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Corporate Censorship

Not only is corporate censorship bad for art, but it has a profoundly corrosive impact on wider society and democracy.¹ All the acts of censorship and self-censorship I will describe here relate to the London contemporary art world. I have avoided cherry-picking examples from across the globe because, while both neoliberalism and censorship are global phenomena, they occur differently in different places and it would be inaccurate to imply global homogeneity. This chapter is about the specific pressures that have occurred in London over the past decades, advancing a trend in censorship and self-censorship. In order to provide insight for the London context, I cite an ethnography of Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. By its inclusion, I do not wish to convey a sense that the contexts of the USA and UK are the same, only that the insights of its author are relevant more broadly.

Those who are fond of the London contemporary art world may argue against the idea of a growing culture of censorship. They may argue there has never been so wide a variety of art produced and readily available, taking this as evidence of artistic freedom and therefore a lack of institutional or pervasive censorship. Belying any grounds for complacency are two recent events. The first is the London conference on censorship in the arts organised in 2013 by *Index on Censorship*, an international organisation founded in 1972 to promote and defend the right to freedom of expression.² The second is the launch of the Museums Association's new Code of Ethics in 2015 to tackle issues of 'undue influence'.³ At the launch of the new Code of Ethics, Sally Yerkovich, Director of the Institute of Museum Ethics, warned delegates of the increasingly pernicious role played by private funders in guiding curatorial practice and even exhibition content.⁴

Corporate censorship, and the self-censorship some forms of corporate sponsorship engenders, is a growing problem. Yet, aside from these two examples, it remains little discussed within the art or museum worlds, with one notable exception: There has been heightened visibility around the role of oil companies in sponsoring arts and cultural institutions since the sustained actions of the

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Art Not Oil coalition (see below). Generally, though, silence about the pervasiveness of self-censorship in the London art world remains the key note while, paradoxically, we also champion freedom of expression, as the press coverage around Chinese dissident artist Ai Weiwei amply demonstrates.⁵

Perhaps illustrating the pervasiveness of self-censorship in the London art world is the fact that very few of the 300 colleagues I contacted to obtain examples from personal experience of censorship and self-censorship responded.⁶ While there may be numerous reasons why a person doesn't respond to a question sent by a colleague and friend, included in my email list were those I knew to have been subject to censorship, who have since gone on to elevated positions in the art world and who had discussed this openly and with anger at the time.

Institutional self-censorship may be inescapable in our current neoliberal climate, as ethnographer Matti Bunzl concludes:

[T]he task of the curator continues to evolve. No longer centered on the quest for the new, challenging, and difficult, it has become a position of managerial mediation. Success, in this context, comes from the ability to domesticate contemporary art in ways that make it amenable to maximum audience engagement and donor involvement. The curator of the moment, in other words, is someone who can readily execute populist shows without losing conceptual credibility, reconcile institution and market without seeming a sell-out, and build exhibitions around patron's collections without being too obvious about it.⁷

Not censorship but something else: the art world

Before I describe corporate censorship, I will first describe what is not censorship but something else instead. The ordinary operations of the art world to police its boundaries; creating orthodoxies, centres, margins and exclusions may be felt as censorship, but it is not. These ordinary normative art world practices have been described by philosophers since the 1960s as the 'institutional definition of art'.⁸ While Arthur Danto is the more famous proponent of the institutional definition of art, it is George Dickie who takes his ideas further, and I believe, onto more accurate ground. I describe this more fully elsewhere,⁹ but in short George Dickie argues

that a thing becomes art because the art world deems one thing to be art and another not art.¹⁰

This process happens in a largely unconscious way and it happens collectively. No one individual determines whether a thing is art and another is not art, though some individuals are better placed than others within existing art world structures to exert this power of inclusion and exclusion. Building on Dickie's understanding, I argue that the work artists do in defining art is comparable to the work that scientists do to define science. This is an important point in terms of censorship.

By comparison, scientists not only *do* science but they define what is science and scientific method through that process. What they include as science (both scientific fact and appropriate methods for creating scientific fact) determines what is science for wider society. That there are social processes at work in the formation of knowledge in the laboratory was demonstrated in the ethnography of Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar,¹¹ and it is comparable to the social process in defining art described by Dickie. Art, like science, proceeds via social processes. This is an idea of disciplinarity supported by historian of science, G.E.R. Lloyd.¹² Because all forms of knowledge are ultimately created through social processes, all disciplines have processes subject to the vagaries of fashion and exclusion, he argues, and all disciplines are subject to orthodoxies and to periodic revolution. This includes both science and art. If some things are art, other things are not art. This is true whether or not artists acknowledge their participation in the process of exclusion.

In addition to exclusions produced as a consequence of the ordinary operation of the art world, there is another form of exclusion that is not true censorship, even though it has been described as such in the *Index on Censorship* 2013 report. This type of exclusion can be described as institutional bias. Prejudice or biases that create exclusions include sexism, racism and class exclusion, to name a few. When these biases emerge as systemic in institutions, exclusions that are over and above the strictly disciplinary also emerge. The *Index on Censorship* conference provides a few examples of this form of bias exclusion.

Kenan Malik, for example, observes an art world tendency to homogenise minority communities thereby creating significant obstacles for artists coming from ethnic minorities who may not conform to the idea of what is acceptable or expected by the mainstream. Jeanette Bain-Burnett,

Artistic Director of the Association for Dance of the African Diaspora, describes a deep-seated prejudice in the UK that limits the range of work that minority ethnic artists are able to produce, based on specific yet unspoken expectations; that ‘artists critiquing their own minority communities were more likely to get their work produced than artists critiquing the mainstream [or] challenging misconceptions’.¹³

While the *Index on Censorship* reports these forms of bias as censorship, it is important to make a distinction between true censorship and the type of exclusion that occurs based on prejudice. The exclusions Bain-Burnett and Malik describe are not exclusions made on the basis of art values. They are instances of institutional racism and the (largely unconscious) perpetuation of the dominance of white, often male, voices at the expense of others. It goes without saying that institutional racism and other institutional bias inherently impoverishes art. That institutional bias denies access to, and representation of, some types of art and artist also undermines art its potential as a democratic form.

Not censorship but something else: the market

In addition to the operation of the art world to define art, and the operation of the art world to exclude by dint of ethnicity or gender prejudice, the market also creates its own exclusions. These too are not censorship, despite arguments to the contrary.

Current prevailing ideology assumes that markets are the best, most efficient and most appropriate means of providing for everything in society, including what used to be called public goods (those goods and services that provide for public welfare, such as sanitation, electricity, health, education, and so on). This ideology is called neoliberalism and it is an extreme variant of capitalism.¹⁴ It is a tenet of neoliberalism that markets are the only way to arbitrate correctly as to the value of a thing. Good or useful things do well in a market. Conversely, it is believed, that only if something is bad or useless will it will fail in a market system. Within neoliberal capitalism, the state should never prop up any form of production that has no market.

Arguing against this assumption but from a pro-market perspective is Jean Gadrey, a French economist, who states:

Markets [have an] inability to create, on a commercial basis, all the intellectual, cultural

and social conditions for economic and social development of sufficient quality and variety to be sustainable. Markets are powerful and flexible and can offer freedom in the short term, however, they are reductive, since they need to stabilise the identity of their objects, of their agents and of the framework within which their reckonings take place.¹⁵

In other words, markets have their own inherent processes of exclusion. They characteristically kill off competition so that only limited, constrained options are left, on which a rational competitive market can be based. A process of ‘rationalisation’ occurs in markets when valuing commodities, including art. Markets disable other options or wider diversity by dis-investing from other starting points and subsequently destroy radical alternatives.¹⁶ Reduction in diversity is the product of how markets operate. It is not censorship. A single corporation or business may dis-invest and a market’s support for a narrow range of all the available options may create a distortion. Those who support ‘mid-list’ authors against Amazon’s ‘censorship’ alert us to the distortions of the market, but they are wrong to name it censorship.¹⁷ It is not censorship. It is what markets do.

Because any monopolistic authority will reduce diversity, including markets, Gadrey argues for a balance and variety of systems to ensure a diversity of innovation. He argues that the market, the state or academia will all succeed equally in reducing plurality and diversity, the bedrock of innovation, if allowed to become monopolistic authorities. For diversity to thrive, Gadrey’s argument is that we need a diversity of systems.

At one time, the London art world could boast such a diversity of systems. Prior to the New Labour government (1997-2010) who introduced the ‘mixed economy’ or public-private partnerships, governments of all hues maintained an ‘arm’s length’ policy towards arts funding and a wide range of art and artists were supported.¹⁸ Indeed, publicly funded art tended to be different from that which was championed by the market. By the late 1980s and early ‘90s different artists from a wider variety of backgrounds were shown in publicly funded galleries than were shown in commercial galleries. The public and the private were two distinct models of support for art, and different opportunities were afforded through the different systems. In general, the commercial system fostered the talents of white men, usually of a similar class background to the patrons, and public funding directly to artists, artist-led organisations and to

‘alternative’ galleries supported both white men and everyone else as well, including those doing the most challenging of art practices, and those who took a counter-cultural and dissident view of art and society.¹⁹

Once it became a *requirement* for museums and galleries to develop relationships with corporate sponsors and individual patrons and to achieve ‘self-generated income’, *in order* to receive state funding, homogenisation of the London art world became the, perhaps unintended, consequence of policies for the arts and culture in the new millennium. This policy-led convergence in models of support was further exacerbated by the increasing dominance of one patron during the 1990s, namely Charles Saatchi, and adding to the drift towards homogeneity, the new millennium saw a dramatic increase in property prices. Subsequent development closed down the informal structures that support artists, including the end of London studios, artist-led spaces and workshops.

As we might expect from a fully converged market, with the new millennium there is little or no difference in the range of artists seen in publicly funded spaces as compared with commercial spaces. Jack Vettriano’s highly commercial paintings were appreciated at Kelvingrove Museum, a publicly funded national museum in Glasgow in 2013. By contrast, the commercial gallery Hauser and Wirth hosted Christoph Büchel’s powerful political intervention-installation in 2007, *Simply Botiful*: a squalid factory and impoverished apartment staged on Cheshire Street, East London. Again, this may appear as diversity to some. As the commercial sector supports the type of work previously only seen in non-commercial, publicly funded art venues, publicly funded spaces host the highly commercial. But a wide diversity of voices, positions and subtleties are side-lined in the homogeneously mixed economy model, including the widest range of those from non-white, non-dominant cultures and many types of women’s voice.²⁰ It was this level of diversity that had been supported in previous times through the distinct, and also sometimes overlapping, models of support that existed in London during the latter half of the twentieth century.

Both the operation of a discipline to include and exclude and the operation of a market to narrow and limit genuine diversity are fundamentally different from censorship. The London art world may be institutionally biased, as described above, notwithstanding leagues of liberals attesting

the opposite, but to understand censorship we need to disentangle confounders like racism and sexism from the operation of censorship and self-censorship. The operation of a market to limit and withdraw support has also been mistakenly called censorship. Indeed, markets can and do limit and withdraw support on the grounds of racist and sexist assumptions as well as the ‘purely economic’. Again, this is not censorship and, while contemptible, mistaking these exclusions for censorship does not add to our understanding.

Corporate censorship

Corporate censorship exists in at least three forms. The first, and most rare, is when a corporation acts in a way reminiscent of egregious state censorship and the censorship exercised by private patrons.²¹ It is when an artwork or exhibition is altered, dismantled, covered, cancelled or destroyed as a result of direct interference by a corporation. The second form is when an art institution anticipates a negative reaction from a corporate sponsor and so, assuming this will be the case, self-censors. The third is when an art organisation or individual artist, in protecting an image or brand, self-censors.

There are a number of examples over the last twenty years of direct corporate censorship, that is, when an artwork or exhibition is directly altered or threatened with alteration, dismantled or deleted because of corporate intervention. These acts of censorship range from the modest to the flagrant, though modest acts of censorship are far more common.

One modest attempt at censorship occurred when the global luxury fashion company, Louis Vuitton (LVMH), aligned their brand with the London art college, Central St Martins, over ten years ago. Louis Vuitton had sponsored various events at the art school and lent their name to the students’ lecture hall (now called the LVMH lecture room).²² Despite choosing to ally themselves with the creativity and freedom associated with art students, they requested that a section of online content be deleted from the Central St Martins website in 2012. It featured a project that included a general discussion about the role of corporate sponsorship at Central St Martins.²³ Their request was refused.

Unlike the response to Louis Vuitton, elsewhere small-scale corporate interventions have been met with little or no resistance. When BP demanded that the youth programme of Tate Britain’s

education department be renamed to one more in-keeping with their brand image, Tate Britain capitulated. Instead of using the name the young people themselves had chosen, the programme was renamed, 'Loud'. Apparently the word was more innocuous and family-friendly than the choice the young people had made.²⁴ My informant understood the decision as a clear case of corporate censorship. Discussing the incident with someone else who had been the head of education at the time revealed another reaction altogether. For the head of education the decision seemed uncomplicated and 'business-as-usual'.²⁵ This echoes Bunzl's observations about operations at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, in which curators and educators alter, however slightly, their programme of work in order to accommodate the real or imaginary whims of corporate donors.

A similar process of institutional corporate censorship also appears to have occurred when Peter Kennard exhibited at the Serpentine Gallery in 1997. He was dissuaded from pursuing a commission to make work for the deck chairs around the gallery on the grounds that it might be censored. Having been invited to apply to produce artwork for the gallery, Kennard received a letter with the following: I fear that this project may not be the best place for an overtly political artist. The indication was that 'controversial' work may be at risk of censorship and I feel it would be unfair to ask you to invest in the project when this is a possible outcome.²⁶

Kennard, whose artwork is found in national collections including Tate, has seen a number of instances of direct corporate censorship at its most flagrant. These include the occasion on 15 July 1985, when one image in the exhibition, *Peter Kennard: Images Against War 1965–1985*, at Barbican Arts Centre, was censored by the gallery director, Henry Wrong, because, according to Kennard, the Chilean finance minister at the time was coming to talk to British bankers at the venue and might happen upon his work.²⁷ More recently, in November 2003 his *Peace on Earth* image, which was to be projected on Trinity House in the City of London at Christmas time, was censored by Orange (now EE) and never shown.²⁸ [fig1. Peter Kennard, *Peace on Earth*, 2003, image for projection. Copyright of Peter Kennard.]

Institutional self-censorship is far more common than direct intervention and occurs in anticipation of censure, opprobrium, or *difficulty* with the corporate sponsor. I was subject to this form of corporate self-censorship working for Tate Modern in the Interpretation and Education

department. Writing the 'Teacher's Kit' for the exhibition 'Century City' (1 February – 29 April 2001), sponsored by CGNU plc, I contextualised the experimental large-scale temporary exhibition within a background of debate on the impact of globalisation. My tone was ambivalent, including both positive and negative impacts. On publication ambivalence was altered to an unequivocally positive account of the impact of globalisation. I received no forewarning of the change yet my name remained as sole author of the publication. Shortly after the exhibition, CGNU carried out a successful merger to become the transnational global corporation Aviva.

More flagrantly, in 2005, South Bank Centre (SBC), cancelled a programme of events commissioned by the Hayward Gallery's education department which sought to critique the role of corporate sponsorship in the arts. The reason given for the cancellation of a programme of live events and the new Pankof Bank commission was fear of alienating its corporate partners and particularly Starbucks, who held a franchise at the time. The Pankof Bank commission, 'Another Waste of Space', was to be a temporary structure occupying part of the car park and connected by a lift from Starbucks café and the Dan Graham 'Interaction Space' above it. A series of events on the work of Georges Bataille was programmed for the temporary structure and the space was to boast a traditional 'greasy spoon' cafe run by restaurateurs recently evicted as part of Southwark's regeneration project. [fig2. Pankof Bank (Manon Awst, Sam Causer, Simon Fujiwara), *Another Waste of Space*, 2005, image courtesy of Pankof Bank.]

'Another Waste of Space' is an example of institutional critique, which, even within the walls of the establishment art world, has a history reaching back to the 1960s.²⁹ While censorship has periodically dogged the heels of artists who work in this vein – and Hans Haacke is the most famous example of this - it is also worth noting that the approach is much vaunted. A number of high-profile artists working today, including for example Andrea Fraser, have a body of work that operates within that history. After all, institutional critique demonstrates the art world's commitment to freedom of expression.

Nevertheless, this freedom does not apply to all artists equally. On three different occasions in 2007, 2008 and 2011, SBC censored Platform, an art-activist organisation devoted to campaigning on the social, economic and environmental impacts of the global oil industry.³⁰

Shell oil are large corporate sponsors of SBC then and now. A comparable act of corporate (self)-censorship occurred in 2009 when John Jordan was invited to lead a workshop about art and activism at the request of the education department of Tate Modern. Attempts were made subsequently to censor the content of the workshop in order to protect oil company BP. An email was sent to him, saying:

Ultimately, it is also important to be aware that we cannot host any activism directed against Tate and its sponsors, however we very much welcome and encourage a debate and reflection on the relationship between art and activism.³¹

In agreement with Amber Hickey, who offered the invitation on Tate's behalf in the first place,³² instead of proceeding with a general workshop on art and activism, Jordan chose to read the email to the workshop participants and let them decide on a course of action. According to him, the group had been mixed in their politics and variously positioned regarding questions of art and activism, but it was decided unanimously to act against the blatant attempt at censoring the artist and the subject of the workshop.³³ Liberate Tate was formed as a consequence with the aim of 'freeing art from oil'.³⁴ They had an initial and primary focus on Tate ending its sponsorship deal with BP and, in the end, Liberate Tate succeeded in this aim. In March 2016, BP announced that it will end its sponsorship of Tate in 2017, though equivocations are given as to the reasons behind this decision.³⁵

Liberate Tate is one of the organisations that form the Art Not Oil coalition, whose ambitions extend to all other arts recipients of oil sponsorship. The work of Art Not Oil brings to light the various impacts and compromises surrounding oil sponsorship and proves that creative action can effect change. Not only have BP pulled out of sponsoring Tate, but their 'undue influence' was investigated by the Museums Association.³⁶ According to *The Guardian* newspaper, in addition, there is evidence that BP put pressure on the institutions to investigate employees for specific Trade Union membership with regard their political and ecological views. (It remains illegal to interfere with a worker's right to membership of a Trade Union or to interfere with a worker's right to affiliate with any particular politics.³⁷)

In 2002, Chin Tao Wu provided the art world with a rigorous and detailed analysis of the impact of a wider range of corporations on the arts since the 1980s.³⁸ Unfortunately, the impact of her

work and those academics following her, has been confined to the ivory tower. Consequent of BP's exposure to media and public scrutiny by the work of the artist-activists, corporate sponsorship in general began to attract media scrutiny, though it remains to be seen whether there is any lasting impact.³⁹

Direct censorship continues at Tate. To date, Tate continues to refuse Freedom of Information (FoI) requests regarding BP sponsorship, despite losing their first battle in the courts and being required to disclose the sponsorship arrangements with Tate until 2006. After protracted recalcitrance on the part of Tate to comply with the rules of FoI, they were taken to court and lost. At the close of 2014, Tate begrudgingly disclosed the moderate amount donated by BP in return for high visibility branding.⁴⁰ Tate continues to refuse to answer a FoI request enquiring about the level of sponsorship by BP since 2006.

While refusing to answer a FoI request can be seen as a form of censorship, Tate's response to later actions by Liberate Tate were not, however much they are felt to be censorship by Liberate Tate. Unsanctioned art interventions happen periodically at Tate by various artists, and, as with any unsanctioned art in the gallery, attempts are made to erase, transfer or distract audience attention away from it. This is as true of Liberate Tate as it is of any other artist or group. From their earliest performance interventions, for example, *Licence to Spill* (2010) until the final ones including *Birthmark* (2015) and *Time Piece* (2015), Tate's strategy was to limit audience exposure to the work, not to stop or prevent the art-action.⁴¹ It is not censorship.

The self-censoring artist

What is new in the context of neoliberalism is the type of self-censorship that artists, ourselves, are choosing to enact. Our avant-garde predecessors, fuelled by Romantic notions of genius and supported in their endeavours by various models of support and self-support, seem to have been cowed only by the most totalitarian of regimes.⁴² By contrast, in the UK in the first decades of the twenty-first century there is accumulating evidence that artists prioritise exogenous pressures like markets, audiences and 'careers' over endogenous art values.⁴³ This trade-off may be reasonable for the art institution. As Bunzl concludes: censorship and self-censorship may be understood as 'a set of strategies devised to persist during a particular economic and cultural moment,'⁴⁴ but it is highly corrosive of both art itself and democratic values when individual

artists choose to self-censor.

I will argue that, as distinct from the action of the institution, the fact that artists self-censor, bowing under the pressures of a neoliberal market is, not only largely unobserved and normalised, but dangerous both for wider society and for art. Sophie Hope's doctoral research, *Participating in the Wrong Way? Practice Based Research into Cultural Democracy and the Commissioning of Art to Effect Social Change* (2006-2010) tracked instances of self-censorship in the UK art world. Her work makes it evident that self-censorship has become part of the working practice of UK artists including, and perhaps especially, those with radically progressive political agendas.⁴⁵ Self-censorship is understood here as the choice to alter an artwork fundamentally from its original conception to one that is more palatable to institutions or funders. With the internalisation of neoliberal values, UK artists find it acceptable, or part of the professionalisation of their practice, to self-censor in these terms, altering artworks in order to make them more palatable to commissioners, exhibitions and funders. This marks a distinct change from past artistic norms, values and practices. In a similar process, artists conspicuously 'hone their brand', expelling extraneous concerns, ethics or aesthetic elaboration in order to create a brand more readily consumed within the market. [fig3. Sophie Hope, *Performative Interviews*, video still, London 2010, image courtesy of Sophie Hope.]

Hope's interviews were presented anonymously. The interviews themselves were performed with animal masks worn by informants. Most of the interviewees requested anonymity before they would speak, hence the use of masks. According to Hope, only one person was happy to be named and understood that it was important to stand by their remarks.⁴⁶ The overwhelming choice was to participate in the research project anonymously, demonstrating a tendency to avoid thinking through ideas of representation and politics, despite an avowed progressive or radical agenda and a passing acquaintance with the ideas of Mouffe and Arendt.⁴⁷ It is beyond the scope of this chapter to describe more fully the problematics of anonymity in the constitution of the social realm. Suffice to say, the argument here is that anonymity fundamentally undermines the condition for plurality. The actor becomes potent in this process, according to Arendt, only when 'he identifies himself as the actor, announcing what he does, has done, and intends to do.'⁴⁸

When I was asked to write a piece critiquing the London art world of 2013 anonymously for

Artquest's series of pamphlets, I accepted on the proviso that my work would be published under my own name and not anonymously. This was refused; I assume because it would have thrown into question the anonymity of other contributors. I then suggested that I contribute a piece about anonymity in the art world and, for reasons of irony, contribute that anonymously. This offer was also rejected and, as we had reached an impasse, the offer to publish any criticism of the London art world was withdrawn.⁴⁹ While this may be an example of poor curating, considering the esteemed history of institutional critique, it is not an example of censorship. However, as with Sophie Hope's informants, the Artquest Pamphlets demonstrate a growing complacency, even normativity, around anonymity.

Self-censorship undermines art's vital role within a democracy; so too trends, established in the wider world, to accept unthinkingly norms for cultural participation, such as anonymity and measuring achievement in terms of website hits and sales figures. Internalising neoliberal norms, including the desirability for smoothing a career trajectory by self-censoring, impoverishes art and the definition of art. It severs the potential for art as truth. I have argued above briefly and elsewhere in more depth,⁵⁰ that artists not only make art but also define what is art, collectively and often unconsciously, just as scientists both do science and define what is science and its methods. So the rules by which we, artists, make art are of fundamental importance. It is fundamentally important because what we do is not simply the act of an individual but because we, collectively, define art, setting the parameters for art and, ultimately, defining what is art for society as a whole. If artists working within the discipline of art self-censor, the methods of self-censorship become the methods of art, unless or until the community of artists, the art world, denounce the practice. This is comparable to when a scientist falsifies results or dilutes scientific method in order to achieve a desirable outcome. In that case, the scientist is deemed to be acting non-scientifically and expelled from the scientific community, or if the science community fails in their role of policing appropriate methods, science itself is altered fundamentally to incorporate such methods.⁵¹

Self-censorship also undermines art's vital role in society. I have argued elsewhere at length that the role and value of art in society is to create the public realm, or to create 'dissensus' as Jacques Rancière expresses it.⁵² The public realm is the space for the establishment of our public identities, for the recognition of a common reality, and for the assessment of the actions of

others. It is in the public realm that democracy is instantiated and reiterated. Democracy is made possible, or otherwise, by action in public as Arendt argues.⁵³ Because art enacts plurality, diversity, the alterity that baffles simple categorisation and hierarchies (Rancière's 'dissensus'), art is constitutive of democracy. The vital social role of art in society is to instantiate freedom and plurality within the public realm. When we censor ourselves we undermine this social role. We undermine the enactment and the possibility of plurality: 'this plurality [which] is specifically the condition – not only the *conditio sine qua non*, but the *conditio per quam* – of all political life.'⁵⁴ When we self-censor, we fail to instantiate the plurality that is the very condition of democracy.

As artists, we collectively define art. Those who self-censor are defining art within neoliberal values and reneging on our pre-existing commitment to drive art towards understanding and truth (however contested), towards instantiating plurality and freedom, in other words, democracy. On the one hand, it is democratic values that are at stake and on the other it is the value of truth. Artists both make art and define what is art. We define art in what we do and in what we accept are the rules for making art. Every artist who self-censors for the sake of their brand image or for their career defines art in those terms. There is much at stake when we fail to recognise or normalise corporate censorship.

¹ As Tocqueville observed, democracy is not merely the organisation of voting rights or government. It is a set of values and cultural assumptions with the then new and specific emphasis on equality. For a discussion of this see James T. Schleifer, *The Chicago Companion to Tocqueville's Democracy in America* (Chicago, 2012).

² Index on Censorship conference held at South Bank Centre, London, in January 2013 (<http://www.indexoncensorship.org/takingtheoffensive>).

³ *Museums Association Code of Ethics 2015* 1.2 'Ensure editorial integrity in programming and interpretation. Resist attempts to influence interpretation or content by particular interest groups, including lenders, donors and funders.'

⁴ Sally Yerkovich's talk is available on the Museum Association website at <http://www.museumsassociation.org/video/17112015-sally-yerkovich-conference>.

⁵ For example <http://creativetimereports.org/2013/04/15/china-every-day-we-put-the-state-on-trial/>, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/06/19/ai-weiwei-self-censorship-ullens_n_5509225.html and, in the USA, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/ist/?next=/arts-culture/is-ai-weiwei-chinas-most-dangerous-man-17989316/>.

⁶ Snowball sampling, which is the name for this method of finding data, is a valid social science qualitative method of data collection, though it is also acknowledged to be a biased network-based method. Participants were offered anonymity which could be waived. I decided to present most of my informants' material anonymously in order to protect those who chose this option.

⁷ Matti Bunzl, *In Search of a Lost Avant-Garde: An Anthropologist Investigates the Contemporary Art Museum*, (Chicago, 2014), p.91.

⁸ Arthur Danto, 'The Artworld', *Journal of Philosophy*, 61 (19), pp.571–84.

⁹ Alana Jelinek, *This is Not Art: Activism and other not art*, (London, 2013) pp.47-58

¹⁰ George Dickie, *Art Circle: A Theory of Art* (Chicago, 1997).

¹¹ Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts* (London, 1979).

¹² The point here is not whether a discipline creates facts that are also empirically true but that disciplines create orthodoxies and innovation within what is 'true' in its broader disciplinary sense. G.E.R. Lloyd, *Disciplines in the Making: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Elites, Learning and Innovation* (Oxford, 2009); G.E.R. Lloyd, *Cognitive Variations: Reflections on the Unity and Diversity of the Human Mind* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2007); G.E.R. Lloyd, *Disciplines in the Making* (Chicago, 1977).

¹³ Julia Farrington, 'Taking the Offensive: Defending artistic freedom of expression in the UK', *Index on Censorship Conference report*, (May 2013), p.11.

¹⁴ It is worth noting, if only in footnote, that neoliberalism is so-named for it being a re-visitation of the conditions of economic liberalism that prevailed in the late nineteenth century, as critiqued by Marx and Engels. This is an observation of Foucault's. Yet, neither Foucault nor I would, on the other hand, wish to overstate the similarities between then and now. My own emphasis in the analysis of the micro-physics of power is attention given to the particularities of conditions at a specific time and location. Michel Foucault, *The birth of biopolitics: lectures at the Collège de France, 1978- 1979*, ed. Michel Senellart, Gen. eds. François Ewald and Alessandro Fontana; translated by Graham Burchell (Basingstoke, 2010).

¹⁵ Jean Gadrey, *New Economy, New Myth* (New York and London, 2001), p.82.

¹⁶ Michel Callon, ed., 'Introduction', in *The Laws of the Markets* (Oxford, 1998).

¹⁷ An instance of perceived, but not actual, corporate censorship following the ordinary operations of a corporation and the market can be seen in the report by David Streitfeld, 'Literary Lions Unite in Protest Over Amazon's E-book Tactics', *The New York Times* (29 September 2014).

¹⁸ New Labour were building on Conservative policies for privatization in general; not just for the arts. It was assumed by Tony Blair that what mattered was the provision of public services, not how they were paid for. This was understood as The Third Way. Alex Callinicos, *Against the Third Way: An Anti-Capitalist Critique* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001)

¹⁹ I am not overly nostalgic about the previous model of arts funding as it had its problems, namely it was biased generally towards the art of already privileged white men. Nevertheless, the various 'firsts' for Black Arts Movement, live art and feminist art practices occurred within the walls of the publicly-funded ICA and a few other publicly-funded and self-funded venues.

²⁰ Jennifer Thatcher, 'Women are still woefully under-represented in the art world', *Art Monthly* No. 367 (June 2013). Chin-tao Wu, *Privatising Culture: Corporate Art Intervention since the 1980s* (London, 2002) pp.258-270.

²¹ See for example Rockefeller's censorship of Diego Rivera in Sharon Ann Musher, *Democratic Art: The New Deal's Influence on American Culture* (Chicago, 2015)

²² Available at www.arts.ac.uk/csm/business-and-innovation/working-with-our-students/sponsorship/lvmh/.

²³ Available at www.recreativeuk.com/resource/value-art-school.

²⁴ Tate Press Release, BP Saturdays: Loud Tate, (6 August 2010). Available at www.tate.org.uk/about/press-office/press-releases/bp-saturdays-loud-tate.

²⁵ My informant(s) were not the previous head of that programme and I discussed the incident with at least two people who were in the meeting(s) at the time the decision was made.

²⁶ Extract from letter to Peter Kennard from Serpentine Gallery employee, personal communication.

²⁷ Personal communication.

²⁸ Personal communication.

²⁹ Andrea Fraser, 'From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique', *Art Forum*, XLIV, No 1, (September 2005), pp.278-283. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (eds), *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists' Writings*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2009).

³⁰ Personal communication.

³¹ Extract from email to John Jordan from Tate Modern, (5 February 2009), personal communication.

³² Available at <http://www.on-curating.org/index.php/issue-20-reader/to-bp-or-not-to-bp-art-activism-and-the-future-of-institutional-sponsorship.html>.

³³ Various articles stand as testament to the outrage caused by the attempt at corporate self-censorship beginning with John Jordan's, 'On Refusing to pretend to do politics in a museum', *Art Monthly*, 334, (March 2010).

³⁴ Available at <https://liberatetate.wordpress.com/>.

³⁵ Despite disavowing any connection between the actions of Liberate Tate and the withdrawal of sponsorship from Tate, citing instead 'a challenging business environment' (The Independent, 11 March 2016), there is a broad acceptance of the direct causal relationship. This was openly discussed at the annual conference of the Museums Association 2015.

³⁶ Available at <http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2016/apr/29/museums-ethics-investigation-influence-sponsor-bp-british-museum>.

³⁷ Available at <https://www.gov.uk/join-trade-union/trade-union-membership-your-employment-rights>. Available at <https://www.harpermacleod.co.uk/hm-insights/2014/january/political-beliefs-and-the-equality-act-2010/>.

³⁸ Wu, *Privatising culture: corporate art intervention since the 1980s*.

³⁹ Available at <http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2015/mar/02/arts-corporate-sponsorship-tate-british-museum>.

⁴⁰ Mark Brown, 'Tate ordered to reveal BP sponsorship details in case by environment activists', *The Guardian*, (23 December 2014).

⁴¹ Personal communication.

⁴² Even under the Nazi regime, there is dispute about the full extent of artistic capitulation and complicity see Eric Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and Its Afterlife* (Harvard, 1996).

⁴³ One example is the doctoral research of Sophie Hope in *Logbook 3 Performative Interviews*, (London, 2010).

Mirza's critique of the ill-effects of measurement on the visual arts can be read as further evidence: Munira Mirza et al., *Culture Vultures: Is UK Arts Policy Damaging the Arts?* (London, 2006).

⁴⁴ Bunzl, *In Search of a Lost Avant-Garde*, p.7.

⁴⁵ Sophie Hope, *Logbook 3 Performative Interviews*, available at <http://sophiehope.org.uk/research/>

⁴⁶ Personal communication

⁴⁷ Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London, 2000). Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London, 1985).

⁴⁸ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p179.

⁴⁹ The published contributions are available at <http://www.artquest.org.uk/project/pamphlets/>.

⁵⁰ Alana Jelinek, 'Introduction and response' to the guest edited edition of *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, XIII/3 (Routledge, November 2014).

⁵¹ Scientific controversy regulates science as a discipline. For example, the science community's reaction to Andrew Wakefield's findings about the MMR vaccine was both to expel him from the community (he was struck off from the UK Medical Register) and to denounce his method, stating that his sample was too small to prove anything conclusive, and also that there were flaws in how he collected his data. For non-scientists, Wakefield's scientific conclusion were undermined by 'conflict of interest'. This point is less salient when understanding the case through the lens of disciplinarity. Understood through discipline, what matters is both the conduct of the individual and the conduct of the community reacting to an individual when they act to undermine the integrity of the discipline.

⁵² Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. and ed. Steven Corcoran, ed. (London and New York: Continuum, 2010). Jelinek, *This is Not Art*

⁵³ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, 1965 [1958]).

⁵⁴ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p.7.