positing:

> 'a form of belonging that does not presume the past is settled, the present is knowable and shared, or the future is predictable or wholly other, is what I have to offer, is what I hope might provide a counter to generational models of time.' (Ibid, p.152)

In the repeated returns to Antigone, McBean sees a form of 'melancholic identification' and asks us to consider this place of loss precisely as a place to start building belonging. In this place vulnerability is not denied, in this way Derrida's secret of the archive is exposed. Instead there is a shared experience of uncertainty, with feminism becoming a negotiation rather than something already known in advance. McBean returns to Shulamirth's manifesto *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970) describing an event at the Showroom gallery in London put on by Cinenova, a non-profit distributor of films and video made by women. The event involved gathering a group together in order to read and transcribe the manifesto, with readers also able to interrupt the process to ask questions or comment on Firestone's ideas. McBean confesses, 'as transcribers we failed miserably' (McBean, 2015, p.151). The process was slow and difficult, leading her to remark that the text seemed to push us away as we 'attempted to erase our distance from it' (Ibid). What is interesting about her account is that failure in the performance produced in participants a unique feeling of belonging. She describes this in a way that is resonant with Sarah Ahmed's work in *Strange Encounters* (Ahmed, 2000), which describes the ethics of meeting with others as somewhere between either total assimilation or conversely complete rejection. McBean writes:

> 'this experience of reading together and of reading slowly produced, for me, a belonging in feminism that did not require a complete identification with feminism's past. Nor did it require that I turn away completely from this past.' (McBean, 2015, p.152)

She goes on to say that a sense of community was produced through what it felt like to be 'both resistant to and touched by the text (Ibid).' What is described then is a shared experience of uncertainty, of dislocation in time. This resonates with Ahmed's affirmation of failure as a kind of ethical encounter (About Hospitality, p.8). Furthermore it works with Chu's account of the friction necessary to produce movement (Introduction, p.3). At the Showroom the experience with the text doesn't depend on approaching feminism as something that is fixed and settled. It is the very uncertainty that the readers feel in the face of past beliefs and desires that produces a sense of community still open to change and negotiation.

The Politics of Transmission

In relation to the feminist manifesto McBean imagines 'a feminist model of futurity that asks us not to leave behind the present in our desires for the future' (McBean, 2015, p.116). To some extent this request approaches the question of how hope (for the future) can work in association with rage (in the present). If feminism is structured by hope for a different future McBean argues that equally it is structured by an anger that ties it to current conditions. She quotes Ahmed's assertion that what feminism is against cannot be seen as something simply exterior. Ahmed argues that a critical politics cannot simply overcome difficult conditions by detachment from the effects of histories of violence and inequalities. Instead rage directed against inequalities enables action in the present moment. In this way the future is not 'guaranteed by letting go of the past but by engaging more closely with it' (Ibid). This sentiment echoes assertions made around the archive, by Derrida, as a protective gathering together deeply related to desires for survival in the present moment and in the future.

McBean approaches rage most directly in her attention to Valerie Solanas' pivotal *SCUM* manifesto (Solanas, 1969). The rage in the *SCUM* manifesto is discussed in relation to this question of uncertainty. To McBean, Solanas' visible anger is a thin veil for a prevailing anxiety that can be read in the manifesto. This anxiety is bound up to the question of survival. Solanas is described as a spectral outsider, a kind of anachronistic relative, whose marginal status places her at the edge of representation. From this position *SCUM* manifesto is an attempt to break through or puncture the present. This assault reflects an anxiety around representation and is bound up with the same fears that Faludi expresses for feminism, in her reference to the scrap heap. Furthermore it is arguable that social practice exhibits similar anxieties around its ability to reproduce itself and the adequacy of the document to convey the inter-subjective processes involved. These are archival fears around transmission and representation, especially given the understanding that histories are felt and experienced at inter-subjective levels. In the case of social practice and feminism these fears are heightened by the drive for social change. Equally *SCUM* expresses an anxiety around its ability to bring about a different future. There is a temporal complexity within the manifesto, which is tied up with constructing a different version of the past. Like other manifestos, it is also busily constructing a different future, intimately connected with a particular, outsider's narrative of the present. McBean doesn't write specifically on archives but her work on time and the manifesto form suggests them. It echoes the anxieties around survival in the future. By choosing to analyse *SCUM*, perhaps the most feverish of all manifestos, she suggests an archive fever, a desire to reproduce which is also a kind of death drive.

When related to feminist history this drive suggests the difficulties of moving past histories of injury and negotiating a path between rage and hope. Solanas asserts 'if scum strikes it will be in the dark with a six inch blade' (Ibid, p.28). McBean registers that this threat, taking place elusively in the dark is so open as to be indeterminate, 'like the affective contours of hope itself' (McBean, 2015, p.111).

Social Encounters in the Archive

In line with Eichhorn, activist and archivist Deborah Withers begins *Feminism, Digital Culture and the Politics of Transmission* (2015) with the idea that people without a history are truly oppressed. Withers explores the 'cleavage' that Derrida lays out in his writing on archives, between its openness to the future and its concerns for conserving, through an exploration of the 'problems and possibilities of an archival world gone digital' (Withers, 2015, p.7). Particularly, Withers explores questions of accessibility, durability, care and excess in relation to digital systems and in her work in co-founding the Women's Liberation Music Archive (WLMA). The book reveals a process of careful decision-making around organisation of archival forms. This care is related to a concern for *how* feminist practices are transmitted. Through attention to such details Withers acknowledges archives and libraries as aesthetic entities that affect how we think and learn. She expresses a fear of a decontextualised feminism that is amenable to other agendas, instead affirming the importance of context to feminist praxis. There is a similar fear amongst artists with a social practice, most notably Helen Smith, who warns against reducing the work to a methodology or toolbox that could be applied elsewhere (Audio Archive, MW.001). This anxiety is related to the political intent latent in the work and bound up with its ability to respond and act in an embedded way.

Withers argues for a kind of bringing to order by asserting that dispersal of materials and disorganisation could mean the loss of much needed marginal perspectives within feminism itself. This bringing to order of heritage is a process of curation, an orientation of care located in gathering materials, stories, practices, ideas and people. Archival work is described as folding back in almost lost but not forgotten histories. In doing so she exploits and extends the metaphor of the scrap heap. Being undefined, or as Ukeles would put it, unnamed, Withers takes the chance to rename the material encountered in the archive through a shifting set of metaphors (About Manifesto, p.35). It is equally:

'a cavernous infinitude', a 'spatial, temporal, fibrous, liquid, resonant, electronic, mechanical, inscribed, geophysical, deep, aquatic, shallow, mineral, metal, wooden, computational, inauthentic, modifying and plastic' finally also 'a technical compost'. (Withers, 2015, p.17-18)

Building on this idea of soil it is also, importantly, ground for 'the movement of thought, resources from which ideas, lives, politics, desire and culture are woven' (Ibid). The vast possibilities suggested by this naming leads her to ask:

'If the material encountered in an archive is not simply *historical evidence*, but a patchwork of ideas, energies, possibilities and world making tools through which I orient my sense of being in the world, *my cultural heritage*, what different intellectual and affective claims does such material elicit?' (Ibid, p.7)

Where McBean writes about the urgency of the manifesto Withers suggests it is urgent that we attend to the 'already there' that is the archive. This is a jump from the out of time, not yet narratives of Freeman, McBean and Eichhorn to assert that this material is poised, gathering together a body of knowledge 'whose time has come' (Ibid, p.8).

Where writers like McBean and Ahmed emphasise feminism's attachment to the things it is in opposition to, Withers' book identifies a social practice in feminist history that is not only about 'critique, reaction and reform' (Ibid, p.35). There is a concern with the social contexts in which knowledge can be shared. Through detailed research into the Women's Liberation Movement and the Black Women's Movement, Withers identifies feminist culture as a form of social life characterised by invention and the substantial elaboration of different worlds. This conception of feminist culture includes not only films, music and books but also discos, workshops, event nights, bookshops or, in fact, any kind of social meeting. Such meetings are framed around the idea of 'living as if', what is elsewhere described as a prefigurative politics, and are concerned with what Gail Lewis describes as 'a culture of being, how we related to each other' (Ibid, p.34).[5] To acknowledge this culture as it manifests across various feminist activist histories is to take a wide conception of political activities. Importantly, Withers' move to highlight the social aspects of feminist activism brings it near to concerns in social practice. Going on to say that 'the value of feminist cultures includes their suggestiveness, and how they

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[5] Gail Lewis interviewed by Rachel Cohen as part of *Sisterhood and After,* 2011. Transcribed by Withers from a British Library audio file.

encourage attention to the processes of social transformation rather than the end product' (Ibid, p.35). Focusing on bands in the Women's Liberation Movement, Withers elaborates how the unfinished quality of the material is a political gesture.[6] To encounter demos or live recordings within Withers' archive (WLMA) is to meet something messy and transitional. Bands like the fabulous Dirt Sisters tended to draw attention to their processes and difficult working conditions that made for open, imperfect and wounded sounds. Rather than finished products there was a culture of poor images and ghostly photocopies made in haste on shoestring budgets. Parallels can consequently be drawn between this aesthetic and the early work of Richardson, Ross and Walker in projects like *Fenix* (1980) (About Manifesto, p.16).

For Withers these methodologies relate to the medium of the digital itself, with its endless and speedy reproduction techniques that are vulnerable to 'upgrade, migrate or disappear' compelling us to confront 'a present that is always degenerating' and asking us to think about how the ephemeral can be made to endure (Ibid, p.127). Given this, a different language and way of thinking is necessary for being in the digital, exemplified by a feminist culture that has always been engaged in caring for the ephemeral. In insisting that now is the time for these cultures Withers' writing becomes manifesto-like. There is a vulnerability in the ephemeral that reaches out for collaboration. For Withers these archives are generative beginnings, by engaging in them we can come together with a heightened awareness of our own vulnerabilities and the need for different models of support in order to survive.

Withers' focus on the social aspects of feminist culture also asks questions of the archive. In describing 'embodied collectivities woven by people that seethe desire, hope, anger and frustration (Ibid, p.35)', Withers acknowledges that this archive is not only bound up with ephemeral, process-based content but also it is, following Ann Cvetkovich (2003), an archive of feelings. This content asks different things of those engaged in the archive; in a sense, the social practices Withers' technical compost suggests require an approach that is similar to that employed within a social practice. For Withers working with feminist culture in the archive necessitates a kind of being with or engagement not premised on knowing about subjects in an abstract or general way. Furthermore it requires time, 'it is a slowed down, interpretive *orientation within*

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[6] Withers uses a letter written by the fabulous Dirt Sisters to the feminist record label Stroppy Cow that contains details of 'a lot of bad starts at getting the band going due to women being too busy with other work, childcare or moving' to illustrate this attention to processes and labour conditions (Ibid, p.147).

that does not know in advance the encounters materials can yield, or the types of possibilities they foreclose and enable' (Ibid).

This movement in the feminist archive produces situated knowledge, described as a reading along the archival grain. Withers uses the term *encounter* to describe this reading, asserting that we do not arrive to consult a complete form or storehouse of information. Instead the archive is 'messy, chaotic, invested, troubled, partial and significant, never representative or representable in a final form' (Ibid, p.59). As Steedman asserts, our search for the lost object changes its form (Steedman, 2002, p.77). This encounter with the archive reveals thinking as an active, ongoing process that is never complete. Like social practice it is thinking that occurs between multiple voices. It is a relational process, created 'in proximity with polyvocal, contradictory and challenging voices embedded within heterogeneous archive material' (Withers, 2015, p.59).

In thinking on this chaos of memories and particularly on how to navigate these multiple voices and relationships Withers draws on theory produced by women of colour in the 1980s. Through black feminism's engagement with ancestors and migrations away from past selves and petrified ideas, a set of metaphors emerge that make it is possible to imagine a self that is always located in relation to others. Particularly she uses the example of Gloria Anzaldúa's co-edited collection *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981) to explore how the metaphor of the bridge is useful for generations of feminists that followed, including specifically M. Jacqui Alexander (2006). In Anzaldúa's hands metaphors are described as forms through which we can both protect and change ourselves, and a way to generate 'spatial orientations' (Withers, 2015, p.67). In this case the metaphor of the bridge enables connections between women without effacing the 'various histories, desires and differences', which exist within this 'earthquake country called feminism' (Ibid, p.68). Quoting Anzaldúa, bridges are described as conduits and connectors that enable transformations to occur in the 'inbetween space, an unstable, unpredictable, precarious, always in transition space' (Anzaldúa, 2002, p.1). How can Withers' use of the bridge metaphor, couched in the middle of an extended exploration of the archive as a feminist methodology for activism, be understood? It is evident that the bridge resonates and adds to Withers' conception of the archive. She says:

'Bridges are metaphorical techniques for thought that can facilitate shifts in consciousness. The bridge is the transformative space that "links us to other ideas, people, and worlds" and offers a way to think how feminist ideas and movement can move across generations.. the visualizing, bringing into the world of the bridge, acts as a visionary portal, fusing ancestral knowledge with currents of immediate articulation.' (Withers, 2015, p.68)

As a 'visionary portal' the archive is a horizon to a different reality. In this description another bridge may be made not only between Anzaldúa's metaphor and Withers' conception of the archive. The writing continues 'the Anzaldúan bridge profoundly resists a futural logic – its operation and techniques or thought enable the realisation of ideas *whose time has come...* the bridge is for those ideas that are ready now' (Ibid). This assertion relays the urgency of a manifesto intervening into the present moment and connects to Withers' ideas on digital culture.

Withers moves from the bridge via M. Jacqui Alexander's writing in *Remembering This Bridge Called My Back* (2006) to the act of crossing. Crossing is configured as a means to radically rethink the relationship 'of self, other, community, history, time and desire in accordance with the deep recognition of difference' (Withers, 2015, p.68). Crossing is a way to describe a kind of ethical meeting with difference; it is a relational practice that is also an act of surrender, an admission that we do not know in advance what we will find. Crossing is an immanent practice, very much emerging from and of the world. To cross is not to project a transcendent vision but to be involved in transforming the mundaneness of lived experience *now*. It is also a way for Withers to describe being with the feminist archive, imagining that encounter as a ground for 'profound revolutionary change' (Ibid, p.69).

Non-Linear Time

Withers is committed to non-linear chronologies, offering this extensive and revealing quote from filmmaker and artist Trinh T. Minh-ha:

'.. if we do not think in terms of linear progress, but rather in terms of spiraling, multidimensional here-and-now – where everything in the present carries with it its past and futures. The seed of the future is always already there, in the

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present in the past. If we think of it in that way, inclusively rather than exclusively, spatially and spirally rather than only linearly, then the time we live in is rich and full of potential.' (Minh-Ha, 2005, p.21)

This sentiment meets Victoria Browne's 'polytemporal approach' examined in *Feminism, Time and Nonlinear History* (2014). Browne offers a critique of teleological history as a kind of totalizing form that is consequently closed to the possibilities of the past. Rather than sequential and teleological time Browne argues for a multi-dimensional, polytemporal approach. Like Withers' engagement with the process-based, social aspects of feminist culture, Browne's conceptual drawing of time could be seen to have much in common with social practice. The book advocates for working with the idea of 'lived time', which is described as foregrounding:

> 'the experiential, relational, and discursive aspects of temporal existence, as opposed to scientific and metaphysical approaches that are interested in time as an objective condition.' (Ibid, p.26)

Throughout the book there is an expressed intention to develop a language that could account for 'temporal coexistence and shared time', which is not monolithic (Ibid, p.38). This shared time is explored through anthropologist Johannes Fabian's concept of 'coevalness' (Fabian, 1983, p.31). Browne makes a case for the importance of this conception of time for practices that are bound up with questions of intersubjectivity and relationality:

> 'If social interaction pre-supposes intersubjectivity, then intersubjectivity, in turn, is inconceivable without assuming that participants are coeval, that they share time' (Browne, 2014, p.39)

Furthermore, given this emphasis on the subjective and inter-subjective aspects of temporality, the reading she proposes might seem particularly pertinent to consider in relation to a sense of the past as something felt in the present moment. This reading of coevalness highlights the complex and fragmentary nature of the present moment. Quoting Historian Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) Browne uses the term 'time knot' to describe how we live in moments 'composed of the traces and fragments of the multiple pasts' (Browne, 2014, p.42). To inhabit these time knots involves acknowledging the complexity of any encounter or meeting with difference. Due to this complexity, there is

no presumption that shared moments automatically exist. Unlike the concepts of synchronicity (events occurring at the same physical moment) and contemporaneity (the same moment in periodised time) coevalness is not something that exists in advance, it is something that must be created. Here the idea, fundamental to social practice, of time as a material to be worked with, recurs (About Manifesto, p.36). It is my feeling that not only is shared time created within social practice but it is also a condition that the feminist archive works towards. Thorough coevalness the archive negotiates a precarious collectivity between its different participants in order to both resist the difficulties of an oppressive present and create a prefigurative vision of a different future.

The time knot exists not only in relation to unresolved pasts but also to a 'futurity that laces every moment of human existence' (Chakrabarty, 2009, p.250). In this way Browne describes a spilling of one historical moment into others. In a move to find a position somewhere in between thinking of history either as objective fact or as pure textuality she asserts that there are traces of the past that will always exceed or outrun any one historical narrative. These traces spill forward through the archive in a generative way. Browne argues for a position within the archive that is critically self-reflective, yet also able to be surprised by 'the strangeness of the past, allowing the present to be interrupted and transformed through the re-emergence of the past in the form of the trace' (Browne, 2014, p.51). This trace is reminiscent of Lyon's conception of the manifesto as a trace (About Hospitality, p.4). It also returns us to Eichhorn's conception of undetonated energy and to an ethics of an approach, which foregoes the desire to know everything in advance.

Sharing the same time does not require an 'ironing out of temporal differences' (Ibid, p.45). Instead Browne insists that we must stay with these multiple temporalities that make up the present moment, resisting the urge to try to make them into one grand narrative that perceives individual histories and local stories as somehow incomplete and lacking. In relation to this she outlines Chakrabarty's theory in *Provincializing Europe* (2009) of two histories. 'History 1' is practiced as a kind of analytic social science assimilating the particularities of place and time into a set of abstract universal concepts including reason, labour and capital. This kind of history, which is elsewhere referred to by Greenlandic artist Pia Arke as the 'big history', is not simply something oppressive that must be resisted (2012). It is also the ground on which critique can be practiced. An understanding of this history is consequently necessary to diagnose the workings of

systems like global capitalism. Alongside History 1 there is also History 2. History 2 is alternatively also what Pia Arke refers to as the 'little history'. It partakes in a love of detail that remains tied to particular contexts. It is a felt history that pulls us towards 'more affective narratives of human belonging' (Browne, 2014, p.43). In this way History 2 posits exactly the kind of temporal complexity that Browne argues for. It is also reminiscent of what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as a minor form (About Hospitality, p.29). As minor forms these 'little histories' are said to exceed and interrupt the 'big history' by offering a subversive language 'that sends the major language racing' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986, p.116). Despite the subversive feel of these little histories that are entangled with History 1, Browne is careful to assert some independence for this second, plural idea of history. It is more than simply a dialectical other to the first history. It offers a kind of multiple scrambling that is always more than a form of critique. Whereas critique offers dialectical opposition to History 1 making it somehow part of what it opposes History 2 moves away from all that is totalising in History 1 to suggest 'the politics of human belonging and diversity' (Chakrabarty, 2000, p.67). This pairing of History 1 and History 2 as forms that sit alongside each other could also be considered in relation to the manifesto's balance of rage and utopia (About Manifesto, p.23). In an effective manifesto rage, produced by critique and awareness of the master narratives in history, is accompanied by a hope for something alternative that is firmly rooted in the embedded and context responsive narratives of History 2.

Conclusions

Browne's suggestion of two related but different historical narratives posits a being in time and between conceptions of history that is useful to feminism, presenting a way of remaining responsive to the injustices of the past yet also concerned with the particularities of where we stand, offering playful readings that open up a potential space for different ways of being in the world. This section has also moved between these conceptions of history, layering theoretical contributions that offer both critique and immanent, context responsive histories through which a prefigurative politics emerges. Common to the different perspectives covered is a non-linear view of history which questions progressive and competitive *avant-garde* narratives to suggest, instead, a solidarity that plays out through archival proximity over time. Following Freeman's

identification, participants in feminist archives are involved in acts of queer retrieval, searching out discarded stories and placing one time in another to create a kind of precarious collectivity. Discourse is open and raw in the works that Freeman analyses, paradoxically it is this openness and uncertain quality, normally disavowed in a political project, which enables identification for feminists struggling in the present moment.

This dragging into the present is accompanied by the idea that moments in the past have a habit of returning to offer affective hauntings. With each return new voices add nuance to the question of repressed histories, that never go away. Steedman asserts that in order to open up 'boundless' poetic and political space, someone must hold the space. In McBean's analysis Antigone is the returning figure, who arguably holds the space, inspiring a collective feminist archive and raising the question of the archivist. The collectivity McBean writes of works through a restless, moving engagement with mythology. This engagement starts from a place of loss, revealing the secret vulnerability of Derrida's archive and turning it around so that loss, failure and friction emerge as powerful and unexpected allies.

Finally, Withers' analysis gives a glimpse not just of resistance but a different form of feminist cultural activity that shapes new archival forms. This difference is one that Eichhorn also intimates exists through her descriptions of the Lesbian Herstory Archive. Withers asserts that these different archives are not about Derrida's search for impossible, lost beginnings but offer knowledge pertinent for this moment. She describes a bridge between generations of feminists over broken ground.

With Archives

The first, About section of the archives collection explores theoretical contributions towards understanding the archive as a form appropriated by feminist praxis to enable political and social activism. This second section details four examples of archival interventions from my own experiences, reading the archival grain (Withers, 2015), offering situated explorations along feminist lines. Initially, I approached these archives to search for traces of feminist history that could be related to current practices in social art. Furthermore, I was looking to uncover little known examples of feminist manifestos from the UK context. Archives like the Women's Art Library (WAL) in Goldsmiths

University, London and the Glasgow Women's Library (GWL) contained important early feminist examples of social art practice, which contributed to an expanded conception of the manifesto form. These early examples asked questions of the home, drawing attention to it as a socially constructed space with hidden layers of complexity. Through time, and using Derrida's evocation of the archive as a kind of home or shelter, it became apparent that feminist social art experiments could be seen as layered forms of appropriation, firstly re-visioning conceptions of home and then reimagining the archival houses they came to inhabit.

Beyond these important collections in London and Glasgow, listening to the Women's Audio Archive (1983-92) (WAA) online led me to the impression that Marysia Lewandowska constructed her archive also as a kind of shelter to support her nomadic identity at the time. Furthermore, the nomadism of Sophie Hope's 1984 Dinners archive takes the meal form associated with hospitality, constructing safe spaces where different kinds of knowledge and resistance can be remembered and restaged. The critical and generative space produced by the artist audio archives quite literally spoke to me, the immediacy of its voices posing questions around similarities and differences between now and then, suggesting the possibility of political collectivity through time, enabled by encounters in the archive. By raising the possibility of shared and collective responses generated in these four feminist spaces it became possible to imagine the archive itself as a manifesto, working through discussions around missing and minority histories towards new interventions into the order of things.

Home

In *Archive Fever* (1996), Derrida begins with an assertion that the archive was first conceived as a private house, a home to the lawmakers, citizens who held the documents and consequently held political power. In reminding us of this origin Derrida delivers his discourse on archives upon a site of much feminist discontent. This discontent is both around the politics of memory and differently around the politics of the home, which has been considered as a site of domestic isolation for many women. As Derrida writes, sheltering is not only a gathering together but also an act of setting apart, in solitude, which is described as a form of violence that produces a totality.

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Writing in detail on the important collective artwork *Feministo: Portrait of the Artist as a Housewife* (1975-77) in *n.paradoxa* Alexandra Kokoli (2004) begins by unpicking the traditional definition of home as a place of security and belonging. She argues that this definition is an enabling condition for the homeless wanderings of 'the subject in modernity' (Kokoli, 2004, p.75).

Just as the archive is not simply a storage house for past events, but also something that opens out onto the future, projecting an image of itself that could be said to travel through naming and repetition, so the home is a stable centre that enables travel. Kokoli argues the home in modernity has gendered connotations that stretch back to what Irigaray argues is a primordial nostalgia for the maternal body which sees women living out an 'internal exile' (Irigaray, 1993 p.65). Kokoli continues:

> 'Housewives are not called *Homemakers* for nothing: it is precisely the presence of women as giver of care and support that supplies home with its domestic identity.' (Kokoli, 2004, p.75)

Writing about Alice in *The Sex Which Is Not One* (1985), Irigaray's description opens with a red and blue-eyed Alice 'who lives alone in her house' (Irigaray, 1985, p.9). This spins out into multiple threads and identities through the scene setting, shifting grammatical landscape of the opening chapter. Her text both expresses and pushes against the confines of the home, a one-dimensional mirror-like space:

> *'he opens the door to the house.. After he passes through, the surface has lost its other side. Perhaps its underside as well. But "how can anyone live without that?" With a single side, a single face, a single sense. On a single plane. Always on the same side of the looking glass. What is cut, cuts each other from its own other, which suddenly starts to look like any other. Oddly unknown. Adverse, ill-omened. Frigidly other.'* (Ibid, p.16)

Alice's voice is suffocated at home and fragmented, becoming defined as simply negative, a mirror image, that supports positive, authorised and worldly identities. Women are permanently *othered* within the domestic sphere, unable to hold onto an identity except in negative terms. Irigaray uses the mirror to suggest this negative, reflective, identity hinting at things less visible, beyond the mirror.

Irigaray argues that women are positioned in discourse and in the home simply as one-dimensional, reaffirming a positive totality, a patriarchal space of politics. This space is reproduced through the archive, which tells a story as much through what it contains as through what it is missing. The archival secret, that Derrida mentions, plays out in feminist hands to reveal that political conceptions of security and belonging are a story bought at a price. To make travel possible someone must stay at home. Equally, as Butler argues, the coherence of political citizenship is defined by zones of exclusion (About Hospitality, p.6). Yet by relocating the political act of lawmaking *at home*, in the archive, Derrida could be argued to perform his own version of the feminist sentiment the personal is political, reminding readers of vulnerabilities and secrets at the heart of the political stage that is the archive.

How have these parallel perceptions of the archivist as lawmaker and the housewife as homemaker played out? It will be the function of the first part of this section to look at feminist revisions of home in the GWL and WAL archives, and also beyond this by approaching Lewandowska and Hope's archives the section moves towards the question of nomadic identity. In engaging with the archive I am interested in thinking on how these records spill forward, opening up into concerns we have in this moment. Next to the archival work I consider a number of curatorial interventions I have made that approach conceptions of archival proximity and encounter, asking questions of archives as they function now and of their homes and of the *archeon* that live in these homes. Asking what kind of home is the archive and also what kind of memories of home can it hold?

Glasgow Women's Library
Castlemilk Womanhouse: An Archive of Social Practice
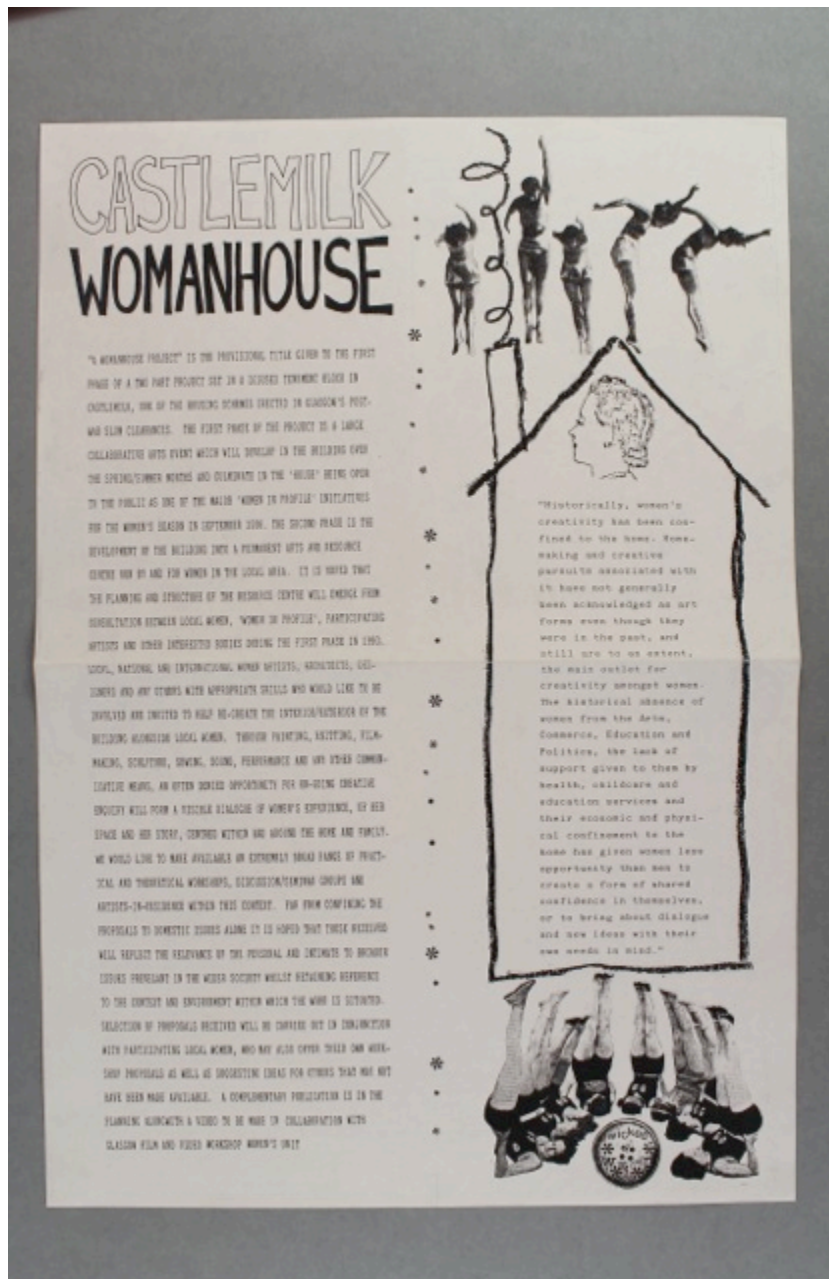
What is Castlemilk Womanhouse? Artist Call Out Poster, Cathy Wilkes, Julie Roberts and Rachel Harris (1990). Courtesy of Glasgow Women's Library.

Subversive Domesticity

In 1990, the year that Glasgow became European City of Culture, a group of young women artists, including Adele Patrick, founder of Glasgow's pioneering arts space and literary resource, the Glasgow Women's Library (GWL), were asking questions of the planned cultural showcase offered by the city. In response to the 'stale, pale and male' history on offer, Patrick and Kate Henderson hosted a meeting in the union space of the Art School to gather support for a public programme of events that could address

historical and contemporary notions of women's creativity to run alongside the official culture offerings.[7] Looking back on the resulting *Women in Profile* (1990) initiative, which predated GWL, arguably giving the library its first form, Patrick remembers *Castlemilk Womanhouse* (1990-92) as the most ambitious element in the programme and also the most enduring.[8] Instigated by artists Rachel Harris, Julie Roberts and Cathy Wilkes *Castlemilk Womanhouse* (CW) was a collaborative project that drew inspiration from Judy Chicago and Miriam Shapiro's pivotal *Womanhouse* (1972) project in Los Angeles. The reasons for choosing the home setting were explained by the artists in a statement at the time:

> 'Locating the project in a house gave women and children from different backgrounds the opportunity to create a form of shared confidence in themselves by making and exhibiting work in a place traditionally designated as theirs, transformed by their own efforts from its historically private to a dauntingly public space; and beyond the notion of a patriarchal provision to a place that was genuinely their own.' (Roberts, Wilkes, Harris, Sept 1992)

Part of the impetus to remember the 'Chicago model' was in order to make feminist praxis visible within the particular context of Glasgow in the 1990s where it still seemed to be significantly absent. In written documentation of the project proposal there is also a strong engagement with the ancient symbolism of the house as a place of human relationships, intercourse and abuse. CW confronts this symbolism, approaching the home as a self-policing, confining environment and transforming it through a kind of 'subversive domesticity' (The Scotsman 1990).

Beyond Judy Chicago, the artists were also interested in British precedents and in reassessing the ideas explored by resituating the practice in the very different context of Castlemilk, an area on the outskirts of Glasgow's south side: at the time the largest housing estate in Europe, built during the slum clearances of the 1950s. The artists' account of Castlemilk noted a severe lack of facilities and high unemployment. In an interview, Lorraine Sharp, one of the core participants and later organiser at the house, noted that a large number of single mothers were relocated to the area and suffered significantly from a lack of social resources that catered to anything beyond their status

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[7] I am indebted to Adele Patrick, speaking at an event I curated with the Scottish Contemporary Art Network, for the poetics of this description (Audio Archive, AW.001).
[8] This reflection comes out in an interview between Patrick and artist Kate Davis (2014) who was commissioned to research the project as part of the *Generation* (2014) showcase, 25 years of contemporary art in Scotland. For a detailed history of GWL see http://womenslibrary.org.uk/about-us/our-history/.

as mothers (2014).[9] Patrick noted the artists were interested in the divergence of aesthetic between the glossy reproductions of the Los Angeles project and other British counterparts, including, significantly, Kate Walker's work to create *A Woman's Place* (1974) in South East London, which offered up a different history of grainy black and white photocopies. In calling up these multiple histories and referencing them in the work's title the artists made the manifesto-like move to build themselves an alternative historical support structure in feminist methodologies.

Social Work

By drawing on these historical precedents CW was already an archive of sorts even in its time, performing feminist praxis in new contexts. It aimed to contribute a nuanced and developing perspective on a significant model of feminist practice to the social and political landscape of Glasgow. Within the context of Glasgow School of Art, where the artists were studying, it offered the, still radical, assertion that creativity and art flourish in dialogue through supportive and confidence building networks. Networks that women, kept in internal exile, did not have access to.

It also contained the seeds of a discourse on social practice, including an emphasis on presenting a contextually responsive, dialogic form of art making. These commitments were very much in keeping with a feminist approach; the ability to perceive, from an outsider's perspective, the importance of context, which may or may not provide the support structures needed to be an artist, and the desire to move away from hierarchical ways of working to embrace the kind of equal exchange dialogue works towards. It was in order to trace this openly feminist genealogy of social practice that I approached the CW archive as one site for my research. I felt that the CW archive could have a significant voice in a dialogue around the missing histories of socially engaged art. In approaching GWL I was aware that it was much more than a storehouse for a particular history of interest, it was a dynamic and growing environment plugged into an activist agenda for social change. Within this environment the CW archive is only a small part of a much larger collection, several boxes of photographs, newspaper clippings, written proposals, booklets, posters and slides that sit on shelves next to library books and many other important collections in the open library space, frequently also used for workshops, meetings, performances, gigs and book groups. This merger between library, social

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[9] The interview was conducted by artist Kate Davis as part of *Generation* showcase (Davis, 2014).

space and archive is no doubt partially a practical space saving solution, but it is also an opportunity to blur the distinctions between different types of users in the space, creating the opportunity for unexpected social moments.

The small collection of boxes has been recently expanded to include a set of interviews by artist Kate Davis as part of an artwork commissioned by *Generation* (Davis, 2014). In order to understand the archive Davis initiated a number of interviews with Claire Barclay, Rachel Harris, Adele Patrick, Lorraine and Stephanie Sharp. Davis' engagement with the archive highlights GWL awareness of the archive as a site where knowledge is performed and in Derrida's terms re-performed, in a hope to speak to the future. Yet it defies his suggestion that the archive is a necessarily sequestered entity. Despite its relatively small size and unremarkable position, CW archive contains details on the whole *Women in Profile* (1990) initiative, and is consequently, a point of origin for the library, a vulnerable yet hugely ambitious beginning for the different possible world that now surrounds it.

As part of *Women in Profile* (1990) many of the methodologies employed by the participating artists became the blueprint for GWL's current working life. Along with a commitment to context and equality CW was a long-term project that was often more about the processes of social change, what Deborah Withers recognises as living 'as if', than the products of change (About Archives, p.22).[10] The artists were committed to encounters with difference and to building an institution for outsiders, on the outskirts. Not only were they part of a collaborative practice, at a time when collaboration was a marginal form, but they also pioneered an open curatorial process that remains a radical move today, issuing a call out to artists to present work that would be chosen by the women in Castlemilk, a long way from the curatorial hierarchy running the city of culture bid. This last move towards an open curatorial process, combined with the emphasis on process, leaving only ephemeral traces of work for display, proved most upsetting to the art establishment at the time, with course tutors at Glasgow School of Art referring to the practice not as art but 'social work' (Harris with Davis, 2014).

Cock and Bull Culture

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[10] Although the project documentation includes some images of traditional art works made at the house, often the lead artists were more involved in organising the space, workshops and publicity material than producing their own works on site or perfectly documenting every aspect. Given the length of the project the archive remains small, perhaps reflecting this characteristic and also driving Davis' need to learn more though interviews with participants 25 years later.

Photo Right: Stamp logo. Rachel Harris in jobs for the girls t-shirt designed by Julie Roberts. Left: p.6 of Harris' manifesto. Courtesy of Glasgow Women's Library.

Couched within the manifesto-like move to participate in history by running an alternative narrative, Harris also produced her own manifesto to accompany the project called *Cock and Bull Culture* (1990), now housed in the archive. The manifesto was a seminar paper for her MFA at Glasgow School of Art where course tutors were struggling to offer approval. She was perceived as having overstepped the boundaries of the course with this 'continually growing work', to the extent that faced with failure Harris put together the manifesto and nailed it to the principal's door.[11] The manifesto opens with Lucy Lippard in *Art after Modernism* (Wallis, 1984) and reprinted in (Harris, 1990):

> 'The lie of official culture is that society-invested art is sullied; deficient in its conception, deformed in its gestation, brutalised by the conditions of its birth, and abused in its lifetime. To rescue ourselves from this damaging fiction surely requires a new emancipation from market relations, and it demands a rethinking of all the facets of the production of art within culture.' (C&B p.1, Ext I Lippard, 1984)

Lippard's sentiment is the beginning of a cut-and-paste work comprised of blocks of

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[11] These facts about the manifesto and the perception of the Castlemilk project as social work were gained in conversation with Harris and Patrick at GWL.

quotations Harris was reading to support her practice. These readings are gathered together in the text to form a supportive community or chorus of voices that enable Harris to act. In this way the manifesto prefigures the library, being a small collection of borrowed texts that tell a different story. It produces an argument through a patchwork fabric of quotations, pulling multiple voices together to create a coherent argument with the seams still showing. Divided into sections on 'Culture', 'Politics', 'Academia' as well as 'Alternative' futures, the manifesto is accompanied by a complex referencing system that brings together modernist critique with feminist insights from a host of sources including Lucy Lippard, Rosika Parker, Griselda Pollock and Martha Rosler. Important artists in the field of social practice like Lorraine Leeson and Peter Dunn are also included, their practices inextricably linked with feminist perspectives in the manifesto.

The first section on culture begins by confronting modernism's transcendent narrative of art, revealing it, through passages from Andreas Huyssen (1986) and Val Walsh (1989) among others, as a boundary drawing practice. If the practice of writing a manifesto has more often been associated with modernism this feminist version is positioned elsewhere. Amongst this deconstructive critique, which presents us with the manifesto's rage, it is left to Parker and Pollock to suggest a way forward, uniting culture and political struggle and providing the manifesto with its more utopic element:

> 'If culture is no longer detached from the social formation but understood as a crucial area of the production of values, beliefs, identities, ways of life, the practices which comprise it can become a legitimate area for political struggle.' (Ibid, Ext P15 Harris reprinted from Parker & Pollock, 1987)

The action of reading the manifesto involves a choice between an uncomfortable movement back and forth to uncover the individual writers behind the text or an alternative reading that gives up on names and blends the texts. Rather than choosing, a careful reading could be in two parts. In this way everyone's voice is acknowledged and yet the text hints at a different social and collective reality. This formal property echoes art critic Suzi Gablik's (1989) diagnosis of an inevitable divide between individualism and the social brought about by art's involvement in capitalist relations. It also offers an alternative constellation:

> 'Right now individualism still implies decreasing social involvement, and it will do so as long as we conceive of culture only as an arena for individuals to achieve private ends. This has been the self-serving thesis generated by

capitalism.’ (Ibid, Ext C6, Harris reprinted from Gablik, 1989)

Can we imagine a political reality where the individual is not pitted against the social? Harris’ feminist manifesto suggests a ‘totally new conception of the production and evaluation of art and the role of the artist’ (Gouma Peterson & Mathews). Perhaps the most resonant description comes from Lippard who, with reference to Suzanne Lacy’s practice, writes on the impressive work ‘through long term activities’ that ‘delve down’ into social life:

> ‘The real work includes the yearlong organizing and workshops that led up to it, as well as film and documentation that follows. These considerations have led to a radically different approach to art making. Tactics, or strategies of communication and distribution, enter into the creative process, as do activities usually considered separate from it, such as community work, meetings, graphic design, postering.’ (Ibid, Ext A9, Harris reprinted from Lippard, 1984)

The artists in Castlemilk worked in long-term way, instigating a two-year process of ‘research, planning, fundraising and diplomacy’ simply to gain access to the building, 39 Glenacre Quadrant, in June 1990 (Harris, Sept 1992). This process resonates strongly with socially engaged projects that exist now without knowledge of these feminist precedents. For example an interesting parallel can be made with Wochenklausur’s work in forming networked strategies for communication and distribution, described evocatively by curator Kirsten Lloyd (2015) (About Hospitality, p.44). As well as the movement into social life Parker and Pollock note a double position for the work, which also resonates with Lacy’s practice:

> ‘A feminist materialist practice is founded outside the art world, but indexes the art world to the social relations of which it is a constitutive element.’ (Ibid, Ext A8, Parker and Pollock)

In this case the manifesto, nailed to the principal’s door, is a very direct index, serving to point out, in contrast to CW, a lack of engagement with the social world outwith the official institutions of art and also to urge the Art School to make those other connections.

Harris played out these alternative conceptions of art with Roberts and Wilkes in Castlemilk but ultimately the lack of wider institutional support for the project took its toll with Patrick reflecting, in interview with Davis, that the individual artists were left

drained emotionally and financially. Some of the most well-used images from the project can be traced back to poster designs and other 'communication strategies'. Despite these 'successes' Harris recalls that often her own works, including *The House that Jill Built,* an oversized Wendy house, almost too big 'like Alice in Wonderland', made from salvaged material that attempted to bring outside enclosure-like structures inside, remained unfinished.[12] Looking back from the archive there is a feeling that Harris' attempt to rebuild the home, messing with the boundaries of inside and outside, is still an unfinished project. GWL carries this urgency with it in its attempts to provide a home for memories of the project. From many small conversations with Patrick and other artists that took place in GWL's very public, open archive it is evident that the library still advocates and cares for numerous projects that play out tactics pioneered by the CW artists. In this way the archive is a shelter, as Derrida understands it, and support for artists whose own work is often bound up with small hard to acknowledge acts of hospitality and care. The labour and processes that go into making homes is not taken for granted. Instead housework is moved into the political space of the archive, which no longer keeps that labour secret, replaying Harris' initial act, which moved housework into the contested space of public pedagogy.

Feminist Culture

Photo: Julie Roberts, Rachel Harris, Lorraine Shadoin and the women and children involved in Castlemilk Womanhouse (1990). Courtesy of Glasgow Women's Library.

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[12] This description was provided by Harris in interview with Davis for *Generation* (2014).

The project's re-appropriation of the home as a space not of private confinement but of social creativity also had consequences for the local community of women in Castlemilk. From the beginning the collaboration was a creative partnership with local women and children that evolved continuously around the 'specific needs of the women' (Harris, Sept 1992). Importantly, from the opening selection process, these needs were self-defined by the local women. The open and collaborative model led to the centre's development as something more than a venue for workshops and residencies to a small centre for social activity of various kinds (spontaneous and planned). This social activity eventually fed into some of the project's most iconic works, including a cupboard packed full of disregarded and broken shoes, which could not be attributed to one artist or another as it was the result of a social outing to the local market. Revisiting the archive 25 years later with Kate Davis, Harris is able to vividly recall these social moments, describing works like *A Girls Night Out* (1990) by Josie Wilkinson and Aideen Cusack and the collaboratively produced *Haunted House* (Harris and Roberts, 1990) as responses to requests from participating women and later the older children. These social aspects of their activism resonate with Deborah Withers' descriptions of feminist culture's more ephemeral process-based content.

Being *with* the Archive

This question of how an archive can communicate the nature of social and process-based, feminist cultures is important for my research interest in the politics of memory. This interest is also bound up with the question: how does a social practice reproduce itself through time and the document? What are the missing and absent parts that could be said to haunt the material and how can they be drawn out to allow for generative speculations on what is present? In many ways the CW collection rubs away at the myth of the autonomous artist to reveal a different ethics of conversation and care that sustains creative practice. In considering this important trace of feminist social praxis the imperative is not to fix history in the archive but to be in conversation with it to open up a discursive space for the future. Significantly Davis, whose practice involves careful re-drawings of feminist histories, was pulled towards the medium of voice and conversation in her response to the archive for the *Generation* (2014). In this way, as a social practice archive, CW encouraged engagement along similar lines, seeing Davis adopt a listening posture to produce a multi-voiced response. Davis' video edit includes two generations of participants as well as the collaborating artists, with Harris captured

looking back on the silent slides, which trigger stories and felt histories.

I entered the archive at a timely moment revisiting this history at the same time as Davis with a similar intention to think again on the past and retrace it in relation to the present moment.[13] Along with reading the documents this process involved me in speaking to artists, curators and archivists also working with the resources and following up on the surprising and interesting connections made. I wanted to try and draw the GWL archive alongside other feminist collections adapting Kate Eichhorn's conception of archival proximity to think about the idea of relational archives. To do this I invited Adele Patrick into conversations with curator/archivists Althea Greenan from the WAL/MAKE Archive, London and Dunja Kukovec from Red Min(e)d's Bring in Take Out Living archive (various locations) (Audio Archive, AW.003). Many of the insights included below have come from these conversations.

Presenting next to Kukovec, Patrick relayed a number of projects over 25 years at GWL that held in common the original commitment to cutting through gender and class-based inequalities (Audio Archive, AW. 002). For example she spoke on the recent collaboration with *MAP magazine* to curate Lucy Reynolds' performance *A Feminist Chorus* (2014). Reynolds' chorus resonates with the multi-voiced, collective nature of Harris' manifesto, by drawing on the GWL collection and Glasgow City archives to bring together women from many different backgrounds, reading texts to create a chorus of overlapping voices. Patrick was keen to emphasise the diversity of participation relaying anecdotal details within the process of creating and performing the event that reveal how hierarchies, enforced by cultural capital, are often overturned in the space. These social moments continue in the film of the event which creates 'new resonances in libraries and collections across the UK' (Reynolds, 2014). Rather than one, the message is there will need to be many small conversational revolutions.

Patrick asserts GWL works through the agency of social art practice collaborating with artists who work in social ways. For example at the time of my research I met artist Mandy McIntosh who was commissioned to produce work around the Zero Tolerance Violence Against Women Campaign developed by artist Franki Raffles in the 1990s. McIntosh worked with the Raffles archive and a community of women in Castlemilk using material in the archive to grow the project with a social practice methodology. She worked with the women to put political works in pertinent public spaces, including bridges near to the law courts in Glasgow. Here we can see McIntosh mining the

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[13] Think again is a poetic borrowing from the film *Denkmal* (2013) made by Kate Davis.

collection, as Eichhorn suggests, realising undetonated energy.

Though the new library building is no longer in Castlemilk and has been in many places in between, its situation in the East End of Glasgow still makes it an institution on the outskirts, for outsiders. In relation to this outsider status many GWL projects work with ideas around home and migration. A project coordinated by Syma Ahmed, for example, worked with artist Sadia Gul to capture histories of Glasgow by migrant women in the first waves of south Asian migration to the city. The artist was able to broker a dialogue by getting groups to make composite models of the homes they left. As they were literally remaking their homes the women relayed stories about those spaces which remain in GWL as oral histories (Audio Archive, AW.002).

Gul's work, like CW, asks fundamental questions about the nature of home, encouraging the reimagination of oppressive cultural geographies through social and collective activities, which work against the erasure of identity. In many ways the library itself offers a new public conception of home for many women in the city. In the 1990s CW sought to transform the home environment into a supportive, public centre for collaborative creative projects with an open curatorial brief – a new possible world for art. GWL in its early days also, in the other direction, aimed to transform the public institution of the library and archive environment into somewhere homely. It was possible to get a cup of tea in an open kitchen area, find a chair or sofa, often with a hand embroidered cushion on it in front of a wood-burning stove. If you were a regular visitor you might see a portrait of yourself or someone you have attended a workshop with in a framed photo, with a book in hand. This atmosphere (though sadly not the stove) is one that has travelled with the library in its many incarnations.

Adele Patrick has also travelled with GWL. In relation to this I would like to take a step further to imagine the archive itself not only as an institution that supports collaborative practice but as a collection that reimagines the agent of the archive as an artist with a social practice. In this way GWL's form reflects the form of the practices it supports. It is not only a home to memories of social art histories but is currently a social art practice. As well as being the library's familiar face and host Patrick also works as an outsider or guest, playing with the conventions of our cultural institutions and turning them on their heads (With Hospitality) suggesting we remember the library as a noisy space, too restless to ever gather dust.

During Althea Greenan's visit to speak at the CCA in Glasgow, around her work at WAL, I

also arranged a visit and tour of the newly opened archival spaces at GWL for her with Patrick. As we walked through the spaces particular collections triggered examples of projects that invite people in, with Patrick reflecting her intention to have as many different groups as possible working with and making different aspects of the collection their own. In response to criticisms regarding lack of representation Patrick relayed the tactic of pinpointing particular collections that under-represented groups could work on to become more visible in the library environment. In this way GWL engages with and offers a response to groups who may feel excluded by the history of the library. This invitation offers an opening and enables that space for uncertainty. As Steedman relates the invitation is a presence that changes a 'carefully constructed, hard won' place to a 'limitless boundless space' (About Archives, p.6). This open curatorial approach continues through methodologies in the library like the 'adopt a shelf initiative', which invites people to curate and name shelves according to their own interests. Patrick confided that she has no desire to be alone in a collection commanding all aspects. She invites others in to negotiate the collection on their own terms. This strategy is a move to counter the restrictive and commanding view of archive we gain from Derrida (1996) and Foucault's (1989) deconstructive work. This is also a strategy to secure the library in difficult economic times, gathering together a multitude of people who all feel relational ties to the collection. In short when hard times come, GWL will be home to so many others, who all feel a sense of ownership over the materials, that it will be 'impossible to get rid of us'! In this way GWL is a very different proposition from Derrida's solitary, commanding archive. Where Derrida perceives the archive's openness, its reproductive function, as a kind of vulnerability, a threat to its imagined coherence and authority, Patrick perceives it as a strength. The ever-growing work at GWL embraces this more anarchic side to archiving, what Derrida terms as its *anarchivic* quality, opening the collection to different perspectives and reinterpretations (Derrida, 1998, p.10). The repetitions that Patrick encourages are open to difference, making GWL a formidable hosting space for any number of subjectivities that feel under threat within neoliberal crisis economics.

The Women's Art Library (MAKE), Goldsmiths, London

Feministo: Portrait of the artist as Housewife (1975-77)

Relational Histories

Photo: Interior view of *Feministo*, ICA installation (1977). Photo courtesy of Women's Art Library/ MAKE Archive.

Just as in 1990 Patrick and Henderson called a meeting in frustration at the exclusively male showcase on offer in the Glasgow year of culture, so in 1975 Kate Walker also spoke out at the Women's Art History conference in London. Su Richardson recounts Walker's frustrated question:

> '..aren't there any housewives here who want to make some art, and who are fed up with all this fine art business? Aren't there any of you making things at home that you would like to show each other?' (Elinor, 1987 pp.37-39)

This appeal, heard by members of the Birmingham Women's Art Group, marked the beginning of the public phase of a touring exhibition culminating in an installation at ICA, of what had been a private exchange between friends, Kate Walker and Sally Gallop. The friends began posting small artworks to each other after Gallop moved house in

1974. From this beginning Alexandra Kokoli (2004), describes how a network of women became involved in making art works:

> '.. which drew on traditional women's art techniques, while also thematising the experience of domesticity in 1970s Britain from an explicitly dissident, mostly feminist perspective.' (Kokoli, 2004 p.76)

This network eventually produced over 300 pieces that travelled within the UK and on an international tour that reached Australia (Ibid, p.77). Where CW, 15 years later, transformed the home into an installation of women's creativity, *Feministo* transformed the ICA's public space into a home. The exhibition staged a double anger, rallying against both the dominance of men in the so-called neutral, white exhibition spaces and the domestic isolation of women in the home space. Kokoli registers parallels between *Feministo* and Irigaray's textual interventions, which play with mimesis whilst also suggesting a different view of women, a multiple, strategically essentialist portrait. The *Feministo* installation mimicked the ideal home in the gallery, with its own revisions, including a memory and rape room. This repetition with differences, steals the symbolism of home, making the exhibition into an unsanctioned occupation or squat (Ibid, p.80). Profound ambivalence works in the individual pieces to combine familiar objects, often food, with repressed cultural narratives around consumption and objectification. It also works as a whole by placing one world in another, to 'wilfully erode definitions and boundaries of both home and gallery alike' (Ibid, p.78).

Kokoli's article draws a history through the writings of Pollock and Parker to discuss craft as a form out of place in the public world of the gallery. In *Subversive Stitch* (1984) Parker charts how embroidery became linked to the home and symbolically associated with femininity, as a natural habit, without aesthetic or commodity value. In this way female craft labour's association with the home is seen to bring about the familiar hierarchical divisions between professional art, found in public galleries, and amateur craft. The eliding of one identity into another, women into embroidery, as into the home, becomes a form of ideological control keeping women unpaid and in the proper place.[14]

Faced with this division between private and public space *Feministo* creates a tear in the fabric of public life within which to make visible the secrets of home. Asserting home is a

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[14] With reference to Hélène Cixous' use of the term *le Propre,* Kokoli explores its connotations in propriety, cleanliness and property. *Feministo* breaks with all these meanings rejecting proper housekeeping and refusing to stay in place or conform to a particular art category. These refusals are compounded by the ambiguous ownership of the individual works.

useful fiction, a tale of security and shelter, which represses other characteristics.

As the name suggests *Feministo* meets the troubled history of revolutionary discourse head on, rethinking the manifesto for feminist agendas and in the process renaming the form. Into the craft history laid out by Parker *Feministo* appears to not know its proper place. Unlike a monologue that might be seen to command *Feministo* is a call and response system, growing through a movement back and forth. So postal art, an art in between places, resolutely unhomely and in opposition to isolation, becomes a public statement of intent.[15] It grows into a manifesto through conversation. Like Harris' manifesto and CW it is a multi-voiced collaboration, that over two years involved a fluctuating number of participants of hugely varied backgrounds. This multiplicity is reflected in the shape shifting nature of work, which doesn't rest in one place or even under one title.[16] Artist and participant Monica Ross registers that the project created a similar 'radical momentum' to that generated at the time by consciousness-raising (CR) groups, which were 'inclusive, eventful and empowering' (2000, p.6). Importantly, also, CR sessions were multiple and deeply sociable forms. CR was a means for women to realise that concerns which seemed merely of an individual and personal nature were in fact deeply social, public matters. These sessions worked to dispute the straightforward division between public and private, just as, differently, Derrida asserts that the public space of the archive, where laws are passed and power is established, have private foundations and conceal homely secrets. *Feministo*'s re-visioning of the home recognised and exposed this paradox, in an unsettling way, enacting a crossing over from private to public space. This crossing over between previously separate spaces is the work's manifesto (About Manifesto, p.7).

In relation to CR *Feministo* could be seen, not as a single manifesto, but as several - each becoming a small, confessional thread of dissent that tied the women to each other in solidarity. This modification of the manifesto form brings it one step closer to an archive itself, which holds multiple documents. One of these documents, a small manifesto, became the centrefold for a publication called *MaMa,* created by the Birmingham Women's Art Group. It encapsulates the feminist disregard for high art categories also seen in Harris' manifesto. Walker's writing compares art MANifest to arts Feminist-O!:

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[15] In her article Kokoli plays around with the use of the prefix un – making explicit the connection between the un-homeliness of *Feministo* and the Freudian uncanny or *unheimlich*.
[16] The project started life as the *Postal Art Project*, becoming *Feministo* later with different suffixes including *Portrait of the Artist as Young Women* and *Portrait of the Artist as Housewife,* which was also sometimes *Portrait of the Artist as Young Housewife.*

'Art is like cooking. Art is like childbirth. Art is like breathing. Our art is ancient magic. Art is solidarity. Our artwork is together even when we're apart. Ours is ordinary + useful magic. We don't boast.' (Walker, 1975)

In opposition to transcendent traditions of fine art Walker presents a blurring of art and life that sets a forgotten conceptual precedent to so many socially engaged practices now, cooking up useful and dialogic forms for social change.

Su Richardson *Burnt Breakfast* (1977). Courtesy of Women's Art Library/ MAKE archive.

Performing the Archive: history..or not

The combination of *Feministo's* social form and its clear stance as a multi-voiced manifesto drew me to visit the Women's Art Library/MAKE archive (WAL) held at Goldsmiths University in order to try and find traces of this history and to tease out the relationship between manifestos and social art practice though this significant precedent. My first point of contact with the WAL archive, formerly the Women's Art Slide Library (WASL), was through the online interface. The introduction to the special collection is a testimony to the importance *Feministo* holds for the collection and also to the importance of artist Monica Ross who was involved in the work. Standing alone underneath a practical guide to the special collection facilities is a single text by the artist, a script written in response to an invitation to perform at a conference attached to

the Whitechapel exhibition *Live in your Head: Concept and Experiment in Britain 1965 – 1975* (January–March, 2000). In this performance titled *history or not* (2000) Ross offers a lively, informal account of feminism, activism and the 'Women's Postal Art Event', another name for *Feministo* (Ibid, p.3). The text comes close to an oral history of the project, offering a specific window into the 100 slides and other documents that make up *Feministo's* contribution to the slide library. Ross introduces the performance as one concerned with *'these gaps, these distances..these not enoughs'* (Ibid, p.1). This could be seen to refer to the absence of feminist accounts in this particular exhibition history but also to the *experience* of art works that don't translate well into object-orientated histories of art. By pointing out these missing histories Ross' script is also a kind of manifesto, close to speech and action, and offering a view through what is missing that hints at an alternative lived reality always just escaping the archive. Like Kate Davis' pull towards recording the voices of participants to understand CW, Ross also feels the need to speak about *Feministo*, she describes its content as a number of 'art dialogues'. Ross sets the scene:

> 'In 1975, or was it 76?
> these collections
> art dialogues
> were shown together for the first time in a Manchester Gallery
> we slept on floors, worked and ate together
> discovered how to make art-and-politics
> and have a good time
> Waldemar Januszczak reviewed it quite favourably
> I wonder if he remembers
>
> in 1977 more than 300 artworks
> made by a network
> of maybe 20 or 30 women
> aged between 20 and 50
> I think....
> were shown at the ICA
> Suzy Varty
> Kate Walker
> Lyn Foulkes
> Tricia Davies

Su Richardson

Phil Goodall and myself

constructed the exhibition

as a collective installation

a series of rooms

a fridge full of artworks

a walk - in photo album

while the queen was being driven up the Mall

to celebrate the anniversary of her coronation' (Ross, 2000, pp.5-6)

Here there is a glimpse of something other than critique in *Feministo's* ambivalent form, of the living 'as if' that Deborah Withers cites in archival encounters with the women's movement. The precarious, uncomfortable and rushed nature of collaborations comes forward, but also the joy of working and eating together.

Just as Ross asserts, the form of the installation represents a loss to the art world. Although it is possible to study the individual works, mostly from the ICA installation, through their slides on light boxes at the Women's Art Library, there is no way to recreate the installation. Instead there is an impermanent, 'flickering quality' to *Feministo* that is both vulnerable and close to a haunting (Kokoli, 2004, p.82). This quality is re-enacted by Ross in her performance for the audience at Whitechapel where her memory as an individual is imperfect. Not only did the artists leave no instructions or provisions as to how it could be recreated, but the works, made from the contents and forms of 'our lives':

'literally from it's material

the broken and discarded bits

the rubbish and the leftovers

the forgotten recycled' (Ibid, p.4)

were never meant to be permanent. In fact the use of recycled materials particularly, could be seen as not only a necessity but a political choice, expressing and highlighting the difficult conditions of the time. They represent a more ecological creativity that could be seen to stem from feminism's relationship to traditionally discarded and repressed parts. Instead, like Ross' performance, their intention was to express something previously invisible which would require a new language:

'to make our experience visible

in our own terms

we said

the traditional languages of art are not enough

for us

the intent, the content of the work will produce it's own form

and some of it will quite soon fall to bits

because the intent

not the object

was the issue

the process of making art work

as communication' (Ibid, p.5)

Memory is simultaneously drawn on in a spontaneous way and brought into doubt, with dates becoming inexact and sentences trailing off. She calls up ghosts of the past, including reviewing critics, to speculate also on what they might or might not remember. The traces of Ross' voice sit somehow as a supplement to the WAL archive performing and exposing what Derrida claims to be the secret of the archive, that it contains an essential contradiction, a hidden 'forgetfulness'. Derrida writes the archive:

'will never be either memory or anamnesis as spontaneous, alive and internal experience. On the contrary: the archive takes place at the place of the originary and structural breakdown of the said memory.' (Derrida, 1998, p.10)

By opening with Ross the WAL archive seems to play out this structural breakdown becoming a supplement to both a forgetful history and a forgetful contemporary moment. Opening with this secret allows the archive to become dialogic, appealing to future users, who are asked to remember the intentions and read them in the present moment.

In the face of the uncertainty of memory and the difficulty of the archive Ross draws support from a collectivity of women through a process of reciting their names. The performance of uncertainty, the almost falling to bits, brings to light the support network. Remembering as a collective action is a characteristic of Ross' performative practice, which often asks questions of what we think we know placing re-inscribed acts of memory at its heart of a questioning and yet affirmative politics. In the case of *Feministo* 'what mattered to us most', Ross asserts, is that we remember 'it was a

collective, process and time-based social practice' (Ross, 2000, p.7).

The manifesto is active through time. Janet Lyon asserts its time is both *now*, insisting on political actions in the present, and *again*, one of its weapons being memory. Likewise Ross' performance insists on a living history. She asserts this 'social art practice' is not a dead and buried form but something connected, a still alive history of work that we are compelled by Ross to look for in the practices of 'artists and curators now' (Ibid, p.7).

In this way Ross asks for acknowledgement of feminism in histories of social practice. Her performance, learned through the protests of the women's movement, calls not for a new name but for a process of looking back to unearth an already existing one whose genealogy has been forgotten, a relational poetics, which could be referred to, after Ross, as a 'Social Art Practice'.

The WASL Archive

Costumes For Curators Althea Greenan (2013) Amelia Beavis Harrison. Courtesy Julian Hughes.

In *history or not* Ross asks us to go to feminist collections, to interpret social and collective practices now. In answer to this call, tracing source materials for practices and feminist manifestos, including time with slides from *Feministo*, I had started to think about certain archives differently. Because of their relationship to history and

suppressed cultural narratives I wondered if it would be possible to think of archives like the Women's Art Library themselves as feminist manifestos. In relation to this process of thinking *about* and *with* archives I discovered that Althea Greenan, curator at the Women's Art Library (WAL), was also asking questions of the special collection through doctoral research at the University of Brighton. Her research is concerned with the slide library (WASL), a subsection of the special collection and a resource she has been custodian of since 1990 when it was still an independent organisation. Before its relocation to Goldsmiths, WASL was an artists' organisation collecting and archiving its members' slides and publishing a magazine from 1982 to 2002. 2002 was also the year that Kodak stopped making slide projectors signalling the end of slides as a practical way to communicate art works in the world. Greenan's research is bound up with the political questions presented by the slide collection now that its functionality has changed. She recounts that while WAL as a special collection is thriving, the slide library has become a closed subsection, a storehouse. Given that this change is related to technological progress, rather than as a consequence of a complete feminist project, Greenan is engaged in asking what can a slide do besides represent artwork? What questions does this collection continue to ask around the visibility of art practices? These questions are pertinent in relation to Ross' voicing of the absences and 'not enoughs' that exhibition history still presents us with. Given my developing thoughts on archives I was interested in hearing Greenan speak on the slide library as a site of continued resistance and an unfinished feminist cultural project. To this end I invited her to contribute a talk to the *Invisible Knowledge* project at the CCA that I was involved in co-curating with a group of PhD researchers co-convened by Tiffany Boyle, Emma Balkind and Viviana Checchia, the CCA Glasgow's Public Engagement curator (Audio Archive, AW.005).

Greenan's project is interesting in relation to Eichhorn's writing not least because her work resists the view of inevitable historical progress, in this case through digitisation. The work also complicates Eichhorn's call to order, without completely resisting it, by recognising a kind of unruly disorder in the collection that requires a careful negotiation and a recoding of the digital systems it enters. Greenan's talk begins by acknowledging the sheer volume of material that takes conceptions of multiplicity in other feminist projects to a new level. The WASL collection holds 20,000 slides. Faced with this multitude Greenan reflects that the slides:

'have absorbed me and engendered a sense of responsibility to those many practices I know the slides embody in absolutely unique ways...my practice has been focused on extending the efficacy of the Women's Slide Library on behalf of women I rarely meet – through the slides I become a part of their art practice, a collaborator in consolidation of their work.' (Audio Archive, AW.005)

To try to get across the weight of the collection Greenan unpacks a small selection she has carried with her from London, revealing slides carefully encased in plastic sleeves, accompanied by meticulously gathered files, documents of all kinds that relate to the images. She speaks about the effort to carry the slides around. This effort makes Elizabeth Freeman's conceptualisation of time as a material come to life, she is literally dragging the past around, bringing a small fragment of it to us here, now. In the audience we look down two long tables where the materials are laid out: she says imagine ten more tables and you will start to get a sense of how much space is given over to the collection. What is presented is a cartography not a chronology. Like the collection itself, which is organised around names and not by date, her presentation interrupts the linear. There is also a sense of what Gregory Sholette refers to as dark matter, describing the bulk of artistic activity that remains invisible to the gatekeepers of the art world despite their dependence on it. In this Sholette references Carol Duncan's sentiment:

'We can measure the waste of artistic talent not only in the thousands of failed artists – artists whose market failure is necessary for the success of the few – but also the millions whose creative potential is never touched.' (Duncan, 1993)

Sholette uses the example of the archive *PAD/D*, political art documentation and distribution (1980-88), called into being by feminist curator and cultural critic Lucy Lippard, who asked for volunteers to assist in organising an archive of documentation around the many socially active artists no one had ever heard of. His writing is equally applicable to WASL as another manifestation of what Sholette calls the vast surplus archive 'from below' structured by narrative gaps and lacunas. To Sholette the act of bringing this shadowy archive into visibility is not a matter of providing a better social context for the usual subjects. Instead, he insists when exclusion is made visible it is always a matter of politics and a rethinking of history.

Greenan spreads out fragments of WASL along two tables that we sit around. In relation to this material she is a collaborator conversing with ghosts. As well as carrying the collection with her she somehow embodies it. This is exemplified by artist Amelia Beavis-Harrison's portrait of Greenan in *Costumes for Curators* (2013), which depicts her as 'some kind of sci-fi, princess, matron'.

> 'I don't actually sit on the floor I'm hovering – what this costume represents is a slide which is fading to pink – that is what happens – the accession number is something to do with the chemical line of numbering for sperm and what I am doing is raising out of the patriarchal cannon – I have become framed in a slide frame myself.' (Greenan, Audio Archive, AW.005)

The image aligns Greenan's agency with Freeman's description of camp, as a kind of bodily archiving that partakes in a love of the ephemeral items that mainstream culture has discarded.

Much of Greenan's talk focuses on the shift from analogue to digital technology and how WASL complicates that shift through its political nature. To some extent her research is catalysed by a failed attempt to negotiate this shift in a project to make the collection into a digital archive with slides 'disembodied to be made available to digitally enabled practices' (Ibid). This pilot web project, now itself an unfinished archive, was rejected by a panel of artists invited in to evaluate the site. They felt their work was over-determined in the interface, curated to the point it was transformed and consequently misrepresented. Given that the act of self-representation in the collection was a political act, a widening of the field of vision to assert another culture in defiance of exclusive hierarchical structure that had defined women differently, as other or outside or unnamed, the failed project highlighted the need for any digital transition to take place on feminist terms so that its political function could remain intact. In order not to undo the self-empowering politics of the collection Greenan reflects there was a need for 'a new combination of work and play, rewind and rethinking' (Ibid).

From where you are lost – *The Slide Walks*

The *Slide Walks* represent this new combination. Where her work as curator of the collection had involved preservation, the *Slide Walks* are described as a moment of

encounter, which opens up the possibility for surprise and disturbance. This reference to surprise is reminiscent of Victoria Browne's writing on the trace that always spills beyond narrative attempts to contain history. The *Walks* involve Greenan entering the collection, selecting a handful of slide files at random and photographing them in 'a messy' way that shows not only the work but also the edges of the slides, how they are written on and how they are physically situated in relation to Greenan. This 'ad hoc digitalisation' enables Greenan to negotiate a different relationship to the slides, allowing her 'to appreciate the elegant properties of this material' (Ibid). This different relationship is referred to as a making 'strange', an opening up of the archive with care that is again reminiscent of Freeman's queer archiving. The slides are marginal twice over, in their time and now in relation to progressive digital technologies. It is not about a bringing to order or making the collection easily legible. Instead, Greenan speaks about wanting the slides to retain their traction, which is about their texture and relationship to the context. She reads the slides for the grain of the artist's voice. What is important is that the archive remains 'a textured location where it matters who is speaking and where and why and where such mattering bears directly on the possibility of knowledge claims' (Ibid). To quote Barbara Stevini context is half the work.[17] By entering this messy transitional space we are politicised, we feel the fabric of place. We are invited to pick up the files, I put my hand on one at random, it happens to be Meirle Laderman Ukeles slides and documents including *Manifesto for Maintenance Art* (1969). There is an ethics of proximity at play here that works through the metaphor of touch. In this way Greenan's research is not about making a fetish of the slide object but in asking how, through this ethics, can the collection continue to be transmitted as a felt history. In the room at the CCA there is a digital projector and a slide carousel that are played in tandem. The slides sometimes get stuck and then at one point move in quick succession, of their own volition, perhaps catching up or catching us short. In Greenan's work it is easy to hear a haunted dialogue; the other calls across history with demands for a different future, Greenan 'answers with imperfect and incomplete reparations' (About Archives, p.15). The research asks how do we touch the collection and how are we touched by it?

As researcher Greenan faces an archive that is so densely packed it appears more like a fortress than a showcase. She asserts that this mass renders it beyond the politics of

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[17] The phrase 'context is half the work' was a founding principle of the Artist Placement Group (APG) produced by Barbra Stevini and John Latham. For details on the phrase in relation to APG see http://en.contextishalfthework.net/.

total knowing. This impossibility opens up a different possibility for knowing *with* the archive. She compares this way of knowing to anthropologist Tim Ingold's writing on walking, using the example of an archeological dig of a house. Ingold writes on the difference it makes to encounter the faint lines left of a structure by walking through the door:

> 'Hunching your shoulders and bending your head a little as you pass..you find yourself 'inside'..the very movement of entry yields a sense of the house as the interior space that it once was..' (Ingold, 2012)

This is an imaginative leap into an unknown territory that seems to unfold only in an encounter. This leap does not approach the site from above, surveying from a position of total knowledge, but is a knowing in time by being with. To photograph the slides is Greenan's way of walking through the doorway. She becomes a guest on the threshold also playing out Anne Dufortmantelle's conception of hospitality as a willingness to get lost in an unknown, or as she asserts, unknowable territory (About Hospitality, p.14). She moves between roles, both guest and host, this movement enables her to listen to the 'rhetorical space' of the collection, hearing the many voices in the collective 'some seductive, others coolly professional, others still conversational' (Audio Archive, AW.005). Through this listening and attention to context Greenan could be said to have a social practice. Her project is around giving voice, she answers Ross' call to listen for the way the archive performs itself.

In response her photos are re-enactments. Their messiness reflects a culture in motion, a movement, and foregrounds the agency of self-documentation. Her work is about, not only listening, but also ensuring the noise is not suppressed. This sentiment echoes with Patrick's vision of a noisy library. By hearing the sound of dissidence, the noise of these failing, fading communications we are compelled to listen harder, to both remember the politics of collective voice and the politics of naming as an established feminist practice. In relation to this Greenan mentions Carla Cruz, Hannah O'Shea and Jacki Parry.[18] I think of Monique Wittig's pivotal piece of feminist utopian literature *Les Guérillères* (Wittig, 1969)(About Manifesto, p.19). She also speaks on a performance called *The River* devised as the result of an artist residency in the collection by Claire Gasson. The work,

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[18] Hannah O'Shea's work can be found in the Re-act Feminism Archive (2011-13), details of Carla Cruz' work in *Conjugar no Plural* (2012), and Jacki Parry's cartography of women's names in *Women in the City* (2012).

curated by Anne-Sophie Dinant and performed at the South London Gallery, involved eight vocalists pronouncing the name of every single artist recorded in the database. The performance lasted an hour, with the audience free to move around the space, or leave at any point; no one left. We also end the CCA talk with a performance. Greenan conjured up an image of a feminist dinner hosted by artists and writers Mo Throp and Maria Walsh, a 'mad hatter type affair' (Audio Archive, AW.004). Into this mix Greenan brings a list of names, one of the score sheets from *The River* (2011). Also sitting around tables, we are asked to read out the names of the artists. Between each person's reading of a name Greenan recites the title of the work – like a slide carousel activated by the click of a button our voice signals to her, inviting a response.

The Women's Audio Archive

Moving Archives/ the Performance of Archives

Photo: Victoria Worsley *New Model Arkive* (2008). Courtesy of *Arkive City* edited by Julie Bacon.

Our performance with Greenan moves conceptions of archives away from static depository towards perceiving the archive as an in-between space, a living call and response system. It hints at an attempt to reimagine archives along the lines of feminist revisions to the home space, undoing the idea of archives as fixed, immovable monuments and remaking them as precarious collectivities.

It also approaches Victoria Worsley's diagrammatic description of the living archive, set out as a mind map of thoughts on the 'new model arkive' within the book *Arkive City* (Bacon et al., 2008). Worsley's understanding of the archive is a key conceptual lens through which to consider the Women's Audio Archive (WAA) a collection, which carefully negotiates a position in the virtual realm, through the medium of voice produced by artist and collector Marysia Lewandowska. Through the use of voice Lewandowska performs a similarly complex negotiation with our current knowledge economy as Greenan stages with her archival performances. In the book *Arkive City* (2008) - a title that riffs on the idea of the ark – a moving shelter and origin story for the archive in Judeo-Christian mythology, Worsley describes the 'arkive' as 'subjective territory', open to 'emotional chaos' (Worsley, 2008, p.141). Rather than just sources, archives are subjects with stories to tell. In this formulation archives are on the move, disembodied and carried forward into new circumstances, they are read in relationship to the contexts and times they enter. Connected to this idea of movement is the idea that archives can be performed and through this performance become generative spaces out of which creative work can develop. In this process the archivist is conceived by Worsley as a co-creator with a discursive research-based approach that could use the 'virtual realm to show the iterability of the archive' so that it appears to be in conversation (Ibid). As a subject the archive could be said to speak and in speaking it is creative.

The moving chaos of archive futures described by Worsley seems close to Walter Benjamin's performance in *I'm unpacking my library* (1931), which he originally delivered over the radio in 1931. In unpacking his books Benjamin 'describes the chaos of memories' that are held in 'dialectical tension between the poles of disorder and order' (Benjamin, 1968). Where Benjamin describes the ordering of a collection as a dam against chaos, Worsley depicts an archive threshold, which the different paths of memory trails may or may not cross in order to enter the 'space of the in-between' (Worsley, 2008, pp.142-43). Besides order and chaos, this space, 'where the fragile is *seen* to be made stable', holds a number of things in tension, including life and death (Ibid). There is an element of rebirth in all these descriptions where objects are set free, re-performed and renamed within a new space. But Benjamin is keen to stress that rather than the books living through him as collector, somehow the opposite is true. He lives through his collection, erecting a dwelling with books as building stones. The precariousness of Benjamin's nomadic condition, at first highlighted in the action of

unpacking, is somehow made more stable by the visual conjuring of the metaphor.[19]As Kokoli asserts, home becomes a stable centre that enables its opposite, a wandering nomadic condition. This dwelling fits Worsley's description of a generative construction. It is also Benjamin's 'whimsical' definition of a writer - someone who writes the books they cannot find to create the future collection.

Where Benjamin builds his house from books, the materiality of Lewandowska's archive is presented as matrix of tapes, recording speaking voices. These records act as a shelter for the artist and become a foundation for a creative praxis. Lewandowska's tapes also play out Benjamin's scenario in reverse, building a house from *missing* texts and highlighting the more precarious position Lewandowska finds herself in, as a woman in a culture that appears forgetful, giving her a sense that she might also end up as a missing text. The small step Lewandowska takes from text to voice creates a shadow for Benjamin's house, archiving the archives' own forgetfulness, and remaking it anew in the process (Derrida, 1998, p.11). Lewandowska lives out the in-between status of the archive that normally remains hidden, building from a perception of what cannot be found in master discourses, society's missing texts (With Hospitality, p.52).

The archive approaches a different cultural form – the conversation. This is developed through the medium of the tape recording, which delivers the qualities of real conversation by including what would normally be edited out: ambient sounds from the recording contexts, pauses, interruptions and spontaneous exchanges between different voices. In this way Lewandowska leaves an imperfect record, noisy, messy, asserting a partial and personal view. Through conversation the archive is able to convey moments of intimacy as well as rhetoric, becoming moving in a double sense.

WAA's recordings move between cities and continents, carrying with them a concern for the politics of origins, in this case Lewandowska's personal origin story, which could be considered in Browne's terms as a History 2 or 'little history'. The archive reflects the artist's cultural upbringing in a totalitarian communist state. The introduction to the archive registers that it is this origin that gives Lewandowska:

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[19] Interestingly this connection between nomadism and the archival impulse is taken one step further by Okwui Enwezor's analysis in *Archive Fever* where, via an extensive exploration of numerous art practices and their relationships with photography and moving image, the archival impulse is also related powerfully to the conditions of exile and near extermination. Julie Bacon echoes this in her assertion that the archive is not simply a portal but also a burial site.

'a sensitivity to the power of representation, to the original and manipulation of images, thereby influencing her perception of how history is constructed, who keeps the documents, and who has access to public broadcast.' (Interview between Lewandowska and Gregor Muir, 2012)

This sensitivity echoes contemporary feminist concerns like Greenan's not only with the keeping of documents but also with how and by whom they can be publically shared. Like Greenan's outsider archive Lewandowska also brings an outsider perspective via her alternative cultural upbringing. Framing the internal concern for origins that unfolds at different points in the audio, there is an awareness of the archive's unique positioning in relation to the theoretical contributions that also open this text. In interview Lewandowska remarks:

'Four years after I stopped recording, Jacques Derrida presented his *Archive Fever* paper at a colloquium organised by the Freud Museum in London. It was from that moment that the Archive has begun to occupy a central position for many practitioners, and by that time we all had internet which has confirmed our dependency on documenting and self-archiving. I had a verbal agreement to keep the recordings for private use and to contact all involved when planning any change to their status.' (Ibid)

In one of Lewandowska's own public talks recorded for the archive she refers to herself as an artist in exile, despite leaving Poland voluntarily (WAA. 013). In exile, she takes up a position as researcher, leaving a trail of sound works that can be given to new contexts beyond the art world.[20]In the recording of Lewandowska's public talk we hear a slide projector and descriptions of images that we cannot see. In discussion with Condé, Lewandowska confirms that the missing text is a lecture that goes with image projections. The status of the missing text is fluid in the archive. Elsewhere, it is itself a projection becoming a metaphor, in the form of the gap or crack, a question and a dream for the future.[21] In WAA. 013 we hear that 'place stays inside us and changes continuously according to the paths we take'. In terms of archive theory this conception

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[20] Lewandowska's position in relation to this felt exile is not negative – in one conversation with Jane Weinstock, WAA.050, for example she notes that her outsider position is an advantage. Also she speaks in several places but most notably with Barbara Fischer of wanting to be outside or at least wanting to cross between the art world system (inside) and other communities where there could be 'more possibilities' (WAA.005).

[21] In conversations with Weinstock, WAA.050, Gronau, WAA.004. Philip, WAA.005, and writer Claudine Dannequin WAA.003.

is reminiscent of what Worsley refers to as model B, an archive continuum, proposed by Australian archivists. According to this model, whilst records are perpetually connected to the context of their creation they are also dis-embedded and carried forward into new circumstances to be re-presented (Worsley, 2008, p.141). From Lewandowska's feminist perspective the perception of home we carry with us is relational, rather than stable and set apart, acted on by the contexts we enter and equally acting on them.

Between Representation and Agency

The WAA archive is almost completely oral and this format feeds into feminist debates of the time and within it on the politics of representation.[22] In the introduction to the archive the focus on sound is described as 'a conscious decision by the artist to undermine the primacy of visuality' (WAA, Introduction). Of the many debates traced within the archive the question of visual representation is repeatedly approached. In public it is at the heart of the *Monuments for Rent* recordings at the ICA in London and features in the Toronto recording *Power as Representation as Power* through discussion of Mary Kelly's work.[23] It is also an important part of the conversation with writer and film producer Jane Weinstock where Lewandowska mentions the strong bodily presence in Kelly's work despite the absence of her actual body. The conversations in WAA echo Worsley's description of spaces in-between, not the polished coherent scripts of institutional narratives but spaces for working things out. [24] The question of representation is not definitively answered, instead in answer to Weinstock's question on visual representation Lewandowska says:

> 'I think I am in a position in-between – I want to understand where I am now but I can only understand it from where I was before.' (WAA. 050)

Equally, listening to the archive I try to balance these past conversations with the politics of now, with our dependency on documenting and self-archiving. How does

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[22] One pivotal but arguably incomplete (see also WAA.054 which includes discussion of the book between Griselda Pollock and Lubiana Himid) account of feminist art practice's extended engagement with the question of the visual representation of women can be found in Parker and Pollock, *Framing Feminism: Art & the Women's Movement 1970–85.*

[23] WAA.014a – WAA.017, WAA.074 and WAA.042 respectively.

[24] In relation to representation one example of this balancing act is in the constant play with metaphor in the archive, which sits side by side with numerous recordings of Jo Spence, whose photographic works evidence the possibility of representing the body in feminist praxis.

Lewandowska's intervention into the politics of archiving still resonate? She records and engages in struggles that feminist discourse had around the politics of representation, of what should appear and what should remain absent. Certainly these debates can be drawn in relation to Greenan's struggle with the digital life of WASL.

In a chapter in the book *Performing Archives/Archives of Performance* (Gade, 2013) Julie Bacon writes on her suspicions around our culture of representation, referencing Chantel Mouffe and Peggy Phelan to diagnose a rhetorical reality where the lines of liberalism, postmodernism and capitalism are drawn together in an ever 'spiralling number of representational and rhetorical forms' all indifferent to each other (Bacon, 2013, p.82). In this culture, representation can be mistaken for agency. So Bacon grapples with the possibility of a gap between these two propositions. She points out that by representing there is also a danger of misrepresenting, making unrecognisable and consequently disarming speech and agency. In this, as in Greenan's work, there is an acknowledgement that the technical means of expressing the poetics of the work should be a vital consideration. In this respect Greenan references Hito Steyerl's defence of poor images. Steyerl writes:

> 'The poor image is a copy in motion. Its quality is bad, its resolution substandard. As it accelerates, it deteriorates. It is a ghost of an image, a preview, a thumbnail, an errant idea, an itinerant image distributed for free, squeezed through slow digital connections, compressed, reproduced, ripped, remixed, as well as copied and pasted into other channels of distribution.' (Steyerl, 2009)

The poor image described resonates with Withers' writing on the cultural products of the Women's Liberation Movement. Withers asserts that rather than perfect products, bands in the WLM drew attention to difficult production conditions and the extent to which they performed as ghosts in the machine.

The technology of the archive determines what it is possible to remember and equally what will be concealed and repressed. For Withers, Greenan and Lewandowska it is important that the conditions of production are not masked by a hyper-real archival product. What we see in the metaphor of the poor image is the poetics of a minor form, to see less, in this case, is to convey more. It sits between a total refusal to represent and unthinking immersion in representational culture. These feminist archives reflect Bacon's acknowledgment of technology as a field, which shapes consciousness. Bacon

reminds us of Foucault's assertion that it is through 'visibility that modern society exercises its controlling systems of power and knowledge' (Bacon, 2013, p.90). Given this, she is interested in performance in this field that complicates perceptions of archival space, showing it up as a mythic 'threshold landscape' (Ibid, p.91). Bacon is concerned with 'the shadow-life of the archive, and the always partly hidden way it shapes perception, establishes value and configures power relations' (Ibid, p.88). Lewandowska's archive, with its question of the missing text, engages with these concerns making us aware, as we listen, of the force of absence.

By referencing the archive's shadow life Bacon approaches the secret Derrida situates at the heart of the archive, which for Bacon is its 'subjective premise'. The archive is a story we tell ourselves to create the illusion of stability and authority, a dam built against 'the chaos of memories' (Benjamin, 1968 p.60). Lewandowska both works with and exposes this secret, playing the objectivity of the recording device, which remains uncensored, against her continued assertion that the collection is a subjective resource compiled in order to orientate herself in the face of cultural uncertainty.

The Chaos of Voices

'The voice is allusive, always changing, becoming, elapsing with unclear contours as opposed to the relative permanence, solidity and durability of the seen.' (Dolar, 2006 p.79)

Photo: Taken from WAA. Courtesy of Marysia Lewandowska

Bacon is interested in archival performances that 'situate the body more directly in the process of history making' (Bacon, 2013, p.89). In the Hospitality section I explore how Lewandowska works with her mother tongue, situated in Derrida's writing as a kind of home, using the metaphor of a crippled form to describe her voice in the archive. How does the specific technology of voice, which is given a body in Lewandowska's archive, work to make apparent the secrets and politics of the archive? In discussion with Carol

Condé, Lewandowska describes the archive, she stresses it will not be available for transcription but to be listened to. There is a fidelity to this on the website. Although you can pause the tape, you cannot scroll back and forth through recordings to repeat aspects. You are compelled to stay with the voices or start from the beginning of the recording enacting a longer repetition. Consequently, interacting with the archive requires a kind of embodied patience and highly attentive listening. Given that psychoanalysis is one of the subjects touched on in the archive, this format seems more than coincidental. In order to be with the archive listeners are placed in a position not dissimilar to an analyst, staying with the voices, which are imperfectly coherent and often interrupted by incidental background noises, including the humming of other machines.[25] This waiting and listening time is bound up with ideas of repetition and arguably also revolution (With Manifestos, p.76). Without the aid of transcriptions or rewind functions, in listening we are part of a struggle to remember, implicated in an embodied way in feminist commentaries around the wider forgetfulness of social and cultural memory with its 'not enoughs' and suppressed histories (Ross, 2000).

Lewandowska is keen that her voice retains traces of her personal history, her Polish heritage. This description of voice reflects its complex relationship to meaning and a relational conception of knowledge that includes traces of personal history. Somehow it expresses the idea that in voice there is more than meaning. Lewandowska's crippled solution seems to link language and body together via the thread of voice, which consequently comes to occupy an in-between space, a bodily trace in the archive despite the absence of Lewandowska's actual body. In his book *A Voice and Nothing More* Mladen Dolar (2006) also notes the dramatic tension between the word, related to symbolic order, and the voice, which is linked to various pre-symbolic sounds and the body in excess of meaning. In the chapter 'Freud's Voices' Dolar looks particularly at the concept of 'lalangue', where:

> 'The element of voice, in the form of contingent and senseless co-sonance,
> unexpectedly runs amok and produces nonsense, which in a second step turns

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[25] In the book *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (1999) Friedrich Kittler sees it as more than a co-incidence that the first sound recording equipment was developed at the same time as psychoanalysis. He describes sound recording machines as displaying the same kind of ritual magic that was originally attributed to mediums channelling spirits so that the record functions as a kind of hallucinatory wish fulfillment. To Kittler the tape's lack of consciousness, recording everything without distinction, makes it an ideal analyst. He asserts 'technological storage reveals everything and makes the past speak' (Kittler, 1999, p.83).

out to be endowed with an unexpected sense emerging from it.' (Dolar, 2006, p.141) [26]

Lalangue is both the ghost that haunts structuralism and a kind of poetry, a contingent resounding of voices, 'a fold in language', that Dolar writes about in relation to its equally powerful counterpoint in silence (Ibid). In this joyful excess, expressed particularly well by voice, the secret of archives unfolds. Voice is a medium that makes room for personal and contextual histories along with facts. This is the *more* that psychoanalysis could be said to listen for, that runs amok and makes a different kind of revolutionary sense. It is also the excess that feminism reclaims for politics through the phrase the 'personal is political'.

Voice has a kind of timeless immediacy, when Lewandowska utters the phrase 'this very moment in which I am speaking to you' (WAA.013) her voice enters the present where I am listening, reverberating with me and suggesting similarities, as lalangue does, between my moment and hers. No wonder then that manifestos, with their desire to occupy the present moment, are documents written for speech. Speech is more than a structure of differences, it is a passage of sound, a bridge in between bodies in an encounter, where we can meet each other in a moment of enjoyment. Like WAA and other feminist archives, manifestos speak of missing histories, of absences that haunt the present in a compelling way. They are also more than deconstructions, they are a collection of voices, subjects with stories to tell, meeting with each other to suggest the poetry of the future. These poetic sounds of voice are described by Marlene Nourbese Philip in WAA:

> 'I know what I want to say and then I give the words a chance to say what they want to say and its not always what I think I want to say – there is a tension and out of that process the poem comes for me.' (WAA. 05)

In response to Lewandowska's question of missing texts Philip speaks on her poem *Discourse on the Logic of Language* (Philip, 1988), which references the historical practice of cutting out the tongues of slaves, in a ritualistic sacrifice, to separate them

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[26] This term is derived from Lacan and is a pun used to describe what makes puns in language possible. As opposed to the logic of the signifier that is based on a structure of differences lalangue works on similarities and reverberations. It is also a moment of enjoyment.

from their own language.[27] Philip's words resonate with Dolar who identifies this poetic sounding unconscious as the ethical aspect of voice. Working through diverse philosophical traditions Dolar describes voice as a point between 'the subject and Other' that is a 'radical alterity' (Dolar, 2006, pp.102-3).[28] Having identified this ethical aspect of voice Dolar goes on to develop a conception of political subjectivity that also seems to be at the heart of Lewandowska's project.

The ethics of voice is linked to its politics through the similar in-between position it occupies. Dolar describes voice's complex relationship to politics and metaphysics, where it has been given both a privileged position in relation to authority and seen as something suspect and unsettling to power structures.[29] This double position is related to the fundamental ambiguity of voice, which being between body and language is also between *bios*, defined as life in the community as a citizen, and *zoe*, bare life outside of the legal or political system. Dolar details its ritualistic function in relation to *logos* or the law of the letter. Yet argues that political subjectivity is not created through these ritualistic functions but by its 'precarious and elusive' position in-between *zoe* and *bios* (Dolar, 2006, p121). This position is similarly the one taken up by Philip's poetry, which seeks to undo the cuts made between language and the body. It can also be related to Kristeva's definition of dialogical language which is both implicitly transgressive and forms the material of WAA (About Manifesto, p.30). Given this fundamental ambiguity, voice presents itself as an apposite medium to use to both navigate and bring to attention the threshold territory of the archive.

Alongside the poem Philip speaks of placing the footnotes at the beginning as a different kind of acknowledgement. Through multiplicity she describes creating a disorder in her texts related to the chaos of life and its unreadability, which are elements that are seen to be left out once structure and meaning come to dominate. Rather than being a place of authority WAA voices questions that speak to this more contingent positioning.

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[27] For a more detailed account of Phillip's poetry and conversation with Lewandowska see my writing in the Journal of Archives and Records (2015).

[28] Dolar considers the role of voice in Socrates, Kant, Freud and Heidegger.

[29] Dolar sites Derrida as arguing for the primacy of voice over writing in the history of metaphysics as well as providing an extensive analysis of the different enabling roles voice takes up in the totalitarian regimes of Hitler and Stalin. On the other hand he also writes on the considerable disruptive presence voice was seen to have when equated with music and femininity quoting Plato on disturbing music which can be 'unsettling of the most fundamental political and social conventions... till finally it overthrows all things public and private' (Dolar, 2006, p.44). Anne Carson's text *The Gender of Sound* (1992) also details the disturbing qualities of female voice as perceived by Western metaphysical history.

Through the moving contours of voice the inadequacy of the moments we collect is not hidden in Lewandowska's archive. It is emphasised. Her subjectivity is revealed out of sequence through fragmentary references interspersed with public debates. It is a chaotic portrait built up through silence as well as voice. Lewandowska is silent in the numerous public talks the archive contains. This silence is extended through the gap in between recording the tapes and starting to negotiate for their public existence. There is significance in the pause between the two moments of her developing ideas on historical traces and shrinking public domains or areas of commons that marks this journey of the archive from private to public. In Lewandowska's silence we hear that rather than one, the missing text is multiple and can be pieced together as a foundation for a creative praxis. This sentiment is also expressed by Griselda Pollock (WAA. 057). Turning the western canon of art history on its head, Pollock argues for the social basis of creativity, pointing out all the invisible supports that prop up the 'archaic individualism' of western art history. It is also expressed by GWL and WAL who each offer up multi-voiced creative spaces. Out of a sense of loss and being lost Lewandowska involves language in 'a process of retrieval' (WAA 0.50). Her question of the missing text is a ritual to survive in a precarious place, constructing a conversational support system that acknowledges other voices.

As a ritual it also brings sacrifice into question. In 2013 Lewandowska spoke at an archive conference on a new publication she was working on called *Undoing Property* (Lewandowska and Ptak, 2013). Beginning with the recognition that something else is possible, Lewandowska spoke on a paradigm shift: from a culture of permission, with its fidelity to origins, to a culture of acknowledgement. This is an assertion of the social basis for creativity and a call to allow for the marginalia to be shown. Like the title of her book this call is nothing short of revolutionary. Permission is part of symbolic order. Acknowledgment in this context is a form of chaos, turning everything on its head, placing the footnotes first and rubbing at the edges of the myth of autonomous creativity. For the archivist this perhaps equates to what Worsley terms 'an opening out into discursive formations with others', reimagining the archive as a social practice. WAA does not present a single definitive origin for social practice but it is a 'little history' that presents the poetry for a different possible future. It contains voices that say something different about knowledge than those offered by Derrida's commanding, lawmaking archive; that it is carried around in bodies, in the chaos of life, that it is experiential and may get lost. Voices that say knowledge is relational and subjective and

it has required sacrifices. The manifesto-like question I am left with after listening, is can we imagine a less sacrificial future?

1984 Dinners Archive: Imagining the Future through Collective Memories of the Past
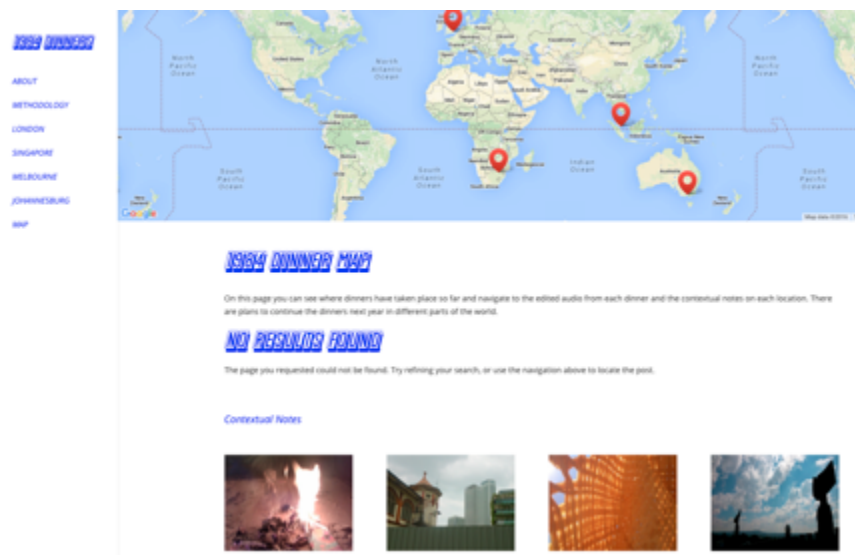

Photo: From 1984 Dinners archive. Courtesy of Sophie Hope.

Artist, curator and practice-based researcher Sophie Hope faces a similar question through the audio archive project the 1984 Dinners (2011-2014). The archive plays host to information about art and politics in the year 1984, gathering recordings from dinner parties in London (Deptford High St, September 2011), Singapore (Armenian St, January 2014) Melbourne (Footscray Community Arts Centre, March 2014) and Johannesburg (The Bag Factory, Mahlathini St, March 2014). Like Lewandowska's project it is an archive on the move. The work involves the artist looking back, with a number of different artist participants who were politically active then and now, to think about persistent and repressed histories and to ask what has changed and what remains the same? Using time, hospitality and the archive in order to try to reach a collective reckoning with history. 1984 Dinners casts the archivist most clearly as an artist with a social practice. It was initiated as a response to Hope's research into the Greater London Council (GLC) from 1981-86. Hope was interested in the relationship between the left-wing metropolitan council and their support of activist, feminist, anti-racist, overtly political art groups and actions in opposition to the Thatcher government of the time. She initiated the first dinner in September 2011, hosting six invited guests in London to

discuss art and politics in the year 1984. Her guests that evening were Lorraine Leeson, Sonia Boyce, Stephen Lobb, Flick Allen, Leila Galloway, Shirley Cameron and Roland Miller, all artists actively working in the UK now and in 1984. Guests were asked to respond to a menu of questions presented by the artist. This format was then expanded in consultation with situated collaborators on the ground in other locations. The collaborators helped Hope devise guest lists and pull together necessary research into the other contexts to repeat the format. In each context the meals had a particular starting point, so in Melbourne the focus was around the politics of community arts, in Singapore the concern was with state censorship and the activities of theatre group Third Stage, whilst in Johannesburg the focus was on the arts' role in bringing down apartheid. Beyond these starting points there was a broader interest in politics and organisation within different left-wing movements.

Hope describes her methodology for pulling together the archive as a facilitation process that works through 'time travel' to consider the present moment. This reference to time travel, which Hope has used elsewhere as a convenient metaphor to enable communities to engage differently with their current circumstances, is an acknowledgement not only of time as the artists' material but also an awareness of the fictive processes of storytelling that inevitably feed into historical accounts. Like Lewandowska she doesn't hide the partial and subjective nature of the archive, which emerges from her political convictions and personal situation living in the aftermath of an oppressive conservative government, and feeds them. She writes:

> 'The project is about the historical content – what was happening in terms of art and politics in the year 1984, but also about the methods of how territories of memories and narrative fictions of recent histories are created and re-interpreted across generations and geographies.' (Hope, 2012)

So there is a concern for the politics of transmission. It is also an experiment in remembering collectively and across different geographies, which is a multi-voiced and sometimes contradictory process. Here, as with Greenan, time becomes a cartography in Hope's hands, she speaks of navigating a journey through the different territories of memory. By gathering together activist artists around a table Hope asks individuals to share time, picking up Victoria Browne's interest in coevalness (About Archives, p.27). Shared time is not taken for granted in Hope's project but negotiated through a number of strategies, including the dinner format, the menu and the focus on one year. This

process of bringing diverse perspectives together to discuss a year allows Hope to acknowledge the complexity of time yet also the generative nature of remembering together. In contrast to interviewing individuals, where Hope would simply have to listen eagerly, the group process means that each recollection can be a trigger to other memories, so that the shape of the conversation is delivered by participants. In this process of navigating Hope expresses an interest in how much you need to know to speak on a subject. In the face of sometimes entrenched knowledge communities Hope plays the role of a guest permitted, as an outsider, to ask the perhaps obvious question that can crack open a conversation giving people a chance to go through things again. She reflects that as part of the form she always allows at least half an hour at the end of each dinner for participants to answer a question on the parallels between now and then. This question really ignites the conversation, changing the pace of the discussion by moving away from nostalgia towards activism now. Through this last question Hope creates an archive of knowledge that is moving towards the future, a dialogic space.

As well as sharing time and considering memory for Hope the archive is a means of gathering together tactics and strategies used by artists working in the margins of institutionalised culture. In this way the archive is a way of relating to the past, which could also be said to contain seeds of the future. Quoting Richard Appignanesi writing for Third Text report *Beyond Cultural Diversity. The Case For Creativity* (2010), Hope reflects 'the artists' agreement with history is not backwards looking to the past but a forecasting of the future' (Ibid p.15). The archive plays out in Hope's imagination as a tool for the future. She describes herself as a child of Thatcher trying to gather together knowledge of what came before in order to find a way to undo some of the damage done. She explains:

> 'I am interested in how this audio archive might trigger discussion and further responses about the political and economic context of art and activist practices in the mid 1980s in relation to past, current and future theories and practices or art and politics. How can one translate and re-interpret events one did or did not experience first hand?' (Hope, 2012)

This hope, along with the relationship to marginal historical narratives, that the archive might trigger different reflections and actions in the present moment makes it manifesto-like. Listening to the recording there is a sense that we are struggling as much now as then to move past histories of injury. These felt histories resonate and create a

shared sense of anxiety in failure that is reminiscent of McBean's argument for an uncertain community that might bond precisely because of their precarious relationship to history. In a workshop Hope conducted with our research group she reflected that although the recordings are not about George Orwell's pivotal work, with the same title, his influence does loom spectre-like in the background, the book's insights proving resonant in a number of the contexts she enters (Audio Archive, AW.004). Commenting on the quality of the recording, one participant in the workshop noted an almost Big Brother like presence, as if the energy for protest is always somehow compromised. Others noted how uncannily similar things seemed in the descriptions, so that looking at the past becomes an extremely interesting way of looking at the present. Hope drew out these over laps between the dinners, through her selection of fragmentary archive clips. In the room listening to the recording we all feel part of trying to work something out, to think of alternatives and resistance to a kind of pervasive sense of surveillance. In this way Hope works to gather us together producing a kind of collective belonging. When asked what she will do in the future with the recordings she shares the aspiration to expand the convivial space travelling elsewhere and approaching different languages. She says 'I would love to get everyone together' even if only virtually. Listening, I imagine a time knot involving the many perspectives from these local histories, conversations between people, triggering questions, which could add another layer to the research. This layer indicates that the Dinners are about something more than conviviality, with Hope asserting a healthy amount of feminist scepticism towards the form. They are about staging an interruption to the larger history that seems to loom beyond. For me this triggers the question: could we imagine Hope's archive moving like a storm, with the dinner form providing a deceptively calm centre, a ritual to mask more destructive intentions?

Conclusions

Deborah Withers visits Gloria Anzaldúa's writing to describe the possibilities within the metaphor as a form through which we can both protect and change ourselves, a way to orient ourselves in the world. Following these theoretical insights I approached my own experiences within feminist archives by beginning with the home, navigating a path through various archives that reimagine the home space in feminist terms and critique the perceptions of home we have inherited as a story told to hold power. This interest in the home as a metaphor stretches into thinking of the archive as home, a form, which

like the metaphor itself, can offer protection and incite change in the world. To approach home and also by extension the archive along feminist lines it is necessary to both deconstruct and reconstruct the terms. In doing this I have tried to imagine the archive equally as a social practice and as a revolution. As a revolution feminist experiments with the form open up the secrets of the archive, its embedded forgetfulness, turning its feverish '*anarchivic*' potential to work on excluding discourses (Derrida, 1996, p.10). As a social practice the feminist archive works with the sheltering and hospitable qualities of archives, mimicking these private functions in the public realm. In this way the archive performs as a bridge between private and public space, turning vulnerable outsides into cracks, which make the vulnerability of inside visible.

At the heart of this reimagination has been the figure of the archivist who works to host alternative stories and voices, bringing them together as a force to be reckoned with. I have been interested in how collections are gathered together and how archivists work to balance the needs of the past with the desires of future users. What could be seen as a balance between rage and utopia. By bringing attention to the archivist it has not been my intention to reduce the complexity of the stories cared for by these influential figures. But I have wanted to acknowledge the work they do, so that they become more than invisible support structures for histories of social practice.

Time in Derrida is a circle, through his study of the archive an exchange is enacted between the past and the future in the present moment. In this exchange the past both commands and is also vulnerable, both its commanding function and its vulnerability are secrets at the heart of the patriarchic archive. Its vulnerability is encapsulated by its dependency on the future. The future is also somehow a precarious collectivity searching for a response to the commands of the past, that appear as ever-escaping traces, footprints in the sand. Where Derrida sees this circle as a kind of death drive, an endless repetition, feminists working in the archival compost offer a more nuanced view that both adheres to Derrida's insights but also departs from them. In a move similar to the one enacted by Mierle Lalderman Ukeles they have looked on these conversations with the past as a kind of careful maintenance, a tool for life and survival. This maintenance work and sharing of uncertain conversations opens up the circle allowing new collectivities to form, both repeating and departing from exchanges with voices in the past.

In *Of the Refrain* (1980) Deleuze and Guattari also describe home as a circle.[30] Speaking of a frightened child, in the dark, they describe a process of drawing a circle with a song:

> 'A child in the dark, gripped by fear comforts himself by singing under his breath. He walks and halts to his song. Lost, he takes shelter, or orientates himself with his little song as best he can. The song is like a rough sketch of a calming and stabilizing, calm and stable, center in the heart of chaos.' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p.362)

The song, like the archive, does not shut out chaos but it does make it possible to act. Through this action, we are delivered home by the authors:

> 'now we are at home. But home does not pre-exist: it was necessary to draw a circle around that uncertain and fragile centre, to organize a limited space.' (Ibid, p.362)

So making a home is an active gesture. They continue to describe walls of sound, asserting that to build a city or a golem you must walk in a circle, which is a rhythmic activity. In this way home becomes a ritual that enables us to continue despite fear of the dark. Can we consider the work of the archivist as a ritual enactment in a dark place? After drawing the circle Deleuze and Guattari proceed to write in an opening. They, like Lewandowska, use the metaphor of the crack to describe this:

> 'Finally, one opens the circle a crack, opens it all the way, lets someone in, calls someone, or else goes out oneself, launches forth. One opens the circle not on the side where the old forces of chaos press against it but in another region, created by the circle itself. As though the circle tended on its own to open onto a future, as a function of the working forces its shelters. This time, it is in order to join with the forces of the future, cosmic forces.' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, p.362)

This shape marks the circle as a place of becoming, a territory which is also a passage. This limited organised space becomes dynamic in the hands of the writers, it invites people in and also launches forth. In their description, Deleuze and Guattari privilege sound as the medium through which this becoming can be realised. Given the archives I

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[30] I am indebted to Anne Douglas for drawing my attention to this piece of writing.

have chosen it makes sense to consider this writing, to see the archive as somehow sonorous, a kind of rhythm that repeats elements but also holds difference. The feminist archives I have entered have taken the form of power and offered a repetition with a difference. In joining with the world Deleuze and Guattari assert you can act as 'assassin or poet', to be a poet is to 'let loose molecular populations in hope that this will sow the seeds, or even engender the people to come' (Ibid, p.402). It is certainly possible to imagine the archive as a molecular population, a collection of elements that have voices in the world. This poetry is a form of improvisation, a balancing act that sees its author venture from home 'on the thread of a tune' (Ibid, p.362).

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Hospitality

The Hospitality Collection

Contents

About Hospitality

'The question of the political is given there as being the question that comes to us from the other, the foreigner.' (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000)

Introduction

In her poetic commentary on two lectures by Jacques Derrida, published in a small text that lays out the impossibility and necessity of hospitality, Anne Dufortmantelle speculates:

> *'Perhaps it is only one who has endured the experience of being deprived a home can offer hospitality'* (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000, p.56)

This section will explore the hypothesis approached by Derrida and Dufortmantelle that the refugee/guest/outsider may be the only one in a position to offer hospitality. This suggestion offers a reversal, appearing in opposition to the idea that the head of the house, owning the space, permits people to cross a threshold setting up a whole chain of activities around commanding and hostage taking. It seeks to complicate the fixed positioning of the guest and the host in discourse on hospitality. This section will approach feminist manifestos and social art practice through consideration of this reversal. It will consider both as performing a double role, simultaneously guests and hosts, leading to Derrida's assertion that hospitality itself could be considered a feminist manifesto. I will argue, following Derrida, that the manifesto occupies a position as a radical outsider, as well as performing as a hosting space. Like Derrida, the outsider also intervenes by bringing into question what is conventionally accepted. Derrida asserts that the foreigner speaks in 'an odd sort of language' that will turn things upside down by suggesting 'that non-being somehow is, and that being, in its turn, in a certain way is not' (Derrida, 2000, p.5).

This disruptiveness aligns the guest/outsider position with the intentions of a manifesto to produce change to political and social structures. It is also a position taken up by certain artists within social practice, who, equally, behave as hosts, providing holding spaces for people to collectively imagine different possible realities. Finally, it is the position that feminist theoretical propositions take up, being the outsiders to

philosophical tradition. The manifesto–like action plays on the borders of these two guest and host positions, holding them in tension and offering a proposition that reimagines hospitality along feminist lines.

This conception, that imagines the guest and the host in this way, sets up a metaphor that links social art practice and feminist manifestos through hospitality, offering a different perspective on the material practices that make up social practice. Finally, the section suggests hospitality as an invisible labour that is at work in the compelling manifesto forms and feminist archival spaces that the other sections of this thesis encounter.

Strange Political Truths

The Manifesto as Host

In her opening chapter on *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern* (1999) Janet Lyon writes that the manifesto performs a kind of 'cultural work' to create a revised historical perspective, often based on a selective history of oppression. It is my hunch that this cultural work can be usefully perceived as the kind of work the outsider performs. As a guest in a new territory it suggests unimagined narratives. These unimagined narratives and histories of oppression function to 'shift the cultural position of a marginalised group' using 'invigorated metaphors to create a new enunciative position in ideology' (Lyon, 1999, p.15). This new enunciative position is a kind of home for uninvited guests. The work shifts between bringing to light repressed narratives, with the manifesto claiming 'our history is the unthought chapter in your history', and creating new futures that can emerge from this 'crisis' in repression (Ibid). In this second function the manifesto also performs a kind of hosting, gathering together and working on subjectivities to suggest new alliances between those marginalised by historical conditions. In this way the manifesto is a holding space for radically disruptive, outsider positions, and the means through which these positions may become disruptive guests in a hostile culture. Like a Trojan horse it is both a guest and a host.

Lyon stresses the manifesto's closeness to action as both a 'trace' of political change and a 'tool' (Ibid, p.16). It exists between a discourse that expresses a certain rage, documenting a break with history, and a discourse that occupies affective and

experiential ground to create new subject positions around shared experiences of oppression (About Manifestos, p.22.). It is through this function as a tool, opening up of the possibility for shared experience, that the manifesto plays host to different individuals, suggesting the possibility of collective action towards change in the present moment. The manifesto moves between different subject positions negotiating a sense of something shared, a 'we' subjectivity. This movement is a kind of hospitality, an almost invisible element and motion that allows for differences to sit side by side. The manifesto employs hospitality as a barely visible tool that sits in contrast to the more visible rage evoked by the tracing of historical oppression.

Lyon stresses this idea of an 'identity in motion' that works less through the creation of a stable or fixed subjectivity and more in providing links between identities. She references the *Dyke Manifesto* (1993) in providing a dynamic list of subject positions that stand in opposition to a universalising norm which produces 'straight acting gays' (Lyon, 1999, p.38). In this Lyon recounts a political tactic that Judith Butler writes on as a process of collective disidentification. In *Bodies that Matter* (1993) she writes:

> 'Although the political discourses that mobilize identity categories tend to cultivate identifications in the service of a political goal, it may be that the persistence of *dis*identifcation is equally crucial to the re-articulation of democratic contestation.' (Butler, 1993 p.4)

These 'disidentifications' articulate a failure of representation, a covering over or erasure in mainstream culture that documents like the *Dyke Manifesto* rally against. The manifesto genre works to bring these disidentifications together as a social entity. Throughout *Bodies that Matter* (1993), Butler interrogates this failure of articulation in different contexts, producing, through the form of the text, the repetitive citational practice that she also describes within it, opening with Luce Irigaray's reading of western philosophy for the things it has failed to include. Her reading and alliance with Irigaray replicate the rage that is half the work of a manifesto, offering critique in a strange voice. Both writers speak as outsiders, pointing out failures of representation. Butler's writing is interesting in relation to Derrida's assertion that the outsider will dispute the terms of existence, the categories of being and non-being. Butler argues for the fundamentally relational nature of identity formation where subjects come into existence and reach autonomy through a process of exclusion that establishes

boundaries between safe inside and uninhabitable outside terrain.[1] She writes on this as something that occurs in and through language, a process of 'grammatical coding', or naming. Coming to matter is contrasted with 'abject' unlivable:

> '..zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the unlivable is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject.' (Butler, 1993, p.3)

To Butler this abject outside, or non-being, still has a place in linguistic formulations even as something beyond representation. It is constitutive of the proper inside, being inside the subject as 'a founding repudiation' (Ibid). Butler's claim for these lives that exist under the sign of the unlivable resonates with the assertion Derrida's stranger makes around 'non-being that somehow is' (Derrida, 2000, p.5). This reasoning enacts a reversal by describing the abject outside as a kind of edge or container for safe insider identities. This container is essentially invisible, a founding repudiation or unconscious theatre that supports the coherence of collective state approved identity. [2]

In these assertions Butler's work meets with Ernesto Laclau and Chantel Mouffe's theory on agonism as a radical democratic project. Mouffe writes on the contingent nature of political subject formation that works in an oppositional way so that a 'we' is always positioned against something antagonistically. Mouffe's writing is important for thinking about manifestos as it stresses the affective nature of political identity formation as well as its relational constitution. For example in *On the Political* (2005) Mouffe argues that neoliberalism's failure to account for any motivations outside of economic drives has produced various outsides or moments of 'disindentification'. Whereas current neoliberal politics remain closed to these other positions, often through the instigation of an absolute moral code, Mouffe tries to sketch a radical democratic project that could instead provide a platform for these antagonisms to play out. It is this lack of completeness, affirmed by Laclau and Mouffe in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985), that Butler identifies with in *Bodies that Matter* (1993). To Butler this reveals an openness to future possibilities for inclusion, which she describes as a horizon of community (Ibid, p.193). This type of project, Butler argues, is based on

[1] Many years after the publication of *Bodies that Matter* Butler describes these terrains as detention centres, part of a huge global prison industry outside of the privileges of citizenship (Butler, 2014).
[2] Derrida uses the phrase 'invisible theatre' to describe acts of hospitality.

an affirmation of failure that works through 'a double movement', that recognises the impossibility of a completely inclusive social field (its failure) yet is open enough to be conscious of and interrogate the exclusions through which it proceeds.

To return to *Of Hospitality* (2000), Derrida refers to this interrogation as a kind of questioning that the foreigner (*l'étranger*) brings. The foreigner, variously referred to also as guest and stranger, posits the first question, and by doing so 'puts me into question' (Derrida, 2000, p.3). I return to this text through the feminist and political perspectives offered by Butler, Laclau and Mouffe in order to suggest an alliance between the odd sort of language of feminist theory, an outsider voice that breaks with the patriarchal codes of western philosophical discourse to suggest an 'unthought history' (Lyon, 1999, p.15) and the language of the foreigner in Derrida. In two lectures Derrida speaks about the guest as the outlaw, the other or stranger who is perceived by the law as holding a conflicting position that produces fear and repression, as s/he will try to suggest something against the received view, to offer a different perspective, a making visible of other positions that is nothing short of revolutionary.

Such suggestions are met with accusations of madness and blindness, which brings us close to the figure of Oedipus. Derrida depicts Oedipus at various moments as he comes into a relationship with the state and law, accompanied by Antigone. First, Oedipus is spoken of an 'absolute arrival' who, without knowledge of the place he enters, appears like a ghost (Derrida, 2000, p.35). He occupies the position of complete difference, as something radically other. Despite this he begs not to be received as an outlaw, making the case that the crimes for which he is accused belong to an internal political unconscious, the unconscious of the law of the city, Thebes, which has produced him as an outsider. This reasoning resonates with Butler's writing on the body of politics with its abject outsides. It also echoes Sara Ahmed's writing in *Strange Encounters* (2000) where she details the stranger as a useful cultural fiction. Ahmed, like Butler, suggests that the stranger we approach, whether with hostile or hospitable intentions, is already defined by the conceptions we have of home. The stranger is already both within the home and excluded by our definitions. Furthermore, in *Strangers to Ourselves* (1991) Julia Kristeva writes about Freud making the connection, suggested by German language, between *unheimlich* (strange, uncanny) literally outside of the home and *heimlich,* literally of the home, or homely but with the implication of secretive. This leads her to the conclusion that the figure of the stranger is a homely, internal secret – it is the

uncanny nature of our own unconsciousness repressed and projected outwards in fear.[3] This realisation around homely secrets asks questions of our perception of hospitality. Could the labour of hospitality also be viewed as a kind of internal secret or 'invisible theatre' that we fail to acknowledge because the nature of the support it provides leads to a different, fundamentally interdependent and vulnerable view of ourselves? What are the consequences of saying that it is perhaps the outsiders, the improper guests, without property, who host and support us?

Both Ahmed and Derrida's writing describes a meeting of different intentions that produce similar effects, for Derrida this meeting can be seen to take place within a word.[4] He writes of hospitality so that it becomes interconnected with hostility 'that it is contradictory, antinomic, *and* inseparable' from (Derrida, 2000, p.81). This resonates with my exploration of the manifesto and also of social practice which both express an interconnected, not always equally visible, mix of hostile and hospitable intentions.

The host is both commanding and penetrating, setting up all sorts of conditions, while the guest holds hostage refusing to stay in place, becoming *hostis* or enemy. Much of Derrida's speech centres on the difficulty that exists between two forms of hospitality that are heterogeneous to each other and yet necessarily entangled. There is, first, the law of absolute hospitality, which sits above the second form, which is a kind of plural, conditional hospitality enacted by state laws. These two forms produce a paradox that must be negotiated, a kind of fine line or threshold Derrida walks in his speech between different intolerable forms of violence. To Ahmed the metaphor of threshold becomes skin, a surface that responds to touch and can be touched. Rather than attempting to assimilate or turn away from difference she suggests we should allow ourselves to be touched and moved. This movement is not without failures. Failures in translation give us a sense of limits and necessary incompleteness. She quotes Spivak to say that activism will involve the 'painstaking labour' of face-to-face encounters, and 'getting closer to others in order to occupy the distance between us' (Ahmed, 2000, p.179). Importantly, this occupation involves a process of listening across distance. Face-to-face encounters, also emphasised within the language of social art practice, are vital to Ahmed. She asserts that being only emerges through sociality. These social moments

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[3] Derrida also describes Oedipus in relation to the internal secret vow he pushes onto Theseus at the end of his life – the secret of his final resting place.
[4] Ahmed lays out these different intentions in various chapters of the book, which deal both with a hostile conception of the stranger as dangerous other and hospitable move to assimilate difference played out within the politics of multiculturalism.

always have hidden layers, bound up with memory, 'elsewhere and otherwise to the immediacy of this encounter' that speakers bring to communication (Ibid, p.158).

For Ahmed the relationship between home and memory is also important, with the experience of leaving home in migration described as a failure of memory to make sense of the place one comes to inhabit. The hidden layers of memory come to contradict experience in the present moment and the gap between memory and place is profoundly disorientating. However, disorientation can also be reconsidered as a positive quality, creating links between individuals who experience the same feelings. She describes an Asian women writers' collective as sharing this experience of disorientation. This shared bond becomes a pre-condition for the act of writing. In this way encounters are impossible and necessary. Equally, Derrida poetically reconfigures Oedipus' blindness as an experience, which allows him feel warmth instead of seeing light.

Derrida notes if we speak to the stranger, we already share something fundamental through language, which is a kind of home. How we are hosted within other languages differs in Derrida's text, coming to signify the paradox between the two forms of hospitality. In speaking we ask guests to offer a name, this coming to name is the first violation of hospitality, placing conditions on an unconditional law. It is a condition that enables exclusions around proper and improper names and origins. Ahmed also warns that sharing through language is in danger of erasing difference. Instead, through the example of Spivak's failed translation of Mahasveta Devi she suggests an encounter between subjectivities that gives us a sense of our limits. This is a form of sociality that involves two different experiences sitting alongside, without collapsing into each other. Throughout, Derrida translates words around the subject and also always remains close to the state of being at a loss. In this way he performs as the stranger, describing his speech as a taking of steps which charts a kind of imperfect movement, sometimes transgressing and at other times digressing, which is 'a step to the side' (Derrida, 2000, p.75). This digression, as a side step, is a way of being lost that also resonates with Ahmed's insistence that we are touched but do not to grasp. In this way Derrida performs the disorientation of a guest in an unknown terrain, yet he also hosts his audience through his words. All the time he holds in balance two different qualities of experience, moving continuously between positions, creating a tension that should never be fully resolved.

Nomadic Practice

Image taken from The Women's Audio Archive (Lewandowska, 1983-92).

This state of being lost is also something that plays out in artist Marysia Lewandowska's Women's Audio Archive (1983-92, WAA). The archive is a collection of audio material in virtual, public space that speaks to the politics of memory via speculative conversations around the idea of missing texts and consequently, again, gestures to a recognition of incompleteness. It includes private conversations and public recordings with an array of art world voices, as well as poets, feminist activists and other figures. It covers a period of time in the artist's personal history between 1983 and 1992 and reflects her semi-nomadic existence having left Poland and moving between places in Canada, New York and London. In all this movement there is a concern for the things that get lost, in what Ahmed would term as the gap between memory and the places we come to inhabit, and a sense that one motivation for making the archive comes from a personal struggle to understand new cultural circumstances. Lewandowska consciously points out her exiled status, her otherness within the particular culture she speaks to. This gesture highlights the politics of hospitality, emphasising her status as a guest. This position is not without ambiguity however as, through the conceptualisation of the archive, she also becomes a host inviting people to speak within the framework she sets up. Through this double positioning Lewandowska's archive, with its emphasis on conversational exchange, is an important predecessor for contemporary social art practices. It could also be seen as a prefigurative example of Derrida's assertion around guest/hosts. For Lewandowska the archive and within it the form of the conversation, which is significantly different from an interview for not having a pre-decided agenda, is a safe space that enables

uncertainty. It is a moving form that enables connections between different speakers around the idea of 'the missing text' (WAA.004, WAA.005, WAA.006, WAA.050).

Alongside memory, the audio recordings explore the significance of language to the artist, who seeks out conversations with linguists and poets as well as filmmakers and visual artists. The first recording is in Polish and beyond that, Lewandowska draws attention to a process of displacement through language, which she works against by giving it a kind of body in the conversations. For example she describes how in order not 'to get lost' in the English language, which had become so familiar, she constructs her speech through the unnecessary process of translating herself from Polish - offering a 'crippled' form that is better in that it 'bears a relationship' to her (WAA. 050). Her voice, which travels over distances in space and time to be listened to, asks what is lost? Quite literally this crippled form occupies a gap, given a recurring visual form in the archive as the sound wave. In asking the question Lewandowska brings to the fore and embodies Ahmed and Derrida's explorations around the politics of translation, integral to conceptions of hospitality, which Derrida describes as a series of transgressions and digressions. While Ahmed, in approaching the question of the stranger, asks for something in between rejection and assimilation, Lewandowska offers a crippled form, something not impenetrable like a foreign language and yet not completely assimilated by the new cultural tongue. Through a conscious occupation of a vulnerable position Lewandowska holds things in tension. She also interrogates loss through a suspicion of the kind of absolute coherence that she perceives in encounters with institutions, citing for example *Audio Arts* (Furlong, 1972) as a resource where things are edited out, for market. Next to these highly polished institutional narratives Lewandowska favours a more imperfect form, leaving digressions in the recordings, which could be seen as another form of transgression against the violence of coherence. These small digressions allow the recordings to remain contingent and open to all incidental sounds and excessive voices that were present in the moment they occurred.

Theoretical Occupations

Butler also approaches loss and excess in *Bodies that Matter* (1993), where she relates the process through which Irigaray takes a step too far to enact an occupation of western philosophical language. Butler suggests that Irigaray makes rude and provocative readings of key texts within western philosophy, including Plato's writing

on materiality, to expose a speculative excess in the original texts, that acts as a cover for hidden or repressed elements. Irigaray does this through a process of tactical miming, also important to certain feminist manifestos (About Manifestos, p.7), employing a kind of 'strategic essentialism' through hyperbolic repetition, which allows her to be inside tradition, taking on the voice of philosophy's founding fathers (Spivak, 1988). This doubling produces a disruptive movement, an unsettling of fixed positions, revealing that texts can be occupied by difference. Lewandowska also plays with mimesis through her recording device, which she not only uses to initiate conversations but to produce repetitions, unofficial recordings of public talks. These recordings are brought into a relationship with personal conversations, so that Lewandowska occupies and produces a relational difference. In the process of occupation the artist, as invisible foreign guest, also, like Irigaray, expresses hostile intentions. Lewandowska uses the metaphor of the crack, suggesting that not only does she exist in a gap, but that she intends to find a way to move making monuments and canons less stable. Lewandowska's position then is within an institutional crack. From this location she invites others in to discuss their similar positions, which somehow hold up but also have the potential to disrupt the coherence of monuments. The hospitality of the archive is consequently entangled with the same hostility that Derrida notices in the form. While in the manifesto rage is perhaps the most visible element, it is important to note and relate the presence of hostility within social practice as well, via this early precedent, where disruptive intentions are often lost amidst a multitude of convivial gestures. What we learn from Irigaray, WAA and Derrida is that if you intend to produce a difference, to explore the conditions for equality and social change, then hostility, as a dimension of hospitality, becomes very important.

While in WAA conversation is a self-evident part of Lewandowska's practice it can also be related to Irigaray's theoretical praxis. Through occupation Irigaray transforms reading into a dialogic act, a back and forth exchange rather than a passing down of received wisdom. She argues that women are positioned as materiality in opposition to rationality within a phallologocentric system of thought. This sets up an unequal binary along gendered lines, which sees women positioned as the silent counterpart to a loud monologue. This material appearance of women is seen in fact to be a moment of erasure, a catachresis at the heart of a system that requires the feminine to remain formless, irrational and excluded. Catachresis denotes something for which language has no name, it involves imperfect translation, often borrowing other words to stand in or cover over what cannot be represented. Butler describes Irigaray's practice as a kind

of catachresis too, in the sense that she borrows from philosophy (a tradition that doesn't belong to her) improperly, to say different things, living in it like a squatter (About Manifesto, p.18, With Archives, p.46). [5]

Irigaray and Butler repeat Plato's description of the feminine as a kind of blank canvas or inscriptional surface that must remain formless non-being, a kind of receiving space or receptacle. This nameless receptacle appears to be a kind of hospitality that functions to welcome things in. Importantly, these terms cannot be reversed; this formless matrix or matter cannot enter into other spaces, defined by Butler as public and legal and also as the beginning of thought. Plato's writing around the nameless receptacle is depicted as self-defeating and knotted in its attempts to describe and yet prohibit a representation, to make sure something remains outside the bounds of representation and political intelligibility. In response Irigaray does not set up a rival ontology but produces a repetition. This play with mimesis, is labelled by Butler as a penetrative textual strategy. By speaking, even only through mimesis, Irigaray enters the paternal text in a way that has been prohibited (as she must only receive) producing an internal gap. There is a double movement between being in close proximity, through repetition, which is posited as an alternative form of relationship to either assimilation or rejection, and distance. In the gap a different, less passive femininity is enacted but not defined. By existing as *a movement between,* Irigaray's reading, in some ways, mirrors Derrida's formulation of hospitality; her writing is both inextricably linked, or close to the original texts and yet also in opposition. Entering from a position outside Irigaray plays Derrida's stranger who will suggest a repudiation, to say that formless non-being somehow is.

Irigaray's writing emphasises multiplicity and makes a fundamental break with binary logic. Equally, Butler asserts that disidentification with the master discourse will be a multiple scrambling, she asserts:

> 'if there is an occupation and reversal of the master's discourse, it will come from many quarters, and those re-signifying practices will converge in ways that scramble the self-replicating presumptions of reasons mastery'. (Butler, 1993, p.52)

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[5] Which is a step further but along similar lines to Michel De Certeau who in discussing reading compares readers to people who rent apartments making their own adjustments to interiors (de Certeau, 1984) (With Manifesto, p.72).

This final assertion projects Irigaray's actions into the future to become multiple re-signifying practices that transform the excluded into a horizon of possibilities. As Lyon notes these are subjects in motion. These subjects in motion are both guests and hosts holding hospitable and hostile intentions in check. This holding of oppositional elements in tension has important repercussions for a discussion on social practice.

Hospitality from where you are lost

Half old and half new: *M-Project* (2005) Yangon, Myanmar. Image courtesy of Chu Chu Yuan and Jay Koh.

Like Irigaray, Derrida enacts a dialogue with philosophy, which is a back and forth questioning of what had seemed fixed and sedimented (Derrida, 2000, p.45). Furthermore, the text is a transcription from speech and includes a reading from Dufourmantelle, which sits alongside the original. Importantly, Derrida's conception of hospitality is something you cannot know in advance. In this way the possibility of failure is embraced alongside risk. You take a risk in seeking hospitality by entering another language, an unknown territory. You risk getting lost. In Dufourmantelle's

responsive invitation she says Derrida's lectures look at the question of hospitality or more than that, the relationship between hospitality and the question. She quotes him as saying:

> 'one could dream about what could be the lesson of someone who didn't have the keys to his own knowledge.. he would give place to the place, leaving the keys to the other to unlock the words of their enclosure.' (Dufourmantelle, 2000, p.14)

She stresses the embodiment of his speech, not just the words but the rhythm, pace and silences, the performance of it, which, she says, makes Derrida a guest without saying so. He navigates around the word hospitality as if it were a territory that he is getting to know. This exploration is described as a movement, a taking of steps, which includes moments where he gets lost, digressing, like a foreigner whose grasp on language slips, revealing other qualities in danger of getting edited out for clarity. The argument is that in speech there is movement, almost in the dark, and this idea of movement in unfamiliar territory is central to hospitality.

Dufourmantelle highlights this property of being in the dark, in an uncertain place, as a sort of purposelessness. She describes the philosophical discourse as having a purposelessness that is already a political action in a society where things must be quantified. She also points towards a different language that can be developed from this place where you are lost – in relation to Derrida she says it is a language that 'can make words sound different so they can't be divided into subject and object' (Ibid, p.50).

What these words brought to mind was a practice that risks being in darkness, of opening out onto what disturbs and takes up a double position of guest and host, maybe analogous to the position of Antigone who is the host or care giver to the outlaw leading negotiations with the state, on the threshold between host and guest. This is the social practice of artist Chu Chu Yuan who works in collaboration with Jay Koh and has completed a practice-based PhD at Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen after many years working in different contexts including extensive work in Myanmar (Burma). To think about this position in darkness I would like to quote an extensive extract from the opening of Chu Yuan's thesis where she relates a catalysing moment:

'Rumours have been circulating about foreign funding being in the hands of the Golden members, something forbidden by law in Myanmar, a country ruled by military generals without proper civil processes, and worse that the funds are being pocketed for personal benefit. Prospects for the future of an international contemporary art centre in Yangon, what we have been working on for the past three years, seem bleak. This meeting has been called by me, to seek advice from the members of Golden on how to proceed and to get a sense of their likely future involvement.

After moments of silence, Tin, a senior member of the group who is sitting on my immediate left, speaks. He flaps his arms, mimicking movements of a crow, and begins to tell a story. "A terrible accident has taken place on the ground, making the crows very agitated and anxious. The crows keep circling the air around the incident, anxiously watching the scene. All the crows are afraid. No one knows what to do next. A young crow cannot take the indecisive atmosphere anymore. He flies over to an older crow and asks him anxiously: *What is to be done?! What is to be done?!* The older crow turns to him, and in his response the younger crow hears his own gawky shrill voice echo back at him: *What is to be done?! What is to be done?!*'(Chu, 2013 p.1)

What Chu describes is a process of asking lots of questions and more disturbingly having the questions thrown back at her. This fits in well with Derrida's description of hospitality. She writes that this moment, where language seems to break down in a mirror hall situation, produces a 'deep sense of paralysis, despondence mixed with cynicism, doubt, and a deep, crippling impotence, inertia and uncertainty' (Ibid, p.3). The feelings in the room left a mark motivating her to undertake research on negotiation and its relation with agency. Chu's research is a strategy for navigating in darkness, from a state of disorientation. This moment acts as a kind of break down in consciousness, a temporary immobilisation, which comes from an encounter with strangeness, and can lead to a different form of reflective consciousness (Ibid, p.156).

Chu writes on Myanmar where she and Jay Koh work on negotiating within unknown contexts without having a pre–decided agenda. So there is this purposelessness again, which Dufourmantelle refers to as a political act, which can 'suspend an economic process by referring to other values which are not quantifiable ones' (Dufourmantelle, 2000, p.72).

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This lack of pre-decided agenda, with the obvious focus on project outcomes, is, in other words, already a radical political gesture essential to the practice. Chu stresses that the work will be built around what she refers to as 'withness' knowledge that is responsive to place and formed over time in that place and NOT prior to entering it (Introduction, p.3). The question in her work echoes Dufourmantelle's hospitality, reframed as the question: where? The answers are found through embodied performances in a place, which are presented as vital sources of experiential knowledge. This is to assert, as Ahmed does, the painstaking labour of face-to-face encounters.[6] Along with Koh, Chu details experiences within the difficult political climate of Myanmar, where the pair worked collaboratively over ten years to establish the international platform *NICA* for artists to experiment and develop practice in the region. Through this platform Chu and Koh set up a hosting structure, testing the hypothesis around guests-as-hosts within artistic practice, as Lewandowska does differently with WAA.

Responsiveness to place in Chu and Koh's work is coupled with insights around time. The artists stress the importance of time to work in different contexts so they can move step by step towards contextual knowledge. Again this understanding of time as a vital material within projects can be related to the question of hospitality. Dufourmantelle points out that in Hebrew making time is the equivalent to inviting and asks:

> 'What is this strange understanding of language where in order to produce time there have to be two of you, or rather there has to be some otherness.. The future is given to us from the other, from what is absolutely surprising.' (Ibid, p.76)

Chu and Koh work as outsiders and are committed to being surprised by the contexts they enter, working over long periods of time, making time to know the contexts they enter. Through their work they are both hosts, setting up safe spaces to experiment within, and guests who enter contexts that are unknowable in advance.

Like the stress on movement in the Derrida/Dufourmantle text Chu also stresses the importance of movement for meeting with difference. She makes space for movement through various performative strategies (the list includes gestural communication,

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[6] This way of working in response to the context is also encapsulated by Barbara Stevini's assertion that for the Artist Placement Group (APG) context is half the work.

imagination, embodied co-presence and self-reflexivity) that go beyond the idea that speech is the only form of negotiation. Within some cultural arenas, speech could, in fact, be detrimental to creating the movement needed to meet with difference (which like in Derrida is perceived as a place or 'ground'). So for example Chu comes to learn of the function of rumour in Myanmar as a method of control and resistance within a culture where oppressive power structures at the highest level are widely replicated producing an atmosphere 'of defensive loyalty, fear, intrigue, suspicion; and *acts* of surveillance' (Chu, 2013, p.63). In this environment people work in 'family-minded groups' to achieve some trust through knowing each other over time. Too much talk, related as it is to the functioning of rumour as a tool for political control, becomes a highly suspect activity with every word given multiple, hidden meanings. In this context the artists are initially at a loss. They learn that words like 'openness, accountability and transparency' common to democratic jargon were not adequate starting points for collaboration but need to be 'negotiated' from this family-minded perspective.

In these circumstances, where as outsiders they are carefully watched, both artists describe responsive, performances in everyday situations, developed from embedded understanding. By following clues the artists learn to mimic the correct social rituals in order to create spaces where their participants and collaborators can feel safe. This mirroring operates within what Koh refers to as a framework of answerability. The framework draws on Mikhail Bahktin's definition of 'events' that involve the interplay of simultaneity and difference. One pertinent example of this interplay is *M-Project Exhibition* at Lokanat Gallery, Yangon (2005) an exhibition of Koh's work negotiated to answer questions about his status as a 'real' artist. In order to bring about the exhibition Chu details a complex set of processes they must go through, including consultation with the correct public officials, censorship committees and bureaucratic procedures that are the hidden 'back room' spaces. The exhibition is a pertinent example of the necessity for silence in a dialogic work. As no foreigner had ever had a solo show in the gallery, the gallery manager, who was consulted extensively in order to build confidence and trust, advised that a local artist should make the application and present the works to the censorship committee. Chu writes:

> 'I was present during this process, while Koh waited outside the room, but we did not speak a word. It must have been quite obvious to everyone that Koh was the artist of the show, as it was printed in all the publicity and invitations, and yet everyone played their role accordingly, as the bureaucratic proceedings

dictated.' (Chu, 2013, p.71)

The artwork extends to include negotiation processes, where there is a nuanced understanding of the maintenance work, in this case the 'accounting of self to others' necessary to create safe spaces (Koh, 2015, p.43).

This accounting process provides a vivid example of what Ahmed refers to as the impossible and necessary encounters through which meeting with difference can occur. The back room spaces of culture provide evocative examples of the hidden layers of meaning that accompany each meeting with another. It is a layered durational performance masquerading as an exhibition. The performance both conforms to and criticises oppressive cultural circumstances. This hidden in plain view critique, which mimics cultural codes to point out an excess, reminds us that their responsive social practice carries with it hostility as well as hospitality. Chu writes on the friction that is necessary to create movement, in this case movement is a quality of dialogue produced not only by acts of hospitality but by a process of bringing into question. Their intervention is a transgression, a step towards social change for artists in Myanmar. The gesture is encapsulated by documentation of the show which includes a picture entitled 'Half old and half new'. This open doorway between two rooms shows one left untouched and the other renovated to become a long-term intervention of the 'new' that sits alongside the 'old'.

In musing on the gap to be negotiated between unconditional hospitality and the various conditional laws, the architecture of which is formed by bodies like censorship committees, Derrida wonders:

> 'whether absolute, hyperbolical unconditional hospitality doesn't consist in suspending language, a particular determinate language, and even the address to the other. Shouldn't we also submit to a sort of holding back of the temptation to ask who the other is.. keeping silent is already a modality of possible speaking.' (Derrida, 2000, p.135)

Derrida does not speak specifically about the labour of hospitality, but what is evident from a close look at Chu's practice is that silence is an important form of work for hospitality, which is about the ability to become a container for other cultural fictions to play out. Yet Chu's silence is not a merely submissive gesture. She asserts that this process is based on a fundamental commitment to equality of exchange. In a significant

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departure from Kester's assertion that social practice involves dissolution of self (Kester, 2011, p.82) she writes instead:

> 'This research outcome contradicts the act (even temporarily) of dissolution of self.' (Chu, 2013, p.167)

If she is a host it is not, even partially, as a formless receptacle. Instead new relational understandings are reached through a kind of slow act of repositioning that brings different subject positions into proximity with each other. The artist's work is a balancing act: carefully self-reflexive and responsive. She writes that sometimes this involves a detour, or sideways movement (Ibid, p.178).

Koh and Chu perform translations, miming social rituals to produce a difference. Their work makes space for negotiated encounters with difference to take place. To do this Chu explicitly works with the functioning antechamber spaces of culture. The artists bring these backroom negotiations to the fore as part of art making, which is a responsive durational project. Their art is to perform and make strange the rituals of hospitality that would otherwise be invisible. Equally Dufourmantelle sees such acts given gravity by Derrida that they are not normally afforded because he talks about them in relation to death and love.

The Keys to Knowledge

Questions around the politics of language and silence in hospitality appear frequently in Chu and Koh's work, forming a kernel that they constantly negotiate in different contexts, meeting with nomadic subjectivities and displaying their own in a body of work. One prominent example is work the pair performed with traveller communities in Galway, Ireland. Traveller communities and their relationship to government procedures highlight this question of hospitality and the limits of it. Such communities also live out the radical conflict between state or *polis* laws and *the* law of hospitality.

The project in Galway was situated on a 'halting site' that had been given government funding, with 1% of the money going to an art project for which Chu and Koh won the commission. The description of the halting site, in Chu's thesis, is from two perspectives:

'On the one hand these could be seen as empowering and enabling social "integration" which is a means for travellers to be supported through intercultural solidarity with the rest of Irish society. On the other hand it is seen as imposing regulations restricting their movements and changing their traditional ways of life.' (Chu, 2013, p.77)

The artists begin by negotiating more time on site than stipulated in the project funding and asserting independence from the bureaucratic agencies that the travellers are in conflict with. Conflict revolves around the city council housing office's request for the travellers to form a representative committee before they can have access to facilities on the halting site. This is an offer of conditional hospitality based on the community giving the council a name, in the form of a committee. However, having been randomly placed together the 'community' is not in a position to offer a unified perspective and perceive the request as a form of control.

As an outsider Chu describes a process by which she creates movement from a deadlock, gaining the trust of the community and the keys, for them, to the house on the halting site. From one perspective the project is a symbolic enactment – the giving of keys – however it is the kind of work that can be overlooked within critical frameworks which fail to recognise the artist's labour as an important form of hospitality.

As in Myanmar there is a politics of 'family mindedness' and suspicion within the traveller community that is revealed through working with the children on site. The children's actions mimic and simplify codes of behaviour in the broader community. This work with the children is brought about not by a plan on the part of the artists but because they learn it fits in with the travellers' conception of what artists should do. The practice begins by a form of listening across difference followed by an embodied answer that meets these alien expectations. Responsively the practice allows itself to fit into a community arts model of activities with the children. This activity is a gateway for indirect communication and learning about the wider community. Alongside this there is disengagement that responds to the environment of suspicion by giving space, not always seeking out. This push and pull could be seen as the hidden performative element that has learned from reactions to questions.

The activities with children lead onto cooking sessions with the women on site. These provide space for the women to relax, joke and finally express their fears about what it

means to give into the alien bureaucracy's request for a committee. The activities make space and time for uncertainty to play out, which can lead to the movement necessary for negotiation. Eventually via the children the travellers ask for the keys to the building. This request is a radical departure from their initial request for a horse monument some individuals originally envisioned as an appropriate artwork for the commission, despite not being allowed to be a permanent fixture of the site. Keys are requested in order to continue the activities after the artists have gone.

Chu and Koh enact a kind of hospitality that is moving, it arrives without preconceptions, receptive to the emerging needs it offers hospitality to. In this way their practice doesn't claim to exclusively hold the keys to knowledge but instead 'gives place to the place leaving the keys to the other to unlock the words to their enclosure' (Dufourmantelle, 2000, p.14).

Mere Voices and Revolutionary Outsiders

A similar responsiveness could be tracked through the body of work produced by artist Monica Ross who emphasises the collective, process and time-based nature of her performance works. In an obituary to the performance artist, fellow artist and friend Conrad Atkinson notes that:

> 'Monica Ross died on June 14th 2013; the very day on which her performance *Anniversary An Act of Memory* reached its 60th and concluding act at the 23rd session of the human rights council in Geneva, Switzerland.' (Atkinson, 2013)

Anniversary An Act of Memory was a long-term durational performance work that involved Ross in a series of recitations from memory, with collaborators, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Performed from 2008 to 2013 the work has involved numerous individuals in 60 public recitations in over 50 different languages. The piece was initially developed in response to the 2005 shooting, by police, of Jean Charles de Menezes, a Brazilian living in London, in the wake of terrorist attacks on the city. Ross writes in *Artforum* that the terrifying demonstration of power was part of 'a covert shoot to kill procedure that is still active in UK policing, although it has no democratic sanction'. The piece was developed as a personal answer to what the artist read, along the lines of Hannah Arendt, as 'a failure to think' in the face of authority.

'I wondered if I would have had the courage and temporal focus to disobey. I asked myself how a society might nurture these qualities in its citizens.' (Ross, 2013)

This sentiment expresses two qualities. Firstly, the courage she is reaching for is to stand outside of the pressures of state authority; it is akin to the courage of Antigone who risks her life in the eyes of the state to perform a proper burial, an act of memory. Second the impulse to 'nurture' these qualities in a social way is a hospitable impulse, a recognition that courage develops within structures of care and support. The result of this was an experiment both in performance and radical education that could act as an affirmative political counter to a perceived loss of self within authoritarian regimes. Within that process memory played a constitutive role:

'It isn't enough to simply reiterate the declaration. One has to commit to the actualized defence of human rights. The act of recollection forms just a part of that urgent process.' (Ibid)

This often involves a level of imperfection within the performances that is due to a struggle with memory under pressure. This showing of labour and investment adds to the effect of the recitations. Performers sometimes stumble or proceed with uncertainty, throughout that process Ross stands, off centre, as a kind of silent support. She acts as host to the event. Using Chu's terminology, Ross' 'embodied co-presence' is important. As well as reciting, she performs a patient waiting that helps to set the stage, creating a safe space within which a process of political consciousness can take place. Importantly political consciousness for Ross involves memory; just as the outsider voice in a manifesto serves to remind and unite us around forgotten and repressed histories, here memory functions as a political voice. It also sets up a circumstance where participants must embrace a certain level of vulnerability. Failures of memory and the disorientation it causes are part of the performance. As Ahmed points out, these failures and vulnerabilities expressed within a supported environment become steps participants take towards new temporary collectivities and different political consciousness.

Ross describes a process through which the police officers respond unthinkingly to voices transmitted through earpieces. In his study *A Voice and Nothing More* (2006) Mladen Dolar draws a distinction between two different voices, the first is an ideological

interpellation, a command from an earpiece, and the second voice is described by Dolar as a 'foreign kernel' that 'cannot be appropriated by the self' and also cannot be silenced by the first ideological voice. The distance that the reflective self occupies between these two voices is the space that opens up for politics. It could be likened to the gap between assimilation and rejection that Ahmed asserts is necessary for an ethical encounter with difference. Dolar describes this second as 'a mere voice', something uncertain, and draws a comparison between this ambiguously quiet voice, the voice of education and the listening posture within psychoanalysis. Like Ross in *Acts of Memory* this voice offers an ethical, political and linguistic call, 'It is the silent voice of an appeal to respond, to assume one's stance as the subject' (Dolar, 2006, p.124).

As well as the act of memory the opening chapter of Monica Ross' publication *Valentine* (2000) registers a concern for 'Things forgotten' that also ties in with Dolar's interest in psychoanalytic processes.[7] In an *Act of Memory* it is possible to perceive Ross providing a supportive holding space for participants, in which to perform uncertainty. In *Valentine* Ross announces herself as a guest drawing a number of relational encounters, in time, around Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* (1512) to position herself as a revolutionary outsider in a chain of others, offering a threat to the order of things. In a similar way to Hélène Cixous in *The Laugh of Medusa* (1976) Ross begins by examining the story of Dora whose case study is an important text for feminist interventions in psychoanalysis. To Cixous, Dora is a forbearer to the new woman, someone who haunted Freud with 'inaudible and thundering denunciations' an 'indomitable poetic body' (Cixous, 1976 p.886: About Manifesto, pp.17-18). In Ross' text we encounter her as an outsider figure, a teenage girl, who shares a moment with the artist in front of Raphael's painting. Dora is linked to Raphael's figure who is in turn linked to Ross through the study of a number of other outsider figures described in overlapping moments through time around the painting, which becomes an index for past conflicts and pivotal histories in the intersection of capitalism and communism. In a series of moves Ross recasts the *Sistina* as a fugitive, just like Dora whose name is changed by various father figures, the state, the church and the analyst. This giving of alternative names is described by Ross as a covering over through which Rosa becomes Ida, for the convenience of her employers, and becomes Dora for Freud. Ross plays a hunch that more than to protect her identity Freud renames to protect against his own fears around the class origins suggested by her surname, Bauer (peasant in German). So here, as in Ahmed and Spivak, naming is

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[7] 'Things forgotten' is a chapter title within *Valentine* (2000).

the kind of translation where things are lost and covered up. Butler writes that this covering over serves to obscure the incompleteness of political systems and of subjecthood. There is also a sense that Freud's analysis is conservative, retaining a given hierarchy between them that, as Cixous says, fixes Dora in place.

Valentine includes a meticulous and complex inventory of historical references that creates an archive around Ross' encounter with the painting. In Ross' layered framing and reframing, the painting itself is read as a kind of revolutionary outsider. Rather than appearing as a static object the painting performs through time creating shared moments that liken it both to a social practice and to manifesto; both able to share surprising things. It is useful to consider Ross' reading of the work, in this performative text, as creating a space in-between a number of political outsiders. The book provides an account of several performative strategies that also apply to social art practice and highlight its revolutionary potential.

In focusing on Raphael's painting Ross performs a scratching away at the boundaries of socially engaged art, to reimagine a painting on a wall as also something in dialogue, a social practice. Tracing a path through conflict Ross reveals how the *Sistina* is politically double, representing the desires of the hands she falls to in conflict, becoming the ethical face of either triumph or redemption. Finding 'her' in a footnote of Walter Benjamin's essay *The Work of Art in The Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1968) Ross reads that an unfixing of a work from its ritualized place 'may set in motion a continuous oscillation between two seemingly opposed states, being neither one nor the other, neither sacred nor profane, old nor new' (Ross, 2000, p.18). This position in between old and new resonates with Koh and Chu's practice. They move between oppositional groups in everyday life in order to make a space for negotiation.

The artists describe a responsive process, a kind of mirroring of rituals in alien cultures that allows them to take up this in-between position. In Ross' description the painting is similarly responsive. She relates a space left open within it, which otherwise works through a succession of non-identical mirrorings, for the viewer, who is able to perceive within the gaze of the human-sized central figure, something between them. 'A nameless thing a transparency plotted into the composition' (Ibid, p.32). She writes:

'The painting is an endless circulation of the double take: a divided curtain, two
saints, two angels, two spheres. Only the two in one of the Madonna and child
are figured a single form. Her, or their, double is the viewer.' (Ibid, p.32)

Importantly, this symmetry that Ross notices is not identical. It offers variables of the
same becoming a socially responsive conversational symmetry. Added to this the figure
of Madonna in the painting is also a 'go between' situated in the picture as in a no-man's
land between heaven and earth. The responsive experience offered by the painting takes
us to another reflexive 'state of attention':

'we forget the conflict between discourse and sensory perception, of mind over
matter, the power of the subject over the object, the prevalent order of things.
We are in touch again with a power of communication, which is of an ambivalent
order.' (Ibid, p.49)

The experience relates an alternative to current systems of power and representation. It
is another language that is embedded within those systems offering a kind of opening,
working to place one world in another (About Manifesto, p.7). This opening, Ross
contends, is also a form of hospitality, a 'house' that 'we' return to and the time there is
'not of want but plenty' (Ibid). What Ross describes then is a full silence that creates
time between people, perhaps similar to that often performed by Chu and Koh in their
relational work. Ross' description sits ambiguously between an absolute outside to
language, her contribution is after all written, and a totally dominant linguistic position.
Instead the text can be seen to act as an index to something else, becoming a shifter that
moves about, belonging to but also poking holes in language, insisting meaning also
depends upon the contexts it enters. To support this Ross' text contains an intricate
archival system that anchors it to various objects, contexts and encounters that are
important.

As much as *Valentine* can be related to a social practice it also describes the feminist
manifesto. Where the manifesto form is a tool for social change it also performs like
Ross, at edge of language; it presents words on the verge of action. It is full of shifters in
relation to time where it moves between 'then' and 'now' gathering together other
subjectivities that are affected by this movement. Ross reflects on 'the gaze of the girl',
Sistina, who expresses subjectivity in transition and an ambivalent time. She reflects 'a
transience, which, at the sight of her, is always happening now' (Ibid, p.27). For a

moment then the *Sistina* is a manifesto. 'Ready to run, destination unknown, we might say that this teenage girl is in a permanent state of revolution' (Ibid p.28); the revolutionary figure in Ross' opinion has a nomadic subjectivity, ultimately she is a kind of improper guest, who offers a hospitable space that is also a revolution. Where the Sistina is between heaven and earth, the manifesto is also situated in a broken middle, leading Holzer to observe that it offers a careful balance of rage and utopia (About Manifesto, p.22). Ross focuses on the gaze of the Madonna, which is directed 'outwards towards a space, which seems to have *neither time nor border*, is above and beyond me yet between us. Both near and far.' (Ross, 2000, p.15) Presumably running from something her gaze looks to something above and beyond the viewer. Like other manifestos it produces a link between different subjectivities that stretches though time and tries to suggest another possible reality just beyond the horizon.

Ross speculates on why the image of the fugitive girl remains in the museum while its accompanying cherubs circulate in endless reproductions. She continues, perhaps it is the gypsy look of the dark eyed girl, ethnic, in some way that we can't place, as well as fugitive. We are not at ease, possibly because we are reminded of things we don't want or because the look might want something from us. This is the unease of 'the unexpected visitor' disrupting the order of our lives. Ambivalence lies in the fear of being overwhelmed, of disintegrating borders.[8] In this description Ross diagnoses a social condition where we are 'crowded out by things' so that we can no longer remember how to be at ease with 'something ambiguous' (Ibid, p.41). The loss of this forgotten knowledge is replaced by an endless want, marked by continuous consumption. In this 'order of things' Ross, like Cixous, concludes that anything considered disorderly or out of place is confined, in normal life, to the unconscious storage house of disorder and in the case of the painting, to the museum, another type of heterotopic space, a cultural unconscious (Ibid, p.41).

Through the Looking Glass: a Minor Literature

In an affirmative manner Ross sees elements confined to the unconscious finding unexpected opportunities to 'breach' our frontiers. This metaphor is played out through references to *Alice in Wonderland* (Carroll and Carroll, 1983) where going 'through the looking glass' represents transportation to a different relational order. This relational

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[8] For more on this see Kristeva *The Power of Horror* (1982).

space is reminiscent of Rosi Braidotti's reading of Gilles Deleuze's philosophy in *Art, Activism, Life* (Braidotti et al., 2014). Notwithstanding Deleuze's depature from and rejection of psychoanalysis, which features so prominently in Ross' text, Braidotti makes a case for Foucault's assertion that 'perhaps one day this century will be known as Deleuzian'.[9] She describes a 'philosophy of the event' which begins in *Logic of Sense* (Deleuze et al., 2004) as 'a mad mix of Lewis Caroll, Stoic philosophy, *avant-garde* French literature and the psychoanalysis of Melanie Klein' emphasising 'pure becomings that manifest themselves in events as they string into lives as we live them' (Braidotti, 2014, p.14).

Braidotti's 'lines of flight' and 'nomadic becomings' (Ibid, p.17) resonate with the central event in *Valentine*, the exchange with the Sistina's fugitive gaze. Braidotti also foregrounds the relational as empowering and gives a view of new subjectivities as emerging not from lack but from 'affirmative social practices' (Ibid). This is not to desert 'old' ideologies like 'marxism, communism, socialism and feminism' (Ibid, p.18) but to look to the future, as Ross does in the text, whilst still moving between Freudian and Marxist ideologies, with what Braidotti terms is a 'strong historical memory' (Ibid, p.28). Braidotti's writing is interesting in relation to manifestos for occupying a position between critique and creativity. In a talk on affirmative politics given in South Africa (Audio Archive, HW.003) Braidotti locates this position as existing within a tradition of immanence that she draws back through Foucault, Nietzsche and Spinoza. Furthermore she credits the feminist politics of location, emphasised by the likes of Adrienne Rich among others, as providing a 'rich methodology for grounding activism in location, as embedded and embodied memories' (Ibid, 3 mins).

In this way Braidotti's feminist praxis also shows a similarly strong commitment to situated knowledge that can be found in Chu and Koh's work. In their work this commitment is balanced, mostly through the long-term durational nature of the practice, with a different and equal commitment to embracing the outsider or nomadic position. For this reason Braidotti's writing suggests itself as a point of connection between feminist manifestos and social art practice. Particularly her book *Nomadic Subjects* (Braidotti, 1994) is interesting for laying out a figuration of a nomadic state that acts as 'the subversion of a set of conventions', consequently making a connection

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[9] At a talk given at the ici, Berlin in 2014 Braidotti acknowledges a kind of groundwork performed in psychoanalytic theory and through Lacan that we cannot do without (About Manifestos p.27).

between the nomadic and the revolutionary. She uses nomadism as a metaphor to express a commitment to change in everyday life and a resistance to micro-fascism – smaller more localised but equally exploitative power formations. These are also a deep concern of Koh's within his book *Art-Led Participatory Processes* (Koh, 2015). Where social practice can be seen as a situated, prefigurative politics that allows us to imagine new possibilities *now,* Braidotti describes an 'as if' philosophy of 'nomadic becoming' that is 'neither reproduction nor just imitation, but rather emphatic proximity, intensive interconnectedness' (Braidotti, 1994, p.5). The nomadic consciousness she lays out is 'a creative sort of becoming; a performative metaphor that allows for otherwise unlikely encounters and unsuspected sources of interaction of experience and knowledge' (Ibid, p.6).

In her writing she shows an ongoing awareness of issues of language and translation as well as an assertion of the value of situated knowledge. She doesn't dispute the existence of borders and boundaries within subjectivity but highlights a transgressive impulse in nomadism that is linked to the transitory. Braidotti asserts that the nomad's transitory nature is precisely 'the reason s/he can make connections at all. Nomadic politics is a matter 'of bonding, of coalitions, of inter-connections' (Ibid, p.35). The stance is against fixity and the processes through which identification becomes divided into oppositional categories like good and bad leaving the subject powerless to effect change. This topic also resonates with Koh's writing (Koh, 2015, p.75). Instead, Braidotti writes on a practice that opens up an 'in-between space' by using techniques like mimetic impersonation to create a place where new forms of political subjectivity can be explored. Identity, in this way, is not fixed but something that rests on contingency. This formation of identity is resonant with Mouffe's politics and in relation to social practice, to the assertion of a responsive approach, rather than one that lays out future goals in advance.

In the chapter of *Valentine* (2000) titled 'through the looking glass' Ross describes a sense of timelessness as well as plenty, a trace of first love and 'a prescience of the last' (Ibid, p.34). It is precisely this time that Ross diagnoses Lenin, another figure whose name changes through time and according to political circumstance, as having lost.[10] In a parallel move to Alice:

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[10] Ross speculates that Vladimir Ulyanov gains his name from a dead man's passport in order to gain safe passage, she also speculates that taking on the name Lenin was an act of distancing, in

> *'Faster, Faster still shouts the Red Queen. She and Alice run and run until they are breathless.* When at last they stop, it is only to find that neither they nor anything else has moved. Time has stood still. They have been running just to catch up with it.' (Ross, p.51)

This kind of time is what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as *chronos*, sequential, quantitative time that is different from *kairos*, a qualitative experiential moment in time. The politics of *chronos* is institutional, defined by Chantel Mouffe (2013) part of a system that permits competition between elites.

Ross argues that it is this time, and politics, that Lenin falls into, stopped in his tracks by joining the party, his 'voice from outside' becoming 'useful and manageable rhetoric' (Ross, 2000, p.51). In this way he moves from Mouffe's definition of the political (a voice from outside the system that can produce profound change or disorder) to her definition of politics. Ross concludes '*the door Lenin was to open* closes as the revolution turns to stone' (Ross, 2000, p.44).

In contrast to *chronos* the time of *the* political is on the axis of *aion* described by Braidotti as a becoming 'minotarian' (Braidotti, 2014, p.30) or 'becoming woman', speaking with a voice from outside. In *Kafka Towards a Minor Literature* (1986) Deleuze and Guattari describe the minority position as the revolutionary position within a major literature. Writers of this form produce collective and political enunciations from the margins where they have more freedom to 'express another possible community' (Ibid, p.17). Paradoxically, it is alienation and isolation from mainstream positions that allows for this collectivity of expression. As Lyon notes of the *Dyke Manifesto* (1993) a minor literature moves across different excluded subject positions. Deleuze and Guattari argue that from a kind of linguistic poverty writers like Kafka produce a new political intensity that makes them 'a nomad, a gypsy, an immigrant' in relation to their own language. This intensity born out of disindentification or critique is a revolutionary form of creativity. Echoing through Braidotti's description of 'joyful acts of transformation' is the other time Ross describes through the painting. A lost or forgotten moment, intense joy in a relational experience, that is a kind of time travelling, giving you energy to act now with a different future in mind.

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the opposite direction to Freud who is uncomfortable with Dora's social position in relation to his own, from bourgeois origins (Ross, 2000, p.57).

The failure or blind spot in Lenin's socialism is both a failure to be still, to take a moment out of time to be *with*, and also somehow a failure to move. It is in relation to these failures that social practice and feminist manifestos both respond with alternative tactics. Writing on Benjamin's theoretical work around the aura of the art object Ross notes another failed translation, a disparity between the system of communication set up in the painting and the intentions for objects in mass production. The social practice of the outsider offers a different 'order of perception and expression' (Ross, 2000, p.38). This is a question of scale. The scale of mass production is something less than human, creating a subject/object relationship. Ross remarks, like Alice, we become too big in front of the object and hold too much power. In contrast the experience of the artwork is with something that seems to look at us in return. This dialogic back and forth is a revolution within consumer culture, an experience of equality without lack. Ross continues in a similar vein to insist that this is not an experience that is translated well into measurable outcomes:

> 'How we might be affected by such an experience, how we might both remember and forget the oblique event of this inexpressible relationship is precisely what resists, and is unusable, to an economic and psychic structure premised not just on generating every kind of want but on reproducing models of power over the object, whatever or whoever that may be.' (Ibid, p.39)

Detail from *The Sistina Madonna*, Raphael. Image sourced from Creative Commons.

From Affirmation to Critique

Ross writes on a collapsing of worlds as the Berlin Wall falls and the East with it into 'the arms of the West' (Ibid, p.35). It is at this point that a Japanese company produces a reproduction of the *Sistina* and the small detail, the two cherubs at the bottom of the picture, begins to circulate, broken off from the larger, forgotten experience of the painting. The endlessly reproduced cherubs:

> 'double again and again for the moment where two differing ideologies come together in the death of the Soviet Union, a relationship between unequals.. In lands which become neither one place nor the other no go-between opens the door of safe passage to a western heaven on earth. Many are left in exile of underworlds where time, as in a nightmare, seems to run backwards against chaos.' (Ibid, p.36)

In the Glasgow, CCA and Edinburgh, Stills based exhibition *ECONOMY*, curated by Angela Dimitrakaki and Kirsten Lloyd in 2013, artist Tanya Ostojić looks out at us from the wall of the exhibition, stripped back, to be literally bare life, without hair or history, becoming her own go-between, as an *Artist Looking for a Husband with an EU passport* (2000-05). The image is documentation from an interactive web project that saw her enact a crossing over from East to West beginning in 2000 through a personal ad and continuing through over 500 correspondences, to a public meeting and small private wedding to a German artist. The artwork interrogates the politics of hospitality within the neoliberal political framework that dominates post-1989. It also plays with Derrida's assertion that in property-driven models of hospitality the guest is often hostile, taking hostages as she crosses the threshold. The work concluded with divorce in 2005 when she was denied permanent residency in Germany. It acknowledges, in line with Butler's work, exclusion from the economic privileges of the West as a foundational part of subjectivity formation. The work explicitly concerns itself with border crossing, joining two other works in a black-humoured portfolio that the exhibition text describes as performing 'a nightmarish realisation of the historical *avant-garde's* wish for the transformative fusion of art and life' (Lloyd, 2013, ECONOMY catalogue, p.16). [11]

Playing on the borders of inside and outside, hierarchy and marginalisation, public and

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[11] The other works that are grouped together on the artist's website are *Illegal border crossing* and *Waiting for a visa.*

private, the work fits the profile of something ambiguous in the gap it creates between the attractive pull of the text and the stark accompanying image. Writing on the 'power play' in the work Suzana Milevska comments:

> 'her skinny shaved body without any traces of sensuality and seducing gaze or gesture conveys a completely opposite visual message. From this conflict of the textual invitation with the visual repulsion was born the gap of ambiguity between attraction and abjection.' (Lloyd, 2013)

I'll Be Your Angel (2001). 49th Venice Biennale /video still DV 21mins. Copyright/courtesy of Tanja Ostojić.

The Angel in the House

To very different ends to what could be considered affirmative relational practices, Ostojić also plays around with silence, supplemented later by stylized narrative

accounts and event diaries, as a powerful tool in her performative life/works. In the *Strategies for Success* (2001-3) series she appeared hollowed out, standing next to Harold Szeemann in the durational performance work *I'll Be Your Angel* (realised during the Venice Biennale, 2001) shadowing the influential curator as a continuously glamorous, empty smile. Here curator Marina Gržinić argues what is performed is an over-identification with the gendered subtext of the event. Gržinić argues that this public over-identification with the fetishism at work within the art world and the 'libidinal relations between artists and curators' performs the act of traversing the 'fundamental fantasy'.

> 'To act in such a way to make overtly visible, to stage, so to speak, in front of our eyes, publicly, the phantasmic scenarios that are discussed, incited, implied, but not made public.' (Gržinić, 2004, p.11)

Using the mechanisms of rumour and distribution throughout the series Ostojić could be said to appear, like Alice, too big or too present. She represents a larger than life occupation of the nightmarish consumer reality that Ross writes on in *Valentine* as east falls into west. As the angel she becomes object to Szeemann's subject. In her diary of the performance she notes, in between costume descriptions, a creeping unease developed between herself and Szeemann, within a gruelling and continuous schedule of press events. This develops up until the point where standing outside the exhibition venue 'He told me to "switch off" and stay outside because all he wanted to do now was "talk to the art works"'(Ostojić, 2004, p.55).

She continues:

> 'I decide to go after him... There was another reason for my "disobeying" him; this would be my only chance to see the exhibition. It's true, I felt ill at ease because he had forgotten, having other things on his mind at that moment, that my performance was also part of his exhibition.' (Ibid)

Somehow Ostojić seems to cross a line as fast as Szeemann tries to draw it. In a letter to the artist Szeemann writes: 'I want that the Biennale piece remains limited in time and use, no more quotes about it in your upcoming works.. Biennale is over and belongs to the past' (Ibid, p.65).

As Gržinić notes the act is a kind of 'self-destruction' which sees her excluded from later

exhibitions.[12] This vulnerability, revealed in small details in *Strategies for Success* (2001-2003) makes the work an ironic contextual response to Spivak's strategic essentialism and also brings the work 'as close to a failure as to a success' (Ibid, p.35). Ostojić meticulously occupies the non-feminist subject position in order to make visible the workings of equally non-feminist structures. In relation to hospitality she performs as the angel in Szeemann's house, everywhere and nowhere, yet the performance is imperfect. Rather than being invisible, becoming the walls of the house, Ostojić is hyper-visible. Through visibility Ostojić kills the angel, performing the failure of hospitality within non-feminist structures just as in her other work she performs the failure of it in neoliberal systems.

Ostojić's critique of neoliberalism is from the perspective of excluded subjectivity, she is an outsider who threatens the borders of the neoliberal order. The two strands in Ostojić's work stage different forms of vulnerability linking up the precarity of artists to that of other misplaced subjects whose presence gives lie to the promise of a common world post-1989. In the *ECONOMY* exhibition she is one of many female artists who are able to make visible the realities within a capitalist bondage system that we have an ambiguous relationship to.[13] The curatorial statement states:

> 'It is also no accident that the majority of the artists in the exhibitions are women - nor is this the result of positive action on our part as curators. If in contemporary capitalism social experience often becomes an economic experience with a gendered face, it almost always falls to women to examine this perspective.' (Ibid)

The gendered face of economic experience is something that Maria Rudio's video piece *Real Time* (2003) alights on. The film, another facet to the *ECONOMY* exhibition, documents a number of poetically juxtaposed conversations between artists and others that act out consciousness-raising scenarios as a way of making working conditions and the gendering of work visible. Speakers in the film alight on both the unacknowledged elements of care that have bled into the workplace from more domestic roots and the

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[12] Gržinić notes that 'In 2003, the exhibition "Blood and Honey", which may be seen as the new art from the Balkans, Curated by H. Szeemann, did not include a work by Tanja Ostojić' (Gržinić , 2004, p.18).

[13] The term bondage is used particularly in relation to Hito Steryl's video *Lovely Andrea* (2007) which also features in the exhibition and depicts two women in the process of tracking down a bondage photograph taken in the 1980s in Japan.

precarious project-based nature of the artists' work producing a terminology that has been taken up by all fields of labour to create an increasingly insecure situation for workers. The relation between domestic labour, which makes up the silent language of hospitality, and the changing reality of the non-domestic workplace is made clear in footage that jumps between timeframes, interspersing contemporary documented footage with that of 1970s housewives performing tasks with a fixed head-on camera view that is evocative of Martha Rosler's *Kitchen Semiotics* (1975). By drawing this comparison the film suggests that women, trapped in the domestic sphere, historical outsiders to public life, possess the knowledge to deconstruct current labour conditions. The idea of movement and the privilege and danger of remaining still are evoked so that beyond the gendering of work what is revealed is the elusive gendering of time that constructs 'the real'. The pace of the film is fast until its ending in a poignant repetition of past footage that gives the viewer a moment to witness the normally hidden movement of oppression and the subjectivities it works on.

Rudio's project is to produce an oppositional form of representation that relates to contemporary labour patterns. Her works and writing play host to discussions around what these forms could look like. In *Bodies of Production* the text offers a deconstruction, quoting Paolo Virno's assertion that 'work has absorbed the distinctive features of political action'(Rudio, 2005 p.18). The consequence of this is that the 'passage to Action appears as a decadence or at best as a superfluous duplicate' (Ibid).[14] It also charts an alternative journey towards citizenship as practice, in line with what Rosler (2001) has termed 'participatory representation', a form that will avoid fixed identity to construct 'narratives and gestures that embody our dreams and enable the transmission of our experiences, that generate collective memory and knowledge' (Rudio, 2005, p.16).

To imagine this collective memory, generated by participatory representation, Rudio enters into a dialogue with second wave feminism. A concern with invisible work, the labour of hospitality, appears in Rudio's conversation (2010) with Laura Mulvey around the important, collectively-produced film *Nightcleaners* (1974) which Mulvey stresses was a collaboration between feminism and Marxism. The 1974 film, produced by the Berwick Street film collective, is ostensibly a record of the attempts by the women's movement to unionise the female night cleaners of London. However, like Rudio's film, *Nightcleaners* is both a political and formal experiment. It grapples with the problems of representing struggle not only through the content but the materiality of the film. In that

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[14] Virno appears, in translation, in *Bodies that Matter* (Rudio, 2005, pp.6-7).

way it was committed to a particular struggle and a reflection on what it means to make an image of struggle in different, less exhausted languages than those on the conventional left. Consequently it offers something more nuanced than heroic individuals and binary confrontations between workers and bosses. Instead, the filmmakers were searching for a language that could go below the surface to express the contradictions of the time including the complexities of personal and political relations in the labour movement. Reality in *Nightcleaners* is not a coherent, seamless narrative but fragmented through discontinuities in soundtrack and montaged segments of footage and conversation. Time appears slowed down by extended sequences and black spaces that Humphrey Trevelyan, founding member of the collective, considers were a way to create 'space in the film for the audience to reflect' (Trevelyan, 2012).[15] This sentiment could be seen as a gesture towards film making as an open process, an early form of participatory representation, which was nevertheless a difficult proposition given the complex reality of the cleaners' lives. In conversation with Trevelyan, Sheila Rowbotham expands on the difficulty of accessing the cleaners to film between work, negotiating with supervisors, and being rejected from private spaces by sometimes hostile husbands. Yet the film is not simply about the cleaners, as much as possible it is a dialogue with them on the possibility of socialism. Moreover the film's experimental format also asks for a dialogue with the viewer. In an article written for *Spare Rib* at the time of its release Claire Johnston claims this as a kind of consciousness-raising. The act of viewing becomes a creative form, which is a far cry from the passivity encouraged by political documentaries that claim to simply transmit an unmediated reality to accepting viewers. To Johnston the filmmakers enact a double movement that, like a manifesto action, involves both a realisation of 'the poverty of our own consciousness and the real possibilities for enriching it.' Johnston writes:

> 'Someone I spoke to who saw the film remarked on how the images stayed with her for days (unlike traditional forms of documentary) in a quite disconcerting way. The film questions the traditional passivity of the spectator in the cinema.' (Johnston, 1975)

The film is essentially about participation, playing out an early form of dialogical practice with very clear political aspirations. It is a new form of political documentary in the same way that the feminist manifesto is a new form of manifesto, both expressing

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[15] Trevelyan revealed this in conversation at an event hosted by the South Bank Centre in 2012.

dialogical impulses that relate to concerns for an equal exchange, subject to subject. It plays host to the cleaners and audience as equals in a conversation around the possibility of socialism. The hospitality evidenced in this new form expresses a slow-paced time, sometimes silent, that at doesn't command but stays with you.

Consuming Hospitality

In one poignant clip from the film several women cleaners talk about the sleep they get in the balance between family life and work, sometimes one or two hours, often less. They are worn thin. The camera fixes on them in this moment of disappearance, it stays still, longer than it should embedding a memory that mirrors experience, forcing us to live through a kind of relentless time, bearing witness to difficult realities. Critique, according to Braidotti, has a strong historical memory too. It performs a form of ghosting, looking out for and occupying, as Rudio and Ostojić do differently, the moments when we are complicit in the structures of power we seek to resist. This long-term research, that acts as a kind of living through, is also identifiable within the work of video and performance artist Lucy Beech who performs this ghosting work in the film *Me and Mine* (2015). The film is shot from the outsider perspective of funeral care worker Vivian, who enters a community created around the alternative funeral awards (a new economy that recognises empathy as a powerful currency) from the male-dominated, silent world of traditional funeral care. In a similar manner to *Nightcleaners'* stylistic piercing of seamless reality, in Beech's hands documentary works become a fiction, a re-enactment fabricated from field notes. Naomi Pearce (2015) describes Beech embedding herself in situations in order to bear witness and in the case of *Me and Mine* the subject she approaches, being close to the grave, is close to hospitality.[16] All the tension in the film is held around outsider Vivian whose quiet, ambivalent reaction to the funeral conference environment is a kind of hospitality, a story that cannot tell itself. Through the film we approach an updated version of the caring, feminine archetype, the caretakers who travel with the dead. One of the conference speakers asserts:

> 'as we know women are great communicators, its no secret that we gravitate
> towards communication based jobs.. its about flexibility, it's about porousness,
> we were talking about that earlier, its so important, the word comes from

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[16] In *Of Hospitality* (2000) Derrida argues that both the grave and our mother tongue are fundamental points of nostalgia for all exiles.

empathia, it's a Greek word, meaning into and pathos feelings, so it's a kind of penetration, a travelling, it suggests when we enter someone else's pain it's like we enter a country, with customs and border control, what does it look like where you are? What are the laws? But as we know whenever we embody someone's pain we run the risk of being alienated from our true sense of self.' (Transcription from *Me and Mine*, 2015).

The caretaker is both a container for grief and a traveller who enters new territories. This second role of caregiver as guest is portrayed by Vivian, an outsider in a conference of empathetic travellers, as an emotional labour. We experience this labour with her through the dramatic tension set up in the film and the questions it asks. Will she speak out against this reading as essentialist or even as a cynical rebranding of natural, receiving femininity, in an economy that, as Donna Haraway (1991) predicted, leans increasingly towards the exploitation of feminised labour? Alternatively, will she discover a darker side to this community of natural carers perceiving her, coming from different traditions, as a spy in their midst. What we are given, is a smile, which Pearce describes as 'a leap of joy', that sees Vivian plunge into the swimming pool to emerge strongly and finally into a conversation that carefully seeks to acknowledge her. The film fades out on a mundane exchange between Vivian and the eco-alternative director Helen, which Pearce argues answers Haraway's call for coalition through affinity not identity. In this last scene there is a meeting with difference, Helen manages to acknowledge Vivian without consuming her, just to sit next to her at the breakfast table and to share the view. Through the exchange Beech suggests the kind of relational encounter that is performed by the non-proprietorial guest/hosts who play out, in the everyday, Derrida's association of hospitality with the gravity of death.

Film still from *Cannibals* (2013). Image courtesy of Lucy Beech.

Hospitality is also, differently, the subject of Beech's semi-fictional video piece *Cannibals* that I encountered at the *Bloomberg New Contemporaries* exhibition at the ICA, London in 2014. Like Rudio, Beech's work looks back to all-female consciousness-raising to reveal a nightmarish transformation of the language of support within the emotional landscape of enterprising capitalism. *Cannibals* (2013) was developed by the artist out of a period of research into the female online support community 'Women Empowering Women', a group premised on the ethos of self-change. The film skirts the ground between heightened reality TV-style realism and a surreal fictional narrative to present a visceral lunch club scenario. A group of women meet to enact a kind of ritualised meal, each participant part of a three-tiered hierarchical system, structured around different positions in an apparently transcendent scheme. As they initiate new recruits/diners to the group members move through a process, entering as starters and graduating through to becoming desserts. The ritual takes on a cult-like feel complete with drums, mythologising a culture where 'every resource' is provided for 'self-reinvention' and 'where everyone gets to be a dessert' (Beech, 2013). Here the language of emotional support prevalent in social art practices appears as a parody. The group are told they 'will feel with each other' in a re-associative process of remembering. Meanwhile the body is tenderised and smoked in preparation for self-consumption. Emotional support is inextricably linked to financial wellbeing. The participants stand outside themselves only sharing a heightened moment of consumption, a fleshy religious instant that leads the protagonist, Dorothy, to the realisation 'we are all cigarette butts for a moment standing in the ashtray' (Ibid).

They share a moment in the ash only to retreat one by one, the host, Helen, wishing them great luck in their feasting before removing herself. The camera leaves us with a vision of her/dessert, individual, packed in plastic, refrigerated.

The feast laid out by Beech is a kind of religious moment in secular capitalist culture, a last supper that could be seen to join a long line of dinner parties in feminist tradition. As Suzanne Lacy notes in interview with Catherine Wood, the meal was both a social form used widely in the 1970s by artists, ranging in scale from the intimate to the performative, large public occasion *and* a form used amongst women labour organisers in the late 1800s (Lacy and Wood, 2013). Lacy goes on to say that the idea of the meal as art back in the 70s wasn't a big dilemma – it only became so later when, as Wood suggests, the 'market took off' (Ibid, p.129). Beech seems to relate a moment where the market catches up and finds a way to produce profit from the idea of a feast as a kind of lifestyle recruitment conduit. Lacy also notes with curiosity the art world's embrace of

social situations, which she frames as previously 'marginalised practices' (Ibid p.130). When asked to draw a relationship between her own work and practices prominent in the 1990s she makes an important distinction: 'one thing I have noticed is that many artists operating in this territory today don't have developed skills in organizing' (Ibid), going further to say that she considers some of her own works 'interesting organizing but not very good art and others I would consider good art and bad organizing' (Ibid).

In relationship to food Lacy's organisational abilities are perhaps best evidenced in works like *The International Dinner Party* (1979) and *River Meetings: Lives of Women in the Delta* (1981-82) which were both remembered recently as part of a large exhibition, curated by Stephanie Smith in the Smart Gallery, Chicago, *Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art* (2012). For *International Dinner Party*, Lacy organised a worldwide simultaneous dinner party to honour her mentor, Judy Chicago, on the eve of the opening of the iconic feminist installation *Dinner Party* in San Francisco's Museum of Modern Art. Lacy and her collaborator Linda Pruess asked women across the world to hold a meal in tribute to a women important to them in their region. In the pre-internet era the work was remarkable for co-ordinating meals across five continents, over 24 hours, triggered through connections in feminist/activist networks and detailed through an archive of telegrams and letters left in the wake of the event. To mark the meals Lacy's performance involved working on a large installation, placing telegrams from all the women who had organised meals in a folder and triangles to mark their location on a worldwide map. For *Feast* (2012) the original map and archive materials from this project were displayed for the first time alongside documentation of *River Meetings,* a second multi-layered project that again drew on feminist organising strategies to arrange around 500 women in a series of potluck dinners to mobilise support for the Equal Rights Amendment. At the time the amendment was not ratified by many states, including Louisiana, becoming the context for the meals as a large boycott. As Lacy recalls *River Meetings* was resolutely anti-consumption, 'we had to focus on how attendees would eat and where they would sleep without spending any money' (Lacy, 2013, p.78)

What Lacy's work highlights is that organising is a part of the labour of hospitality, the gathering together of a number of people to share something. In this way organising is not only another part of the invisible labours of hospitality, sitting alongside cleaning, cooking and caregiving, it is also an expression of hospitality's political potential. Acknowledging organising is similar to acknowledging the work performed by a manifesto, which appears to effortlessly gather together and affectively represent a

community of people.

In interview for *Feast* Lacy registers a complexity around food that can also be found in *Cannibals* (2013) making it fertile ground for women's performance:

> 'I think, the relationship between consumption of the female body and food; between preparation and serving food and nurturing; between consuming flesh and being flesh, all these things took on a gendered perspective.' (Ibid, p.78)

She relates both a feeling of resentment in having to be in the kitchen, doing dishes, while the men talked in the living room and a realisation of the potential that the kitchen discussions could yield. In *International Dinner Party* Lacy enacts a symbolic crossing over, she describes the event as 'colonizing global male directed space with local women's aspirations' (Ibid, p.81). She emphasises that the work was an exploration of 'time, space, relationship and ritual' describing it as a performative structure, that could take a set of life-like actions and frame them in terms of time and representation (Ibid). In interview Lacy doesn't define which part of the performative structure was art and which organising. It is my hunch that a work like *International Dinner Party* walks a line that manages to redefine these categories anew. The performance, involving over 2000 women in events that would be both distinctive to each context and yet collective, delivers something with political specificity and yet enough general appeal to evoke a large collectivity. This tightrope between political specificity and mythic capacity is a line Lyon identifies the manifesto as needing to walk. Lacy plays the role of outsider to mainstream media perspectives yet she is also a host bringing together multiple others in a process of disidentification with 'global male directed space'. As host Lacy stresses that hospitality is an essential part of the work's politics, being the element that ensures people feel comfortable, coming to a situation feeling 'engaged, honoured, respected for their part in the whole' (Ibid, p.84).

Nevertheless where food is concerned Lacy retains an ambivalence. When asked to describe a favourite story for *Feast* Lacy chooses instead to speak about a moment teaching in the Feminist Studio in 1974 when students performed at a long white table a Last Supper, feminist style:

> 'things began to get more and more heated. One woman kept shoving oatmeal gruel down the face of a mask of herself (situated in a large bottle). Another smashed chocolate candies with a hammer, one at a time. Each candy was embedded with glass and nails, etc. Another kept pouring herself tequila shots

until she was completely drunk, threw off her clothes and sprayed whipped cream all over herself. It was a cacophony of rage and pain.' (Ibid)

As well as the organising it is also this acute awareness of an underlying chorus of rage and pain that separates Lacy's practice from those of the 1990s, gathered together under the term, coined by Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (1998). In an extensive critique of Bourriand's reduction of art as a social encounter to a kind of one-dimensional conviviality Helena Reckitt notes that 'feminist analysis of how certain tasks, objects and people are rewarded and others devalued' is the vital and 'forgotten relation' suppressed in 'successive accounts of relational art'. Reckitt continues:

> 'The emphasis on conviviality in relational aesthetics that Bishop critiques is problematic in feminist terms because it ignores the antipathy and ambivalence of women in their stereotypical, feminized roles, as well as that of affective workers, to the expectation that they supply service with a smile.' (Reckitt 2013, p.141)

Once this ambivalence is suppressed, social practice becomes something the market can use, a product for a baffled audience that feel a little like they have entered the party too late, lagging behind some form of collective participation.[17] As relational aesthetics such practice feels detached from the organising politics that had previously structured it. This surface celebration of convivial forms fails to understand the complexity of hospitality, or its political potential as a reimagined form.

Backstage Temporality and Constant Care

Writing in response to *Feast* on the politics of hosting culture, Jan Verwoert concentrates on the social time flows that go into organising events as an 'offstage' temporality. He describes a 'temporal horizon' that is a labour of 'constant care' involving 'sustained social communication, preparation, administration, and maintenance' that is long term, durational and unspectacular:

> 'Many small acts (emails, phone calls, etc.) eventually add up to something. But

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[17] Reckitt quotes curator Bettina Funcke, for one, who felt confused about which role the viewer was supposed to play - an accomplice, a piece of decoration, or an equal participant..I often had the sense that I had missed the central event, that I had arrived "after the party" as it were' (Reckitt, p.140).

in themselves they are too many, too unspectacular, and too extended over time to be convertible into the theatrical logic of onstage delivery. The award ceremony organizer is hardly ever the prize winner.' (Jan Verwoert, 2013 p.361)

These many small acts of communication and care allow trust to form, which is the basis of collaboration. Writing on Wochenklausur's social art practice and more particularly their contribution to *ECONOMY* (2013) the exhibition curator Kirsten Lloyd emphasises this particular aspect of their practice. Lloyd's analysis focused particularly on *Participatory Economics* (2013), a business proposal to work with a group of disenfranchised women in the economically depressed area of Drumchapel, Glasgow to set up a fruit and vegetable cooperative. Through this example she described how the group formed a 'caring infrastructure' in public, performing pragmatic engagement, administrative negotiation, fund-raising and networking. Lloyd notes 'in this sense the "subject" Wochenklausur tackle is none other that the one produced through disempowerment: internalised disempowerment guaranteed to crystallize as an inability to proceed to even reformist (let alone, revolutionary) action' (Lloyd, 2015, p.147). Yet somehow the approach to this 'subject', in this case, women in Drumchapel, is somewhat indirect. Lloyd describes Wochenklausur's labour 'performed - in the main - in front of laptops set up in temporary offices (in this case a converted artists studio), in the virtual spaces of the internet or through telephone' (Ibid, p.151). These many small acts seem to set up the architecture of a creative project with ease, building connections between existing agencies, in this case Drumchapel L.I.F.E, accruing knowledge on business models and securing the support of local actors including politicians. The group count their outsider status as an advantage, bringing a different perspective that can catalyse action for social change, offering something additional to the local context. For Lloyd this additional element can be analysed through a consideration of feminist care ethics which draws into focus various affective components in the work that are occluded in current critical discourse on social practice. Referencing Virgina Held (2006), Lloyd espouses care ethics as departing from the particular point of interpersonal relationships, rather than universalised ethical rules and principles. She highlights important qualities like attentiveness, openness, directedness, empathetic responsiveness and emotional sensitivity.[18] Through the lens of care Lloyd argues it is possible to see the 'substantive emotional, psychological, somatic and care orientated facets of contemporary artwork' that the focus on 'communication,

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[18] Arguably Joan Tronto's (1994) work on the radical *political* potential of care is also particularly relevant to this context.

negotiation, information and knowledge production' (Ibid, p.144) make less clear. Lloyd argues that in order to succeed Wochenklausur must generate trust with a broad range of people in an accelerated timescale. Within this process artists appear in a constant state of active listening, projecting an image of openness and responsiveness to the needs and interests of all parties. This additional, inspiring quality is apparently in excess of financial motivations, which are themselves obscured by the complexities of art world invitation and commissioning systems that secure artists' practices. Constantly inspiring, Wochenklasur are a kind of driving force, willing projects into existence through a mixture of caring diplomacy and altruism. Lloyd argues that this performance of a responsive encounter is something required by art world spectatorship:

> 'I want to suggest that the old-fashioned "spectator", rather than the trendier "participant" is ultimately addressed when a narrative of care is stitched together, performed and pictured by means of the document.' (Ibid, p.155)

Lloyd describes this labour as a process of subjectification that is not simply something participants in social practice undergo, but a process that shapes the artist's personality through the intensive, affective nature of the work.[19] Verwoert also relates an unspoken power relation between the two positions of backstage and centre so that 'the sensitivities of those who host the social relate to the assumptions of those who perform it' (Lloyd, 2015, p.147). To Lloyd, Wochenklausur are invited guests, who largely play host to the desires of spectatorship culture. What is more this labour, performed in response to audience desires, goes largely unnoticed within outcome-based narratives and dialogic frameworks. If dialogue can be related to equality of exchange, Lloyd highlights the lack of equality, not only in Wochenklasur's meeting with participants in Drumchapel but also in their meeting with the ultimately exploitative terms of spectatorship.

While Lloyd explores this hidden power dynamic between the demands of art world spectatorship and the artist, Verwoert extends this conception of backstage temporality through a considered look at Virginia Woolf's treatment of the subject in *To The Lighthouse* (1927) where, through the figure of Mrs Ramsey and her own writing, Woolf

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[19] In relation to *Participatory Economics* Lloyd registers a somewhat fragile process of interaction with women in Drumchapel who were envisioned as the core of the project. For example the women offer some resistance to taking on leading roles, perceiving the project as another scheme to supplement unemployment benefit. This resistance is registered by Lloyd as a possible survival mechanism employed by the women which meant the project required constant institutional mediation.

lays out 'a scenario of exemplary hospitality' (Verwoert, 2013, p.361). In Woolf's fiction of 'sheer social time' Mrs Ramsey is the angel of the house holding the very fabric of the social together through a 'constant invisible labour' that 'renders the inspired conviviality possible' (Ibid). Woolf ghosts this act of ever-attentive hosting in her writing, which tends tirelessly to the cast of characters, laying out an environment through language in which they can act. Woolf's plot reveals a significant paradox, being everywhere, extending her care ceaselessly to every social detail, Mrs. Ramsey is also nowhere. Like a nightcleaner she is spread thin, her contours fading. Hospitality, it seems, is like the host, invisible to the cast it supports. Absent by being present in every aspect, it performs a deception, masking its own labour in social engineering so that interaction appears effortless. It is in this aspect, painted as self-sacrificing altruism, that Verwoert reads ambivalence on the part of Woolf who simultaneously honours the beating heart of the household, mother and host and betrays her, making her labours visible. In a speech to the London and National Society for Women's Service in 1931, later translated into the essay *Professions for Women*, Woolf, standing on the edge between a traditional and modern world that we are arguably still transitioning from, makes this betrayal apparent:

> 'In those days – the last of Queen Victoria – every house had its Angel. And when I came to write I encountered her with the first words. The shadow of her wings fell upon my page; I heard the rustling of her skirts in the room.. I turned upon her and caught her by the throat. I did my best to kill her. My excuse, if I were to be in a court of law, would be that I acted in self-defence. Had I not killed her she would have killed me. She would have plucked the heart out of my writing. For as I found directly I put pen to paper, you cannot review even a novel, without having a mind of your own'. (Woolf and Barrett, 2001, p.57-63)

In this we see the transgressive nature of Woolf's action. She performs a form of mimetic doubling in the text: playing host to the host. Yet she is also, as Derrida frames it, hostile. Becoming Irigaray, she breaks the rules: representing the act that should stay outwith the bounds of representation. Through Mrs Ramsey Woolf gives the angel of the house a form and a name and then introduces an internal gap into the narrative. Mrs Ramsey is killed off, in a plot twist that reveals her role in everything, leaving the male protagonist, her husband, at sea, lost to his own thoughts.

Pussy Riot: Image courtesy of Creative Commons.

Conclusions

Virgin Mary, Mother of god
Become a feminist, we pray thee

(Pussy Riot, 2012)

Derrida plays the foreigner who enters into a strange culture to suggest something revolutionary – that 'only those who have endured the experience of being deprived a home can offer hospitality'. Derrida suggests that this outsiders' hospitality has the potential to turn things upside down and could be seen as a feminist manifesto. By suggesting this parallel the section posits that the manifesto too is a kind of foreigner, who will suggest things in 'an odd sort of language', an apparently plain speech that breaks with elaborate and established legal terminology to suggest an unthought history. It has been the work of this section to understand what type of hospitality it is that this foreign guest offers, performing hospitality from an uncertain space where difference can never be fully resolved. It is a hospitality that comes from a place of loss and that takes a risk to share this vulnerability. It is a responsive hospitality that moves, restructuring the relationships between things as it goes. In restructuring it hides hostility within apparently convivial forms.

As well as recognising the rich potential in social practice to reimagine hosting in a revolutionary way, this section has also approached critique of what exists. In exploring this form of affirmative relational hosting the analysis meets and comes into conflict with other definitions of hospitality. More specifically it comes into contact with hospitality as an invisible theatre and occupation that makes itself into an unthought, repressed history in spectatorship culture. Writing on hospitality, Irina Aristarkhova (2012) also seeks to reclaim hospitality as a feminist concept offering a parallel reading of hospitality and the maternal.[20] Approaching Levinas' and Derrida's descriptions of hospitality Aristarkhova advocates an account that could examine hospitality's 'unthought foundation, that is, its grounding in the maternal relation and as specific acts of hospitality' (Ibid, p.163). Through this examination Aristarkhova targets a similar angel to that which Woolf and differently Ostojić take on: that 'bloodless, effortless hospitality of the passive, ephemeral, welcoming smile' (Ibid, p.172), arguing that 'the endless insistence on her to remain silent, discreet, to understand without words and to welcome effortlessly, to almost become the walls of the house, of interiority, is what problematizes the possibility of hospitality' (Ibid). In line with this insistence that we don't forgot specific acts of hospitality this section has tried to describe the material practices of hospitality as performed in various art practices: the organising, cooking, cleaning, networking, caring and making safe that goes into creating holding space. In attending to these material forms it is possible to perceive of a line between practices that remember and perform hospitality consciously and those that forget.

Aristarkova's account provides a list of characteristics that could be seen as belonging within both definitions of hosting: receptivity, being open to whatever comes, discretion, that suggests you not me, and intimacy, which relates to 'an absolute defenselessness, a conscious and enjoyable vulnerability' (Ibid, p.165). Finally, Aristarkhova lists recollection, a kind of internal core that relates to the idea of language as kind of hospitality. This core holds a memory of being welcomed, a particular feeling as 'a recollection of the first hospitality' (Ibid, p.166). In approaching memory we enter into Ross' territory, tracing through *Valentine* an invocation of the very maternal space that Aristarkhova argues has been forgotten. As Beech records, the connection between femininity and hospitality has been perceived as natural, leading feminist thinkers to either turn away from it or, as Aristarkova argues Derrida does, avoid charges of

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[20] Aristarkhova quotes Derrida as claiming that the foundational status of femininity within hospitality should lead to 'a sort of feminist manifesto' yet she also puts forward a quarrel with Derrida's abstraction of femininity from the material conditions of women and more particularly mothers (Aristarkhova, 2012, p.170).

essentialism by turning femininity into a mobile term, an abstraction disassociated from the actual labour of hospitality performed by real people and often by the mother of the household, the invisible Mrs Ramsey.

Nevertheless, Ross seems to insist that the angel of the house can be reimagined as the stranger within (Kristeva, 1991). Ross' 'unnamed house' is a far cry from Woolf's household; Ross describes a kind of revolutionary intimacy between people whereas Woolf's angel is forever withdrawing, exhausted. Instead Ross describes a connection between women, in a kitchen maybe, that when made public suggests something ambiguous that we might have forgotten. This ambiguity is in an encounter not based on property, the order of things. To recognise this is to deconstruct hospitality's tangled relationship to property, a genealogy that starts from ownership and consequently excludes women, who historically have been owned rather than owning. This deconstruction suggests that whilst we remain proprietorial about our knowledge other possibilities for giving and having remain unthought and unacknowledged. Can we imagine a different genealogy for hospitality that is not based on dispossession? If it exists would it be something in a different, affirmative tradition that nevertheless has a strong historical memory? Aristarkhova argues also for an alternative tradition, a 'hospitality that has a direct and radical relationship to ownership calls for acknowledgment and power from the maternal point of view' (Ibid, p.175). She continues that hospitality is about preparation, intention and expectancy, actions that complicate 'the reduction of the mother into a passive container that merely provides space for generation' (Ibid). In this formulation hospitality is performative, there is labour in decision making and dealing with unexpected outcomes. To let others be, become, breathe, requires work. I have tried to acknowledge this work, as it takes place and is made visible in art practices, to see how art *works* as communication. In doing this, my writing traces multiple encounters with another tradition, working towards undoing property, playing out the too often unthought politics of feminist social practice.

With Hospitality

Introduction

This research has been interested in exploring and articulating a history of feminism in social art practice. Alongside this it has looked to articulate how a manifesto functions as a feminist form, offering an expanded definition by drawing it in relation to a number of contemporary art practices. To do this the theoretical section has reimagined hospitality along feminist lines as a revolutionary language that the foreigner brings. This section will develop these theoretical perspectives on hospitality through a sustained engagement with artistic practice and the development of a curatorial methodology based on feminist definitions of hospitality. From this core orientation the section describes a methodology which adapts the techniques and approach adopted by artist Marysia Lewandowska, who in compiling the Women's Audio Archive offers not only a resource for feminist histories of social practice but also a social practice methodology. Lewandowska inhabits the position of outsider as revolutionary foreigner, her strange sort of language operates by seeking out conversations around the metaphor of the missing text. In this way she offers a holding space for disidentification. In relation to this vulnerable, embedded, conversational and hospitable archive, the section approaches a number of contexts through questions around hidden narratives and missing histories, finally repositioning hospitality as an invisible theatre that often participates in its own erasure from the records.

Strange Political Truths and Missing Histories

In conversation with activist, filmmaker and curator Claudine Dannequin, Marysia Lewandowska describes conversation as 'a wish for the future' (Lewandowska 1986 , WAA. 003). The statement, uttered within one of the earliest recordings, reveals an interest at the core of the archive, in conversation as a different cultural form. For Lewandowska, positioned both as guest and host within the archive structure and on the move between several alien cultural contexts, it is also a navigational tool, allowing the artist to gain a relational understanding of her present circumstances. The combination of discussions around feminist praxis, the emphasis on conversation, so central to contemporary conceptions of social practice, and the interest in exploring art

'beyond the gallery' suggested WAA as an important source for research.[21] The archive contains many views on feminism, art history and social practice in myriad forms. These conversations and recorded talks offered a resource for articulating an absent feminist narrative in critical debates on socially engaged practice. I initially went to the archive for interviews with feminist artists like Jenny Holzer, who is pivotal also for her relationship to the manifesto form, and other important artists working collaboratively and in different social settings. As I spent time with the archive listening to both the unedited public talks and the personal conversations, originally recorded for private use and with permission for their current public status online negotiated over 20 years later, the realisation emerged that the voices provided a methodology for my research as well as a basis to understand collaborative practice.[22] Online, the normally unrecorded conversational elements, which are often personal spaces for working things out, interact with the public talks revealing the interconnectedness and influence of one on the other. In this way the archive presents the conversation as an unacknowledged cultural form, a less visible feminist history that emerges in dialogue.

In relation to the manifesto concern with repressed histories Lewandowska shows a concern for elements that seem to go missing from what is sometimes referred to as the 'main text', which the artist perceives to be almost violent in its demand for coherence (WAA. 050).[23] There is also a sense that the archive is born out of a struggle for the artist to understand and reach a necessarily relational position within new cultural circumstances. Lewandowska consciously points out her exiled status, her otherness within the particular culture she speaks to and a sense of alienation; she sits between East and West, between knowledge of a failed socialist state and the shock of encountering an equally difficult capitalist culture. She differentiates between an interview and a conversation, with the latter being less about finding something out and more about finding out how to be with. She occupies Deleuze and Guattari's (1986) minor position turning her feelings of alienation into a reaching for a new expression of

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[21] Discussions on leaving the art world appear in many of the recordings but particularly 'art beyond the gallery' is discussed with a number of people including Deanna Pether and James Lingwood in recordings WAA.035–035.

[22] In the context of the archive the term 'private' has two meanings: it refers to the public recordings 'for private use' and to the personal, confessional nature of some of the conversations. In a confessional respect, Lewandowska's one-to-one conversations with artist Anna Gronau, as well as with photographer Nan Goldin and filmmaker Jane Weinstock are particularly striking. In conversation with artist Lani Maestro and poet Marlene Nourbese Philip the personal level of the discussions shows deep creative connections forming between speakers that could lead to further collaborations.

political collectivity (About Hospitality, p.27). Lewandowska repeatedly identifies a gap or crack that she is situated precariously and disruptively within. This precariousness is related to both her experiential position and the sense that she is missing an inherited tradition. She confesses to writer and film producer Jane Weinstock that:

> 'I guess I feel inadequate. It comes from under the skin, it really starts as a troubling notion and I think that notion is in relation to how one secures one's own texts.' (WAA.050)

She goes on to describe this missing element in the same conversation:

> 'I have this kind of visual image of the missing text being this whole structure of positions and voices and commitments to a certain way of living, being and producing that is largely invisible but kind of holds and props up the main text.' (Ibid)

Lewandowska's conception of the missing text is in some senses equivalent to Janet Lyon's conception of the unthought histories manifestos are concerned with bringing to light. In WAA these unthought, outsider histories, are reconfigured through the figure of the foreigner, speaking a strange sort of language, within a host culture. Lewandowska points to the contingent nature of the 'main text', which is held up by these excluded, invisible positions 'so that without that the main or present text would not survive' (Ibid). It is the contingency of the main text, which draws both support and its identity from the invisible positions it excludes, that gives her the potential to be disruptive. This disruptiveness, imagined through the conversational form, anticipates Derrida's realisation that the possibility of hospitality is inextricably bound to notions of hostility. Guests sit ambiguously in the framework of hospitality, having the potential to disrupt the order of insides and outsides through their positioning. Lewandowska uses the metaphor of moving in the cracks, as a way of becoming visible, and consequently making monuments and canons less stable. This metaphor of the crack, more often than not associated with weakness, is turned around by the artist, becoming a strength. In WAA Lewandowska moves between positions in contemporary art and further afield asking people to express their own conceptions of what is missing. This question allows the artist to construct a relational support network through the premise of the archive, the making of which becomes a social practice methodology. Lewandowska crafts a poetic language from her precarious position asserting:

'the social and historical circumstances that place you in that gap yourself – that asks you to deal with life from that position – it can be poetic as a notion.' (Ibid)

As I navigated the archive I also perceived it as enacting a political tactic that Lyon and Butler register is part of a productive process of disidentification with mainstream positions. For Lyon the manifesto form is a catalyst for this process of disidentification, acting as a kind of go-between that links up various subjectivities, excluded from mainstream narratives and political representation, to produce a difference. If Lewandowska's action in WAA can be understood as producing a similar go-between effect then it is important to note that she he does not begin by asserting a 'we' as a given, as in the case with traditional manifestos, but tentatively asks questions of it, asserting that manifestos are relationally produced as well as producing relations. This could be read as a feminist contribution to manifesto politics, troubling the notion of collective subjectivity without abandoning the need for political collaborations. Where the manifesto could be said to create relational solidarity by assuming a 'we', Lewandowska does not make that assumption. Instead, through imperfect conversational voice inter-subjective solidarity becomes a flickering temporal process that persistently asks questions around lack.

In the light of realisations around the political position of WAA as a disruptive and supportive network for the artist, hospitable and hostile, I became interested in a form of research that could take into account the original contexts for the archive and mirror this process by continuing to ask for definitions of missing texts – initiating conversations that would give me a relational position and enable me to not only write about social practice but perform aspects of these practices.

A Conversational Methodology

This methodology led me to contact the research-based curatorial collective Tiffany Boyle and Jessica Carden, who, under the name Mother Tongue, approach questions of cultural amnesia, language and diaspora, through an exhibition practice often concerned with issues of migration and the corresponding definitions of home that accompany these. As well as inevitably touching on notions of hospitality through their exploration of diaspora, the nature of their practice reveals a restless preoccupation with the

problem of excluded histories. Their work teases out the relationship between nationalist or indigenous subject positions and the moving outsiders who threaten to disrupt the coherence of those identities. This relationship is expressed through an exhibition strategy that not only asks questions about exclusions that exist in mainstream narratives but also moves through a reconsideration of the exclusions their own practice generates. For example, like a call and response, one of their early collaborations, the artists' film and video screening *Double Distance* (2011), a programme that references the writings of Paul Gilroy in relation to exploration into navigational routes across oceans, prompted the later exhibition *Germans, Speak German* (2012) which focused on those who stay at home or are prevented from travelling. In interview the duo explain that after *Double Distance*:

> 'we felt unsatisfied, that "excluded" from this project (Double Distance) were overland trade routes, landlocked nations, those who can't move'. (Mother Tongue, personal correspondence by email, January 2014)

In this way via the self-reflexive preoccupation with exclusion and bringing to light less visible narratives their practice spoke very directly to the question of missing texts raised by Lewandowska's archive. In writing on Afrofuturism, Mother Tongue note that it is necessary to reconsider the manner in which we think of historical and contemporary black cultural production, to revisit Toni Morrison's assertion that African slaves and their descendants were the first to experience the founding conditions of modernity, identified by Nietzsche as homelessness, alienation and abduction. Rather than being peripheral or lagging behind majority positions in modernity, Morrison asserts a neglected foundational understanding drawn from black history. They also explore the paradoxical invisibility and apparently transcendent quality of dominant narratives, which are positioned as universal rather than coming from a particular position. I was interested in placing Mother Tongue's exploration of both minor and invisible positions in main texts alongside my own interest in missing texts in order to generate intersectional perspectives.

Revisiting *Two Invisible Case Studies*, Malmö Konsthall
Maud Sulter & Oladélé Ajiboyé Bamgboyé. Image courtesy of MT.

I encountered Mother Tongue's practice through research I had undertaken as part of the AHRC-funded Glasgow School of Art project *Materials for Alternative Histories,* which supported several strands of research into and around the creation of an archive out of many accumulating materials from the history of the Centre for Contemporary Art in Glasgow, stretching back to its beginnings as the Third Eye Centre.[24] I was aware of work they had undertaken as part of this research to articulate a missing history of black artists' work absent from the white Scottish 'Glasgow Miracle' narrative that had accompanied a generation of hugely successful Glasgow based-artists.[25] In the CCA archive Mother Tongue had uncovered work by artists Maud Sulter and Oladélé Ajiboyé Bamgboyé which they represented, in a commission by Prawn's Pee (Rebecca Wilcox & Oliver Pitt) as part of the exhibition *What We Have Done, What We Are About To Do* (2012) held at the CCA. In 2014 after they had expanded the original exhibition concept to include a publication and further exhibition, at the Malmö Konsthall, Sweden, Mother Tongue joined me for a research event. They described a process where after encountering Sulter and Bamgboyé's work they began to think about these two artists 'both tied to Glasgow and very successful outwith Glasgow or even Scotland' within the remit of the *Materials for Alternative Histories* project, framing what they saw as a 'fading presence' or invisibility within narratives around Glasgow. These thoughts led to

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[24] http://glasgowmiracle.blogspot.co.uk/p/about-project.html
[25] Mythology around the term 'Glasgow miracle' locates its first use by curator Hans Ulrich Obrist to describe the ascent made by Glasgow artists in the 1990s, built upon a steady flow of activity from the 1970s at least. In a way the miracle narrative was as much a tool for success as it was a trace with many Glasgow-based artists going on to win the Turner prize in the decade following, particularly between 2005 and 2011, arguably with the help of the cultural capital the city accrued in the wake of the narrative.

an exhibition of the works found in the archive and an essay released halfway though the show.

The essay was a textual voice next to photographic elements, described evocatively as items 'brought out of shadowy boxes into the light, lens-based media that speak to the etymology of photography as drawing images with light' (Mother Tongue personal correspondence by email, January 2014). While part of the exhibition revolved around making something previously absent present, the text marks an absence, creating a crack by expressing a historical process of whitewashing that had accompanied the miracle narrative and gone previously unnoticed. In this way Mother Tongue make a double movement. This is mirrored in the title of the essay, which comes in two parts: *The White Aesthetic Necessitated by the 'Glasgow Miracle'*, *Two Invisible Case Studies*. (MotherTongue, 2013) With reference to Douglas Gordon and others, the essay lays out an argument for the 'knitting together' conceptually and socially of artists in the miracle story and for the strength artists gained from these relationships.

These sentiments echo Griselda Pollock in the WAA where she attests to the social nature of art production (WAA. 057). From an outsider perspective Mother Tongue point out that this knitting together works also by exclusion, exploring the 'slippery commonalities' that led to the characterisation of a particular aesthetic, a kind of 'poetic conceptualism' that was related both historically to Scotland through precedents for interlinking art and ideas, dating from the enlightenment, and also through certain stereotypes relating to ideas of Scottish thrift, understatement and a dry humour. Mother Tongue argue that it is the interlinking of the aesthetic and cultural that leads the ethnically white nature of the 'Glasgow Miracle' to go unremarked:

> 'There is no need to note the lack of diversity as the aesthetic of the work is absolutely white, and therefore demands – of course – that the artists producing it are white themselves.' (Ibid)

Furthermore, they are eager to point out the effect of such histories on the contemporary moment, arguing a system founded on exclusion has no room in the present for work that does not fit within the parameters of the marked aesthetic. The essay asserts that it is not about blaming individuals or a single gang of artists but an attempt to explore how systemic exclusion works as 'a recurring cycle of events,

expectations and oversights, in which curators, galleries, boards, funding bodies, etc are all implicated'. (Mother Tongue, 2013)

Where the writing points towards a certain failure Mother Tongue also admit to flaws in the original construction of the essay, which when released as part of the CCA exhibition was met with silence. They describe a process of moving back and forth, in and out of the archive to develop the exhibition and be self-reflexive about their initial responses. Part of this movement took a conversational form, inviting four different voices to feedback in a revised essay for the larger, Malmö exhibition.[26] In this way Mother Tongue show a commitment to producing research that remains open and evolving through time as well as in conversation with the contexts they participate in. Even after the essay's final publication Mother Tongue still express a desire to revisit. This desire could be seen to play out Lewandowska's metaphor of a 'missing text' they continue to move towards. In this case the missing text would be more extensive exhibitions around Bamgboyé and Sulter's work and another reframing of the essay in light of the interviewees' input, working on their perspective over time. I was interested in thinking on Mother Tongue's curatorial strategy as something akin to a manifesto, expressing a desire to act on the present moment through a consideration of historical omissions. It also displayed similarities with feminist adaptations of the form being conversational, critically self-reflexive, on the move and open to failure.

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[26] Interviews were conducted with artists Ross Sinclair and Graham Fagen, art historian Neil Mulholland, and PhD researcher Emma Balkind.

Exhibition view from *A thousand of him Scattered,* Stills Gallery, featuring
Significant Others (1993) Maud Sulter. Silver-gelatin print and hand-written chalk. Image
courtesy of Mother Tongue.

Nomadic Practice

The interviews in the reconstituted essay show an underlying commitment to the
question: *what constitutes collective memory?* The work on the *White Aesthetic* traces a
historical process and registers, through analysis, the impossibility of slotting certain
artists into a given, inhospitable history. Yet they do not work only as impartial
recording devices, the work is also an attempt to intervene in the constitution of
historical memory to change things in the present moment, and allow an opening for
other types of artwork. In email correspondence they directed me towards the work of
Mathieu Kleyebe Abonnenc who is involved in his own research on a missing 'text', the
lost feature length film of pioneering French filmmaker Sarah Maldoror's *Guns for Banta*
(1970). The film, which depicts the life and untimely death of Awa, a countrywoman
involved in the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, is a
catalyst for Abonnenc to question and approach images of past revolutionary moments
and to think about the unifying spirit of these moments from outsider perspectives. In
his bibliographic information Abonnenc has something to say about collective memory:

'Many objects constitute a collective memory.. Each of these elements needs to be constantly renegotiated in order to discover contemporary conflicts, vis-a-vis the construction of an identity, a community, a nation, and allow for the time to reinvent artistic and political action.' (Abonnenc)

In some senses Mother Tongue also perform a restless renegotiation of historical memory. Their practice imagines the exhibition space as a site with multiple narratives, visual, poetic and textual, unfolding like a dialogue through time and in response to other exhibitions. The curatorial impulse to place different things alongside each other that can add depth to an argument in a non-linear way is explained as research that is 'more compelling in every sense than if we had simply written about it' (MT, personal correspondence by email, January 2014). They are not only concerned with movement but, in renegotiating more hospitable encounters, they employ a kind of moving curatorial strategy. Their exhibitions are in process, changing through time with the release of essays and publications and developing in new contexts. While their joint practice often involves travel, the foundation of their initial collaboration is also built upon an exchange between places, suggested by the commonalities in their separate research practices in the very different geographies of Northern Scandinavia and West Africa. This travelling methodology is in keeping with the questions they ask of diasporic imagination. Beyond this Mother Tongue are hosts, providing exhibition spaces for the diasporic imagination. Their method speaks to the politics of hospitality by showing a concern for thresholds and remaining open to other perspectives, allowing different things to sit side by side, skin to skin.

To some extent it is their position as *freelance* curators that allows them to ask such pertinent questions of the politics of collective identity construction, which as they note is tied up with systems and institutions. As part of the research event in Aberdeen Mother Tongue agreed to speak also on their curatorial practice to undergraduate students at Gray's School of Art (Audio Archive, HW. 001). In email correspondence about the nature of their curatorial practice, including the visible and invisible nature of hosting, I posed question around their curatorial methodology. They were at first reluctant, remarking:

'We can of course never be invisible - we are always embedded in the projects in different ways - we just don't want to announce our presence.' (Mother Tongue in email correspondence, January 2014)

Given this, the Gray's talk was a moment of exception, brought about by their willingness to enter into a conversation with me. Rather than producing a straightforward success narrative that would give students an idea of their practice through a list of completed exhibitions and publications, the pair performed a double process. Carden spoke on exhibitions and collaborations, producing a neat chronology of practice, evolving out of a core set of concerns around language, translation, cultural amnesia, indigenousness and collective memory. In contrast Boyle took on the more painful task of approaching their curatorial failures. This second aspect to the talk listed the less visible aspects of their practice, the numerous failed project proposals, which involve them in a strange occupation of speculative future time that often stutters or doesn't unfold. [27]Added to this frank admission of failure Boyle's presentation revealed the precarious nature of their work in what could be considered the institutional cracks, including the lack of funding for curatorial work outwith institutional support, which often saw their fees absorbed into project overheads or their time not acknowledged at all by regional funding structures. Curating from this perspective is likened to a kind of emotional labour or process of care, which, with the exception of a few curatorial stars, is otherwise systemically overlooked and undervalued. As Kirsten Lloyd notes in writing on *ECONOMY* (2013), the labour of care is positioned as an excess, beyond the need for remuneration. Even for those curators who make it out into the light the nature of curatorial work is often glamorised as a process of authoring, a kind of conceptual work that leaves much of the painstaking labour of hospitality in the shadows. Mother Tongue offered insights into curatorial politics in and outside the institution as part of a process of demystification that they hoped would be useful for students and in response to my feminist concerns. It offered a complication to the smooth narrative of interesting projects, which when delivered to Gray's undergraduate students would have an excluding coherence. To say that although this narrative offers a useful perspective, something is possibly lost in translation, the intervention is in a way a crippled form, a way of remaining open to the context by admitting to failure as well as success.

What plays out in my approach to Mother Tongue is a relational strategy that also works throughout this thesis. This could be seen as a placing *alongside* which is of course also a curatorial strategy. Using Lewandowska's metaphorical evocation of missing history I

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[27] Boyle estimated perhaps fifty or more rejected applications, revealing a huge amount of labour that could be seen as the 'dark matter' within their own practice, stalled before reaching the light of day (Sholette, 2010).

wanted to test its generative possibilities as well as its potential to create a conversational holding space. In doing this two things are important, first, getting in touch with Mother Tongue I had no pre-defined agenda for our conversation. My interest was defined as an exploration of a territory, the context of the conversation was around their practice's identification with the term missing history. In this way the research methodology dovetails that taken up by many artists in social practice, who don't define projects in advance, but are open in their approach creating context-specific responses. Importantly, in creating the encounter there is no assertion that we have identical concerns. Early on in our conversation Mother Tongue were keen to distance themselves from 'socially engaged practice', arguing that as a category it produces a kind of outside so that other practices are defined, in opposition, as *not* socially engaged. In response to this they ask a similar question to the one posed by Monica Ross' descriptions in *Valentine* (2000) – why can't a painting on a gallery wall be socially engaged? Despite this acknowledged distance I made the unsure, exploratory suggestion that we may have things in common. In Ahmed's terms then, this seeking out of an encounter is not one that rejects or assimilates difference, instead it could be defined in relation to Chu's description as 'a process of calibrative interplay with others and otherness' that produces possible realignments and new relational understandings (Chu, 2013, p.170). My conservation with Mother Tongue proved to be an extremely generative encounter, leading to collaboration on a number of other projects, including an invitation to be part of Curating Europe's Futures (2014-15) for a number of relevant events and the research collective Invisible Knowledge (2016) group, based at CCA (With Archive, p.24). It is credit to both the methodology and the openness of Mother Tongue that these later collaborations were possible.

From the SCAN series with David Blyth, Alana Jelinek and Petra Tjsike Kalshoven. Image courtesy of Manual Bauer.

Hospitality from where you are lost

I expanded on this relational, associative work through a commission from the Scottish Contemporary Arts Network (SCAN, 2006-2016) to curate a series of encounters that would focus on innovative practice in North East Scotland. The brief was to provide a platform for discussions around independent curating in the region - relationships with power, institutions, artists and audiences. The events were aimed at highlighting innovative local practice that could be placed into conversation with similar international practices. Given this suggestion of exchange between different contexts, through artistic practice, I felt it would be appropriate for the series to be on the theme of hospitality and meeting with difference. In moving to Aberdeenshire I was struck by the rich combination of incoming perspectives, able to speak of perceptions of north from different geographies (perhaps reflecting Norwegian author Steffan Søren's assertion that oil cities are immigration cities) and rooted understandings of place that came from a lifelong creative engagement with the area. [28] Given these two perspectives the SCAN objective to pair innovative local practice with similar international examples seemed fitting. In this context I hoped the events could be meeting spaces and contribute to an exchange between different positions occupying the same geography.

[28] Steffan Søren gave his perspective on oil cities at a seminar organised by Aberdeen University on the subject in November 2014.

As well as acknowledging the complexity of Aberdeen as an immigration city and also my own position as outsider, I also wanted to ask questions about perceptions of northern landscapes as inhospitable environments.

I wanted to produce situated events that were responsive to the overall context of the North East and grew out of an extensive period of research that would include dialogue with the multiple support structures that existed in the area. I approached these conversations in line with my research methodology, testing the proposition that the guest may be in the best position to offer hospitality. I emphasised my status as an outsider in the context, looking to find a relational position and also to ask questions about perceived gaps in the landscape. This approach led me to the question of northern creativity and a number of institutional agendas seeking to offer definitions that would put Aberdeenshire 'on the map' (Cockburn, 2014). As a relative newcomer, navigating from within the situation, I initiated conversations in an open way, which did not cover over the uncertain position that I occupied in relation to the question of northern creativity. I tried to approach the question in a social way with the understanding that terms like northern are always relational definitions, formed by personal positioning. In this, I acknowledged the politics of memory, as Lewandowska does extensively within her archive (WAA. 013), describing the importance of personal histories carried around, hidden from view, inevitably colouring what is on view. In a curatorial statement on personal history I used Danish/ Greenlandic artist Pia Arke's practice, which I knew of through both Mother Tongue's research and the work of feminists collective Kuratorisk Aktion, as an example for its foregrounding of what she terms the 'little history' that exists within 'big histories' (2012). Furthermore, I wanted the events to acknowledge the politics of place, in relation to understandings of the Glasgow Miracle narrative, and of place making as an activity that could produce exclusionary narratives that sacrifice complexity for coherence. I offered the paradoxical suggestion that Aberdeen could allow itself to be defined by the multiple others that it plays host to. Through this methodology, playing around with my own status as both guest and host in the SCAN framework, I was hoping to produce a curatorial strategy that would operate from a grounded feminist and social perspective so that even when events were not openly positioned as feminist they would be linked by an underlying approach.

One narrative that came out of Aberdeenshire clearly was the idea that northern creativity was a missing history in Scottish accounts of culture that were primarily focused on the 'central belt' (Glasgow and Edinburgh). Next to these narratives,

creativity in the region was perceived as hidden, leaving practitioners without institutional support and funding from national organisations. The self-confessed outsider status of Aberdeen gave me the opportunity to introduce an unexpected connection between the region and feminist perspectives, initiating a curatorial discussion around feminist responses to the problem of representation and the difficult material conditions it creates. I invited Adele Patrick, creative director at Glasgow Women's Library, to speak on her tireless work to achieve greater representation for female artists, particularly by spearheading the *Women in Profile* campaign in the nineties, when the mainstream 'city of culture' narrative was exclusively male. Through the *Women in Profile* (1990) initiative Patrick was involved in projects like *Castlemilk Womanhouse* (1990), which looked beyond conventional institutional support systems to locate art in different places (With Archives, pp.34-42). Through these early campaigns in GWL's genealogy there was both an articulation of missing history and an acknowledgement of the invisible, hospitable support works that makes creativity possible. Patrick's description of starting up the Women's Library was nothing if not manifesto-like – including an almost lunatic sense of ambition that led the initial collective to dream big, calling themselves The Scottish Women's Artist and Writers Archive, despite the difficult circumstances that saw them occupying a small rat-infested office with no windows, telephone line or resources, for over seven years (Audio Archive AW. 002). She was keen to encourage similar DIY ambitions for the audience in Aberdeen. She also stressed GWL's origins and development through collaborative arts practice. In this way her talk presented the mutual interdependence of social arts practice and feminism, speaking also to my own concerns to articulate a missing history. The talk flagged up the labour-intensive care work within social practice, not least for the artists, as well as the benefits. This feminist voice offered an outsider's expertise, speaking in a surprising way to the context of Aberdeen at a moment where it felt differently outside of mainstream narratives on creativity. It also offered a self-reflexive critical perspective on social practice, relating it as something more nuanced than a series of success stories.

I had invited Aberdeen-based artist Merlyn Riggs to host the event. Riggs has a social practice involving various forms of feminist activism, including hospitable interventions, sometimes with food, that typically take place in public spaces. I felt that Patrick's comments could offer an appropriate frame for the practice, highlighting the complexity of Riggs' labour. Beforehand I had spoken to Riggs on the subject of hospitality as the underlying theme for an event that would focus on feminist praxis as a strategic

response to marginalisation. In response Riggs offered to create as site-specific intervention for the occasion drawing on the theme to approach different support systems that sustain creativity. She spoke last on her practice, showing a red knitted backdrop created for a performance of the *Vagina Monologues* (1996) which involved the artist in sending out 80 invites to women in a variety of different settings from universities to safe houses, sheltered accommodation and care homes. The invite asked women to contribute a piece of knitting any shape, size or style and was the beginning of a longer process that triggered the formation of many groups in different contexts. From this example Riggs moved the talk into social space, promising that 'the kettle was on' and inviting speakers and audience to move through the gallery into a tearoom setting. This had been laid out to play on the concept of historic re-enactment as a vehicle for political conversation. Using the tearoom setting, which is a recurring motif in Riggs' practice, particularly with reference to iconographic suffragette heritage, she offered to recast the space as an open forum where essential issues could be discussed freely.

Left to right, Patrick in conversation with Kukovec and Riggs with tearoom guests. Photos Natalie Kerr.

The Keys to Knowledge

This recasting of space echoed with intentions laid out by the second guest speaker, Dunja Kukovec, from the feminist collective Red Min(e)d. Red Min(e)d are a four-women

collective consisting of Danijela Dugandžić Živanović, Katja Kobolt, Dunja Kukovec and Jelena Petrović who work between cities (Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Belgrade, and Munich) in the post-Yugoslav context and further afield. The collective define their work as questioning:

> 'the multiple relations between feminism, art and curating: in time – its historical scripts, ways of producing, institutionalizing and applying feminist knowledge and in space – referring to local globality, mostly to the complex, still undefined post-Yugoslav region'. (RedMin(e)d, 2015)

I was interested in thinking about how practices have developed in regions where there is little or no official institutional support for contemporary art. Critical theorist and curator Jon Blackwood describes Sarajevo, host city to the third edition of Red Min(e)d's *Living Archive* project, as a situation where:

> 'As in most of the former socialist, newly neo-liberal countries of the region, art no longer occupies any significant public space or attention; rather, starved of any state funding or recognition, it has since the early 1990s adopted the mode of a subculture; accessible to a few, misunderstood by many, existing at the margins of the mainstream media's field of vision.' (Blackwood, 2014)

I felt this situation had particular relevance to a community who also expressed a lack of support from national funding bodies and lack of recognition in the broader Scottish context. Although, of course, there are significant differences between the context of Aberdeen and that of Bosnia-Herzogovina I was less interested in presenting the example of Red Min(e)d as an exotic cultural 'other' and more interested in emphasising points of connection that also play out in different feminist narratives. It was my intention to create a moment of solidarity between places through affinity (we have things in common) rather than identity (we are the same thing). This strategy played out Butler and Lyon's theories of disidentification with dominant narratives as a political tactic.

In collaboration Red Min(e)d have worked to develop the concept of the *Bring in Take Out Living Archive* (LA) which, as the title suggests, is a moving form that materialises as 'editions' at different locations, providing an interactive platform and multi-layered

research site. Like Patrick's description of GWL, Red Min(e)d describe the *Living Archive* as continually evolving through a questioning, collaborative practice. In this way both examples were moving and oppositional spaces that spoke to my conception of hostile hospitality, performed by guest/hosts. LA 'editions' are positioned in contrast to 'popular Biennales' as events that reconfigure the politics of feminism in the field of curatorial practice to produce a common social imagination of space. I was interested in how this social imagination of space was manifesto-like. Furthermore the LA editions are 'processing spaces', concerned with the gaps and cracks in history, working 'as if we are one by one uncovering gaps of our commonly accepted reality and are at the same time revealing, showing and living possible futures' (RedMin(e)d, 2015, p.8). This sentiment echoes the manifesto impulse to reveal historically-produced gaps in the present, and consequently suggest different futures. It is, like Lewandowska's archive, a missing history project. Red Min(e)d assert that the time of change is here and now, asserting a prefigurative politics of the everyday and a position from which action spirals out in both directions affecting both history and the future (About Manifesto, p.7).

In speaking, Kukovec also started with the idea of collaboration, which Patrick emphasised, through thinking about the support that enables artists to produce innovative social art. Kukovec posed a critique of the term, arguing that rather than perceiving collaboration as a 'one dimensionally good' (Audio Archive, AW.002) commodity it should be approached as a challenge. Perceiving it this way, collaborators can better manage expectations and produce different things within it as a form. As a guest this insight did much to challenge received views on collaboration without dismissing it as a working method. Kukovec went on to place the concept of safety at the heart of collaboration, enforced quite strictly within the collective to create an invisible dynamic and reduce stress. Safety is created through the '*a priori* belief that each of us did our best' (Ibid) and through not dividing up labour in a hierarchical way. Instead members all work on concepts and execution depending on time and space. This feminist conception of safety is a kind of hospitality that enables collaborative outcomes.

From this detailed lens on collaboration Kukovec's talk went on to take a broader view, again using what she termed as 'multi-dimensional thinking' (Ibid), echoing Patrick's double-edged perspective. Kukovec diagnosed a time of apocalypse where 'things are so disintegrated that no ideology has real power' (Ibid). Despite this situation patriarchy is also 'somehow not over' with women still under-represented in positions of power. To

Kukovec this is an opportunity; rather than participating in institutions, as they exist, she advocates a different strategy, which grows from this issue of representation into a concern for something else. Instead of fighting for representation in existing systems she argues for creating spaces with transformative potential, using outsider knowledge to build something from scratch in a different way. Red Min(e)d's work is to try and trigger that space, with every edition being a process and continuation of ideas, an attempt to develop a new paradigm for thinking. In this the group identify friendship as a powerful political tool; the only inter-human relationship not regulated.

Finally, in building from scratch the question of history is still as important for Red Min(e)d as it is for GWL. Kukovec's intention is to think about rewriting history leaving only poetry intact. This critique of history locates its value system within the age of reason along with most theoretical discourse, which is a mismatch for us in a post-logical age. Enlightenment thinking brings with it concepts around progress as well as a hierarchical value system around high and low that locks some people out of knowledge systems. In contrast to this Kukovec advocates a different kind of thinking. She suggests expertise and leadership must be rethought not as positions of power but in terms of responsibility and care. In the meantime Kukovec reflects that the *Bring in Takeout Archive* is not perfect or complete but living. What does living mean in this context? Accepting failure as part of an iterative process, taking time, sleeping and writing poetry so you can figure out the best way to keep moving.
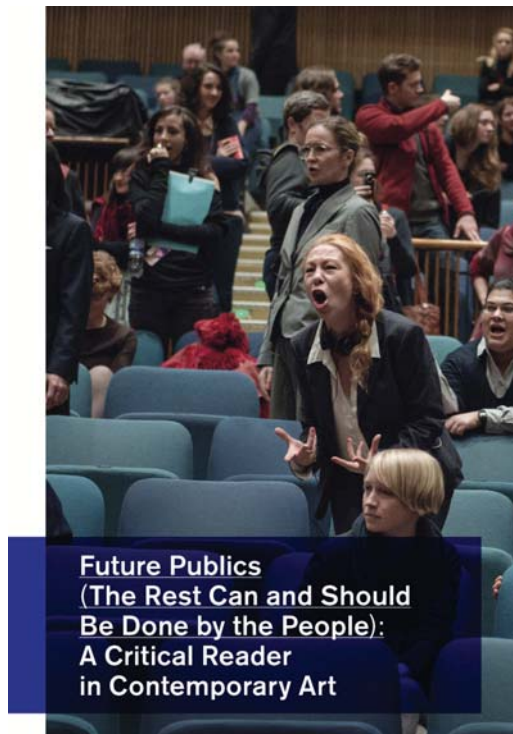
Aernout Mik, *Untitled*, 2013. From BAK publication *Future Publics*, Eds Maria Hlavajova and Ranjit.

Mere Voices and Revolutionary In-Betweeners

In a keynote speech for a conference considering *Museums in The Age of Migrations* Angela Dimitrakaki tries to think of a paradigm shift from the museum as a place where we are educated about each other's difference to becoming a place where we can consider what we share, 'what brought us all here' (Dimitrakaki, 2015). This could be read as Dimitrakaki's attempt to suggest that we rethink the museum as something that could perform the work of a manifesto, becoming a hosting space for political affinities. It is also a similar paradigm shift to that suggested by Maria Hlavajova, in her work as Director of BAK, Basis Voor Actuele Kunst, a space for art, knowledge and activism founded in 2003 and responsible for a number of projects including Former West, a contemporary art research, education, publishing and exhibition project (2008-2016). Given the manifesto intentions expressed by BAK as well as its relationship to contemporary social practice and following our conversation, Mother Tongue suggested a further collaboration between us. They invited me to be part of a series of discussions produced under the banner of Curating Europe's Futures (2014-15), a collaboratively organised event series led by themselves and the practitioner research networks of

Variant and Framework. Curating Europe's Futures articulates its remit as exploring 'contemporary curatorial and artistic practices that have critically addressed themselves to the processes of socio-economic restructuring, identity politics, gender dynamics and cultural policies within 'post-bloc' Europe' (Mother Tongue, 2014 -2015). In relation to the question of hospitality, the series invites artists and curators 'who have investigated the paradoxes of national ideology and capitalist structures' (Ibid). More particularly, in relation to manifestos, the series is concerned with artistic research into ongoing socio-political struggles and *possibilities*. It is these possibilities, that present themselves through the connections between contemporary art and daily life within social practice, that Maria Hlavajova explored in her presentation for the series, thinking on a paradigm shift towards a 'we subjectivity' and exploring concrete examples of practices that live this shift in thinking.

To begin with Hlavajova's talk was concerned with naming this particular moment, as a time of the interregnum, when, following political thinker Antonio Gramsci 'the old is dying and the new cannot be born' (Hlavajova, Audio HW.001).[29] Within this time she described a set of practices that no longer relate to the tropes of modernity around authorship, ownership and spectator culture. In this way the old is defined as an inherited framework of modernity, the white cube and the single, white male spectator. This rhetoric resonates with elements of Rachel Harris' *Cock and Bull* (1990) manifesto indicating traces of a core feminist orientation in Hlavajova's practice (With Archives, p.38). In line with the writing in the previous section and Red Min(e)d's praxis, Hlavajova relates a situation where, following the fall of the Iron Curtain, the promise of one heterogeneous world has not been fulfilled. Instead there has been a brutal process of sorting winners and losers in a time of crisis.[30] Detailing practices like those of artist Aernout Mik and the *We Are Here* refugee collective, Hlavajova describes a series of 'propositions' that work 'in spite of' 'a powerless politics', driven exclusively by the language of markets and risk, that has proved inadequate to face the human and ecological challenges of our time (Hlavajova, Audio, HW. 001).[31]In the second half of the equation she also dwells on a 'politic less power' calling to mind Mouffe's distinction between the power structures of the political and politics as a radical agonistic voice from outside (Mouffe, 2007). These failures between politics and power have produced

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[29] Gramsci wrote this in his *Prison Notebooks* (1926).

[30] Perhaps coincidentally *Loser* is the title of Estonian artist Kai Kaljo's 1997 video piece where the artists recites the numbers (from weight to income) that make her a social failure.

[31] Aernout Mik is a Dutch artist known for his installations and films. *We Are Here* is a refugee collective based in Amsterdam and started in 2012 as a project to make the community visible.

a time of acute uncertainty. Yet in the context of Hlavajova's work with Future Vocabularies, a programme initiated by BAK as a discursive research space to explore pressing contemporary concerns, including the future of migration and shifting institutional infrastructure, uncertainty is perceived as something 'extraordinarily constructive' (Hlavajova, Audio HW.001). This could be considered alongside Kukovec's assertion that this time of apocalypse presents an opportunity and Lewandowska's description of her precarious position as a poetic notion. Hlavajova suggests that when you are uncertain 'all outcomes are still possible'.

Into this climate Future Vocabularies could be seen to stretch out like an expanded manifesto, providing a platform for art practices that 'try to imagine the world otherwise' (Ibid). In a similar way to Maria Rudio's *Real Time* (2003) diagnosis Hlavajova also notes the shrinking division between artistic labour and other labour noting that we are all increasingly asked to employ creativity in the workplace, the huge common factory of the internet, inhabited by great numbers but owned by a few. As Julia Morandeira, speaking at a conference on *Art, Gendered Labour and Resistance* at Nottingham Contemporary reflects, contemporary art mirrors neoliberal capital production in that it is:

> 'virtual, global, decentralized, unpredictable, mercurial, limitless and inspirational; a hidden economy of oligarchy fed by over enthusiastic, hyper productive precarious workers'. (Morandeira, 2012)

However in response to this situation Hlavajova seems to veer away from the language of critique, offering this change in labour circumstances as an opportunity. Where Hlavajova perceives a loss of outsider status for artists, who now offer up their creative skills to project work like everyone else, it could alternatively be asserted that new conditions in a global economy have simply produced greater numbers of other precarious outsiders. In any case this change signals, for Hlavajova, a chance for solidarity. Using the vocabulary of ethical survival, which is distinct from survival of the fittest, Hlavajova suggests we respond together to enact a paradigm shift from critique to proposition. The BAK website statement also registers that the 'necessarily slippery' commonality described by the term 'we' can find some tangible meaning in this interregnum period, 'the current lived interstice between the no longer and the not yet as we presently experience it' (Hlavajova, 2014). This lived interstice or crack that we find ourselves in calls for social practices that forego a spectatorship culture of subject/object relationships. Instead, the moment calls for something arguably

prefigured by Lewandowska's method: a conversational exchange that could allow for collaboration based on perceptions of what is missing.

This fundamentally in-between status, that could be our commonality, is reflected in the titles of projects BAK supports. For example within the New World Academy BAK supports the collective of refugees We Are Here to produce public forums like *Collective struggle of refugees. Lost. In Between. Together* (Eds. Jonas Staal, 2014). The situation for members of the group of over 200 refugees is a complex one that sees them contained within the interstices of a regulating legal framework for global immigration. The self-defined collective are, differently, labelled by the Dutch government as 'un-deportable aliens', whose requests for asylum have failed. In this case governmental language acts to cover over the incompleteness of political systems. Despite failed requests for asylum they cannot be sent back, as there is no way for the Dutch government to connect with the 'home' country institutions. They exist beyond the law and must survive in this bare life way without support. In this context *We Are Here* is a co-op between artists and refugees that involves an exchange of life competencies and a negotiation for visibility. The collective, a foreign kernel, sits on the edge of citizenship, neither completely rejected nor assimilated. Instead they are a crack committed to revealing the blind spots within legal systems, the multiple laws that Derrida identifies as interconnected with and in opposition to the overriding, singular law of hospitality. Within this exchange, between artists and refugees, Hlavajova argues that the role of new institutions is as an *interlocutor* that could connect care to power. Art becomes a method and practice to access political life. The Future Vocabularies section of the BAK website emphasises interconnection:

> 'In spite of the politicized vulnerabilities, and perhaps even due to the acute uncertainties surrounding such a reality, this process requires creating sustainable interconnections to others, human or not. As we speculated earlier, *we* are in *this* together.' (Hlavajova, 2014)

When Hlavajova speaks she echoes Chu's use of the word movement as the key element created by these propositional practices. Just as Chu's negotiation is 'active knowing' so BAK is a 'base for active knowledge'.

The projects that Hlavajova described at the event in Glasgow, collected around the BAK institute as a hosting space, attempt to mobilise language. BAK uses terminology like 'post-capitalist', which counter-intuitively describes a situation where private property

interests dominate even in public facing institutions, and 'former west', which turns the denominator 'former east' on its head to think about the end of western hegemony. These terms act like manifestos attempting to bring a new state into being, now, through language. When Hlavajova speaks, there is an urgency about her, answering questions she speaks well beyond time, she also declines her fee to present. This is speech that lives beyond itself close to action.

The relationship between this active knowledge and the institution of critique seems at first straightforward. In the Future Vocabularies section of the website this definition is presented:

> 'Consider, for instance, the workings of *critique*, itself a modernist paraphernalia. Linked etymologically to crisis (through *krino*, "to judge" in Greek), it gathers negativity from within the circumstance at hand in order to arrive at an opinion, or better yet, a verdict.. Critique "did a wonderful job," as with it "you may debunk, reveal, unveil, but you cannot repair, take care, assemble, reassemble, stitch together." And as it seems to bind us perpetually to that which we critique, it condemns us to the routine of rehearsing the same, time and time again. We might begin to find a way out of the torpor of the bygone era by leaving *that sort of* critique behind altogether, or at the very least, repurposing the *being against* contained within it alongside the logic of proposition.' (Ibid)

The suggestion to leave critique 'behind altogether' resonates with Grant Kester's desire in the extensive critical account of social practice *The One and The Many* (2011). Kester not only describes various exemplary practices but also sets up an oppositional framework, placing these practices in contrast to the 'paranoid intellectual' stance fostered in post-structuralist, language-obsessed thought. He asserts this type of thought came to dominate after the revolutionary failures of 1968. In opposition to paranoid thinking Kester cites Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick as a writer who posits other ways of being in the world. In order to do this, perhaps ironically, Sedgwick writes extensively on paranoia. Her insights are invaluable in relation to the manifesto, which often, as an active political form, manifests itself as exposure of hidden truth, performing the kind of critique that Hlavajova recognizes as unveiling. Sedgwick asserts paranoia is just one way of knowing, and is interested in how 'knowledge is performative and how best does one *move* among its causes and effects' (Sedgwick, 1997 p.6). Her analysis of paranoia shares common features with manifestos, which are forms of knowledge that attempt to *perform* social changes. In *Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading* (2006) Sedgwick

lists five key features of paranoid knowing. She relates these to Melanie Klein's use of the word 'position' to describe paranoia as something that exists in relationship to other possible positions:

> 'The flexible to-and-fro movement implicit in Kleinian Positions will be useful for my purpose for discussion of paranoid and reparative critical practices, not as theoretical ideologies (and certainly not as stable personality types of critics), but as changing and heterogeneous relational stances.' (Sedgwick, 1997 p.7)

In referencing Klein this way Sedgwick suggests it is possible to hold a critical position that could oscillate between paranoia and a more reparative perspective. This moving, in-between position that Sedgwick suggests through Klein is taken up by the manifesto, (About Manifesto, p.18). In relation to both manifestos and Hlavajova's talk, and particularly the statements around critique, it is interesting to explore some of the characteristics of paranoia, detailed in Sedgwick's account. Firstly, using Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* as an example, paranoia is defined as anticipatory. It occupies 'a complex relationship to temporality that burrows both backwards and forward' looking vigilantly for hidden truth. Hlavjova too operates between times, going further to assert that we all do via her use of the concept of interregnum. She deconstructs the current economic system, simultaneously making it a thing of the past through her deployment of future vocabularies. Besides this Lyon notes the manifesto's ability to suggest *telos*, the end of historical time, through compelling narratives (Lyon, 1999).[32] Equally, Hlavajova also suggests that there is no future, in the modernist sense of linear progression, but only other possibilities in the present.

Paranoia is also classed as a *strong theory* defined by Sedgwick as a metanarrative that increases in strength the more its diagnosis is successful. She notes that though it can account for things generally it is not necessarily effective at reducing the things it accounts for. As the Future Vocabularies page observes it cannot 'repair, take care, assemble, reassemble, stitch together.' Unlike, say, an ethnographical approach, paranoia is easily generalisable and 'gains in strength, paradoxically, by virtue of the continuing failures' (Sedgwick 2006, p.12). Finally, paranoia is said to be a theory

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[32] Lyon uses the *Communist Manifesto* as a key example of this practice through the rhetorical inevitability it creates in narrating the proletarian revolution as one to end all class struggle. She notes how the manifesto suggests *telos* and controls time through its manipulation of tenses and sentence structure concluding that ' the revolution is made possible, made effortless, by *telos* and its narratability' (Lyon, 1999, p.185).

concerned with negative rather than positive effects, placing its faith in exposure of these negative aspects. This focus belies a belief in the process of making visible as a catalyst to situational change. We are here.

These last characteristics add complexity to the 'we' subjectivity evoked by Hlavajova, which enters the Curating Europe's Futures context as an evocation to imagine the practice of curating differently. For Hlavajova the institution isn't a fixed, immovable building. She suggests that institutions are impermanent and by voicing the suggestion in the CCA building she creates a small crack. Hlavajova repositions the institution as a hosting space for marginalised subjectivities involved in the difficult process of survival. As hosting spaces curatorial methods aren't in competition with each other to produce programmes, instead they should be seen as a shared network of research resources offering survival tactics and concrete expressions of prefigurative politics.

This sense that we are involved in something *as a collective* is strengthened and given 'tangible meaning' through definition of the moment of crisis that 'we' exist within. The interlinking of minotorian or precarious perspectives to produce solidarity is achieved through diagnosis or critique of an existing apocalyptic situation. In this way collective subjectification holds onto oppositional thinking, confirming Mouffe's insistence on the relational nature of group identity formation. For the interlocutor, or hosting space, critique or hostility is not so easily abandoned. Rather than leaving critique behind it is repurposed by Hlavajova to sit alongside, or as Klein suggests, to go between different knowledge positions. The host sits between paranoid and reparative techniques shifting from one position to another, this movement is arguably also apparent within some of the practices it supports. Practices like the We Are Here collective as well as others that Hlavjova speaks on, including Aernout Mik and the occupation of Teatro Valle in Rome, are social to the extent that they are part of rather, than separate from, what BAK designates as new or future publics. These publics are described as provisional assemblies that defy and reject institutional models of passive, consuming spectatorship. Social practices enter into these provisional assemblies living out a continuous oscillation between positions, being 'forward looking yet prefigurative, situated yet nomadic' (Hoskote, 2014).

 The combination of terms like prefigurative and situated brings to mind Rosi Braidotti's affirmative critique, rooted in feminist epistemologies and seemingly with a foot in both camps; moving between the old (that is dying) with a strong historical memory, and affirmation of the new which is prefigured by language and collective action. Affirmative

critique in the hands of BAK involves reimagining the museum, so that rather than a storage house for the cultural unconscious it becomes a meeting place for various minotorian subjectivities to enact a linked-up politics in the cracks.

Tanja Ostojić *Naked Life 6*, 2016. Performed at The Society of Advocates, Aberdeen.
Photo: Maja Zeco.

From Affirmation to Critique (and back again)

In the curatorial strategy for SCAN I was interested in having a foot in both camps, moving between paranoid and reparative tactics, acknowledging and exploring how these positions could sit alongside each other becoming manifesto. This moving position was also a considered way to enact the tension that plays out between hospitality and hostility. I wanted to think about how the rage and disidentification that is associated with critique could exist in alignment with affirmative practice. One remit for events in Aberdeen was to encourage conversations around curatorial practice. These conversations inevitably touched on institutional politics. Through the events there was a chance to initiate conversations with practices related to a history of institutional

critique, that practice of being a hostile guest. Beyond this, I invited artists and curators to speak on leaving the institution, working in its cracks or making institutions from scratch as Patrick and Kukovec suggest. To some extent these different positions do not oppose each other but form a network of tactics that can be embraced in different times and places to try and imagine other possible worlds. Through foregrounding the concept of hospitality I was interested in how incoming perspectives on systems could inform discussions and be transformative. In a larger sense this incoming perspective is provided, post-1989, by the 'former east' bloc countries. These regions, entering capitalism as a less than equal other, experience the effects of neoliberalism in an accelerated manner through a process of rapid economic assimilation. Emerging from this context, Tanja Ostojić's work seemed particularly relevant, pointing out the fault lines of this assimilation through her repeated experiments with border crossing and migration. Ostojić's practice also intersects interestingly with genealogies of social practices with works like *Looking for a Husband with an EU Passport* (2000-2005) turning the dream of blurring art and life into a nightmarish reality (About Hospitality, p.32). The fine line between a utopian-leaning project and an oppressive economic reality brings to consciousness the important question of equality of exchange in a relational practice. In the book *Integration Impossible* (2009) Rune Gade notes that Ostojić's practice is an expanded form of second wave feminism's real-life performing around identity, which involves artists like Lynn Hershman creating alter egos. The difference, Gade argues, is:

> 'For Ostojić, it is not a question of playing different roles, playing with the possibility of momentarily being someone else. It is a question of actually transforming the conditions of her existence, producing possibilities for changing her life, rather than changing her identity.' (Gade, 2009, pp.202-3)

This life change is not about affirmation of a different possible reality or a prefigurative politics. It is, for Gade, a process of queering, where the work is 'to make real, circumstances and facts that exist but are usually reduced to non existence and invisibility' (Ibid). Crucially, following Gade's definition then, Ostojić's practice fits into the category of paranoia or critique by involving a kind of unveiling process. As mentioned in the first section she employs a strategy of over-identification leading Dimitrakaki to remark that Ostojić embodies 'the ideal subjectivity promoted by capital today: focused, resourceful, self-managed' (Dimitrakaki, 2013, p.88) directing herself

through an art 'project' that completely merges life and work so that there is no distinction between the two categories. In relationship to Sedgwick's definition of paranoia Ostojic's practice ticks all the boxes. It is mimetic, producing a theory through a body of work that increases in strength the more it diagnoses. It is concerned with depicting negative effects and is also an easily generalisable theory. For example through a reading of Ostojic's practice and intersecting critical voices Dimitrakaki is able to reach the huge and startling conclusion that the administrative and managerial reality of neoliberalism offers only two positions: the first, merging of life and work into a bureaucratic whole, where time management is the supreme virtue and decent life is equated with lifestyle, or the ability to mindlessly consume, and second, the bare life position which struggles to be included in this scenario. The social relationship between those who belong and those who aspire to belong is managed by the economic imperatives of capital. Dimitrakaki quotes Šefik Tatlić: 'this obscene relationship marks the situation in which politics are slowly killed by capitalism' (Tatlić, 2009, p.233).

Politics in Mouffe's (2013) writing is defined not just as an outsider perspective but as an antagonistic one, between these two positions, this obscene relationship, no contradiction is offered, both follow the rules of economic imperatives. What does this critique offer then? It does not repair, take care, assemble, reassemble, stitch together. It does not offer an affirmation of something different, a prefigurative politics. However, it is my argument that this kind of alternative politics itself is not produced without the help of critique, the stitching together of disidentification. While Hlavajova speaks on leaving critique behind we have seen that she moves between affirmation, which is around imagining different 'future publics' and critique which points out that the old world is dying in order to mobilise subjectivity towards those different futures. It is no surprise then that Hlavajova was involved in commissioning Ostojić to produce a work for the Roma pavilion at the Venice Biennale. The resulting work, *Naked Life* (2004–2016), applies the themes that have concerned Ostojić throughout her artistic practice to the predicament of various Roma communities in Europe, producing a body of research that combines legal perspectives and systemic actions undertaken by European governing bodies and difficult accounts of the violence suffered by individuals within these communities. Between each account Ostojić takes off an item of clothing, bringing attention to this painful bare life position that is socially reproduced in a number of contexts from Hungary and the Czech Republic to France and the UK.

The embedded discussion around the politics of hospitality that the piece contains made it an obvious choice as part of the SCAN series. I had been involved in a *Misplaced Women* (2009–ongoing) workshop that Ostojić had previously produced in Aberdeen as part of Amy Bryzgel's academic lecture series for Aberdeen University so I approached Bryzgel to collaborate around bringing the artist back to the city to perform a version of *Naked Life* (2004–2016), rewritten for the UK context.[33]Added to the politics of the work Ostojić's critique of curatorial relations, along gendered lines, was equally interesting as part of a discussion series that aimed to examine the curatorial. Performances like *Naked Life* (2004–2016) are closer to advocacy than the earlier life works so I wondered at the possible connections and dissonances the performance would suggest between advocacy and curatorial practice.

Sharing not hoarding (2015). Image courtesy of Jonathan Baxter.

For the SCAN session I was interested in what an exchange between critique and reparative practice would look like. I wanted the event to move between positions and was interested in how this movement could create solidarity around an issue. For this reason I approached Dundee-based artist and curator Jonathan Baxter to be part of the conversation. Baxter has a social practice that involves him taking on a curatorial role in long-term durational projects where he facilitates others (often participants not directly involved in the 'art world') in producing performance work. This responsive and facilitative work usually operates within a loose pedagogic structure that works towards producing collaboration and autonomy within groups. For example he met with a group of citizens every week for three hours for over a year to collaboratively develop the

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[33] More information on the *Misplaced Women* project can be found at
https://misplacedwomen.wordpress.com/category/aberdeen/

programme *If The City Were A Commons* (Baxter, 2014-2015*)*. Throughout the year Baxter instigated a regular structure of reading groups, presentations and workshops that was responsive to the needs of the group as they developed. This incremental activity built towards the *Dundee Commons' Festival* (2015), which included daily talks, bread making, walks, workshops, music, poetry and performances and was produced collaboratively. Baxter's proposal for *If the City* accessed arts project funding yet significantly stepped beyond the art world, programming only one day of arts-related discussion in a week of events. More than a side step Baxter positioned the programme as an 'alternative arts development programme' in response to *The Art of Living Dangerously* initiative. This initiative, arguably a more institutionally-based series, was aimed specifically at professional 'creatives' and programmed by the Fleet Collective to explore more sustainable livelihoods for artists and creative practitioners.[34] In contrast Baxter's project represented a more ambiguous position in relation to the institutions of art. Being both antagonistic and coextensive his work signals a move towards participatory representation as Rudio and Hlavajova imagine it, generating collective memory through a provisional assembly of people.

Besides *If the City'*s positioning Baxter's work makes frequent references to shadowing. As part of *Dundee Urban Orchard* (DUO), a citywide art project co-ordinated by Baxter with Sarah Gittins that supports communities and individuals to plant and care for small scale orchards within Dundee, DUO took over a series of hoardings on the city waterfront, which is currently being redeveloped. The resulting poster series, *Shadow Work* (2015) was framed around Ivan Illich's description:

> 'Shadow work, unnamed and unexamined, has become the principal area of discrimination against the majority in industrial society. It cannot be ignored much longer.' (Illich, 1981, p.101)

Referred to on the project website as 'sharing not hoarding', the poster series depicts a number of shadowy figures advancing in a mirrored progression towards a hole in the centre of the billboards. This move is intended to make visible what otherwise might remain invisible. In relation to the context Baxter expressed a concern to make a double move articulating 'both the *real value* of social engagement whilst also highlighting a suspicion that social engagement and participation were *not really being valued* in the

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[34] The Fleet Collective describe themselves as 'a community of artists and designers and other highly skilled people' based in Dundee.

overall process of redevelopment - and commodification? - of the waterfront' (in personal correspondence by email, February 2016). Baxter both works with various government institutions to make DUO possible and offers a shadowy critique.

Baxter, currently doing his PhD at Gray's School of Art, positions his social practice as a prefigurative politics which relates to feminist methodologies like standpoint theory. He also makes frequent references to psychoanalytic processes, and quoting Donald Winnicott, suggests that his practice involves being 'a good enough mother', or providing a facilitating environment of care in which development can take place (in personal correspondence by email, October 2015). His thesis proposes Gillian Rose's theory of the broken middle as a metaphor to describe the terrain on which he operates a practice and radical pedagogy. As a metaphor the broken middle resonates with Kukovec's descriptions of apocalypse or Hlavajova's time of uncertainty, which also produces moments of opportunity. The extent to which Baxter seeks to create new relational understandings within a given context is also the point where his practice intersects with curating. In this respect I wondered if social practice could produce different examples of curatorial relationships than the ones critiqued by Ostojić in the vastly different context of the art world's centre stage act, the Venice Biennale (2001) (About Hospitality, p.33).

I initially approached Baxter to speak on his curatorial practice. I wanted to think about curating as a performative form of participatory representation, based on the hunch that Baxter's practice worked with a similar conception of the public as that expressed by Future Vocabularies: an active provisional assembly rather than a passive, consuming spectatorship. The underlying question was around the consideration of curating as a form of radical hospitality, gathering together outsider voices to contribute to an event. The question of hospitality accrued urgency in the light of the subject matter of Ostojić's piece. The intention was to have an open conversation on the possibility of hospitality. I was interested in creating a platform for discussion around the performance that could position it in relation not only to the situation for Roma populations in Scotland, but in a wider way to the current refugee crisis. It was my intention to invite local organisations that are working to support refugees and councillors involved in organising places of residence for people seeking asylum. In response Baxter also suggested that the political impact of the work would be increased if the performance took place beyond the closed loop of sanctioned art spaces. He expressed a reluctance to open a curatorial conversation around his practice stating:

'My role as a curator is to help the work speak as powerfully as it can. To do that the curator needs to step out of the way. The main role of the curator is to foreground the work and make connections for the work's affect. I think curatorial conversations might detract from this' (Personal correspondence by email, November 2015)

In this way Baxter proposed to perform hospitality around Ostojić's work. Rather than consider his practice from a distance as a narrative he offered his practice as an ongoing process that could feed into the event, setting up the conditions to enable dialogue around and continuation of the work's effect.

In conversation with Bryzgel we discussed the Society of Advocates Hall as an appropriate venue. The hall, a membership society of lawyers, is situated next to the council buildings in Aberdeen city centre, and is available for public events. From this point we discussed Ostojić's concerns around making sure the space was warm and negotiating permission for the performance in advance. Baxter offered a view of the work as something that continues to act beyond curatorial and artist intentions:

'A balance needs to be struck between the artist's intentions and the work's autonomy. Combining Tanya's statement and Caroline's curatorial theme provides the wider 'setting' and 'interpretative context' for the work. It ensures a two-way street between the artist's intentions and the curatorial context.

Likewise, the work needs to be honoured (not diluted or appropriated) on its own terms. Here the work has affect - beyond Tanya's or anyone else's framing intentions. The work does the work. It performs its own advocacy. What effect this has on an audience members cannot be predicted.' (Ibid)

Through this understanding of an artist/curator dialogue Baxter arrives at a theme for the discussion after the performance, that he would facilitate, attempting to initiate an open dialogue on the possibility of advocacy. *Performing Advocacy* became the title of the event and by expressing these perspectives Baxter performed his own advocacy work as a kind of shadow curator in dialogue with me. As facilitator Baxter suggested the discussion should involve one or two respondents to the piece who might be willing to talk about their experience of displacement. This could be one person with direct

experience of the issues brought up by the piece and someone who works with/represents an agency in the city that works with asylum seekers to perform their own advocacy. The presence of respondents could open up possibilities for solidarity and action.

In order to achieve this I approached various organisations that work with different gypsy/traveller communities in Scotland, eventually receiving help and responses from Friends of Romana Lav in Govanhill, Aberdeen Equalities Action Network and the council's social work department. It was evident that, particularly in relation to this community, trust was a huge issue in the process of facilitating participation from a community member. My involvement in a network of activist groups and friendships proved decisive in securing the participation of musician and dancer Sonia Michalezwicz. Michalezwicz offered a moving personal response to Ostojić's performance that detailed many painful moments of persecution in her lifetime as well as stories from previous generations in different geographies. She also told a positive story of her own activist activities, performing Roma culture with the band E Karika Djal and the all-female dance group Romane Cierhenia. In this spirit her presentation ended with a song. Next to Michalezwicz, Jon Davidson, a social worker for the criminal justice department and volunteer with education services with the traveller community in Aberdeen, and Juliana de Pena, advocacy worker with Friends of Romano Lav, made up a panel of people with different experiences of the issues brought up by the performance. Finally, Nigel Lamas from Aberdeen Solidarity with Refugees joined the group to give direct advice about actions and initiatives people affected by the issues could join.

Baxter held the space by offering a number of pertinent questions around the subject of hospitality and introducing the guest speakers. He attended to the details of the form of the event in consultation with me, ensuring that the formal and respectful feel that the first half had, around Ostojić's performance, was carried into the second half that would include Michalezwicz' contributions. He also provided considerable support to Michalezwicz who in the discussion elaborated on the risk she took in speaking out on a public platform. This risk she explained stemmed from her own community's distrust of those outside, a feeling which undoubtedly is built upon generations of persecution. By opening up her experience in this way Michalezwicz explained she risked exclusion from the gypsy way of life. Before singing Michalezwicz looked to Baxter, who she trusted, even in that short period, to read the room and in split second evaluate the appropriateness of song in this formal legal context. The weight of the conversation fell

around two significant debates: firstly some expressed a need to recognise that we are the same whilst other voices in the room raised the concerns that the significant differences between us are not erased in the process of being together. One member of the public asked for a greater openness from minority communities, to which Ostojić offered the cutting observation that she felt opposed to the increasing necessity for 'radical transparency' as a prerequisite for being included as visible citizens in a neoliberal culture. In between the performance and discussion we converted an adjacent space into a soup kitchen run by Solidarity with Refugees, donations were given to the refugee charity Are You Syrious?[35] Overall the event became a moving multifaceted performance leading Ostojić to remark that she was extremely happy with the contextual framing of her performance and moved by the responses, to the point where she felt she will only perform this piece in future under these expanded circumstances.

Image courtesy of David Blyth, *Untitled Birds.* Photo: Manuel Bauer.

Consuming Hospitality

One of the realisations from working on the event with Baxter and Ostojić was that my critical position in relation to social practice performed its own kind of ghosting or

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[35] It is possible to follow this charity at https://medium.com/@AreYouSyrious

shadow work. On one hand I performed the backstage social work necessary to realise Baxter's conceptual framework, taking responsibility for researching organisations involved with asylum and Roma issues, meeting gatekeepers and ultimately caring for both the respondents and the artist who was performing parallel research work and, through the visa application, time-consuming bureaucratic labour. On the other hand it was my responsibility to make Baxter's practice visible next to Ostojić's more obvious performance. These aspects were part of my responsibility as curator of the event, to balance the needs of all participants and to make visible. In retrospect my framing curatorial statement fell short in acknowledging the complexity of Baxter's practice and my own labour, following the curatorial desire also expressed by Baxter to step aside and let the work speak. Yet in reflection our partnership combined to gather a provisional community in a compelling setting in a way that added something manifesto-like to Ostojić's performance. It moved into action. Afterwards as well as good feedback Ostojić expressed a feeling of some difficulty in entering into discussion, without script, after a hugely emotional performance, yet her responses in real time with the audience added to the complexity of the discussion. I felt that the intuitive, unedited answers created an opening for other voices to enter the conversation and try to negotiate a path through difficult questions.

As the transcription from Beech's *Me and Mine* (2015) (About Hospitality, p.38) reveals, this backstage care work and advocacy sit close to each other, linked by this term *empathia*:

> 'a Greek word, meaning 'into' and 'pathos' feelings, so it's a kind of penetration, a travelling, it suggests when we enter someone else's pain its like we enter a country, with customs and border control'.

The last event in the series looked to explore wounds and vulnerabilities in Roma communities through the body of the artist, asking what is the relationship between artwork and advocacy? Who performs the work to ensure safe passage for those arriving or travelling through? The first event I curated in a series of six also approached the topic of caretaking, approaching the question of hospitality at the moment of passing, at the heart of Beech's docu-fiction, this time through the exploration of human/other relationships through taxidermy and taxonomy. The event hosted local artist David Blyth, who describes his interest in taxidermy as first emerging largely as a means to understand his own positioning amidst the Aberdeenshire wilderness. In this

way the event considered Blyth's work as a kind of relational action, dealing with questions of the post-human.

Blyth's work has been exhibited both nationally and internationally and was included in *Zenomap*, Scotland's first ever presentation at the Venice Biennale in 2003. Blyth is also interesting, less for his emergence as a Biennale 'worthy' artist, but for his withdrawal, describing his practice as hidden and located far from the art world centres. Blyth frames this withdrawal partially in terms of care, relating a significant moment where he decided not to stay at an art gathering in Glasgow but to go home and care for a wounded dog. This move is also part of a larger form of institutional critique that characterises his work's engagement with wider museum and collection practices. It was the combination of care and critique that interested me as part of a discussion around hospitality. He was the first of a number of art world outsiders the series would engage with based on Derrida's speculation that the outsider can say something different, reversing the received order of things. For the event we invited anthropologist Petra Tjiske Kalshoven, who gave an overview of taxidermy as a knowledge-forming practice, and artist Alana Jelinek who had recently completed a book called *The Fork's Tale* (2014) which saw the artist write from the perspective of a museum artifact in order to explore and critique the process of collecting and taxonomy. Jelinek's post-human engagements and work around the ethics of meeting with otherness suggested her as an interesting conversation partner to Blyth in the series and also worked with my intention to experiment with pairing up social practice with other forms of institutional critique.

Between these two art practices Kalshoven's talk centred on taxidermy, providing a comparative commentary to produce a fuller understanding of the particularities of the field, its structures, techniques and hierarchies, and to open a window into Bylth's artistic encounter with the form. Kalshoven framed her perspective as being one that could shed light on other forms of knowledge making, allowing us to think differently about how we come to know in art, collecting and in the ethnographic practices at the heart of social anthropology. She spoke on historian Carlo Ginzberg, whose writing could be seen to mirror concerns in Jelinek's narrative on how people fit ideas about the world into categories and frameworks. She particularly focused on Ginzberg's concept of elastic rigour, concerned with registering small traces and gestures, which reveal connections between things and patterns. She quoted James Clifford's recognition of it as a useful tool for understanding 'how one feels one's way into an unfamiliar

ethnographic situation'. Elastic rigour was described as playful, intuitive knowledge, difficult to reconcile with academic rules and structure. A disciplined non-generalising form of knowledge that could be seen instead as responsive to context and to emphasise a somantic engagement, referring to touch, just as Chu uses similar metaphors to describe 'feeling' her way through. In the world of taxidermy Kalshoven is an outsider learning from the practitioners as they mimic the natural worlds that inspire them. She notes that because of the various competitive structures within the discipline there is a search for the ideal specimen, without imperfections, each work a rehearsal for the perfect imitation of life that leads to hyper-real results.

In contrast to this Blyth seems more drawn to the discarded and imperfect. He goes under the skin, his birds, installed at Aberdeen Art Gallery for the occasion, are often stripped back to the manikins revealing insides of string and straw. Despite this reversal, doing away with the illusion of life, Kalshoven registers an intriguing liveliness and movement in Blyth's work that celebrates the skill of taxidermy by turning it inside out and bringing it alive again in a very different setting. Blyth's choice of the discarded and imperfect mirrors Mierle Laderman Ukeles', who also relates strongly to the idea of touch. For example in her work *Fresh Kills: Imagining The Landfill/Scaling The City* (1995) on Staten Island, once the largest landfill in the world, she describes the rubbish piles as a collaborative 50-year old social sculpture, a graveyard of undifferentiated materials that must be reclaimed by 'attentive reverence to each mote of dust' (Ukeles, 2002).[36] Blyth performs his own reclaiming of imperfect, discarded life forms through an exploration of taxidermy. Rather than adding to an industry of hyper-real forms, Blyth's engagement probes taxidermy for what it could be. He introduced the talk as a work in progress, happening 'as we speak' and beginning with the arrival of two woodcocks from different places delivered in a moment of strange synchronicity to Blyth a month before. The birds, perhaps the least visible migrants to the shores of Aberdeen, inspired Blyth to undertake a period of intense research into their habits and the different traditions of knowledge that accompany them from ecological, hunting and culinary towards the mythological and artistic. Blyth's storytelling around the birds seemed to imitate their circular movements including their 360-degree vision and anti-clockwise or 'widdershins' flight paths, and circular movements on the ground.

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[36] In the article Ukeles thinks through the new status of the island as graveyard for the debris from the World Trade Centre, which, breaking a huge social taboo, relocates the lost remains of people who died to the garbage site.

Blyth likened the taxidermist to a funeral director or temporary agent who arrives at a particular point, a point of passing, to take care of the animals in a journey to somewhere else. He uses the French word *passager*, evocative of travel and temporary locations, to describe this fleeting or flighting encounter. In caring he is listening for messages from the birds and finds them in the details of their existence and the stories from colliding bodies of knowledge. So for example from the butcher he relates the archaic tradition of eating the whole animal, including its cranial juices, with its beak as a fork, and also registers another reversal in that the white meat can be found on the leg and the dark meat on the body. This combined with the widdershins flight inspires the artist to enact his own reversals, playing video footage of his processes backwards to strange effect, suggesting resurrection and tracing a path to ancient Egypt and the legend of Osiris's resurrection through his dark sister's fashioning of a missing body part for the god: a wooden cock. Blyth's small return to Egypt parallels one made by Ukeles who, significantly, picks the glass 'Mummy case' to clean in the work *Transfer: Maintenance of the Art Object* (1973). Through this work, centred on a historical piece of waste management in the form of the mummy, Ukeles aligns maintenance work and curatorial work, transferring responsibility for the care of the object from the maintenance worker to the conservator at the museum and in the same instance asserting that power is a story we tell ourselves. By recalling the story of Osiris, Blyth also seems to similarly suggest that phallologocentrism is an ancient story to cover over missing parts. Navigating these stories Blyth seems to be constantly on the move, spiralling between disciplines to find insights in the connections between things. Finally, he relates his intention to eat the bird, his approach to consumption complicated by video footage, played backwards, of himself adopting the postures of the woodcock. Given this the proposition of a feast appears almost cannibalistic reminding us of the self-consumption that can be part of care taking. As noted in Beech's film we must protect ourselves in an empathetic process where the borders between self and another may become thin. Blyth also frames this proposed consumption as a kind of hospitality, an internal process of hosting which joins other modes of violent interaction like hunting that play out around the bird.

Jelinek and Blyth in conversation. Photo: Manual Bauer.

Alana Jelinek's talk opened by thinking through her years in collaboration with anthropologists where she related an outsider's perspective and registered art as a specific discipline, one way of seeing the world. Like Blyth and Kalshoven, Jelinek finds the awareness of different genealogies of knowledge refreshing and generative. She begins from what she refers to as the sentient object, getting to know it in a playful way by looking at its form in relation to her own. Jelinek's object is the cannibal fork, which she first encountered on a residency in the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. The object presented a rich source of stories leading the artist to write *The Fork's Tale: As Narrated by Itself* (2014). *The Fork's Tale*, twelve chapters published over the same amount of months, is about the relationship between collections, collectors and the collected. It is told from the perspective of the fork because Jelinek felt also somehow collected as an artist. In the narrative the fork is engaged in the process of drawing up its own taxonomy of collector types that it has encountered over its history, by this reversal Jelinek begins to undo subject/object relations. Each collector type is in search of particular categories of stories that reflect self-interest. Through this taxonomy a struggle emerges as the fork tries to remain true to a taxonomy that increasingly won't hold. Rumbling beneath the need to create an ordered collection is the perception, brought to the surface through discussion, that stories aren't so easily contained within categories. Often myths overspill into different time frames having an effect on social practices, which become active misreadings with ancient roots. The fork's taxonomy is based around what stories you hold onto and, like the taxidermist, what stories are discarded. The narrative drive is towards the ideal collector, one who does not discard or project his/her own stories onto the fork. In approaching the act of 'selective collecting', something the tale asserts we all do through storytelling, the book

asks: how much truth can be ascertained by simply dividing up the world? This fiction of order perpetuated by the museum is something that both the collected, whatever place they are positioned in a hierarchy, and collectors hold onto. In bringing up these questions in the space of Aberdeen Art Gallery, a place of ordered collection like any other large museum, her critique lands very close to home despite the exotic subject matter. Jelinek's talk makes it clear that her analysis of anthropological collecting structures could be a metaphor for a larger critique of art world perspectives as a set of particular stories that frame the world. Where Blyth encounters multiple truths the fork's search for *the* ideal collector stalls and eventually fades from view, leaving a more uncertain place to negotiate.

The discussions following on took up this uncertainty dealing with questions of care and intention in curating. More than classifying and setting things out it seemed the three perspectives could shed light on the curator as someone who might attempt to care for the relationships *between* objects/subjects. Knowing that in caring, like the Egyptian tradition of wrapping up the dead, you inevitably change what you approach. And in the same way it changes you, finally begging the question: what do we have to give up to be in common?

Caroline Gausden maintenance work (after a performance). After Mierle Laderman Ukeles, *Hartford Wash* (1973). Photo: Christine MacFarlane.

Backstage Temporality and Constant Care

When presented with the 'backstage temporality' that Verwoert lays out in his analysis of the politics of hosting it is evident that not only do these acts not translate well into the on-stage logic of spectacle culture but they do not translate into critical language well either. While Lloyd suggests that 'the narrative of care is stitched together, performed and pictured by means of the document' (2015, p.155), Patrick reflects that, in relation to foundational projects at GWL, the social labour of artists and others often remains hidden in narratives of the work. Maintenance is often a missing history in documents and archive records. As Verwoert writes, in relation to Virginia Woolf, the narrative of care work resists telling itself. Openly speaking on the many small acts of curatorial work detracts from the performance itself. Instead, this narrative must step 'out of the way' (Baxter, 2015). In this way the power relationship that Ostojić records between herself and Szeemann in *I'll be your Angel* (2001), where the authoring curator figure rises above a structure of mute works, is reversed by other models of curatorial care that I have encountered, including those practiced by Baxter and Mother Tongue. Standing between curatorial and artistic work social practice also performs care work in the 'backroom spaces' of culture. By writing on this work Chu performs a kind of doubling, honouring the conventions of hospitality that require silence in order to produce a safe cultural space for the art works, and yet articulating this silence as integral to the work of a dialogic practice. Chu, like Woolf, asserts that having a mind of your own, not losing yourself to the angel, is integral to creative practice.

I was concerned with producing a genuinely dialogic series with space for discussion between all parties at an event. This is about timing, ensuring that speakers and audience have enough time for an exchange and that the conditions make it possible for different people to speak. It is also about ensuring that invited guests have some chance to speak to each other before hand, to be aware of the intersections and contradictions that emerge between each other's work. These conversations are time-consuming and also produce an element of uncertainty; for genuine dialogue something needs to be left open. It takes less social time to organise a number of guests to perform individual monologues fixed in advance. With guests juggling busy schedules this convention was difficult to forgo in order to create a more uncertain, open space. Much of my work involved negotiating around this issue. The intention to reduce conference style proceedings also had to be weighed up with giving guests enough time to perform their expertise.

This extra, non-outcome based time required to produce dialogic events is small in comparison to the long-term durational work involved in generating interconnections, across the different, often conflicting, communities that a social practice is involved in. Given this it is not surprising that artists with a social practice moved more comfortably beyond conference-style conventions, speaking for less time and opening up the space for the audience to step into, often through provocative questions. Jelinek presented her view of the art world and its limiting ontologies as a provocative conversation, in a non-academic tone that sat somewhere between intimacy and antagonism. This view, from an anthropological perspective, voiced to an audience engaged in the art world, opened the presentation to criticisms. This opening up allowed for conflict to emerge as well as the more convivial exchange around questions of care and intention. As host there is an impulse to try to cover over conflicted exchanges, which are not the same as managed performances intended to shock. I chose not to intervene, to live with this gap in the smooth surface of the event structure, which also contained moving performance and conviviality.

In the last event Baxter's performance began backstage negotiating between performers to ensure a proper form for the discussion. He spoke briefly framing a number of questions that could accompany us. These questions allowed conflicting experiences to emerge. In conflict he made sure that one voice didn't dominate, as I had done in earlier events, balancing openness with safety in the space. This labour performed in event situations is the everyday work of social practice, where groups often meet over many hours, months and years making for a much larger choreography. The work is always unfolding now in shared moments of time, and consequently contingent on its conditions. Like a manifesto its firmly occupies a particular moment. In her study *Feminism, Time and Nonlinear History* (2014) Victoria Browne observes that we cannot take this shared time for granted as something that simply exists: this time *between us* must be carefully constructed (About Archives, p.26). This uncertainty produces a poetic solidarity that is also evident in Lewandowska's work. For Ostojić's performance I invited new voices to respond, putting it to work across different, even dissonant communities. This impulse to invite others in is towards producing a relational understanding of the artwork's affect. This reaches into the future suggesting other collaborative actions between all parties involved in the moment of the performance. In different way Blyth also described his performance as a work in progress conveying a

sometimes uncertain feel that can also be seen in his artworks, which appear in a way undone and exposed.

Finally, Merlyn Riggs, whose work deals directly with the question of hospitality though specific acts within a feminist tradition, including her bespoke tearooms, spoke briefly. Having worked the longest to set up the event she was careful to let everyone know that her performance included putting the kettle on. Riggs's performance was not only offered comfort to the audience it was also difficult in places. She solicited active participation from the audience, playing a Gaelic version of a familiar nursery rhyme and then asking us to sing. This awkward moment between us changed the pace and tone of the event allowing us to share something before relaxing into the tearoom setting.

Conversation within the SCAN framework is between local and international practice. It is also between different publics in the local context meeting an expressed need for critical dialogue within the region. Bringing together these different publics involved me in a process of careful research that could be perceived as operating as a conversational model similar to that expressed by Lewandowska. I spent time approaching as many different artists, organisers and others involved in the art life of the city as I could. I emphasised my outsider status and interest in reaching a relational understanding of the context. Through these conversations, which could be said to show Verwoert's backstage temporality as slow incremental time, I was able to link up with a number of other outsiders, asking questions and seeking out the missing texts that characterised the region. This work to develop the events in conversation with the context is ongoing. It is the many small emails, phone conversations and even indirect research that can tap into the existing infrastructures in a context where the idea of a supportive community is still illusive and underdeveloped. Over time, different voices expressed a sense of isolation possibly born out of a feeling that they lacked representation and a supportive structure that could link and nurture their practices. The SCAN series was not intended to fill that gap but to think through it to imagine other possible situations and collectivities. In this way SCAN was very clearly a hosting mechanism, not only to open up the possibility of having conversations with individuals but also to try to allow for other outsider voices to speak.

Conclusions

The focus of this section has been on exploring hospitality as it unfolds in certain artistic and curatorial practices I have worked *with*. This work is written up in parallel to the preceding section, which details practices I have been engaged in researching from distance, knowing *about*. The boundary between knowing *about*, a more vertical engagement *with* feminist history and knowing *with* is, however, not fixed or immutable. Instead this thesis expresses an interest in playing out the manifesto impulse to remember certain missing histories so that they can become active in the present moment. I have tried to place these forgotten labours alongside other narratives and artworks drawing out points of intersection and difference. In practical terms this living out of different temporalities meant that my research into feminist genealogies for conversational practice, particularly work with the Women's Audio Archive, became a methodology for approaching various contemporary practices. The most direct iteration of this methodology can be seen in my conversation with Mother Tongue where I presented my research on WAA alongside their practice, drawing parallels between the two. The collaboration with Mother Tongue attested to the generative capacities of the methodology; I approached them simply to have a conversation around possible parallels our conceptions of a missing history. This discussion revealed Mother Tongue's restless renegotiation with history reaching outwards like a manifesto probing at the edges of collective memory, asking questions about its constitution. The conversation between us benefited from Mother Tongue's self-reflexive openness, also apparent in their public presentation to Gray's undergraduate students, which led to insights around the hidden processes and difficulties within the field of freelance curating. In curating as well as in art history there are hidden narratives of support work. Mother Tongue's voice brought these and other fading presences out of the shadows.

From these initial meetings our collaboration extended to include work on the Curating Europe's Futures series, which, not least, involved Maria Hlavajova's contribution. In Hlavajova's narrative a time of interregnum is identified, a moment of profound uncertainty, possibly equivalent to the kind embodied by Lewandowska as a migrating consciousness over 30 years earlier. This moment of crisis is rewritten by Hlavajova's institutional practice at BAK as an opportunity. Her language prefigures a new post-capitalist age occupied by those from the former West and elsewhere. Hlavajova describes BAK as a new kind of institution, a meeting point for precarious, migrating subjectivities. Like a manifesto this institution is described as an interlocutor,

connecting 'care to power'. In making these connections the institution becomes a migrating subject, speaking a strange kind of language in the face of excluding power structures. This language moves between 'old' paranoid forms of critique and new affirmative practices, simultaneously breaking down power structures and repairing worlds.

Finally, the methodology of making connections *between* precarious subjectivities and playing host to conceptions of missing histories stretched into my own curatorial commission with the Scottish Contemporary Art Network. Through this work I brought Aberdeen's missing narratives into conversation with feminism, pointing out surprising commonalities. Through the series I moved between making overt and covert articulations of feminist praxis, approaching the subject of care taking as a kind of journeying with and meeting difference. Through the theme of hospitality the events also played with notions of consumption, as something supportive (hospitality as a supportive environment), overbearing (hospitality as consuming, an eating of the subject) and self-effacing (hospitality as an invisible theatre, dark matter spread thin). I wanted to try to construct a framework that would allow elements of critique to sit side by side with affirmative models of social practice. This playing host to different activist approaches was an attempt to reconceive the manifesto, political outsider and teller of strange truths, as a performative structure, holding different values in tension; moving between rage at an old dying world and utopic leanings towards different futures.

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Manifesto

The Manifesto Collection

About Manifesto

Introduction

The focus of this collection is the manifesto, approaching feminist experiments with the form and theoretical writing on these to offer a refrain of characteristics that can act as a lens to explore social practice here and throughout the whole thesis. The work done in the following sections is to suggest that a manifesto is more than a text: it may be a type of hospitality or an art practice. Drawing on the critical perspectives provided by Janet Lyon, Felicity Colman and Jacques Rancière, the first section examines the particular time of the manifesto and its embedded nature as well as its quality as a voice out of place. Looking at pivotal feminist manifestos, the collection gathers together writing that appears to be on the move, close to speech and action.

The manifesto's position on the edge of speech is complicated by feminism's equally marginal position. These co-ordinates make the feminist manifesto a kind of improper guest, lost within inherited revolutionary languages. This struggle with language is explored as a tie that draws the feminist manifesto close to social art practice, which is described by feminist art historian Angela Dimitrakaki as form that requires movement on our part to be brought into view. Picking up the thread of Dimitrakaki's argument the section draws a line between the poetics of social practice and of feminist manifestos, tracing recurring motifs of flight and movement that exploit the dialogic space between things.

Finally, as if drawing a circle, the first part of the collection returns to the question of time, transformed by social practice into something palpable, a medium to work with. Where time often appears as something we only ever run out of, Meirle Laderman Ukeles' lifelong practice as a Maintenance artist uncovers a different perception of time, as something interstitial that we can share. Ukeles offers both a traditional manifesto text and a nuanced social practice, which works to repeat the simple form articulated in the manifesto through many careful variations. Her work draws the reflection that not only are there manifesto-like qualities in art practice but also art-like qualities in her manifesto. In her work it is possible to see a practice that grows from a single moment of heartfelt rage to reveal a world of tiny hospitable gestures. These gestures offer a new

horizon for the manifesto form, revealing it as carefully-drawn hosting space that hides beneath an angry surface.

Timely Interventions

In the pivotal study *Manifestoes Provocations of The Modern* (1999), Janet Lyon produces a comparative, often non-chronological history, through various revolutionary discourses, from the early tracts of the Diggers and Levellers through to second wave feminist use of the form. In Lyon's analysis the manifesto genre comes to prominence in post-enlightenment Europe 'when the conditions of possibility emerged for an ideology of a universal subject with universal rights and sensibilities' (Lyon, 1999, p.3). In the face of this enlightenment hope for an inclusive society that could offer universal rights, the manifesto exposes the 'broken promises' within the ideology of modernity, marking the 'gap between democratic ideals and modern political practice' (Ibid). Writing on the strategic use of hope in feminist manifestos Felicity Colman also picks up on the form's ability to point to broken promises, this time of 'the current shape shifting capitalist society' where fulfilment is a 'permanently deferred state' (Colman, 2010 , p.389). Lyon's account of the genre locates the rhetorical power of the manifesto, in part, as a product of its relationship with history. She notes that the manifesto uses a selective historical chronicle, given from the perspective of the disenfranchised, to produce momentum in the present moment (Lyon, 1999, p.72). As Colman states 'there is a situation in history and a rejection that is enacted in the manifesto' (Colman, 2010, p.377). The manifesto produces a sense of empowerment partly by offering up a historical situation that must be answered, a set of injustices that demand a response in the present moment. By responding we produce the possibility for a different future.

In the face of these broken promises the time of the manifesto is always now (Lyon, 1999, p.203). It seems to speak self-evidently from a particular moment in history to produce action that will not be deferred. Alongside the manifesto's situatedness in a particular moment, which is cemented by its calls for change *now*, it is also, somehow, outside of time in a commanding way. It produces an interruption. Lyon offers pivotal examples of manifestos that manipulate chronological time, marking a beginning, through a list of injustices, and also producing a sense of an inevitable end brought about by the manifesto's intervention. This is cemented in language, often through the use of the future perfect tense, which asserts a different future, willed by the manifesto.

Lyon focuses on this revolutionary speaking position outside of time as constructing 'a political certainty' by 'assuming control of the language of history, the conditions of plot' (Lyon, 1999, p.60). In this way the manifesto moves from critique to affirmation providing a kind of utopic vision for an alternative future. Where Lyon speaks of certainty, Colman points to the manifesto's strategic use of hope as 'a power to affect' (Colman, 2010, p.379) and its capacity to ask *what if?* (Ibid, p.386). In this way the manifesto is perceived 'as a subject with an affective praxis' that wants to access 'the chaos of subjectivities' and understands that the question *what do you hope for the future?* is vital (Ibid). History is opened up in an affective way to produce signs of a mythical future that begins now.

This position in and out of time and between affirmation and critique are two of the many ways that the manifesto can be characterised as a form that moves *between* seemingly contradictory positions. In a similar vein to Lyon's description Colman notes that the form wants 'to take action, to intervene, to reimagine and re-configure the current forms of existence' (Colman, 2010, p.385) and that it often gains mythical status despite holding a particular political position. In this way the manifesto sits between myth and history. Whereas often the mythical timeless present is juxtaposed with particular historical time Colman suggests that in the case of the manifesto both are simultaneously present. She says 'as the manifesto form itself is iconic, it often quickly gathers mythical status in its signification of a definite political position' (Ibid, p.380).[1]

Aside from the manifesto's deployment of chronological time, which accumulates, propelling us with urgency into the present moment, Lyon also argues that the form 'disrupts the smooth temporal surface of modern history by marking for us precisely those moments when history repeats itself' (Lyon, 1999, p.204). Stylistically it echoes through time, as Colman asserts, in an iconic way, evoking through repetition of form numerous historical struggles against dominant forces and offering to 'link one's voice to countless voices of previous perpetual struggles' (Ibid, p.29). This relation to the past is to some extent the manifesto's mythic capacity, its timeless framing of the revolution as something that has happened and will happen again.

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[1] Colman refers to three particular feminist manifestos as examples of this 'type of iconicity': Valerie Solanas's *SCUM Manifesto* (1967), Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975) and Donna Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1991).

A Crack in the Order of Things

Perhaps it is the manifesto's claim to speak for the disenfranchised that makes it so appealing to feminist sensibilities. However this evocative 'atavism' produces its own difficulties, largely through its consequent connection with the gendered rhetoric of revolutionary discourse. With support from Nancy Fraser and, particularly in relation to the French Revolution, Lynn Hunt and Joan Landes, Lyon argues that the public and political spaces produced by past revolutions were explicitly gendered spheres.[2] Beyond the French Revolution Lyon highlights the limited availability of feminist subject positions within leftist discourse that recurs through time.[3] In revolutionary France the republic was symbolically associated with a rational, virtuous and manly style, in contrast to the feminised, corrupt aristocracy that it replaced. Similarly Dorinda Outram points out that the alternative symbol system of the revolution features 'a female virtue.. frequently represented in republican discourse as domestic, natural and *un*-public' (Lyon, 1999, p.65). In this way the private domestic space of the home is gendered feminine in contrast to the public and political space. Home is not considered as a revolutionary space.

The extent to which this gendered marking out of public and private space was important is illustrated by the example of Olympe de Gouges, revolutionary playwright and author of the *Declaration of the Rights of Women* (1792). De Gouges' *Declaration* acted as a biting parody of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* (1789), mimicking its form, with revisions, to highlight the hollowness of the narrative in relation to both feminism and abolitionist causes. For Lyon the success of this 'radically new' manifesto would lead to her execution, with de Gouges living out her famously stated conviction that if women can go to the scaffold then they were also entitled to go to the Assembly. Jacques Rancière uses her protest to articulate his definition of the politics of dissensus:

> 'Olympe de Gouges' argument showed that it was not possible to draw the
> border separating 'bare life' and 'political' life so clearly. At least one point

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[2] Fraser is cited as producing an influential deconstruction of idealised conceptions of a utopian public sphere, where differences can be bracketed out to produce equal exchange, by arguing that the very concept of the public is gendered masculine and consequently constitutive of always already exclusionary spaces.

[3] In this respect Lisa Tickner's work on the imagery in the Suffragette campaign is an important reference for Lyon who argues that the Suffragette campaign is neglected by discourse, deemed to be too artistic for political history and too political for art history (Tickner, 1988).

existed where 'bare' life proved to be political: when women were sentenced to death as enemies of the revolution. If they could lose their 'bare' life thanks to a politically motivated public judgment, this meant that even their bare life – their life from the standpoint of being able to be put to death - was political'. (Ranciere and Corcoran, 2015, p.69)

It follows that:

'dissensus is not a conflict of interests, opinions or values; it is a division inserted in 'common sense' a dispute about what is given and about the frame within which we see something as given.. This is what I call dissensus the putting of two worlds in one and the same world.' (Ibid)

The political then and by association a working manifesto acts as a crack in the fabric of reality. It is something interstitial, a space in-between. In the case of de Gouges her manifesto enables her to move between the spaces designated for bare life, or *zoe* and political life or *bios*. This position between bare and political life is also the one Mladen Dolar ascribes to voice as a medium in his pivotal study *A Voice and Nothing More* (2006). It relates to the ability of voice to hold meaning and additional physical qualities that relate to the body in excess of reason (With Archives, p.67). This in-between position is extremely precarious, but also dangerously elusive, both these characteristics are signified by her subsequent execution. Her precarious position is, in an extreme way, a political strength as it proves a flaw in the logic of the system, threatening to reverse the established order of things. Like voice de Gouges' manifesto occupies a double position; inside and outside of political citizenship it literally speaks against the unjust politics of the time.

To Play with Mimesis

A key feature of the feminist manifesto, exemplified by de Gouges' pivotal example, is that it takes on the language of power in order to offer a twist in the narrative. In this way it works according to Luce Irigaray's (1985) strategy of mimesis, reproducing the signs of oppression to highlight a moment of excess, a broken promise, and consequently occupying that language, passing it on and into different hands. This act of mimesis or doubling performed by the manifesto is part of the complexity belied by an

apparently transparent form. Lyon notes 'its apparent rhetorical straightforwardness obscures the degree to which the form is embedded in the contradictions of political representation' (Lyon, 1999, p.2). Colman writes 'within regulated social structures, the manifesto is a civil expression that is dependent on the political system under which it emerges for its legality' (Colman, 2010, p.376).

To be heard by the dominant ideology de Gouges must use republican rhetorical codes. This practice of mimicry walks a fine line where success, in this case for feminist rhetoric, comes at the cost of personal survival. Conversely, reflecting on Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), Lyon remarks that it ends up reproducing the values of the language of 'unmarked masculinity', without offering a difference. This ends not in the sought after re-coding of a value system but in an endorsement through language of the system she wishes to transform (Lyon, 1999, p.64). She is literally lost in the language she employs. To some extent this failure is connected to the manifesto's capacity to act as a hosting space. The manifesto functions to gather together subjectivities that feel excluded from the political and social codes of a moment, consequently it must create a sympathetic space in order to accommodate and relate to these feelings of difference in an affective way. Yet, as noted above, it must also smuggle itself into a hostile culture that seeks to refuse its claims to representation. This double function as host and improper guest marks another way that the manifesto is in-between (About Hospitality, p.2). To exist in and produce this in-between space, which can speak for many others within a hostile system it must hold things in tension, attempting to avoid either complete assimilation by the host culture or outright rejection. The manifesto's political voice rests on its ability to walk that line.

Prefigurative Politics, a different kind of *avant-garde*

Can we imagine this smuggling into language, this living in and creating a crack in the organising structure of a host culture through other forms?

Just as the feminine was positioned outside of revolutionary discourse so social art practice is considered outside of *avant-garde* trajectories for art. The two loudest art historical voices on the subject, Grant Kester (2011, 2004) and Claire Bishop (2012) offer opposing critical perspectives on social art practice. Bishop prefers art that stays within an antagonistic tradition, favouring shock tactics, whilst Kester, in a

paradoxically modernist way, advocates for art that makes a decisive break with what he considers to be an *avant-garde* position, moving instead towards slow-paced durational work. Yet both argue within a framework that places social art practice in opposition to risk, ambiguity and revolution. In contrast to this tacit understanding of practice laid out by the leading critics in the field, in 2013, Angela Dimitrakaki spoke at an event hosted by the Austrian art collective Wochenklausur, as part of the larger exhibition *ECONOMY* [4](CCA and Stills Gallery, 2013), positioning 'socially engaged art' as a highly experimental practice on an '*avant-garde* horizon' (Dimitrakaki, 2013).[5] Using terminology from Marc James Leger's *Brave New Avant-Garde* (Leger, 2012) Dimitrakaki reclaimed a place in revolutionary narratives for socially engaged artists as 'organisational and mediating platforms for realising art as pragmatism' (Dimitrakaki, 2013, p.5). Her analysis hinged on exploring the balance between visible and invisible elements in this 'pragmatic art'. At the heart of this balancing act is an important distinction between aesthetics and poetics, with socially engaged art being a form of poetics that hides itself in order to survive within the structures that it opposes:

> 'Things are not simple for this pragmatic art. To begin with, the gulf between aesthetics to poetics, that is from "sensory experience" (aesthetics) to "making", which involves "doing" (poetics) is not always adequately appreciated.. I am referring to the fundamental etymological distinction between something that is done to you (and stimulates your senses) and something that you do (which may or may not stimulate your or anybody else's senses but that makes you responsible for effecting change).' (Ibid, p.5)

The poetics of 'socially engaged art' lies in its refusal to follow the model laid out in spectatorship culture where a passive audience receives and is stimulated by a cultural message. Instead poetics is an ambiguous, open-ended form of subjective exchange, which involves a less hierarchical relationship. It exists between speaking positions and sets off a chain of actions around shared subjectivity. In this way it evokes an organisation of social relationships where things are held and developed in common.[6] It

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[4] This large exhibition in two parallel institutions included over 30 different artist contributions around the core subject Economy.

[5] Quotations are from the paper *The Avant-Garde Horizon: Socially Engaged Art, Capitalism and Contradiction* presented on 3 March 2013 in CCA Glasgow with Austrian collective Wochenklausur. The public forum was organised in the context of the *ECONOMY* exhibition and the paper was later made available on Academia.edu.

[6] Referencing Costas Douzinas and Slavoj Žižek's analysis in *The Idea of Communism* (2010), Dimitrakaki also points out a distinction between socialism and communism where 'socialism is

is exactly this insistence that *we* act rather than be acted upon that is so central to the manifesto, occupying and rewriting the narrative of history, enacting an affective politics through the language of shared hopes. Given the historical position of women this poetic language of commons is further complicated. Feminist manifestos operate as uninvited *visitors* to the so-called common public and political arena, they are outsiders even to revolutionary discourse, entering from isolated positions in private and domestic space. From these positions shared hopes are not taken for granted but must be negotiated tentatively. This need for negotiation and dialogue has led feminist manifestos to take up a more complicated position in relation to voice, opening up the form to deliver multi-voiced and dialogic forms. These innovations, arguably brought about by women's outsider status, bring feminist manifestos near to Dimitrakaki's horizon for socially engaged practice, which also pivots on principles of dialogue and negotiation.

Like the manifestos, Dimitrakaki asserts that this pragmatic art struggles with language. Where Lyon relates a historical struggle for feminist manifestos to be included within revolutionary discourse, Dimitrakaki sees socially engaged art smuggle itself into the quantitative paradigm of neoliberalism. She diagnoses a system that fosters 'a competitive funding culture where narratives of measurable success are winners' (Ibid, p.5). Projects gain visibility, which is a prerequisite for artistic survival, because their interventions are perceived as successful. Visibility is negotiated within a value system that works through quantification, demanding measurable outcomes. Instead of offering critique of this situation from a transcendental vantage point, social art is embedded, offering, as a manifesto does, a situated narrative from within this culture, getting its 'hands dirty' with various institutions including funding bodies, government organisations, and in some cases the police.[7] What the success story narrative serves to obscure, Dimitrakaki asserts, is the elements of risk taking, lack of measure and possible failure at the heart of the praxis. It is these elements that allow for a definition of socially engaged art as revolutionary praxis.

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understood in terms of the state being owner of the means of production and with communism understood as a return of the means of production to the common'. It could be added that Sheila Rowbotham draws similar distinctions in *Beyond the Fragments* (1979) where her contribution argues in detail against a Leninist inspired model that allows for a central Party detached from experiential knowledge and leading social change.

[7] The reference made to the police is resonant with Suzanne Lacy's practice. She worked extensively with the police force in Oakland to realise long-term durational projects and performances including *The Roof is on Fire* (1993-94) and *No Blood No Foul* (1996).

Perceived as a form of poetics 'socially engaged art' is less about success or failure and more about allowing for new ways to imagine living together. These imaginative possibilities could in fact be reframed as forms of a 'prefigurative politics', a term used by Sheila Rowbotham in her 1979 contribution to the collection of essays *Beyond the Fragments: Feminism and The Making of Socialism* (Rowbotham et al., 1979, p.219). Rowbotham's contribution *The Women's Movement and Organising for Socialism* argues for the radical importance of initiatives like self-help projects and consciousness-raising groups (CR), first developed within the women's movement in Britain, to the left-wing project for social change.[8] Answering a critique that is similarly levelled at socially engaged projects, that initiatives like self-help groups ease the necessary pressure that should be applied to the state in demands for resources, Rowbotham argues for a radical reimagining of the power structures within politics. She suggests that instead of a detached Party or state that can run things from above, 'untouchable and apart', people with experiential knowledge on the ground should be in control of resources.[9] In the women's movement we see the same assertion of a situated and embedded politics as is picked up and continued in social art practice. Describing prefigurative politics as an organisational form developed within feminism, Rowbotham continues:

> 'Conscious-raising, therapy and self-help will imply that we want change now. They are involved in making something which might become a means of making something more. They do not assume that we will one day in the future suddenly come to control how we produce, distribute and divide goods and services and this will rapidly and simply make us new human beings. They see the struggle for survival and control as part of the here and now.' (Ibid, p.226)

This desire for change now echoes the manifesto position. What the women's movement suggests is an end to detached, top-down politics. This alternative politics is more than a critique of the current system. It works on subjectivity through embedded action and involves being able to come together to perceive or imagine an alternative culture in which different values exist. In this way prefigurative politics, like manifestos, contains both critique and affirmation. Initiatives like consciousness-raising are manifestos, providing a hosting space for these imaginative possibilities.

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[8] Key examples of self-help groups include Women's Aid, Women's Health and Rape Crisis.
[9] Rowbotham's analysis, written in 1979, includes a detailed discussion of left-wing politics that still heavily references Russian forms of communist thought. Reference to the Party is made in relation to the Leninist ideal where a vanguard group of professional intellectuals lead the revolution.

Dimitrakaki's talk ended on a little known project called *Egnathia* (2013), which took place in various locations in the Balkans and was concerned with collective memory and dialogue through the narration of migrant experiences. Although this form of sharing, a kind of consciousness-raising, hardly proved adequate to face the historical circumstances in the region, it was nonetheless an encounter that opened up the imagination to other possible ways of living. She moved to suggest the project as a horizon of intersubjective exchange that may not be visible from our particular standpoint. In order to see it she challenged the audience in the CCA to take a shared risk and go higher 'to see more of this world and embrace fear of falling' (Dimitrakaki, 2013, p.6).[10] Dimitrakaki's evocative metaphor of the horizon offers the suggestion that the language in which we frame art changes its form, asserting the revolutionary potential of a practice depends on its ability to spark other similar actions. This is of course also the revolutionary potential held by the manifesto. Dimitrakaki narrates social practice as an unfinished process, suggesting that the extent to which it is revolutionary is in our hands and depends on our responses to it.

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[10] This perspective is particularly interesting coming from an art historian who has written a critique on the exhibition structures and more broadly on representation as a paradigm. Arguing that the exhibition is the place where socially engaged art is tamed along traditional art historical lines: 'The exhibition form is typically where co-operative labour succumbs to authorship and where the organising activity of the artist (or artist collectives) amounts to "ownership" of the artwork – first by the artist.'

Catalogue cover to the exhibition *Social Strategies by Women Artists* (1980). Image reproduced with the permission of The Women's Art Library, Goldsmiths.

A Core Orientation

Thirty-three years prior to Dimitrakaki and Lloyd's co-curated exhibition, *ECONOMY* (2013), a show curated by Lucy Lippard called *Issue*: *Social Strategies by Women Artists* (1980) also linked the compulsion to work in a social way and towards political change more broadly to a number of feminist practices. Lippard's exhibition was large in scope including, for example, the very different conceptual paths of Jenny Holzer's street works alongside Mary Kelly's *The Postpartum Document* (1973–79). Given Lippard's foregrounding of the social in feminist practice it is interesting to consider Martha Rosler's assertion, many years later in *Women Artists at the Millennium,* that feminist ambitions to revolutionise art along social lines had been portrayed as 'agitating only for themselves: white, middle class women' (Armstrong and de Zegher, 2006, p.142). To Rosler artists with a specifically feminist orientation offer up a broader, ecological politics and significant critique of communication and commodity culture. Exhibitions

like Lippard's reveal feminism as a significant precedent for social art practice. Yet to Rosler this precedent is obscured by art historical definitions and containment of feminism as a single-issue category. Rosler continues that currently 'avoiding the label of feminism is a strategy, conscious or not, and does not necessarily speak to the content of one's work, character, or attitudes and beliefs' (Ibid). Feminism could be inherent in a practice without being acknowledged, yet, she warns, this kind of historical blindness could 'impede criticality and cohesiveness' (Ibid). One question for this research is: does the field of social practice represent this phenomenon, taking up feminist methodologies without acknowledging or sometimes even without knowledge of a feminist history of practice? Could forgetfulness of this history lead to a loss of criticality?

The 'issues' in Lippard's show attest to broader feminist concerns, addressing 'racism, imperialism, nuclear war, starvation and inflation' (Harris, 2004, p.114), all of which reappear in *ECONOMY* (2013) along with a number of socially engaged artists, still decidedly quiet about any feminist affiliations. [11] In relation to these practices Dimitrakaki suggests that the exhibition space is typically the place where socially engaged art is distorted by traditional art historical standards around authorship and ownership. In order to perceive the revolutionary potential of practice she suggests we need to reimagine the exhibition space. Three feminist artists that pioneered this kind of reimagination were Su Richardson, Monica Ross and Kate Walker, experimenting with the form through radical, collaborative projects like *Feministo* (1975-77) (With Archives, pp.15-17). The artists also explored the question of new forms for art for new content, in a travelling co-operative installation called *Fenix* (1980). In *Fenix* the artists continued themes evident in their earlier collaborations, working together to produce installations and durational performances, using a monochrone scheme to reflect the distance between their collaborative practice and the 'usual lonely way' artists work.

Reading through the collaged-style pamphlets from the *Fenix* project housed at the Women's Art Library (With Archives, pp.46-59) shows an awkward fit between the artists' work and the predefined structures of art world classification. It is this awkward fit that gives the work its manifesto quality as well as making it a significant precedent for contemporary social art practice. *Fenix's* dialogic styled text reveals a struggle with the 'pressurized container' produced by an art history dominated by the single universal

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[11] In the *ECONOMY* forum (2013) social practice artists Wochenklausur were asked about their relation to feminism given the nature of their intervention, which focused on a group of women, and their own status as female artists. Their response was to smile and assert that the fact that all artists on the project were women was a coincidence.

male artist. The artists resist categorisation asserting that to fit into predefined agendas is insufficient, being merely a form of 'gliding' rather than 'flying'. Instead flying represents a challenge to the structural definitions that hold up the system. It is posited as a kind of art world revolution narrated by their manifesto pamphlet. As in other manifestos there is a struggle with language where simply gliding is equated with assimilation.
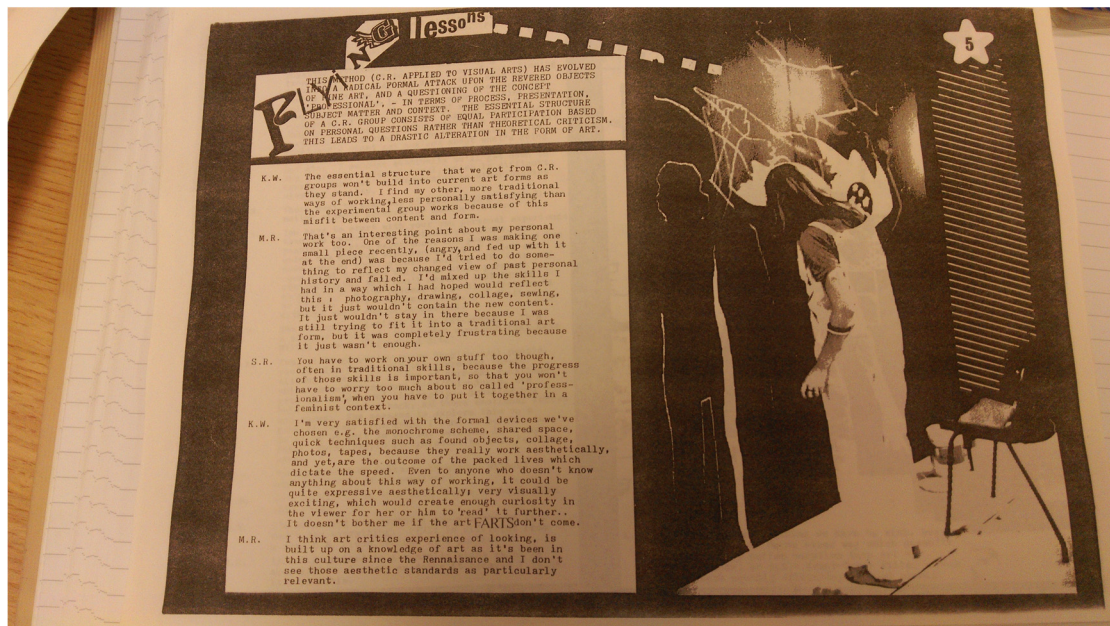

Photo from a *Fenix* publication. Image reproduced with the permission of The Women's Art Library, Goldsmiths.

In contrast flying is a 'transformation process'. Like a manifesto it offers a different viewpoint and a methodology that changes the systems it enters. They describe it as a visual and symbolic equivalent to the personal revelations and 'group energy' to throw off oppression, discovered within consciousness-raising. Walker says:

> 'K.W.   The essential structure that we got from C.R. groups won't build into the current art forms as they stand. I find my other, more traditional ways of working less personally satisfying because of this misfit between subject and form.' (Ibid)

CR was an essential form of activism developed in the women's movement that worked to bring isolated individuals together to discover shared or common ground. In small groups women gathered to narrate personal stories from everyday life. Much like social

art practice CR functioned through the creation of 'safe spaces' in order to enable a sense of common ground between people. Through shared moments a broader understanding of oppressive circumstances emerged between women, enabling political solidarity to develop. The now iconic slogan 'the personal is political', could be seen to emerge from initiatives like CR. [12] Through the creation of solidarity CR came to perform one of the key functions of a manifesto – uniting people to create change. It also transformed the manifesto into a dialogic process sowing the seeds for the development of social art practice.

Writing on her involvement in a group called West Village, Susan Brownmiller reflected that not only was CR the women's movement's most successful form of 'female bonding' but also 'the source of most of its creative thinking' (Brownmiller, 2000, p.79). Given this creative potential it is no surprise that *Fenix* artists were keen to incorporate it into their work, realising that it would irrevocably change its shape. Through this sentiment, activism appears to thread its way into art practice as a crack in a field still largely defined by formalist concerns, prefiguring the type of pragmatic art that aims at social transformations. Where politics and art had been decidedly separate, the use of CR by the artists, on a 'symbolic plane' (Ibid, p.5), became an act of dissensus (Rancière, 2015), placing the separate worlds of art and politics together just as CR elided the personal and the political.

There is a remarkable similarity between methodologies described by the *Fenix* artists and those used currently in social art practice including diary and notebook format, found objects, documentary sociology, collage and photos. Participation is also discussed, including when it becomes exploitative as a kind of lip service to make art *seem* more accessible. They express a need to work quickly in a race against other bare life imperatives like childcare, time off from teaching, loss of pay etc. This precarious position is similar to that found in early feminist manifestos. They are in flight, referencing butterflies, they move between things, refusing to be 'pinned down' (Su Richardson, *Fenix* documentation, p.10). This movement reflects a practice that doesn't want to be placed in a category but instead make a space for itself.

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[12] The phrase 'the personal is political' was popularised by Carol Hanisch who used the term in 1970 in a journal article. She however disavows authorship of the phrase – claiming it to be collectively authored by millions of women in public and private conversations.

Flying not Gliding

'She doesn't speak, she throws her trembling body forward, she flies, all of her passes into voice.' (Cixous, 1976, p.881)

The use of flight terminology is acknowledged overtly by Walker as a reference to literature and particularly the 'collaged, incidental' approach of Kate Millet. Another possible reference is to Hélène Cixous whose influential manifesto *The Laugh of Medusa* (1976) also alights on the term *voler* with its evocative double meaning to take flight or to steal. In Cixous flying is equated with the immediacy and physical presence of voice. It is a manifesto text that is close to the sounds of speech, it is present, 'bearing the mark of its time', (Cixous, 1976, p.875) and attempts, like the fenix artists, to steal the plot from history. Cixous' manifesto is also concerned with being caught within discourses, including those of reason, psychoanalysis and the mirror which all involve holding still while you are diagnosed 'so we can paint your portrait and you can begin to look like it right away' (Ibid, p.892). [13]

In response to this situation Cixous proposes a poetic turning around from the inside:

> 'If woman has always functioned "within" the discourse of man, a signifier that has always referred back to the opposite signifier which annihilates its specific energy and diminishes or stifles its very different sounds, it is time for her to dislocate this "within," to explode it, turn it around, and seize it; to make it hers, containing it, taking it in her own mouth, biting that tongue with her very own teeth to invent for herself a language to get inside of.' (Ibid, p.887)

This visceral, embodied description exemplifies the feminist assertion that women produce situated responses from *within* an alien culture that fails to recognise their specific sounds. From this position the introduction of a new language is explosive. For Cixous poetry is particularly significant because of its relationship with the unconscious - that 'other limitless' country where 'the repressed manage to survive' (Ibid, p.880). She suggests that this new language will not be contained within the oppressive systems she rallies against. She describes a kind of 'becoming' that 'comes-in-between' (Ibid, p.893). In this way Cixous' writing suggests later theoretical work by Rosi Braidotti, situated with Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of becoming as an affirmative relational praxis (Audio Archive, HW.003). Cixous posits writing as a relational process of exchange from

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[13] She states: 'Nearly the entire history of writing is confounded with the history of reason' (Ibid, p.879).

one subject to another. An act of giving that disrupts property:

> 'jumbling the order of space, in disorienting it, in changing around the furniture, dislocating things and values, breaking them all up, emptying structures, and turning propriety upside down.' (Ibid, p.887)

In this way Cixous seems to describe an occupation, a kind of squatting. This metaphor is also comparable to the place a manifesto occupies in a host culture and is apt in relation to feminism for its use of the domestic space (With Archives, p.47). She also emphasises fragility as a force, associated with voice, challenging expectations. Cixous takes on the language of essentialism, which places women as the weaker sex, and turns it on its head, by realising the communicative power in fragility. Cixous describes a 'moving, open and transitional space'. This type of space is reproduced by the *Fenix* installation with its rough, *in situ* work that has to be made quickly due to precarious life conditions.

Richardson, Walker and Ross arguably take Cixous' manifesto to the next level by producing a form of writing that is itself a dialogue between multiple speech positions. Their conversation, preserved in the archive, overlays images and metaphors that spill into personal concerns occupying a place between an iconic manifesto and the harder to see poetics that Dimitrakaki identifies in contemporary social practice.

A Moving Form

In *Differencing the Canon* (1999) Griselda Pollock writes on feminism's encounter with the canon, laying out different positions. The first could be seen as effecting change from within and made up of attempts to insert women into the canon of art history, filling in the missing histories of female artists, plugging 'gaps in the archive' (Pollock, 1999, p.25). The second position goes about revaluing traditions of art making that have fallen outside canonical values, setting up a resistance from outside, voicing women's difference from the margins and 'valorising the feminine sphere' (Ibid, p.26). Though Pollock gives credit to the work made up by each of these positions she also concedes that both leave the deeply problematic, exclusive structure that is art history intact.[14] In response to this difficulty Pollock presents a third position, 'an oppositional signifying

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[14] Pollock describes the story of art as 'an illustrated story of man' (Ibid, p.25).

space that we call the women's movement' (Ibid). She argues that 'the play on the word movement allows us to keep in mind the political collectivity in which feminist work must be founded' (Ibid). This emphasis on collectivity speaks to Rosler's objections to definitions of feminism as the demand for women's individual entry into pre-defined art historical spaces. Collectivity is an essential component of both the manifesto, which seeks to engender collective responses, and social art practice, which defies the vision of the artist alone in the studio.

Pollock alights on the word movement as significant, signifying a practice. She goes on to equate this notion of movement with that which the eye makes, a re-visioning in Adriene Rich's terms, that re-reads the texts of our culture for the things that are missing or outside the frame. In this third position, Pollock asserts, feminism isn't confined to a place apart but enacts 'a movement across discourse and its institutional bases, across the texts of culture and its psychic foundations' (Ibid, p.26). The fear of containment is repeated and converted into a process of making meaning that is produced in the spaces between. Pollock sees feminism working between discourses through a relational form of understanding. This understanding is also at work in the collective politics of feminist manifestos working between people to create a common ground.
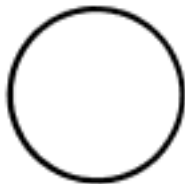

Image from Monique Wittig's *Les Guérillères* (1969).

Writing on Wittig's vision/utopian/manifesto/poetic narrative *Les Guérillères* (1969), Lyon notices a similar strategy employed by the book's central revolutionary figures, the ungendered lesbians at the heart of the text. She writes:

'Their method is one of un-ceasing movement, self-revision, camouflage patterns, new names, endless relocations, strategies of disorder, demystification. They resist in other words the discursive interpellations that would identify them either within social taxonomies or as anti-collective individuals.' (Lyon, 1999, p.189)

Wittig's figures are positioned in-between the equally oppressive forms of individualism and collective identity. Instead the text reconfigures both these forms in a similar manner to the slogan the 'personal is political'. Describing Wittig's 'Utopian manifesto' (Ibid, p.194), Lyon writes 'the exhortation to collectivity preserves, in other words, the integrity of each potential member of the group' (Ibid, p.189). So feminism rewrites the traditional politics of left-wing thinking where solidarity requires individual and personal sacrifice. This balancing act between oppositional forms in Wittig is a semiotic revolution that works through movement. Her figures are always moving away from the process of institutionalisation that threatens revolution. Lyon uses the metaphor of fabric to describe this new (dis)order, playing with the spinning metaphors that run throughout the text, she says 'each time the revolution threatens to become institutionally legible the warriors pull loose the thread that unravels it' (Ibid, p.193). This emphasis on moving forms has a long legacy in feminist manifestos. In reading Donna Haraway's *Manifesto for Cyborgs* (Haraway, 1991) written fifteen years later it is impossible not to hear echoes of Wittig's poetics in Haraway's part sci-fi, part socialist critique. Haraway gathers together subjectivities under the sign of the cyborg form, a non-gendered, non-totalising hybrid that works to disrupt global capitalism. She describes this cyborg as moving evocatively between destructive and reconstructive actions, its voice is embodied becoming a:

'powerful infidel heteroglossia..bound in a spiral dance that means both building and destroying machines, identities, categories, relationships, space stories.' (Ibid, p.491)

Does this movement translate into social art practice? How does it influence the manifesto form? One artist who specifically works with the metaphor of movement to describe the operation of her practice is Chu Chu Yuan, who like many other social practice artists could be said to work within the medium of 'time and collectivity'

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(Jackson, 2011, p.14).[15] In order to think about how the category of feminist manifestos can be considered as an expanded form, with certain art practices functioning to similar effects, I would like to use this evocation of movement across time to alight on a particular work by the artist.

Chu works in a collaborative partnership with Jay Koh to produce interventions and negotiations for change that work with the fabric of the everyday. This everyday focus acknowledges what is realised in CR; that changes in consciousness are driven by an ability to relate situations of oppression to personal experiences. Their working practice recognises that successful interventions must be embedded in the political structures they oppose. This process of producing situated responses is accompanied by awareness of small accumulative effects and repetition that play an important role in political work on consciousness. Consequently the artists work over long periods in order to gain contextual understanding and develop relationships. Over time Chu describes a negotiation between participants and their context in order to produce the necessary 'movement' for change. Chu displays a similar wariness of systems and social processes that lead to a feeling of being pinned down and unable to act.

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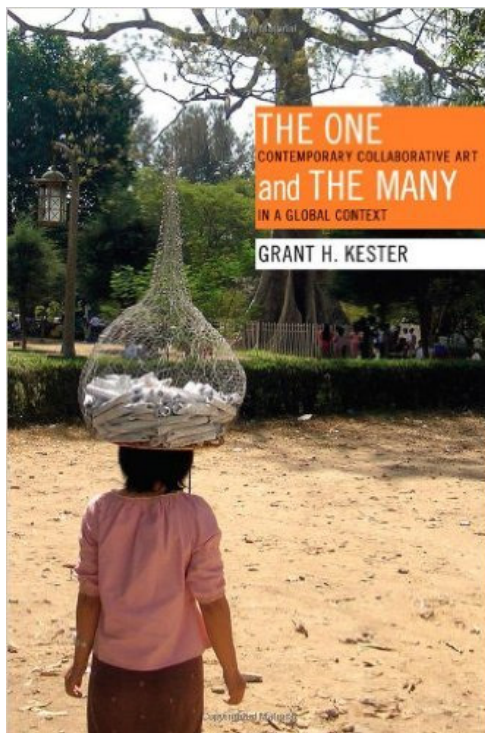
[15] In a section entitled immersion and mobility Chu puts the body in motion at the heart of her ideas on negotiation, writing: 'The mobility of the body-subject on a ground of experience is necessary for knowing and grasping what is perceived' (Chu, p30).

Image from Chu Chu Yuan *An offering of mind* (2005). Front cover of Grant Kester's *The One and The Many* (2011).

What do you hope for?

If Colman asserts that the manifesto understands the importance of asking *what do you hope for?* A similar awareness is evident in Chu's practice, which often uses a process of open-ended questions to initiate collaborative action. This questioning action, a dialogic back and forth initiated by the artist, could be seen as the necessary movement needed to trigger changes in consciousness. One important example of this is the piece *Offering of the Mind* (2005) performed by the artist and collaborators as part of a performance art festival organised by the arts organisation NICA, a collaborative platform based in Myanmar (Burma) initiated by Chu with her collaborative partner Jay Koh . The work involved collaboration with a range of different individuals including a retired police officer, a housewife/writer, a professional woman and a noodle vendor. As part of a dialogic process they were asked to write down their 'strongest wishes, hopes or thoughts' (Kester, 2011, p.150). These offerings were then placed in a wire mesh headpiece and worn in various places that related to the personal histories of participants. With reference to the Burmese Buddhist practice of donating gold to embellish sites of worship, the headpiece took on the contours of a stupa, the monumental Buddhist shrine. In this way the site-specific performance referenced the practice of offering something in order to secure spiritual wellbeing in the next life. In interview with Grant Kester, who uses the work as the front cover to his 2011 exploration of social and dialogic practice, Chu asserts the symbolic importance of the performance for NICA's work overall:

> 'This project functions as a visual representation of NICA's work in Myanmar: to encourage and cultivate the development, propagation and application of knowledge and ideas in the present. This becomes an offering of mind, in contrast to the offering of gold: to be applied in the present, in contrast to the ideology of gaining merit for one's next life.' (Ibid, p.152)

The performance expresses the wish for justice *now* rather than something deferred. The stupa form gathers together a number of subjectivities in public space. In order to

produce the work participants have shared a personal journey arriving at these different desires not accommodated by the system of power they enter. This wish, which sits close to the manifesto's demands in relation to time, acts against the government's desire for a passive and fatalistic population, happy to accept a ruling elite as somehow supported by actions in a past life. Kester notes that the risk entailed by the performance is considerable. It takes place in an oppressive state where 'expressive autonomy' is normally something individuals can only share privately in 'family minded' groups. Consequently documentation of participants shows them from behind, a detail that only adds to the fact that, like what is hoped for, we cannot see what they face ahead of them. Kester continues, marking out what Rancière might term an act of dissensus:

> 'The *Offering of Mind* performance thus exists on a continuum with other, more overt, gestures of resistance marked by the occupation of public space. It collapses, if only briefly, the division between the quiescent self-presentation demanded by the state and the normally privatized realm of expressive autonomy.' (Kester, 2011, p.151)

By sharing these personal desires in the public realm Chu's performative practice exists in direct relationship to the feminist manifestos at the heart of this chapter. It moves through a disciplined public space. It prompts the question of what moves us and gathers the responses together to form an elusive collectivity, acting as a form of consciousness-raising for all involved.
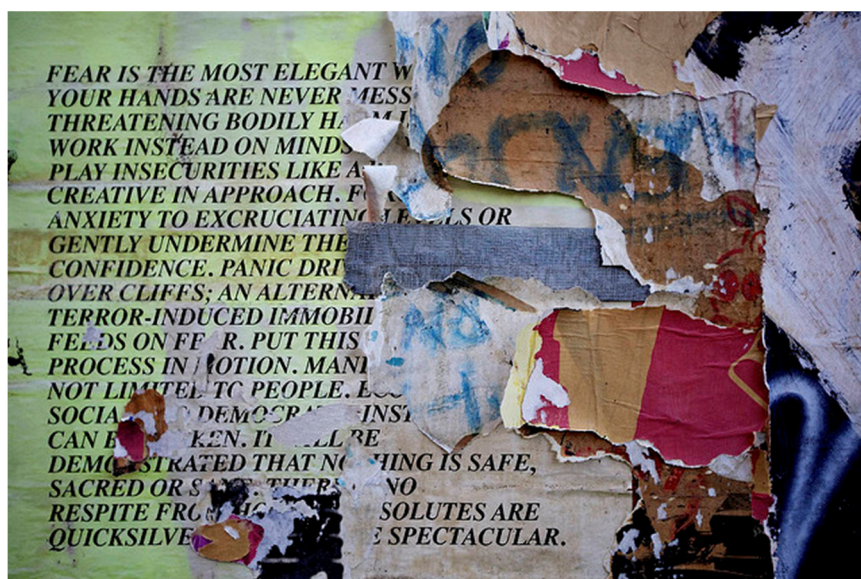
Jenny Holzer *Inflammatory Essay Series* (1978). Image sourced from Creative Commons.

Between Rage and Utopia

'they say, the language you speak is made up of words that are killing you' (Wittig, 1971, p.114)

Rage

So far I have drawn a picture of the feminist manifesto as a form on the move, working in-between apparently oppositional positions to negotiate a new affective relationship through the poetics of the form. One recurring opposition that plays out in the manifesto is between the deconstructive and the reconstructive or what I refer to as the poles of affirmation and critique. Often affirmation takes the form of a prefigurative politics that works from embedded positions to suggest different possible worlds. These utopian suggestions grow in and out of gaps created by the surfacing of repressed voices. Acknowledging the repressed is a form of feminist critique, a politics of dissensus, that must smuggle itself into the very systems it opposes in order to make change.

It is this ability to move between things to create political consciousness that artist Jenny Holzer sees in the manifesto form, leading her to compose the *Inflammatory Essay Series* (1979-82). Speaking on the manifesto Holzer draws attention to this position in-between, naming it as an awkward coupling of rage and utopia:

> 'I tried to figure out what kind of discursive art form would be uneasy and hot and I went to the manifesto..I wanted to move between, or include both sides of manifesto-making, one being the scary side where it's an inflamed rant to no good end, and then the positive side, when it is the most deeply felt description of how the world should be.' (Lyon, 1999, p. 198)

In that description the twin peaks of modern manifesto writing from Valerie Solanas' *SCUM* (1967) (About Archives, pp.20-21) to Hélène Cixous' *Laugh of Medusa* (1976) present themselves. The essays, written just after her first textual experiments with the one liner in the form of the *Truisms* (1978-87) series, were a collection of 100-word texts, printed on different coloured paper and posted throughout New York City. The Holzer studio writes of the work:

> 'Like any manifesto, the voice in each essay urges and espouses a strong and particular ideology. By masking the author of the essays, Holzer allows the

viewer to assess ideologies divorced from the personalities that propel them. With this series, Holzer invites the reader to consider the urgent necessity of social change, the possibility for manipulation of the public, and the conditions that attend revolution.' (Statement provided by the Holzer studio sourced from Lucarelli, 2013) [16]

These texts, described by Lyon as 'eviscerated' manifestos (Lyon, 1999, p.198), mimic political rhetoric without being attached to any particular position or ideology. In a way they provide an interesting counterpoint to the expanded, situated and embodied manifestos that this thesis suggests. Holzer exploits the dramatic tension in a form that attempts to hold together oppositional elements, the manifesto's small 'margin of error - between social praxis and lunacy' (Lyon, 1999, p.201). The 'we' position, so important in manifesto history and complicated by feminism's outsider position in revolutionary discourse, is abandoned in the individual essays. As the title suggests all the rage of the political is present in the *Inflammatory Essays* but it is not the emotive desire to belong to a position that is compelling but language itself. Fragments of text jump out to be shared either in heartfelt agreement or in a move of extreme ironic detachment. Sentiments expressed in different essays contradict each other so that reading becomes an uncertain occupation. Power, which takes shape as an ideological voice through accumulating words, makes us uncomfortable precisely because it moves around. It is also compelling. By putting the series together Holzer shows that the form can be used in countless situations, by numerous speakers.

Language becomes abstract in Holzer's hands so that we no longer recognise or feel secure in the promises it makes. In this way Holzer creates a gap. Lyon calls this gap a catachrestic rhetoric – denoting something in language that there is no name for, an abuse of words or to use Gayatri Spivak's definition, an abusive rhetoric of 'master words' that claims to represent something, say for example woman or proletariat, that there are no true examples of (Morton, 2003, p.45). To produce this rhetoric Holzer performs the task with 'a stolen pen and palimpsest, decoding and recoding inherited discourse' (Lyon, 1999, p.203). Through this possibly cyborgian work, Holzer asserts that domination in language is disguised and pervasive. In the upper anonymous forms of the official public venue and the lower anonymous forms of the street it takes on a neutral voice that resists categorisation - leading Jo Anna Isaak to assert that 'language is clearly the institution Holzer felt most endangered by' (Isaak, 1996, p.39).

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[16] This statement floats free on the internet, quoted on numerous sites that approach the manifestos.

The essay series mimics this domination. In an interview with Bruce Ferguson Holzer states:

> 'I always try to make my voice unidentifiable, I wouldn't want it to be isolated as a woman's voice because I found that when things are categorized they tend to be dismissed. I find it better to have no particular associations attached to voice in order for it to be perceived as true.' (Ferguson, p.45)

In this way Holzer speaks very much as a woman, from the perspective of an artist who belongs to a sex that has been subjected to categorisation, representing the particular and the personal, as opposed to speaking from a universal position occupied by the great male artist.

This complicated relationship to authorial voice has led some critics to read the work as pushing beyond conceptualism's dematerialisation of the art object to the dematerialisation of the author. And yet later in the same interview Holzer denies the loss of self that such a reading suggests: 'I do want my voice to be heard and yes it's a woman's voice' (Holzer et al., 1988, p.45).

What this double position evokes, this voice, 'which is not one', is a kind of guerrilla warfare that resists being in one place (Irigaray et al., 1985). Instead the essays play with the borders of identity construction often approaching abjection, whether through references to food and vomit, what Julia Kristeva terms 'the most elementary and the most archaic form of abjection' (Kristeva, 1982, p.2), or in the more general calls to self-ruin and scorn.[17] The content of the essays fluctuates, proving unsettling through a play of attraction and revulsion and meeting Kristeva's descriptions of 'a vortex of summons and repulsion that places the one haunted by it literally beside himself' (Ibid, p.1). The individual displays of abjection that pepper the text are replicated over the series which seems to draw you towards the place where meaning collapses:

> 'there is nothing like the abjection of the self to show that all abjection is in fact recognition of the *want* on which any being, meaning, language, or desire is founded.' (Kristeva and Roudiez, 1982 p.5)

More specifically what is collapsed is the universal and unified subject position. In Kristeva's writing this is the 'I' whose borders are troubled by difference. Here language

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[17] Particularly strong examples of this sentiment include statements in individual essays like 'ruin your fucking self before they do' and 'destroy superabundance' which asserts it's 'a question of form as much as function. It's a matter of revulsion.'

becomes tangible, fleshy. Reading Holzer the language of power is given form offering a view of totality from outside.

Utopia?

So far what is apparent about Holzer's work is its function as critique. Where and how does it balance this with something more hopeful? Holzer's affirmation arises in an unexpected place, right on the point of uncertainty and crisis. She plays carefully with language drawing different ideologies together into a singular form to drive home the point that claims to truth and identity are constructed in a fundamentally relational way. Seemingly positive, universal values are incomplete and supported by invisible negative definitions. The performance of multiple texts pulls the rug from under language. In this process Holzer's voice, the voice of a woman, within a culture where women have often been given invisible support roles, is silent and yet heard. It is no longer simply a negative value that gains definition in relation to something positive. In this way Spivak's reading of an 'affirmative deconstruction' resonates. Writing on feminism's relationship to deconstruction, Spivak describes 'a paradoxical way of saying yes to the text' that entails 'understanding from within' (Spivak, 1993, p.144). Spivak accepts Derrida's borrowing of the name woman to define a decentered subject because of the potential it could open up towards 'unknown horizons' (Ibid). She calls this a negotiation:

> 'it is in the spirit of negotiation that I propose to give assent to Derrida's text about woman as a name for the nontruth of truth, upon the broader terrain of negotiation with other established structures, daily practiced but often disavowed, like the law, institutional education and, ultimately, capitalism. Negotiation not collaboration; producing a new politics through critical intimacy.' (Ibid)

The extent to which Holzer's work is more than a deconstruction comes in the relationship to movement. Just as the manifesto is seen to *move between* things so Holzer's work moves between critical narratives; where text is emphasised, conceptualism is foregrounded while other critics like Hal Foster (1982) and Jeanne Siegal (1985) emphasise context with the later seeing the site-specific parallels between art and the real world as important for the work's criticality. The works don't stay in the gallery or on the street. They move, 'sensing real danger from forces like institutions, for example' (Holzer et al., 1988, p.113). Where an ideological position asserts a unified and

fixed meaning, Holzer's tactic is contrastingly open to context. On writing *Truisms* Holzer says:

> 'I just kept going I didn't dare to think of a reaction to them, but I hoped they would mean something to somebody. At that stage I wanted to stay in motion.' (Holzer in Joselit et al., 1998, p.23)

As well as implying openness and movement the quote is telling in that it doesn't attempt to think of a response and consequently doesn't enact a simple reversal of the ideological fixings that it tries to destabilise. Instead it suggests a different relationship to audience. There is no attempt to place people into 'us' and 'them' categories. This is an alternative way of being in the world; a moving relational model not based on unequal power relationships. It finds articulation in the moving light box texts and differently when the *Truism* series finds a home in the interactive website *Please change beliefs* (1995). The multiplicity of the works, reproduced in different contexts, offer endless possible readings echoing the sentiment that where all is lost, all is also possible (Audio Archive HW.003, AW.003). These are works that can be encountered unexpectedly, that seem out of place, that allow you to stop for a moment out of time. The chaos of voices that meets us when we pause in the face of the work creates a kind of hope that seeks to embrace the precarious position. The kind of collectivity evoked by Holzer's work is a far cry from solidarity. Instead she creates an uncertain community. We are linked to each other through the foundations of this shared uncertainty, which turns out to be an effective survival tactic in intolerable times.

Intransitive Writing

'Everything written today unveils either the possibility or impossibility of reading and rewriting history.' (Kristeva, 1980, p.86)

In a talk at the ici in Berlin Rosi Braidotti (2014) advocates an affirmative relational philosophy that offers situated rather than transcendental responses. She moves away from philosophical precedents founded on theories of lack, what she calls a melancholic tradition, including the work of Judith Butler, Jacques Derrida, Emmanuel Levinas and others. Despite this suggested move she asserts we cannot do without the work done on this subject within that tradition. More particularly she affirms Lacan's work on language in the context of psychoanalysis as absolutely necessary and, in places, making

a radical feminist contribution (Ibid, 36 mins). In speaking on language she describes 'intransitive writing', which is co-extensive with living and breathing. Writing for Braidotti is 'a mode of inscription into life, a way of formatting the intensity of life' (Ibid, 31.24 mins) that is the most democratic from. It is this kind of writing that is evidenced in Holzer's work, writing as survival and more than that writing as a methodology that works to turn understandings around lack and negativity into a different way of being in the world. Drawing on the work of Irigaray and Derrida, Braidotti describes language as a structure that is constitutive, a code that precedes you and contains the rules of power. For Braidotti we must negotiate with language, this negotiation is 'the beginning of a different way of conceptualising the job of becoming a subject' (Ibid). Holzer's multiple texts offer that beginning. In the face of power they suggest an alternative, moving and relational way to be in the world.

It is in this openness to context and negotiation with structures of power that Holzer's work contains the seeds of social praxis. Her manifestos are dialogic, they accrue meaning in a social way. It is this aspect that recalls Julia Kristeva's exploration in *Desire in Language* (1981) of Bakhtin's term dialogism: an implicitly transgressive, spatial and poetic operation that is distinct from the monological in its social aspect – meaning is constructed between speaking positions. In Bakhtin dialogic language is spatial, operating both horizontally, between subject positions, and vertically through intertextual conversations over time. Bakhtin embeds texts in their historical and social contexts, which can also be seen as texts to be re-written. In this way Holzer supplements Pollock's concept of re-reading texts to suggest re-writing them.[18] In the possibility of re-writing, history sheds its hierarchical, linear structure becoming something dialogic that speakers can participate in. The horizontal function of words allows them to belong to both the reader and writer, which is important also for political manifestos in order to engender a sense of collaborative empowerment. Having multiple sites of belonging, words have multiple resonances. Holzer recognizes this through a refusal to dictate meaning. According to Bakhtin there is also dialogue in the vertical mode where texts are seen as speaking to other texts, moving back and forth through time. Kristeva writes that any text 'is constructed as a mosaic of quotations' (Kristeva, 1981, p.83). Words are not fixed, dictating entities, but mediators, written over other words, becoming at least double. Being addressed to someone writing is also a kind of

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[18] The genesis of her *Truism series* is the reading list given to her at the Whitney Museum's independent study programme. The list contained many heavy but important books that were nevertheless difficult 'to plow through' and gave her the idea to try to remake the list in an accessible form (Ferguson, 1986, p.67).

reading of the other in encounters through time.

This spatial aspect to dialogic language, its doubling operation, makes it poetic:

> 'the poetic word, polyvalent and multi-determined, adheres to a logic exceeding that of codified discourse and fully comes into being only in the margins of recognised culture.' (Kristeva, 1981)

Rather than following the logic of the monological, which occupies a fixed position, handing down words to mute spectators, the dialogical is *a becoming* that implies the relationship of 'non-exclusive opposites' (Ibid). Kristeva explores this notion of doubling within dialogic language as ambivalence. This is first defined mathematically; social structures of god and authority conform to the idea of 1 and 0. Poetic structures exceed this by suggesting a multiplicity of meanings, connected to social spheres and participating in history. The relationship between the self and other is non-hierarchical, non-linear, subject-to-subject rather than subject-to-object. This transgression of logic where 'language escapes the linear' is considered by Kristeva to be best represented by the carnivalesque. A carnival participant is 'both actor and spectator' (Ibid, p.78). This doubled, moving subject position, challenges the borders of fixed identity bringing to light those other repressed moments where the subject position is challenged, its 'underlying unconscious: sexuality and death' (Ibid, p.79). Kristeva continues:

> 'Out of the dialogue that is established between them, the structural dyads of carnival appear: high, low, birth and agony, food and excrement, praise and curses. Laughter and tears.' (Ibid)

Kristeva's carnival scene allows 'prohibitions (representation, monologism) and their transgressions (dream, body, dialogism) to coexist' (Ibid). In this way it is different from parody, which does not break the logic of oppositional structures. Instead carnival produces something in excess of those structures, a spatial poetics that 'adopts ambivalence as an ethic stance' (Kristeva, 1981). Holzer's work provides an example of this poetics as a non-exclusive multiple form of opposition. Her works pull the utopian from the political evoking a relational aesthetic that opposes hierarchy by absorbing and exceeding its structures.[19]

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[19] Jo Anna Isaak notes the relationship of Holzer's work to carnivalesque structures in *The revolutionary power of women's laughter* (1996, p.39). Equally in *Power's Script* (2006) Gordon Hughes points out Holzer's relationship to Nietzsche whose 'Dionysianism' is also referenced by Kristeva.

The dialogism of Bahktin is analogous to the semiotic elsewhere in Kristeva's writing which, usually repressed by the symbolic order, can also emerge to challenge systems of representation and social order. Writing on Kristeva's theories of the speaking subject, Elizabeth Grosz (1989) sums up this tension as existing between the unity of the sign associated with limits, rules and procedures and the semiotic which is a process and consequently exceeds and proceeds unity. Kristeva applies her *semanalysis* to the *avant-garde* text arguing that its semiotic properties hold the potential for radical subversion. She concedes that employing the semiotic is a risky endeavour and asserts that its potential as a subversive act depends upon it not becoming abstract.

Given the focus on holding things in tension and on embedded actions is it possible to consider Kristeva's *semanalysis* in relation to feminist manifestos and social art practice? Writing on dialogic practices like Chu's risky durational interventions, Grant Kester (2011) outlines a philosophical position for social practice in opposition to Kristeva, who is situated in a philosophical tradition tied up with language and paranoia. I have tried to produce a more dialogic critical position that could work by moving across theoretical perspectives, not set up as exclusive categories. Grosz goes on to describe Kristeva's practice along dialogical lines, putting her philosophical sources, Hegel, Saussure, Derrida and Lacan into 'confrontational and antagonistic relations with each other' (Grosz, 1989, p.61). In the wake of 1968, Grosz continues:

> 'She raises the crucial question of politics and the effect (or lack of it) of their work on the broader questions of social struggle and change. Kristeva's strength lies in her ability to take hold of disparate sources, frameworks, methods and to bring them together, not as incommensurable positions, nor as completely harmonious compliments. She sets them to work against each other while adhering to their insights.' (Grosz, 1989, p.62)

These negotiations are movements made in the cracks between things. Like Braidotti's talk they suggest a drawing from traditions of thought set up as non–exclusive oppositions. In this way it becomes possible to acknowledge the insights within particular traditions and still move elsewhere: from critique to affirmation. This suggests the question: what meanings can be made if we are able to move out of a binary frame of reference, to move from the suggestion of one *or* the other into a discourse that can accommodate contradictory motivations? This move would be to affirm the complex and shifting nature of social relationships and to embrace a politics of multiplicity.

Mierle Laderman Ukeles *Hartford Wash* (1973). Image from *Feminist Theories and Art Practices*, *1960s-1990s.*

The Time that we have

Holzer's texts, both antagonistic and carefully relational, perform in the field of art as a kind of social work, moving between different systems of thought to accrue meaning socially. The phrase is used here particularly with reference to Shannon Jackson's text *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics* (2011). In the book Jackson thinks about social art practice in relation to performance discourse using the metaphor of the prop or support system to 'place social systems in the foreground of analysis despite the fact that they usually occupy the background of experience' (Jackson, 2011, p.6). For Jackson art participates in history through becoming a form that can 'help us to imagine

sustainable social institutions' with social practices contributing 'to inter-dependent social imagining' (Ibid, p.14). In bringing forward the often hard to see and sometimes disavowed supporting systems Jackson is concerned with art forms that interfere with the fixed positions of inside and outside. She references Allan Kaprow's art work as a similar 'unsettling of figure and ground, object and support, art and life' (Ibid, p.35). In committing to this kind of collaborative work Jackson sees artists open up to different groups and agendas and the inconvenience of their differing claims. This is a kind of formal openness to contingency which acknowledges that individual freedom rests on relational systems.

An important artist for Jackson is Mierle Laderman Ukeles who wrote the *Manifesto for Maintenance Art* in 1969. Focusing on the invisible and repeated labour of cleaning tasks she significantly stretched the definitions around what could be conceived of as art to the point where the act of shaking hands with all the binmen of New York city, a performance work initially entitled *Handshake Ritual* (1977-78), became a long-term conceptual project, *Touch Sanitation* (1977-84) that led to a residency in the sanitation department of the city. Ukeles' expanded ecological positioning is a good example of a practice that has, to use Rosler's term, 'a core orientation' in feminism 'while addressing content that does not speak to feminism or women's issues exclusively or even at all - on the surface' (Rosler, 2006, p.139).

A year after the birth of her first child, Ukeles' *Manifesto*, written in one go in a 'cold fury', calls for a readdressing of the status of maintenance work both in private, domestic space, and in public (Interview with Ukeles, Ryan, 2009). Through this call she attempts to break down the barriers between what we think of as 'work' and what can be labelled 'art work'. In this way the manifesto represents a point for the artist where the concerns for her conceptual practice and for her home life meet. Ukeles also acknowledges the manifesto as a kind of art work saying 'art is often the encapsulation of a whole flow of things that end up in one formal thing, and the formal thing here was the manifesto document' (Ibid).

Prior to writing the manifesto Ukeles had been working on inflatable sculpture with the intention of producing the kind of autonomous objects that could be very big and yet small enough to be folded and placed in her back pocket. This aspirational attempt to produce work that could mirror the status of the artist as autonomous individual, somehow unencumbered by institutions and 'their extensive materiality', proved problematic; the sculptures involved a dependency upon complex industrial processes

and often they leaked (Ibid). The leaking inflatables joined earlier works by the artist involving wrapped and bursting 'energy pods' called bindings, made out of cheesecloth and rags. In an interview on the subject Ukeles notes that at the time she wanted the bindings to be stuffed to the point of bursting, like images of energy captured, and that the ones that had not been effective enough to maintain their borders were considered as failures. Although Ukeles saw these works as abstract the Pratt Institute, where she was studying, considered them to be oversexed. Ukeles was expelled for producing pornographic objects.

Beside this history Ukeles explains how the manifesto grew out of her experience of being a parent: 'I was literally divided in two. Half of my week I was the mother, and the other half the artist. But, I thought to myself, "this is ridiculous, I am the one"'(Ibid). To think about being one Ukeles' strategy is to bring 'the mute parts' into view using premises from conceptual art to announce a new form – *Maintenance Art*. This form revealed the material processes behind the dematerialised conceptual art she encountered and was herself involved with. She describes these practices of *Process Art* and *Minimalism* as skimming 'off the top', lifting industrial processes and forgetting the 'whole culture that they had come out of' (Ibid). In relation to this Jackson also describes Ukeles' work as conceptually moving 'from a discrete notion of an artwork to a process-based notion of the work it takes to make art' (Jackson, 2011, p.92).

The manifesto begins as a mirror to Ukeles' life experience approaching two drives that will form a dialogue at the heart of her practice: the Death Instinct and the Life Instinct.

> 'The Death Instinct is: Separation; individuality; Avant-Garde par excellence; to follow ones own path to death – do your own thing; dynamic change.
>
> The Life Instinct is: unification; the eternal return; the perpetuation and MAINTENANCE of the species; survival systems and operations; equilibrium.'
>
> (Ukeles, 1969b) (Appendix 01)

Imagining the drives in this way, Ukeles lays out two distinct categories of action: development and maintenance, with development being 'pure individual creation; the new, change, progress, advance, excitement, flight or fleeing' (Ibid). Alternatively, maintenance involved repetition and is 'a drag' that takes 'all the fucking time' (Ibid). Repetition, normally associated with the death drive, becomes re-aligned in Ukeles' manifesto. The description of maintenance spins out into a list of mind-numbing tasks

that spill between housework and other work, outlining the ambiguous nature of care as something necessary but somehow resented from both the perspective of the carer and those receiving care.

> 'The mind boggles and chafes at the boredom. The culture confers lousy status on maintenance jobs.. Change the sheets, go to the store, I'm out of perfume, say it again - he doesn't understand, seal it again – it leaks, go to work, this art is dusty, clear the table, call him again, flush the toilet, stay young.' (Ibid)

Rather than a straightforward deconstruction of heroic *avant-garde* practices Ukeles' response layers metaphors bringing unusual or normally separate things together in a pragmatic way. She identifies a binary value system only to turn it on its head, collapsing one value into the other so that maintenance becomes flight, 'avant-garde par excellence' (Ibid). She suggests that we take this vital and difficult work of maintenance and see it anew as art *work*. Her work trajectory takes flight precisely where it appeared grounded. To counter the feeling of being a divided self she suggests the exhibition "CARE" that would bring cleaning tasks into the gallery. She also brings her experience of being a housewife into the organisational context of the sanitation department, describing the sanitation workers as the housewives of the city. She retrieves their experiences and with them countless objects that, in being made into rubbish, have been part of a huge un-naming project.[20] To counter cultural amnesia around maintenance in *Public Offerings: Made by all, Redeemed by all* (1989-2006) she suggests that waste undergo a revaluation process where items donated by 'donor citizens' will be inventoried and put in glass cases mimicking the museum form and conferring value on the objects in the process. Through this renaming process instead of a landfill we can see a 50-year-old social sculpture collectively produced. Ukeles points towards the ultimate hierarchical process that everything is subjected to: collecting and discarding. In defiance of this process Ukeles declares:

> 'Everything I say is Art is Art. Everything I do is Art is Art. "We have no Art, we try to do everything well" (Balinese saying).'

Finally, as Jackson notes she puts 'a beleaguered and under-funded public art system and a beleaguered and under-funded public sanitation system to mutual use' (Jackson,

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[20] The Re-act Feminism archive contains video works produced from Ukeles' residency at the sanitation department, including extensive interview footage between herself and various workers in the department, who talk her through the conditions of their daily experience including various levels of persecution that they suffer from encounters with the public.

2011, p.99). Each action is carefully linked to her first maintenance text, acting as manifestos do, through time, by repeating iconic forms for different contexts and accruing momentum. Ukeles offers up the manifesto as artwork and the artwork as manifesto, moving away from singular forms towards an affirmation of multiplicity.

Manifestos host through the creation of shared subjectivity. Ukeles creates this common ground through her descriptions of Maintenance, which is a repressed, shared vulnerability. It appears at points in our personal histories and also points towards histories of repression. It is also produced by the internal logic of capitalism, which demands excessive consumption and consequently a process through which this waste and excess can be hidden. In pointing out this hidden labour Ukeles' work highlights care as a durational practice that takes 'all the fucking time' (Ukeles, 1969). This focus on time is highlighted by Lisa Baraitser (2015), Reader in Psychosocial Studies at Birkbeck, London. Baraitser observes that it is not just the systems of maintenance that remain hidden but the time that unfolds within these systems.

In a similar vein to *Fenix'* descriptions of rushed methods for lives filled with maintenance concerns, Baraitser reflects that time itself in late capitalism is something we only ever run out of . In this way, Baraitser argues the future has 'been emptied of its affective qualities' replaced by a perpetual present in crisis (Baraitser, 2015, p.23). In contrast to what could be considered institutional and historical time, Baraitser cites Agamben in conceiving of another kind of 'interstitial time' that is 'neither the then, the now, nor the yet to come' (Ibid, p.22). This description approaches Lyon's positing of the manifesto as somehow out of time yet also embedded and reflecting the pressures of a particular historical moment. Baraitser argues this interstitial time is different from linear historical notions of time; it is instead a kind of Maintenance time. In contrast to time that runs through our fingers, interstitial time is something we can hold onto and share. It is precisely this ability for interstitial time to be shared that makes it a suitable medium for a form ultimately designed as a hosting space. A manifesto works if we share its sentiments and in this case perceptions of time. It is no coincidence that Ukeles chooses the manifesto as a beginning to a lifelong commitment to a hospitable social practice. As an artist committed to hidden and repressed histories she sees what is hidden in this outwardly raging and hostile form. She alights on its capacity to be an indomitable host, carefully producing moments of shared time, gathering together tired subjectivities in order to produce energy in excess of oppressive systems. Drawing a parallel between Richard Billingham's (1996) poverty saturated family portraits and Ukeles' portrait of domestic labour as it leaks into the public sphere, Baraitser

continues:

> 'what is maintained in these practices is not just others but a temporal
> imaginary different from the stuck present, the foreclosed future and the
> melancholic past.' (Ibid, pp.29-30)

Instead of running away from the ambivalence of care work Ukeles makes a decision to live with it, challenging her own assumptions about it as a waste of time and revealing its qualities. What can be observed in this temporality is the potential for 'a life without project', something that increasingly organises industrial and material labour, more than mere survival and different to development and success narratives. Instead we find a way of being in time that is possible to hold and share, that is:

> 'not about going anywhere, and is not about going nowhere, but is perpetually
> concerned with what is produced, collected, transported, and buried like
> rubbish, 365 days a year.' (Ibid, p.36)

These lives that Ukeles hooks into are not lived outside of institutions and their structures of power and oppression, they are lived in the cracks without proper names. Ukeles' time is bound up with supporting these other lives and by being with them, enacting a 'joyful transformation', an exchange between hands that can allow us to imagine a different relationship to the things we throw away.

Conclusions

The manifesto offers a call of protest, speaking from a particular position in relation to time, myth and history. This protest, from an excluded perspective, disrupts the order of things, intervening as an out of place voice that resonates with others, suggesting real change now. To this loud and unruly tradition feminists bring an added precariousness even in relation to revolutionary discourse. The uncertainty of feminist positions enables activists to make key innovations to the form. These play out as a number of tactics and offer unexpected hope in a broken cartography, as if to say: once all is lost all is possible.

Manifestos are also acts of memory, working to remind us of repressed things. Following this, feminist manifestos remind us something about social art practice. In this way the research is manifesto-like bringing together moments of feminist activism (and feminist

art history as a form of activism, a movement, rather than a moment apart) and contemporary art practice to suggest a missing history for social practice. Once we know that history, social art practice can be read differently, as a form committed to social change, reworking difficult ground and making space for other possibilities.

Beyond all that it makes clear, what is disguised in this apparently straightforward showing of hands embodied by the manifesto? Not only does it have grievances, but to be effective, the form must share these grievances. Emerging from marginal positions feminists assert that before we can bring ourselves to speech and share things we must feel safe. To create 'safe spaces' the women's movement worked between conceptualisations of public and private space, suggesting that private lives were political subjects. This placing together of worlds, previously imagined as separate, became a form of prefigurative politics repositioning the *avant-garde*.

Artists in social practice also work with the essential concept of 'safe space'. Added to this they aim to create shared time. In this way social art practice offers the perception of time as material to be worked with, taking different shapes. They seek out methodologies that enable us to share time and consequently perform a form of hosting in time and space. Through this hosting the quiet maintenance work and complexity of the manifesto is brought to light. The manifesto can be seen to hold in tension this quiet work and its louder political voice. By giving a glimpse of this balancing act it is clear that social art practice allows us to approach the manifesto anew and to remake it to meet the complexity of contemporary political life.

Finally, by being in between, the multiple feminist manifestos approached in this section are forms on the move, precarious and furtive, stealing things from the discarded remnants of mainstream culture. They re-order what is found, offering improper answers to the imperatives produced by oppressive systems. These answers become their affirmative, relational poetics, inviting us to share time within their forms. By sharing time an uncertain community, in the cracks, offers the support necessary to reconstruct the world from discarded remains.

With Manifestos

Introduction
Critique, Curating and Collaboration

In this section I will explore a number of art works that I have directly experienced. This will include events I have been invited to curate or contribute to, along with readings of particular works in particular contexts from a participant perspective. Through the various modes of curating, critique and collaboration With Manifestos documents interventions into the unfolding processes of social art practice to raise the question of feminism, testing the ways in which these practices function as feminist manifestos and drawing connective threads between diverse art works.

With Manifestos replicates and amplifies the movement back and forth between social art practice and feminist manifestos produced in the first, About, section of the collection so that it is possible to place the two sections alongside each other as a conversation between contemporary practice and feminist history. The About Manifesto section posits the difficulties presented by language as a constitutive force for feminist versions of the manifesto form. In the field of socially engaged practice, Angela Dimitrakaki (2013) has spoken on the need for a different positional perspective to engage with the revolutionary horizon of social practice. Equally, Grant Kester (2013) notes a failure of conventional criticism to deal with *all* the moments of social art practice, the ephemeral traces of process-based conversation and action. Given these concerns and feminist manifestos' dialogical impulses, this section describes a different critical position, *with* social practice, generating a conversational and collaborative method as a means to explore the proposition that certain art practices function as feminist manifestos due to their intentions, reception and interpretation. In being *with* I moved between the position of a critical theorist in conversation with artists Alana Jelinek, Emma Balkind and Laura Edbrook, Cornelia Sollfrank and Helen Smith.

Furthermore as a curator I produced events for the Scottish Contemporary Art Network. I also moved between the roles of collaborator, invited guest and participant. This moving position reflects a second layer to the research methodology, a performance of manifesto strategies, suggesting a missing history within narratives of socially engaged practice and eliciting a response.

These questions around a missing history within socially engaged practice are tied to changing notions of the curator and practices of collaboration through art. While a certain movement is required of the critic by forms of social practice it is also interesting to note that the position of curator is equally affected. Claire Bishop writes:

> 'the curator is no longer a mediator between artist and public (in the museum model) but someone with a clear desire to co-produce a socially relevant art for multiple audiences ' (Bishop, 2012, p.200)

This interpretation suggests writer and curator Irit Rogoff's (2006) conception of curatorial work as collaborative and taking place not simply after the work is complete but unfolding throughout. For Rogoff criticality is not so much passing judgment but an embodied form of practice, which she also describes as a form of smuggling. Equally 'the curatorial' is not an illustrative form but something more like a living out of possibilities:

> 'we see various principles that might not be associated with displaying works of art; principles of the production of knowledge, of activism, of cultural circulations and translations that begin to shape and determine other forms by which arts can engage.' (Ibid)

Definitions of collaboration are also open to various interpretations. Writing on collaboration curator Maria Lind (Möntmann, 2009) describes the ambiguities that can exist within a term that is used both to denote something we are increasingly compelled to perform within the post-fordist knowledge economy and something that is connotative of radical political action, solidarity and collective agency. Lind's essay (2009), which provides a list of names and extensive definitions for social practices, makes it clear that she is interested in the latter: the process of exchange and 'working together' with 'the purpose of generating some sort of agency'.[21] It is also the question of

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[21] Lind lists and describes five categories of practice: 'Relational Aesthetics, New Genre Public Art, Connective Aesthetics, Kontextkunst and Dialogical Art' (Lind in Möntmann, 2009).

agency that drives my research with artists along with exploring the possibilities for a more dialogic, process-based position for critical theory, in line with a concern for the equality of relationship between art and its critical narratives. What follows asks how and to what extent collaboration and curating align themselves with activism and agency becoming manifesto-like.

Creative Lab and Centre for Modern Thought Public Seminar: Creative Work

Sat 13 July 2013

1pm – 4pm, FREE
Book online / 0141 352 4900

Related CCA Events

Creative Lab:
Echo Chamber
Mon 1 July — Fri 26 July 2013

As part of Echo Chamber's Creative Lab Residency, this workshop will explore philosophical and critical questions around "creative work".

Engaging with cultural policy and research, we will examine how creative work is variously understood by artists, academics, and government, opening out to a conversation with the workshop participants. What is at stake when creative work is approached in terms of either innovation or improvisation? What is the difference between work and labour? Is collaboration necessarily creative? Working away from economic frameworks for art and research, we move towards "creative work" understood in terms of our relations with others.

Publicity for the Creative Work event. Sourced from CCA website: http://www.cca-glasgow.com/programme/518a76c28cd803a061000006

A Crack in the Order of Things

To think about collaboration from within its processes I initially worked together with artists Alana Jelinek, Beth Dynowski and anthropologist Jen Clarke on a single event that led to several others. Collaboration was initiated by Jen Clarke, who brought an anthropological perspective to issues of art and ecology and is part of the larger research initiative *Knowing from the Inside.*[22] In relation to the event her research asks: how are publics negotiated within the context of government institutions? The event involved an exploration of art and work in the Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) in Glasgow, hosted by a 'curator lab in residence', which included Beth Dynowski.[23] Alana Jelinek was invited into this context as an artist with a social practice in order to

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[22] Knowing from the inside is an EU-funded research project led by Professor Tim Ingold at Aberdeen University.
[23] The CCA Creative Lab offers a monthly residency programme for artists and curators to explore research ideas.

negotiate a space for dialogue between a number of voices including those from the cultural and public sector.

The event's invitation posed a number of critically directed questions including 'What is the difference between work and labour? Is collaboration necessarily creative?' It asserted the intention to move away 'from economic frameworks for art and research' tapping into Dynowski and Jelinek's context-grounded analysis of art world discourse, as well as their experiential knowledge around forms of self-organisation and practice. Dynowski's writing in *Art, Politics, Praxis, Transformation* (2011) offers a critique of art world capitulation to neoliberal standards of measure and a different horizon, through case studies of several self-organised alternatives. Next to this Jelinek's book *This is not Art* (2013) argues, along similar lines to Andrea Fraser (2005), that art in the context of London, where she is based, has allowed itself to be defined by market forces outwith its own culture of expertise.[24] In practice Dynowski and Jelinek both offer complications to the repeated dichotomy between collaborative practice and artistic autonomy by focusing on collective, self-organisation as an autonomous act.[25]

Within this critical framework I was interested in introducing a feminist voice, exploring the hidden labour of maintenance and hospitality in the art world. This picked up on issues touched upon by Helena Reckitt (2013) in a talk within the *ECONOMY* exhibition at the same site. Reckitt's talk focused on practices of self-erasure in contemporary art stemming from the late sixties, in the form of strike practices (notably Lee Lozano and the Situationists), especially in response to the bio-politics of late-capitalist production. Reckitt examined Lozano's *Dialogue Piece* (1969), a work which is essentially a list of art world names gathered in her studio, as anticipating the current, heavily networked art world where performance around the works is a constant and the term dialogue appears as a hollowed-out ghost of names without content. All interaction is work and what is acquired is contact capital, leading Reckitt to remark 'when labour becomes flexible performance, time as measure erodes' (Reckitt, 2013). In response to this she considered a number of collaborative practices that work together to 'dislodge the function of the author' including subRosa, The Yes Men and the Bernadette Cooperation.

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[24] Andrea Fraser observed in reply to Frieze Art's question: 'how has art changed?
The threat of instrumentalization by corporate interests has been met in the art world by a whole scale internalization of corporate values, methods and models, which can be seen everywhere from art schools to museums and galleries to the studios of artists who rely on big money backers for large-scale - and often outsourced - production.'
[25] Maria Lind writes on certain forms of collaboration as acts which assert autonomy from dominant economic models.

The latter's refusal to perform political identity inspired the title of Reckitt's talk *Getting rid of yourself*. I wanted to bring Reckitt's remarks, uttered a few months previously in an adjacent space, into this discussion around creative work, offering a context-specific response.

The lab event was designed around a close reading of Jacques Rancière's short text *Art and Work* in *The Politics of Aesthetics* (2006). Describing the 'factory of the sensible' Rancière outlines the ways in which artistic practices 'represent and reconfigure' economic activities (2006, pp. 42-45). Rancière's writing features prominently in the debate between critics Bishop (2012) and Kester (2011) with the latter dismissing Rancière's positioning of art as too abstract and favoured by critics (particularly Bishop) who place disruptive, 'autonomous' artistic practices in opposition to open and dialogic approaches. Despite Kester's persuasive argument the event presented the opportunity to rethink the text in relation to feminist perspectives, which go largely unacknowledged on both sides of the debate, *with* unfolding social practices.[26] Working with Jelinek in the CCA context enabled me not only to consider how manifesto-like her practice was but to perform as a manifesto, voicing a missing history.

Rancière describes the 'distribution of the sensible' as a regime that keeps certain people tied to particular forms of labour, in private space (as opposed to the public place in which politics takes place), producing a division between 'those who think and decide and those who are doomed to material tasks' (Rancière, 2006, p.41). His text highlights the transgressive nature of the mimetician, who has a double identity, enacting apparently private concerns in public and consequently blurring the two. This kind of doubling, which places one world in another, is also a tactic integral to much feminist praxis including feminist manifestos. In art Meirle Laderman Ukeles' is exemplary, devising works such as *Private Performances of Personal Maintenance as Art* (1970-73) where, under the exhibition title *Care*, the artist carried out a number of cleaning tasks in public gallery spaces.

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[26] Feminism is perhaps most noticeably absent from Bishop's analysis in *Artificial Hells* (2012), which only mentions it once as a movement in the 1970s. Conversely Kester uses feminist terms of reference, (describing Dialogue's intervention he notes 'a pervasive scopic regime within an essentially patriarchal community'), uncoupled from feminism as the conceptual source (Kester 2011, p.79). There are also connections to be noted between Kester's writing on context-specific engagements and feminist standpoint methodologies (Sandra Harding) as well as concerns raised by Rowbotham, Segal and Wainwright in *Beyond the Fragments* (1979) where they assert the need for a grounded political response (About Manifesto, p.11).

Catwoman: Minerva Valencia. From: Puebla, Mexico. Occupation: Nanny.
Money sent home: $400 a week. Image courtesy of Dulze Pinzon.

Given these associations I opened the seminar by positioning the text in relation to feminist manifestos, defining these as subversive and dialogic practices. As well as Ukeles I spoke on a number of artists who use notions of doubling within their practice including Holzer and the Mexican/American artist Dulze Pinzon whose photographic series *The Real Story of Superheros* (2006) was pertinent to the context given that the CCA was also hosting a comic book convention that day. I drew a link between their work and Kristeva's theories of the dialogic as a form of doubling produced between subject positions (About Manifestos, pp.29-30).

In homage to Ukeles' various *Maintenance Works* (1970–2013) I also drew attention to the labour of those necessarily absent due to their involvement in maintenance tasks. Specifically, I spoke on a failed experiment to include the CCA's primary maintenance worker Eira Szadurski in the event. I aimed to bring attention to the combination of cleaning and hosting work performed in the job of duty manager, a position that Szadurski fills alongside her own art practice, and also to interrogate the dialogic model along lines suggested by Nancy Fraser (1990). I pointed towards the voices that are necessarily absent. In failing to include Szadurski the separation between the world of cleaning and hosting and the world of political conversation was left intact. This outcome spoke to Greg Sholette's metaphor of *Dark Matter* (2011), which describes the

invisible and growing group of artists, interns, students and volunteers that hold up this art world structure that we all to some extent live and work within. Sholette, who like Reckitt was a recent guest to the CCA context, continues that despite this situation of dependency, dark matter goes largely unnoticed by 'those who lay claim to the management and interpretation of culture' (Ibid, p.1). My gesture, referencing Reckitt and Shollete, manifested other worlds of concern that feminist analysis is attentive to, suggesting missing and excluded voices.
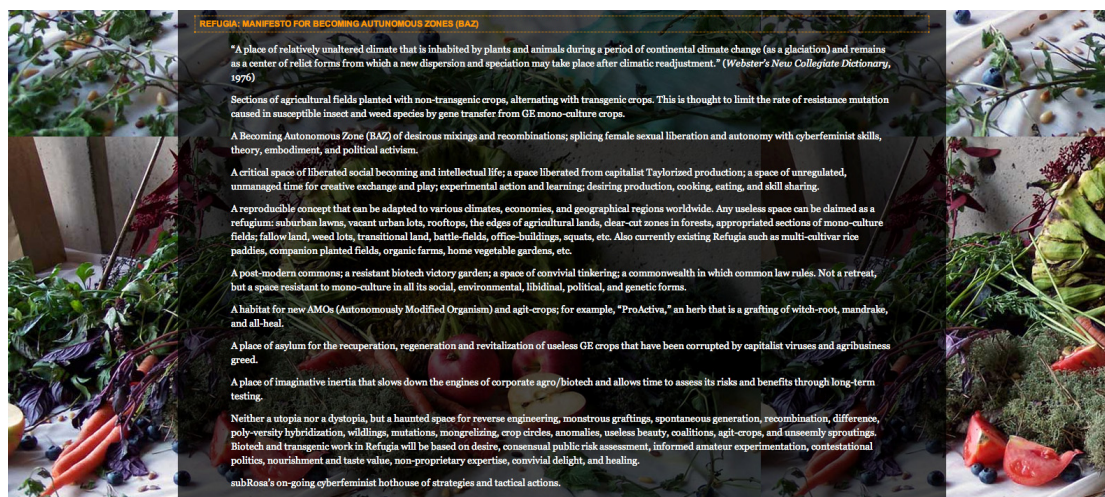
Poster for subRosa's *Refugia: Manifesto Becoming Autonomous Zones* (2002).

Prefigurative Politics

I was interested in how or if Jelinek's practices enacted a kind of prefigurative politics, reconfiguring social relationships now to model different futures, and becoming manifesto by placing one world in another. After separating into small groups to speak about the text we gathered in a circle to summarise our thoughts, with Jelinek facilitating the discussion. She asked if the event could be considered art – being as it was simply conversations in a room. I wondered about Lee Lozano's *Dialogue Piece* (1969). One participant raised the question of wages for workshops. The question resonated with Reckitt's talk on performance as labour and made it clear the lab had not escaped economic frameworks for action. For me defining art was less interesting than if the event had produced the conditions for an exchange that could reverberate elsewhere and a sense of collectivity, however temporary. These were effects that could not be defined as measurable outcomes. It was however interesting that the definition of the work as art was considered to be something collaboratively negotiated. The manifesto sets up a framework for different subjectivities to meet and connect around a

shared perception of something broken, an inadequate language, or a failed promise. Consistently Jelinek's practice points to a broken art world struggling within neoliberal language systems. Did her framework provide enough to set up the conditions for a shared space from which to act differently?

In the field of social art practice this question is concerned with the type of utopic conversational moment that Kester's earlier writing in *Conversation Pieces* (2004) points to. Alternatively I wondered if it could be considered in relation to Foucault's category of Heterotopia (Foucault, 1984), a place or experience that could haunt other experiences in a location. By offering a space to collaboratively negotiate definitions the event parallels subrosa's performative project *Refugia - BAZ (Becoming Autonomous Zones)* (2002–ongoing). *Refugia/ BAZ* is defined as a curatorial space devoted to collaborative projects including live performances, workshops, print and other medium (radio, video, digital) productions. *Refugia* is also a feminist manifesto text. In defining autonomous zones the manifesto states it is 'neither a utopia nor dystopia, but a haunted space for reverse engineering' (Ibid). I was interested in how Jelinek's practice could be said to intersect conceptually around the concept of refuge, which *BAZ* claims acts to regenerate and reclaim as a political, cultural and ecological project. Particularly *Refugia* is defined as:

> 'A critical space of liberated social becoming and intellectual life; a space liberated from capitalist Taylorized production; a space of unregulated, unmanaged time for creative exchange and play; experimental action and learning; desiring production, cooking, eating, and skill sharing.

> A reproducible concept that can be adapted to various climates, economies, and geographical regions worldwide. Any useless space can be claimed as a refugium: suburban lawns, vacant urban lots, rooftops, the edges of agricultural lands, clear-cut zones in forests, appropriated sections of mono-culture fields; fallow land, weed lots, transitional land, battle-fields, office-buildings, squats, etc. Also currently existing Refugia such as multi-cultivar rice paddies, companion planted fields, organic farms, home vegetable gardens, etc.' (SubRosa, 2002)

In order to explore this connection and a genealogy between second wave prefigurative feminist practices and contemporary social art practice, suggested by subRosa's

positioning of *Refugia*, it is relevant to consider Jelinek's durational work *The Field* (2008–ongoing). *The Field* is also a cultural, political and ecological project and in offering an actual field space lives out a number of the metaphorical possibilities suggested by *Refugia*.

As a consequence of my attention to maintenance labour at the CCA I was invited to speak on hospitality at an annual art event called *Moot Point* (2009–ongoing), which takes place at *The Field* space as part of Jelinek's art practice. *Moot Point* is an annual event that gathers people from different backgrounds in order to explore and gently interrogate ideas around a theme through making and thinking. It is a durational and participatory practice, part of Terra Incognita (Jelinek and Brown), a small London-based arts organisation generating exhibitions, outreach projects and publications since 1997. Juliette Brown of Terra Incognita defines the *The Field* as a conceptual art piece (Brown, 2013, p.111).[27] It is also a field; half woodland, half grassland separated into areas of activity, between human and non-human. It consists of allotments, an apiary, shelter, water, a woodland, camping areas and green woodworking area. This double identity, as field and artwork, is interesting in relation to Kristeva's discussion of transgressive poetics (About Manifesto, p.29). As a set of activities *The Field* aims to bring together 'usually separate worlds including: art science, thinking doing, artist non-artists, urban rural, us them, participation observation, human non human' (Incognita, 2013).

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[27] To reach this definition Brown cites George Dickie's (1974, 1984, 2001) institutional definition of art. 'That which is proposed as art, by someone within the art world other than the artist, is art. Art must be validated within a field of practitioners.' In this case Brown defines the work as a writer and cultural producer (who is not herself an artist).

Moot Point at *The Field* (2013). Image: Caroline Gausden.

Working out of a conceptual art tradition, Jelinek experiments within a self-created structure of rules and conditions, maintaining her expertise by keeping control of the opening conditions for action. These opening conditions are the art's work, yet whilst in conceptual art traditions from the 1960s the rules are fixed throughout the process, in *The Field* they are reflexive so that 'practice can inform and change theory' (Brown, 2013, p.113). The framework is only a beginning, it is not announced or set in stone. In a text on the subject Brown (2013) writes that it is important for these conditions not to be explicit so that others can approach and experience the project without recourse to another's framework; for many participants it is simply a field. As mentioned, this double status allows *The Field* to remain an open and pluralistic site that people can approach from different educational and cultural backgrounds. Having experienced *The Field* and later heard Jelinek speak on the principles that guide it I would say that these 'rules' are self-reflexive and responsive so there is space to be in dialogue with the conditions and find a way to act. Participants like myself are invited to stay, observe and speak on themes that are curated following an open, reiterative methodology. At the end of each *Moot Point* others can volunteer a theme and invite their own guests accordingly. Again this is not prescriptive.

Within the conditions an idea of refuge or safety emerges that is interesting in relation to wider manifesto practices, suggesting a barely visible form of hosting that creates the conditions for people to share experience within a non-hierarchical structure. In setting up this structure Jelinek identifies safety as her primary concern, describing nature as a

multi-voiced, political space and a set of challenges that demand collective action whilst generating all the difficulties inherent in collectivity. Like a manifesto she is interested in the politics of collective action and frames her practice as negotiating issues over who occupies space and in what way. In her introduction to the 2016 *Moot Point* Brown expresses the sentiment that 'people coming here commit to a spirit of generosity towards each other' (2009). This is opposed to a less safe, 'elbows out' culture of competition, which is triggered by some taking up a greater share of resources.[28] Time and attention are also considered as resources that some take up more of leaving others to feel lacking or occupying invisible support roles. To counter this, there are no supporting roles in *The Field* instead Jelinek's hosting is feminist, insisting that everyone enters the space a responsible adult, equally sharing available resources.

For Jelinek an understanding of safety pivots on her reading of Emmanuel Levinas' philosophy. She emphasises his critique of the western philosophical assumption that knowledge, stemming from a particular Graeco-European experience, is universal. This knowledge system carries with it a horror of the other which can be reduced through strategies of assimilation or withdrawal. For Jelinek these strategies often manifest in acts of self-projection that do not constitute an ethical meeting with difference. Jelinek's position directs rage at the hierarchical structures set up within cultures of self-projection, which cannot account for the existence of more than one truth. She writes:

> 'My aim for *The Field* is to understand just how embedded is the preponderance for hierarchy within a culture of the same: ideas of inferiority or superiority, better and worse, one species instead of another, one being preferred over another, one human or culture over another, one time period over another.' (Jelinek, 2013, p.119)

In her writing on Levinas, Luce Irigaray (2001) describes 'sameness' poetically in a way that resonates with Jelinek's concerns:

> 'Sameness, which quarrels about how much room it is due, occupies my flesh, demarcates and subdivides my space.' (Irigaray, 2001, p.124)

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[28] Jelinek used this term in conversation with me in September 2014.

Irigaray's writing describes a non-regressive empathy with others that is continuously moving, as if on a threshold, 'even after entering a house.' She suggests navigating between assimilation and withdrawal through our sense of touch. She critiques Levinas for countering this moving sense of responsibility, by assigning women a fixed position outside of his transcendental ethical scheme. In the face of Levinas' assertion that we cannot know the other Irigaray offers an ethics of:

> 'The one for the other, messengers of a future that is still to be built and contemplated. The one for the other already known and still unknown.' (Irigaray, 2001, p.130)

This both differs and concurs with Levinas. Here Irigaray's writing comes close to the manifesto form, but is it relevant to Terra Incognita's project? The flexible, moving nature of the framework, which approaches utopia cautiously as a process that must be continually negotiated, resonates with Irigaray's writing and the feminist manifesto position. Also *The Field* considers non-human relations in a way that is well beyond the parameters of Levinas' writing but perhaps not of Irigaray who writes on the intimate connection between 'animality' and the heights of ethical being (Ibid, p129).

Beyond Irigaray's philosophy the immersed and context-specific approach to working is in keeping with social practice methodologies elsewhere and echoes the prefigurative politics developed within the women's movement. The impulse is to act here and now and to also link up concerns of here with elsewhere in a non-hierarchical way. In writing Brown describes this as a position between philosophy, in the Anglo-American tradition, which works by abstracting ideas from their social context in order to prove universally valid truths (Levinas, 1981), and social anthropology which embeds knowledge in local context. Their work attempts to combine these modes of knowledge within a contemporary art setting to produce a 'philosophical praxis' (Brown, 2013, p.119). A form of ideas tested through personal, situated experiences to produce a self-reflexive praxis could equally be seen as one way to define a feminist position.

You want me to do it your way? (2014). Image courtesy of Alana Jelinek.

A Core Orientation?

At *The Field* I spoke on Chu Chu Yuan's practice as a nuanced performance of hospitality (With Hospitality), using Derrida and Dufortmantelle's conversational exchange around the subject, alongside Kristeva's writing in *Strangers to Ourselves* (1991), as key references. My continued drawing of feminism next to social practice interested Jelinek, producing unexplored resonances between theory and practice. She invited me to speak in Dublin at a five-day creative practice development session for artists, supported by the Live Art Development Agency and Create Ireland. In a session antagonistically titled *You Want Me To Do It Your Way?* (2014) Jelinek considered her practice in dialogue with the diverse perspectives on feminism I had offered in our previous encounters. Despite references to feminist politics in *This is Not Art* (2013) the Dublin session offered more than an assertion of Jelinek's political affiliations. It offered a profound attempt to think about how feminist politics could be voiced as a dynamic and influential part of her art practice. Much of the workshop revolved around thinking through this difference between identifying as a feminist and identifying as a feminist artist. For my research it is crucial for artists to try to imagine the second proposition alongside the first, acknowledging the minority histories that have given rise to the forms they use. Within this context I framed my project as bringing awareness of feminist methodologies into current conversations around social practice, voicing less articulated histories of

practice and to bring these within the scope of artists who don't specifically identify as feminist. This is my manifesto for social art practice.

The project was described as a practice sharing aimed at 'articulating contemporary approaches to feminist art and activism and celebrating its many forms' (Ibid). It aimed to provide a feminist methodology for practice sharing that builds on the notion of art school 'crit' to create a rigorously formed yet 'safe' space out of which individual and collective practice could grow. More broadly the project also aimed to produce 'a critique of models of alternative and activist practice that tend to be either "Trotskyist" (led by a charismatic, usually white, male leader) or rigidly consensus, which is often purported to be feminist, though this is highly disputable' (Ibid).

By reference to rigidly consensus models of feminism Jelinek offered a response, a proposition that social practice offered different negotiating forms that could feed into feminist politics. The workshop looked to walk a path between neoliberalism and dominant 'alternative' practices taking Chantal Mouffe's thesis on agonism and Jacques Rancière's on dissensus as the starting references. The hope was to 'encourage new untested or uncelebrated varieties of feminist art practice and feminist activist practice' (Ibid). This hope led to a broad category of artists attending, some who wanted to tentatively think through what defining themselves as 'feminist' could mean for their practice.

For the workshop as well as the practice sharing elements Jelinek invited me and Irish visual artist and campaigner, Siobhán Clancy to speak. [29] In response to this format and in line with my attempt to produce a different critical position for writing, more appropriate for process-based and durational work, I suggested writing a dialogic piece that would be triggered by earlier conversations between myself and Clancy. I produced a response to Clancy's perspectives on what defines a feminist approach. She listed the following important aspects of feminist practice: collaboration, empathy, care, solidarity creation and counter-hegemonic actions.

My talk made a dialogic case for the relationship between social art practice and feminism with Jelinek providing a platform for the research manifesto. I looked at Chu's social practice alongside Marysia Lewandowska, whose early work in compiling and

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[29] More specifically Clancy is an active campaigner around women's right to choose.

collecting materials for the Women's Audio Archive (WAA) is an important archival source for understanding contemporary social practice (With Hospitality, pp.50-53. With Archives, pp.58-69). Consequently my talk mirrored the dialogical methodology that led to its development. I met Clancy's foregrounding of empathy and care through a consideration of hospitality in these practices as well as their emphasis on collaboration and the social production of art. I highlighted a carefully negotiated form of movement that both artists enact differently in order to create the possibility of agency and solidarity. With reference to the sound wave image used throughout WAA, I focused on the idea of the gap or crack to think about Rancière's idea of the political, arguing that a social practice could be considered to produce a gap or space for agency within which it is possible to produce different prefigurative realities. In this way my talk framed their practices as feminist manifestos and also acted as one by voicing a previously absent feminist critical position on social practice.

Beyond working in conversation with Clancy and Jelinek to produce content for the DIY session at Create, the experience was important for helping me think through, from other perspectives, a concern with positions in language, how we speak *with* each other and how we speak *about* feminism and what political life it can have. The workshop environment was set up in a considered way, following the principles and ethics laid out in relation to *The Field* where everybody is given equal space and opportunity to share. This is also similar to the structures of early consciousness-raising groups described by Lynne Segal which introduced the politics of the 'small group as a more supportive and equal way of discussing things and working together' (Rowbotham et al., 1979 p.249). Given these conditions, in addition to the extended time and size of the group in comparison with the earlier workshop in CCA, the space opened out for sharing and interrogation of each other's practices in surprising and profound ways. Outwith the time given to our critical perspectives and to practice sharing at different sites, we discussed a number of topics as a group including: the personal is political, hospitality, expertise and safe spaces, which became embodied by the relational dynamics of everyone present. I asked for permission to record the conversational aspects of the workshop (Audio Archive WM.002). From this recording I produced the following piece of writing to think about the session:

Where some artists approached feminism as a restrictive and defining term, a container for practice it was re-imagined as a score for art practice, making artwork as communication (Ross, 2000). The conversation looked at the edges of things for the

invisible labours and places where power is negotiated, sometimes through a loud voice and sometimes in silence. In thinking about containment and containers the idea of insides and outsides kept repeating. What is inherent in the work? What is given? Where are the borders of intimacy? What is the power relationship between guest and host? What changes when we enter a space to work with each other? The answers were like the rules set out and collectively negotiated, they were unfinished answers, multi-voiced, ambivalent. They formed a conversational map between us highlighting the tensions between self and other. On the map there were absences, cracks and interstices. The achievement was in allowing for these vulnerabilities to emerge, in creating a space in praise of the marginal, where vulnerabilities could be shared. The weekend ended with a performance, a re-enactment of an earlier moment between us. The challenge was to do things differently by thinking about the cracks also in the consensus we had negotiated.

What this writing reflects a deep concern for hospitality that surfaced in the workshop not simply as one of several predefined topics presented for discussion but as a questioning of the workshop form. The earlier moment the writing referenced involved a decision to not allow a new artist to enter the group late. Within the logic of Jelinek's framework a new voice at this stage was seen as disruptive to the precarious equality negotiated between us. However I was keen to test the restrictive nature of the framework and open the point up to debate. The group conceded to Jelinek's concerns but the exclusion re-occurred symbolically at different moments and seemed unresolved, leading us to a re-enactment that remained a private performance. What would it have meant and what would have been needed for the work to cross into public space? The re-enactment gave me pause to reflect on and to critically evaluate the idea of safe space: to question who was left outside a safe space and why? I contacted participants later on to ask permission to share some of the audio of the workshop and one member expressed a lingering concern around the consensus, feeling that opening the group would have been a positive test to our 'resilience' and the group dynamic (Email correspondence May, 2016). In this way the workshop represented more than a affirmation of feminist practice. It opened up a moment of critical reflexivity through a meeting between feminist practitioners and others less decided, who brought an ambiguous combination of reluctance and willingness to meet. These guests questioned the borders of feminism and of the space Jelinek had set up reminding me of the need to continue to negotiate with the necessary structures of care and support that enable creative processes.

Flying not Gliding: The different sounds of a feminist reading group

Manifestos work on subjective territories; they try to effect consciousness by enacting history from a particular perspective, to say that something is missing and 'we' share that loss. In a social practice what we share is, within certain given conditions, open to negotiation. The question at the heart of Jelinek's practice, of how a single form or performance can create equal space for many voices and subjectivities is also a concern of feminist manifestos, which complicate straightforward assumptions of solidarity. I was able to explore questions around the politics of subjectivity as a participant in a year-long reading group initiated by practice-based researchers Emma Balkind and Laura Edbrook in association with *MAP* magazine. Through the artists' practice the reading group combined feminist content with a social art form crossing the institutional politics of art and literature through its situation and choice of texts.

Named '*Sick Sick Sick': The Books of Ornery Women* (Autumn 2014–Autumn 2015) the group centred on exploring a radical or 'bludgeoned' subjectivity of female writers emerging from online Alt Lit scenes and earlier. In one of the group's key texts, *I Love Dick* (1997) writer Chris Kraus, cited as a foundational influence on the reading group, describes 'bludgeoned' subjectivity as on the edge of existence, under attack by those who institute culture.[30] The group was framed as bringing together emerging writers, late nineties publications in the Semiotext(e) 'Native Agents' series and 'earlier women's literature such as *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892) by Charlotte Perkins Gilman' (Edbrook, 2014).

In manifesto terms, moving backwards and forwards through time, collaborators Balkind and Edbrook suggest that these diverse sources represent a missing voice that we can uncover and share as a group, exploring 'tensions between language, sociology, subjectivity and power-relations'. Writing on the group Edbrook reveals the intention for it to be 'small, invited; a communal space for exchange and possible consciousness' (2015). In this way descriptions of the intentions for the series mirror Segal's memories of consciousness-raising groups (Rowbotham et al., 1979) yet the content, with some texts considered as post-feminist, takes it well beyond the second wave. More pointedly the artists approach history in a dialogic way reconfiguring apparently fixed formations (including the wave metaphor) through their combination of form and content. This

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[30] The term 'bludgeoned' is part of a quote from the author in an interview with Giampaolo Bianconi in the journal *Rhizome* (Bianconi & Kraus, 2012).

allusion to consciousness and the 'transformative' potential of gathering a group together around a shared set of allies, in the form of books, makes the project an interesting proposition to consider as an expanded feminist manifesto.

Film still from Věra Chytilová's *Daisies* (1966). Image: Creative Commons sourced from
http://www.cineoutsider.com/reviews/dvd/d/daisies.html

The reading group began with a film showing of Czech writer and director Věra Chytilová's neo-surrealist film *Daisies* (1966). The convention breaking, cut-and-paste film followed the two female leads in pushing the boundaries of their visibility through an outrageous, carnivalesque rebellion against social norms. It set the tone for the series that aimed to curate a programme out of 'a spine of books' (Balkind in conversation with the group, 2013). Within this framework it was possible to see Balkind and Edbrook's work as a developing social practice, exploring the intersection between contemporary art and writing, as well as between personal and institutional spaces. In a retrospective article for *MAP* magazine Edbrook asks:

> 'how might narratives of radical subjectivity, friendship, wildness, love and
> desire transform our relationships to the institutions of history and culture?'
> (Edbrook, 2015)

The project's interest in the emerging online literature was reflected not only in the choice of books, two of which were developed from online platforms, but in the group's

oscillation between regular face-to-face meetings in the CCA and online encounters, through a tumblr platform. The platform was part of an open methodology that allowed for a larger readership beyond the immediate geography of Glasgow. It also enabled a form of conversation between sessions where readers could submit posts that would contribute to the overall form of the series. In addition Edbrook and Balkind read books *with* the group in real time rather than having a pre-planned programme. This position, in time and responsive to context, both defining features of a social practice, was attributed to a hope:

> '..for the project to develop its own logic, for the reader to be a priority and become a collaborative writer of the programme.' (Ibid)

This hope connected the reading group to the project of producing agency through writing. In a sense this was a reading group that was on the edge of becoming a writing group, navigating through texts that opened up the practice of writing, extending it to other subjectivities. In this way the project also acknowledged the role of a supportive network in the process of creativity. *Heroines* (2012) the first book selected for the group, written by Kate Zambreno, emerged out of a blog and within its pages Zambreno acknowledges the support given to her through an online community. Zambreno's project, like the reading group that references it, is a research and reading project. The narrative focuses on the missing histories of the 'mad' wives of the canonical modernist writers, among their number Zelda Fitzgerald and Vivienne Eliot. The book explores these women as creative people in their own right, walking the line that is drawn between madness and genius to try and imagine a reality in which their creativity could be acknowledged alongside their husbands'. This reality is juxtaposed by the one found by Zambreno in archive records. Here Fitzgerald appears as colonizer of his wife's experiences leading to the necessary repression of her own written narratives, which have become his property. Zambreno is first of all a reader and appears somehow haunted in her writing by these missing women to the extent that the text feels co-authored. This responsive and busy feeling of co-authorship is juxtaposed with a particularly modernist form of consciousness that distils everything under the sign of the author, transcending the self and the messy incidental bodies that might support it. Here modernist writing is viewed as a form of murder. Echoing Foucault's observations in *What is an Author* (Foucault, 1998) Zambreno says of modernism 'Don't let them find the bodies. Take everything out that can be verified or named' (Zambreno, 2012, p.237).

Zambreno's project works like a feminist manifesto, her reading producing a community through time and her writing one in cyberspace. She describes this online space as moving in cycles between feverish dialogue and withdrawal that might reflect a form of abjection that comes from feeling somehow missing and consequently performing its own oblivion. She also urges others to write, replacing the singular author by a 'we' form; describing the online community she says there is 'a fear and compulsion towards confessionalism, towards blurring boundaries. We write of this bleeding.' (Zambreno, 2012, p.287)

This perspective mirrors glimpses we have of Edbrook's view on creative practice. In this way the reading group is not one but multiple manifestos. Writing on her exhibition, *The Copyist: Sky Blue and Yellow* (2012) at the Changing Room in Stirling, Ken Neil notes that the exhibition asks questions of the ownership of work (Neil, 2012). In *MAP* Edbrook writes on a radical 'post–critical' position that is a 'communal discourse - relational and associative' (Edbrook, 2015). This discourse uses its own life as material, testing the rules of the literary canon by enacting a kind of reversal. Edbrook quotes Chris Kraus, whose book *I Love Dick* (1997) is credited by Colman as being a feminist manifesto, in conversation with writer Elizabeth Gumport:

> 'if women have failed to make universal art because we are trapped within the personal then why not universalize the personal and make it the subject?' (Kraus, 2012)

Although Kraus' personal is very different from Ukeles', this logic repeats the gesture made in the *Manifesto For Maintenance Art* (1969a). Ukeles reasons similarly – if I have failed to make artwork because I am trapped in maintenance then I will turn the place in which I am trapped into the work (About Manifesto, pp.31-34). Revolution here is a kind of turning inside out, as Cixous suggests, dissolving binary positions in the process.

Within this relational and associative process books are considered as a supportive community. To prove this point Edbrook quotes another author from the series, Katherine Angel, who tweets that the act of buying books functions 'as a way of gathering allies around me, gathering my people' (Angel, 2012). In this way the acts of production and consumption are interweaved with each other so that Foucault's

assertion that 'reading and writing must not be disassociated' (1997 p.216) comes into play. Finally, Edbrook pulls in Kraus as an ally who claims:

> 'Writing is essentially cannibalistic. To write something you need to go out and find things and bring them back. A process of hunting and gathering.' (Kraus, 2015, 51:23 mins)[31]

Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller *The House of Books Has No Windows* (2008) © Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller. Courtesy of the artists and Luhring Augustine, New York.

I could add Michel de Certeau to Edbrook's catalogue of allies who describes reading as an 'act of poaching', an act of everyday creativity that works to survive in and subvert culture's master narratives. Or Walter Benjamin who in *Unpacking My Library* (1968) builds a dwelling from books, merging the act of writing into the act of collecting. [32] Edbrook also quotes Kathy Acker, who provides us with the final book to read in the series: 'I was unspeakable so I ran into the language of others' (Acker, 1997, p.80).

In this way writing is a dialogue with history, a cut-and-paste process, a generative re-appropriation of sources. The art in writing is a kind of gathering together, a curating of words. Caring for words. What writers like Kraus and Acker do within this tradition is let the seams and sources show. In highlighting a support structure to creative work and asking what interests make this structure invisible these writers bring up feminist

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[31] This quote is from Chris Kraus speaking at a series of events presented by Raven Row, London called Plastic Words.
[32] Benjamin originally delivered *I'm Unpacking My Library* on the radio in 1931.

concerns. This question of support intersects with questions raised by social practice, manifesting in Edbrook and Balkind's desire to gather a community around a set of texts and to ask what voices are still unsupported by our various cultural institutions. And also to ask what is missing in their own discourse, where it might fail.

A Moving Form

Echoing this perspective on creativity Balkind writes on the exhibition *Dreams of Machines* (2015) at Transmission, Glasgow by collaborative duo Victor & Hestor, who transform the space into a domestic setting that references feminist histories, further supplemented by a parallel online space (2015- ongoing).[33] She recognises a kind of comfortable social intersection between Victor & Hestor's exhibition and the reading group platform:

> 'We are each investigating archives of other women's work.. there is something mutually referential happening across our discursive practice.. We examine some of the same things across exhibition spaces, and platforms with quotes and references. In this way our feminism presents as a kind of autodidactism.' (Balkind, 2015)

Feminism here is moving across platforms and spaces, what is more it is social and dialogic movement. Balkind's PhD research investigates a philosophical history of commons. Manifestos meet the subject of commons through the politics of shared subjectivity, galvanising individuals through an expression of common purpose. They also approach commons as a broken promise, interrogating exclusive discourses and public spaces. In conversation with me Balkind revealed a surface disparity between her research topic and the book group. The language of commons, invested in a neutral public sphere, seemed to be at odds with the excessive and personal subjectivity expressed in the reading group texts, as if the feminist exclusion from revolutionary spaces that Lyon comments on was playing out again (About Manifestos, p.5). She described the reading group as a kind of repressed subconscious to the discourse around commons. Yet her writing reveals a different possible history. She cites 'the concept of the estovers, the law permitting widows to collect branches of wood (and sometimes other things like honey) from commons' (Balkind, 2015) as a formal

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[33] Victor & Hestor is an artistic collaboration between Amelia Bywater and Emma Fitts.

recognition of lack. The concept opens up a space for those without resources, 'who would otherwise be confined to a domestic space' (Ibid) to enter into another, shared public space. Estovers is a promise in law that the political manifesto remembers and re-enacts, creating its own version of shared space as a political collectivity.

Balkind reframes the commons as a feminist gallery space. In this context estovers, initially branches, become paper and books, passed between people, 'one woman to another' (Ibid). This narrative allows the reading group to become more than a repressed part. Balkind also shared with me the concept of *Affidamento*, developed by the Milan Women's Bookshop Collective, describing it as a kind of support or exchange that moves towards action. She quotes Mirna Ciconi on *Affidamento*:

> 'It is a recognition of one woman's public expertise and the need for that to be translated into social relations for the benefit of another woman and women generally.' (Ciconi, 1989, p.77)

This 'turning around' (Myles, 1997) to create an exchange between women is a feminist practice that artists such as Kate Davis and Faith Wilding could be said to replicate through their long-term written exchange and collaboration.[34] The making public of these exchanges creates a commons that doesn't negate forms of personal subjectivity. The feminist perspective enables commons to move on from the oppositional deadlock between objective public forms and personal private interests. This different commons model for identification and sharing sits between personal and public space so that 'collectivity does not negate singularity, but compliments or even enables it' (Lisa Robertson, 2013 in Edbrook, 2015). [35]

Balkind's experience of the discourse on commons, and her working out of a place for feminism within that discourse, does not sacrifice the excessive personal subjectivity revealed in the reading group texts. The group replays the second wave assertion that the personal is political. These ideas re-emerge in the context of a group of books that also represent a critical departure from second wave practices. In this way the reading

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[34] Davis and Wilding's creative partnership included installations by the artists in the CCA as part of Glasgow International 2010, a symposium, a 'peculiar resources' archive room of feminist material and a reading room collaboration with Glasgow Women's Library. See more at http://glasgowinternational.org/events/kate-davis-and-faith-wilding/

[35] Lisa Robertson in the introduction to the 2013 edition of the collectively written text *Theory, A Sunday* (1988).

group accommodates oppositional forms, it provides time and space for working things out. The open and dialogic nature of the group is supported by the tight conceptual principles through which it was initiated. The texts cohere, becoming a collectivity with very specific things in common, yet it is also possible to read them individually and to take them elsewhere into other creative projects. This link to agency gives the project a political edge. It suggests the feminist manifesto form as a plural support network and a radical pedagogical form.
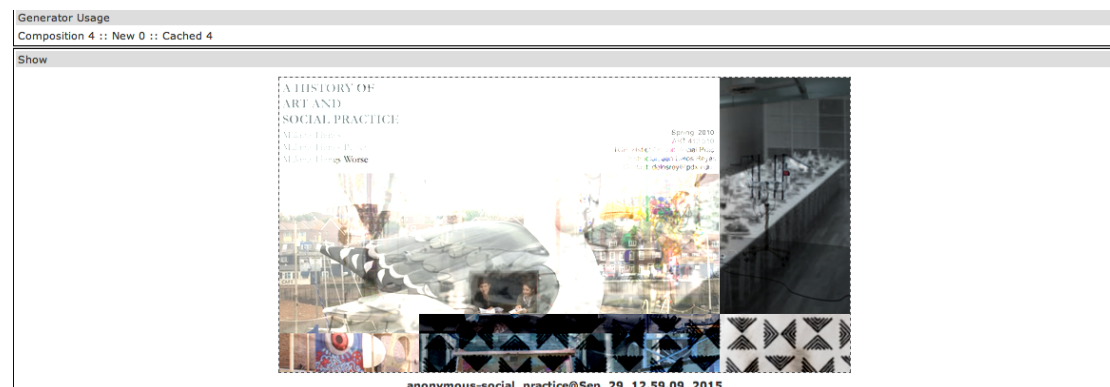
A smart artist makes the machine do the work. Image courtesy of net.art generator, Cornelia Sollfrank.

An Offering of Mind? Giving what you don't have

In becoming a public syllabus '*Sick Sick Sick'* also shares much in common with other online projects that have developed out of small collectives of readers to become larger movements. At the *Dundee Commons Festival* (August, 2015) initiated by artist Jonathan Baxter and collaboratively produced from weekly readings and events set up by the artist, Cornelia Sollfrank ran a workshop, which I attended, around digital commons. The workshop centred on different online platforms created by artists including, notably, Sean Dockray's work with *Public School* (2008-present). Sollfrank, a founding member of cyberfeminist group *Old Boys Network*, spoke on the idea of an expanded notion of art. She defined this notion as art that actively relates to society and is concerned with its 'emancipatory and empowering functions' (Audio Archive, MW. 003). This expanded conception suggests art works as oppositional and collective systems, against the notion that the isolated, competitive individual is the basic unit of human experience.

Her practice is interested in art's 'operating systems' and how the parameters of these can be changed. Much of her work asks questions around copyright, ownership and art history's predilection for rising individual stars. In this process Sollfrank uses hacking as a metaphor for interventions that enter into systems through a process of mimesis to produce a logic that is counter-intuitive to the system. For example in an interview on the *Old Boys Network* (2000) she describes the process of hacking a computer software convention by inventing and relaying stories of female hackers, using the language of the convention to set up an imaginary scenario that tests its assumptions (Sollfrank, 2001). In this way Sollfrank uses several tactics laid out by Faith Wilding (2001) for complicating models of acceptable art careers, including making work 'anywhere and everywhere' (Wilding, 2001).[36] Her work performs a double hack, intervening within art world systems and on other platforms, setting up experiences of art that are unexpected. This placing of one world in another parallels Rancière's definition of the political action performed by feminist manifestos. It is the manifesto's job to hack a host culture.

In relation to hacking, and in the context of the Dundee festival 'digital commons' day, Sollfrank identified commons as a new political discourse and practice, made up of small islands of experimentation, in the wake of global crisis.[37] She suggested digital commons as a hacking practice, challenging understood notions of sharing and giving. Because sharing in the digital realm can be achieved cheaply and easily it comes to represent a multiplying rather than dividing of resources. Moreover the act of sharing in different contexts is a form of creative modification, blurring the line between production and consumption in way that interests artists like Edbrook.[38]

Quoting Massimo de Angelis, Professor of Political Economy at University of East London, Sollfrank related the discourse of commons to issues of social justice, which is

[36] Wilding also lists the following as important tactics: gift economy; anti-copyright; interdisciplinarity; allowing others to perform your work for free with no strictures on how they do it; working collectively, anonymously; not confining oneself to performing or showing in art spaces or recognised museums, but seeking audiences everywhere and anywhere; refusing signature styles or purity of method, media, or materials.

[37] The festival itself represents one of these small islands, produced by a group formed around a weekly reading group run by artists and curator Jonathan Baxter.
[38] One project Sollfrank explores is the continuously morphing online platform aaaaa.org, which mimics the library function by making text available online. Its initiator Sean Dockray says of reading 'there is a strong relationship between ideas that you have and what you think is possible and what you have been reading' (Sollfrank & Dockray, 2015, 13:07 mins).

where it most notably aligns with manifesto concerns. Furthermore, she approached questions that are apparent in Jelinek's work around the relationship between the individual and the group. Asking is it possible to function without leadership? Or what kind can be accepted by a group? In asking these questions feminism has played with the manifesto, moving it from a monological text that offers a particular form of leadership, to a more negotiated form.

In order to approach these questions Sollfrank's research practice *Giving What You Don't Have* is an online database of interviews with practitioners like Sean Dockray whose work is social, creating open structures and unstable situations. In interview with Sollfrank, Dockray, who has an architectural background, explores the idea of 'expanded appropriation' (Sollfrank, 2015). This goes beyond the Duchampian practice of appropriating objects (things already distributed) to thinking about the appropriation of systems and structures of distribution including libraries, schools and galleries. There are many feminist precedents for this kind of appropriation including most directly Glasgow Women's Library (With Archives). More broadly the reimagination of care structures within the women's movement also acts in a similar manner (About Manifesto, p.10).

Like Jelinek, Dockray's work consists in providing a framework and basic rules that only come to life through contributions from others. Understanding how this framework operates as a form contributes to the proposed rethinking of collectivity that Sollfrank's research grapples with. Equally the framework, like '*Sick Sick Sick'*, is worth considering as an expanded manifesto practice that works prefiguratively to suggest social change. Dockray's interventions more often involve coding online forms with contributions from large numbers of people, yet in interview he stresses the fact that his motivations are social and stretch beyond the online platforms. His experiments are traced back to a gallery-based project he initiated to support new media art. This project placed him in the uncomfortable curatorial position of deciding what would become visible. From there *Public School* (2008–present) grew as an online syllabus that makes the curatorial structure visible and enables people to share responsibility for decision making within it. The platform, which Dockray programmes with Kayla Waldorf, offers a space for people to propose things they want to learn or teach, then use the online space to allow people to sign up and turn ideas into real meetings between different users. In this way the website, which currently includes fourteen groups meeting around the world, is an engine for curating. The software becomes a kind of politics, influencing what people see

as possible and getting things to happen. As a programming vehicle *Public School* differs greatly from the gallery model where websites broadcast an already decided programme. An important question for this project and for '*Sick Sick Sick*' (2014-15) is: does this mean that curating is completely open? Dockray concedes that it is guided by the 'coding conditions', which in some senses become the project manifesto. Dockray reasons that:

> 'in any open structure there are always rules in place and a past history, these two things go a long way to influencing what can happen in the future. You go to the site try to find things that speak to you if not you leave.' (Dockray in interview with Sollfrank, 2015, 16:33 mins)

The website engenders a self-selecting community. It is able to ensure coherence around a subject and set of concerns without overtly dictating the terms. In this way an open structure does not suggest a completely unregulated chaos of voices but a different negotiated model of leadership - a dialogical manifesto. It functions as a kind of buried and adapted score setting up an important relationship between history and the future. History is conceptualised as something that works actively on the future. Dockray's stance on power relationships is one found frequently in feminist praxis which is a territory formed through a particular awareness of exclusive structures and the politics of visibility. His work is one particular example of many considered in *Giving What You Don't Have* (2012-present). As part of *Old Boys Network* Sollfrank exhibited a concern for the manifesto form.[39] Her later work in *Giving What You Don't Have* expands on this earlier commitment, seeking out art works that perform as manifestos, infused with feminist consciousness, exploring and developing different anti-hierarchical redistribution systems.

Intransitive Dialogue

Sollfrank's research raises concerns over the problems of collective working, issues of leadership, consensus, the relationship between individual and group identity, credit and the need for practical tactics in order to sustain successful forms of self-organising, perhaps particularly when these forms enter into other systems. These concerns around

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[39] The homepage of the *Old Boys Network* site opens with a list of manifestos: 100 anti-theses, Bitch Mutant Manifesto and Cyberfeminist Manifesto for the 21st Century.

the internal coherence of structures that are necessarily open and engaged in the process of social change are also manifesto concerns. Following Lyon's analysis, the manifesto should be specific enough to offer definition and speak to particular political subjectivities and yet be open enough to engender new engagements (About Manifestos, p.4).

The questions of sustainability and leadership in collaboration is one that I also explored in parallel to the question of organisational change through an ongoing dialogue with artist and fellow researcher Helen Smith. Smith's practice-based doctoral research involved understanding organisational change through art and laying out a methodology for art as a social practice. I initiated a dialogue, because I wanted to see how an embodied theory could intersect with what Smith initially referred to as a social relational practice. The intention, as with the other collaborations, was to consider the dialogical action prevalent in feminist manifestos within the context of a social practice as it unfolds. The dialogue between us stretched over two years. Conversation started by moving between text and discussion and led to multiple creative trajectories including conference presentations, works for exhibition and collaboration with two community organisations. Initially we were concerned to explore the question of sustainability in relation to social change, asking how self-organising collectives can continue to work according to their original ethos yet still prove open enough to grow and develop. This question was of direct relevance to Smith's research context, which was a placement at the rural art centre, Woodend Barn in Banchory, a hybrid space that had developed into its current form out of a self-organised community initiative.

In conversation with me Smith discussed her practice at Woodend Barn including *The Lavender Project* (2012-2014), which was a context-specific intervention into the changing organisational structure of the centre. The project included a public programme of related events and a final exhibition that involved multiple communities. Within *Lavender* Smith utilised a social practice methodology, including organising and hosting a meal at the start of the project. In conversation Smith explained:

> 'Through this dinner, the subject for the project, lavender, emerged as a story. Acting as a point of reference, it enabled us to talk about sustainability in a more specific way.. It emerged as an important topic for the people in the room and *created a shared energy*. The story was the history of local cultivation of the

Deeside lavender.' (Conversation transcribed from audio, 2014, Audio Archive MW.003)

Smith referred to *Lavender* as both a resonant local history and a metaphor for sustainability. Lavender is also more than a metaphor, it is a way for the local community to become aware of and work with the art centre driving its future form. In this way Smith's work with the group around the topic spins out history as a thread that can offer a working method for the organisation in the future. As an artist she moves between the symbolic plane, where the story of lavender works and a more practical organisational plane where structures of exclusion and organisational hierarchies play out. Towards the end of the project Smith brought together volunteers, researchers, artists and members of the gallery committee to discuss the resonances of the final exhibition and the next steps the organisation could take. One participant described the exhibition as 'a vital piece of social history brought to life by making it into art' (Gray, 2013). In Smith's hands history becomes a dialogical form that affects the present and future. This aspect of her practice parallels the manifesto's use of history as an affective force that resonates in the present and can consequently be brought to bear on the future. Both Smith's social practice and the manifesto in this way become hosting spaces, drawing memories together in a compelling way to enable collective action.

We began our collaboration in response to a conference co-organised by the research community in Aberdeen, called *Meaning(less)Meaning*. In response to the call Smith and I laid out an argument that was grounded in principles drawn together from radical pedagogy, pragmatism and different strands within feminist theory and practice. As with Jelinek my role was to consider and bring to light a possible relationship between Smith's practice and feminist principles. We presented an argument for the situated, collaborative and relationally poetic nature of meaning making. This argument took the form of a dialogue that opened out into a workshop. The presentation, which was less a final paper than a process-based intervention, contained the seeds of later discussions and collaborative work between us.[40]

I discussed certain characteristics of feminist manifestos, their moving quality, quoting Holzer's sense of 'real danger from things like institutions', as well as their double

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[40] Early on in the dialogue Smith emphasised the importance of being in process rather than producing a final form.

position between rage and utopia. I wanted to sketch out these connections between her work and the manifesto form. Initially we did this by producing a dialogue that moved between descriptions of Smith's practice and my research. We stretched this dialogue into the workshop element by combining Jenny Holzer's *Truisms* (1984) with images from a set of postcards of the Deeside Lavender factory where Woodend Barn art centre now stands, to generate discussion between workshop participants around their own interests. The juxtaposition of the *Truisms* (1984), often expressing different shades of revolutionary sentiment and *avant-garde* language with the grainy images of lavender farming and the benign soundtrack that accompanies Kay Gordon's short documentary (Gordon, 1965) on the area produced a comic effect. Underlying this was the proposition that social practice may operate as a form of hacking, hiding radical, often antagonistic intentions within apparently convivial forms. Later on in her research thesis Smith also acknowledged the antagonism within her practice that, through projects like *Lavender,* was able to short circuit institutional forms of communication, which left some volunteers cut off from the conceptual development of the art centre programme. Instead, through a mechanism that seemed, from the outside, to be a straightforward community history project, Smith was able to help establish new connections between communities at Woodend Barn and beyond and be party to evolving different organisational methods going forward. [41]

These institutional interventions became an important topic of discussion between us. Along feminist lines I was interested in deconstructing an institutional tendency towards a mind/body split; which involves people in an office deciding on the programme and other people on the ground carrying out the tasks – cleaning the spaces, engaging and playing host to the community. In relation to this it was evident that Smith's practice circumvented this institutional division by moving between forms of material and immaterial labour in the Woodend Barn art centre. She defined this movement with reference to the importance of the Artist's Placement Group (APG) to the development of her work (Stevini, 1960 - 2005). The group, founded by Barbara Stevini and John Latham in the UK, pioneered the concept of art in social contexts, placing artists at the centre of governmental and industrial organisations. Importantly, APG insisted on an open brief for artists so they were not tied to the preformed agendas of any one group in a situation. Instead the artist was referred to as an incidental person

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[41] For example ITV News included coverage of the project but left the question of its status as art outside the frame of the story. The full news clip can be found at https://vimeo.com/79193958

who could move freely between different groups within an organisation.[42] For Smith, this work as incidental person explored *in situ* forms of communication that exist *across* different groups in an organisation. As well as setting up a studio within the centre, out of which to invite participation in developing projects, Smith also attended volunteer committee meetings, increasingly peripheral to the evolving public programme. In this way she experienced organisational culture from the inside, observing the points where communication between parts seemed to break down and making these failures apparent. Smith defines this 'culture of openness' within *Lavender* as:

> 'one that valued the different knowledge and experience of participants equally in order to create shared responsibility between us for the delivery of the project'. (Smith, 2015b, p.150)

Openness sits in contrast to the usual decision-making process within art centre environments where, as Dockray also notes from his experience of running a gallery, there is a closed curatorial mechanism that holds responsibility for making things visible. Smith goes on to say:

> 'The concept of openness is a useful and antagonistic quality of the practice because it sets up the conditions for revealing insights into the often hidden boundaries of the practice as well as those of the participants and their context.' (Ibid)

Openness is in this case both a form of institutional critique but also a self-reflexive mechanism. As a gesture it could also be seen as a creating a small crack in the order of things, opening up a perspective that allows the different knowledge, experience and positionality of the participants to emerge. It is also a self-reflexive movement *between* that echoed with my preliminary writing on feminist praxis.

Being *with* Smith's practice also revealed the generative nature of collaboration, which tends to produce multiple creative trajectories, or lines of flight. These trajectories were often embedded in conversational and social circumstances that were difficult to acknowledge as formal methodologies.

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[42] More particularly on the incidental person Stevini speaks to Tony Benn ahead of the conference *Art and Social Intervention* (Stevini, 2005, Part 2 18.54 mins).

I was interested in these barely visible social and conversational elements that my collaboration with Smith revealed. For this reason we continued a dialogue beyond the context of Helen's placement, in relation to a different situation, around the sustainability of the environmental organisation South Seeds (2011–present) in Govanhill, Glasgow, where I had previously been a founding member. As an initiative, South Seeds works from several reclaimed community growing sites and within tenement block populations in an area where complex and diverse experiences make it difficult to link communities and individuals up to resources and each other in a way that could bring about lasting environmental change. I proposed an exchange between Woodend Barn and South Seeds that could explore the similarities and differences in organisations that both have environmental concerns and a community-based history. In a recorded conversation, which later became a publication around conversational mapping (2015), we discussed what I perceived to be a process of institutionalisation that operated by a series of separations between organisation and community. Prior to the conversation I also organised events within South Seeds, taking on the role of 'incidental' person, to host meals and shared walks around Govanhill, gathering together staff, committee and community members in the area. These events worked towards producing a situated definition for South Seeds that could move the group forward through a considered and social reflection of its own short history. In setting up these events, which have now become part of the working method, between different members of the South Seeds, I combined Smith's insights on sociability with reflections on feminist techniques like consciousness-raising.

In parallel to this process of testing my understanding of social practice within a new organisational context, the dialogue also developed between us to try and account for the value of social and conversational elements in theoretical terms. In collaboration we emphasised how meaning was generated through social moments, not separate from life. This sociability is an important part of Smith's practice, which often sees her crossing the line between personal and professional positions in a generative way. In conversation she revealed:

> 'HS: There is a real expertise and professionalism of knowing how and when to move between these interchangeable identities. This can be disconcerting - you have to play that over time.' (Audio Archive MW.003 adapted for conference proceedings, February 2014)

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The disconcerting element is to some extent the line that is crossed between personal and professional actions. Smith acknowledges the personal also as a form of labour that feeds into her practice. Kirsten Lloyd frames this labour in relation to social practice as a form of care that crosses over into emotional territory (About Hospitality, p.44). Furthermore, Smith crosses the line between being an artist and a participant so that as the project develops it is difficult to define roles in a hierarchical way. This negotiation between roles continues into the reflective phase of the project where her PhD includes the radical incorporation of participant perspectives in defining the artwork. Importantly, when invited to speak on the work at a conference in Queens, New York, Smith's presentation incorporated the recorded voices of multiple participants. Through these adaptations there is a break with the forms of academic paper and conference, which could be considered, along with the exhibition, as spaces where collaboratively formed artworks traditionally become pieces owned by the artist. [43] This break does not suggest that the artist's work should go unacknowledged, but to say that in traditional art systems of acknowledgement a certain amount of complexity is lost along with an understanding of what this labour, within a collaborative project, might look like. By adding other voices to her presentation Smith suggests missing histories embedded within each collaborative practice that should be shared in order to take the methodology forward.

A Moment in Time, Spoken Words

This acknowledgement of hidden labour and support structures around creativity is pervasive in feminist art history and surfaces in creative practices as varied as Marysia Lewandowska's Women's Audio Archive and Kate Zambreno's *Heroines*. Equally collaborative working methods have been embraced within feminist praxis, possibly because of feminist emphasis on the social and collaborative nature of all creative forms, which exist in a network of, often repressed, supportive actions. In collaboration with Smith what surfaced was the underestimated value of the conversational form. For Smith meaning is generated in a social way. In order to try to articulate this aspect of meaning making we discussed the difference between text and speech referencing Michel de Certeau's pivotal work on the subject in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (de Certeau, 1984). This movement towards speech is the movement the manifesto makes,

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[43] Dimitrakaki refers to the exhibition as interface in *Art, Globalisation and the Exhibition Form* (2012).

as a text that requires performance. By referencing de Certeau we considered the speech act as an intervention that takes hold of the moment in a similar manner to the manifesto (About Manifesto, p16). Furthermore de Certeau writes of possibilities offered to those on the margins of 'dominant culture', without a space to operate from or in other words, without property. This marginal, improper space is also the position taken up by the feminist manifesto:

> 'HS: In de Certeau, ordinary moments can be liberating. Liberation comes from choosing to *enunciate*, to become social and activate the text. De Certeau refers to the sentence as a metaphor for the infrastructures of society; somebody deciding to speak a sentence, he says, is intervening in life..
>
> CG: If social infrastructures are related to these tiny everyday speech acts, then power becomes something more fluid. We don't simply fit into an existing structure but also alter it through these almost imperceptible acts. When thinking about existing power inequalities, there is a complexity to this as well as some hope.' (Audio Archive MW.001 adapted for conference proceedings, February 2014)

In de Certeau it matters who is speaking and where and why (With Archives, p.55, Audio Archive, AW.005). As Cixous realises, to speak is an act that involves the body, it is also a kind of theft that is impossible to regulate against. De Certeau frames the act of speaking as a re-appropriation that 'steals something from the distribution owning the space' (Ibid, p.85). He writes:

> 'The act of speaking is not reducible to a knowledge of the language.. speaking.. effects an appropriation, or re-appropriation of language by its speakers; it establishes a present relative to time and place; and it posits a contract with the other (the interlocutor) in the network of places and relations. These four characteristics of the speech act can be found in many other practices (walking, cooking, etc.).' (de Certeau, 1984, p.14)

By speaking, he continues, users make 'innumerable and infinitesimal transformations of and within the dominant cultural economy in order to adapt it to their own interests and their own rules' (Ibid, p. 15).

The immediacy of speech, existing within a particular time and space, and its consequently different qualities, was considered in tandem with the undervalued work of listening within a social practice.[44] For this reason the role that voice plays became central, affecting our decision to include multiple recorded voices in the documentation process, most notably within the journal article, *Conversational Mapping: Revaluing the Social Aspects of Art* (2015). The article opens up our original dialogue around de Certeau and Smith's practice to include the voices of participants and social activists in the two contexts of Banchory and Govanhill, incorporating audio fragments, which test de Certeau's hypothesis.[45] The hybrid form of the article, which also made use of hypertext to travel in different directions, attempts to conceive of a form of writing that reflects the complexities of social practice and the movement of the artist.

The article was also an attempt to acknowledge and explore the role of sound within social art practice. In a poetic article on the *Ethics of Listening* Salomé Voegelin (2012) describes a way of being in the world that would be based on sound rather than vision. Through this description sound and listening are tied to participation. In contrast to a world based on vision where things are fixed and follow a certain hierarchy:

> 'The politics of listening blurs single visions into multiple motions whose definition needs to be drawn and negotiated.' (Voegelin, 2012)

Voeglin continues:

> 'Ethical listening in that sense describes the responsibility of participating in the motion of the heard: to draw its meaning contingently, and to pass it on in one's own sound as personal speech. It is an ethics of the self, of subjectivity, as much as of the world, of objectivity, as in effect the two become intertwined within its participatory framework, depending on each other for a definition in faint pencil marks.' (Ibid)

Voeglin's drawing of subjectivity and objectivity not as oppositional characteristics but as mutually supporting relates to feminist understandings. Her drawing of sound and participation together as forms of ethics also ties the participation inherent in social

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[44] What Gemma Corraldi Fiumara refers to as *The Other Side of Language* (1995).
[45] The audio clips included in the submission were short fragments from a recorded conversation between ourselves, Genevieve Jones, a participant of *Lavender* (2012-2014), Lucy Gillie, the director of South Seeds, and Robin Ashton, a member of staff from South Seeds.

practice to poetics, just as Dimitrakaki does differently in her reading of social practice. Like de Certeau, Voeglin stresses speech as an act of appropriation that adapts language in a contingent way and consequently requires an ethical approach through listening. Writing on the deep listening practice pioneered by composer Pauline Oliveros, Sharon Stewart emphasises a certain form of openness or receptivity within deep listening practice that is similar to the function of listening within social arts practice. It is important that artists in social practice are responsive to context, developing works *with* rather than *about* the social situations they enter. This requires them to arrive without preconceived projects or assumptions. Similarly Stewart writes about a particular type of receptivity within Oliveros' practice:

> 'The receptivity spoken of here is in no way a passive act. It implies an alert presence in emptiness, empty of 'opinions and speculations' cultivating the field of quieting that allows for the subtle motions of interpenetration to unfold in their own doings, deeply felt and sustained beyond and unhindered by pre-conceptions or pre-judgment.' (Stewart, 2012)

In speaking, de Certeau announces we enter into a contract with the other; the contribution this other might make is unknowable in advance. Social practices operate in this terrain of encounters with others over time and are consequently open to risks, remaining open to the unpredictable possibilities of speech in a network of real time relations. This is the other, quieter side of the manifesto, listening for the politics of the moment, setting up the conditions through which different voices may be heard.

Lavender (2012-2014) closing conversation. Image courtesy of Helen Smith.

The Time that we share

In *The Practice of Everyday Life* de Certeau (1984) also describes the act of reading as a kind of poaching that adds mutations or furnishings to the text in order to make it 'habitable' (de Certeau, Introduction: xxi). Texts become allies in conversations but they are also furnished with our contexts and memories. De Certeau writes on the significance of memory as an everyday tactic (as opposed to strategy, which is aligned in his analysis with having power and a space from which to operate). As a tactic memory is a kind of 'invisible knowledge' that derives its 'interventionary' force (de Certeau, 1984, p.86) precisely from not having a particular space to operate from, instead it has a capacity 'to be altered - unmoored, mobile, lacking any fixed position' (Ibid). In this capacity it mediates 'spatial transformations', intervening at the right moment.

He uses the motif of the circle to describe a cycle 'in which invisible knowledge escapes visible power' (Ibid). As with sound it is the relational qualities of memory that are emphasised:

> 'memory is played by circumstances, just as a piano is played by a musician and the music emerges from it when its keys are touched by hands. Memory is a sense of the other.' (Ibid, p.87)

It acts as a kind of invisible element that, through speaking, can enter into a situation and produce a change in power relations. Memory is also central to Smith's practice at Woodend Barn, with memories of lavender production in the area becoming the central motif through which people increase their connections with each other. In using memory as a material that we can share, Smith joins artists like Monica Ross and Meirle Laderman Ukeles who both also employ memory differently in their practices, urging us not to forget repressed labours and histories. Memory for de Certeau relates to time as opposed to space, intervening at the right moment to change things in an unpredictable way. The invisible 'tactics' of memory play against the visible 'strategies' of space and power so that uncertainty becomes a strength. This is echoed in collaboration with Smith where she asserts the importance of being in process rather than defining things in advance. She quotes Allan Kaprow: 'one shouldn't rush too quickly to label life as art; it may deaden the game' (Kaprow, 1995, p.157).

This is a form of waiting that plays out in time. I initially emphasised space in our conversation, wishing to consider how social practice might facilitate the making of collaborative or commons spaces. In dialogue Helen drew my attention towards time. In speaking to each other we realised that time is not heterogeneous (About Archive, p.26). Instead people are revealed as operating in different time frames, as in Ukeles' manifesto where some activities move rapidly, developing along zip wire lines and others drag, stretching out time in a claustrophobic way. We also discussed how the organisational division between mind and body, material and immaterial labour, operates temporally. Smith was acutely aware of hidden, interstitial time emphasising the important skill of being able to 'shift your timeframe to hook onto the timeframe of somebody with a different set of motivations' (Audio Archive, MW.001).

In the larger conversation with Aston, Gillie and Jones at South Seeds multiple time frames are also considered as significant for the work within the community initiative. Robin Ashton's insights of setting up and working in the community gardens in Govanhill were particularly relevant. In conversation, Ashton emphasises pace, consistency and a kind of cyclical way of working that is in tune with the community's time frame and motivations. There is a questioning of the sustainability of an approach in which leading personalities move ahead of a particular community in order to drive through change. This resistance to traditional *avant-garde* notions of leadership resonates with feminist concerns explored in About Manifestos (p.10). What Ashton describes instead is a sense of time that is both cyclical and progressive. It moves

forward without charging ahead as linear time, or institutional time could be considered to do.[46] Instead, the movement it evokes is similar to a spiral. In the essay *Remembering, Repeating and Working through in Anniversary* (2012) Alexandra Kokoli references Jean Laplanche's (1999) writing on the spiral as a symbol through which he understands the movement that takes place in analysis. Kokoli looks particularly at the significant time of waiting in artist Monica Ross and Co-recitors' repeated performance piece *Anniversary – An Act of Memory* (2008-2013). Instead of pure linear progress Kokoli argues for the significance of waiting and repetition in order to depart into unknown territory (Ibid, p.7). This time of waiting and repetition could also be seen as the time of maintenance. These unknown territories, accessed through crossing into other time frames, are particularly the places where social practice artists like Ukeles and Smith choose to dwell. Equally, Ashton and Gillie argue for a different type of waiting through the winter before they pick up the work with communities at a more intense level during the growing season.

For Ashton the gardening sessions are generative spaces where people can 'mill about and chat' with the gardening activities providing a 'wee bit of structure' (Ashton, March 2014). From Smith's perspective, this kind of loose framework is reminiscent of Kaprow's work:

> 'HS: I don't want to create a set of instructions to replicate.. It is a loosely choreographed framework for a happening. A path, you let it run its course and you create the conditions for that to happen. It is an intervention but it contains the possibility of chance operations. As soon as you're working with people, chance occurs. It took me a year to get to that point in a particular journey. To get to a similar place, you have to digest the work and reinterpret it for who you are, what the context is and who the participants are.' (Audio Archive, MW.001 adapted for conference proceedings, February 2014)

Much of Smith's work is in creating the conditions for things to happen. This setting of conditions could be seen as a less rigid metaphor for what Jelinek terms as the rules or conceptual framework through which participation occurs. Yet there is, as Ashton also states, some structure to activities that then play out through time. John Cage developed the concept of chance operations around musical scores, leaving some elements of

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[46] Braidotti describes this kind of time as *chronos* (About Hospitality, p.30).

works open to chance. Kaprow developed 'happenings' which blurred the relationship between life, art, artist and audience and in this he references Cage as an influence (Kaprow, 2003, p.23). This meeting of two bodies of work that influence Smith's social practice have a genealogy in sound that makes it appropriate to think of her creating scores for events. The form of the work as it plays out is dependent not only on her score but on the bodies that meet it. Similarly Stewart writes of deep listening:

> 'I might also suggest that with somatic listening, the structure we speak of is no longer, or not only, a musical structure, but the structure of a happening: neither sound nor body, but the story of the sound-with-body encounter.' (Stewart, 2012)

Her response to these bodies performs an ethical listening that moves with them, crossing between personal and work boundaries, intervening to produce shared moments, things in common. In this way her work is relational yet also antagonistic, producing interventions that collectively reimagine the structures we exist within, using memory to steal something from the operating systems that hold us in place.

Conclusions

Throughout this thesis social practice is an embedded form, engaged in knowing *with* its subjects. In response this section also represents a situated view, describing my role as a researcher negotiating a critical position from within various social art practices as they unfold, moving between participation, conversation and collaboration, looking for the spaces where art practices align themselves with activism in support of agency, becoming manifesto. This movement enables me to approach the invisible labours of social art practice, the moments that can be perceived through a sustained process of being *with*. From this position social practice emerges as a score that can be placed alongside an understanding of the poetics of the manifesto form. By initiating a dialogue between the two I suggest a missing history that could be collectively reclaimed.

My initial dialogue with Jelinek's practice, as a workshop collaborator, offered significant critique and a feminist perspective on events – drawing questions around the assumption that dialogic space is somehow inherently utopic. Jelinek's choice of Rancière's writing spoke to my concerns around feminist manifesto practice allowing

me to weave together theory and practice in public space. The antagonism inherent in my critique spoke to Jelinek, who often positions herself in conflict with mainstream neoliberal positions, opening up a space for me to explore the balance she negotiates in her own work between safety and conflict. This drew the realisation that it is only from safety that risk and experimentation towards different futures can take place. In the interests of producing open and pluralistic spaces Jelinek's conceptual framework represents a desire to create the conditions through which other voices can be heard. This desire places the question of equality at the heart of her practice and is framed with reference to Emmanual Levinas' ethics. By including Irigaray's critique of that position this writing presents itself as an awkward guest, pushing at the boundaries of practice. In dialogue with me Jelinek proves herself ready to move responsively to this, articulating in her practice a hitherto unspoken relationship to feminist history and a way for social practice expertise to feed into that history going forward.

The question of language, how we speak about what we do, so important to the first section, is approached again through my participation in a feminist book group. At the group a view is afforded on an alternative literary tradition that, like social art practice, swims against the tide of hierarchical conventions to suggest a different, radical form and posits important questions about the politics of subjectivity, which resonate with manifesto projects. Participation in the group offers me a view of Balkind and Edbrook's sociable practices, which combine to assert something about the influence of collective knowledge. Like Cixous they advocate a kind of wilful theft from other cultural sources, knitting together new forms. By reading culture in this way they suggest it is possible to produce a kind of writing; an autodidactic feminism that relates to the politics of commons. This form, a kind of collectivity, suggests personal subjectivity not only has a place in narratives of commons but that it might be a vital missing history in the discourse.

Where manifestos meet and interrogate the broken promises and missing histories of commons, social practice also approaches the form. Particularly, Jonathan Baxter's collaboratively produced *Commons Festival* (2015) invites Cornelia Sollfrank to offer a feminist lens on the question of commons. Sollfrank suggests numerous commons projects as new forms of prefigurative politics, acting in different ways to appropriate operating systems and create new open structures. To describe these acts of giving, Sollfrank's practice perceives of curating as a kind of hacking, smuggling disruptive forms into host cultures through a play with mimesis. In this equation history is

described as a form of programming that makes certain things possible in the future and other things more difficult. This understanding of history is also inherent to the manifesto, begging the question: are these forms of commoning new manifestos, prefiguring different times? By exploring these projects in Sollfrank's workshop it is possible to see how various frameworks, set up by artists, act like manifestos, being specific and responsive enough to intervene in the context they enter but open enough to produce a sense of agency in their participants.

This surface view on projects offered by the encounter with Sollfrank is supplemented by extensive collaboration with Helen Smith. Through a durational conversational practice Smith's work emerges as another form of hacking, an open and convivial form that hides antagonistic intentions in relation to organisational space. Where other artists speak about conceptual frameworks and programming, Smith describes her work as a score, setting up the conditions for connections to be made between normally separate areas of an organisation and thereby encouraging social change. Smith's practice gathers together a number of individuals and communities around history, creating a hosting space in which these shared things can be brought to the surface in a compelling way. In this way her work plays with the politics of collectivity and memory as do the other practices in this section. In conversation with Smith I play the manifesto form alongside her work, picking Holzer's raging forms in a bid to bring out the hidden deconstructive aspects of Smith's slow-paced durational practice. Just as this combination makes visible certain feminist impulses in Smith's work, our conversation also touches on the invisible labours in social practice. These are revealed as quiet, embedded and responsive forms that employ the active labour of care; a social practice that listens carefully and recognises the necessity to wait for memory to play out in social time.

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