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WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?

The 'creative social action' of La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex,
and its contribution to sustainable social change.

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy awarded by
Oxford Brookes University.

September 2010

WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?

The 'creative social action' of La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex,
and its contribution to sustainable social change.

Abstract

“WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?” begins by introducing the type of art practices being studied, collectively referred to here as ‘creative social action,’ and explaining the nature of their revolutionary intentions. It then shows that such art practices are in need of a critical framework; specifically, a means of examining their contribution to sustainable social changes. Having established that creative social action lacks an apposite or robust critical framework, and that such a framework is an essential tool, the study sets out to address this.

Initially the study surveys a significant number of practices in order to identify core threads of creative social action. Through this, three threads of particular significance are identified; utopianism, participation and value-orientation. These threads are then examined in depth through recent critical writings on each, which takes the research into several different disciplinary territories and alternative concepts of revolution, as a slow, creative, permanent and almost imperceptible process. Subsequently, aspects of these writings and concepts are synthesised to provide an evaluative approach that is original in its transdisciplinarity and its depth of vision.

The study uses its newly formed evaluative tools to unpack three carefully chosen cases of creative social action; Skart, Superflex and La Fiambrera. Accordingly, the utopianism, participatory strategies and value-orientation of these cases are explored in depth. Through this, and further development of an alternative concept of revolution, the study shows that in this sense the practices in question appear to be revolutionary.

By developing a comprehensive critical understanding of creative social action, and its relationship with radical social change, the study makes a significant contribution to the field. By not providing definitive answers regarding creative social action’s contribution to revolutionary changes, the study makes an equally significant contribution. In examining the transformative potential of these practices, the study draws attention to the need to value qualities such as complexity and flexibility, and shows that focusing on tendencies rather than absolutes, and generating further questions rather than arriving at neat answers, is not a weakness but a revolutionary force.

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Preface

The play between inner and outer worlds is something I have reflected deeply upon in my life. This engagement with notions of ‘connectivity’ has had considerable influence on my decision to explore the relationship between art and radical social change. It has also influenced the way in which this exploration is presented in “WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?” In particular, two innovative strategies have been used to highlight the study’s interconnection with a wealth of dynamic terrains and perspectives.

In conjunction with the academic conventions of quoting and referencing, this text encourages a rich array of voices to occupy its margins. These voices come from many directions, gathering around the subject of the thesis and reflecting its position as a collection of threads drawn out from an ever-shifting, deepening and expanding lived context. Hopefully, justice has been done to the texts that inspired this approach: Nina Felshin’s *But is it Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism* (1995); Susan Griffin’s *Woman and Nature: The Roaring inside Her* (1978); and Gavin Pretor-Pinney’s *The Cloudspotter’s Guide* (2006). In “WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?” these ‘asides’ nestle into the text, as fragments that offer a first layer of reading by indicating content in a very broad way.¹

No one writes or paints alone. But we have to make the pretence of doing so. ... Ideology exalts the solitude of the creative person and mocks all forms of community.¹

Rather than follow the conventional approach to signposting a text of this nature, “WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?” uses headings to emphasise the thesis’s dependence on the work of others. With a few exceptions, both headings and subheadings are quotations from key figures in the field. For example, these include seminal statements from Suzi Gablik’s eloquent essay “Connective Aesthetics: Art after Individualism” (1995), Rebecca Solnit’s powerful *Hope in the Dark: The Untold History of People Power* (2005) and John

A tissue of quotations.²

¹ Bibliographical details for the asides are given in Notes to Asides.

Jordan's beautiful "In the Footnotes of Library Angels: A Bi(bli)ography of Insurrectionary Imagination" (2003). "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" values the passion and dedication of such figures, and in turn, aspires to make its own contribution to the continued evolution of this field.

In response to the nature of the subject studied, two decisions have been taken in relation to the presentation of "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" Firstly, the thesis necessarily refers to numerous groups; many are positioned here as instances of creative social action, while others are highly relevant to that field. However, readers who are not already immersed in the field many find the names of these groups tend to camouflage themselves within the text, much like the practices themselves which persistently disappear within the terrains they inhabit. Therefore, the names of these groups considered to be instances of creative social action are incorporated in the text in a way that overcomes this. Secondly, "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" does not follow the tendency among art-related texts to include images. This thesis focuses on a type of art practice that avoids the conventional mechanisms of the art world, which does not reinforce the traditional hegemony of vision or produce 'work' that can be captured by photographs or other dominant techniques of image making.

Alongside writers such as those mentioned above, many organisations and individuals have contributed to the study recounted in "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" For instance, both Oxford Brookes University and the Arts and Humanities Research Council have funded the research project, and provided essential training opportunities. The research project has also been supported by Shelley Sacks and Roger Griffin, who oversaw its growth, shared their own thoughts and questions, and patiently commented on numerous drafts. The study could not have flourished as it has without those who have supported my conviction that this study is worthwhile, and contributed to its realisation. I am grateful to many in the field, including PLATFORM and John Jordan, for their contributions, and especially to the groups who agreed to be studied in depth and generously gave their time and thought to the study. I am also indebted to the family members and friends who have shared my struggling and celebrating along the way, without this support the following paper would not have been possible.

Introduction

1: Setting Out

1: Should the reader seek yet another opportunity to grieve over the prosperity of bourgeois culture, please read no further.¹

Cast aside the concepts of art that have dominated for the last hundred and fifty years; you are entering a territory occupied by an entirely different species. The form of art at the centre of “WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?” rejects the traditional positioning of art and its associated values, and in this sense can be described as an ‘expanded’ art practice.² That is, the practices centralised here follow the ‘expanded concept of art’ articulated by artist-activist Joseph Beuys. This asserts the social, ecological and political role of art as a universal creative faculty and ‘an agent of change,’ rather than simply giving the artist an expanded mental and physical terrain to occupy and explore by moving their work from the gallery and in to the world. These practices, of an expanded nature in a Beuysian sense, are concerned with current social and ecological conditions and focus on contributing to a movement towards a more just and sustainable future.³ As the art theorist Suzi Gablik explains, the focus is on

The false concept of art cannot contain us; what is needed is much more, a form [of art] that will embrace the totality of life.¹

Art that cannot shape society and therefore also cannot penetrate the heart questions of society ... is no art.²

evoking new images of what it means to be an artist ... letting many of our cherished notions break down – letting go of our narrower vision of brisk sales, well patronised galleries, good reviews and a large admiring audience – in order to experience that larger transforming power, which is the truly significant and essential power of art to change things.⁴

In many ways, the practices described here as creative social action have roots deeply embedded in twentieth century attempts to disband culturally embedded definitions of art.⁵ They clearly echo the

Modern art history ... contains some awesome moments of profound social and political engagement.³

¹ The use of quotations as headings and subheadings, and as asides that appear throughout the text, is explained in the “Preface,” i.

perspective of many earlier groups and movements, such as The Argentinean Avant-Garde Artists' Group who declared,

We believe that art implies an active confrontation with reality – active because it aspires to transform it. We believe, in consequence, that art should constantly question the structures of official culture ... death to all bourgeois institutions. Long live the art of the revolution.⁶

On the other hand, creative social action corresponds with an increasingly critical engagement with social, ecological and political conditions, which can also be mapped over the last century. In other words, this practice also responds to the call issued by radical activists and theorists, and philosophers such as Arne Naess, that “how terrible and shamefully bad conditions will be in the twenty-first century, or how far down we fall ... depends on what YOU and others do today and tomorrow.”⁷

Essentially, creative social action is intently critical of social, ecological and political conditions that demean the world, but it is also an optimistic form of art that aspires to *do* what it can, not only to stop conditions getting any worse but also to provide a sustainable alternative to those conditions. In this, creative social action does not limit itself to institutional critique or reactionary posturing, but incorporates aspirations to contribute to concrete social changes: it is hopeful regarding the possibility of social change and the potentiality of art, in its expanded sense, to contribute to this.

A different practice of the concatenation of art and revolution emerges, one that dispenses as far as possible, with the logic of the spectacle and the scandal, yet without losing its insurrective components.⁴

“WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?” is the culmination of a research project that has taken the correspondence between social change and radically expanded concepts of art as its focal point. From the outset, the aim of the research has been to examine creative social action’s capacity to contribute to a movement towards a more just and sustainable future.⁸ This has focused on examining aspects of creative social action in order to develop a clearer understanding of its contribution to shaping a ‘better’ future. Primarily, the research asks, do these practices work? Are they contributing to social change? In other words, are they revolutionary? In order to respond to this question, the research has focused on constructing a new evaluative framework, one that is appropriate to the expanded nature of creative social action and makes it possible to examine the strengths and weaknesses of this practice in terms of its contribution to revolutionary social changes. This has

involved an indepth study of contemporary theories of radical social change, which provide the basis for the evaluative framework developed here, and then an analytical study of three cases of creative social action, Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex. "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" recounts this research, which in short has pursued the following aim;

to extend the scope of current understandings of creative social action

by identifying co-ordinates that define this practice

then, studying these co-ordinates in order to develop a critical framework appropriate to creative social action

then, using this framework in an analysis of the ways in which selected cases contribute to sustainable grassroots social changes

in order to shed new light on the transformative potential of these practices and affect future activities in this area.

Before explaining the background, aims and methods of the research project, and the content of "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" the following section of this chapter briefly turns attention to the use of the rather ambiguous terms, 'creative social action,' 'social change' and 'revolution.' This brief meander is important at this point. We are, after all, about to enter into a rich terrain, and these terms will provide our guide ropes. As each of these terms is unstable to some extent, we will proceed more confidently on this journey with a shared understanding of the ways in which they are set up here. Following this familiarisation with the sense in which key terms are brought into play here, the third section of this chapter moves into an introduction to the research project itself. Section three presents a brief description of "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?"'s background, including the motivations behind the research project. Ending this chapter, a fourth section explains how this research and the findings are organised within "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?"

2: Proper labelling is less the issue than the process of articulating and mapping present co-ordinates ... [of] a dimly lit creative realm.⁹

Interdependent ... non-linear, networked, co-operative, diverse, flexible [and hopeful].¹⁰

Attempting to define the practices on which this study focuses, it soon becomes evident that descriptive labels are generally something of an anathema to this area of art. Given the nature of the work encompassed in the field of expanded activist art, this is perhaps to be expected. For instance, the practices described here as creative social action challenge notions of taxonomy, fixivity, disciplinarity and inexorability. In fact, these practices are linked by an inherent variability, to the extent that they are aligned with a plethora of distinct and yet overlapping descriptive terms including 'socially engaged art,' 'littoral art,' 'social sculpture,' 'ecoart,' 'dark matter' 'activism-art' and 'activist art.'¹¹ Such alignments can be succinctly demonstrated. For example, *WochenKlausur*, one of the more well-known instances of creative social action, describes its practice as 'interventions' and 'activist art.'¹² The same group is included in Ted Purves' *What We Want is Free: Generosity and Exchange in Recent Art* (2005) as an example of 'gift and exchange-based art' and discussed by Wolfgang Zumdieck as a form of 'social sculpture.'¹³ That each association is appropriate emphasises the richness and complexity of these practices.¹⁴

Just when they think they have identified a formation, it will change and mock their attempts to pin it down.⁵

Arguably, the capacity for challenging definition found among practices occupying what Gregory Sholette describes as a 'shadow zone' is one of their engaging features: it suggests a deeply embedded challenge to established values.¹⁵ Recognising this, "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" does not argue that 'creative social action' is the most appropriate label for the group of practices on which it focuses. In fact, such an argument would be antithetical to these practices, in that it would overlook the importance of this challenge to predominant value systems. This challenge to definition is clearly a significant dimension of these practices. However, in order to conduct the research

To pigeonhole exactly is a conventional impulse.⁶

it has been necessary to employ a descriptive term that can embrace the rich and complex practices at the centre of the study. Consequently 'creative social action' is used here as something of a pragmatic device, with the emphasis placed on the co-ordinates of practices embraced by the term rather than the term itself. In offering a rather generalised description of these co-ordinates, the following passages are intended to prepare the way for the deeper engagement with more specific aspects of creative social action offered in the later chapters of "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?"

'Ideal type theory.'⁷

An introduction to the practices at the centre of this study is perhaps best prefaced by drawing attention to the following: while they can be sagaciously aligned with terms such as 'ecoart' and 'connective aesthetics,' these practices are, for the most part, distinct from institutionally-driven 'public art and regeneration' projects.¹⁶ As the theorist of public art Patricia C. Phillips notes, the term 'public' becomes problematic in this context. In the case of expanded art practices of the activist type, "the work is not public because of *where* it is, but because of what it *does*."¹⁷ Essentially, these practices, including creative social action, locate themselves within the world in a different way in order to pursue their radical ambitions. In the pursuit of its aims, creative social action engages with the flows of everyday experiences and ideologies in a multiplicity of contexts. In other words, this is a complex multi-dimensional practice; a practice that adopts a perspective put forward by theorists of the everyday, such as Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau, who argue that the routines of daily life are the locus of radical social changes.¹⁸

Context rather than category. flow rather than work of art.⁸

Nina Felshin echoes Philips' claim that 'public' is at best a misleading term in this context. Like Philips, Felshin notes that expanded art practices, such as those at the centre of this study, are not forms of public art in its conventional sense but 'art that uses public forms;' for instance, discussion forums, supermarket bar codes and train tickets, bus signs, traffic signs, public events and postcards.¹⁹ As Felshin's statement indicates, the transformative aspirations and focus on everyday conditions of these expanded practices are reflected in an equally expanded concept of artistic media, which extends to the forms and routines of the everyday.²⁰ In fact, in the case of creative social action, this goes beyond the position indicated in Felshin's statement, in that it may not involve making *things* at all. As

WochenKlausur explains, these practices “see art as the process instead of the tangible artwork ... [as] setting processes in motion instead of leaving objects behind.”²¹ In other words, creative social action is characterised by its prioritisation of immaterial creative processes rather than material art objects. In short, these practitioners share a concept of artistic practice that defines the work of art as the process of *making things happen* in particular social contexts. Creative social action characteristically attempts to achieve this by forming participatory alliances with those at the grassroots of everyday socio-political contexts. This may involve geographically defined communities but is generally concerned with ‘communities of interest.’²² In summary, creative social action seeks concatenations of sub-constituencies around specific social, political or environmental issues. Seeing creativity and imagination as an everyday necessity, without which radical social and political changes are not possible, creative social action prioritises fostering these qualities among such sub-constituencies. Consequently, to a large extent, the hoped-for outcomes of creative social action are intangible; creative dreaming and perceptual shifts, for example.

‘Slow practice action.’⁹

A medium of the people.¹⁰

The characteristics of creative social action outlined above are exemplified by groups such as Ala Plastica and e-Xplo, which use everyday forms to open up possibilities for critical and imaginal engagement with aspects of specific life-worlds.

Ala Plastica’s work, for instance, involves residents around the swamps of Rio de la Plata in activities such as focus groups; the processes set in motion centre on developing strategies to address the degradation of local ecosystems, which Shell has polluted with crude oil.²³ E-Xplo’s bus tours, which can occasionally be found advertised in tourist magazines and local papers, are described by critic Nato Thompson as “a response to the growing privatisation of public space” and by a member of the group as taking “familiar sites and open[ing] them up to new readings and possibilities, ... rather than an end point, the tour is really a tool for introducing questions.”²⁴ Essentially, e-Xplo uses these carefully choreographed meandering physical and audio experiences as a vehicle to “transform preconceived notions of the collective environment.”²⁵ Other examples can be found, for instance, in TreePeople’s large-scale tree planting events involving local residents and businesses, Oda Projesi’s tea parties, PLATFORM’s guided walks and Temporary

When we do not trouble ourselves about whether or not something is a work of art, if we just act in each moment with composure and mindfulness, each minute of our life is a work of art.¹¹

Services' daylong bicycle rides for children and teenagers in local public spaces, with prizes awarded.²⁶

Evidently the co-ordinates of creative social action map out a greatly expanded concept of art. In fact, its focus on various combinations of social, environmental and political issues, and alignments with participants at the grassroots, often leads to some difficulty in differentiating these practices from a range of other activist movements.²⁷ This difficulty is further compounded by creative social action's frequent attempts to break free from what some see as the negative connotations and inappropriate values accompanying the descriptive label 'art.' That is, groups such as TreePeople and PLATFORM often distance themselves from such association through pragmatic avoidance of the term 'art,' while projects such as Exchange Values focus on reprising the term from the elitist, object-orientated, ideological associations it has accrued.²⁸ Superflex, on the other hand, explains that, in some situations, the collective has "chosen to refer to [its] artistic activity as socio-economic integration."²⁹ While there appears to be some differences in the use of the term among protagonists, creative social action is at one point or another self-defined as art, in the radically expanded sense. Creative social action sees itself as art and as activism, as a chameleon-like subject occupying a constantly shifting terrain. However, it is possible, albeit fleetingly, to discern several characteristics that are particular to creative social action, as indicated above. Together these characteristics denote a practice that is a concatenation of expanded concepts of art, social realms and commitment to doing, to action. In short, the focal point of "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" is a complex group of collectively constructed, proactive, community-specific, process-based projects with particular ideas about creativity at their core, with socio-politically challenging intentions and a belief in the transformative power of imaginal thought.³⁰

At the end of the century, activist art no longer overestimates its capabilities. But it does not underestimate them either.¹³

Revolution doesn't necessarily look like revolution ... [a] better world, yes, a perfect world, never.³¹

Creative social action's collective belief that it can make a significant contribution to a better future is articulately expressed by well-documented and lesser-known groups alike. For example, *WochenKlausur* explicitly states that it pursues "a desire to show that certain human living conditions do not necessarily have to be the way they are," and that art provides an opportunity for achieving "long-term improvements in human coexistence, small lasting socio-political changes."³² Similarly, PLATFORM lists a set of six 'core principles' that focus on "promoting creative processes of democratic engagement to advance social and ecological justice," and Littoral articulates its ambition to affect social transformations and belief that addressing real life social, environmental and cultural conditions must be intimately linked to 'grassroots creativity.'³³ *Imagine / RENDER* "strives to create positive and lasting social change" and describes its *Empty Bowls Project* as a model for action, "a tool which all can use in working towards the goal of ending hunger."³⁴ In response to social and political issues "characteristic of an increasingly aggressive capitalistic, globalised economic world," KUNST://ABSEITS VOM NETZ sets out a concise list of aims orientated towards developing concrete improvements in the living conditions of marginalised social groups, and *Ala Plastica* articulates its aims with similar passion and focus, stating that its attention to ecosystems and infrastructures is concerned with the "recovery of the social power of doing."³⁵ *Ne Pas Plier* endeavours to tackle social issues such as immigration and unemployment, and claims to do this in collaboration with people who are part of that issue on a daily basis.³⁶ *La Fiambrera's* stated aims articulate its concern with shifting consciousness in relation to everyday political and social conditions, and evidence its hope-full conviction that it is contributing to a larger movement towards a more just and equitable society.³⁷ Likewise *Mejor Vida Corporation* aims to address the disenfranchisement of certain constituencies within its local community, to highlight local poverty-related issues alongside the unethical practices of multinational companies. Hope for a better future and a determination to work towards it, a form of 'utopian militancy,' is evidently a central component of creative social action.³⁸

Clearly, creative social action is motivated by multifaceted concerns, including the global hegemony of the corporate beast, the colonisation of imagination, the silencing and marginalisation of social groups, hunger, disempowerment and misuse of resources.³⁹ These concerns incorporate many other interrelated issues including the human species' increasingly autistic relationship with its own species-being, its fellow species and the ecosystems with which it co-exists.⁴⁰ In generalised terms, it is possible to talk of creative social action's concern with social structures that are deeply embedded in the modern worldview; ubiquitous structures that are underpinned by corrupted values, or, as several writers put it, structures and attendant values that are inherently 'pathogenic' in nature.⁴¹ As Reinsborough points out, global corporate rule causes harm to the human species in the same way that cancer does to the individual; it thrives on its host while simultaneously destroying that host from the inside. In other words, when value-orientations fetishising money and certain forms of power proliferate unchecked, becoming fully integrated with the internal workings of their host system, they effect a malignant transformation in favour of social and environmental injustice and suffering. Likewise, the growth of value systems prioritising self-centred individualism is inherently damaging to a social organism, these values thrive at their host's expense and ultimately bring disease, or social decline, into being. In this sense, the term 'pathogenic' is used as a form of shorthand, referencing the ways in which certain socio-cultural, political and economic structures foster ideologies and value-orientations that are in fact inherently unsustainable and systematically destructive. Such pathogenicity can be seen, for example, in the intensifying reification of social processes, in the force of neo-liberalism's expanding reach, in the acceleration of ecological crises on a planetary scale and in the recent global financial crisis that continues to ripple across the world economy, alongside numerous other forms of social, political and economic organisation orientated towards perpetuating inequality, oppression, injustice, dehumanisation and exploitation.

World views ... are powerful in a society since they influence the way we think, what goals we pursue, and what we value.¹⁴

In line with what seems to be an erudite appreciation of the complexity of pathogenic systems and values, creative social action incorporates both single-issue activism and a more radical holistic approach to social change. This approach corresponds with what writers such as Charles Derber and Reinsborough describe as 'post-issue activism,' a concept which is explained in the following terms;

Issues of social and economic justice, democracy and ecological integrity intersect and are interdependent. Ultimately none of them are possible without all of them intact.⁴²

This post-issue approach echoes among contemporary activists concerned that,

the ecological struggle and the anti-capitalist struggle are one and the same ... there is no protecting the environment without a radical change in social relations.⁴³

That is, creative social action joins the call for radical alternatives to current systems and their pathogenic values, rather than myopic or conservative reforms.

We live in a time of escalating and interlocking global crises, and deep changes in all sectors of our society is needed to address the ecological crisis, social injustice, oppression and war.¹⁵

Evidently, the transformations to which creative social action aspires have a clearly defined focal point, the need to move beyond unsustainable and unjust social structures. Although taking different routes, instances of creative social action collectively aim to prise these systems open and develop viable movements towards an ecologically and socially just and non-exploitative future. This post-issue approach corresponds with the emphasis on a 'sustainable' future in the sense that the term is used by groups such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Green Party and the Earth Charter Initiative. That is, the focus is on an understanding of sustainability as involving "new models of societal development and social transformation" that reconcile environmental, social and economic wellbeing.⁴⁴

Sustainability refers to the viability of socially shaped relationships between society and nature over long periods of time. Therefore, environmental sustainability is closely linked to supposedly 'internal' problems of social structure, such as social justice, gender equality and political participation of local actors.⁴⁵

In short, 'respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace' are positioned as synergistic components of a sustainable future. Consequently, sustainable transformations call for a significant shift in values, a rethinking of notions of wellbeing, and a different kind of political activity.

The perspective on social transformation articulated by creative social action echoes that of Beuys, who recognised the importance of "interconnecting art, activism, healing ritual, community organizing and ecological restoration."⁴⁶ The work of theorists such as Paulo Friere and

We cannot accept the terms of struggle that have defined protest movements in the past.¹⁶

Ivan Illich also reverberates here to some extent; essentially, in the belief that individuals have the power to envision and thereby affect social transformation, but that the modern era has squeezed the root of this power, the social imagination.⁴⁷

Such views specifically link radical transformation with the rediscovery of imaginative faculties and the capacity to hope, recognising the significance of these as a *social* force. This draws attention not only to the central role assigned to hope and imagination, but also to the fact that the notion of social transformation at play here has to be understood as incorporating a fundamental shift in values. As Ala Plastica's Rafael Santos has noted, a shift from traditional, or old, values to 'new values' is at the heart of sustainable creative social transformation.⁴⁸ Furthermore, this "transition from older positions of protest and declamation to that of imagination and creativity" avoids the tendency to focus on 'antivalues,' as found among 'mainstream' anti-globalisation movements.⁴⁹ In other words, radical transformation involves nurturing *alternative* values; not only recognising the value of connectivity, imagination and hope, but a plethora of other qualities such as sharing and openness rather than self-interested power-seeking. Thus, in many ways, creative social action attempts to avoid established values and systems, and their attendant mechanisms of change. In short, while seeking a non-violent path to social change these practices do not aspire to constitutional reform through elected parliaments and other established political forms. Rather, they appear to be aligned with theoretical and practical positions at the more radical end of the spectrum of perspectives on social change, those favouring revolution.⁵⁰

Politics arises out of the spread of ideas and the shaping of imaginations ... the revolution that counts is the one that takes place in the imagination.¹⁷

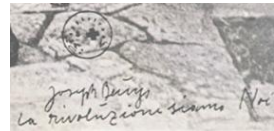
Be realistic, demand the impossible.¹⁸

In many ways, creative social action's approach to social transformation seems to position it as a revolutionary practice. While it does not attempt to mediate revolution of the 'new story' type, as theorised by Hannah Arendt or manifest in many of the practices detailed in Gerald Raunig's recent book, it's approach to instigating social change does appear to correspond with perspectives that see revolution as something other than a violent rupture.⁵¹ It is perhaps unsurprising that Beuys' notions of revolution find a strong resonance in these practices, given his seminal position in the move away from old and paralysed definitions. Alongside developing an expanded concept of art, as living, pulsating and cultivating life, soul and spirit, Beuys moots a similarly radical concept of revolution.⁵² Rather than a rupture of sudden and violent proportions, Beuys believes that revolutionary thought and action is a slow ongoing, almost

imperceptible, creative process, as articulated for example through his concept of 'permanent conference'.⁵³ Beuys' convictions are also succinctly expressed in statements such as "a conception of art revolutionised to this degree [as social creativity rather than self-expression] can turn into a politically productive force, coursing through each person" and that art, in the sense of creativity flowing through the social body, is now the only evolutionary–revolutionary power. Only art is capable of dismantling the repressive effects of a senile social system that continues to totter along the deathline.⁵⁴

Revolution then is a slow, ever-evolving process responsive to a changing contemporary society.¹⁹

Alongside articulating a concept of revolution as a slow, creative, permanent and deep process, Beuys also prioritises the complex relationship between the individual and the social body. For example, 'the revolution is within us' asserts an important point, that radical social transformation depends on both the individual and the collective. It seems that the fundamental principles Beuys aligns with revolutionary practice are at the crux of creative social action: in its focus on the necessary change as both radical and gradual; in its belief that the force for this change must arise from grassroots collectives and individuals; and in its concatenation of crisis and hope. In short, the concepts of revolution underlying creative social action, alongside the questions these practices provoke, seem to be eloquently expressed by Beuys' postcard work *We Are the Revolution* (1972).⁵⁵



20

3: But, does it work?⁵⁶

"WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" recounts a critical engagement with creative social action's revolutionary capacity, which has grown from a personal concern. This can be summarised as a concern with the predominance of pathogenic values, and a commitment to making the world a better place by seeking ways to instigate a shift in values to the best of my ability in every area of my interaction with the world, as an artist, a parent and a member of the earth community.⁵⁷ This concern and commitment has led to long-term small-scale

engagement with several activist organisations and, in 1990, it fuelled my move into a deeper exploration of art practice with the intention of constructing a practice that could resist mediating pathogenic values. This exploration drew my attention to areas of the art world that harbour a collective urge to contribute to radical social transformation. To a critically engaged, detail-hungry practicing artist of a relatively conventional type, these areas offered a plethora of practices and theories to engage with and learn from: *WochenKlausur*, the *Art of Change*, *Homeless*, Peggy Diggs, the *Harrisons*, Lynne Hull and ‘connective aesthetics,’ to name a few.⁵⁸ However, growing awareness of the discourses around the transformative potentialities invested in art has also brought with it burgeoning concerns and questions. Primarily, concern that a stated ambition does not necessarily translate into one attained, and that appropriate critical engagement is necessary to guide the evolution of a truly radical practice. I gradually became aware that “do these approaches to radical social transformation work?” is a significant question, not only in relation to my own practice but also to the field of radical activist art as a whole.

I'll know my song well
before I start
singing.²¹

Let's start this
winding journey
asking questions.²²

Without subjecting them to scrutiny, accepting that art practices with revolutionary socio-political ambitions achieve what they set out to appear to be equivalent to supposing that initiatives such as carbon offsetting offer a viable means to achieve a more just and sustainable future, or that anything with a ‘fair trade’ label provides an opportunity to exercise social and ecological responsibility. The descriptive labels and associated rhetoric are undoubtedly worthy, but are they meaningful? Such ‘ethical trade’ initiatives can generally be criticised as legitimising current pathological systems and preventing imagining anything beyond continuing established value-orientations. As artist Kate Rich phrases it, such initiatives often offer nothing more than “the commercialisation of ethical desires.”⁵⁹ Similarly, prominent justice campaigner and social change strategist, Reinsborough, suggests that such initiatives are likely to ensure the status quo and are a result of the recent tendency for social change to be taken up as a specialised profession.⁶⁰ Can the same claims be levelled against practices such as creative social action? Is this empty posturing or opening up the possibility of viable alternatives? Are they preaching to the converted, providing a distraction to pressing issues or reinforcing the status quo? Clearly, creative social action’s worthy aims should not be seen to excuse it from the type of critique levelled by Rich and Reinsborough: alignment with techniques of social distraction, and

Integrity.²³

pacifying any urge at the grassroots towards effective oppositional cohesion is not only intentional, it can also be inadvertent, born from naivety.

Evidently, there is a need to move beyond advocacy on the basis of stated aims. In fact, this seems particularly pertinent in the case of practices that aim to promote a more just, sustainable and sane future. Creative social action states its aims with deeply embedded passion and conviction; these are not vague aspirations, they are a commitment to making the world a better place, to transforming society. Therefore, unpacking dimensions of these practices, which offer the possibility of social transformation, is an important task. It seems that a framework for rigorous critique should be an indispensable tool for creative social action. "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" works from this conviction; that developing the scant critical discourse around creative social action could strengthen its contribution to the hoped-for transformation of individual experiences, shared conditions and social structures. Consequently, in its course "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" confirms that such a critical framework does not yet exist in robust or appropriate form. Arguing that an appropriate framework cannot be constructed within the confines of art world discourses, neither by using the tools already available there nor by bringing tools from outside into those discourses, the thesis examines alternative possibilities for such a framework. In turn, through intensifying the critical discourse around such practice, "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" is itself intended to make a significant contribution to the 'permanent conference' and the shaping of a sustainable future.

Emerging from a conviction that it was necessary did not prevent the research project from setting out with what in retrospect appears to be an incredible naivety. For example, the primary aims of the research were initially articulated through questions such as how effective is creative social action? What is the value of this practice? What is its impact? Fortunately, the lack of scholarly awareness evident in these questions, regarding both the subject and the demands of an effective research project, was repeatedly challenged from several directions.⁶¹ The objections and advice offered, complemented by consistent reflection, have shaped an achievable research project, which "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" recounts. Fundamentally, this journey has involved moving from a position where Doctoral research appeared to entail addressing the entire field to one in which it has been

possible to make informed and rigorous decisions about the specific issues to be addressed, and the means to address them. In fact, the journey recounted here was a complex adventure that incorporated many small steps. Some of these steps, it transpired, were more carefully placed, rigorously grounded and successful than others. Some led serendipitously to unexpected places and views, often opening up valuable vantage points from which methodologies and assumptions could be re-examined.

No research work answers all questions.²⁴

We have not everything to do, but something.²⁵

4: An occasional glance toward the summit keeps the goal in mind, but many beautiful scenes are to be observed from each new vantage point. Climb slowly, steadily, enjoying each passing moment; and the view from the summit will serve as a fitting climax for the journey.⁶²

In setting out the research, “WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?” reflects the way in which the research project progressed, as a journey of three parts. Three chapters, grouped as “Part One: Building Foundations,” follow this introductory chapter. Together, the chapters in “Part One” recount the groundwork undertaken prior to embarking on the major part of the research project. This background research consisted of reconnoitring the territory, mapping out methodological strategies, selecting cases of creative social action for detailed study and identifying, examining and aligning pertinent theoretical perspectives. Presented under the same title as the thesis, “Part Two: We are the Revolution?” incorporates two further chapters. These chapters present the main body of the research: the indepth study of three carefully selected cases of creative social action. Subsequently, the thesis is drawn to a close by the single chapter of “Part Three: Conclusions,” which is aptly titled “Enjoying the View.”

Before embarking on this research it was necessary to either substantiate or invalidate the initial observations regarding both the lack of, and need for, a critical framework for radically expanded art. Consequently, a preliminary survey of

existent material in this field was undertaken, which confirmed that creative social action has not received the kind of rigorous critical attention crucial to the future evolution of this field, and thereby substantiated the premise of the research project. In presenting the findings of this survey, chapter 2 “Circumambulating” introduces the background against which the research project unfolded, draws together pertinent voices and reflects on the significant developments and limitations found within this body of literature. Consequently, “Circumambulating” offers an introduction to the field, and supports the claim that this field generally presents an affirmative perspective that lacks a suitably radical, and rigorous, critical framework. Once the premise of the research project had been confirmed, the task of finding a way to address this emerged, which took the study from naivety through confused doubt to informed, joyous doubt, from an impossible intention to a rigorously planned research project.

Doubts liberate ...
doubt enables,
encourages and
urges on.²⁶

Chapter 3 “Moving Forward” explains the process of refining the research question and the concurrent designing of the research project. In short, chapter 3 details how and why the research entailed firstly stepping back to take a wider view of the type of practices under consideration, then identifying a selected group of these practices and then moving on to attend to the details of these practices. This chapter also indicates the decisions behind the choice of Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex as pertinent cases, and explains the strategies used to study them. Prefacing the study of these cases with a survey of practices in the field allowed for the identification of certain core threads that appear to be intrinsic aspects of these practices. “Moving Forward” accounts for the thesis’ focus on three of these interlinked threads, as intrinsic aspects of creative social action and as crucial features of any rigorous debate regarding its revolutionary capacity: utopianism, participatory strategies and value-orientation.

In mapping out some fundamental aspects of contemporary discourses around radical social transformation, chapter 4 “Crossing Borders” offers a contextualisation of creative social action. From this, chapter 4 turns attention to three interlinked threads underpinning creative social action; utopianism, participation and value-orientation. Engaging with each of these threads through standard text-based research methods and textual analysis,

That ‘fimble-ing
feeling.’²⁷

chapter 4 moves across several disciplines in order to develop an alternative concept of revolution and an apposite evaluative framework for creative social action. In other words, “Crossing Borders” constructs a ‘transdisciplinary’ theoretical context for creative social action’s utopian urges, its participatory strategies and its value-orientations.⁶³ From this, “Crossing Borders” concludes by mooted a set of analytical tools to be used in developing a critical understanding of the contribution that creative social action may make to a just and sustainable future.

Building on the groundwork set out in “Part One” the second part of this thesis focuses in on the three cases of creative social action, Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex. As its title, “Looking Closer,” suggests, chapter 5 offers a broad but detailed account of each case. Drawing on a range of sources, including interviews and a rich array of textual material, these accounts contextualise each group and detail aspects such as their aims and constituencies. In doing so, chapter 5 offers a seminal account of these three practices. Following on from this, chapter 6 “Asking Questions” synthesises information on specific aspects of these practices with the critical platform mooted in chapter 4. In other words, chapter 6 moves the focus from a description of these practices to an analysis of their core co-ordinates. Chapter 6 questions the utopianism evident at the core of Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrera, with reference to recent critiques of utopian thinking and theoretical perspectives that assert its current necessity. The chapter then turns to a critical consideration of the kind of participation that underpins these cases, with reference to critiques of participatory practices that have recently emerged within fields such as social development. The last thread of this indepth analysis involves questioning the value-orientations currently forming and informing these three cases. “Asking Questions” then closes with a brief reflection on these analyses alongside a consideration of the appropriateness of this critical framework, which moves into a brief deliberation on the necessity and appropriateness of applying a stable and consistent body of evaluative criteria to such work.

“Part Three: Conclusions” takes up the reflection and deliberation that closes chapter 6, and draws conclusions regarding La Fiambrera, Superflex and Skart’s contribution to a just and sustainable future. Chapter 7, “Enjoying the View,” takes these conclusions back to the field of creative social action as a whole and offers some innovative insights, in the form of responses to questions such as; is

creative social action's utopianism a strength or a weakness? do the participatory methodologies underpinning creative social action enable these practices to effect social transformations? Which evaluative strategies are appropriate to these practices? Following this, chapter 7 tackles a fundamental question raised by this thesis, where next? In other words, based on the conclusions drawn, this chapter moves on to make some recommendations regarding the ways in which creative social action can continue to develop.

A good question is never answered. It is ... a seed to be planted and to bear more seeds toward the hope of greening the landscape of ideas.²⁸

Alongside recounting the research project, "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" incorporates an appendix. As chapter 3 explains, the early stages of this research involved a substantial survey of contemporary radically expanded art practices. This was, in part, undertaken with the intention of ensuring that the three cases studied were less well-known examples and that they appropriately reflected the geographical spread of creative social action.⁶⁴ In fact, this survey revealed a rich vein of diverse practices and invaluable resources, some of which are incorporated in "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" through this appendix. In short, the appendix "A Guide to Creative Social Action and other Relevant Practices" contains information on many of the projects and practices referenced in the main body of this thesis.⁶⁵ Essentially, this provides accessible supplementary information regarding the breadth of practices referenced in the main text, and highlights the diversity and flexibility of practices within the field of creative social action.

Part One - Building Foundations

2: Circumambulating

1: A sense of direction and adventure, imagination, a will to explore, to be able to get a little lost and then figure out the way back.¹

This chapter offers an account of the first part of the research project; a ‘wandering about’ in the terrain of academic discourses on ‘activist’ art practices. This journey began with a tentatively sketched map, with landmarks such as Suzanne Lacy’s *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (1995) and Nina Felshin’s *But is it Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism* (1995) noted. However, most of this map was marked only ‘terra incognita.’ Consequently, it was necessary to survey the field, locate other landmarks, cursorily map the areas of interest in between, and note areas of potential difficulty; an enjoyable excursion within a landscape previously only partially encountered. This happy meandering was not directionless, the route took a spiralling path that narrowed and deepened as the journey proceeded, guided by the following three-fold purpose. Firstly, it was necessary to develop an understanding of the recent evolution of this field and its discourses. The second objective of this circumambulation was to explore the viability of the premise mooted in the original research proposal, that it is necessary to develop a more assiduous approach to art practices describing themselves as activist, or socially transformative. Once this premise had been confirmed, the journey pursued a third purpose, to locate discourses that could inform the research project.

A good traveller has no fixed plans, and is not intent on arriving.¹

Circumambulating facilitated a panoramic view of the field, and a deeper engagement with particularly pertinent aspects. For example, the panoramic view incorporated theoretical discourses concerned with art’s relationship with both ‘Political’ and ‘political’ structures. These included the Marxist debates reproduced in Theodor Adorno et al.’s *Aesthetics and Politics* (1980) and the more recent revisiting of such perspectives, as in Gerald Raunig’s *Art and Revolution* (2007).

This initial overview also included the landmark publications mentioned above alongside others such as Lucy R. Lippard's *Six Years: The Dematerialisation of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (1973) and *Get the Message? A Decade of Art for Social Change* (1984). This panoramic view provided the background, against which a more detailed examination of relatively recent developments in academic discourses around expanded art practices could be undertaken.² From this point, the survey narrowed further, to focus on a wealth of contemporary sources concerned with current activist art practices and the relationship between art and activism, including Temporary Services' database and articles, and the online *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*. To view comprehensively and in detail.²

The following sections summarise, juxtapose and briefly discuss the most significant of the perspectives identified through the survey, the connections and disparities revealed when an overview is taken, and the issues raised when a more detailed view is pursued. In setting out the material gathered through this survey, and thereby indicating the academic framework of this research project, this chapter moves systematically through several areas. The next section of chapter 2 maps out the recent historical and theoretical backgrounds of activist art practices. Then, the third section introduces the wave of discursive engagement with such practices that rose between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s. Subsequently, a fourth section turns attention to the most recent and relevant developments in this academic field.³ A fifth section concludes "Circumambulating" by drawing out the most pertinent aspects of the field revealed by wandering about in this terrain.

Before relating the findings of the literature survey, it is necessary to explain the seeming omission of a significant body of material. At this point it may appear that the research has a narrow disciplinary focus and has overlooked potentially significant sources from outside the territory of art. In fact, academic discourses around issues such as grassroots activism and political participation have been fundamental to the research. As chapter 3 "Moving Forward" explains, while it was clear from the outset that familiarity with such discourses was important to the research, by the time the survey recounted below had reached its latter stages it had become evident that critical engagement with certain features of activist art practices would depend on recourse to academic frameworks to be found in other fields. Consequently, this has played We must step outside the strictly art arena.³

a significant part in the research. However, the material gathered is presented in a separate chapter as this better reflects the temporal development and the focal points of the research. To put this another way, the material set out in this chapter has emerged from a survey of the discursive field currently framing activist art practices, while the fourth chapter of this thesis, "Crossing Borders," presents the findings of a focused engagement with discursive developments across several academic territories in order to construct an appropriately transdisciplinary critical platform for creative social action.

There are numerous points at which the material presented in chapters 2 and 4 overlaps. Consequently, the Critical Theorists and Ernst Bloch, for instance, appear within both chapters, firstly in terms of their enduring presence across theoretical frameworks for activist art, and then in terms of their contributions to the development of theories of radical social transformation.⁴ Habermas' work on the public sphere is of note here as it plays a significant role in both chapters. Providing a point of reference across various fields, Habermas' theories are frequently cited by those practicing and theorising art in an expanded form, such as Martha Rosler and Grant Kester, by theorists of citizen participation and social movements, such as Wayne Clark and Peter McLaverty, and by those with one foot in each camp such as Stephen Healy, a key researcher with the Centre for Energy Research and Policy Analysis.⁵ In fact, the interconnections indicated by such overlaps have been central to the research. However, it has been necessary to present this beautifully tangled material in manageable form. Accordingly, this distribution between chapters is a pragmatic device rather than a reflection of clear and consistent demarcations between the various sources. Having explained this, "Circumambulating" now turns attention to the academic discourses framing activist art practices.

The interface between things is where the most interesting events take place.⁴

2: All art is political – not just art that claims its political agency ... Complicity and silence are political, saying nothing when faced with a society at permanent war with itself and the planet, is a political act.⁶

Discourses around the power of art as a socio-political force are hardly a new phenomenon. The subject can be traced back to perspectives such as Plato's oft cited call for a society without art, on the basis of its capacity to distract the populace from 'good works.' However, given the research project's focus on contemporary practices and future developments, surveying the wealth of esteemed literature concerned with the historical dimension of this subject would not have been the most appropriate strategy. On the other hand, the practices at the centre of this research have deep and tangled roots. These are manifest, for instance, in writers, critics and artists' persistent reference to certain theoretical frameworks, which reveals a general consensus that the primary roots of contemporary art in the service of social change are embedded in the avant-garde practices of late Modernism and the social critiques of the 1960s. These threads *are* relevant to this study.

All articulation occurs in a specific time, and a place, in the context of a pre-existing discourse and a real politics.⁵

Some attempts to position contemporary radical art practices as historically determined phenomena assert a connection with cultural avant-gardes, such as Malcolm Miles' *Urban Avant-Gardes: Art, Architecture and Change* (2004), which aligns such practices with nineteenth and early twentieth century avant-gardes, and then with theories and practices of 1960s avant-gardes. Others, including Kester's *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (2004), trace links with forms of social activism. Further examples of the latter association can be found in Lippard's "Trojan Horses: Activist Art and Power" (1984), *Collectivism after Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination after 1945* (2007) edited by Gregory Sholette and Blake Stimson, and Will Bradley and Charles Esche's *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader* (2007), to name a few. Felshin also maps out the lineage of these radical practices. Tracing this back through similar connections, Felshin describes this as a hybrid practice that emerged "from a union of political activism with the democratising aesthetic tendencies originating in conceptual art of the late 1960s and early 1970s" and has become an 'activist cultural practice' incorporating "art, political activism and community activism."⁷

The critic and historian Jan Avgikos devotes considerable attention to aligning the work of the long-practicing collective Group Material with the historical avant-garde's opposition to institutional and formal frameworks.⁸ In unison with several other contributors to Felshin's anthology, Avgikos suggests prising open the "hegemonic opposition of 'art' and 'activism'" and problematising the conflation of the two domains. Avgikos asks:

When an activity is designated as 'art' and its function is described as political, in the final analysis what efficacy does it possess to do more than rail against the limitations of its self-imposed status?⁹

Possible responses to this are given exemplary consideration by the philosopher and art theorist Raunig, who's *Art and Revolution* draws attention to various, often problematic, 'concatenations' of art and revolution. Raunig articulately expands current discourses regarding the historical dimension of art practices with activist intentions, whilst also shifting these discourses into a more fertile territory; one that explores art as an active, radical and sometimes powerful political force.

In order to understand or justify some forms of art practice as socially transformative, protagonists and onlookers tend to bring existent frameworks to bear. As indicated above, a broad survey of the field suggests that a certain group of theorists and philosophers are consistently drawn upon to provide an interpretive framework for these 'hybrid' practices. That is, artists and theorists alike repeatedly, and quite unsurprisingly, turn to the works of Marxist and Post-Marxist thinkers, such as Herbert Marcuse and, as mentioned above, Habermas. Such theoretical framing is evident, for instance, in Raunig's alternative art history, which grounds such practices in the writings of Felix Guattari and Giles Deleuze alongside Antonio Negri. While Raunig's text centralises a relatively rich array of recent thinkers, Miles' *Urban Avant-Gardes* places the theoretical emphasis firmly on perspectives emerging from the Critical Theorists of the Frankfurt School, and associated thinkers such as Bloch.

In *Urban Avant-Gardes*, Miles develops a theoretical framework around art of the 1990s that 'contributes to radical social change.' In doing so, he brings in many of the key Post-Marxist voices that continue to shape the theoretical terrain around avant-garde cultural interventions.¹⁰ Miles explores such interventions in the first section of this book, where he incorporates, for example, Bloch's utopian

thinking, Henri Lefebvre's theories of the everyday and social transformation and Habermas' public sphere theories. In a later chapter Miles employs a Benjaminian framework to interpret practices he describes as radical and participatory, such as the work of Mierle Laderman Ukeles, the Guerrilla Girls and Mel Chin.¹¹ In addition, although Miles stops short of developing this into a critical framework, he makes some interesting observations regarding these theoretical perspectives. For example, he points out that for Marcuse there was a necessary temporal displacement between the imagination of freedom and its social realisation, whereas for Lefebvre, 'authentic moments' of liberation are essentially 'now.'¹² From this Miles extends his discussion to argue that whereas avant-gardists such as Marcuse interpret the world for others, from a Lefebvrian perspective these moments of insight belong to everybody, not just the intelligentsia or the revolutionaries; Miles concludes that Lefebvre's theory of everyday moments of liberation is more plausible.¹³

The revolution in and through everyday life, everything all at once.⁶

Clearly, figures such as Marcuse and Lefebvre have mapped out a rich theoretical terrain for contemporary activist art. Consequently, these theoretical frameworks continue to appear in key texts within this field.¹⁴ William J. T Mitchell's seminal anthology *Art and the Public Sphere* (1992) provides an early example of this: Mitchell discusses works such as *Tilted Arc* (1981) and the *Vietnam Veterans' Memorial* (1982), and argues that they embody Habermasian public sphere theory in the convergence of 'utopian' and 'critical' relations between art and its public; Michael North claims that in expanded forms of sculpture public dialogue becomes the work, in a Habermasian sense; and J. Hallmark Neff is primarily concerned with "moving towards dreaming in the spirit of Bloch's practical utopianism in order to reconceptualise the possibilities of works of art within the social and political arena."¹⁵ Mitchell explains that such alignments are made in order to assert that "either there is no such thing as public art, or all art is public:" to prompt a rethinking of

the conceptual and physical locations of art and its possible publics, and ... [connecting] these with the monumentous cultural transformations that are remaking the social orders of the present, while reconfiguring our understanding of the past.¹⁶

Such concern with the alignment of art, the public sphere and social transformations has been developed through more recent texts. Several writers and thinkers offering perspectives on this interconnection, including bell hooks, Stewart Home

and Noel Carroll, continue to bring variations of Western Marxism to bear in their discussions of art as an empowering and revolutionary force.¹⁷ Some, such as Jacques Ranciere, explore the notion of politicised art and challenge the dialectical positioning of aesthetic and political realms, while questioning the predominance of the Marxist and Critical Theorist approaches.¹⁸ Others, such as Kester, see radically expanded art practices as a discreet form of political activism and question “the relationship between art production and more direct forms of political struggle and protest?” asking “what constitutes an activist art practice?”¹⁹

There is something of a wealth of perspectives available on the ways in which art and politics converge. Among those arguing that art is a socially significant practice, there is inevitably some divergence of opinion regarding key theoretical frameworks. However, as shown here, there has been a general tendency to draw on the theoretical frameworks provided by variants of Western Marxism in one way or another, and this appears largely limited to interpretive and advocative deployment, rather than critical consideration of the work itself. As the philosopher and critic Carroll argues, while contextualising and interpreting works of art is of indisputable importance, it is equally significant to move beyond description and to consider what is of value in a particular form of art. According to Carroll, evaluation of art is an “indispensable part of the conversation of life.”²⁰ In fact, the question of the value of art has been a pertinent issue, with a diverse array of interpretations and alignments coming to the fore.

3: The question of when something is and is not art is a threadbare polemic that has been tossed around for most of the century.²¹

The 1990s witnessed an unprecedented, but predicted, alignment of art, entertainment and business throughout Europe and North America.²² In the main, this alignment drew certain roles of art to prominence, alongside particular values, and dismissed practices not adhering to these as being ‘other,’ generally a misguided or juvenile abasement of art. However, simultaneous countermoves in

certain shadowy corners of the art world urged various challenges to these assumptions about the role of art and associated values. While these 'new avant-garde' art practices, and discussion of links between art and activism, have attracted considerable disdain, they have also garnered growing enthusiasm as they have evolved. Unsurprisingly, this advocacy has emanated from several directions; not only from writers, such as those already mentioned, attempting to provide such practices with an art historical or theoretical lineage, but also from those endeavouring to bear witness to the significance of such practices.

Locating the political significance of art has not only gone out of fashion, it has in recent years become a source of embarrassment.⁷

Lippard's *Get the Message? A Decade of Art for Social Change* (1984) and Suzi Gablik's *Has Modernism Failed?* (1984) provide seminal insights into the advocacy of activist art practices in the latter part of the twentieth century. Both authors direct their focus beyond questions of art world status and avoid drawing fixed conclusions regarding the social role of art. Lippard has consistently and systematically addressed this area of practice through a number of books, articles and papers. For example, the publication of *Get the Message?* coincided with Lippard's co-construction of Political Art Documentation/Distribution (PAD/D), an archive documenting the activities of artists and art groups with an interest in social or political change, spanning from 1979 to 1990.²³ Together these resources signal Lippard's commitment to asserting the interrelation of aesthetic and political dimensions and to advocating practices within this domain, but also to questioning their potential achievements. Similarly concerned with mapping out relationships between art, ethics and economics, Gablik also questions the capacity of the allegedly 'radical' artists of the twentieth century avant-garde to challenge the culture of consumerism and individualism. She asserts that the majority of their work reflects consumerist culture rather than challenging it and claims that, as a consequence, their work attests to the dominant system's capacity to degenerate and despiritualise. However, like Lippard, Gablik holds on to hope that some forms of art work may be capable of overcoming this. In setting out both advocative and interpretive positions these books have challenged and provoked a multitude of readers, and together they set the ground for a plethora of publications concerned with art and social change.

The system is in the position to co-opt and disarm ... the most dangerous forms of political art by turning them into cultural commodities.⁸

It is imperative that we maintain hope even when the harshness of reality may suggest the opposite.⁹

As a new decade arrived the ground prepared by Gablik and Lippard received ever increasing attention. However, another area of burgeoning interest emerged concurrently, which is at something of a tangent to the radical practices advocated by Gablik and Lippard. Miles summarises this area as ‘public’ art of the type that is intended to “give a sense of place, engage the people who use the place, give a model of imaginative work and assist in urban regeneration.”²⁴ In other words, object-orientated public art affiliated with institutional or ‘Political’ frameworks, such as ‘regeneration’ or ‘inclusion’ initiatives. In his enthusiastic focus on practices outside of the gallery framework, Miles asserts that “if public art received the extent and sophistication of criticism given art in galleries, the standards would rise,” and that “one of the most urgent needs is for a rigorous critical debate on art in public places.”²⁵ This call for ‘rigorous critical debate’ is pertinent. However, like this form of ‘public’ art, Miles’ approach is largely bound to the orthodox structures of the art world, and his main point appears to be that consultation mechanisms must be improved. Miles is not alone in calling for a critical engagement with the achievements of this type of public art. Susan Jones simultaneously asserts the need to critically consider institutionally determined art projects sited in ‘public’ spaces and Sara Selwood’s *The Benefits of Public Art* (1995) offers evaluative research on the social and cultural ‘benefits’ of public art. However, like Jones’ book, Selwood’s report is confined by a traditional conception of both public art and social change, that they are mediated by experts.²⁶

Publicly owned streets, rights-of-ways, parks and other publicly accessible open spaces, and public and civic buildings and facilities.¹⁰

A wealth of books has emerged from the ground prepared by Gablik and Lippard, many tracing the development of a radical kind of public art. Several of these are concerned with the relationship between such radical art practices and ‘bottom up’ social transformations, such as *Reimagining America: The Arts of Social Change* (1989). Edited by Craig Little and Mark O’Brien, this seminal anthology of articles from artists, critics and community activists focuses on the relationship between social movements and expanded art practices such as the Los Angeles Poverty Department. A similar focal point underpins Arlene Raven’s *Art in the Public Interest* (1989), which not only documents projects such as the Theatre Workers’ Project and the Electronic Cafe, but also aligns them with activist movements such as Greenpeace, and moots discursive frameworks for these radically expanded forms of art. Throughout the 1990s, this interest burgeons, as signalled by the emergence of a distinct group of writers,

Public because of ... what it does.¹¹

artists and critics with an interest in these practices. For instance, the 1994 conference Littoral: New Zones for Critical Practice - Artists' Projects in the Context of Social, Environmental and Cultural Change provides a platform for several key advocates of such practice, including Bruce Barber, Peter Fend, Sunil Gupta, Mary Jane Jacob and Grant Kester alongside Suzanne Lacy and Carol Becker.²⁷

Intervention ... often carries an implication of subversion, operating counter to the authority, challenging or provoking comment in relation to the context and the expectations of a particular public.¹²

While a sense of advocacy remains prevalent throughout the 1990s, interest in questioning the effectiveness of such work is articulated in relatively obscure texts such as the contributions to *Questions of Community: Artists, Audiences, Coalitions* (1998), which primarily seeks to evaluate the practices of Canadian artists working toward social change.²⁸ This interest also emerges in several key publications, including Felshin and Kester's renowned anthologies and Gablik's contribution to *Mapping the Terrain*, in which she notes the need for "a reframing process that makes sense of this more interactive, intersubjective practice which is emerging."²⁹ According to Felshin several pressing issues indicate the need for such reframing, including the difficulties of "assess[ing] the impact of projects that often strive for difficult to measure results like stimulating dialogue, raising consciousness, or empowering a community?"³⁰ Echoing Felshin's concerns, and noting that

When art is allowed to flourish in society, it can help develop communities, address social ills, heal sickness, protect the environment and renew the urban landscape.¹³

the claims made [for such public art] tend to be nebulous and the social benefits undemonstrated and perhaps, given the vagueness of the claims, undemonstratable.³¹

Miles has repeatedly drawn attention to the problematic lack of critical engagement with art practices in the public realm, of both conventional and radical type. As a whole, this recognition of a need for new critical frameworks is in itself an important development in the field and by the mid-1990s was collectively articulated by a plethora of voices. However, while writers such as those mentioned here draw attention to the need for appropriate critical frameworks, and some articulate the difficulties in developing these, others have focused on furthering the dialogue, occasionally looking in interdisciplinary directions.

An art taking as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and private symbolic space, points to a radical upheaval of the aesthetic, cultural and political goals.¹⁴

The beginnings of a significant development in the critical reframing of radical activist art practices can be found in *Mapping the*

Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change (1993) edited by John Bird.³² As the book's title suggests, its contributors are primarily concerned with contemporary economic, political and social changes, and their impact on 'community-specific' cultural practices. Several of these contributors focus on the destabilisation of dominant values and the rather dubious social construction of notions such as 'place.' While such issues are clearly pertinent, the most significant feature of this publication is its juxtaposition of perspectives from across the fields of geography, sociology, philosophy and art. This signals a move away from the tendency of many earlier texts, including Miles' *Art for Public Places*, to explore such practices from within the confines of the art world. Having said this, Miles eventually joins writers such as Bird in calling for interdisciplinary critical frameworks; *Art, Space and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures* (1997) brings voices from various disciplines together, including cultural policy, urban sociology and landscape design, in an attempt to assert the importance of such frameworks, if public art practices are to fulfil their social potential.

The lack of a critique which includes insights from outside the institutions of art, for example through urban sociology, geography and critical theory, or through the responses of publics in whose spaces public art is sited, is an impoverishment of the practice ... It is necessary that art ... is critiqued from a viewpoint outside that of the art world, and its agenda identified as that of urban futures, not aesthetic reductionism or art market success.³³

While writers such as Bird and Miles have noted a need for interdisciplinary critical frameworks, with an implicit shift in value-bases, these calls were generally limited to arguing for such frameworks and problematising their construction, rather than proposing possibilities. Bird observes that, the enormity of this task has led *Mapping the Futures'* contributors to collectively admit that "a social and cultural analysis – or a series of related and supportive analyses – that is adequate (in its explanations), non-reductive (in its effects) and enabling (of positive social change) still has to be argued for."³⁴ It appears that the enormity of this task was further compounded by the implicit need for what Steven Connor has described as a form of 'value reflexivity.' That is, before an appropriate analytic framework can be argued for, there must be an "active and concrete effort to subject value and values to evaluation."³⁵ In this sense, such calls for a more complex critical framework have clearly been limited, yet, they nonetheless indicate a significant development in the field,

Art and social engagement is an emergent field; it does not have the answers as it is yet 'disorganised and under theorised' but it is ripe for further debate.¹⁵

particularly in raising issues such as the need for rigorous critical engagement of a trans- or interdisciplinary nature.

While surveying recent discourses around expanded and activist art practices reveals notable developments, it also draws attention to various problematic areas. For example, although some writers raise concerns regarding issues such as evaluation, advocacy continues to permeate these discourses. To some extent this uncritical but enthusiastic support has a positive dimension. That is, it confirms the realisation voiced by Felshin that the question of such practices being 'art' is no longer a moot point; their distance from the conventions of the art world is cause for celebration rather than defence. Sholette's enthusiastic description of 'dark matter,' art that extracts itself from the economic paradigm and is therefore rejected by the art world, is just one instance of a surge of writing confidently celebrating the distance between these practices and the 'public art' practices embedded within the mechanisms of that art world.³⁶ In fact, such enthusiasm is evident in the emergence of numerous terms reinforcing this distance.³⁷ While this enthusiastic development of new categories can be seen as attempts to demarcate a field in which cultural capital could be acquired, the terms developed also provide a useful insight into the richness of this practice, and the importance given to its flexible position on the boundaries of the art world. With 'new genre public art' Lacy argues for expanding the territory encompassed by the term 'public art,' and less prominent writers such as Eleanor Heartney similarly assert that some forms of 'public' art are distinguished by their way of thinking about politics, community and society rather than their physical location.³⁸ Sholette focuses on 'activist art,' while Kester and Barber prefer the term 'littoral art' as used by Ian Hunter.³⁹ A reawakening of interest in the term 'social sculpture,' adopted from the vocabulary of Joseph Beuys, is also evident.⁴⁰ Terms such as 'ecovention' and Gablik's 'ecoart' have also emerged to place emphasis on specific concerns, and elsewhere a determined avoidance of the term 'art' can be found, for example in Felshin's focus on 'activist cultural practice.'⁴¹ Collectively, such terms indicate the heterogeneity of a 'group' of practices inhabiting the penumbral borders of the art world.

On the whole, the anthologies appearing in the mid-1990s, such as Felshin's *But is it Art?* (1995), have given radical art practices a shared identity and

a voice. However, in pursuing a path of celebratory advocacy, they have tended to overlook or avoid any sustained development of critical frameworks.⁴² *But is it Art?* provides a succinct example of this. Although the book centres on questions regarding the evaluation of such practice, each of the twelve contributors are evidently advocates of the practices their respective essays explore, which notably hampers their criticality. Bird's response to Lorraine Leeson and Peter Dunn's contribution to *Mapping the Futures* provides another example.⁴³ Leeson and Dunn's essay raises pertinent issues regarding the relationship between 'transformative creative resistance' and approaches to 'community.' Rather than take up these issues, Bird responds to their work by offering unsubstantiated conclusions such as "the project develops a critical means of celebrating solidarity, strength and the ability to survive and win over oppression."⁴⁴ Consequently, it seems that the advocacy prevalent among texts emerging en masse in the mid-1990s usefully draws attention to the rich diversity of radical and activist art, but has also precluded any sustained critical engagement with that field.

Some of the publications of the mid-1990s indicate the geographical diversity of radical art practices, and those interested in these practices. For example, the thirty-three essays gathered by social historian Shifra M. Goldman focus on artists throughout Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean and the United States.⁴⁵ In presenting contributions from contexts as diverse as South Africa, the Czech Republic, Mexico, the USA and Iran, Becker's well known anthology reflects the complex relationships between practices in these diverse contexts.⁴⁶ However, accounts such as Goldman and Becker's appear to have been something of an anomaly in the field. It seems that acknowledgement of the geographical diversity of radically expanded art practices is notably absent from the majority of key publications of this era. Despite widespread claims to consider international practices, the most frequently cited texts of the 1990s perpetuate a decidedly Euro-American perspective. This is evident, for instance, in Lacy's anthology and accompanying compendium, Mitchell's *Art and the Public Sphere*, Durland and Frye Burnham's anthology, Miles' *Art, Space and the City*, Felshin's anthology and the sixteen essays in Kester's *Art, Activism, and Oppositionality*. These examples include essays such as Virginia Maksymowicz's referencing Athena Tacha and Siah Armajani, Guillermo Gomez-Pena's articulating developments in Mexico, and Robert L. Pincus' focusing on Border Arts Workshop / Taller De Arte Fronterizo.⁴⁷ However, such essays are significantly outnumbered by

texts concerned with Euro-American practices. Furthermore, within these publications there is a consistent focus on a handful of groups. Despite a rich plethora of radical activist art practices evolving and emerging at this time, the majority of the texts mentioned here consistently cite groups such as Group Material, PLATFORM and WochenKlausur as exemplary instances of this wider body of practices.⁴⁸

Clearly, 1990s discourses in the field of activist art have certain limitations.

These can be summarised as a prevalent sense of advocacy rather than informed critique, and a rather narrow view of the field in terms of its cultural and geographical scope, and in terms of its lesser-known inhabitants. While some contributors acknowledge these limitations, there is little evidence of them receiving sustained attention. On the other hand, significant developments are also evident, such as the recognition that categorisation as art is not a pressing issue and the strengthening assertion of links between radical art practices, social context and activism. The most significant development in this era appears to be the concerns raised by some regarding the inadequacy of traditional evaluative criteria and the need to develop new critical frameworks. As Kester notes, such practice throws up wide-ranging and complex questions, and among these “the development of a new critical framework and a new aesthetic paradigm” seems to be an increasingly pressing issue.⁴⁹ Along with others such as Miles and Bird, Kester observes that any attempt to develop a new critical framework is presented with certain difficulties, primarily the need to respond to this practice’s interdisciplinarity and its avoidance of the notion of a ‘single’ work. Felshin also points out some of the difficulties implicit in the construction of such a framework. She suggests turning attention to their processes, but notes that their social and contextual specificity make it difficult to define the kinds of processes central to these practices.⁵⁰ Despite this, Miles, Felshin and Kester highlight specific areas of these processes, primarily their participatory dimension. As the next section of this chapter shows, while these writers approach such issues with tentative caution, the discourses they initiate around radical art practices prove important; as the 1990s draw to a close, the discursive momentum emerging around issues such as interdisciplinarity and participation continues to strengthen.

Is it still privileged Art?
One of the problems ...
is that it exists as
something ‘external’ ...
we use ‘universal’ and
institutionalised
standards to
evaluate.¹⁶

The future is critical.¹⁷

4: Overlaps emerge in which the neighbouring zones of art machines and revolutionary machines intertwine, extend into one another.⁵¹

Following the increasing attention given to socially transformative art throughout the 1990s, the subsequent decade witnesses a continuing expansion of the discourses surrounding such practices. This is evident in Kester's continued discussion of critical frameworks appropriate to 'dialogical aesthetics' and Miles' historical and theoretical contextualisation of such practice.⁵² It is also evident in the work of emergent contributors, such as Wallace Heim.⁵³ Alongside a rich array of publications, the field has also witnessed a growing number of related events. These include explorations of 'interventionist' relationships between art practices and everyday contexts, and extend to investigations of the role of art practices in the context of an "interdisciplinary understanding of ecology."⁵⁴ Concurrently, various journals and internet-based resources have also emerged to play a significant role in expanding the discourses of the 1990s.

Given their ability to keep pace with rapidly evolving practices and their relative ease of access, internet-based resources have been particularly well placed to present a view extending far beyond that found in the literature of the 1990s. Many of these resources offer a view of the field that ventures beyond this narrow perspective into an unequivocally richer territory. However, such expansion is not only evident among these resources: several books have also attempted to move discourse in this direction: while Miles includes groups such as Extra]muros[in *Urban Avant-Gardes*, Claire Doherty concurrently presents essays on Mejor Vida Corporation and Oda Projesi; contributors to Caroline Turner's anthology consider art that reflects social and political events in contexts such as India, Vietnam, New Zealand, Korea, Indonesia, and Pakistan; Jessica Morgan's *Common Wealth* catalogue presents work by artists from Latin America; and in *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader* Bradley and Esche attempt to 'gather together an international selection' of artists. However, despite evidence of a shift within the publications of the new decade, the advocacy and tendency to focus on well known groups identifiable in the earlier generation of writings has generally continued and expanding the 'international' perspective remains largely limited to either briefly mentioning non-Euro-American practices, or to separating practices on the basis of

cultural and geographical contexts. For instance, while Miles turns to groups such as Extra]muros[the majority of his attention is devoted to examples such as PLATFORM and Nine Mile Run, and this attention remains consistently advocative.⁵⁵ It seems that representation of the rich diversity of activist art practices and the complex nets they weave across the globe has generally been limited to web-based resources such as the *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest* rather than books.⁵⁶

Online resources have contributed to the development of discourse around activist art in several ways. Websites such as republicart.net offer a wealth of textual material from contributors investigating various dimensions of activist and interventionist art practices, such as Oleg Kireev's "Art and Politics in Moscow," while sites such as Greenmuseum.org provide access to an array of articles alongside discussion forums.⁵⁷ A significant body of online resources dedicated to providing links to radical activist and art practices have also emerged: 'Groupsandspaces' organised by Temporary Services, www.ljudmila.org, <http://blog.groundswellcollective.com/>, the 'counter cartography' page of 16beavergroup's website and the 'art on the edge of politics' and 'art and activism' sections of the Subsol website are just a few.⁵⁸ Such web-based resources include those with a nation-specific focus, such as the Artists Network, which claims to "connect artists and the resistance movement to each other in new ways," and those with a decidedly international dimension, such as the online database offered by Greenmuseum.org, which promotes what it describes as "creative efforts to improve our relationship with the natural world."⁵⁹ Many of these initiatives encompass international and less well known practices, for instance the Irrational website, which 'Core Irrationalists' describe as "an international system for supporting independent artists and organisations," and republicart.net, which has evolved from a project set up with the intention of overcoming "the authoritarian north-south relationship."⁶⁰ Clearly, the rapid growth of such resources has been invaluable to the field of activist art; among other things they represent a crucial shift in the recognition of its geographical and cultural scope.

During the early twenty-first century, established writers and critics have continued to add insights and questions to the discourse around critical evaluation. These established voices have been joined by relatively new ones, such as Miwon

Kwon's and Jessica Morgan's.⁶¹ Gablik's 2004 edition of her key text *Has Modernism Failed?* provides an interesting example of the development of this discourse among those with a relatively long-standing position in the field. In one of the two new chapters, Gablik focuses on developing the call for a new critical platform she voiced in the 1984 edition. Expanding on her earlier argument, Gablik reasons that a critical platform must account for artists becoming "an integral component of a larger social network," and for the decentralisation of creativity. She also asserts that it is necessary to identify new points for analysis; primarily, reflecting the importance of 'integralism,' as mooted by Ken Wilber, and 'transdisciplinarity' as advocated by Basarab Nicolescu in his call for an integration of disciplines into an 'open unity.'⁶² Thus, the discursive concerns regarding the dilemmas of evaluating such practices tentatively raised in the 1990s continue to evolve.

Contemporary artistic analysis largely forgoes critique in order give art a direct agency and nigh-utopian possibility.¹⁸

To some extent, the continuing significance of discourses regarding an appropriate critical framework is indicated in debates regarding the merits of evaluation according to ethical or aesthetic qualities, as played out recently between Bishop and Kester. On one hand, Bishop argues that too much attention is given to the ethical dimensions of such practice, that there is a tendency to focus on "the artist's processes and intentions ... to the neglect of the work's aesthetic impact," which must be returned to its axiomatic position; on the other, Kester takes up a counter position and asserts the primacy of ethical considerations.⁶³ While such debates draw attention to the continuing significance given to the criteria against which activist art practices are judged to be effective or otherwise, they also highlight another issue that appears to present a barrier to development of an appropriate critical framework. They reflect a widespread tendency to view such positions as opposing forces, or at least as hierarchically positioned. As Gablik makes clear, overcoming this tendency is a fundamental prerequisite to developing an appropriate critical framework. Revisiting the issue, Gablik suggests that as these practices manifest success by effecting cognitive and social transformation, or "awareness,... interconnected[ness], ... compassion and responsibility," and evaluating that success depends on an understanding of art that refuses dualistic hierarchical positioning.⁶⁴ Drawing on Nicolescu, Gablik proposes another perspective, based on 'and' rather than 'either/or.' In doing so, she expands the call for a move beyond

Many artists, art historians and curators fail to see a clear link between art making and social justice.¹⁹

dualistic positioning and towards a 'connective aesthetics,' and touches on the complexity that must underpin an appropriate critical framework.⁶⁵

The transversality of these practices and their hybrid nature enable quick passages from the predominantly artistic into the predominantly political sphere and back.²⁰

Several critics and theorists acknowledge the importance and complexity of drawing threads from wide ranging sources and weaving them together to form a robust and yet appropriately malleable basis for the critical evaluation of expanded art practices. For instance, Raunig extends the discourse around "the as yet missing theorisation of activist art practices" in a seemingly pertinent direction. He suggests that it "has to develop new concept clusters in the course of its emergence and undertake to connect contexts not previously noticed in the respective disciplines."⁶⁶ Thus, Raunig raises the pertinent notion of transdisciplinary 'concept clusters' as necessary to a framework for such practice. Examining the diverse interrelations between various forms of art and revolutionary activism, Raunig configures overlaps between conceptual positions without resorting to dualisms. "Interweaving political aesthetics and a post structuralist theory of revolution," Raunig explores the 'concatenations' between, for example, Yomango and Euromayday to suggest that they intertwine, and that practices sitting within such temporary overlaps are manifold, contingent and manifest particular aims.⁶⁷

The manifold endeavours in between art activism and political activism do not aim to institutionalise the concatenation, nor to continue its progress in teleological linearity, nor to trigger the one major rupture leading to a new world; they attempt to institute an ongoing series of singular events, to actuate contemporary becoming revolutionary in the concatenations of revolutionary machines and art machines.⁶⁸

Here Raunig succinctly indicates the complexity of such practices, while also drawing attention to the ways in which conceptual agility that can exercise 'and' is fundamental to understanding this new approach to art and to revolution. In fact, according to Raunig, concatenation and a different approach to revolution are themselves intertwined, underpinned by value-bases that refuse "the logic of exploitative subordination and heteronomization ... of dedifferentiation and totalization."⁶⁹

Raunig appears to maintain a deeper critical insight in to the complexities of the relationship between art and revolution than many other critics concerned

with crossing disciplinary boundaries in order to develop the discourse around art as a revolutionary force. In various ways writers such as Miles and Frye Burnham also indicate the complexity of these practices, and their radical positioning within the world. For instance, *Urban Avant-Gardes: Art, Architecture and Change* sees Miles give considerable attention to 'activism' with reference to recent thinkers such as John Jordan and pertinent events including the World Social Forum, alongside grassroots campaigns such as the anti-roads movement. Similarly, Frye Burnham draws attention to the need to identify meeting points between art and activist organizations, rather than simply restrict the discourse to art as activism, and to "the benefits of, and even necessity for, consortia, coalitions and relationships of all kinds."⁷⁰ However, Raunig's text is immersed in these convolutions, moving beyond notions such as 'activism,' and offering an in-depth theoretical perspective on art and activism, or art and revolution.⁷¹

The transdisciplinary complexity that Raunig articulates appears to be one of the most significant aspects of radical activist art practices, and as such must underpin evaluative approaches to these practices. While Raunig offers a seminal theorisation of these complexities, there have also been attempts to focus attention more directly on strategies of evaluation rather than theorisation and interpretation, as indicated above. Frye Burnham, for example, considers such strategies and suggests that an appropriate approach must involve asking:

What is it worth -- to artists, activists, communities, critics, politicians and funders? How is its worth assessed? How does that assessment affect the direction, support, effectiveness and sustainability of the work? What are the terms of that measurement and can they be changed?⁷²

Frye Burnham's questions acknowledge several ways in which such practices challenge established evaluative strategies, and indicate the need for a radically different critical approach. While such acknowledgements do not articulate the complexity of the practices in the depth achieved by Raunig, they do offer a perspective that complements Raunig's theorisation. Indeed, much of the complexity of radically expanded art practices arises from their concern with challenging established value-bases, and the fact that they are motivated by an alternative set of values.⁷³ Consequently, a growing number of critics, theorists, and artists have continued to expand the argument that such practices must be questioned from a new perspective. That is, pertinent evaluation must not only involve 'concept clusters,' that ignore the dualistic positioning of art and activism, it

must also give significant weight to appropriate values. As Frye Burnham notes, in traditional terms art work is evaluated according to understandings of worth that are determined by a particular worldview.⁷⁴

By asserting that the aesthetic exists in social relationships, Nicolas Bourriaud has contributed to the discourse around to the need to rethink the values aligned with certain types of art practices. In what has become a key text, Bourriaud draws attention to the 'relational' dimensions of contemporary art in terms that appear closely associated with a more widespread turn to 'participatory' strategies.⁷⁵ The scope of this interest in participation is clearly indicated by a diverse range of recently published texts. For example, Bishop's *Participation* (2006) juxtaposes diverse writings in order to trace the historical and theoretical dimensions of the art world's recent participatory turn, and to gently problematise it while also drawing attention to the essential meaninglessness of the term 'participation.' In other words, "if participatory practices are to have critical bite, it is necessary to question the very assumption that reduced authorial status is more 'democratic' and ethical."⁷⁶ Concerned with the same time frame, *The Art of Participation 1950 to Now* (2008) appears to forego even the most tentative critical engagement with its subject. It presents instead a broad historical survey of participatory strategies as they have developed within the institutional context, and a consideration of contemporary shifts in notions of participation that come with digital mass media and the internet.⁷⁷ The editors of *Taking the Matter into Common Hands: On Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices* (2007) give little attention to historical contextualisation.⁷⁸ They offer instead a rich collection of essays cutting across several interwoven and 'increasingly established' facets of contemporary art, primarily collaboration, participation and collective processes.⁷⁹ For example, Brian Holmes' contribution notes, with reference to several 'oppositional' practices, that although these strategies are prevalent among "half-hearted projects in impotent institutions" they also have a radical dimension; "it is here that many artists' longing to affect people in their everyday life is realised."⁸⁰

For some writers, the increasing emphasis on participation offers a means to further critical discourses around expanded art practices. The importance of taking up the effects of participatory strategies as a measure of success is mooted, for example, in Kester's recent position paper. Here Kester asserts that "identifying

the specific ethical and epistemological effects of collaborative interaction on both the artist and their co-participants” should be of particular interest.⁸¹ Frye Burnham is similarly concerned that evaluations of activist art practices must give significant weight to participants’ perspectives and experiences.⁸² To some extent this extends the discussion beyond the concern with benefits and usefulness for communities tentatively mooted by figures such as Miles in the 1990s. It signals the emergence of an important body of theorists and critics whose work strengthens the argument that evaluation of such practices’ contribution to revolutionary social transformation requires a radical shift in approach. For example, Frye Burnham expands on Gablik’s concerns regarding the esoteric nature of ‘re-enchantment’ to pragmatically assert that issues such as “trust, accountability, liability, commitment, communication and negotiating differences” must be prioritised.⁸³ While critics such as Gablik and Frye Burnham continue drawing attention to the importance of participants’ views and the complexity of evaluating their experiences, others keep one eye on the problematic dimensions of this increasing urge to centralise participatory strategies.

Here the notion ‘aesthetic’ is taken in its original sense, namely as the form of sensitivity of the senses and as the form of the concrete world of human life.²¹

Concerns regarding the potential problems associated with participatory strategies are raised in texts such as Kester’s “Dialogic Aesthetics: A Critical Framework for Littoral Arts” (2002). Kester notes several problems including the ‘salvage paradigm;’ in other words, a tendency to focus on “improving the implicitly flawed subject.”⁸⁴ Ian Hunter echoes these concerns, claiming that attempts to collaborate with constituencies are doomed to fail as long as artists retain a position of ‘moral censure, shamanistic arrogance or pedagogical superiority.’⁸⁵ Despite their pertinence, the issues raised in such texts appear to be somewhat overshadowed in contemporary discourses regarding radically expanded art practices. While, as shown above, there is a growing call among theorists for the development of a new evaluative framework for such practices, critical engagement with their participatory strategies is largely overlooked in favour of the types of questioning centralised by KLARTEXT! The Status of the Political in Contemporary Art and Culture (2005). This conference “brought together ... international artists, activists, curators, workers in the cultural sector and theoreticians to discuss the relationship between art and politics.” The discussion centred on questions such as:

How influential is art? What is activism today, and how does the interchange between art and activism function? Does it make any sense to use art as a means to articulate social and political concerns? What manifestations should this kind of art assume? And in what context can it be effective?⁸⁶

While these are undoubtedly significant lines of questioning, they are relatively well-trodden, appearing for example in Kester's *Art, Activism, and Oppositionality* in 1998. Taking up questions such as "what manifestations should this kind of art assume?" and incorporating a critical approach to the tendency to employ participatory strategies appears to offer a necessary, but generally overlooked, means to further critical engagement with such practices.

This may be the time ... to encourage and promote a shift in paradigms, a cultural drift that, to some extent, seems already to be taking place.²²

The survey recounted here has revealed continued momentum in the discourses that surround contemporary radically expanded art practices. Some of the material discussed reiterates relatively well-trodden debates, while some takes the discussion into new territories or deeper into those previously visited. The survey has shown that while considerable developments are evident in these discursive frameworks, the perspectives articulated retain a general tendency to advocate rather than critique. Consequently, the survey has confirmed that furthering the discussion in terms of critical and evaluative engagement would be invaluable to the field. As this chapter has shown, some critics and theorists, such as Miles, Gablik and Kester, have already raised this issue and have tentatively mooted a range of starting points and potential problems. In addition, several resources have been revealed through this survey, which provide the ground for a continued re-thinking of the transformative role and potential of art practices of an expanded nature: the writings of theorists such as Patrick Reinsborough, Benjamin Shepard, and John Jordan for example.⁸⁷

Together, these writers link the work of theorists discussed in this chapter, such as Gablik, with the perspectives on radical social transformation introduced in chapter 4, "Crossing Borders." Consequently, their contributions to the field are taken up at that point, to run through the fourth chapter's exploration of contemporary discourses around radical social change.

We are entering an era of common sense transformation where collective creativity, organized people power and values rooted in respect for the diversity of all life can win over greed, exploitation and fear.²³

3: Moving Forward

An exploratory research design ... gaining familiarity with the field of study ... generating hypotheses for further testing.¹

As explained in chapter 1, “Setting Out,” this research project began with a practitioner’s intuitive idea, an urge to develop a more rigorous understanding of the ways in which creative social action may contribute to radical social change.² Chapter 3 expands on this, detailing the design of the research project that developed from this initial idea. In short, this incorporated three methodologically distinct stages. The first of these stages involved surveying the field, and engaging with its academic framework. As chapter 2 “Circumambulating” explains, this literature survey confirmed the initial working hypothesis; that the field lacks rigorous critique. This survey also substantiated the idea that critical engagement with the practices in question needs to draw on theoretical perspectives that are beyond the boundaries of the conventional art world.³ Consequently, the first stage of the research also incorporated the groundwork that would make it possible to construct a transdisciplinary critical approach relevant to these practices.⁴ Following this, attention was able to turn to unpacking three representative cases of creative social action, which has constituted the second stage of the research. The third stage of the research project involved reflecting on this analysis and drawing conclusions that could be taken back to the field of creative social action as a whole. Each of these three stages has incorporated different methodologies, and chapter 3 moves sequentially through each stage, discussing these methodologies in detail and explaining the choices made in the design of this research. In this, the majority of attention is given to the first stage due to its incorporation of several different research strategies.

The whole object of travel is not to set foot on foreign land; it is at least to set foot on one's own country as a foreign land.¹

1: Stage 1: Building Foundations

As indicated above, the first stage of the research necessarily incorporated a range of research strategies:

- Surveying academic literature and discourses that currently frame the field of creative social action.
- Identifying aspects of creative social action that are central to its transformational aspirations, and are as yet underexplored.
- Surveying contemporary theoretical perspectives on radical social change, and identifying those relevant to the core and yet underexplored aspects of creative social action.
- Synthesising the most apposite of these theoretical perspectives, in order to map out a critical framework for creative social action.

At this stage, as part of the groundwork, it was also necessary to attend to the following tasks

- Selecting cases of creative social action to which the framework could be applied.
- Detailing appropriate methodologies for studying the chosen cases and for applying the critical framework.

Together, these various strands of preliminary research provided the foundations necessary to realise the aims of the research project.

Beginning with a review of the literature currently providing practices such as creative social action with a discursive framework was crucial to laying the foundations for the subsequent research. As chapter 2 shows, this led to a deepened understanding of the theoretical context in which the research sits. This survey also made it possible to tap into the most pertinent discourses in the field, specifically those attending to the more radically expanded practices and raising questions regarding the evaluation of these practices.⁵ Chapter 2 also shows how, rather than suggest that there was no need to pursue the aims tentatively mooted at the outset of this research project, the literature survey unequivocally supported the proposition that creative social action requires serious critical attention. In other words, this

We cannot really know the consequences of our actions. That is why we need environmental impact studies, even on creativity.²

survey was fundamental to the research moving forward; not only did it confirm that the proposed research could make a contribution to the field that was both significant and original, but it also prompted reflection on the research questions and the ways in which the aims of this research could be met.

With a deepened understanding of the field, the questions underpinning the research were inevitably subject to some revision during this first stage. The focus moved on from the initial proposal, to investigate the contribution that creative social action makes to sustainable social change, to a set of rigorously framed and manageable questions. This was the result of careful and sustained reflection on the ways in which this contribution could be assessed and lead to questions such as how are these practices currently evaluated and how can the evaluative strategies used be improved to reflect the aims and motivations of practitioners? What implicit and explicit notions of value are at play in these aims and motivations?⁶ From this, it seemed most appropriate to 'adopt and adapt' theoretical perspectives that could shed light on these practices, and to allow core aspects of the practices themselves to determine this adaption.⁷ In this way, an apposite and theoretically grounded critical approach could be developed, which could then be applied to instances of creative social action in order to meet the aims of the research project and offer a critical discussion of their contribution to radical social change.⁸ Importantly, this strategy would allow for an increasing depth of focus that responded to the essence of these practices, and generate findings that would be useful 'on the ground.'⁹

Flexibility ... the ability to move around and pursue areas of investigation that might or might not have been foreseen or planned, yet that appear to shed light ... or add a new perspective.³

As the primary aim of the research has been to expand understanding of creative social action as a whole, it was appropriate to pursue this indepth study through existing instances of such practice, rather than shape a self-generated project for the purpose of the research. The latter approach would lead to findings so narrow that they would have little relevance to the field as a whole; the former would enable core threads of this type of practice to emerge and determine the theories consulted. On the other hand, given the diversity of practices encompassed by the term creative social action, a study of these practices as a whole would generate findings that lacked the depth intended for the research. Consequently, selecting a small number of representative and 'established' cases to study in depth seemed the most appropriate way to arrive at the type of findings

sought through this research. However, the success of this strategy would depend on identifying cases of creative social action that are representative of the field as a whole, *and* reflect the diversity and fluidity of the practices encompassed by this field.

In order to select appropriate cases of creative social action for further study, and to identify core threads that link it with sustainable social transformation, it was necessary to begin with a relatively broad overview of these practices. A limited but none-the-less rigorous and systematic investigation of the field in terms of practice was seen to be a viable means by which to identify threads that are consistently evident, and that call for further examination in terms of potential to effect social transformation. This would make it possible to compare practices and to identify common threads in their various motivations, strategies and aims, and then to select cases that could be subject to progressively focused analysis. It was, however, equally clear that it would be neither necessary nor feasible to attempt a conclusive, all-encompassing survey of practices. Therefore, a 'partial' survey formed a fundamental part of the groundwork for this research project, with the findings compiled to form an inventory of such practices.

Beginning with an extensive data base ... systematically reduc[ing] the breadth of ... enquiry to give more concentrated attention to the emerging issues.⁴

Developing a partial inventory of creative social action.

The most significant challenge to compiling an inventory of a subset of contemporary radically expanded art practices arose from the fact that, as explained in chapter 1, practices in this field slip among and between several descriptive terms.¹⁰ Therefore, to ensure the task was manageable and conducted in the most effective manner, a set of reliable and valid generic criteria by which an appropriate group of practices could be recognised was developed. This was an uneasy task, in that setting down a specific set of defining characteristics seems to conflict with the ideological underpinnings of the practices in question.¹¹ However, this was crucial to the realisation of the research project. Consequently, criteria determining the inclusion of practices in the inventory were formulated simply as a working tool. In

fact, they should be understood as pragmatically constructing an 'ideal type' in the Weberian sense, or a temporary typology constructed by the researcher in response to the field itself.¹² That is, the criteria are intimately bound to a reflection on the key features of the practices under consideration rather than presenting some truth of creative social action, and they stress 'certain distinctive elements and characteristics common to most cases while not necessarily corresponding to all of the characteristics of any one particular case.'¹³ In other words, these criteria offer rather than assert characteristic qualities of creative social action; for this research project they provide a temporary and malleable guide making a seemingly chaotic subject matter manageable.

The criteria used to determine the inclusion of practices in the 'partial inventory of creative social action' took several issues into consideration. For example, the survey of literature in the field had drawn attention to the tendency to use collective or collaborative identities, such as Oda Projesi, Exchange Values and Mindbomb. As an intimate link can be made between the use of such identities, rejection of modernity's individualist divisionism and a re-valuing of connectivity, it appeared pragmatic to establish the following criterion:

- The group or project does not operate in the name of an individual.¹⁴

Similarly, as the practices that appear most challenging to dominant systems are those operating within everyday contexts and with ambient forms this offered a pragmatic dividing point and the following criterion was drawn up:

- The group or project works with the public sphere, using forms such as discussion forums, postcards, broad sheets, bus tickets or public actions.¹⁵

As engagement with the field nurtured a deepening awareness of the subtleties and complexity of its discourses, the significance of 'post-issue' thinking to the most radical practices became increasingly apparent. Consequently, it seemed appropriate to reflect this. Therefore, the criteria also stated that:

- The group or project has clearly defined aims and objectives.
- The group or project focuses on live social, environmental or political issues within a clearly defined context.
- The group or project intends to affect concrete changes within a clearly defined context.

Furthermore, consideration of the field as a whole shows a marked bias towards engaging communities among practices with aspirations to contribute to positive

social change. In fact, participatory processes appear to be centralised by such practices. Acknowledgement of this led to the inclusion of the following criteria:

- The group or project engages the communities to be affected directly by the intended changes.
- The group or project focuses on process-orientated activity.

In addition, as noted in chapter 1, reflection on the subject of the research drew attention to the concatenation between creative social action and the work of activist groups such as Greenpeace, or the Camp for Climate Action.¹⁶ In fact, as Grant Kester remarks, critics often dismiss some radically expanded forms of art as “both practically and theoretically indistinguishable from political or social activism.”¹⁷ While the thesis positions such difficulty in differentiation as an essential aspect of its subject matter, it has been necessary to ensure the research was manageable and conducted in an effective manner. Therefore, the following was incorporated within the criteria:

- The group or project is, at least occasionally, self-defined as an art practice, which includes the use of the term ‘art’ in a radically expanded sense.¹⁸

Finally, given the research project’s focus on studying current cases of creative social action, it was necessary to include the following criterion:

- The group or project has been operational for at least four years, part of which is between 2004 and 2008.

Compiling an inventory offered an opportunity to explore, and potentially address, the limitations revealed by the survey of academic literature in this field; most significantly the Euro-American focus and reference to a handful of ‘exemplary’ practices. Consequently, locating practices to include in this inventory involved moving systematically through key texts within the field, but also spending time with less prominent resources, which included archives and journals alongside conferences and events. Considerable time was given to seeking out potential sources of information, and, for example, to carefully sifting through material accompanying events such as the Sharjah Biennial 8 (2007) and the 27th Bienal de Sao Paulo (2006).¹⁹ Numerous electronic databases were consulted, such as those detailed in the appendix to this thesis, and practices encountered through such resources were followed up, generally through internet searches and journals. Eventually, this systematic-serendipitous search led to a rich vein of radical activist art practices operating within and beyond Europe and North America, in places as diverse as Turkey, Argentina, Latvia and Singapore. While only a small proportion

of these practices met the criteria for inclusion in the inventory, information was gathered on all those investigated. Material on those that did not meet the criteria was collated in an alternative database, ready for future use, and the 'partial inventory of creative social action' gradually acquired information on a rich array of practices. Nothing goes to waste.⁵

The inventory took the form of a purposely designed electronic database, which allowed for the strategic compilation of information. This groundwork was time-consuming but invaluable in establishing a sound understanding of practices within the field. In effect, this provided an 'indigenous typology,' in that the data brought together protagonists' understandings of these practices, which subsequently revealed salient core elements of those practices.²⁰ In fact, as anticipated at the outset, this collation of information made it possible to look beyond the rich and flexible diversity of these practices and identify consistent, deeply embedded and yet under-scrutinised aspects of creative social action: primarily, its utopianism, its centralisation of participatory processes and its value-orientation. Based on their evident significance to creative social action and its transformational aspirations, these three threads were taken up as co-ordinates of a critical framework.²¹

Going into sufficient detail to unravel the complexities ... being able to discover how the many parts affect one another.⁶

Constructing a critical framework.

Having identified apposite co-ordinates on which to focus, the research was able to move on to developing a critical framework for creative social action. Firstly, attention turned to recent theoretical discourses concerned with radical social change. This involved a survey of literature spanning several disciplines, which provided a broader understanding of the theoretical context of creative social action and its aspirations to effect radical social changes, as set out in detail in chapter 4 "Crossing Borders." This literature survey was also a crucial part of the groundwork in that it was a means to locate critical perspectives offering pertinent insights into those core features of creative social action highlighted by the inventory

and providing the co-ordinates for the critical framework: utopianism, participatory strategies and value-orientations.

In brief, this survey revealed particularly notable discourses around the significance and effects of utopian thinking in relation to social change. It also revealed critical discourses concerned with participatory strategies, and particularly relevant critiques of the relationship between a 'participatory turn' and the rhetoric of social change. In addition, it drew attention to critical discourses around value-biases and their links with evaluative strategies. Having located pertinent theoretical perspectives relevant to these core features of creative social action, attention turned to a close analytical reading of these perspectives in order to identify salient threads. These threads were then drawn out and woven together, forming a unique critical framework apposite to creative social action, as set out in chapter 4. The intention here was to synthesise pertinent elements in order to construct a new set of critical lenses through which creative social action can be subject to rigorous analysis; which would shed new light on creative social action's contribution to a better future. Significantly, the methodology used has allowed for these critical lenses to be shaped by the practices themselves. It is a similarly significant aspect of this research project that from this point it incorporated these new critical tools in a two-way process; they were applied to live cases of creative social action in order to develop a clearer understanding of these practices, and were themselves tested out in the process.

Designating specific aspects of theoretical elements, then developing a set of 'empirical indicators, measuring instruments, or scales.'⁷

Selecting cases, and methodologies appropriate to studying them.

Alongside shaping a set of critical tools, this stage of the research also involved selecting cases of creative social action to which these tools could be applied, and detailing the methodologies to be used to gather data on each case. Analysing the ways in which utopianism, participatory strategies and values play out in several carefully chosen cases had a range of benefits. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, studying a small number of existent practices meant that they could be

explored in considerable depth. The study would be able to focus in on these core threads and achieve the depth of investigation necessary to unravel them. This would not only make it possible to explore the utopianism, participatory processes and value-orientation of each practice, but also to compare these across the practices. Consequently, selecting representative cases, as far as there is any 'typical' instance of creative social action, and then using this approach would generate relevant and defensible findings that could be taken back into the field as a whole.²²

It was decided that three cases of creative social action would be drawn from the inventory. This number would be manageable within the parameters of the research project and yet allow for the type of triangulation, or comparative consideration, described above.²³ As the process of selecting appropriate cases for indepth study is discussed in some detail at the beginning of chapter 5, that discussion is not repeated here; rather, attention is focused on explaining the design of the case study part of the research. Before the critical tools could be applied, a considerable body of general and specific information needed to be gathered in relation to each of the cases. The decisions made regarding the strategies to be used took the type of information needed into account, and in this they were informed by several sources. This included texts concerned with this type of small-scale research, such as Martyn Denscombe and Vinay Kumar Srivastava's, alongside websites offering guidance on social research, qualitative research and fieldwork.²⁴ It also included studies employing this methodology that had been encountered during the research. For example, the work of writers such as Sara Selwood and Malcolm Miles and of researchers who have used the case study methodology to investigate grassroots political engagement and social change, such as Wayne Clark and Peter McLaverty.²⁵ Together these sources indicate the breadth of strategies that can be aligned with the case study methodology, and the intricacies of these strategies.

Both Selwood and Miles investigate specific cases of 'public' art in order to arrive at conclusions regarding their 'impact.' Miles reconstructs and then applies a theoretical framework in order to unpick aspects of his chosen cases, while Selwood uses a range of strategies to gather information on specific cases, including accessing previously recorded opinions and conducting surveys, focus groups and

indepth interviews.²⁶ Clark's strategy sits somewhere between Miles and Selwood's, using both theoretical tools and empirical fieldwork in an analysis of the structures and processes of public participation in grassroots political organisations. Like Selwood, Clark gathers qualitative data from participants and protagonists, and then like Miles he turns to theorists such as Jurgen Habermas for an interpretive framework. The series of case studies edited by McLaverty collectively question why people support public participation, and pay particular attention to the views of those participating. In pursuing this, the studies use methods such as non-participant observation, documentary research, and survey research incorporating structured interviews and questionnaires. In combination, approaches such as these proved invaluable for developing a deeper understanding of the strategies that could be used in the case study part of the research.²⁷

In light of the breadth of case study methodologies and their various strengths, weaknesses and applications, it seemed that this aspect of the research project would be most effective if a range of approaches were used to gather information on each case. Further documentary research would provide background information on each, potentially from a range of perspectives. Carefully devised interviews and questionnaires would provide more insightful and specific information with regard to the core threads of creative social action under examination. Initial thoughts were that the following strategies would provide the required primary information. Each of the selected practices would be contacted with a covering letter explaining the research project, and invited to take part in face-to-face interviews, with the aim that at least one member of each group would contribute to this aspect of the research. A standardised interview guide would be prepared in advance with semi-structured questions grouped under topic headings corresponding to the three focal issues, that is questions would be prepared but the order and presentation of them would be determined by the particular respondent. From this initial contact, accessing any relevant data held by the group could be negotiated, as could the researcher's participation in activities organised by each group in order to conduct participant observations.

As noted previously, creative social action places considerable weight on participatory strategies and yet participants' views seem to be given little attention in considerations of these practices.²⁸ In light of this, several possibilities for gathering

participants' perceptions of the selected cases were examined. As the specifics vary from group to group, the sample size and strategies would need to be similarly variable. However, individual perspectives derived from direct experience of the practices in question could be effectively gathered using the following strategies: bringing focus groups together for discussion around the issues central to the research, which would offer a simple random sampling of the views of a range of participants; using an interview schedule to gather indepth information, in other words verbally posing a series of structured, carefully devised questions to individual participants; the same series of closed and open-ended questions could be posed through questionnaires, to be self-administered by participants. It was anticipated that offering several means of engagement may remove some barriers that could prevent participants from contributing to the research. Furthermore, these practices move beyond the idea of a single, immediate change, and their impact is 'durational rather than immediate,' which suggested that any research into their contribution to positive social changes should be conducted over an extensive period of time.²⁹ Therefore, the need to conduct follow up studies was also considered.

To have some basis for evaluating its effectiveness, in my view, we would have needed at least ten years.⁸

Order appears as ... cessation, crystallisation, alien silence.⁹

The issues of duration, and of 'unintended consequences,' were among several raised during the development of these methodologies.³⁰ Another had to do with the way information might be gathered from participants. Whether pursued through discussion in focus groups, face-to-face oral interviews or written questionnaires, gathering participants' perspectives would risk distorting those perspectives in several ways, and this would be compounded through interpretation and analysis of the qualitative data gathered.³¹ In fact, when explored in depth, there appeared to be many reasons why this strategy would be difficult to implement and would not necessarily produce reliable information. Bearing this in mind, materials such as questionnaires to be distributed among participants were prepared in anticipation of further defining this aspect of the research in negotiation with the protagonists of the groups to be studied. Then, in order to test out the appropriateness of the proposed methodologies and highlight any other issues that may affect the effectiveness of this aspect of the research, a pilot study was conducted with a carefully selected instance of creative social action; the London-based group PLATFORM.

Another Whether

The questions are diamonds you hold in the light ... you see different colors from the same jewel.¹⁰

Leave[s] no trace at all, except in the souls of those who are *changed* by it.¹¹

PLATFORM is well known in the field, one of those practices frequently cited by key writers and critics. Therefore, it was not suitable as a case for in-depth study in this research, which was already committed to focusing on less well known examples.³² However, it offered an ideal case for the pilot study due to its enthusiasm for research in this field, its position as a long-term and representative example of creative social action and its geographical proximity to the researcher. Consequently, following a telephone conversation with one of its members, PLATFORM was presented with introductory material; that is, the covering letter and invitation to participate in the research. This material was well-received and led to a face-to-face interview with a member of the group. The interview worked well and confirmed that the flexibility of the interview schedule was appropriate, as were the questions posed. Overall, the pilot study confirmed that the research design was sound and would provide the type of information sought. This was also confirmed during an informal discussion of the research project as a whole, which followed the interview. Significantly, this discussion also provided an opportunity to examine the concerns noted above regarding interviewing participants.³³

Issues identified during the initial development of the research methodologies were discussed in depth with PLATFORM, such as the durational and often barely traceable nature of these practices' potential impacts and the significance of 'unintended consequences.' In relation to this, several previously unconsidered issues were brought to light during the discussion. Most significantly, while PLATFORM shares the view that a range of methods could be used to draw out participants' experiences and that using a combination of such methods could expose a reliable body of information, the group expressed concern regarding an external researcher pursuing such methods with participants in its projects.³⁴ In short, PLATFORM strives to establish a specific type of relationship with its participants, or 'sub-constituencies,' which is nurtured over the long-term and is heavily dependent on trust and transparency. According to PLATFORM, the quality of such relationships is of primary importance to the group, and its aspirations. Therefore, any external engagement with those participants for research purposes would require extensive consideration and preparation, if it was to avoid being detrimental to the effectiveness of the group's work. This discussion made clear the importance placed on establishing such close and transparent relationships, and further reflection confirmed that this is not particular to PLATFORM but is equally evident among other instances of creative social action. As a result, this aspect of

the research design was reconsidered. It was decided that while gathering data directly from participants would be a useful strategy for instances of creative social action to pursue themselves, the attention of this research project would be better directed at developing the questions to be posed by such strategies. Consequently, the intentions of the research project that centred on implementing strategies such as self-administered questionnaires, random sampling of participants' views through focus groups, interviews with participants or participant observations, shifted somewhat. It seemed more viable for the research project to focus on developing a set of lenses which may enable the protagonists of creative social action to examine participants' experiences with greater clarity, or may be used in a subsequent research project focusing specifically on the ways in which these experiences can be gathered and their significance examined. As a result, once this pilot study had been conducted, the research design was adjusted accordingly and the project could move on to studying the chosen cases using an informed choice of sensitive methodologies; La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex.

2: Stage 2: We are the Revolution?

Having completed the groundwork, attention turned to the core of the research project; looking closely at cases of creative social action and asking questions about their contribution to sustainable social transformation. Firstly, a body of detailed information on each case was gathered using the strategies described above. This was a fairly straightforward exercise, which involved seeking out and accessing material from a range of sources, such as journals, conference papers and the groups themselves. The questions formulated as part of the groundwork were put to the groups via email, in order to elaborate on the information gathered through other means. In combination, these sources provided a complex body of qualitative information. This included perspectives on these practices from critics, theorists, participants and the protagonists themselves. It also ranged from generic, descriptive and contextualising material to relatively indepth discussions of the qualities of these practices. Data falling into the former

category was carefully synthesised to construct an innovative and indepth descriptive account of each case, which also incorporated further research into specific issues; regeneration initiatives, politics in the Balkans and economic paradigms for instance. These accounts provide the content for chapter 5, "Looking Closer," and so will not be elaborated here.

By stepping back we can observe patterns.¹²

Gathering and synthesising information, in order to provide a comprehensive account of each case, was an important process. The theorists of research Catherine Marshall and Gretchen Rossman offer a pertinent summary of the primary advantage of this process;

reading, reading, and reading once more through the data forces the researcher to become familiar with those data in intimate ways. People, events and quotations sift constantly through the researcher's mind.³⁵

It was through this sustained process of reading and re-reading the material gathered that the study moved beyond descriptive comparison, into the territory of rigorous analysis. In short, this increasingly close reading enabled threads to be drawn out and then subjected to scrutiny. As Marshall and Rossman explain, the process of analysing such qualitative material is an inherently

messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, fascinating process. It does not proceed in a linear fashion: it is not neat. ... the analytic process demands ... an openness to the subtle, tacit undercurrents of social life.³⁶

Indeed this analysis necessitated penetrating deeper and deeper into a richly complex web of intertwined data; it did not proceed in a linear fashion.

However, the analytical process was guided by the set of indicators and questions that had been shaped during the first stage of the research. In

A chaotically complex web of relation.¹³

other words, the critical lenses developed as part of the groundwork were used to focus in on key areas of these chaotically messy practices and pose apposite questions. In addition, this indepth analysis was undertaken by theme, referring again to the key features of creative social action, utopianism, participation and value-orientation, which has enabled the analysis to maintain a sense of coherence, as chapter 6 demonstrates.³⁷

3: Stage 3: Conclusions

Once the utopianism, participatory strategies and value-orientation of Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex had been subject to sustained analysis using the lenses developed for the purpose, the findings were considered and conclusions drawn. This reflection on the findings and shaping of conclusions constituted the third and final stage of the research project. It focused not only on bringing the findings together in a way that made it possible to draw conclusions regarding the cases studied and their contribution to radical social change, but also to make statements relevant to the field as a whole. In this sense, it appeared that a more comprehensive understanding of these practices and their potential would be derived from focusing in on specific aspects of the findings. Consequently, this approach was taken and the reflection was directed towards certain themes and issues that emerged from the findings. The results of this are set out in chapter 7, alongside another set of findings; that is, regarding the critical tools used to investigate the work of La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex.

Moving from the particular [the cases studied] to formulate general propositions.¹⁴

The aim of the research was not only to shed new light on the transformative potential of the practices in question but also to affect future activities in this area by contributing a unique set of critical tools to the field. Therefore, the tools developed were reflected on in some depth. Doing so after applying these tools, or lenses, to ‘live’ cases of creative social action was a significant aspect of the research process, and led to some interesting conclusions. As chapter 7 shows, this process has nurtured several pertinent conclusions on the subject of taking a critical approach to practices found in the field of creative social action. From this, and reflection on the analysis of the practices, it has been possible to draw sound and relevant conclusions and to identify specific areas for further exploration, as “Enjoying the View” explains.

4: Crossing Borders

1: The basic premise is that borders are ungraspable.¹

As chapter 3 “Moving Forward” has explained, before the research project could move onto its main task there was a considerable amount of groundwork to be undertaken. Chapter 2 recounts part of that early exploratory research; a review of literature and associated resources. As chapter 2 shows, this review has been important for contextualising creative social action and for confirming its need for rigorous critique. In conjunction with this review, a survey of practices was carried out in order to identify and reflect on examples of creative social action. As explained in chapter 3, this survey has made it possible to consider creative social action as a whole, and stimulated sustained reflection on the nature of these practices. In particular, the survey of practices has drawn attention to qualities at their core, such as the values implicit in their goals. In amongst all the diversity of these practices, their goals appear to carry a unified commitment to alternative values, such as ‘life values.’ That is, in the sense that Patrick Reinsborough uses this term to describe “the clash between a delusional value system that fetishises money and a value system centered around the biological realities of life’s diversity.”² This collective focus on fostering and mediating ‘alternative’ values draws attention to the need for an evaluative framework that, above all, reflects this shift in value-orientation. In order to develop an apposite set of critical tools, the research has focused on three such qualities that emerge from the practices themselves, as core aspects of their radical aspirations. Chapter 4 recounts this part of the research, which has involved negating borders and venturing into unfamiliar disciplinary territories in order to identify discourses pertinent to these qualities.

From the outset of the research it was clear that creative social action is closely aligned with processes and discourses beyond those embedded in the

realms of the art world. In fact, these practices determinedly resist the limitations on form and function imposed by that world; they consistently challenge notions of art as something restricted to a specific arena by disciplinary boundaries. This challenge is evident in what La Fiambrera describes as the work's 'double character.'³ Positioning the work as activism *and* art, as political *and* aesthetic, challenges the conventional understanding of these as divided domains, and also raises questions regarding what constitutes aesthetic and political activity. In other words, creative social action does not limit its challenge to the borders themselves but, by implication, it also challenges established definitions of aesthetics, politics and ethics that reinforce this perception of them as mutually exclusive domains.⁴ In this respect the concerns of creative social action appear to resonate with those of thinkers concerned with the integrity of all aspects of human experience, such as John Dewey, and more recently Jurgen Habermas, Raymond Williams and art critics such as Suzi Gablik.⁵ For example, they are closely aligned with Habermas' assertions that these borders are an inherent aspect of a pathogenic system rather than constants, and with Williams' summation that these borders are symptomatic of "the divided consciousness of art and society."⁶ This also aligns creative social action with the work of theorists such as Walter Benjamin, who have drawn attention to the revolutionary potential of a consciousness transformed by aesthetic experience.⁷ Jacques Ranciere provides a more recent consideration of the intrinsic relationship between aesthetics, ethics and politics, and concludes that,

enacting art means displacing the borders of art, just as enacting politics means displacing the borders of what is recognized as the sphere of the political ... Art and politics become one and the same thing only when they vanish together into ethical indistinction.⁸

Embedded within such discourses, creative social action seeks to avoid perpetuating the divisionism that is deeply entrenched in consciousness and in the life-world.

As evident from the writings of critics such as Grant Kester and Gerald Raunig, and from statements emanating from the groups themselves, there have been some attempts to provide creative social action and similar practices with an interpretive framework that reflects their transdisciplinarity.⁹ As chapter 2 shows, these frameworks have in the main been drawn from sources such as the Critical

Practices which include the re-thinking and redefining of concepts like the 'aesthetic' and 'responsibility' ... practices that begin with our thinking and our values.¹

Theorists and associated writers such as Henri Lefebvre.¹⁰ Such interpretive frameworks, drawing on well-known perspectives that pull together various disciplinary domains, are undoubtedly invaluable to creative social action. However, this approach needs to be taken further, to be extended to evaluative engagement with such practices. As Raunig, Gablik and Linda Frye Burnham suggest, there is a need for critical perspectives incorporating criteria that reflect the transdisciplinarity of such practice.¹¹

In order to construct an appropriate evaluative approach to creative social action's relationship with radical social transformation, the research has turned to pertinent voices and issues within current discourses around social change, grassroots movements and activism. These discourses are broad: they encompass a spectrum of perspectives on social change, ranging from those concerned with strategies of reform such as widening participation in existing 'democratic' systems to those considering the means to effect revolutionary transformations that lead to new systems with radically different value-orientations. Slowly, and often serendipitously, the research has revealed a number of recently published texts, occupying the latter end of this spectrum of perspectives on social change.¹² These include Rebecca Solnit's acclaimed assertion of the potentiality of grassroots movements, *Hope in the Dark: The Untold History of People Power* (2005), Benjamin Shepard's "Absurd Responses vs. Earnest Politics" (2003), John Holloway's radical consideration of the relationship between power and social change, *Change the World Without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution Today* (2002) and *We are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anticapitalism*, edited by the Notes from Nowhere collective.¹³ Consequently, the following section of chapter 4, "Crossing Borders," offers a short overview of these perspectives on radical forms of activism, social change and revolution, which provides a broad but useful framework for contextualising creative social action and supports the argument that such practice is more closely aligned with discourses around radical political forms than those of the art world.

The survey of current writing on radical social change and grassroots activism presented here has been undertaken for reasons beyond simply providing a rather broad overview. It has also been a means to identify relevant areas for

further investigation in order to develop an understanding of the 'revolutionary' potential of creative social action. The success of this venture has depended on identifying the most viable areas to which a new critical framework for creative social action might direct its attention. Attention has been drawn to several such areas through the compilation of the inventory of creative social action. However, attempting to focus on each characteristic that defines practices as creative social action would only result in a rather surface level exploration.¹⁴ Therefore, a small number of pertinent areas have been selected for indepth study, directed by the following questions: which common features of these practices are the most significant focal points for an evaluative framework? Which of creative social action's shared characteristics have lacked sustained critical attention? Which of these shared characteristics correspond with issues attracting critical attention in the field of radical social change and grassroots activism? Posing these questions while concurrently surveying literature in the field of contemporary activism and social transformation has drawn attention to three characteristics of creative social action that are prime subjects for rigorous scrutiny: utopianism, participation and value-orientation.

Firstly, the motivation underpinning the work of groups such as La Fiambrera, PLATFORM, Ala Plastica, Yomango and Skart can be summarised as a collective and personal critique of current socio-political conditions, and a passionate commitment to 'making the world a better place.' These groups share a belief that art *can* make a significant contribution to a better future, that it *is* a force for social change. In short, creative social action is underpinned by what could be described as a form of utopianism. However, although theories and critiques on the subject of utopianism have continued to evolve in other domains, showing a marked correspondence with wider shifts in worldviews and values, the subject is underexplored in relation to creative social action. Consequently, perspectives on what constitutes utopian thinking and the forms that it might take are given rigorous attention in the third section of this chapter. This is pursued through the work of writers such as Ruth Levitas and Miguel Aviles, who have been expanding the discourse of social activism and aligning 'effective' approaches to social transformation with specific forms of utopianism, and Tom Moylan, Director of the Ralahine Centre for Utopian Studies at the University of Limerick.

Secondly, creative social action gives the process of engaging communities far more significance than it does object-based outcomes. According to Jessica Morgan, works such as those represented in the Common Wealth exhibition are the result of “collaborative or ‘de-centred’ productivity,” participation is central to their realisation.¹⁵ In fact, working *with* others is fundamental to the values underpinning these practices. However, while a few writers, including Malcolm Miles, have called for the significance of participation to be reflected in the evaluative processes applied to these practices, this call has not yet been addressed with any rigour. On the other hand, an increasing emphasis on the participation of those at the grassroots has been the subject of growing contention and debate in other domains, such as social and urban development. Consequently, section four of this chapter attends to critiques of participatory strategies, such as those articulated by social theorists Wayne Clark, Bill Cooke, Uma Kothari and Peter McLaverty.

Thirdly, creative social action focuses on moving beyond hegemonic values and their associated divisionism. Therefore, developing an evaluative framework appropriate to such practice requires venturing into the complex territory of value systems. Gablik eloquently articulates this need in her statements regarding a radical re-visioning of notions of success:

A power-orientated, bureaucratic professionalism has promoted a one-sided, consumeristic attitude toward art ... notions of product development and career achievement echo the stereotypic patriarchal ideals and values that have been internalised by our whole culture and made to pervade every experience ... practices of the art world have been modelled on the same configurations of power and profit that support and maintain our society’s dominant worldview.¹⁶

As Gablik suggests, in moving away from dominant values, creative social action aims to assert alternatives. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that criteria against which such practice is judged as ‘good’ or ‘valuable’ are appropriate to measuring their ability to meet these aims. While such issues have not been fully explored as part of the discourse around creative social action, debate on the subject of value-ideals and value-judgements found elsewhere offer a rich resource for such considerations. Consequently, in its fifth section this chapter attends to recent discourses concerned with the relationship between strategies of evaluation and value systems, with reference to writers such as Reinsborough, Ronald Inglehart and Mika Hannula.

In essence, this chapter brings together a range of contemporary perspectives on utopianism, participation and value-orientation. This synthesis reveals how shifts in value-orientation provide intertwined threads linking utopian thinking, social participation and evaluative strategies. This thesis argues that consideration of these threads is a fundamental prerequisite to a mapping out of a possible critical framework for creative social action, which is undertaken in the concluding section of this chapter. However, this chapter does not enter these complex subjects of utopianism, participation and value-orientation straight away. Rather, as indicated above, it begins by introducing some of the contemporary perspectives on social change, activism and revolution encountered during this part of the research. By providing a sense of context, this introduction to current perspectives and divisions within the field of socio-political activism prepares the ground for a deeper consideration of utopianism, participation and value-orientation, and consequently, as this chapter shows, of creative social action.

Exploring new values, new forms of thinking and new ways of being in the world.²

2: There is far more to politics than the mainstream of elections and government.¹⁷

Writers who think outside the conventional approaches to social change are not hard to find. Eminent figures such as Paulo Friere, Herbert Marcuse, Ernst Bloch, Michel Foucault and Antonio Negri are but a few. The significance of the perspectives on issues of social transformation and grassroots action offered by such writers is not disputed here. However, with the contemporaneous nature of creative social action in mind, it seems important to look to voices that augment the considerations offered by thinkers such as Friere, Foucault and Habermas. Therefore, in order to draw the most relevant perspectives into the study, this part of the research has focused on identifying recent and emergent developments in the field of activism and social change.

Clearly, those eminent thinkers mentioned above continue to play a significant role in contemporary debates. For example, as noted in chapter 2 “Circumambulating,” Habermas’ work on the political potential of free and open public debate is taken up by a wide variety of practitioners, critics and theorists concerned with radical social transformation.¹⁹ A cursory survey of recently published literature in this field reveals a range of valuable contributions that expand on Habermas’ claims that the public sphere is “a first step in a wider process of emancipatory social change.”²⁰ It seems that such expansion is best traced through recent publications emerging from the field of sociology. For example, the collected essays in Nick Crossley and John M. Roberts’ *After Habermas: New Perspectives on the Public Sphere* (2004) deepen and extend Habermas’ theories by discussing them in relation to perspectives on social change and reform offered by figures such as Pierre Bourdieu and Mikhail Bakhtin, and by doing so, present a more rounded debate on the public sphere and its centrality to radical social change.²¹

Miriam Hansen traces a significant development in the discourse around the public sphere, from Habermas through Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge and into the work of theorists such as Nancy Fraser, Andrew Edgar and Clark.²² Hansen observes that these contemporary writers offer what can be described as a postmodern approach to the public sphere, which introduces concepts such as ‘subaltern counterpublics,’ or “parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses,” to Habermas’ articulation of the public sphere.²³ Such perspectives reflect a significant development of the Habermasian public sphere, which, according to Alastair Hannay and Edgar, was an exclusive domain limited to “the propertied, rational and male.”²⁴ According to Hansen, such perspectives signal an important shift in the discourse around the public sphere, in that they focus on those at the grassroots and open up to radical forms of democratic participation. In other words, these perspectives release the public sphere from the Habermasian idealisation of the Enlightenment and its universals and place it in the hands of a decentralised public that encompasses a plurality and heterotopia of discourses.²⁵

Having developed somewhat from their Habermasian roots, notions of the public sphere continue to play a key role in discourses of sustainable social transformation and radical democracy. Evidently, opening up the public sphere to those at the margins has been an important part of this development. In fact, the opening up of the public sphere runs much deeper than this. Some theorists of social change have recognised that historically “collective struggle and mass movements organised from the bottom up have always been the springboard for true progress and social change.”²⁶ For example, Hannay asserts that a “multiplicity of publics” is currently engaged in the public sphere, which signals a momentous shift from ‘the public’ of Habermas’ salons and coffee houses as the latter depended on the speaking authority, listening audience paradigm.²⁷ Clark also attempts to release the public sphere from its patriarchal and authoritarian attachments in his eloquent theorisation of the involvement of those at the grassroots in “a public arena in which controversial issues, in principle, can be resolved, or at least handled, through dialogue rather than through pre-established forms of power.”²⁸ In other words, notions of the public sphere have expanded considerably, not only including those at the grassroots in debates around social, environmental and political crises, but also acknowledging that these communities have always been the driving forces behind significant social transformations.

New models of society based in sustainability are already emerging, and, with them, a desire to take back the world from the people who have stolen it.³

Close examination reveals several momentous shifts in perceptions of the role and potential of the public sphere, beyond those regarding the reform of existing democratic systems, or who is involved and how. For example, as Habermas himself notes, his notion of the public sphere orientates around an opposition, “the public domain versus the private.”²⁹ This underpinning opposition is problematised by Fraser, and several of the contributors to *After Habermas* attempt to move the public sphere beyond such limited dualistic understanding.³⁰ Ulrich Beck also takes up this issue. He moots a conceptual interconnection of microcosm and macrocosm, of private life and seemingly insoluble problems, and argues that this interconnection is essential to the discursive public sphere and its transformative potential.³¹ In fact, according to both Fraser and Beck, detachment of the personal from the public sphere devalues the former and renders the latter impotent: overcoming the perceived separation of the individual and

We need ... ‘practices of the self’ that understand the essential intertwining of self and other, self and society, that are aware of the subtle complexities of this intertwining.⁴

Myself ... includes the rainforest ... it includes clean air and water.⁵

the structural is of primary importance in terms of transformational potential. As Fraser and Beck show, these concerns feature prominently in current discourses around social change and activism, particularly those concerned with radical forms of politics. Clearly, while Habermas' notions of the public sphere occupy a prominent place in the contemporary field of activism, they have never-the-less been revised significantly.

Revision of theories of the public sphere has taken place through scholars such as Negt and Kluge, Fraser, and a wealth of others. For instance, Naomi Klein describes a 'coalition of coalitions' that is radically 'reclaiming the commons' through "exuberant creativity and radical intellect," while Immanuel Wallerstein asserts that processes of open constant debate are a fundamental force in the development of a better society.³² Theorist and geopolitician Brian Holmes expands such thinking, suggesting that "eruptions of public discourse" are a pre-requisite to indicating other ways of living.³³ Holmes describes 'oppositional devices,' which not only "produce and provoke public debate," but erupt as

Preparing the mental ground for a new society.⁶

behaviour that inserts itself into, and distorts, a corporeal, technical and symbolic configuration of normalised social relations, in such a way as to provoke dissenting public speech.³⁴

Evidently, the public sphere has evolved to encompass more than democratic consensus formation; it has also become an unstable, inconstant discursive arena which is made all the more potent by its capacity to 'erupt' within 'normalised social relations.' Like Holmes, the sociologist Beck develops an interesting tangent to current reinvigorations of the public sphere. He suggests that there is potential for the emergence of "a third way to the society of citizens," which he imagines to involve

quarrel-some pluralistic affinity-group parties, which lose their profile and open themselves to temporary, issue-specific person-dependent consensus formation, create subsidiary forums and offer meeting places and participation in decisions to the diversity of citizen interests on all levels of society.³⁵

Significantly then, in the hands of some theorists, the spheres of uncoerced dialogic consensus formation appear to have grown into fluid, contentious, fragmentary networks of temporary coalitions. In addition, they have evolved beyond democratising and strengthening civil society and into the territory of full-scale social transformation. Furthermore, while these shifts within the public sphere are

theorised by writers such as Holmes and Beck, they are also articulated in practical terms, as evident in the activism of contemporary movements across the globe.³⁶

When we talk about a movement we are not talking about a specific population or a specific agenda ... perhaps we should not talk about a movement, or movements, but about movement.³⁷

With their emphasis on dialogic processes, openness, connectivity, pluralism, transient permanence, and the value they recognise in those persons at the grassroots, the approaches to social transformation described above are reflected, in practical terms, in the activity of 'groups' such as the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN). Since this revolutionary 'army' occupied towns and cities in Chiapas in 1994, the Revolutionary Laws, political initiatives and *!Ya Basta!* of the Zapatista have echoed throughout Mexico, and around the world.³⁸ Although this occupation saw the Zapatista focus its protest on a single event, the Mexican government's signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement, the history of the movement demonstrates that its concern is not limited to a single issue. Rather, the Zapatista acknowledge the complex ways in which the neo-liberal globalisation that this Agreement represents impacts on individuals and communities on a daily basis, through gender and age related bias, human rights abuses, oppression and dehumanization of indigenous communities, ghettoisation of economically deprived areas, and much more. In short, the Zapatista offer an example of 'post-issue' activist practice. That is, in Reinsborough's terms, the Zapatista is one of many "movements with the inclusiveness, creativity and depth of vision necessary to move towards a more just and sane world," a movement which recognises "that the roots of the ... crisis lie in the fundamental flaws of the modern order and that our movements for change need to talk about re-designing the whole global system - now."³⁹ This also corroborates Charles Derber's description of activism that is "basically antidoctrinal ... [it] reflects the huge variety of global constituencies and the need to accommodate their many issues and points of view."⁴⁰ In attempting to radically re-design the system rather than reform it, the Zapatista insist that all major decisions should be taken through a collective deliberative process involving those at the grassroots of the crises. This corresponds with the movement's aspiration to radical

An army of dreamers.⁷

participatory democracy, to the communicative consensus formation proposed by Habermas, but of the 'bottom-up' type that directly shifts dominant power relations and is advocated by writers such as Edgar and Clark as an essential transformative tool. In other words, the Zapatista confirm what Reinsborough describes as the "ability of collaborative power to overcome coercive power."⁴¹ Equally significantly, in this attempt to redesign the system according to new values, the Zapatista also offer a radical critique of notions of democracy and focus on alternative forms of being, thinking and acting together.

La prise de parole
(the taking of
speech).⁸

Exploding the
continuum of the
present.⁹

Solnit's *Hope in the Dark: The Untold History of People Power* offers an eloquent and persuasive account of how social change happens, which draws on many of the issues introduced above. Referencing a rich array of instances, such as the movement against slavery in Britain (initiated in 1785) alongside the Zapatista uprising, Solnit argues that society has consistently been transformed by those to whom the social issues in question really matter, those with passion, with "dreams of freedom, of justice."⁴² In short, Solnit shows that the activism of the Zapatista is far from unique, that previous social transformations, including some of the most momentous, need to be recognised for what they are. That is, as processes that may have included legislative change, but that were actually driven by citizen-led movements on the margins of society, and primarily by their capacity to think beyond established systems.⁴³ Solnit uses examples such as the Zapatista to support this challenge to the idea of the vanguard leading the people, and to argue that understanding the processes of radical social change entails recognising the radical power of the individual and the collective psyche.⁴⁴

People powered
grassroots social
movements, led by
people who are most
directly affected, are
the engines of true
social progress.¹⁰

We need to be highly motivated and imaginative ... to 'connect' with the information we receive. It needs to become experienced and real.⁴⁵

Throughout *Hope in the Dark*, Solnit stresses the importance of embracing the notion of sustainable social change as driven by those at the grassroots. In this

she rejects the premise that those who are 'in' power are the source of socially transformative ideas. Solnit suggests instead that "the changes that count take place ... in the minds of those who are again and again pictured only as audience ... radical power actually lies in neglected places."⁴⁶ In other words, the most meaningful and powerful new thinking emerges from the minds of those persons at the grassroots and grows within a dynamic between those people and community. To support this Solnit also articulates the significance of sharing these ideas as communities. Here, she pertinently uses an analogy deployed by William DeBuys in his elaboration of the concept of the 'radical centre' as a place where "there are large toolboxes and tools are lent and borrowed freely."⁴⁷ Solnit does not only articulate and assert the significance of passion, which is at once individual and collective, as a tool for social change, following thinkers such as Bloch, she argues that hope and imagination also play a crucial role in positive social transformations. According to Solnit these capacities are inherent components of the radical type of power mentioned above. That is, in the sense of a power to influence and transform.

They no longer believed it was impossible. Their old reality had been shattered and their present reality had taken on new parameters, all because someone had a dream and refused to believe an illusion.¹¹

Solnit expands her articulation of an alternative view of social transformation, suggesting that understanding such transformation also involves dissolving the idea of identifiable achievements. "To be effective, activists ... have to recognise that their victories may come as subtle, complex, slow changes instead, and count them anyway."⁴⁸ Solnit argues that transforming society is not a question of achieving a fixed goal, or having conclusive answers or realisable plans; it is a dynamic and continual process. This leads Solnit to the pertinent suggestion that "the old distinctions between reform and revolution no longer seem relevant," that this is in fact "a revolution in the nature of revolution."⁴⁹ In this positing of a continual process, Solnit appears to echo the notion of a 'permanent conference' mooted by Joseph Beuys.⁵⁰ In fact, the principles Beuys put forward regarding such 'extraparliamentary' movement resonate in many ways with the type of radical activism discussed by recent writers such as Solnit. For instance, Beuys asserted that there "can only be a unity in diversity."⁵¹ In other words, pursuing shared action means valuing, rather than submerging, the differences in ideas among those in a discursive community, which in turn nurtures the permanent conference and drives it forward. Clearly, the alternative notion of activism and social transformation offered by Solnit

Such changes occurred without anybody getting arrested in the dark of night. Further changes will come...¹²

As we work towards something better, we create the means to shape a more humane and sustainable 'sculpture'.¹³

encompasses many complex dimensions, which are articulately summarised by Derber's comment that "the type of activism that matters is subtle, slow, improvisational and collaborative."⁵² As John Jordan succinctly expresses it, the revolution is in the hands of those at the grassroots but "the Marxist model of a proletarian revolution ... taking power and proposing a single blueprint for society, has become a dusty relic in the museum of failed ideals."⁵³

The realism of anti-power, or better, the anti-realism of anti-power must be quite different if we are to change the world.⁵⁴

Like Solnit, Holloway describes radical activism as a process of inestimable longevity and incalculable outcomes. In a similar vein *Change the World Without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution Today* examines the twentieth century tendency to view the state as the locus of radical social change and exposes this view as something of a fallacy.⁵⁵ Like Solnit, Holloway overturns the dominant premise, that "taking state power is ... an obvious prerequisite for changing society."⁵⁶ Holloway also consistently cites the Zapatista to support the claim that radical social change is driven by those at the grassroots. However, Holloway offers a more rigorous consideration of the role that power plays in revolutionary transformations.

Power as a precondition to revolution.¹⁴

The idea of changing society through the conquest of power ... ends up achieving the opposite of what it sets out to achieve ... what is at issue in the revolutionary transformation of the world is not *whose* power but the very existence of power.⁵⁷ In fact, Holloway's book centres on the argument that ideas of power need to be radically re-thought. In this, Holloway explores issues such as the distinctions between 'power-to' and 'power-over' in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of the complexities of power. Elaborating on this Holloway picks up threads of various arguments. This includes Bloch's regarding the "Not-Yet contained-in-but-bursting-from the Is," which Holloway expresses as the explosive power of possibility submerged within things as they are, and Foucault's regarding the tendency to only view power in negative terms, in its 'disindividualised' form.⁵⁸ As Foucault suggests, "power is not simply repressive; it is also productive."⁵⁹

Using military force as an example of established notions of power, Holloway argues that, “power and dehumanisation (of self and others) are treated as practically identical.”⁶⁰ He goes on to ask how else power could be defined, and responds by asserting that there are many different forms of power.⁶¹ It is here that Holloway begins to expand the notions of radical power as put forward by Solnit. For example, with further reference to the Zapatista, Holloway draws attention to the revolutionary power of truth and dignity, as ‘negations of untruth and degradation.’

The notion of power that is implied by asserting one’s own individuality and having one’s way ... leads ... to a deadening of empathy.¹⁵

Their truth is not just that they speak the truth about their situation or about the country, but that they are true to themselves. Truth is dignity ... dignity is to assert one’s humanity in a society which treats us inhumanly. Dignity is to assert our wholeness in a society which fragments us. Dignity is to assert control over one’s life in a society which denies such control.⁶²

According to Holloway, the recognition of such deep connections with self and other, and the struggle for “a humanity that is denied us” on a daily basis unleashes a power that has the potential to change society.⁶³ In effect, this is more than a simple reversal of the conventional concept of power. In this sense, revolution is not a case of acquiring ‘power over,’ but of altogether resisting this form of power and the equally insidious tendency to see power as separate from us, as something external. It is a case of allowing the inherent power inside ourselves to grow. However, as Reinsborough points out,

The system we are fighting is not merely structural it’s also inside us, through the internalization of oppressive cultural norms which define our worldview. Our minds have been colonized to normalize deeply pathological assumptions. Thus often times our own sense of self-defeatism becomes complicit with the anaesthetic qualities of a cynical mass media to make fundamental social change unimaginable.⁶⁴

The real problem is *not* exterior. The real problem is *interior*. The real problem is how to get people to *internally transform*. ... Global consciousness is not an *objective belief* that can be *taught* to anybody and everybody, but a *subjective transformation* in the interior structures that *can* hold belief in the first place.¹⁶

In fact, Reinsborough raises an important point here, which the Notes from Nowhere collective also articulates. That is, anaesthetising norms are not only externally applied, they are also internally active. As internalised forces these norms effectively anesthetise transformative power by detaching individuals from their own faculties, such as empathy and imagination. In the words of Notes from Nowhere, “the fences are also inside us. Interior borders run through our atomised minds and hearts.”⁶⁵

Despair never creates a revolution. Revolutionary moments are carnivals.⁶⁶

In light of the anesthetising capacities of the dominant ideologies, revolution appears to depend on a re-engagement with the 'en-livening' capacities of the *aesthetic* dimension.⁶⁷ In other words, an awakening of what Jordan describes as 'the somatic sensation at the root of the aesthetic,' which enables "a profound noticing of our world ... just paying attention – simply feeling."⁶⁸ Holloway points out that, just as anaesthetisation is profoundly embedded in the person and in the everyday, so radical social transformation must begin with the personal and the ordinary. Holloway expands on this, describing how, "in a society based on human alienation, the Zapatistas raise the banner of non-alienation, of that which is suppressed, of laughing, singing and dancing."⁶⁹ He points out that the Zapatistas' "discourse is full of jokes, of stories, of children, of dancing" and he asks "how can we take such a rebellion seriously? It all seems too much of a colourful tale."⁷⁰ Clearly there is a sense of irony in this question: in its deliberately joyous and colourful nature such activism performs the very 'No!' to dominant systems that is at the centre of Holloway's discussion.⁷¹ In this, such activism appears to draw on assertions such as Marcuse's that, "if the radical opposition develops its own language, it protests spontaneously, subconsciously, against one of the most effective 'secret weapons' of domination."⁷² In other words, these playful forms of activism have a serious and powerful dimension in that they reject both the image and the values of the systems that exercise these strategies of domination both externally and internally.⁷³ This rejection is evident, for example, in the following detail: while this form of contemporary activism prioritises personal and community transformation, it is also conscious of the need to avoid the pedagogic, evangelical, paternal or self-righteous positions generally adopted by much activism of the 1980s and 1990s.⁷⁴ "The sacrifice of the self to 'the cause' which is seen as being separate from the self ... of course has nothing to do with real revolutionary activity which is the seizing of the self."⁷⁵ The orderly protests with their reified and unified chants have been giving way to dancing, festivity and clowning, to a spontaneous, generous and heterogeneous form of activism.

The aesthetic ... overcoming the anaesthetic, numbness and certain forms of alienation and denial.¹⁷

Dancing and revolutions belong together.¹⁸

We love life and happiness more than 'revolution'. ... no revolution is ever complete and rebellions continue forever. ... rebels transform everything - the way they live, create, love, eat, laugh, play, learn, trade, listen, think and most of all the way they rebel.¹⁹

Within the colourful and joyful terrain of contemporary activism a wealth of practices bear witness to the burgeoning attention given to disorder, play and humour. For example, the power of humour is exercised by a rich array of practices. To name a few: the anti-consumerism interventions of Reverend Billy and Adbusters; the playful do-it-yourself tactics of the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army and the Biotic Baking Brigade; the Surveillance Camera Players; Mark Thomas' satirical 'presentations;' and Reclaim the Streets' transformation of city thoroughfares "into people friendly space with music, festivity, comfy furniture and in some cases even grass and plants."⁷⁶ Such manifestations of the current use of humour as a 'tool' are accompanied by articulate theorisations of the transformative potential of interruptive humour and chaos in the political arena of the everyday. In short, philosophers such as Julia Kristeva, and then theorists such as Shepard, have taken up Mikhail Bakhtin's seminal work on the carnivalesque as a potent force for radical social change.⁷⁷ This perspective hinges on the claim that the carnivalesque "is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it," and that participation in such events offers "temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order ... the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions," which in turn heightens "awareness of one's sensual, material, bodily unity and community."⁷⁸ Shepard develops Bakhtin's perspective to argue that the "model of protest as carnival [has] never been more essential."⁷⁹ As Shepard suggests, instances of activism permeated with fun and freedom are erupting around the world. Shepard notes the cacophony of voices at play within initiatives such as the global justice movement, and holds this instance up alongside Reclaim the Streets New York and Absurd Response as examples of an activism that is "flexible, anti-authoritarian, creative, fun, increasingly popular and hence effective," a radical form of activism that continues to spread its influence according to what Solnit describes as "the law of unexpected activist consequences."⁸⁰

Revolution is conceivable only if we start from the assumption that being a revolutionary is a very ordinary, very usual matter, that we are all revolutionaries.⁸¹

Solnit suggests that "activism isn't reliable. It isn't fast. It isn't direct either."⁸² For her, slow, unpredictable sustainable social transformation is the 'new'

revolution. In its overturning of notions of power and its reliance on those at the grassroots, working toward a better world appears to have taken something of a turn towards the value-orientation that it advocates. As shown above, the field of radical activism has turned away from traditional top-down strategies orientated towards fixed goals, strategies which are inherently bound to the systems it seeks to displace. Instead this revolutionary activism focuses attention on aspects of the world, the social and the individual that have been systematically devalued by these systems. This is evident in the value assigned to interconnectedness, the everyday, humour and spontaneity, and in the attention given to hope and the imagination as transformational forces. For example, while the revolutionary power of the imagination is hardly a new subject, it occupies a special place in this radical form of activism. Writers such as Holloway, Beck and Solnit seek to re-assert its importance, in contention with the modernist hierarchy that bestows special value on capacities such as rationality and competitiveness. In fact, according to Reinsborough, “in facing the global crisis, the most powerful weapon that we have is our imaginations,” while Solnit states “the revolution that counts is the one that takes place in the imagination,” and “transformations ... begin in the imagination.”⁸³ In other words, the imagination of transformation is correlative to the growth of power and aesthetic sensibility within the individual, which expands beyond the self and into the social body. This understanding appears to be at the heart of activism with visions of radically different social structures. The work of writers such as Holloway, Reinsborough and Solnit succinctly draws attention to the shift in values that underpins many forms of contemporary activism, not only in their prioritisation of imagination but also in their emphasis on a plethora of other similarly marginalised transformative faculties, such as hope, creativity and empathy.

Emotional connections tend to be suspect in a world where the mind is valued above all else.²⁰

There must be a link between the actual experience of first imagining things and then bringing them into being, individually or collectively, and the ability to envision social alternatives.²¹

All power to the imagination.²²

While the account of contemporary forms of radical grassroots activism offered above suggests that clear links can be traced between this field and aspects of Habermas' work or the Romantic perspective, connections with other sources could be traced in their place. In fact, there are a multitude of extensions and expansions of the discourses mapped out above, alongside precursors for the various perspectives mooted. For example, as already suggested, a strong correspondence is evident between current discourses in the field of activism and Beuys' articulations on subjects including revolution as “change in a deep and

sustainable sense,” the significance of the ‘permanent conference’ to this evolutionary process, and the necessity of exercising imaginal thought in both an individual and a collective sense.⁸⁴ In fact, the relevance of Beuys’ perspective is eloquently summarised in his statement that ‘another world is possible,’ and in its recent re-articulation by Mertes.⁸⁵ Other, equally robust, connections can be traced, for instance through aspects of Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s work, or the recent writings of Michael Hardt and Negri.⁸⁶ Taking up Foucault’s notion of a ‘plurality of resistance’ as the only legitimate path to a better future, Hardt and Negri centre on the power of decentralized disorganised networks of self-organised resistance movements spontaneously acting collectively, which are described as the ‘multitude.’ The authors argue that, “the multitude is the real productive force of our social world.”⁸⁷ Notably, within this, Hardt and Negri critique the habitual leaning towards leadership and organisational structures, and argue that maintaining a healthy relation between singularity and commonality is the most basic aspect of the formation of politically effective ‘multitudes.’ A plethora of theoretical articulations of these ideas could be drawn on to elaborate the various points made above, such as Beuys’ notions of ‘direct democracy’ or Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s ‘radical democratic pluralist theory.’⁸⁸ However, while tracing such trajectories is undoubtedly an important and rewarding task, this part of the research has declined that route in favour of surveying the discourses around contemporary activism that can be followed through recent theorists of grassroots movements and radical social change. This survey has been invaluable in mapping out qualities that distinguish the type of activism that provides a background for creative social action, with a significant body of the writers encountered agreeing that grassroots action can be *the* force driving such social change, but only if it is of the particular type described above.

A territory where inner and outer work co-incide ... emphasises the role of imagination in transformative social process and the centrality of alternative modes of thought.²³

The very seeds of activism are empathy and imagination.²⁴

The perspectives encountered through surveying theoretical and critical approaches to radical social change expand the understanding of creative social action, its processes and motivations, and the position it asserts for itself in the world. Considerations such as those offered by Solnit, Holloway, Shepard, Wayne, Fraser and Beck assert the importance of an improvisational, heterogeneous, humorous territory of ‘bottom-up’ activism that can incite change on both macro- and micro-

Radical in the sense of a creative inventing of non-hierarchic sociability through opposition to neo-liberal capitalism, *encuentrista* [encounters or meetings], reshaping of everyday life and reflective imagination.²⁵

scales simultaneously. They acknowledge the power of communities at the grassroots as a force for change without losing sight of the crucial part that individuals play in sustainable social transformation. They assert the value of imagination, hope, sharing, dialogue, openness, interconnectedness and mobility rather than self-interested power-seeking. According to this view, sustainable social change can only emerge from experience, power and imagination on an intimate personal level. It must be nurtured by communities-in-dialogue. It bears witness to subtle transformations. It is permanent and spontaneous. It is passionate and hopeful.

Not playing the game
of the state.²⁶

Engagement with contemporary discourses around radical and sustainable social change reveals several areas in which there has been considerable debate and development. This is particularly evident in discourses around notions of democratic participation, which range across those concerned with small changes, including increasing awareness and social cohesion and those concerned with full-scale transformation that requires reaching deep in to the individual and collective psyche and stimulating utopian hopefulness. As indicated at the outset of this chapter, creative social action is driven by a distinctly utopian perspective, manifests a firm commitment to participatory practices and shares an emergent value system. However, although each of these areas offers a point of entry into a critical understanding of creative social action, such an indepth exploration has yet to be undertaken. Consequently, this chapter now moves beyond an overview of the field of contemporary radical activism and turns attention to unpacking specific threads; the subsequent sections move through a series of indepth explorations. Firstly, section three focuses attention on recent revivals and re-evaluations of utopian thinking, particularly those aligned with the radical 'new' forms of activism described above. Then, the recently expanded topic of participation is subject to similarly focused consideration in section four. Following this, the relationship between value systems and evaluative strategies is prised open with reference to the radical value shifts advocated by these revolutionary forms of activism. Section six then draws these three explorations together to conclude the chapter by mooting an evaluative approach to creative social action, including a potentially viable set of critical lenses.

3: The word UTOPIA stands in common usage for the ultimate in human folly or human hope.⁸⁹

As indicated previously, instances of creative social action are described as utopian by some writers. Wallace Heim, for instance, writes about the ‘utopian force’ of these “hybrids of conversation, art and activism” and Claire Doherty talks of the “utopian projects of an artists’ collective such as Superflex.”⁹⁰ Groups such as Mejor Vida Corporation, La Fiambrera, *imagine / RENDER* and Grupo de Arte Callejero are driven by recognition of the pathogenic nature of current political and social conditions, and by dreams of a better world, which is in the broadest sense of the term ‘utopian.’ It appears that writers such as Heim and Doherty, and Carol Becker, tend to apply the term in this broadest sense, without acknowledging its complexity and its value associations.⁹¹ In fact, ‘utopian’ is much more than a neutral descriptive adjective, as engagement with recent perspectives on the topic reveals. To understand this and to draw out the ways in which such understanding may inform a critical approach to creative social action, it is necessary to begin by unpacking the term.

As Lewis Mumford pointed out in his seminal contribution to the modern discourse surrounding utopianism, historically, the term has accrued a dualistic character that encompasses both

vain dreams of perfection in a Never-Never Land [and] rational efforts to remake man’s [sic] environment and his institutions and even his own erring nature, so as to enrich the possibilities of the common life.⁹²

Since Mumford made these observations in 1922, the association between utopian thinking and the fantasist, or dreamer, naively hoping for real social changes has rapidly strengthened, while the value associated with capacities such as dreaming and hope has diminished with equal rapidity. Consequently, utopianism has generally become a derided quality: in the context of the value-orientations of modernity the dreaming hopefulness of the utopian has accrued negative associations. In other words, an historical negativity towards utopian thinking can be seen as correlative with an ideological bias towards rationalism, objectification and grand narrative, and against dreams, hope and imagination. This bias has not only led to the marginalisation of

‘Utopia’ and its variants, utopian and utopianism, are almost always associated ... with the impractical, the unrealistic, and the impossible.²⁷

hopeful utopianism; recent history has seen a corresponding focus on the implementation of rationalist mass utopias that inevitably became oppressive realities.⁹³

The mode of distanced, objective knowing, removed from moral or social responsibility ... strips away emotion and is detached from feeling. ... Care and compassion ... are often ridiculed.²⁸

The negative use of the terms utopia and utopianism has recently acquired something of a sinister dimension through the commonplace tendency to associate these terms with the genocidal nightmares of the twentieth century, such as those driven by Adolf Hitler, Mao Zedong, Pol Pot and Slobodan Milosevic.⁹⁴ Furthermore, with the end of the Cold War, utopia came to

designate a programme which ... betrayed a will to uniformity and the ideal purity of a perfect system that always had to be imposed by force on its imperfect and reluctant subjects.⁹⁵

With the final disintegration of the Enlightenment's grand narratives of emancipation and the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, all positioned as utopian projects, utopianism has become firmly embedded as a derogatory adjective, a term of derision or abuse associated with a trail of folly and tyranny. No wonder, as Susan Buck-Morss notes, as the twentieth century closed there was a move to leave utopianism behind as a relic of failed meta-narratives of progress.⁹⁶

Merely utopian.²⁹

Simple-minded utopian drive.³⁰

Utopianism has undeniably accrued a plethora of problematic associations. However, theorists such as Buck-Morss and Russell Jacoby have argued that rather than distancing ourselves from modernity's unfulfilled promises of utopia we should "work our way through the rubble in order to rescue the utopian hopes ... because we cannot afford to let them disappear."⁹⁷ Indeed, while utopianism bears the weight of an array of negative associations, as indicated above, writers such as Krishan Kumar recognise that,

there were reasons ... for doubting progress and for distrusting the power of reason to reshape the world ... there are now reasons ... for urging and expecting a renewal of utopia.⁹⁸

With rallying calls such as this, Kumar, and others including Jacoby and Ruth Levitas, anticipate a renewal of interest in utopianism that has accompanied the transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century.⁹⁹

The world is now too dangerous for anything less than Utopia.³¹

The term utopian is once again current in present-day discursive struggles.¹⁰⁰

Tom Moylan comments that “given the suspicious attitudes towards utopian discourse ... the present vitality of what has become known as utopian studies may seem, at first glance, surprising.”¹⁰¹ Indeed, a general derisive attitude to utopian thinking and a commonplace tendency to apply the term ‘utopian’ to all manner of dystopian projects dominated in the previous decades. None-the-less, it has been evident for some time that utopia is still very much alive, and that notions of utopianism have evolved to an extent that it is possible to talk of a radical revolutionary form of utopianism. As Moylan points out, the beginnings of a growing re-valuing of utopia and utopianism are discernable in the expansion of the field of utopian studies and its discourses, initially to encompass ‘feminist utopias’ and then notions such as ‘ecotopia.’¹⁰² In fact, Moylan identifies a renewed appreciation for the ‘utopian hermeneutic’ extending across “areas as diverse as anti-racist struggles, green and feminist politics, liberation theology, Marxist theory, and radical pedagogy.”¹⁰³ At the same time associations devoted to the study of utopianism in all its forms, such as the Society for Utopian Studies, were founded and journals were launched, including the biannual *Utopian Studies: Journal of the Society for Utopian Studies*.¹⁰⁴ The surge of interest has continued, with three significant anthologies published in 1999; *The Faber Book of Utopias*, *The Utopia Reader*, and *Utopias*, edited by John Carey, Gregory Claeys with Lyman Tower Sargent, and Catriona Kelly respectively. The same year saw the publication of Immanuel Wallerstein’s much cited *Utopistics*, and an assortment of academic conferences and exhibitions on the theme of utopianism. These included events such as the conferences A Millennium of Utopias: The Theory, History and Future of Utopianism and Nowhere: A Place of Our Own, Exploring the Uses of Utopia, and then, in spring 2000, an international exhibition and subsequent book of the same title, *Utopia: The Search for the Ideal Society in the Western World*.¹⁰⁵

The momentum of interest in re-discovering utopianism has continued. Various key texts on the subject of utopia have been republished, including Levitas’ *The Concept of Utopia*, which offers a psychological definition and Bloch’s venerable *The Spirit of Utopia*, and in 2002 the Second World Social Forum rallied

to the utopian cry, 'another world is possible.'¹⁰⁶ Led by Paul Raskin, the international Global Scenario Group pursues the long-sought "scientific approach to finding utopia." Corresponding with the concerns of its time, this pursuit involves trying to identify

a path to an environmentally sustainable and socially equitable future ... an alternative vision of globalization centered on the quality of life, human solidarity, environmental resilience, and an informed and engaged citizenry.¹⁰⁷

While this venture appears to some extent to work with features of the existing system, others follow a more revolutionary utopianism. For example, the cultural event Utopia Station (2003) argues for a re-examination of utopia, asserting the 'catalytic relations' between utopianism, creativity and social transformation.¹⁰⁸ Clearly, rather than disappearing, utopian thinking has experienced something of a reinvigoration.

Does the concept of utopia still possess a meaning?³²

With a new millennium dawning, key books on the subject of utopian thinking have continued emerging: Buck-Morss' *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: the Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (2000), Jacoby's *Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an Anti-Utopian Age* (2005) and *The Philosophy of Utopia* (2001) edited by Barbara Goodwin, to name a few. Collectively, these books give considerable attention to the co-existence of various forms of utopianism. Moylan and his co-editor Raffaella Baccolini expand on this spectrum of utopianism in *Utopia Method Vision: The Use Value of Social Dreaming* (2007), which describes utopian studies as 'pluridisciplinary,' extending across wide ranging areas from archaeology and economics, to studies of intentional communities and grassroots activism.¹⁰⁹ Beyond this insight, Moylan and Baccolini assemble an admirable body of writing from the field of utopian studies, which provides a significant introduction to the territory, paying particular attention to the concept of utopia as a poetic and discursive transformative process. As Fatima Vieira notes, Moylan also takes up the concept of utopia's transformative potential in *Exploring the Utopian Impulse: Essays on Utopian Thought and Practice* (2007), co-edited by Michael J. Griffin. "Discussing the transformational energy of Utopia ... [this book] sets out to prove the validity and the growing importance of ... utopian thought and practice."¹¹⁰ Evidently, utopianism has not only undergone a process of reinvigoration, but also re-valuing and re-imagining.

While utopian thinking appears to have a relatively consistent critical or diagnostic dimension, various writers identify distinct disparities in its transformational dimension. In other words, utopias tend to be consistent in their critique of current conditions, but their figurations of a better world take several distinct forms. As Jameson puts it, there is a rich array of categories of utopianism.¹¹¹ This is expanded on, for example, in Moylan's description of what he sees as the fundamentally distinct forms of 'warm and cold utopianism.'¹¹² Goodwin and Keith Taylor have elaborated on this further, and summarise the broad spectrum of utopianisms as encompassing dichotomies such as the following: 'open / totalitarian, democratic / authoritarian organisation, ascetic / abundant and revolution / gradualism.'¹¹³ In terms of social transformation, the question of the form of utopianism assumes particular importance, according to writers such as Solnit, Holloway and Moylan. A fairly widespread agreement is discernable among such writers: it is not just a case of identifying the co-existence of several types of utopianism, but of acknowledging that some forms of utopianism will never lead to viable social changes, some may generate small reforms while others are a revolutionary transformative force. Alongside expanding notions of utopianism, recent writers within the field, such as those mentioned above, express a general unanimity on the subject of 'traditional' utopian thinking, in its cold, rationalist, blueprint manifestation, utopia can only lead to dystopia. Concurrently, many of these writers concerned with radical social changes assert the necessity of a 'transformative' utopianism. This general unanimity regarding the shift from traditional to revolutionary, or 'transformative,' utopianism appears to coalesce with a recognition that, in its various forms, utopianism mediates and is defined by differing worldviews and value-orientations.

In this sense, utopianism can be benign or malign, plausible or implausible, possible or impossible.³³

How and when does [utopia] become the catalyst of change?¹¹⁴

Writers such as Buck-Morss, Goodwin and Solnit align traditional notions of utopia with a flawed value system, and argue that association with these kinds of values has disconnected utopianism from its most essential qualities. In response, such writers focus on the significance of these detached qualities, which were

encompassed in Thomas More's seminal definition of utopia (1516). As Vieira explains, in uniting the Greek words 'eu-topia' and 'ou-topia,' meaning 'good place' and 'no place' respectively, More implied that the perfectly good place is really no place.¹¹⁵ In other words, he presented utopia as an idea, as a motivating force that drives human evolution, rather than as an ideal and realistically possible place.¹¹⁶ Historically then, the significance of utopia has resided in its association with changes and possibilities, not places and solutions. It is to this sense of utopian thinking that writers such as Goodwin, Kumar and Solnit have turned their attention, to assert the significance of a particular type of utopianism; a transformational utopianism. As with radical activism, the type of utopian thinking advocated by these writers relies upon a different set of values, which lead to an altogether different vision of utopia.

Transformational forms of utopian thought are seen to be defined by particular qualities, which are aligned with those of the revolutionary 'new' forms of activism described above. For example, engagement with contemporary discourses in the field of utopian studies quickly draws one's attention to the possibility of a form of utopian thinking that forgoes the need for a conclusive outcome: a range of writers have asserted that utopianism is not limited to the 'blueprint tradition' as Jacoby and Levitas describe it.¹¹⁷ Solnit's writing offers an eloquent description of an alternative to this type of utopianism. From her perspective, the utopian thinking underpinning radical activism is not limited to plotting a single defined trajectory leading to perfection, in the here-and-now or the distant future.¹¹⁸ This distinction between utopias as achievable and as a fundamental driving force in a continual process of social and individual transformation is summarised in Solnit's statement "a better world, yes, a perfect world, never."¹¹⁹ The same distinction is echoed in Holloway's assertion that blueprints undermine any attempt to transform society into something better; they are to be avoided.¹²⁰ It is also evident in Solnit and Jacoby's assertions that the utopias of value perceive sustainable social transformations as revolutionary but also always incremental. Solnit elaborates on this in her consideration of the utopian hopes underpinning radical activism as

an ability to work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed ... there will always be cruelty, violence and destruction. We cannot eliminate devastation for all time, but we can reduce it, outlaw it, undermine its sources and foundations: these are victories.¹²¹

There can't possibly be a vision of an endpoint, there can only be a vision of some of the processes.³⁴

In this observation Solnit succinctly echoes the view of utopia presented by earlier theorists, from More to Levitas, who note that the point of utopia has always been that it “disrupts the taken-for-granted nature of the present” rather than implements a perfect world.¹²²

The notion that utopia is a continual guide, rather than a final destination, resonates with concerns regarding the impossibility of imagining a radically different world, as expressed by another well-known theorist of utopia. Tower Sargent draws attention to the possibility that “even our wildest imaginings are all collages of experience,” which clearly presents a certain difficulty for any radical departure from the existing system.¹²³ As Tower Sargent points out,

utopianism ... is not primarily about specifics; it is about an attitude to change. ... Few utopias [presenting an appropriate attitude to change] are radically inventive.... new ideas must use the intellectual tools available to the authors in creating innovative ideas.... the new society has to develop first within the confines of the old.¹²⁴

Consequently, according to Tower Sargent transformative utopianisms disrupt the continuum of the present by pursuing a revolutionary attitude to change, and they necessarily disrupt incrementally rather than manifesting as a new story or rupture type revolution.

Just as utopianism that focuses on incremental ‘victories,’ rather than the blueprint, is positioned as a catalyst for change, it is also no longer defined by the expert or those deemed to hold a ‘peculiar vocation or talent.’¹²⁵ Radical forms of activism assert that transformative utopias are those generated by ever changing grassroots communities, or in Negri’s terms ‘multitudes.’¹²⁶ This position underpins Solnit’s *Hope in the Dark*. As shown above, Solnit explores the force of the grassroots capacity to dream of a more just and hope-full society, and offers a convincing account of the transformational power of such utopian dreams. In fact, as Solnit explains, this is more than a release of utopianism from its hierarchical bonds; it involves recognising the revolutionary power of personal experiences and enlivened passion rather than following existing notions of liberal democracy. A similar position is manifest in Holloway’s assertions regarding power. As explained above, Holloway argues that utopian hopes which focus on appropriating power are, like

We must end the use of coercive power and authority ... abandon our attempt to solve our problems through shifting power balances.³⁵

the ideological conditions that produced them, fundamentally flawed.¹²⁷ Holloway suggests that radical social transformation depends on a utopianism that does not follow dreams of grassroots movements gaining power, but overturns the taken-for-granted prioritisation of certain forms of power over other more significant forms. Such arguments, that the blueprint and the expert are not inherent features of utopianism, tend to effect a similar separation of utopian thinking from the places and structures of power, the institutions and ivory towers.¹²⁸

Utopianism has clearly expanded to include alternatives to the expert-led form, externally defined and imposed and moving to a promised conclusion. It is in these terms that utopia has been allotted a place as a potent resource in the revolutionary's tool box. According to some perspectives, this place involves not only recognising utopia within the hands of grassroots communities, and asserting that utopian thinking is an essential component of the ordinary and the everyday. Such perspectives situate the most potent utopianism within the personal and the subconscious, as an inherent and necessary dimension of human thought and action. For example, following Bloch and Levitas, writers such as Solnit expound the power of utopian thinking as an instinctual principle of hope in the human psyche. Taking up Reinsborough's point that dominant systems are deeply embedded in the psyche, Gablik reiterates a pertinent statement by "the most influential utopian of the 1960s," Marcuse; unless revolt reaches into "the infrastructure of our longings and needs" social change will remain self-defeating.¹²⁹ Such re-valuing and intertwining of utopianism, hopefulness, imagination and aesthetic enlivening appears to be centralised by many in the field. According to both Solnit and Jacoby "imagination nourishes utopianism," and this is a healthy transformative faculty rather than a meaningless or powerless form of escapism.¹³⁰ As Lucy Sargisson explains, "utopias permit us to radically change the way that we think. Once that process has begun, we can, perhaps, begin to act in ways that are different."¹³¹ In such statements, contemporary writers rearticulate Marcuse's claims regarding the realignment of utopianism;

It means that the creative imagination ... would become a productive force applied to the transformation of the social and natural universe. It would mean the emergence of a form of reality which is the work and the medium of the developing sensibility and sensitivity ...

Utopianism is a vocabulary of hope ... a militant optimism of the will ... hopefulness can be brought to bear ...through the exercise of the utopian imagination.³⁶

The Raqs Media Collective calls utopia a hearing aid.³⁷

And now I throw in the terrible concept: it would mean an 'aesthetic' reality – society as a work of art. This is the most Utopian, the most radical possibility of liberation today,¹³²

To connect a utopian passion with practical politics is an art and a necessity.¹³³

In the terms set out above, utopias are the catalyst for radical social change when they are hopeful, passionate, aesthetic, contingent, imaginal, plural and iconoclastic, and available to all on the grounds that they are already present within the everyday. In addition, such utopianism is positioned as *fundamental* to such social transformations. Recognition that there is more than one form of utopian thinking brings with it an acknowledgement that the term utopian is more than an insignificant adjective, or a term of derision. In fact, it becomes necessary to accompany the term with prefixes such as 'transformative,' 'alternative,' 'traditional,' 'blueprint,' 'transgressive' or 'contemporary.'¹³⁴ Collectively, the theorists mentioned above indicate the need to talk of a spectrum of utopianisms, extending from the realms of tyranny and folly into a rich and diverse landscape of sustainable social transformation. For example, in terms of their role in sustainable social changes, utopian thinking underpinned by universalism and grand narratives is seen to occupy one end of this scale, while utopianism that centres on notions of diversity, contingency and radical imagining sits at the other. Consequently, in describing practices or positions as 'utopian' the question is raised, what form of utopianism? Given the assertions introduced above, that utopianism has an important social and political function but only when it is of a transformative type, this question assumes considerable importance. In short, these writers emphatically argue that radical and sustainable social change is only associated with types of utopian thinking found at one end of this scale, those that are at once transcendental and immersed within the everyday lives of grassroots communities, and are nurtured as an imaginal, critical, hope-full force that nourishes and empowers the human being to envision society beyond its current form. In setting out the characteristics of a radical transformational form of utopianism these perspectives offer a means to engage critically with practices and positions that aspire to contribute to sustainable social transformation.

4: Greater social equality requires greater public participation, for greater participation to occur greater social equality is required.¹³⁵

The second area to be subject to scrutiny here is the strategy of directly engaging ‘grassroots’ communities. To some extent, creative social action appears to be driven by a belief that its capacity to play a part in social transformation depends on its use of participatory strategies; not necessarily to encourage wider participation in existing systems but rather to shape creative and coherent communities in which utopian thinking and new ways of valuing are developed. This is indicated, for example, by Oda Projesi’s organisation of events for and with local communities, such as tea parties, film screenings, exchange libraries and workshops.¹³⁶ According to TreePeople, the starting point to addressing environmental and social issues has to be ‘creating community,’ which the group seeks to achieve through ‘tree planting events.’ In this, TreePeople relies on various forms of social participation as a means of creating community: participation in these events appears to involve neighbourhood factions in a wide range of subjective and collective processes, fundraising, decision-making, contributing to committees, liaising with relevant parties, co-ordinating the planting, digging and providing long-term care for each tree, to name a few.¹³⁷

In this field our work connects the problems and challenges we face with the inner perspectives, values and habits that create them.³⁸

Creative social action’s prioritisation of participatory strategies is quite clearly linked to concerns that are articulately described by a range of writers. This includes the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre, who argues that the modern emphasis on subjectivity and the concurrent subjugation of communal life has led to a loss of morality and moral language; the theologian Thomas Berry, who bemoans the current autistic state of humans in the Western world; and the art critic Gablik who claims that, as a result of modernity’s one-sidedness, “we are painfully aware of our separateness but have lost sight of our connectedness.”¹³⁸ As mentioned previously, the protagonists of creative social action frequently reference thinkers such as the Critical Theorists, who, from Theodor Adorno to Habermas, argue that the one-dimensionality of modern society leads to alienation and reification, and Emile Durkheim who observes this cult of the individual resulting in social fragmentation and a loss of social solidarity.¹³⁹ In other words, creative social

action's prioritisation of participatory strategies is aligned with its urge to address the social and ecological dis-ease caused, in broad terms, by value systems that prioritise self-centred individualism and concurrently anaesthetise the human being in the ways discussed above.

The celebration of ... humanity through joining together in the healing expression of one's relationship with others ... will clearly create major confrontations with existing values and systems.³⁹

Creative social action is not the only contemporary practice following a conviction that participatory practices offer an appropriate means to mediate revolutionary social changes. A commitment to the notion that engagement of those at the grassroots is a necessary aspect of social change is also found among a multitude of practices. As noted in the discussion of activism at the beginning of this chapter, writers such as Holloway and Solnit articulately explore such engagement, and use a variety of examples to support their claims that radical social transformation depends on those at the grassroots forming and taking part in 'communities of interest' that stimulate hope and imagination.¹⁴⁰ In fact, the tendency to centralise communities and participatory practices extends beyond those concerned with radical social changes: the relationship between social change and the physical and discursive engagement of 'publics' has been the subject of growing interest across several fields, including those more reformist territories concerned with expanding participation in existent systems. There has been something of a widespread centralisation of participation, a 'participatory turn,' which is evident on a global and multidisciplinary scale. Participation enjoys a high profile, for instance, in relation to notions of governance and the arena of social development. Fields such as 'social inclusion,' 'political participation' and 'participatory social development' have burgeoned over the past ten to fifteen years and within them 'participation' has been understood as a means to address all manner of social and political issues.

With their potential to create active subjects and non-hierarchical social bonds, participatory methodologies appear to offer exciting possibilities to those concerned with ecological, social and political justice, with the forming of active, empowered grassroots constituencies. However, as suggested above, participatory strategies are used by a range of practices with diverse motives: Joint Forest Management in India; specific areas of the World Bank's activities; Non-Government

Opportunities for dialogue processes ... and connective practices that contribute to creative transformation, social and ecological justice and the shaping of a humane and non-exploitative world.⁴⁰

Organisations in South Asia; and the community, or 'gacaca', courts taking place in Rwanda, to name a few.¹⁴¹ Consequently, the processes embraced by the term have recently been subject to relatively sustained critique. For instance, Grant Kester, Nicolas Bourriaud and Stephen Wright note a range of participatory strategies at play in the art world, and express concern regarding the disparity between these strategies.¹⁴² In fact, calls for critical discrimination between participatory strategies echo across several disciplinary fields. For instance, these disparities are discussed with critical vigour by several theorists of social development policies, who similarly advocate a move beyond presuming such strategies are implicitly pertinent to realising radical social aims. As the locus of a participatory turn of epic proportions, and consequently of a considerable body of critical writing on the subject, the discourses of social development offer a useful starting point for critical engagement with the complexity of participatory strategies. For example, critique of the tendency to centralise participation as an answer to social issues, is traceable from Shelley Arnstein's "A Ladder of Citizen Participation" (1969) to recent polemics such as Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari's *Participation: The New Tyranny?* (2001) and Peter McLaverty's *Public Participation and Innovations in Community Governance* (2002).

Participation is seen as a spectrum with a range of possibilities.¹⁴³

While Arnstein's paper analyses public engagement with institutional provision, and is firmly located in the realm of widening participation in existing systems, it does offer a seminal account of citizen participation. As the title of the paper suggests, Arnstein describes a ladder of participation, which divides participatory strategies into a hierarchy of levels. Her typology acknowledges that some strategies involve little meaningful citizen participation and retain most control for the 'powerholders;' these are relegated to the lowest rungs of the ladder, the realm of 'manipulation and placation.' According to Arnstein, such participatory strategies are frequently a tool for top down amelioration rather than radicalised community empowerment and, she argues, this is generally linked to the instigators' motivations. The contributors to Cooke and Kothari's *Participation* take up aspects of

Participatory practices are also flawed; they are frequently used instrumentally, as a tool for efficiency rather than 'real' community participation.⁴¹

Arnstein's perspective, particularly the issue of motivation. Following Arnstein, these theorists argue that participatory initiatives that emerge from concerns to increase efficiency or reduce local opposition to policies, such as the World Bank's, often, at best, reinforce existing social structures. The contributors to this book generally dismiss such initiatives as an instrument for the unjust and illegitimate exercise of power despite their repeated promise of community driven development, empowerment, redistribution of power, and an end to inequalities.¹⁴⁴ This argument is echoed among a range of contemporary theorists, who similarly give considerable significance to the motivation underlying the use of participatory strategies, and distinguish between instances of participation driven by institutions, funders and other 'experts,' and those initiated by grassroots constituencies. For instance, like McLaverty and Cooke, John Haily examines the issue of motivation and agrees that there is a tendency to claim a participatory approach yet to continue relying on traditional stratifications of power, to manipulate and placate.¹⁴⁵

Participation is used by business as a tool for improving efficiency and workforce morale.⁴²

Various theorists assert that sometimes participation operates as a pacifier or, in the extreme a social tranquiliser, sometimes it removes the protagonists from responsibility, and other times it puts "control and decision-making within the hands of grassroots constituencies."¹⁴⁶ In fact, within the field of social and political participation there appears to be a general recognition of Arnstein's point that the realm of participation is comprised of a spectrum of strategies, with different potentials for social transformation.¹⁴⁷ For instance, Clark maps out several types of voluntary political participation including 'minimalist participation,' 'administrative participation,' 'social participation' and 'careerism.' However, theorists such as Clark, McLaverty and Samuel Hickey also venture beyond identifying various positions on a 'spectrum of participations,' and argue that these strategies demand a much deeper investigation.¹⁴⁸ In other words, even those strategies derived from the most well-meaning intentions, those that rely on high levels of citizen participation and occupy the uppermost rung of Arnstein's ladder, have the potential to perpetuate pathogenic socio-political experiences.¹⁴⁹ Recognising that no matter how emancipatory the initial aims participation is not necessarily 'empowering,' theorists such as these focus on approaching the claims and rhetoric of participatory practices with extreme caution, and on examining participatory strategies in considerable depth. For example, in a co-authored article, Clark and McLaverty suggest that even in the case of the most radical of participatory practices, even the

potential for any development of deliberative tendencies should be called into question.¹⁵⁰

Creating opportunities for new forms of ... transformative action in which we are creative participants.¹⁵¹

Engaging communities in dialogue is regularly held up as a model of 'good' participatory practice, particularly by those with a tendency towards reformism, as in Arnstein's typology and in the work of theorists such as Friere and Habermas. K. T. Eldson extends these ideas and demonstrates that involvement in organising and running groups increases a range of skills and qualities, including self-confidence and physical health, and as these skills and qualities increase so too does an individual's capacity to 'participate.'¹⁵² However, this is not necessarily the outcome of engagement in dialogic participative processes; the quality of participation in such situations is not a given. As McLaverty asserts, while citizen participation initiatives are often seen as promoting democracy through their discursive processes, participants in forums, committees, discussion groups and other such situations "remain open to manipulation by the powerful, the articulate and the organised."¹⁵³ Consequently, critical perspectives such as McLaverty's tend to centre on analyses of participatory strategies that bring to bear questions about power and control, intention and motivation, external pressures and responsibility.

In his analysis of discursive participatory practices, McLaverty draws on Habermas' differentiation between: instrumental and strategic rationality, trying to convince others to support preformed aims; and communicative rationality, trying to reach an understanding and consensus in response to arguments and evidence. Echoing a similar dichotomy, many of the theorists mentioned here acknowledge that some participatory practices involving discursive strategies co-opt handpicked 'worthies' onto committees, which these theorists align with one end of the spectrum of participations. In addition, as McLaverty points out, the complexity of participation extends beyond such dichotomies. That is, however they are set up, and even when they are intended to be radically democratic, deliberative processes risk domination by the better educated, the articulate, the self-confident, those with

greater social power and those with spare time.¹⁵⁴ Taking up this argument, and pursuing a qualitative analysis of the actual experience of such participatory strategies, Clark studies several types of voluntary political participation in Britain. From this, he demonstrates that the quality of such participation is often permeated by inherent inequalities, and consequently severely impaired in terms of its transformational potential. According to Clark, even the most democratic forums for dialogue may simply allow participants to ‘advise or plan ad infinitum’ while ensuring that established power structures remain intact: in the main participation remains bound by currents of instrumentalism, coercion and bureaucratisation.¹⁵⁵ Likewise, Haily focuses on the implicit and complex roles that power plays within these processes.¹⁵⁶ Such perspectives draw attention to the complex issues encountered when social and political participation based on discursive engagement is subject to critical exploration, and indicate the ways in which these complexities may develop when participations with more radical aspirations are scrutinised.

The notion that participatory strategies focusing on mediating a relationship of equals and instigating open and uncoerced dialogue are an impetus to community-directed action and radical forms of democracy has been subject to considerable scrutiny. However, several theorists have concurrently directed attention to certain qualities that may endow participatory strategies with greater potential for engendering social creativity, radical democracy and response-ability; if those at the grassroots “drive the entire job of planning, decision making and managing a programme” for instance.¹⁵⁷ Consequently, questions about how participants are identified and engaged, and where they are recruited from, have gained currency among those concerned with critique of participatory strategies. For example, Clark gives considerable attention to examining why people ‘take part’ and asking questions such as, who defines the issues for which solutions are sought. Who judges the legitimacy or feasibility of the suggested solutions and who directs the selection of particular solutions? This approach to instances of participation, so such theorists argue, leads to a critical understanding of the capacity of that instance to constitute, or engender, collective creativity and grassroots action.

It is important to ask not only how various participatory strategies empower people, but also for what.⁴³

Extending the discussion of strategies of social participation beyond the critical engagement with discursive processes described above, some theorists

draw attention to deeper aspects of participatory practices. A correspondence between these aspects and the concerns of practices seeking radical social transformation is indicated by Clark and Kothari who note the significance of the participatory process in terms of personal experience. This is taken up, for example, in Kothari's argument that the quality of such practices cannot be considered without recourse to the participant's perspective. As McLaverty and Hickey acknowledge, public participation has transformational potential, but only as an important psychological force.¹⁵⁸ In fact, for participatory practices with transformational intentions, attention is primarily focused on 'innerwork,' on internal shifts within the individual that counter the anaesthetising capacity of normative experiences.¹⁵⁹ As noted at several points above, the social changes sought are seen to emanate in the first instance from transformations on an intimate, personal level. This attributes significant value to subjective or subconscious dimensions of social participation, which could be described as their 'transformational dimension.' Social participation of a transformative nature depends then, as the eminent Ivan Illich has pointed out, on each person having both the means to respond to that experience and the urge to discover.¹⁶⁰

Practices that connect inner and outer worlds ... 'scratch on people's imagination' and enable people to become internally active.⁴⁴

In order to act, especially in difficult circumstances, we need ... 'connective practices' that develop our ability-to-respond!⁴⁵

Clearly, there is also a wide variation in participatory strategies and forms of participation, which correspond with a range of motives and value-bases. While according to some perspectives there is an evident link between grassroots participation and sustainable radical social changes, it appears important to recognise the complexity of the issue of participation, and fundamental to understand the tenuous nature of that link. In other words, given the diverse uses and complexities of participatory strategies, it seems advisable to approach 'participation' with caution and to critically analyse aspects of the strategies used, particularly by those practices with the most radical of intentions, such as creative social action. According to many of the writers mentioned above, the types of participatory strategies that make an effective contribution to a shift in collective consciousness, action or aspirations are those that are *driven* by what might be called 'contingent communities;' 'connective practices' that nurture personal transformative process rather than encourage wider participation in existing democratic processes.¹⁶¹ Such radical participations, of the type that break through the continuum of the present and nurture transformations of the psyche, appear central to the 'new' forms of activism described above that work with practices such

as the carnivalesque. Furthermore, such strategies appear to correspond with the transformational aspirations and 'alternative' values at the heart of creative social action.

We're so engaged in doing things to achieve purposes of outer value that we forget the inner value, the rapture that is associated with being alive, is what it is all about.⁴⁶

5: We are claimed always and everywhere, by the necessity of value in [an] active, transactional sense. ... In this way, the play of value is bound up intimately with motivation and purpose of every kind.¹⁶²

This chapter now moves into the complex territory of values, to consider some issues and possibilities around the value-orientation and evaluation of socially transformative practices of a radical nature. It is important to begin this consideration with an acknowledgement that values are not universals waiting to be discovered, rather they are created by cultural contexts and competing interests, as Friedrich Nietzsche so articulately explained.¹⁶³ Even philosophers persistently arguing the case for absolute value, such as Paul Grice, appear to generally acknowledge that values are socially constructed.¹⁶⁴ As W. J. T. Mitchell remarks, "every discussion of value is more or less explicitly grounded in some beliefs about what is or ought to be truly valuable:" values are relative, depending on individual and cultural views, and therefore denote particular attitudes and worldviews.¹⁶⁵ Steven Connor adds that perceptions of value are intimately bound to motivation and purpose.¹⁶⁶ In addition, as Mitchell notes, values develop in an evolutionary sense, "as a human production that is both the goal and the motor of human progress."¹⁶⁷ A shift in social value-orientation then is not a sudden rupture, but a slow indeterminable process. Connor similarly elaborates on this point, by drawing on John Fekete's perspective regarding the complex ways in which the "objectivisations, interplay and transformations [of] value orientations, value ideals, goods values, value responses, and value judgements" have underpinned the gradual formation and disintegration of social and cultural structures.¹⁶⁸

There is no such thing as absolute value in this world. You can only estimate what a thing is worth to you.⁴⁷

As indicated elsewhere in this thesis, creative social action's place within this territory of shifting values is delineated by its critique of predominant value-bases.¹⁶⁹ Creative social action not only moves away from the values embedded in the institutional framework of 'art:' the rejection is primarily of the values mediated by the dominant, and pathogenic, ideological systems, which are embodied in this institution and across whole social configurations.¹⁷⁰ Writers such as Jameson and Reinsbrough expand on this interconnection, while Gablik articulately expresses its pathogenic nature in her remark that,

most institutions in our society, including the art world, have echoed [Modernism's] self-assertive and consumerist values to a point that is now threatening the health of individuals, of society and of the planet.¹⁷¹

In short, creative social action does not pursue a narrowly focused concern with the value-biases of the art world, it prioritises a much wider shift in values. Furthermore, in doing so it positions itself as implicitly linked to other practices with similarly transformative aspirations. In other words, creative social action does not see itself as an autonomous movement; to use an apposite term theorists such as Jeffrey Weeks and Chantal Mouffe employ to describe groups temporarily drawn together by shared vocabularies of values, creative social action sits among a particular cluster of 'contingent communities.'¹⁷² In this case, the shared vocabulary centres on radical social transformation through commitment to 'new' values.

The call for 'new' values in the face of a crisis appears to support Connor and Mitchell's observations regarding the adaptive and evolving nature of normative values, but also the perspective articulated by John Dewey, that such values are either inhibitors or instruments for social progress.¹⁷³ In this case, as Kate Soper explains, awareness of impending social and environmental catastrophe forces a shift in value-orientation: this appears to offer the only means of addressing the crisis, to be intrinsic to sustainable social transformation.¹⁷⁴ In other words, at the centre of this value-reorientation is what Felix Guattari and Giles Deleuze have described as capitalism's homogenisation of all values to the aims of the market and the pathogenic nature of this homogenisation, and recognition that something radically different is needed.¹⁷⁵ Andrew Simms of the New Economics Foundation contends that the challenge of moving towards a more sustainable and just future does not involve the construction of new values; it "will draw on things that we already know how to do, but have missed the political will for."¹⁷⁶ This suggests that the current shift is in fact a question of change in the things that are collectively

seen as having value. In other words, a new way of engaging with what has always been there but has not been within what philosopher Charles Taylor has described as the 'horizons of significance' that permeate the life-world.¹⁷⁷

The requisite 'ethical [and social] change' of the dominant modern social values and institutions must play if our world is to be saved.¹⁷⁸

It seems that the 'new' values emerging in response to the current crisis are in fact those that dominant worldviews have repressed, and that more timid reformist approaches to social change continue to marginalise. In other words, this response positions itself in relation to a system that values competition, and de-values co-operation: new value-orientations prioritise the latter. The predominance of economic values, noted by writers such as Adorno and more recently by Soper and Reinsborough, has been similarly reconsidered as a projection of structural value-sensibilities. Accordingly, these emergent contingent communities question the value vested in transferable wealth, productivity and shareholders, and locate value in other places including replenishable wealth, prosperity and stakeholders.¹⁷⁹

The negation of the needs that sustain the present system of domination and the negation of the values on which they are based ... The negation of the need for wasteful, ruinous productivity, which is inseparably bound up with destruction; and the negation of the vital need for deceitful repression of the instincts.⁴⁸

As Reinsborough explains, the dominant systems - modernity, capitalism and neo-liberalism - have been opened to question, and their oppressive pathogenic tendencies shown to be supported by their normative values. For example, as already shown these dominant systems have found little value in 'mere' dreaming. In fact, dreaming, seen as a potentially problematic aspect of the human psyche, has been systematically stripped of value and effectively suppressed. On the other hand, dreaming emerges as of the highest value in the work of many writers concerned with moving beyond these pathogenic systems, as in the image of 'coming community' put forward by the political philosopher Giorgio Agamben.¹⁸⁰ Consequently, while these dominant worldviews place high value on privatisation, proxy decision making and corporate rule, these contingent communities attend to alternative values using a language that incorporates collective responsibility, democratic decision making and global justice.¹⁸¹ Reinsborough summarises the

difference between the value-biases of an authoritarian, consumerist, unjust system, which orientates towards monoculture, short term gain and inequitable distribution and an alternative system, which recognises the value of diversity, complexity, sustainability and economic justice.

A simple dichotomy for articulating the crisis which is being used more and more often is the clash between a delusional value system that fetishizes money and a value system centred around the biological realities of life's diversity. ... The path shaped by life values leads towards many choices - the decentralized self-organizing diversity of different cultures, political traditions and local economies. While the money values path leads to fewer and fewer choices and finally the homogeneity of global corporatization.¹⁸²

To some extent this value shift is expressed most eloquently in the two opposing value-orientations based on 'money values' and 'life values' set out by Reinsborough, and in Simms' description of a movement from prioritising economic values to recognising the value of ecological health.¹⁸³ In the words of Orion Kriegman, co-ordinator of the Great Transition Initiative, it centers on 'new values of quality of life, human solidarity, environmental sustainability and responsibility, or ability-to-respond'.¹⁸⁴ Responsible is able to respond.⁴⁹

Like Reinsborough, political scientists Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel also consider an emerging dichotomy of values. In their terms this is a shift from 'survival values' toward increasing emphasis on 'self-expression values.' Clearly, their terms vary from Reinsborough's, they describe this value shift as inevitable and objective rather than a radical attempt to address a values crisis and their use of the term 'self-expression values' seems rather inadequate.¹⁸⁵ However, while it begs several questions, Inglehart and Welzel's work offers another perspective on the dichotomy Reinsborough describes. According to Inglehart and Welzel this is a polarisation of Materialist and Postmaterialist values, which reflects "a cultural shift that is emerging among generations who have grown up taking survival for granted." Explaining this shift towards Postmaterialist values these authors state,

[These] values give high priority to environmental protection, tolerance of diversity and rising demands for participation in decision making in economic and political life. ... [This] also includes a shift ...

from emphasis on hard work toward emphasis on imagination and tolerance as important values to teach a child. And it goes with a rising sense of subjective well-being ... this produces a culture of trust and tolerance, in which people place a relatively high value on individual freedom and self-expression, and have activist political orientations.”¹⁸⁶

Inglehart and Welzel argue that these are precisely the attributes that are crucial to radical democracy, which they see as evolving from a system that is simply outdated. Clearly this differs somewhat from Reinsborough’s rather more revolutionary perspective and critique of existing systems. However, there appears to be something of an agreement regarding the value given to attributes such as participation and imagination among these writers.¹⁸⁷ This further illustrates the need to critically examine the type of participatory approach manifest in practices in order to ascertain the values they mediate and their potential as a revolutionary force.

The value shift advocated by practices with aspirations to radical social transformation does not only raise previously marginalised values to prominence, it also challenges the way in which value is assigned. In fact, the value shift mapped out in this thesis distinctly prioritises qualities such as heterogeneity and connectivity. However, according to some theorists such emphases signal an impotence, a problematic fragmentation and relativisation, as articulated in Judith Squires’ *Principled Positions: Postmodernism and the Rediscovery of Value* (1993) in which she suggests that:

Incommensurable value-fragmentation.⁵⁰

The deconstruction of all ‘principled positions’ creates a value vacuum which, in turn, leads to a state of ethical and political paralysis ... there remains no grounds for talk of transcendent values and no basis more solid than discursive agreement for the development of principled positions which might inform political action.¹⁸⁸

Even so, while Squires and many of her contributors bemoan the demise of transcendent values, others see this as a necessary part of the development of an alternative value-orientation. Discursively formulated and contingent shared value-orientations, of the type seen as inadequate by Squires, are centralised by some as entirely appropriate to the transformations that must take place. As Beck argues, quarrel-some pluralistic discursive forums provide the most viable basis for radical political action, and the only means to move away from the pathogenic system. In other words, only the firm commitment to openness found in contingent communities or the ‘permanent conference’ can

What has value can be made or distinguished only by defying judgment.⁵¹

counteract the deadening and controlling force of these 'transcendent' values and positions.¹⁸⁹ This position can be seen to reverberate through the field of radical activism described above. Its significance is further articulated by the political scientist and art theorist Mika Hannula, who describes,

the notion that certain values cannot be achieved when pursued directly or consciously, but are by-products of other, partly unplannable and unconscious activities ... for example, political contribution and generousness are not things you can order or achieve by straightforward demand or aim. By their inner character, they are values which are created, maintained and renewed in cooperation with all the various participants in a time and place bound activity.¹⁹⁰

Although the value shift described above finds itself a solid enough basis in discursive agreement, which prepares the psyche for pursuing a different worldview, it appears to present another problem. This also concerns the contributors to *Principled Positions*: as Connor pertinently notes, "value is inescapable [and] the process of estimating, ascribing, modifying, affirming and even denying value, in short the process of *evaluation*, can never be avoided."¹⁹¹ In addition to sharing an inescapable ubiquity with value, evaluation is similarly unstable and culturally determined. Evidently, just as beliefs and worldviews generate particular value-orientations, so these orientations in turn produce attendant types of value judgements and approaches to evaluation. Furthermore, these attendant evaluative strategies perpetuate the hierarchies presumed by their framing worldview. Consequently, this becomes a significant issue when evaluations are made regarding the worth or significance of the processes and achievements of contingent communities. Clearly, the value of these 'permanently unclosed constructions of personal and collective selves' is undermined by traditional processes and criteria of evaluation.¹⁹² In other words, revolutionary practices demand an equally radical evaluative approach, one that pays attention to the relationship between value structures and evaluative strategies.

Significantly, those concerned with radical social transformation tend not only to locate value in overlooked places and derided qualities but also to look at value in different ways. For instance, in recent history, instrumental value has occupied a privileged position, over and above intrinsic value: forested land has been considered to have value due to its provision of resources such as fuel and

food rather than its innate qualities. However, some concerned with radical change have recognised that this too is a pathogenic construct of the dominant worldview. Consequently, they have given the intrinsically valuable, which is worth having for itself, increasing attention while diminishing the bias towards valuing attributes and objects as a means to something else worth having. This is manifest, for instance, in the growing recognition that healthy ecosystems have intrinsic value, which is prior to their instrumental value as resources for humans, as eloquently expressed in the work of Holmes Rolston III.¹⁹³ Clearly, some things, such as healthy ecosystems, are both valuable in themselves *and* for getting other things of value. Significantly, this shift signals not only a challenge to value hierarchies, but also to the binary positioning of value. In other words, it prioritises intrinsic value but also indicates recognition that intrinsic and instrumental value are not mutually exclusive categories.

A tree has value in itself, even if it presents no commercial value to humans. That the tree is alive and functioning is worthwhile. It is doing its part in nature: recycling litter, producing oxygen, sequestering carbon dioxide, sheltering animals, building soils, and so on.⁵²

Valuing what matters.¹⁹⁴

Evidently, value-orientations reinforce themselves in numerous ways, for example in ascribing value of one type or another and in valuing certain attributes and capacities over others. This is evident, for instance, in the dominant bias towards quantitative forms of evaluation, which appears intrinsic to the institutional forms of the twentieth century: education, multinational corporations and the art world, for example. Reflecting the ideological biases of the system that frames them, value judgments across these institutions have prioritised the measurement of things, exact calculability and predictability and instrumental value; evaluation has become something of a numerical process.¹⁹⁵ As David Sloan points out, in the case of the institutional structure of art, the value of artwork, even of the socially engaged variety, is often reduced to a question of numbers: evaluation of its quality involves questions such as, how many people attended. How many people participated?¹⁹⁶ Similarly, the increasing focus on accountability and the tendency to align evaluation with the realm of monitoring, which is manifest across such institutions, is also inherently linked to the value-biases of the dominant worldview. Likewise, these underlying value-bases are revealed through other aspects of

evaluative strategies, such as the purpose of the evaluation and the priorities of the evaluator.

While the dominant value system has clear biases towards instrumental, quantitative, objective evaluation, it is also possible to trace a recent movement towards evaluative strategies of a different kind. This is found, for instance, in an emphasis on quality of experience and a tendency to focus on enquiry rather than measurement, which has been growing across several fields of both reformist and revolutionary natures.¹⁹⁷ For example, the organisational development and evaluation consultant Michael Q. Patton proposes an alternative to the practice of relying on deterministic, positivist quantitative approaches in the evaluation of projects involving 'publics.'¹⁹⁸ In his much cited *Utilization-Focused Evaluation: The New Century Text* (1997) Patton borrows terminology from the eminent Freire to explain these orthodox approaches as following a 'banking' process. That is, they tend to be formulaic rather than responsive to the complex and non-deterministic nature of 'real people in the real world.' In response to this one-sidedness, Patton proposes an alternative approach to evaluation, which embraces people as subjects and considers evaluative strategies according to their actual use, and their users, a suggestion echoed in the work of writers such as the development analyst and policy advisor for Oxfam, Joanna Rowlands.¹⁹⁹ In addition, Patton extends this alternative perspective on evaluation with the premise that, as it is impossible to make 'value-free' judgements or draw value-free conclusions, as "everything that is done, from *beginning to end*, will affect how real people in the real world experience the evaluation process and apply the findings," one of the most important tasks is to recognise and account for the alignments between value-biases and evaluative strategies.²⁰⁰

Clearly, value-bases are responsible, at least partly, for determining what is given value, and how. In essence, in their many forms, value judgements are consistently aligned with the value-bases of the structures from which they emerge. This is evident in the biases of evaluative strategies, in their purposes and in their criteria, and features such as who imposes these judgements and how they are used. Consequently, the work of 'contingent communities' that distance themselves from pathogenic systems and their inherent value-orientations, require the development of forms of evaluation that are equally distant from these pathogenic

systems. For example, the goals and processes of these communities with revolutionary transformational aspirations do not call for summative evaluation of outcomes, and do not anticipate demonstrating 'success' in conclusive, economic or quantitative terms. In their case, both processes and goals are seen to be in a permanent state of emergence and development. Consequently, when considering arriving at value judgements that are appropriate to these positions it seems particularly pertinent to begin with a close consideration of the content, model, method, and even use of the evaluative tools brought to bear, with reference to the value shift that underpins these practices.

The resistance to every simple incorporation into the structures of value under capitalism ... rigorously distinguished from the attempt to transcend value.⁵³

6: Even if ... condescending patronage is avoided through genuine collective decision-making and shared responsibility, how much of this activity is sustainable and to what end?²⁰¹

Examination of current discourses around utopianism, participation and values reveals the complexity of each, and the connections between them, particularly in their more radical forms. For instance, recent development in each discourse reveals a particular attentiveness to: issues of power and control; openness; direct experiential engagement on subjective, intersubjective and community levels; and values that are marginalised by pathogenic systems. Viewed in all their rich and intertwined complexity, these discourses indicate the shape that a transformative 'type' of practice may take: aligned with a particular set of values that lead it to favour certain forms of participation and utopianism. The concerns shared among the more radical facets of these discourses seem to echo across the field of contemporary activism, and perhaps across aligned practices such as creative social action. Having engaged with pertinent areas of these discourses, this thesis turns attention to considering creative social action with reference to these areas; those concerned with revolutionary forms of social change, particularly those focusing on utopianism, participation and value-orientation.

In its move away from the dominant and destructive value-orientation, creative social action appears to pursue a form of utopianism. As the perspectives introduced above show, some utopianisms are seen to contribute in a very real way towards developing a socially and ecologically just and sustainable future. These 'transformative' utopianisms are identified as having specific qualities that make them a potent component of revolutionary change: their utopias are localised, process-based and contingent, they emerge in the everyday, from participants and from the imagination. Consequently, investigating the utopian urges of potentially transformative practices with this in mind offers a starting point for a discourse about the significance of these practices as part of a grassroots force for social change. While such investigation has not yet been undertaken with reference to creative social action, the perspectives of thinkers such as Solnit and Holloway provide tools that make it possible. Theorists such as these offer a means to open up the complexities of an expanded spectrum of utopianism, and an understanding of utopias that aligns them with particular value-orientations.

As a result of its commitment to an alternative value-base, creative social action places considerable weight on participatory strategies. However, the critiques of participation introduced above confirm the need to prise open any assumptions that participatory approaches necessarily offer more possibilities in terms of addressing social and environmental dis-ease.²⁰² As Bishop implies, those adopting participatory methodologies in response to an urge to contribute to radical social transformation need to take on board a rich array of issues.²⁰³ Creative social action may offer forms of participatory engagement with a capacity for fostering, engaging and supporting grassroots constituencies, or contingent communities, and nurturing radical change on a personal level. Alternatively, it may perpetuate 'power-over' type experiences in a myriad of subtle ways. Clearly, in light of creative social action's motivations and aspirations, these concerns assume considerable importance. Yet, in relation to creative social action such issues appear to be largely unexamined. On the other hand, the critiques of participatory strategies offered by theorists such as Holmes, Beck and Clark make it possible to enter in to an investigation of the types of participation that define such practice, and to discuss these participations in terms of their transformative potentiality.

In positioning itself beyond an already complex network of value assumptions, creative social action attempts to legitimate and propagate alternative values, which suggests that an equally alternative strategy of evaluation is necessary. As indicated above, ensuring that critical evaluation is appropriate to creative social action requires the development of fitting terms of evaluation. This clearly necessitates investigating the values that any potential critical framework might reflect and mediate; it also requires a consideration of the forms and mechanisms of that framework. For example, as Smith explains, the question of measurement is itself problematic; it is necessary to question what is being measured, why and how.²⁰⁴ In short, in approaching practices such as creative social action it is important to bear in mind that “evaluation is not primarily about the counting and measuring of things. It entails valuing.”²⁰⁵

It appears that an alternative value-orientation is at the very *core* of creative social action. This is evident, for example, in the significance given to mediating individual and collective value shifts. Consequently, discourse around creative social action’s potential to achieve this and to contribute to the types of sustainable social changes it envisages must take up an appropriate evaluative framework, including criteria that are relevant to its revolutionary aspirations. This thesis suggests that contribution to such transformations can be appropriately discussed in terms of the values reflected in:

- the form of utopianism these practices mediate
- the types of participation they foster
- their evaluative strategies

Following Smith’s suggestion that ‘indicators’ are more useful tools for evaluation than measurements, these three evaluative tools provide a relatively loose group of qualitative indicators rather than firm criteria against which creative social action can be measured in quantitative terms.²⁰⁶ Importantly, these indicators are intimately bound to the value-orientation of radical perspectives rather than the established system. Consequently, these qualitative indicators make it possible to embark on an appropriately focused venture into the complex terrain occupied by creative social action.

In order to ascertain creative social action's position in relation to the three points raised above, critical engagement is required to focus on dialogue and enquiry rather than measurement, on engaging with practices rather than quantifying them. This enquiry is directed by a particular type of questioning, which can only be effectively negotiated through dialogue with the practices, their protagonists and their participants. The questions, generated by the indicators introduced above and centralised by this dialogue, incorporate the following: how important are 'participatory' alignments with specific communities to the practice? Why? What forms of participation are at play in the practice, and from whose perspective? Do they embrace messy discourses and complexity? Are there different levels of involvement? Who is involved? How and why? How is power constituted in these practices? Does it include the 'power to do,' if so, for whom and to do what? Is it the inner power to hope, to experience transformative utopian imaginings and the power to share this in the constitution of communities around shared values? Focusing in on the utopianism at play among these practices and their participants involves questions such as whose utopias and what form of utopianism is at play here? How and where are they generated? The turn towards participants evident in these practices is also reflected in other key questions to be posed, such as, how does the practice evaluate the success of these participatory activities? How is evaluation undertaken, why, when, and who is involved? Is evaluation participatory or expert led? Does the practice document these evaluative processes? If so, who makes use of this material and how?

Although the thesis puts these indicators forward, it is recognised that, according to the perspectives on radical forms of participation and utopianism set out in this chapter, much of the value of these practices is likely to be intangible and only to be experienced, felt in 'atmosphere and in spirit.'²⁰⁷ For instance, the focus on utopianism having significant value when it is permeated by imagination and hope, locates the value of these practices largely in their *impact* on participants, in slow subtle value shifts. As Smith notes, such subtle and indirect changes of behaviours are a key part of transformative participatory practices, yet "changes in values, and the ways that people come to appreciate themselves and others, are notoriously hard to identify – especially as they are happening."²⁰⁸ In her assertion that there is no going home from activism, Solnit indicates another dimension of the shift in thinking that this demands from critical approaches; "it's always too soon to calculate effect."²⁰⁹ With this in mind, the indicators introduced above are

provisional; they have been developed with the intention of testing them out through live cases of creative social action, which is the subject of chapter 6 “Asking Questions.” The detailed description of the chosen cases offered in chapter 5, “Looking Closer,” leads into the focused analysis that takes place in “Asking Questions.”

Part Two - We are the Revolution?

5: Looking Closer

As explained earlier, this thesis applies the critical lenses developed in chapter 4 to three carefully selected examples of creative social action: Skart, Superflex and La Fiambrera. “Looking Closer” presents material gathered through sustained study of these three cases and offers detailed and innovative accounts of each. These accounts provide a broad understanding of each case, paving the way for a critical engagement with key aspects of their work, which is taken up in chapter 6, “Asking Questions.” However, before chapter 5 ventures into its description of these practices, it lingers briefly to explain the selection of Skart, Superflex and La Fiambrera as appropriate cases for further study.

1: If a case is intrinsically interesting it can prove an attractive proposition ... [it is] rather foolhardy ... to use this as the sole criterion for selection.¹

As explained in chapter 3, “Moving Forward,” the research has involved constructing a ‘partial inventory of creative social action,’ which has grown to contain more than forty examples. While each example is an interesting and inspiring case of creative social action, not all are viable candidates for indepth study as part of this research project. Inevitably, reflection on the nature of creative social action, the type of cases best suited to indepth study and the limitations and possibilities of this part of the research, has generated to a set of criteria to be taken into account in the selection of cases for further study. Firstly, if the research is to provide findings relevant to the field as a whole, the chosen cases need to reflect the breadth of strategic approaches encompassed by practices described as creative social action.

Secondly, this part of the research clearly offers an opportunity to focus on less well-known instances of creative social action, rather than those consistently referenced, discussed and critiqued in a wide range of key texts and journals: WochenKlausur, PLATFORM and Border Art Workshop/Taller de Arte Fronterizo, to name a few.² However, it has also been necessary to ensure that appropriately detailed information is accessible, and available in English, and to ascertain the likelihood of accessing further information through resources such as unpublished papers and email contact. This has narrowed the field considerably. For example, having been encountered through the Was Ton Art-and-Social Engagement conference, Artway of Thinking has been included in the 'partial Inventory.'³ However, subsequent research reveals no more than a small body of web-based information, which is only available in Italian.⁴ In the case of Grupo Escombros, a considerable body of web-based information has been found, but with the exception of a paper by Grant Kester this is entirely in Spanish.⁵ Similarly, Malcolm Miles describes the work of Extra]muros[yet investigation does not reveal any further information on this group, and while Chto Delat? is included in the 'partial inventory' on the basis of a statement presented at the Klartext Konferenz, the group is not a viable case for further study largely because little information can be located.⁶

Thirdly, the research project has offered the possibility of reflecting the geographical spread of creative social action, rather than the Euro-American focus that generally permeates the field.⁷ The geographical range of examples included in the 'partial inventory' indicates that the majority of relatively easily traceable examples are, as the key publications suggest, found in Europe and North America, but also that creative social action has been evolving in diverse contexts, from Sweden, Denmark and Portugal to Australia, Senegal and Argentina.⁸ Surveying the field and compiling this 'inventory' also drew attention to some practical issues that may partially explain the apparent bias of the authors and editors of those key texts. For example, there are numerous difficulties implicit in accessing examples of 'expanded' and 'alternative' practices outside one's own culture, language and contacts; such access depends on sustained resources and commitment, among other things. Surveying the global distribution of creative social action also draws attention to the fact that many of these practices work across and between geographical areas.⁹ For instance, AfroReggae primarily works within the favelas of Rio de Janeiro but is also active throughout England, Exchange Values has moved between the Windward Islands, Nottingham and Johannesburg, *Imagine/RENDER*

began as a local initiative and now has a global presence and University of the Trees consists of a network of local groups spread across England and Germany.¹⁰ In light of these findings, it seemed that, although areas such as South America offer a rich array of likely candidates, including Mejor Vida Corporation, Grupo de Arte Callejero and Ala Plastica, the study in hand would be most effective if the cases investigated in depth were selected from a somewhat narrower geographical area.¹¹ While this could clearly align the study with many of the works cited in chapter 2, possibly due to similar pragmatic constraints, it would not necessarily preclude opening out the rather narrow perspectives found in those earlier texts. Such opening out could be achieved, for example, by writing a broad range of practices into the thesis and incorporating an appendix reflecting the rich geographical spread of creative social action. It could also be achieved by carefully selecting cases for indepth study from among the diverse contexts that are united by the term 'Europe,' by looking into the very corners of this domain and into the shadows cast by its cultural 'centres' Germany, France and the UK.

From a shortlist of potential cases, three have been selected. Significantly, these have been chosen both individually and as a whole. In other words, the first of the examples to be selected has necessarily had a bearing on the subsequent choices. For instance, alongside standing out as an intrinsically interesting case, La Fiambrera appears to be a candidate for indepth study in light of the considerations described above, which then excludes examples such as Ne Pas Plier on the basis of their structural, strategic and geographic similarities.¹² On the other hand, in terms of reflecting the geographical scope of creative social action, Belgrade-based Skart and Danish Superflex offer appealing choices in relation to the Spanish collective La Fiambrera. Furthermore, La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex each work with an array of ambient forms and contexts in ways that show both dissimilarities and overlaps.

While sharing core elements, which are crucial to their description as instances of creative social action, in combination La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex also indicate the diversity and complexity of practices embraced by the term.¹³ Consequently, in constructing an indepth account of each case, the second section of "Looking Closer" offers a penetrating and unique view of each, while also highlighting the richness of creative social action as a whole. Following these

accounts, the third section of chapter 5 briefly aligns the chosen cases with the theoretical perspectives set out in chapter 4 “Crossing Borders,” which paves the way for the focused analysis of aspects of these practices offered in chapter 6 “Asking Questions.”

2: The Cases

La Fiambrera: Tying artistic work to real political and social challenges - not just referring to them - but helping to build them from the inside.¹⁴

La Fiambrera is described as a ‘collective’ “working with social movements, entering into direct contact with political and social problems,” as “halfway between art and activism ... trying to find a balance between both camps.”¹⁵ Since its emergence in Valencia in 1991, this loosely organised group has generally operated in the South Westerly tip of Europe, across Spain, and generated documentary and critical material in its first language, Spanish.¹⁶ However, it is also possible to locate a range of texts written in English, including an essay published in *Variant*, the collective’s essay “Flamenco Singing against Gentrifying Bishops,” which provides an overview and contextualises the group’s work, and its brief statement “Bordergames,” which includes a description of the project of the same name.¹⁷ In addition to such essays, various forms of unpublished material have been incorporated into this study of La Fiambrera, some generously provided by the collective itself.¹⁸ The descriptive account of La Fiambrera’s work provided below draws together the findings of this sustained research into the collective, and paves the way for a more detailed examination of specific aspects of this work in chapter 6.

According to La Fiambrera, the group's name is derived from the Spanish noun *fiambrera*, which loosely translates as lunchbox but more specifically refers to a refillable aluminium food container used by underpaid workers. La Fiambrera states that "the group adopted the name after frequenting gallery openings and finding that they could fill up their fiambreras with food for the week."¹⁹ However, it seems that beyond such explanations the choice of name also succinctly aligns the collective with the everyday and with exploited communities, which effectively synopsis La Fiambrera's practice. Positioning itself as a 'vanishing catalyst,' La Fiambrera rather self-effacingly claims to "just happen to be somewhere" and to just "assume the consequences of being there."²⁰ For this collective, 'assuming the consequences' involves recognising that "there's conflict going on, there are evictions going on, there are nasty things going on."²¹

The conflicts that concern La Fiambrera can be linked to the gentrification of urban areas, and in turn linked to a complex of socio-political structures, encompassing issues such as the globalisation of multinational companies and capitalist discourses, the reification of social processes, the colonisation of imagination, and the disempowerment, silencing, and marginalisation of social groups. The extent and complexity of such conflicts is readily confirmed by numerous studies, ranging from accounts of the gentrification process in specific contexts to critical considerations of gentrification as a global phenomenon.²² Several of La Fiambrera's texts make it clear that the group recognises the complexity and prevalence of these conditions.²³ However, for this collective, addressing the 'barbaric,' 'criminal' and 'violent' monopolisation of public property by institutional power necessitates intervening in these pathogenic socio-political structures as they are played out in the local context.²⁴ That is, La Fiambrera addresses these global issues through interventions within its own neighbourhood.

Policies - not residents - are what generate ghettos and insecurity.¹

Our domain, then, is the urban nexus, the natural expression of collective creativity, capable of subsuming the creative energies that are liberated with the decline of the culture based on individualism.²

La Fiambrera works within neighborhoods such as the Lavapiés barrio of Madrid, which has seen "decades of structural urban and economic problems: social and spatial segregation and exclusion, industrial decay" and unemployment rates exceeding fifty percent. Communities in this barrio have suffered an onslaught of evictions due to government 'social inclusion' initiatives aimed at bringing in more prosperous residents.²⁵ Similarly, communities in the

Alameda district of Seville, where La Fiambrera also works, have suffered the destruction of their socio-cultural identity for more than three decades as part of an ever strengthening process of real estate speculation driven by government initiatives.²⁶ La Fiambrera focuses on creatively transforming such situations, and thereby aims to contribute to the movement towards a better future.²⁷ “For la fiambrera [sic] it has kept being a question of offering weapons to be able to solve, in a fiambrera way, very specific aspects,” which generally involves humorous actions that the group describes as ‘interventions.’²⁸ To some extent, this ‘fiambrera way’ appears to be a practical realisation of Benjamin Shepard’s assertion that “fun and freedom are essential tools for activists working to create a better world.”²⁹

La Fiambrera has often been described as playing creatively with the icons, symbols and representations of insidious power, as a form of subversive parody.³⁰ This strategy is found, for example, in its subversive reuse of representations of power such as an official motto, a public procession and, frequently, public space itself. In fact, the collective’s creative interventions in public ‘conflict zones’ utilise a range of everyday items, such as flamenco music and airport signs, billboards, mottos, dog faeces, video games, picnics and parades, discussions, presentations and public statues. La Fiambrera explains that its use of particular forms is consistently determined by its intimate personal familiarity with the contexts and communities that it works with. According to the collective, the forms that it uses in any given context are simply tools, ‘ways of doing’ that are ‘tactically justifiable’ in a specific arena of conflict.³¹ As Jordi Claramonte makes clear, these tools stimulate debates and actions among communities, and these are the primary political ‘weapons’ against the conflicts in question.

It is evident from several texts that La Fiambrera draws encouragement from the achievements of activist groups, such as the Zapatistas, and strives towards a similarly collective, non-hierarchical approach.³² In short, from La Fiambrera’s perspective, collaboration is ‘decisively important’ to its practice: “collaboration is [the group’s] very way of existence.”³³ The group explains that, collaboration is an essential component of the

process by which a group of people construct the specific conditions for a setting of specific freedom and in doing so free ... a way or a handful of ways of relating, ... a long and fruitful process of interrelation and mutual influence.³⁴

While one writer describes La Fiambrera's practice as involving two types of collaborative alignment, one with the social networks that organise large anti-globalisation events and the other on a local level, the situation appears far more complex than this.³⁵ La Fiambrera has in fact collaborated with a myriad of social and political bodies on both local and global levels, and many in-between. For example, La Fiambrera has worked with social and political agents, ranging from Amnesty International to the radical *Molotov* magazine, for which the collective has generally provided "graphics, communication devices, and direct action tools and equipment."³⁶ In addition, La Fiambrera has entered into numerous collaborative ventures with like-minded activist art groups that share the collective's tactical approach to varying extents, including *®™ark* and *Yomango*, and with members of the *Yes Men*, *Reclaim the Streets* and *Ne Pas Plier*.³⁷ Furthermore, while La Fiambrera has occasionally worked with 'art world' structures and publics, the focus of its collaborative activity is in the streets, "where neighbours are present, and where conflicts can appear ... places where politics might happen."³⁸

La Fiambrera explains its focus on the streets with considerable clarity, stating that it avoids associating itself with 'nice gallery shows,' 'staged experiences' and other types of "cultural 'junk food' that lose the contextualisation and ... articulating depth of the experience."³⁹ Describing these as offering 'tactically unjustifiable' strategies, La Fiambrera has consistently turned to alternatives and collaborated directly with community networks and grassroots organisations, such as squatters' groups and immigrants' advisors, alongside local political networks such as the radical group *Red de Lavapiés* in Madrid and the *Asamblea Vecinal de La Alameda* in Seville.⁴⁰ While La Fiambrera's practice clearly incorporates a range of activities, from developing strategies of graphic communication with social justice campaigns and organisations to constructing gallery-based networking and dissemination opportunities for activist art practices, its priority appears to be on such activities; that is, those that have evolved in collaboration with everyday locales and disenfranchised communities.

Ultimately it is in the streets that power must be dissolved: for the streets where daily life is endured, suffered and eroded, and where power is confronted and fought, must be turned into the domain where daily life is *enjoyed, created and nourished*.³

La Fiambrera's grassroots collaborative activities include a series of responses to Madrid City Council's programme of urban redevelopment in the dilapidated long-neglected barrio of Lavapiés. The thirty-eight streets which make

up the district are narrow, with very low quality housing and hardly any open public spaces, the living conditions are poor and the area is densely populated.⁴¹ Like many such abandoned inner-city districts across the globe, the Lavapies barrio has become home to “gypsies, migrants and other ‘dangerous living’ people.”⁴² Recent research has estimated that around fifty percent of those living in this barrio are from Latin American countries such as Ecuador and Columbia, or of Asian origin, and that many of these are illegal residents.⁴³ However, the majority of these residents are Spain's least popular immigrants, Moroccans. Consequently, as the journalist Jeremy Hazlehurst points out, the Lavapies district “has become a byword in Spain for ‘*multiculturalismo*’ gone pear-shaped. It is certainly no haven of racial harmony and brotherly love.”⁴⁴ In short, the barrio of Lavapies has been characterised by growing numbers of immigrants adding to a population already in a position of severe social exclusion, resulting in a “concentration of socially and economically deprived people,” which “has led the emergence of perceptions of these spaces as dangerous, conflictive and unsafe.”⁴⁵ This perception has been further reinforced by Lavapies’ reputation as a prime location for *okupacion*, or squatting, in Madrid. Significantly, political grassroots groups of many forms are prolifically active throughout Spain, and much of their activity is organised through squatted social centers known as Centro Social Okupado.⁴⁶ Often occupying abandoned buildings such as factories, warehouses and schools, these groups typically see themselves as part of a movement “building a new antagonist subjectivity capable of liberating spaces or territories from the logic of money and its different ramifications.”⁴⁷ The Lavapies barrio has become renown for its large number of these squatted social centres.⁴⁸

By the end of the 1990s, the Lavapies district had been designated an ‘area of preferential renewal’ and became the subject of an Urban Development Programme focused on “restoring the quality of urban life and its environment.”⁴⁹ Since the inception of this programme, La Fiambrera has taken issue with the initiative, which the collective describes as a ‘scheduled degradation’ that centres on the increasing disenfranchisement of already marginalised communities.⁵⁰ As noted above, for La Fiambrera, addressing such disenfranchisement involves working closely with grassroots community groups and political activists. At one point La Fiambrera and its squatted social centre, El Laboratorio, were part of a social “network including some twentysomething organisations all joined to fight the gentrification of Lavapies.”⁵¹ On La Fiambrera’s part, this fight has taken many

forms over the last twenty years. For instance, one of La Fiambrera's typically humorous interventions took issue with the Council's planned misappropriation of one of the last public spaces in the barrio. With a notable lack of open public spaces the authorities had difficulty finding space for building new facilities in order to attract more affluent residents and economically profitable businesses to the barrio.⁵² Under these conditions the Mayor handed a large central piece of public land to the Bishop for it to become a construction site and eventually a highly lucrative piece of real estate belonging to those already in power, rather than fulfilling its potential as a community asset in the hands of local residents.⁵³

One of La Fiambrera's responses to the theft of valuable public land in the Lavapies district provides a succinct example of the group's contextualised satirical tactics. Typically, La Fiambrera's responses have evolved from the collective's familiarity with the locale, with its customs, communities and events. In seeking an effective political and aesthetic tool within that context La Fiambrera discovered that a carnival procession was scheduled to parade through Lavapies. Such processions are fairly common events in the area. However, this procession would include the Mayor and Bishop implicated in the scandal, and it would pass by the disputed public space. La Fiambrera recognised this as an arena that could be intervened in, a political possibility. Further exercising its 'sense for the typology of tactics' the collective developed the 'saeta intervention.' Traditionally a flamenco song, or *saeta*, is sung *a cappella* during such a parade. Typically emanating from a balcony above the crowd, these powerful traditional songs are used to stir up feelings of devotion among those waiting in the streets to greet a procession.⁵⁴ La Fiambrera took up this possibility and worked in collaboration with a neighbour, a flamenco singer. The parade took place. The singer duly delivered the traditional *saeta*, but with a slight alteration of the words so that it succinctly drew the crowd's attention to the dignitaries intended theft of the park. As the collective has noted,

this action was widely commented on ... by the neighbours who had to realise how their barrio was subject to a scheduled degradation and how evictions would soon be following,⁵⁵

According to La Fiambrera, such small satirical interventions lead to greater collaborations:

[The saeta] had a lasting and empowering effect on many of the neighbours ... [who] began the process of organising themselves: discussing the disputed piece of land, and how they would squat it, clean it, and open it to the public ... it was the beginning of many weeks during which they created an illegal summer cinema.⁵⁶

The collective claims that the *saeta* intervention fostered community galvanisation, and as a result of this local residents have generated further initiatives, taken responsibility for these initiatives and continued to represent local interests. According to La Fiambrera, that such intervention “entails the real use of a contagious autonomy in a specific space and structure” is the key point.⁵⁷

Like the Lavapies area of Madrid, the Alameda district of central Seville has been subject to continued degradation in the name of redevelopment initiatives since the late 1990s. In 1999, La Fiambrera began working with various groups involved in the problems of this derelict neighbourhood. As one commentator notes, this was the start of a sustained and fruitful interrelation with the Alameda barrio and its communities, which has generated interventions such as the *Alameda Kit* and *Booths for the Competition of the Body Villardilla Resistance*.⁵⁸ Developed to coincide with a Euromediterranean Conference on Sustainable Cities organised by the Seville City Council, the collective’s *Si 8 Do* intervention offers a further example of its attentiveness to the political and aesthetic nature of a context in developing apposite tactics.⁵⁹ Working with a network of collaborators from the Alameda barrio, La Fiambrera sought something that would coincide with the ironic juxtaposition of a Sustainable Cities conference and the ‘neighbours’ increasing subjection to abandonment and eviction as part of the gentrification process. La Fiambrera identified a cheap yet effective tool for communication and community galvanisation, a counter logo. The search resulted in *Si 8 Do*, meaning “thou have abandoned me,” a direct play on the Council’s official motto, *No 8 Do*, “thou have not abandoned me,” which appeared ubiquitously throughout the city. This distinctive counter logo was reproduced, and distributed through a range of satirical interventions. It appeared, for instance, on small flags placed on every dog faeces found in the streets of La Alameda, drawing attention to the lack of open green public spaces and the Council’s abandonment of the area. In a similarly humorously absurd intervention the counter logo also appeared in a narrow street, Calle Arrayan. This direct action centred on a dangerous crumbling wall, similar to one that had recently fallen and killed several people in another abandoned area of the city. The counter logo was applied to a range of items, including safety helmets

to protect those passing under the wall. A description of these interventions in La Alameda, or of La Fiambreira's work in Lavapiés, is useful in that it indicates the collective's motivations, intentions and contextualised creative tactics. Such descriptions also provide a useful introduction to the translation of the rhetoric surrounding radical activist art into practice. As La Fiambreira states, it is striving to move the theories of writers such as Michel De Certeau beyond glorified abstraction and academic conferences and to articulate them practically.⁶⁰

Skart: asks us to take ourselves a little less seriously and coaches us to grander generosity.⁶¹

During the early stages of the research, the collective known as Skart was encountered through an article published by *In Motion Magazine*, which offered an account of several of the group's projects accompanied by visual material, and suggested that the collective merited further investigation.⁶² Since its formation in 1990, Skart has worked primarily within the city of Belgrade, which, as the Serbian capital, sits at the far western edge of the European Union.⁶³ More recently, the group has begun to develop a more international presence through activities such as its exhibition SKART: On the Origin of Wishes and its 'community-oriented' workshop and installation project, *Mekanika Popular*.⁶⁴ Since its initiation in Klaipeda, Lithuania in 2004, the latter project has continued to wander through cities in numerous countries including Russia and Latvia, Poland, Croatia and Finland. Consequently, while Skart's first language is Serbian, with a little persistence and tenacity websites offering pertinent material can be found, some relatively bilingual.⁶⁵ In addition, Skart's work appears to a greater or lesser extent in several texts published in English, such as Annika Salomonsson's essay "Art Action Group Speaks to the World: Humble Artists Create Touching Work on the Trials of Humanity" and a brief account published in *NYFA Current*, which contains visual material and project details.⁶⁶ While much of this published material is relatively limited and generally descriptive, like La Fiambreira, Skart has generously contributed unpublished material to this research and responded to personal communication.⁶⁷ This material has been crucial to the construction of the following

account of the collective's practice, which moves through the descriptive and introductory and then ventures into the territory of critical engagement in preparation for analysis of aspects of this practice in chapter 6.

Like La Fiambrera, Skart works within a penumbral territory that incorporates art and grassroots activism. One writer has described Skart's practice as "combining visual art, performance, poetry, architecture, design, music, and social activism."⁶⁸ However, this description gives little insight into the nature of Skart's work. The collective itself offers more elaborate descriptions of its work, as "unpredictable permanent conflict-dialogue armed with poetry/design/music/social activism" for example.⁶⁹ Elsewhere, Skart provides a more succinct interpretation of this practice as "street samizdat/samodat [self-production/self-distribution] actions," which seems to allude to its focus on seemingly meaningless dimensions of the everyday and discarded materials.⁷⁰ Meaning 'scraps' in Serbian, the name 'Skart' itself aligns the group's activity with the overlooked and seemingly useless, with the detritus of everyday life. This choice of name not only underscores the group's centralisation of the everyday in a material sense, its recycling of materials such as cardboard and string; it also conveys something of the group's critical engagement with the unseen or unquestioned structures of the life-world. To some extent, Stevo Zigon acknowledges this in his suggestion that Skart's practice manifests "the poetry of nothingness" and that the group works with an 'aesthetics of modesty.'⁷¹ However, it is more clearly asserted in Sophie Hope's observation that Skart's "poetry is pragmatic and [its] aesthetic is communal."⁷² In essence, for Skart everyday scraps are "a tool to create [a] network where people can express their opinion, their position towards the world they live," and, as Skart confirms, these tools are intended to "draw attention towards what people would otherwise not notice."⁷³ In other words, Skart's practice not only focuses on 'destroying the mystery which is around 'art work' and how 'artists' work, but also on destroying myths that are all around us, created by media and society.'⁷⁴

To be a citizen does not mean merely to live in society, but to transform it. If I transform the clay into a statue, I become a sculptor; ... if I transform our society into something better for us all, I become a citizen.⁴

Skart summarises its malleable form of 'self-made culture' as a series of attempts to 'critically communicate.'⁷⁵ This rich and diverse anti-mythical critical communication appears to be a practical manifestation of a 'post-issue' type of activism.⁷⁶ Recognising the interconnectedness of ecological, social, and political

issues, of the personal and the social, Skart's "various [self-made] skills, initiatives and rebellions" consistently draw attention to seemingly diverse pathogenic social conditions.⁷⁷ For example, the group has taken up structural pathogens ranging across consumerism, international conflict, 'humanitarian violence,' and the 'cultural monopoly of the metropolis.'⁷⁸ Significantly, as with La Fiambrera's interventions, Skart's actions are intended to offer not only a critique of structural deficiencies but also a contribution to the creation of a better world. As Skart has noted, "the thing is to start changes, to start moving things."⁷⁹ Furthermore, like La Fiambrera, while Skart focuses on local conditions that expose the operation of these structures within the everyday it also acknowledges that these structural deficiencies are global phenomena.

Permit for the Free Walk in all Directions (1997) provides a succinct example of Skart's engagement with structural failings on a local level. This action was intended to raise questions regarding civil liberties in a specific context, the politically tumultuous Belgrade.⁸⁰ In fact, the self-made, rubber-stamped cardboard *Permit* was developed in response to mass demonstrations, which erupted throughout Yugoslavia after electoral irregularities in November 1996 and called for the removal of Slobodan Milosevic's party from government.⁸¹ These protests against the anti-democratic actions of those in power, or as one reporter put it, against "the disrespect of the voters' decisions," prompted further repression of public dissent in the form of a siege of the city by the authorities.⁸² Eventually, 20,000 police militia in full riot uniform cordoned off streets in an attempt to prevent continued protesting, and Skart moved among the barricades offering the *Permit* and utilising a strategy of ironic and humorous socio-political integration that has permeated its work.

Skart's earliest attempts to 'start moving things,' such as *Skart Wishes You a Nice Day* (1990), coincided with a turn towards the grassroots resistance strategies that John Jordan describes as 'serious play.'

Hidden from the official history of this period is the fact that many of the popular uprisings against the Soviet state were catalysed by groups of radical cultural workers. The revolutions in Eastern Europe were ignited not only by the big names that we know, Vaclav Havel, Charter 77, Polish Solidarity etc. but by a new wave of playful protests ...

this ... is a fantastic illustration of how history forgets (conveniently) that its often the small radical cultural acts of audacity and imagination that light the spark that pushes even the biggest empires over the edge.⁸³

An almost bewildering pluralism of movements ... articulate[ing] a new style, and thus ... chang[ing] the social ... environment ... this opposition never took itself, nor the regime, too seriously ... from the perspective of grassroots social movements we can look in a new way at the revolutions of 1989.⁵

Skart Wishes You a Nice Day was the group's response to its immediate conditions and involved a series of innocuous messages disseminated throughout Belgrade using radio broadcasts and posters on a weekly basis over the period of a year. Significantly, these messages and posters did not simply protest pathogenic conditions but issued what Skart succinctly describes as a call to take personal responsibility, not only in the face of crises, such as political turmoil and social upheaval, but as a part of everyday routines and interactions.⁸⁴ The collective elaborates on this description, suggesting that such actions are part of a "strategy of small steps," which is intended to stimulate greater attention to the need to take responsibility and action in the face of structural weaknesses.⁸⁵ That is, *Skart* is not concerned with raising awareness or generating fear through disseminating its socio-political critique, but specifically with stimulating a capacity for self-criticism, which the collective argues is the only route to 'direct responsibility:'

If you are self-critical enough you will find your own responsibility for the things which are happening to you and further away ... criticism towards your reality, towards politics, towards your own life. ... to start to initiate a critical position that was our aim.⁸⁶

Direct responsibility appears to be a significant issue for *Skart*. Rather curiously echoing La Fiambrera's *Si 8 Do*, *Skart's Your Shit - Your Responsibility* (2000-present) humorously focuses attention on

the need for a nation's populace to understand and think critically about their government's actions. In this sense, governmental 'baggage' is equated with dogshit (with an underwhelmingly triumphant flag placed in it) that's merely left on city streets by *Skart* for someone else to clean up.⁸⁷

Your Shit—Your Responsibility has involved actions that *Skart* describes as a form of 'civil disobedience,' placing flags in dog faeces and distributing associated stickers and posters on the streets of numerous cities, including Belgrade, Brussels, and Baden Baden.⁸⁸ According to *Skart* changing the world begins with taking personal responsibility and recognising the role this plays in relation to larger issues.⁸⁹ Consequently, the collective often concentrates attention on personal feelings, whether the group's or others, as a reflection of larger social issues. This

aspect of Skart's practice is exemplified in actions such as *Sadness* (1992-4). According to Skart this action was a defiant declaration of everyday sadness in the face of Serbia's ongoing political tumult, it "realised an underlying whisper in the background of the general hollering."⁹⁰ Through its amplification of such whispers, Skart attempts to instigate critical communication and generate "a kind of new openness and new consciousness."⁹¹ While making such esoteric claims, the group appears to be careful of associating its work with any ideological dogmatism that may lead to prescriptive assertion of the form of such 'new' 'consciousness' and 'openness.'⁹²

Although this group generally works in a specific context and with particular communities, in terms of process Skart inserts itself in the world in numerous ways. As Salomonsson explains, Skart's work includes graphic design for a range of events and organisations, the production of posters and slogan-stickers, radio broadcasts, performances, workshops and numerous other activities.⁹³ For Skart, city streets and radio waves are not the only public spaces that offer possibilities for sharing its concerns and stimulating critical discourse and personal responsibility. While La Fiambrera occasionally 'finds itself' interacting within the institutions of the art world, Skart appears to actively court a relationship with such institutions. For example, alongside contributing to the third version of the pan-European biennial Manifesta (2000), which as Jan Verwoert has noted is explicitly political rather than part of the mainstream art world, Skart has also taken part in numerous international group exhibitions of a more conventional nature.⁹⁴ This dimension of the collective's activity has involved presenting both remnants of actions and works developed specifically for the venue in question.⁹⁵

Skart describes its approach as 'a very widespread way of doing things, making the group's activities visible in an art circle, but also in villages and among different social groups.'⁹⁶ On the whole, a particular form of social dynamic is evident across these activities. A version of the 'dialogic aesthetics' described by Grant Kester, or of Nicolas Bourriaud's 'relational aesthetics,' appears to resonate throughout, from 'street-based' actions such as *Sadness* to the residency at Space.⁹⁷ Summarising the latter, one observer focuses on this dialogic and relational dimension:

Skart met friends and new acquaintances to talk about personal thoughts and public woes. These conversations then led to devising short two line rhymes and drawings. Some of the 'embroideries' were made by the people we met, while others we made ourselves in response to the meetings ... [this] included students from the London College of Communication; residents of Dayton Court and Adelaide Court (Hanover in Hackney) and other individual activists, artists and writers.⁹⁸

Wherever Skart's actions have occurred, they appear to have focused on working with others in this way. In other words, Skart consistently enters into dynamic relationships, its practice orientates around involving others in conversations.⁹⁹ Echoing Hope's comment that "conversations are starting points which have no set path," Skart asserts that "result is less important than involvement in process" and seems to focus on starting critical conversations, rather than defining the path they take.¹⁰⁰

As explained above, Skart's *Sadness* offers an interesting example of the way in which this group seeks to stimulate critical conversations that draw on personal experiences and the everyday. As noted, Skart began *Sadness* in response to the experiences that it shared with those living in Belgrade through the slow unravelling of Yugoslavia during the early 1990s.¹⁰¹ While war was not fought directly in Belgrade, it had a deep impact on the city. After several years witnessing ongoing conflict, residents of Belgrade were immersed in a life-world that encompassed "blood-soaked, thundering battlefronts."¹⁰² Residents suffered the consequences of international condemnation as a result of Milosevic's advocacy of fervent nationalism, including NATO bombings and sanctions imposed by the United Nations. Thousands of these residents demonstrated against Milosevic and his regime, but were repeatedly met with suppressive tactics, including tanks deployed in the centre of Belgrade. Faced with such suppression and swayed by the government's messages of denial, residents generally distanced themselves from the reality of the situation. Experiencing this detachment, Skart saw a "new (worse) system of values" developing in this "time of silence and fear," of "anger, hysteria, and confusion."¹⁰³ Consequently, the group "endeavoured to ... draw the last remaining traces of thought that still had not sunk into dismal and hopeless everyday life routine:" *Sadness* was shared with the residents of Belgrade.¹⁰⁴

The source of art is in the life of a people.⁶

Sadness indicates Skart's early approach to drawing out everyday communal experiences in unexpected ways. Made from discarded cardboard, these little 'books' resembling lost-and-found tags, attend to valuable elements of the everyday that are similarly discarded. These books were produced on a weekly basis over a year, each containing poems written by Skart, such as *The Sadness of Potential Friendship*. Skart then distributed *Sadness* by leaving the books in public places, such as markets, giving them away to passers-by on the streets, mailing them to various Belgrade residents, and reading the poems every week on Belgrade radio.¹⁰⁵ Although some writers, such as Eloise de Leon, focus their attention on the materiality of these little objects, the group's writing makes it clear that *Sadness* was intended to stimulate 'critical communication' among Belgrade residents, to 'punctuate the looming hopelessness' shared with its neighbours.¹⁰⁶ As Hope explains, Skart's *Sadness* is a manifestation of the group's general strategy:

The contradictions, mistakes and fervor in all our lives ... are captured and thrown back at us to contemplate. It is about finding the poetic in everyday speech and turning this into something special. Embracing the misunderstandings, faux pas and absurdities of everyday life are sometimes fruitful meeting points for people to come together and share a joke. It is these moments that make Skart smile as they remind us that we are all fragile, naïve and uncontrollable.¹⁰⁷

The focal point of actions such as *Sadness* is evidently not the physical objects produced, but the potential for deconstructing experiences and for voicing opinions, for neighbours "sharing ideas about society."¹⁰⁸ If attention is to be given to the objects that Skart is responsible for producing, these are best described, to use the collective's words, as "warning objects ... as the first level of irritation/incitation/communication."¹⁰⁹

How do we create an alternative emotional landscape?⁷

In the main, Skart's work can be described as a shared process of facing and dealing with aspects of daily life, which the group sees as essential to moving towards a more just and sustainable social structure. Skart's response to these 'everyday' conditions has been ongoing and developed through a range of strategies. For example, in 1997 the group began distributing small mass-produced paper 'coupons' for necessities such as fear and orgasm, as part of the 'street action' *Additional Survival Coupons*. These 'coupons' have been given away at other people's exhibitions, they have also been distributed in person in suburban areas such as Beli Potok, which is home to a large number of refugees created by the conflicts, at village fairs, on the streets of Belgrade, through the mail system, in

queues for necessities such as oil and bread, on “makeshift street stalls, after cinematic screenings” and at political rallies.¹¹⁰ While these interpersonal but fleeting distribution strategies echo those of the earlier *Sadness*, it is important to note that many of Skart’s actions have given equal, if not more, attention to establishing sustained and intimate relationships with other Belgrade residents; the group’s second music collective, *Proba* (2006) meaning ‘rehearsal,’ provides an interesting example of this.

Described by Skart as a series of ‘open rehearsals,’ *Proba* is not in fact a series of isolated events but a long-term process of working with small and equally committed communities.¹¹¹ The collective that forms *Proba* has ‘performed’ on numerous occasions, for example, sharing the four-minute piece *Working Hours* at a public cinema in Belgrade as part of International Human Rights Day (2008).¹¹² Skart explains how such self-directed activity on the part of the choir began with several groups engaging with the collective and preparing a repertoire of Yugoslavian songs from the 1940s and ‘50s, with themes of patriotism and of rebuilding the state. This early repertoire was presented in the derelict and abandoned public spaces of a society desperately chasing capitalism, as a multi-layered action intended to

re-voke a spirit of optimism in our devastated society, and also remind people that socialism had a lot of good things, not only bad as the new fashion of ‘first accumulation of capital’ was telling us. At that time, after a very hard decade we were hoping that our state will go on some other way than embracing neo-liberal capitalism so fast.¹¹³

Skart also explains that when it initially formed, “the choir was singing those post-revolutionary songs, but many of the members didn’t know why.” However, the rehearsals involved intense meetings and discussions, which “resulted in a repertoire created by members of the choir.”¹¹⁴ In this sense, it appears that Skart’s practice is largely driven by intuition, and by its ‘collaborators.’ Skart’s attention appears to be firmly directed at ‘doing something’ rather than achieving specific outcomes. In fact, Skart is relatively candid regarding its tendency to work with processes that it does not fully understand, claiming that it is not fully aware of the terrain in which it works and therefore unable to tell if it does achieve these hoped-for outcomes.¹¹⁵

It is necessary only for the good man [sic] to do nothing for evil to triumph.⁸

Superflex: Depending on needs and situations, depending on the interest expressed in a project from the outside, different people with other motivations will be involved.¹¹⁶

The research project initially encountered Superflex through the catalogue for the Ecovention exhibition (2002).¹¹⁷ On further exploration it quickly became apparent that since its formation in 1993 this collective has generated a relative wealth of accessible information and documentation. This ranges from brief reviews in the art press, such as Octavio Zaya's "Don't Waste Waste," to the group's comprehensive website, which offers information on its projects alongside visual material and a useful collation of articles, publications and features.¹¹⁸ The website includes interviews, such as "An exchange between Asa Nacking and Superflex" (1998), texts focusing on particular projects, such as *Supergas*, and papers examining this practice in considerable depth, such as Barbara Steiner's "Radical Democracy, Acknowledging the Complexities and Contingencies" (1999) and Will Bradley's "Superflex/Counter-strike/Self-organise" (2003).¹¹⁹ Furthermore, this group has maintained a fairly conventional presence within the art world through photographic and video-documentation of its processes, which has been shown in exhibitions such as Ecovention.¹²⁰ Superflex has also appeared in several publications in addition to the Ecovention catalogue mentioned above; a brief paragraph on the group is included in Ted Purves' *What We Want is Free* (2005) and, in *Remarks on Interventive Tendencies: Meetings between Different Economies in Contemporary Art* (2000), the development expert and rights activist Birgitte Feiring discusses *Supergas*.¹²¹ In combination, the wealth of resources available provide a comprehensive view of Superflex's practice, as offered below in preparation for a more detailed examination of specific aspects of this work in chapter 6.¹²²

In unison with La Fiambrera and Skart, Superflex has consistently described its work as a 'tool'.¹²³ As Jessica Ingram suggests, in Superflex's case these tools "are either designed to create an opportunity to engage people in discussion, or exist to enhance social or ecological productivity."¹²⁴ However, Sue Spaid notes that "only a fraction of Superflex's work addresses ecological concerns, although all of [Superflex's] work engages communities in social issues."¹²⁵ Superflex adds to this, claiming that its work is a manifestation of a "desire to

introduce real economic relations into art and conduct concrete social interventions.”¹²⁶ While such statements set out Superflex’s aims and motivations in rather vague terms, and to some extent pivot around the division of issues into economic, social and ecological categories, they do collectively confirm that critique and change are at the centre of the group’s practice. Steiner adds to this, suggesting that “to this end, [Superflex] make as much use of their aesthetic proficiency as of their social commitment.”¹²⁷ Superflex reiterates and expands on this description stating that,

[Superflex has] chosen to refer to [its] artistic activity as socio-economic integration. The reason [Superflex] work[s] within art is because of the possibilities it offers - a space in which to experiment, free from the bonds of convention.”¹²⁸

In Superflex’s practice “socio-economic integration” appears to take the form of exploring the social side of material production, to critique conventional and hegemonic strategies and experiment with alternative forms of production, specifically those valuing its social and individual dimensions.

Superflex explains that it aims to ‘enhance social or ecological productivity’ on both local and global levels, and that it seeks to do this by drawing attention to, and offering alternatives to the pathogenic, oppressive and exploitative economic system perpetuated by capitalism.¹²⁹ Steiner offers a corresponding interpretation, describing Superflex’s projects as primarily investigations of “communicative processes in which power, hegemony, assertion and oppression ... become evident.”¹³⁰ Bradley summarises this practice as revolving around

the related ideas of self-organisation and what [Superflex] describe as counter-economic strategies ... in Superflex terms [this] means a community organising itself independently of existing state or corporate structures, and often, but not necessarily, in opposition to them ... decisions are made by the group as a whole, there is no hierarchy, and any organisational structure is open and representative, existing only to implement community decisions.”¹³¹

As Superflex puts it, ‘working within the social structure, the group not only presents a product, but also offers ideas on social and aesthetic function.’¹³² In essence, this appears to focus on notions of ‘development.’ Discussing conventional development organisations, Superflex states:

On a basic level the organizations are working for fundamental humanistic ideals that are hard to argue against. Ideals that expose the image of what the dominant cultures, the ‘aid-givers,’ want the world to look like ... The goal of the ‘donors’ in the classical aid-giving scenario is to raise the quality of life among the ‘recipients’

by providing a road, a school or some other amenity. Quality of life is, however, measured by Western or European values and norms and does not always work in a new context. ... Many Africans talk about wanting to kick out all aid organizations, saying that they undermine creativity and initiative and thereby create victimized people.¹³³

Shaping alternatives to these dominant notions of development appears to underpin the majority of Superflex's projects, such as *Free Beer* (2005-present), which is "free in the sense of freedom, not in the sense of free beer," *Outsourcing* (2005-present) and *Free Shop* (2003-present), alongside a broader concern that "in the future there will be a need to redefine some of our fundamental economic laws."¹³⁴

There is nothing 'natural' about our current economic arrangements. They have been consciously designed to achieve a simple objective: growth. But growth is not making us happier, it is creating dysfunctional and unequal societies, and if it continues will make large parts of the planet unfit for human habitation ... We need to do things differently, and soon.⁹

While, as Bradley notes, eye catching objects such as the bright orange biogas units of Superflex's *Supergas* (1996-present) seem to play a pivotal role in the work, this can be rather misleading.¹³⁵ As noted in relation to Skart's practice, focusing on the objects themselves gives a rather limited view of Superflex's work, which extends beyond objects such as the production of the biogas unit, as one collaborator in the *Supergas* project explains:

The *Supergas* project challenges development and it raises the discussion to some kind of measure of communication on development, because they are not just creating a bio-gas system, they are also communicating their experiences in the process, which is the fun part for me ... They deal with different expectations, desires and images, also with parts of our imagination.¹³⁶

The same collaborator notes that, "it seems that all of Superflex's projects challenge everybody including themselves."¹³⁷ Another observer expands on this;

Various parties – individuals or groups – enter the scene with specific interests and fight to assert them. ... Superflex's projects might not only lead to a greater sensibility for the existence of ideological discourses, they mirror contradictions and contentions and show that an individual entering this field has always already been defined through other discourses and practices.¹³⁸

As these statements suggest, it is not the products themselves that are at the centre of Superflex's work, but communication and imagination, and the possibility that stimulation of these valuable faculties might "change the world just a little bit."¹³⁹ On closer examination, it becomes clear that the crucial aspects of this practice are the discussions, shifts in thinking and visions arising around the processes of production and

Successful transition to a new economy in which people and the earth have a higher priority than financial return will require a restructuring of institutions and governance frameworks; changes in values and behaviour; hard decisions; and decisive actions on the part of individuals, communities, civil society, firms and governments throughout the world.¹⁰

distribution involved in projects such as *Supergas* or Superflex's small-issue CDs and downloadable MP3 tracks.¹⁴⁰

Superflex's *Superchannel* venture provides an insight in to the group's focus on social processes as an aesthetic and political medium, and a succinct example of its reuse, or reorientation, of existing communicative strategies. *Superchannel* (1999-present) was initiated in Copenhagen and has since expanded to include a further twenty-seven instances of the project, which is primarily an open access broadcasting studio "using cheap, existing technology and software."¹⁴¹ Describing the first manifestation of *Superchannel*, Steiner notes that this live internet television channel "was open to anyone interested ... broadcasting time could be booked directly in the studio or via the internet," and Bradley remarks that it was "designed to be used by anyone with access to an ordinary computer, a video camera and an internet connection."¹⁴²

As a whole, whether in Copenhagen, Chiangmai (2002), Morocco (2002) or elsewhere, these studios have provided diverse communities with a centre for discussion, listening, debate and gathering. For instance, when a badly run down Liverpool tower block was due for 'remodelling' and more than one hundred occupants faced seemingly inevitable dispersal, the residents' primary concern was to keep the community together.¹⁴³ In response,

Superchannel provided a forum for community members to meet discuss, and create their individual and collective identities. The tenants were in control of the programming ... anyone [could] access to watch or to create a show and a platform for speech and interaction.¹⁴⁴

In short, Superflex initiated an internet television channel run by the tenants of Coronation Court, Liverpool, or as the group explains,

[It involved] tenants in producing shows about their lives, their homes and their community for global broadcast - from debates about the future of high-rise living ... campaigns for tenant rights to tea dances. More importantly than this, the *Superchannel* presents residents with a set of new media tools with which to maintain and develop their community links and to influence decision-making about their future.¹⁴⁵

In fact, as with other manifestations of *Superchannel*, the work with Coronation Court's residents has not only involved sharing a range of 'practical' tools such as

'research, camera and computer skills, publicity and presentation strategies, and studio management' but also discussion and argument around pertinent subjects.¹⁴⁶ For example, one weekly show involved lively discussion "looking at issues such as rent increases, resident participation and technology, landlords, demolition, the built environment, high rise living, regeneration and beans on toast."¹⁴⁷ According to Charles Esche,

the major effect of *Superchannel* in Coronation Court has been to build a stronger sense of community in the building. This is extraordinarily encouraging. The complexities of both internal and external communication seem to be addressed in a single project.¹⁴⁸

This is expanded on by another observer, who describes how each instance of *Superchannel*

can then be taken over and put into operation – by whoever wants to do so. ... The resulting scenarios, a constantly changing succession of possibilities, are then continued as long as the interest remains alive.¹⁴⁹

In engaging with communities, and engaging communities in discourse, Superflex appears to retain not only a commitment to grassroots self-determination, but also to drawing out points of contention and initiating the exploration of differences. Alongside this, Superflex highlights the need to engage with the discourses of environmentalism, social justice and development on a localised level, rather than in abstract globalised terms. Furthermore, Superflex states that such exploration on a local, or even individual, level is the starting point for wider social changes, that it values "the individual as a point of departure from which to exert influence on a broader scale."¹⁵⁰ The possible breadth of that influence is succinctly indicted by Bradley;

Against the passive consumption of corporate programming [*Superchannel*] offers plenty of other possibilities: two-way communication, shows made by people whose motivation isn't necessarily money, the internet used as a local, community network, a new tool for activists of all kinds ... with the *Superchannel* concept and software currently being developed as a commercial proposition, the hope is that others will take up the idea and replicate it. It's a neat idea that maybe the future of TV might not be just as something everybody watches, but something everybody does.¹⁵¹

This emphasis on shaping possibilities through discourse and pragmatic engagement has led Superflex to draw on multiple strategies in order to involve a

The terms of the deal 'that you didn't do things for yourself, the council did it all for you' led to an erosion of responsibility and personal investment, and of purpose, independence and confidence.¹¹

wide range of individuals and organisations. For example, as previously noted, *Superchannel* attracted various local communities to contribute through discussion, listening and organisation. In the case of Coronation Court, this involved Superflex becoming part of communities comprising of residents and their advocates, working with a programmer, Sean Treadway, and entering into a partnership with the Liverpool Housing Action Trust. In addition, “certain people from various disciplines were specifically invited to take part” in the project.¹⁵² In the case of *Supergas*, Superflex worked collaboratively with African and Danish engineers, designers, development agencies and families living in Tanzania, while *Guarana Power* involved Danish university students, guarana farmers in the Amazon and Superflex working together.¹⁵³ In fact, examination of the majority of Superflex’s projects reveals that they are largely dependent on co-operation with quite diverse ‘experts,’ each bringing specific interests and values to the respective project, and, as mentioned above, the juxtaposition throws each back into questioning that ‘expertise.’

In pursuit of its aims, Superflex appears to focus on overturning the deeply embedded worldviews that permeate institutions and organisations. This extends from environmental and development organisations, as described above, to the institution of art. As Bradley explains, Superflex embraces “the idea of the art world itself as a tool that ... can be used to serve diverse ends far beyond the traditional system of galleries, collectors, dealers and museums.”¹⁵⁴ Bradley expands on this.

The Superflex philosophy is one in which art itself is a tool, not just for contemplation or aesthetic experiment, but for direct social empowerment. They use the freedom that the art world offers - the freedom to work with ideas in their raw state - as a starting point. They use the financial resources, the locations, the collaborators that the art world gives them access to in order to develop ... projects which then take on a life of their own, in the hands of others.¹⁵⁵

There has never been a time in history when more of our ‘culture’ was as ‘owned’ as it is now. And yet there has never been a time when the concentration of power to control the uses of culture has been as unquestioningly accepted as it is now.¹²

Using the resources made available by the art world Superflex has exhibited documentary material relating to *Supergas* across Europe, and

tested alternative strategies, such as a meeting organized in conjunction with an exhibition in Chicago that was intended to create a dialogue about the biogas system within that specific art environment. [Superflex’s] idea was that the audience would feel that they would want to take the project further and try out new paths.¹⁵⁶

For Superflex, these resources appear to offer a means to undermine the very thinking that underpins such institutional structures: to challenge notions of authorship, ownership and development, to question the nature of art, and to nurture 'participants rather than audiences' and expanded consciousness rather than contemplation.¹⁵⁷

There is clearly a dimension of Superflex's practice that is reliant on its ability to use the mechanisms of institutions and conventional organisations to subversive effect. This is evident, for example, in its formation of a company, Supergas Ltd, with the aim of developing its innovative biogas system and distributing it internationally. Superflex claims that wide distribution of these units, which convert faecal waste into 'clean' energy, has the potential to "reduce deforestation, pollution and a range of health problems."¹⁵⁸ In essence, Superflex depends on its, and others,' ability to use these processes to overturn normative values and dominant ways of thinking. As one commentator puts it, they have "managed to trade finger pointing for humour."¹⁵⁹ In fact, it appears that, as with Skart and La Fiambrera,

Making best use of social, environmental and economic resources to deliver sustainable social justice: the fair and equitable distribution of natural, social and economic resources between people, countries and generations.¹³

a sense of humour is also an important part of [Superflex's] approach, and it may be that this sensibility wields the most political agency where the collective understands the capacity to change things through the lightness of play.¹⁶⁰

According to another writer, Superflex's work can be summarised as 'Greenpeace staging Fluxus-style events,' which suggests that this work may have considerable political potential: at least according to some theories of radical social change.¹⁶¹

3: Basically, it is a question of what art is capable of doing.¹⁶²

As Steiner notes, Superflex's practice is of a 'complex and contingent' type, as are La Fiambrera and Skart's. Consequently, moving beyond glib comments or simple descriptions, to critically examine this work in order to understand its contribution to revolutionary social changes is a demanding task.¹⁶³ As suggested

in chapter 4, "Crossing Borders," such critical engagement necessarily involves unpacking some aspects of this malleable and complex work. As the above accounts confirm, Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex's respective attempts to instigate social change may differ in some ways, but they are in essence intimately connected. Fundamentally, these practices are united by what can be described as a form of 'post-issue' critique of existing social conditions: to put it briefly, La Fiambrera focuses its attention on power relationships and social diss- or miss-placement; Skart on the marginalisation of everyday personal experiences, power relationships and consumerism; and Superflex on economic and social relations, alongside notions of productivity and development.¹⁶⁴ La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex are also linked by their intention to creatively address these conditions and thereby contribute to a movement towards a more just and sustainable world. It seems that this hopeful combination of critique and work towards a better future can be summarised in one word, utopianism.

If utopianism is taken to mean critique of current social conditions, and the imagination of a better society then the characteristic appears to be easily identified in the work of Superflex, La Fiambrera and Skart. For example, La Fiambrera's *Si 8 Do* and interventions in the Lavapies barrio have had a specific focus; unequal power relations as manifest in an inner-city district subject to assault by developers and gentrifiers. Driven by critique of these inequalities, the collective has worked closely with various existent grass roots campaigns and communities. According to La Fiambrera, the aim is to draw attention to these inequalities in order to challenge and change them.¹⁶⁵ From the collective's writing it is also clear that, the changes sought in these specific instances are intimately linked to their wider aims. Shattering the discourses of neo-liberalism and globalisation, and the attendant power groups, on an intimate everyday level can, it is anticipated, have powerful consequences: a better world.¹⁶⁶ Strikingly similar comments can be made regarding Skart and Superflex. As explained above, Skart largely works within a context underpinned by economic strain, social and political marginalisation, social unrest, and overtly corrupt systems. In defiant response, Skart turns its attention to the mundane, the everyday, to the value and power of grassroots community and 'innerbeing.' In this way, Skart also issues a challenge to communities and individuals, to change these conditions and contribute to a more just and equitable future. Clearly, these groups are driven by a form of utopian thinking. However, in light of the array of utopianisms identified in chapter 4, and their links with certain

worldviews, it seems important to go beyond simply noting that these practices have utopian aims and motivations, and to consider the way in which utopianism plays out in their work.

Turning attention to the strategies used by Superflex, La Fiambrera and Skart, it appears that each of these groups prioritises the creation of opportunities to engage individuals and communities in discussion, reflection, critique and action. Steiner summarises this in her claim that “Superflex's work is not utopian but emancipatory in the sense of ‘radical democracy.’”¹⁶⁷ However, while she indicates the centrality of certain forms of participatory engagement, Steiner seems to overlook the ways in which utopianism can be intimately linked with radically democratic participation. In other words, recognising a sense of utopianism at play here does not necessarily preclude looking for radical forms of participation, in fact it becomes necessary when considering transformative types of utopianism. As chapter 4 has demonstrated, there are grounds for bringing a critical perspective to bear on ‘participatory’ practices: several theorists of social participation assert that ‘taking part’ has ample potential to reinforce the worldviews and values of the already powerful, of existing pathogenic systems. In short, there is in fact a spectrum of participations, some more democratic and transformative, others reinforcing existing conditions through group dynamics, coercive strategies or naivety, for instance.

To some extent, La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex appear to be aware of the critical discourses that have developed around ‘inclusive’ or ‘participatory’ practices. For example, La Fiambrera notes that participation is “one of those worn out words,” and claims that it keeps “one critical eye on its relationship with ... [the] widespread tendency to claim an ethereal and un-localisable ‘community,’” to construct “relationship[s] of service and temporary assistance.”¹⁶⁸ La Fiambrera claims that, in contrast to these tendencies, the process of engaging young migrants in discussing how their environment and expectatives [sic] are organised leads these ‘collaborators’ to “become more autonomous in terms of being able to think about their situation and aims.”¹⁶⁹ Hope identifies a correlative prioritisation of certain types of collaborative relationship by Skart:

collaboration in this case is not a fluffy, passive, worthy word. It can be interpreted as openness to difference where conflicting viewpoints are listened to and shared. It seems that in the process of Skart's work, this is something they are trying to highlight and share.¹⁷⁰

Steiner explains how Superflex's "starting point is a heterogeneous, complex society:"

When they assemble not only the project and development team, but also the users, they take into account the specific interests of individual groups, their different opportunities for articulation, their interests and projections.¹⁷¹

Such statements highlight the way in which each of these practices focuses on certain types of participatory process, seeing this as appropriate to their aims. However, it seems that closer examination of the processes by which these groups share their utopianism and value-orientation with others is necessary if their contribution to sustainable social change is to be fully understood. In other words, it is necessary to question works such as *Si 8 Do*, *Proba*, *Additional Survival Coupons*, *Superchannel* and the Lavapies project, asking questions about their participatory processes, and thereby the values they are contributing to the social landscape.

As indicated in the accounts above, Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrera's motivations and aims lead them to value specific qualities. Essentially, the values at the core of these practices are an alternative to those perpetuated by dominant worldviews: works such as *Si 8 Do*, *Free Shop* and *Sadness* look towards changing social conditions through the nurturing of these alternative values. Consequently, indepth examination of the value-bases motivating and determining these practices, and the way in which they are mediated, seems crucial to any insight into La Fiambrera, Superflex and Skart's contribution to radical social change. In addition, as explained in chapter 4, such examination also directs attention to the means by which these practices are evaluated. Quite appropriately each group appears, at least in part, to focus on autonomous activity among those it works with as evidence of its contribution to social transformation: Superflex places considerable value on 'self-organising;' this is reiterated by Skart and emphasised in La Fiambrera's assertion that its aim is to "increase and articulate both our autonomy and our collaborators," which it claims is "the most important result."¹⁷² However, although such statements may suggest otherwise, critical exploration of these practices is not a simple task, largely because it involves a radical expansion of critical

perspectives, as chapter 4 explains. In other words, there is a need to look beyond the rhetoric and explore aspects of these practices in greater depth, using an apposite set of critical tools: to ask, in terms of social change, do these practices really work?

6: Asking Questions

1: Wanting [these practices] to be right [revolutionary] is not enough. If we want them to be right, we must try to understand, criticise and strengthen the theoretical and practical foundation of what they are doing.¹

Having described the practices of Skart, La Fiambra and Superflex in the previous chapter, the thesis now turns attention to investigating these cases of creative social action in more depth. “Asking Questions” undertakes this analysis with a view to ascertaining their capacity to contribute to sustainable societal transformation. As chapter 4 “Crossing Borders” has shown, revolutionary social evolution requires coherent grassroots communities, with alternative values and utopian hope at their core. With this perspective on social transformation in mind, the thesis argues that understanding creative social action’s contribution to the process of revolution calls for a critical focus on specific qualities: the forms of utopianism and participation this practice nurtures and the values it propagates. Extending the material presented in chapters 4 and 5, “WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?” now analyses these aspects of creative social action as a basis for furthering understanding of this practice and strengthening its foundations.

“Asking Questions” uses the qualitative indicators set out in chapter 4 to unpack the work of Skart, Superflex and La Fiambra. Alongside strengthening practice and developing discourse in a critical direction, this offers an opportunity to highlight some of the merits, possibilities and limitations that emerge from viewing these practices through this particular set of lenses. Consequently, the last section of chapter 6 offers a brief reflection on both aspects; on the use of these lenses as a means to expose qualities at the heart of Skart, Superflex and La Fiambra, and on these practices’ contribution to sustainable social changes. In both instances, the

findings are then taken up, elaborated and related to the field of creative social action as a whole in chapter 7 “Enjoying the View.”

With the appropriate questions to hand, it appears possible to embark on an investigation of creative social action from which conclusions regarding its contribution to sustainable social change can be drawn and then contributed to the ‘permanent conference.’² As its title suggests, “Asking Questions” seeks to pursue this investigation in considerable depth. It not only poses those questions introduced in chapter 4 but also expands on them. In short, chapter 6 brings Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex together in a rich and indepth discussion that moves through three aspects of their practice: utopianism, participation and value-orientation. While chapter 6 separates these areas, discussing them in sections 2, 3 and 4 respectively, this is for pragmatic reasons; as chapter 4 has shown, they are in fact intricately intertwined areas.

2: An imageless utopianism laced with passion and spirit [?]³

A shared sense of utopianism, in the sense of criticism of current conditions and a conviction that things can be better, is evidently a fundamental component of creative social action. For example, Mejor Vida Corporation (MVC) articulately conveys its aim to prompt critique of “the dilemmas of the capitalist socio-economic system,” and its belief that a better world is possible.⁴ In short, MVC focuses on disrupting the taken-for-granted nature of the present, in radical and often humorous ways, and on releasing the imaginative faculties to shape future possibilities. This echoes across the terrain, as a form of utopianism articulated with particular force in protagonists’ statements. A similarly critical engagement with the present and hopeful view of a better future permeates, for example, PLATFORM’s position paper for a recent conference. Here PLATFORM describes its work as driven by a “vision of using creativity to transform the society we live in; a belief in every individual’s innate power to contribute to this process.”⁵

Such statements suggest that creative social action focuses on taking its utopian thinking beyond rhetoric and into the everyday, with the intention of nurturing utopianism as a transformative force. This is evident in the work of both MVC and PLATFORM. For instance, PLATFORM's experimental *Critical Walks in the City*, or 'rolling discussions,' are contingent community-based interventions that focus on exercising the potentiality of imaginal thought within the everyday.⁶ These practices appear to exercise the "simple manipulation of everyday encounters, disrupting conditioned reality ... re-present[ing] reality while accusing it" advocated by Herbert Marcuse. Casual engagement with these practices suggests that this could be an 'open' utopianism, a radical, imaginal bottom-up form of utopianism. However, ascertaining the extent to which these practices exercise the 'iconoclastic' form of utopianism, which theorists such as Rebecca Solnit and John Holloway position as crucial to sustainable social transformation, involves a deeper examination.

Exploring creative social action's utopianism is a complex matter. This involves going beyond a casual or advocative engagement, beyond taking statements and rhetoric at face value; it requires a critical framework. As chapter 4 has shown, the work of scholars such as Solnit and Holloway directs attention to a series of questions that can be posed to instances of creative social action in order to explore this utopianism in depth. For example, the question of whether this utopianism is envisaged as ongoing or as reaching a conclusion is raised. Similarly, these theorists draw attention to questions such as the following: whose dream of a better world are these practices following? Are they opening up opportunities for the exercise of collective utopian imagining that emerges from those at the grassroots? Consequently, in order to explore the type of utopianism at the heart of creative social action, the following passages take up such questions and apply them to the work of Superflex, La Fiambrera and Skart.

Implementing a perfect world [?]⁷

Asking whether Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex position their utopias as realisable domains or as a driving force for ongoing action and hope offers a useful

starting point in exploring the utopianism underpinning these practices. As indicated in chapter 5, "Looking Closer," each of these practices sees itself as intervening in a web of inequalities and social injustices, and as contributing to sustainable changes in socio-political conditions. However, these practices do not appear to see themselves as bringing about some form of sudden 'new story' revolution or eruption. Nor do they appear concerned with arriving at a utopian destination at some point in the future. Describing its contribution to social transformation as part of "an open and evergoing process," La Fiambrera appears to echo the perspective on 'transformative' utopianism expressed by Tom Moylan and Solnit, that it is perpetual, its "work is never done."⁸ As Skart notes, "facing and dealing with problems now, taking action" and "some idea about an ideal community in an ideal place in the future" occupy radically different positions on the spectrum of utopian temporalities and ends.⁹ Acknowledging these alternatives, Skart aligns its practice firmly with utopian thinking that involves taking a specific type of action. However, while focusing on realising small changes within the individual and the everyday, Skart also positions its work as contributing to a perpetual rethinking of socio-political norms. In this way, Skart appears to unite revolution in the here-and-now with the gradual evolution of a significantly better future, in a hopeful concatenation that reverberates with the perspectives of several thinkers, such as Ernst Bloch, Joseph Beuys and John Jordan, and merits further investigation.¹⁰

The hopeful pursuit of a better world as an everyday and ongoing task appears to be evident in Skart and La Fiambrera's statements, and in their practices. At first sight, La Fiambrera's creative interventions may give the impression of focusing on specific and relatively limited achievements in the here-and-now,

[La Fiambrera] has become well known in Madrid for we always prepare great meals, we light fires in the park, prepare some enormous barbecues and get our 'morcillas' and 'tocino,' and 'chorizos' ready as a political statement.¹¹

However, closer reading through the lenses developed in chapter 4 reveals that each of these impermanent manifestations is not intended to be an isolated political statement or action but part of a radical socio-political process. For example, the collective's *saeta* intervention in the Lavapiés barrio of Madrid takes the form of a short-term and clearly defined event focused on galvanising resistance to the acquisition of public land by developers and other powerholders. On the other hand, this intervention also forms part of a rich and fluid network of attempts to draw

attention to the complex ways in which social processes are reified and imaginations colonised.¹² In other words, the *saeta* intervention and the meals in the park are in fact interwoven with a myriad of ways in which La Fiambrera's urge to develop alternatives to disempowerment, silencing and marginalisation disrupts the taken-for-granted of the everyday.

Like La Fiambrera, Superflex appears to focus on utopian thinking as a revolutionary *process* and to implement temporary and contingent disruptions of everyday situations as part of an equally ongoing and ephemeral evolutionary-revolutionary process. Examination of an instance of Superflex's practice, such as *Supergas* (1996-present) or *Free Shop* (2003-present), confirms this. For example, *Supergas* appears to respond to a need for 'self-sufficiency in energy,' and to offer a realisable solution that is "concretely relevant to an individual or a group of people."¹³

The [biogas device] produces approx. 4 cubic metres of gas per day from the dung from 2-3 cattle. This is enough for a family of 8-10 members for cooking purposes and to run one gas lamp in the evening.¹⁴

As a biogas engineer explains, this unit works "without any peripheral equipment ... without any supply of energy for control or heating. This [device] is run solely using solar heat" and consequently it offers more than a family's self-sufficient energy:

[it] contribute[s] in various ways to the maintenance of ecological balance. Deforestation, collecting wood and pollution of watercourses with organic waste are avoided.¹⁵

However, *Supergas* also offers something else: "discussion is an important part - the fact that we have an opportunity to enter into a dialogue with people from a variety of divergent positions."¹⁶ As the critic Barbara Steiner indicates in her observation that Superflex "attempts to create conditions for the production of new ways of thinking, acting, speaking and imagining," *Supergas* is intertwined with a wider critique of outdated development paradigms.¹⁷ Essentially, *Supergas* is aligned with

the creation, dissemination and maintenance of alternative models for social and economic organisation, ... counter-economic strategies [as] alternatives to classical capitalist economic organisations that exploit, or have been produced by, the existing global economic system.¹⁸

As one development specialist collaborating in *Supergas* comments, "we tend to forget that we are social and cultural beings. That is one of the reminiscences of the old development paradigm."¹⁹ Evidently, Superflex intends to involve those at

the grassroots in confronting habitual modes of production, and to nurture ongoing reflection on economic, social, cultural and ecological conditions and their complex inter-relations with modes of production in order to effect the development of radical alternatives. It seems that for Skart, Superflex and La Fiambrera, the development of alternatives is always ongoing; these alternatives are temporary contributions to the evolution of an increasingly sustainable future, rather than attempts to definitively determine the shape of that future or provide simplistic solutions. In this sense, the utopianism of these practices appears to correspond with the ever-flowing 'utopian impulse,' described by Fredric Jameson as distinct from the 'utopian programme or realisation.'²⁰

Analysis of some of Superflex, La Fiambrera and Skart's works suggests that their form of utopianism focuses on contributing to a 'continuous articulation,' "a world whose hopefulness lies in its unfinishedness."²¹ Their utopianism appears to offer an alternative to, in Jordan's words, "everything that is fixed hard and rigid with fluidity, constant movement and evolution ... turning hundreds of years of political form and content on its head by putting the means before the ends."²² However, while centralising fluidity and evolutionary processes is clearly an essential characteristic of 'transformative' utopianisms, there also appears to be an inherent danger in 'putting the means before the ends.' The importance of aligning means and ends, rather than positioning them as opposing or mutually exclusive facets of utopianism is raised, for example, in Beuys' notion of *Richtkrafte*, which Heiner Stachelhaus has explained as concerned with "the directional forces of a new society."²³ According to this perspective on radical social change, 'ends' in the form of proposals, models or visions of future possibilities are an essential component of radical utopianism; in offering a focal point for thought, discussion and action, these act as an essential driving force moving evolution-revolution in a sustainable direction.²⁴ Such alignment of ends and means appears to be a crucial aspect of 'transformative' utopianism as it prevents the kind of openness that leads to ineffective deliberation, cynicism or apathy.²⁵ In other words, to paraphrase Ernst Bloch, proposals, models and visions of possibilities are a means of "grasping and affecting the hoped-for-future."²⁶ This suggests that transformative utopianisms are not entirely imageless or devoid of ends, and supports the claim asserted throughout Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini's *Utopia Method Vision: The Use Value of Social Dreaming* (2007), that perpetual utopias may be a transformative force for radical change but this is not always the case.

Utopianism's significance as a revolutionary force is by no means assured by its positioning as a process. In arguing that utopian impulses are not necessarily innate but are equally likely to be constructed by dominant social structures, Ruth Levitas indicates why perpetual utopianism should be considered in greater depth. Levitas suggests that utopianism can arise

as a socially constructed response to an equally constructed gap between the needs and wants generated by a particular society and the satisfactions available to and distributed by it.²⁷

According to Levitas, and theorists who have taken up her argument such as Peter Fitting, in its ability to "nourish the sense that 'something's missing'" utopianism of this type is an essential component of a consumerist society: society is currently being driven forwards on its pathogenic course by a perpetually evolving utopian impulse of this materialist type.²⁸ The difference between this and a radical transformative type of ongoing utopianism, according to Fitting, is that the critical component of the former is directed towards individual circumstances, wants and needs, rather than social totality, ideologies, customs and order.²⁹ Fitting's explanation of this difference is clearly apposite. However, it can be usefully expanded as follows: in the first instance the 'something missing' is defined by the existing system, consequently the 'wants' perpetuate pathogenic value-orientations; in the second instance that 'something missing' is defined by those at the grassroots, is subject to ongoing debate and discussion, and concerns the development of radically different value-orientations. Levitas raises a further point, that echoes Beuys' notion of *Richtkrafte*,

if utopia is hoped for, then it must indeed be set in the future; but if it is merely the expression of desire, or a criticism of existing conditions, then this is not necessary.³⁰

Evidently, while the utopianism centralised by La Fiambrera, Superflex and Skart is of the ongoing type there is a need to question this at a deeper level, to ask who defines the something missing, and whether attention is given to both the here-and-now and the shape that better future might take.

Attempting to export their revolution or inviting others to find their own local version of it [?]³¹

Superflex, La Fiambrera and Skart appear to focus on perpetually opening up social structures, norms and ideologies. However, as the passage above shows, this cannot be taken as evidence of a revolutionary transformative type of utopianism. Writers such as Holloway, Solnit and Patrick Reinsborough show why: revolutionary social change depends on utopian dreams flowing from the individual participant and then through the social body. According to these theorists, sustainable change does not emanate from the state, other power-holders or 'experts,' radical social transformation is driven by permanently evolving utopianisms, which are at their most potent when they are rooted in the innate power of those at the grassroots.³² In light of this, it appears that reflecting on any utopian process should involve considering not only the process of that utopianism, but also the source of its goals. In analysing the nature of the utopianism at the core of La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex, it seems vital to ask how and where this critical awareness and visioning of alternatives is nurtured. In short, whose utopianisms are they?

In their statements and rhetoric, La Fiambrera, Superflex and Skart express a conviction that imagination of alternatives by those at the grassroots plays a primary role in the continual shaping of possible futures. Each group makes it clear that they aim to provoke a shift in consciousness in relation to everyday political and social conditions, and to contribute to the generation of alternative movements shaped *by* specific local constituencies. For example, La Fiambrera suggests that its tactical interventions in the everyday are tenaciously and repeatedly exercised within the community in order to open up avenues of grassroots experimentation and communication. In explaining the *saeta* intervention and the ruined houses contest, the collective expands on this and describes how it intervenes in "places where neighbours are present ... places where tactics can be ... practiced" as a means of initiating "personal and social discovery."³³ As this suggests, La Fiambrera's interventions within Madrid's Lavapiés barrio provide a useful example through which to explore the roots of the utopianisms nurtured by the collective.

La Fiambrera's critical engagement with the systematic marginalisation and disempowerment of communities is shared with other groups and neighbours living at the heart of Madrid and its urban redevelopment programmes.³⁴ In this sense, La Fiambrera explores and details the conditions problematised at this local level as part of a 'contingent community.'³⁵ On the other hand, La Fiambrera appears to propose and pursue relatively specific and clearly defined responses, such as the *saeta* intervention and the ruined houses contest.³⁶ In other words, while these interventions draw on a critical framework that has emerged in direct liaison with those communities and individuals most affected, the utopian images appear to be shaped by La Fiambrera. This seems to diverge from the position taken by writers such as Holloway, Solnit and Reinsborough regarding the need for utopianisms to emerge from those at the grassroots if they are to have transformative power. However, the collective explains this as a tactical manoeuvre that "articulates with other things happening in the neighbourhood," and as a tool for provoking a critical awareness and a shift in consciousness on a personal basis.³⁷

'Glued to the ground' ... our recipe for revolution comes to be ... the rehabilitation of competences ... especially the transformative powers of the people who inhabit this terrain.³⁸

Evidently, from La Fiambrera's perspective these interventions provide the circumstances in which personal utopianisms 'laced with passion and spirit' can arise.³⁹

Closer examination of works such as Skart's *Sadness* and 'perpetuum mobiles,' or Superflex's *Superchannel* and *Supergas* reveals that considerable emphasis is placed on utopian impulses coursing through the individual. In each case, the 'tool' for nurturing utopianisms appears to be open dialogic situations.⁴⁰ For example, Skart's focus is on creating a "network where people can express their opinion, their position towards the world they live," and where "result is less important than involvement in process."⁴¹ Asa Nacking echoes this in her observation that,

one of [Superflex's] most noticeable characteristics is its socializing effect. This is a type of art that wants to bring people together and to increase understanding for each other and for our own situation.⁴²

'Discussion partner' Troels Degen Johansson identifies the same focus: he explains, Superflex "seeks precisely to 'make things happen' by establishing and 'staging' a variety of relations between individual human 'agents.'"⁴³ Noting this relational

dimension Will Bradley, co-editor of *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader* (2007) describes this tool as,

Self-organisation, [which] in Superflex terms, means a community organising itself independently of existing state or corporate structures. ... One characteristic of this ... is that any decisions are made by the group as a whole. There is no hierarchy, and any organisational structure is open and representative, existing only to implement community decisions.⁴⁴

It also seems worth noting here, that in denoting each of its interventions as 'ongoing,' Superflex appears to reaffirm the centrality of openness, in terms of each work's conclusion and in terms of who determines its evolution. On this note, Nacking has posed the following to Superflex,

Our own time is characterized by failed utopias. Even so, we want to retain faith in the future and find new ways to develop. Your project is positive proof of this. Is it possible to describe your project as a do-it-yourself utopia on a small scale, a utopia which is available to the individual?

To which the collective replies, "yes ... we do not wish to impose a prevailing ideology on people."⁴⁵

Echoing Grant Kester's suggestion that effective practices of this type need to be 'left open,' La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex clearly assert the significance of a certain openness, a radical type of democracy in which all proposals are valuable, in that they are the basis for passionate and playful discussion.⁴⁶ As La Fiambrera puts it when explaining the importance of inclusive collaboration, despite the seemingly fixed nature of interventions such as the ruined houses contest, no one 'right' alternative or idea is offered;

There's no reason why any ideas should be discarded on behalf of some others ... when nobody remembers whose was which idea and all of them just start to get mixed and entangled ... a number of different funny things come to life somehow.⁴⁷

In some sense, such openness to alternatives appears to correspond with the form of activism described by Solnit as

generously, joyously impure, with all the impurity that come from mixing and circulating and stirring things up ... [in which the emphasis shifts] toward a revolution that does not institute its idea of perfection but opens up the freedom for each to participate in inventing the world.⁴⁸

In other words, as Jordan advocates, these practices appear to be "dissolving any notion that we have answers, plans or strategies that are watertight or universal."⁴⁹

Overall, it appears that Skart, Superflex and La Fiambrera centralise dialogic relationships with those at the grassroots, and that these are orientated around openness, radical democracy and equality. It seems that La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex's dialogic gatherings may provide opportunities for grassroots critical discourse to multiply and intensify. The emphasis appears to be on leaving the utopian dreaming of alternative possibilities open to the individual and collective imagination. Analysis of these practices suggests that they generally avoid determining the focal point of the critique themselves, and they appear to inherently value visions of alternatives that emerge from the grassroots. Indeed, there appears to be little sense of ownership or leadership at play in this generation of alternatives. In short, La Fiambrera, Superflex, and Skart seem to focus on scattering 'seeds' of utopianism and providing tools for nurturing them.⁵⁰ Reinsborough expands on Solnit and Jordan's perspectives, to argue that the rather ephemeral vagueness of such approaches to shaping a better world, the lack of certainty, conclusions and leaders, is essential to a utopianism with potential to contribute to revolutionary social transformation.⁵¹

While their rather loose, or open, approach securely binds Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrera to utopianisms of the provisional, pluralistic, bottom-up kind advocated by writers such as Solnit, it also highlights the seeming absence of a 'directional force.' The sense of 'freedom' found here is clearly a significant component of transformative utopianism. However, there also appears to be a sense in which this openness may simply lead to a directionless 'fragmenting individualism,' which Beuys' *Richtkrafte* warns against.⁵² In fact, without any shared ideas of how the hoped-for-future might look, this freedom may, in Peter Fuller's words, at best be

Like the freedom of ... the insane; they can do whatever they like because whatever they do has no effect at all. ... They have every freedom except the one that matters.⁵³

It seems that, in the case of these practices, the 'freedom that matters' is the freedom not only to break open the taken-for-granted of the everyday but also to develop this into transformational utopianism. This depends on that freedom having direction and force, shaped by radical utopian proposals.

An environment in which we can celebrate our potential – and discover the way to a more humane world [?] ⁵⁴

Krishan Kumar succinctly explains utopianism as an awareness that “things need not continue as they are” on both collective and individual levels, and that “out of this defiance, set in a context that proposes an alternative, comes the desire for change and the hope that it may be possible.”⁵⁵ According to several theorists, including Reinsborough, this defiance is most powerful when alternatives are not externally proposed but emerge from the individual.⁵⁶ However, this proposal of alternatives also clearly depends on a forward-looking vision that offers a guide for collective discussion. In the case of La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex, it seems that an alternative value-orientation, is an essential aspect of their utopian visions and may offer this guiding element that stimulates discussion of what shape that ‘better world’ might take. In other words, these groups appear to propose and practice alternatives to the dominant value-orientation in a way that corresponds with Marcuse’s claim that subjective revolution must precede collective revolution, and Reinsborough’s assertion that before change can occur it must first be imagined.⁵⁷ Looking intently at the frameworks La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex provide for dreaming, hoping, questioning and exercising new value-orientations is crucial to understanding the contribution they may make to shaping a radical revolution. In fact, this involves tracing utopian threads through their collective discussion, their proposal, and then further, to their crucial evolution within the individual imagination; exploring what La Fiambrera describe as the “continued, delayed or submerged activism” that depends on the ‘continuous articulation’ of public spaces by “the networks themselves in an immediate future.”⁵⁸ In short, developing the understanding of the way in which alternatives are proposed, the role of those at the grassroots and the alignment of means and utopian ends takes the investigation in to a careful examination of the types of participation at play here.

3: A particular emphasis on grassroots organisations and increased opportunities for deliberation [?]⁵⁹

Working with communities, constituencies, or collaborators is fundamental to La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex's practice; it is equally evident across the field of creative social action.⁶⁰ However, as indicated in chapter 4, subtle differences in the way in which participation in these practices is arranged can have significant impact on its nurturing of radical utopian hope and alternative values on individual and collective levels. While intending to show that "certain human living conditions do not necessarily have to be the way they are" and foster imagination of alternatives, these practices may be: reinforcing those stratifications of power that they seek to overthrow; replicating the bureaucratisation of community activity and dominant value-orientations; and further suppressing the imaginal capacities of those who take part.⁶¹ On the other hand, their strategies of social participation may foster grassroots 'response-ability' and creativity.⁶² As theorists from Sherry R. Arnstein to Frances Cleaver have shown, the difference between the two depends on more than the protagonists' intentions: it extends to small subtle aspects of the framework in which participation occurs, which leaves little doubt regarding the need to investigate the participatory strategies at play in these practices in greater depth.

Concerns regarding a recent turn towards 'participatory' practices have reverberated among a handful of critics concerned with radically expanded forms of art, such as Kester and Nina Felshin. However, as shown in chapter 4, a problematisation of participation has been most evident in fields such as social and urban development.⁶³ Several perspectives articulated within these fields draw attention to the complexity of participation as a subject of investigation. In essence, they set out a spectrum of participations with different potentials for social transformation, and indicate several routes to examining this potential in depth. Consequently, drawing on these perspectives offers a way into considering the sense in which individuals and communities 'take part' in the practices of Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex. In other words, a careful synthesis of these perspectives generates a series of questions; lenses through which the potential for these practices to nurture the most fundamental roots of radical social transformations can be studied. The questions begin with the rather generic, such as what forms of

'participatory' alignment are at play in these practices. Who is involved and how? From this, the consideration moves deeper, into a complex territory led by questions such as how is the taken-for-granted of the everyday overturned and how is power manifest in these participations? As Peter McLaverty and his contributors stress, questioning assumptions and positions regarding participation can only enhance the quality of the ensuing democratic forms.⁶⁴

Non-hierarchical decision-making, decentralised organising, and deep community democracy [?]⁶⁵

Seemingly aware of the need to exercise care in deploying participatory strategies, Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrera identify certain types of participation as antithetical to their values and aspirations. Consequently, they purposefully avoid the more overtly coercive and manipulative types discussed by theorists such as Arnstein, McLaverty and Cleaver. From Cleaver's perspective, participations emanating from institutional sources, specifically those aligned with inclusion policies and urban renewal projects, are generally of the manipulative type, as evident in their tendency to perpetuate questionable assumptions about 'community.'⁶⁶ Articulating similar concerns, La Fiambrera describes such participatory strategies as attempts to colonise and re-appropriate, and suggests that artists involved in such participatory projects often

set themselves up as the true Enlightened leaders of the inexperienced masses, or rather, of the un-identified or over-identified masses: the groups that are worked with have had certain classifications imposed upon them which helps us central Europeans or members of the white middle class feel good in our work in a kind of enlightened populism which serves to clean our social conscience.⁶⁷

Rejecting superficial populism, La Fiambrera is careful to distinguish its strategies of engagement from such approaches, and to avoid what Kester describes as a tendency toward 'aesthetic messianism.' Furthermore, as indicated in the consideration of La Fiambrera's utopianism above, in distancing itself from such positions the group also avoids a related tendency identified by Kester:

From the start [such art work] ... limits and annuls the complexity of the social, the contradictions of the field and the diverse tensions and differences that always arise in the public space ... in detriment of any work or reciprocal benefit for the community or social network with which it has been developed, beyond the mere excuse of 'giving voice' or 'raising consciousness in the subordinate masses.'⁶⁸

As Wayne Clark emphatically agrees, more participation of this anaesthetic, externally imposed and homogenising type is not needed; "if more democratic relations are the goal then new forms of democratic relationships and practice are necessary."⁶⁹

While awareness of the pathogenic nature of certain participatory strategies leads La Fiambrera to avoid institutional frameworks, every now and then Superflex and Skart work within these frameworks.⁷⁰ As the critic Sophie Hope notes, Skart occasionally finds itself in an association with funders anticipating a manipulative or suppressive type of participation, which as Clark suggests often aligns with a 'careerist' agenda.⁷¹

While the language of social inclusion and participation may be used to describe the funding that has enabled Skart's residency to take place, such platforms often evolve in the interest of those supporting the platform ... such platforms are in danger of controlling, framing and suppressing those people they aim to serve. The self-importance of the platform initiators can take over and the sharing of, knowledge and power can be forgotten, collaboration becomes a tokenistic word for using people to further one's own career.⁷²

As Hope indicates, a complex array of potentially suppressive strategies permeates such alignments. On the other hand, while La Fiambrera's stance may suggest greater freedom to employ alternative forms of participation, of the radically democratic and decentralized type, this is not necessarily the case.

According to Hope, sensitivity to the complexities of institutional frameworks enables practices to avoid and manipulate them in sophisticated ways. Hope claims that, despite the institutional emphasis on 'end products,' Skart is able to retain its focus on 'the social encounter that leads to that act of production,' and Skart explains how, regardless of institutional framing, "in the moment, direct communication and direct responsibility are the main subjects of [the] work."⁷³ Such comments indicate a shared belief that Skart moulds the support offered by institutional frameworks to strategies that align with its own values. Similarly

centralising direct communication, Superflex establishes close working relationships with those immersed within such frameworks, as a means to challenge established value-bases. Like Skart, despite the host's expectations, Superflex appears to 'produce' social encounters that align with its own proposals and values, which is evident for example in *Supergas*.⁷⁴ In this way, Skart and Superflex seem to demonstrate ways in which strategies can be used within strategies, to open up more radical forms of participation within any given context.

In striving to evade 'giving voice' to the 'lost masses' or perpetuating other anaesthetising strategies of participation, Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex appear to draw on a rich variety of decentralised and radically democratic means of engaging with others. The extent of this variation is clearly manifest in their development of a multiplicity of contexts in which contingent communities gather; picnics, discussion groups and poetry workshops, to mention a few. John Hailey's argument that formulaic approaches to participation are a means for imposing external control shed light on the ways in which this incorporation of a wealth of strategies can be seen as further evidence of an alignment with 'new forms of democratic relationships' and radical social change.⁷⁵ Holloway and Reinsborough elucidate this perspective, arguing that such variability can be taken to indicate something other than a lack of consistency: it can also signal a sensitivity to the problems of formulaic participatory strategies, and an impetus to foster alternative strategies that enable new spaces for deliberation and galvanisation among contingent communities. It seems that strategic inconsistency *is* the alternative, and La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex appear to reflect this in opening up a range of participations that are intrinsically aligned with particular groups and frameworks, rather than adopting a formulaic approach. Indeed, in each case, these practices appear to consistently reinvigorate rather than annul the complexity of the social.

Like Hailey, Holloway and Reinsborough, Cleaver asserts that, in the main, current approaches to participation do not allow for complexity, and that this not only perpetuates strategies of power and control but also marginalises the complexity inherent in social praxis and within the participants themselves.⁷⁶ As Hope explains,

The desire to create a smooth, streamlined, cohesive service, product or platform can sometimes be at the expense of taking the consequences of inviting participation seriously.⁷⁷

Drawing on Foucauldian theories of power, Uma Kothari elaborates on the tendency to systematically stifle such complexity, and its consequences. She argues that, in the case of participatory development strategies, it is often not a matter of failing to allow for the complexity inherent in democratic practices, but of strategically masking these complexities. According to Kothari, the challenging, messy and unmanageable aspects of local knowledge are often routinely 'cleaned up,' effectively marginalised⁷⁸ As Cleaver and Steiner explain, acknowledging and fostering this complexity is essential for practices that aspire to transform.

Radical democracy demands that we acknowledge difference – the particular, the multiple, the heterogeneous – in effect, everything that has been excluded by the concept of Man in the abstract ... A new 'common sense' is necessary; one which would transform the identity of different groups so that the demands of each group could be articulated with those of others according to the principle of democratic equivalence.⁷⁹

As Steiner asserts, articulating a messy cacophony of heterogonous positions is an essential aspect of the development of new and radically democratic forms of participation.⁸⁰ As suggested above, this openness and valuing of complexity in the social domain appears to be a fundamental quality of the participations offered by Skart, Superflex and La Fiambra.

Drawing on John Stuart Mill's seminal work, theorists such as Clark and McLaverty argue that to be meaningful social participation should be ongoing. However, alongside writers such as Hope, they also expand on this, arguing that radical non-hierarchical participation not only takes 'time, patience and continuity' but also depends on participants becoming their own producers.⁸¹ Hope identifies these qualities in Skart's work, particularly the choirs, or 'perpetuum mobiles.' In explaining the long-term and indeterminate nature of its participatory processes, the collective refer to the same examples, noting how the *Horkeskart* group has

held concerts all across Serbia, as well as prepared a tour of primary schools and cooperatives in Montenegro. ... During the last years of their work, the members of this 'perpetuum mobile' started to compose, organise appearances, hold lectures and conduct by themselves.⁸²

Clearly, Skart places considerable importance on nurturing an environment that is conducive to an ongoing, personal and active form of taking part. Autonomous achievements of this nature are given particular significance by critics such as Hope, who notes

a successful outcome of their work, then, is when Skart are no longer needed ... when people can learn, laugh and share their own experiences, politics and ideologies through such acts as poetry, embroidery and design.⁸³

While such observations indicate that Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrera involve those taking part in negotiating, co-ordinating, fundraising and decision-making for instance, there appears to be something more than simply fostering complexity and 'taking part' running through these practices.

The non-hierarchical participations of Skart, Superflex and La Fiambrera appear to acknowledge a pertinent point that Jordan has eloquently raised: positions such as 'activist' or 'artist' bring with them divisions and hierarchical relations, and thereby perpetuate pathogenic values.

The term activist ... makes people who work on social change issues into experts, separating them from the rest of society. Activists become specialists in rebellion and the transformation of life ... [this] assumes other people aren't doing anything to change their lives and that it's our responsibility as "The Activist" to act on their behalf. While Activists have the monopoly on social transformation, Artists have the monopoly on creativity, both roles continue the unhealthy division of labour and specialism that our culture requires to separate people from each other and to stop us being self-reliant.⁸⁴

Indeed, 'leadership' and fixed roles are problematic in this context. Recognition of this appears to underpin La Fiambrera, Superflex and Skart's general insistence that all those participating are power-holders and play a significant role in determining discussions and projects. On the other hand, as shown above, the utopian dimension of these practices requires a directional force; if participation is to go beyond offering opportunities to adapt to roles such as co-ordinator, it must also offer guidance and direction. From this perspective, Skart, Superflex and La Fiambrera seem to play an interesting role in their own participations, as do their participants. That is, multiple flexible and complex roles appear to co-exist. For instance, La Fiambrera invites others to take part in its practice while also participating in the worlds of others; at times, the collective is an almost invisible participant and at others, it takes responsibility or guides the process. Such comments are also apposite to the work of Skart and Superflex. In a sense, these groups take the role of 'response-able participants.'⁸⁵ That is, they work *with* others, with flexibility and an ability to recognise when it is appropriate to lead, to steer or to disappear, which perhaps comes close to aligning the 'democratic equivalence' discussed by Steiner and Beuysian notions of 'directional forces.'

Several theorists expand the discussion around roles played within participatory strategies, by suggesting that transformational participation depends not only on how communities are engaged, but also on who takes part. On this subject, Clark argues that strategies involving the co-option of 'handpicked worthies' tend to annul any transformative potential that a participatory strategy may hold. He identifies engaging with the 'already converted' as having similar consequences. On the other hand, Kester asserts that participatory processes are most effective if they involve "a community that is already politically coherent," which implies that, at the very least, the participants are already converted.⁸⁶ Ian Hunter and Miwon Kwon echo Kester's assertion.⁸⁷ Clearly, the question of who takes part manifests a level of complexity that corresponds with that demonstrated in relation to other facets of participation. As noted above, Superflex's *Supergas* engages those involved with particular types of organisations, who could be considered worthies or already converted, while *Free Shop* embraces seemingly random passers-by. Likewise, participants in the work of Skart and La Fiambrera include: those randomly encountered; those selected for their expertise, in a traditional sense; those choosing to participate according to their own interests; and those choosing to participate in one thing only to encounter something completely unexpected. Analysis of Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrera's practices suggests that this list could be endlessly expanded.⁸⁸

The participatory strategies put to use by La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex appear to manifest several shared tendencies. These can be summarised as a focus on reinvigorating the complexity of the social within a multiplicity of existent contexts rather than relying on formulaic approaches. In other words, they place significant value on fluid participations that are heterogeneous, complex and indeterminate in terms of strategies, roles, durations, contexts and participants. Together, these appear to be core characteristics of Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex's participatory processes, which suggest that a transformative type of participation is at play here. However, there is another dimension of participation that underpins this transformational potential, which has yet to be considered in detail here.

The emphasis placed on 'taking part' as a processes of active personal engagement in the formulation and negotiation of creative proposals corresponds

with Peter McLaverty's observation that individuals learn how to become active citizens through participation in such forums.⁸⁹ However, as suggested above the focus here is on more than shaping an active citizenry able to participate in an existing social structure. Consequently, the questions posed by theorists Heiko Henkel and Roderick Stirrat concerning the quality of participatory practices add another dimension to this exploration: what are people empowered for? What powers are participants encouraged to exercise?⁹⁰ Analysis suggests that these practices focus on nurturing participant's power to transform social conditions, which is essentially the inner power to hope and to experience utopian imaginings, and the power to share this in the constitution of contingent communities. In this, Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex seem to share Holloway and Reinsborough's conviction, that each participant has an innate power to contribute to processes of radical social change. However, as Marcuse pertinently stated, and Gablik has reiterated, unless revolt reaches into "the infrastructure of our longings and needs" social change will remain self-defeating.⁹¹ Clearly, there are many ways in which participation can overtly, or covertly, stifle the deeply embedded stirrings of such revolutionary shifts and thereby maintain the status quo. In order to reach into these infrastructures, practices must find ways of disrupting participants' habitual, conditioned, normative patterns of action and thought.

Creat[ing] a new world by subverting all stereotypes, daring imaginations to expand their limits, turning the present world upside down, if only for a moment [?]⁹²

Evidently, participation in the projects of Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex is intended to involve experiencing a complex and meaningful process in a way that allows that experience to reach deep into collective and individual psyches, and to have a powerful, lasting impact. However, providing the conditions in which utopian imaginings and value shifts can be experienced on an individual level is not enough, developing the tools is not enough: this subtle shift depends primarily on participants valuing these conditions and tools.⁹³ As Reinsborough argues, this requires overcoming a system that is both structural and 'inside us;' socio-cultural norms oppress on an internal level.⁹⁴ As noted above, this system anaesthetises

individual's power to hope and imagine, and it subverts utopianism, or as Jordan puts it, "capitalism has hijacked our desires and wants."⁹⁵

Clark points out that, while some participatory practices are driven by admirable aspirations to prioritise equality and democracy, a tendency to replicate the 'participatory' frameworks offered by pathogenic systems restricts them to echoing the repressive and anaesthetic nature of these systems. Clark explores a range of participatory strategies to show how replicating established patterns of participation in social and group dynamics reinforces an anesthetised engagement with the world, rather than fostering the growth of power and utopianism within the individual psyche.⁹⁶ Cooke and Kothari raise similar concerns regarding participations that bolster the interests of the already powerful by providing situations in which normative patterns of behaviour and thinking are replicated.⁹⁷ These perspectives appear to lend support to the argument that individuals are most likely to experience the transformative power of utopianism if they are free, even temporarily, from the norms of social praxis. Benjamin Shepard, Jordan and Reinsborough demonstrate how this is achieved by playful, convivial practices that momentarily overturn the norms of everyday life; new ways of thinking, being and acting can emerge and "participants [are able] to cultivate full confidence in their own creative capacity."⁹⁸ However, despite the compelling assertions of these writers, it is clear that such 'convivial practices' do not always offer opportunities for the exercise of this capacity in a revolutionary sense.

Jordan explains that the carnivalesque has the potential to effect an inversion in which

the foundations of authority are shaken up and flipped around. The unpredictability of carnival with its total subservience to spontaneity, where any individual can shape her environment and transform herself into another being for an hour or a day, ruptures what we perceive to be reality.⁹⁹

The Notes from Nowhere collective similarly celebrates the aesthetic and utopian urges of carnival.

Carnival and revolution have identical goals: to turn the world upside down with joyous abandon and to celebrate our indestructible lust for life ...

In its immediacy, carnival ... reminds us to refuse the idea that revolution is a ready-made permanent blueprint that we wait for ... It gives us a glimpse of what is possible, igniting our imagination, our belief in utopia.¹⁰⁰

On the other hand, as this collective point out, capitalism has also hijacked the carnival: these opportunities for rupture are frequently impotent spectacles, “specialist performances watched by spectators – with police lines and barriers placed between the parade and audience.” As the collective puts it, “consumption and corporate sponsorship has taken over from the creativity and spontaneity ... carnival under capitalism has lost its vitality.”¹⁰¹ In fact, rupturing reality ‘for an hour or a day’ and temporarily ‘celebrating a lust for life’ within clearly specified ready-made arenas has traditionally proved to be a useful tool for maintaining the status quo. Historically, many dominant structures have used carnival as a tool for rendering potentially transformative energies harmless. The Feast of Fools and Mardi Gras, and the carnaval parades of Rio de Janeiro and Brazil’s Bahia state to name a few.¹⁰² By enabling the release of these energies, while separating them from daily life, such events affect a displaced cathartic release that effectively anesthetises. As ethnologist Ivan Lozica explains, in the main, “carnival freedom is strictly controlled. In fact, it is only a show of freedom” and “the time of carnival is a detached time.” In short, carnival offers

a discharge of energy, a catharsis similar to that of the theatre: after relieving the pressure in the detached, concocted world of the show, the individual returns to reality ... without damaging the ruling structure of society.¹⁰³

The philosopher and cultural critic Umberto Eco has also argued this point.

Carnival can exist only as an authorized transgression ... comedy and carnival are not instances of real transgressions: on the contrary, they represent paramount examples of law reinforcement.¹⁰⁴

However, Eco also asserts how under certain conditions

Carnivalization can act as a revolution ... when an unexpected and nonauthorized carnivalization suddenly occurs in ‘real’ everyday life, it is interpreted as revolution.¹⁰⁵

Evidently, there are complex and multifaceted ways in which internalised mechanisms can be encouraged to suppress revolutionary desires. It seems that, La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex’s strategies of engaging with the everyday can be explored to ascertain whether they offer momentary, fragmentary, accumulative, or intimate ruptures of the everyday. However, it is also clear that such examination may not reveal a great deal about their capacity to affect a rupture through which

individuals are likely to experience the transformative power of their own creative capacities. As Eco points out, normative experiences are not necessarily overturned through any of these strategies, unless they enter into the everyday by an unauthorised and unexpected route.

To some extent, the strategies of Superflex and Skart appear to rely on what theorist David Sloan describes as “a pattern reproduced from the academy – conferences, reading groups and other forms of accumulating and synthesising information.”¹⁰⁶ In other words, they seem to replicate the normative frameworks that Clarke, Cooke and Kothari advocate avoiding. However, in Superflex’s case, these everyday frameworks and patterns of participation, such as gathering in forum-type situations and planning meetings, are used as a means of opening up the everyday experiences of pre-existing groups. In a project such as *Supergas*, Superflex appears to break open those ways of thinking that dominate groups such as development organisations by using its own contribution to the discourse to temporarily rupture an everyday situation. In other words, Superflex enters into a framework with which the ‘participants’ are familiar and in which those ‘participants’ are used to having power, or being the experts, in order to engage coherent and contingent communities in re-valuing their own strategies and values.¹⁰⁷ Like Skart’s rehearsals and workshops, these strategies appear to ‘turn the world upside down’ through quiet infiltration rather than carnivalesque rupture. None-the-less they seem to be relatively effective in challenging internal mechanisms rather than bolstering the ‘interests of the already powerful,’ at least according to several participants in Superflex projects.¹⁰⁸

In the case of La Fiambrera’s ‘experimental wall,’ the collective explains how it worked ‘together with neighbours,’ and how a narrow street and its crumbling wall were identified as a focal point as passers-by “would know what we were talking about more quickly.”¹⁰⁹ It seems that this initiative also involved strategies of participation familiar to those passers-by. While La Fiambrera overtly focuses on avoiding strategies resembling “scholars’ meetings and academic conferences,” interventions such as the ‘experimental wall’ appear to play with participation in usual everyday terms; after all, steering, advising and overseeing those traversing public spaces are strategies by which dominant systems infiltrate the everyday.¹¹⁰ “When anybody went through the street he/she would be asked kindly, on behalf of

the city council, to wear the helmet ... just in case.”¹¹¹ As La Fiambrera points out varied reactions ensued, ‘from obedience to insults,’ until people realised that the encounter was not all it seemed. A similar strategy is evident in La Fiambrera’s ruined houses contest and to some extent in the placement of small logo-bearing flags on every dog faeces as part of *Si & Do*.¹¹² Similarly, in *Free Shop* the intention appears to be that the individual participant is immersed in the patterns of the everyday and is therefore entirely unaware of an imminent rupture in those patterns,

There must be no sign or other means of information communicating that, or at which times, the goods or services in the shop are free of charge. Nor must the concept of Free Shop or the name SUPERFLEX be mentioned during the event.¹¹³

It seems that in working with the habitual participations of familiar everyday situations interventions such as these have the potential to affect radical, unauthorised and small-scale rents in everyday familiar experiences.¹¹⁴ As a result, the normative worldview appears to be shattered; momentarily within the mundane of the everyday ‘reality’ appears to disappear. It seems that surprise, humour and absurdity are frequently a key component of these disruptions of the everyday. As Shepard points out, these are seen as essential tools for those working to create a better world.¹¹⁵

Skart’s work is often fuelled by irony or humour. For example, *Permit for the Free Walk in all Directions* (1997) took place within a context of public protest; this intervention incorporated strategies echoing those of the Zapatista and anticipating those of groups such as The Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army. When protesters responded to a police cordon constraining the demonstrations, their strategies of “noise, wit, and good humour” included kissing the police, drawing hearts and flowers on riot shields, arriving in their own ‘uniforms’ and voting on a daily basis for the ‘most beautiful policeman.’¹¹⁶ The Balkan Peace Team International Office reported that

During this time, protesters have used a wide variety of non-violent tactics. These have not been based in any one specific, clearly defined non-violent strategy. They arise, rather, from an atmosphere among the protesters of determined joy. People have channelled their anger at the state into humour and celebration, creating a culture of resistance that the police and the government have not been able to break.¹¹⁷

As the critic Annika Salomonsson notes, Skart’s playfully ironic distribution of the *Permit for the Free Walk in all Directions* among those protesting the police cordon

coincided with “the beginning of a new form of protest,” the emergence of a ‘people’s rebellion carnival.’¹¹⁸ It seems that Skart embraced carnivalesque strategies, as a frame for its work, before such strategies bore any resemblance to an activist ‘strategy;’ at a time when they were *unexpected* ways of taking part, in Eco’s sense.¹¹⁹

La Fiambrera’s *saeta* intervention provides a pertinent example of the breadth of ways in which unauthorised and unexpected participation can happen. As suggested previously, La Fiambrera consistently locates its interventions within conditions of daily life familiar to specific existent communities, and the collective uses the forms found in such contexts as a means to engage with these communities. In the case of the *saeta* intervention, a carnival-type event provided the ready-made form. As Lozica and Eco argue, such events often offer a cathartic release from the structures, habits and norms of the everyday in a way that prevents utopianism from emerging. Had La Fiambrera made a contribution adhering to the ‘strictly controlled freedom’ of this event, it is unlikely to have turned experiences of the event on their head, or to have offered opportunities to exercise imaginal and creative conscious.¹²⁰ However, the *saeta* erupted unexpectedly; participants stopped celebrating to listen in solemn devotion. In its unauthorised and unexpected eruption it appears that this has the potential to counter the potentially anaesthetising effect of the authorised event. Furthermore, had the *saeta* been an isolated event within this normative framework it would be likely to correspond with the authorised event, in the sense of releasing critical energies while separating them from daily life. Consequently, the intervention would risk developing a cynical awareness rather than value shifts and hopeful utopian discourses. In fact this has not been the case, this intervention interweaves with others developed by La Fiambrera, and those initiated by and with ‘neighbours’ in the Lavapies barrio. In repeatedly overturning everyday ready-made forms in unexpected ways, La Fiambrera appears to avoid formulaic and homogenising strategies, while maintaining a directional energy tied to its wider aims of derailing the ‘neo-liberal steamroller’ and challenging the ‘great globalised discourses of the power groups:’ a ‘revolution in the everyday.’ It seems that an approach such as La Fiambrera’s may offer the means to break open the internalised devices that prevent communities and individuals from developing their own utopian resources.

Changes in values ... are notoriously hard to identify – especially as they are happening.¹²¹

Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrera seem to position individual and collective value shifts and utopian visions as the most significant outcome of participation in their work. This corresponds with the value that these groups place on an already existing inherent transformational power, which arises at first within the individual, as a cumulative process, before flowing out into community, as described in depth by Holloway.¹²² A focus on nurturing this flow as a revolutionary force appears to lead La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex to certain types of participatory strategies, which generally appear appropriate to the task. As shown in the passages above, the flow of this radical power, fuelled by utopianism, requires contexts that value complexity, connectivity, and enliven rather than anaesthetise the dynamic landscape of social relations. In addition to depending on a complex web of social conditions and influences, this flow of radical utopian power is equally dependent on the individual. While these conditions and influences can be explored in terms of the participatory strategies at play, this is evidently a difficult task, as demonstrated in the passages above. The difficulties of any such exploration are further compounded by the fact that the effects of any experience are not limited to the results originally intended or anticipated.¹²³ Then, there is no guarantee that such shifts will occur in response to any particular experience; if, and when, they do being small and subconscious they often go unrecognised. As Mark K. Smith notes, such shifts can *only* be felt in ‘atmosphere and in spirit;’ they are in effect intangible, not only to the observer but also to the individual experiencing them.¹²⁴ In addition, these shifts are permanently evolving as the individual’s experiences accumulate and change over time, and they can occur through a complex ‘ripple effect’ rather than as a direct result of a particular experience. In these terms, the value shift sought by Skart, Superflex and La Fiambrera depends primarily on a transformation in essentially invisible cognitive and social behaviour and values, or ‘re-enchantment’ as Suzi Gablik phrases it.¹²⁵ This inevitably raises the question, is it viable to assert any claims regarding the contribution these practice make to sustainable social change? Clearly, Skart, Superflex and La Fiambrera present a challenge to traditional forms of evaluative judgement in many ways.

4: Validation in terms of political aptitude [?]¹²⁶

As chapter 4 “Crossing Borders” has indicated, creative social action presents a range of challenges to those interested in making value judgements regarding its potential to contribute to radical social change. While critics and theorists such as Malcolm Miles, Linda Frye Burnham and Clark rightly propose that evaluation of such practices must incorporate participants’ perspectives, this suggestion barely acknowledges the complexity of this type of participation, its participants and its potential impacts.¹²⁷ For instance, La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex focus on nurturing a certain form of utopian thinking among participants, as contingent communities *and* as individuals, which involves shifts deep within the individual psyche. As noted above, this hoped-for ‘innerwork’ is necessarily non-linear and gradual, frequently delayed, and generally nurtured by a complex interweaving of influences and unrecognised even by the individuals concerned.¹²⁸ Consequently, to a large extent the successes and failures of Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrera are indeterminate and almost always imperceptible. These groups aspire to perpetuate sustainability, response-ability, utopian hopefulness and radically democratic forms of participation as alternatives to currently dominant values; they do not offer easily measurable or conclusive ‘outcomes.’¹²⁹ In fact, these practices direct attention beyond traditional means of evaluation involving measurement and quantification. As explained in chapter 4, the core values underpinning Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex’s centralisation of certain types of utopian thinking and participation call for a correspondingly alternative means of evaluation, not only in the sense of what is evaluated but also in how it is evaluated. In other words, they call for a re-evaluation of evaluative strategies.

Chapter 4 has shown how wider discourses around alternative values and associated evaluative strategies are available that offer a useful starting point for developing a critical framework in relation to the work of Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex. From this starting point, an array of questions comes into view, which can guide an investigation of the connection between the values underpinning this work and the ways in which it is evaluated. How is evaluation currently undertaken, why, when, and who is involved? What is evaluated? Who makes use of the value judgements reached, and how? Such questions lead to an indepth consideration of

the relationship between the value associations of these practices and the evaluative strategies applied to them.

A system of evaluation ... a way of anticipating and measuring the impact of the work [?]¹³⁰

Evidently, multiple evaluative strategies and associated criteria are currently in use in relation to the cases studied here. For instance, at times Superflex and Skart are supported by funding from institutional bodies, and these often bring a particular set of value judgements to bear, in the form of criteria to be met on application or expected outcomes, for example.¹³¹ Overall, these judgements tend to turn attention to quantifiable data and outcomes. For example, as Hope notes in relation to Skart's alignment with institutional bodies, such 'platforms for participation' generally 'evolve in the interest of those supporting the platform,' and the criteria for judging success are similarly bound to these interests.¹³² For instance, as chapter 4 explains, institutions manifest a deeply embedded emphasis on evaluative approaches with a quantitative bias, such as those looking for evidence of success in terms of tangible products at the end of an event, the number of participants in an event or number of visitors to an exhibition. Such criteria are clearly useful for providing results that are easily analysed, and for describing concrete phenomena such as a percentage increase in certain types of visitors or participants, or an increased profile for the institution among the local community. However, such criteria reveal nothing of Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrera's successes in terms of *their* goal, a growth in transformative utopianism directed towards a shift in value-orientations.

It seems that Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex bring their own criteria of success to bear in several ways. At times, these appear to correspond with the means of measurement and quantification dominating institutional frameworks. For example, Nacking asks, "how do you evaluate the biogas project," and Superflex responds,

we already have an investor and have sought to patent the product. We are in touch with an agricultural research institute in Vietnam who is interested in establishing a test facility there. The continued existence of the project is highly dependent on finding partners. It is obvious that we are not able to become installation engineers, so we have to focus on supervision and management.”¹³³

This implies a focus on financial investment and continued production of the object, the biogas unit. Such statements suggest that the group’s evaluative strategies do not account for growth in transformative utopianism or shifts in value-orientation. In fact, such statements suggest a tendency to reinforce dominant value-biases by replicating their hierarchies and notions of value. On the other hand, as noted above, Nacking, Johansson and Superflex discuss the importance of less tangible outcomes; primarily, developing discursive relationships within these institutional frameworks, focusing on reflections on dominant values and movements towards alternatives. The group appears to give a certain primacy to such outcomes:

The biogas project has several aspects that may be more or less successful. Discussion is an important part - the fact that [Superflex has] an opportunity to enter into a dialogue with people from a variety of divergent positions. In this situation negative feedback can become an important part of the way the project develops. In that sense, the project may already be termed a success, since it is now part of the public debate.¹³⁴

This gives an insight into the terms in which Superflex determines the success of its work. It seems that evaluative strategies used in relation to Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex need, primarily, to attend to these ‘relational,’ or ‘connective,’ processes and effects.¹³⁵

As shown above, La Fiambrera clearly locates the value of its interventions in the contribution that they make to localised communities setting up autonomous groups and finding ways to work together in order to deal with their immediate problems.¹³⁶ In relation to this, the collective explains in some detail what it looks for in order to make evaluative judgements;

there’s a first level of judgment, one we could call a tactical level. Here what must be considered is the most immediate outcome related to the conflict ... how [La Fiambrera’s] intervention has contributed to change the balance of power, how it might have changed the very terms under which the conflict itself was being understood.¹³⁷

For example, *Si 8 Do* and the interventions in the Lavapies district have both involved working closely with various existent grassroots campaigns and

communities, in order to challenge and change power relations. Consequently, La Fiambrera's primary measure of success appears to be immediate changes in normative relations, behaviour and consciousness as a result of its tactical intervention. The group identifies this in subsequent instances of creative activism undertaken autonomously by participants. For example, the fact that residents of the La Alameda barrio galvanised, organised a media campaign and an "evictions alarm committee," and developed their own tools for intervening in symbols of power, following La Fiambrera's interventions is seen as 'evidence' of success on a 'tactical level.'¹³⁸ Similarly, for Skart, the success of the collaborative *New Embroideries* project is seen in the fact that it "spawned a number of other embroidery projects including an all-male group in Belgrade in 2007 and a women's' group in the same year in Hackney."¹³⁹

Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex clearly evaluate their own practices, using criteria that correspond with what they see as the most valuable aspect of those practices. However, these groups also acknowledge that this is only part of the picture. For example, both Skart and La Fiambrera describe a need to develop these strategies, with the latter stating that it would like to see "the improvement of [its] operational concepts so that [the collective] can apprehend more complex contexts of evaluation."¹⁴⁰ Skart explains how evaluation of its work is generally spontaneous, intuitive, consisting of discussion within the group, which is sometimes extensive and often involves disagreement.¹⁴¹ Echoing La Fiambrera's statement, Skart summarises changes that it would like to make to its evaluative approach, which would involve "creating [a] wider network."

The main change should be to involve more people from other professions ... it is very important to work in groups which are not only artistic; to plan in advance a bit, less improvising ... doing a lot by intuition, spontaneously, ... is nice, but stressful and unpredictable ... and communication might be better; ... more meetings, more discussion, even if it is hard, slow and often difficult work¹⁴²

Significantly, Skart notes that it feels its approach to evaluation could be effectively developed by "experiment[ation] using some other methods, applied by some other groups worldwide."¹⁴³

A set of heuristics to define its use to the communities it serves, what goals the work seeks to achieve [?]¹⁴⁴

With their values and goals clearly defined, each of these practices articulates a commitment to developing evaluative approaches that are appropriate to their value-orientations and aims, alternatives to the dominant approaches. This commitment is manifest in the way that they tend to put evaluative process to work in order to develop their practices, rather than assert their own success. While summative evaluation is evident, as the passages above have shown, Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrera centralise the fact that they not aiming towards an end product, a conclusion to a process or an autonomous entity. Therefore, it seems appropriate that they turn their attention to cumulative reflective strategies, which appear particularly useful for ascertaining how to improve practice; these are frequently undertaken as part of an informal ad-hoc process, often shared with others.¹⁴⁵ In this, these practices appear to pursue a form of ‘reflective practice,’ as described by Donald Schon, or ‘action research,’ which as Wilfred Carr and Stephen Kemmis explain, is orientated firmly towards self-reflective enquiry aimed at improvement and understanding of practices.¹⁴⁶ In fact, generosity and openness to evaluative judgements of the type that can *improve* rather than *prove* is manifest across La Fiambrera, Superflex and Skart’s practices.

Carr and Kemmis explain that action research is characterised by its emphasis on democratic participation, and on evaluative judgements that are shaped by contingent communities.¹⁴⁷ As Ernest Stringer points out, action research involving such communities manifests a particular value-orientation, which appears to correspond with that of Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex.

It is *democratic*, enabling the participation of all people.

It is *equitable*, acknowledging people’s equality of worth.

It is *liberating*, providing freedom from oppressive, debilitating conditions.

It is *life enhancing*, enabling the expression of people’s full human potential.¹⁴⁸

According to Schon, engaging in such processes as a means to exercise new value-orientations nurtures reflective practitioners; individuals not only able to participate but to “understand, guide, influence and manage” transformations.¹⁴⁹ Such statements assert the correspondence between processes such as action

research and cooperative inquiry, and the aims of Superflex, La Fiambrera and Skart.

La Fiambrera, Superflex and Skart appear to pursue numerous perspectives on the quality of their participations, and to assign considerable value to the discourses that arise from bringing these perspectives together. In addition, rather than a 'relatively fixed centre and leadership,' these practices appear to have 'ad hoc reflective centres and leaders' involved in strategies that nurture the expertise and experiences of others. These strategies also seem to incorporate 'feedback loops' that operate in both 'local' and 'universal' terms to provide information about results or effects that enable adjustment of their process.¹⁵⁰ In this use of discourse and feedback, these practices appear to take up an evaluative approach advocated by theorists such as Peter Reason, who expands Schon's work through the idea of 'cooperative inquiry.' That is, as a form of *collaborative* action research. Reason explains this as "research 'with' rather than 'on' people" and it is described elsewhere as action research involving those similarly concerned with or interested in 'understanding the world, developing new and creative ways of looking at things, learning how to act to change things and finding out how to do things better.'¹⁵¹

For Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex, the evaluative judgements that matter appear to draw on the type of collective and cooperative, forward-looking inquiry described by Schon and Reason. This is evident in Skart's work, for example, in the following way; while Skart is occasionally obliged to comply with institution-led evaluative frameworks as a condition of its funding, it also independently seeks feedback from those involved with interventions such as the *New Embroideries* project and the *Horkeskart* project.¹⁵² As Skart explains, this generally takes the form of a messy discursive process:

We discuss a lot about what we have done, and often argue and disagree ... Usually, we ask people involved in the project for opinions, as well as ones who were not involved but know something about it ... Summarizing all opinions, we argue and try to develop ideas further on ... it is hard, slow and often gets stuck.¹⁵³

Significantly, La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex not only turn to such reflective community-based evaluative approaches in order to develop their practices; this also becomes part of the process of nurturing what Schon describes as reflective

practitioners, and Skart describes as 'critical activated collectives.'¹⁵⁴ By engaging communities in qualitative evaluation, through small discussions and focus groups, surveys and interviews and other mechanisms for providing testimonials and comments about what they thought about the program's impact, these groups also bring their goals and processes closer together. Paying close attention to the evaluative strategies favoured by Superflex, La Fiambra and Skart suggests that these approaches focus on qualitative phenomenon revealed through informal observation and discussion: overt shifts in normative patterns of behaviour, power relations and value-orientation. However, in terms of these practices' goals, incorporating participants' perspectives within an evaluative framework appears to have limited use.

As already noted, the hoped-for impacts of these practices, shifts in consciousness and values, and aesthetic enlivening, have an imperceptible esoteric dimension that appears to make any definitive evaluative judgement difficult at best. As Steiner explains, the value shifts to which Superflex, La Fiambra and Skart aspire are

by-products of a very complex, open-ended and uncontrollable action ... of other, partly unplannable and unconscious activities. By their inner character, they are ... created, maintained and renewed in cooperation with all the various participants in a time and place bound activity.¹⁵⁵

Smith draws attention to similar difficulties in his observations that that such outcomes can only be felt in 'atmosphere and in spirit;' they are only to be experienced. These shifts are not overt, and they are not identical for all participants, in fact, they are unique and personal. Solnit expands on this, arguing that such change is the 'hardest to track' due to its 'gradual and subtle' nature.¹⁵⁶ In addition, not only is there a need to consider different measures and different sources of value judgements but also alternative time scales. As the seminal interventionist-theorist Allan Kaprow once pertinently suggested, a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of such expanded practices would require at least ten years distance from it.¹⁵⁷ According to Kaprow, this raises the possibility of exploring impacts in some depth. However, this is not necessarily the case: there is still the question of *how* the anticipated impacts can be assessed. While appropriate strategies for this appear to be available, for example, anthropological studies, tracing readily mappable developments in the lives of specific individuals or small communities, or studies of a psychological nature, it is questionable whether such strategies would prove

satisfactory.¹⁵⁸ La Fiambrera indicates the reasons why in its discussion of differentiated evaluative strategies. The collective suggests that evaluation also involves considering the impact of interventions in the 'longer term' and on a 'broader scale;' also that this not "a question of getting aims completely accomplished; rather it is an open process" that is constantly evolving.¹⁵⁹ In other words, by their very nature, these practices' goals are the antithesis of controllable, containable or definable outcomes; they value openness and complexity, they value messy discourses, and questions rather than answers. This appears to reiterate the importance of centralising these values within any evaluative criteria; the messiness, intangibility and openness of these impacts is a core element of their radical value shift, *these* are valuable qualities and as Smith states "evaluation is not primarily about the counting and measuring of things. It entails valuing."¹⁶⁰

5: It is not about answering fast and sharp, but allowing the uncertainty of not answering at all [?]¹⁶¹

Unpacking key aspects of Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex's practices seems to highlight a persistent uncertainty, and a consequent difficulty in arriving at secure positions from which absolute claims regarding the impact or value of these practices can be made. While the questions pursued throughout this chapter appear to reveal little in terms of conclusive evidence, they do draw attention to the significance of an alternative viewpoint, from which the process of inquiry seems to be of more value than the answers it may lead to. It seems that this process of opening up, and the rich and inherent complexity it reveals, is valuable in itself and should be nurtured rather than negated. As Eleanor Heartney suggests, "at a moment when so much of our cultural and political rhetoric revolves around stark oppositions ... to defend complexity is also to defend our ability to function in a meaningful way in this world."¹⁶² Before looking at this in more detail, section 5 summarises the claims that chapter 6 suggests emerge from a close reading of Superflex, La Fiambrera and Skart's utopianism and participation using the lenses developed through this thesis.

Examination of works such as *Supergas*, *Sadness*, *Si 8 Do* and *Superchannel* seems to reveal a specific form of utopianism at play. As La Fiamberra explains, this is a 'continuous articulation,' which, to use Solnit's words, rejects the "static utopia in favour of the improvisational journey."¹⁶³ In other words, their utopianisms do not proceed towards an endpoint or according to a blueprint, but are improvisational and continuously re-articulated. Furthermore, La Fiamberra, *Superflex* and *Skart* not only focus on articulating and nurturing their own utopianisms, but also the utopian impulses of other individuals, and the social body. This is not a utopianism of the few. Nor is it generated by the dominant system; this is not the 'education of desire' that maintains the present systems, which Levitas identifies in some ongoing utopianisms. Rather, it is a radically democratic utopianism that continually disrupts everyday situations in an ephemeral evolutionary-revolutionary 'negotiation of the present.'¹⁶⁴ In addition, images of an alternative value-orientation accompany this disruptive utopian dreaming and give it a transformative directional force. In short, it seems justified to describe this type of utopianism as 'transformative,' given its radical, imaginal and bottom-up nature.

Such transformative utopianism depends on types of social participation that provide for the reawakening of the power of utopian hopes and aspirations within individuals and communities. Close reading indicates that, between them, *Superflex*, *Skart* and La Fiamberra, use an array of participatory strategies. At times these groups are 'activists,' at others they are 'artists' or 'entrepreneurs.'¹⁶⁵ Sometimes they position themselves as just another part of the discourse and merge into the everyday or into a noisy cacophony of voices. Other times, these groups become 'response-able participants,' generally in order to maintain the directional force of the process. Examination of interventions such as *Free Shop*, *Superchannel*, *Your Shit—Your Responsibility*, *Proba* and the 'ruined houses contest' shows that each involves both positions, disappearing catalyst and response-able participant, to varying extents. Essentially, underpinning these participations is a fluidity and an openness to conflict and complexity, which corresponds with the value-orientation these groups aspire to nurture. These practices clearly call upon themselves and those they encounter to take part in a messy, dynamic permanent critique of current systems and shaping of alternatives, and to exercise alternative values. In addition, to repeat La Fiamberra's expression, these practices are firmly 'glued to the ground,' which might be the workplace, a frame of mind or the street, or a myriad of other everyday contexts with their

attendant norms and customs.¹⁶⁶ Within these contexts each group finds ways of overturning the norms of the everyday, using tactics and tools developed for the purpose. Consequently, Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrera appear to be opening up spaces for radical participation, for experiencing and nurturing the power of imagination and utopian dreaming, for enlivening being. As La Fiambrera replied when asked, what does engagement ... involve for individuals? "Well it may change your life, ha ha ha."¹⁶⁷

Evidently, critically engaging with the participatory and utopian dimensions of Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex, using the indicators and questions mooted in this thesis, can offer close readings of these practices. Using these tools to focus in on particular examples draws attention to aspects of these practices that have a bearing on their contribution to radically changing the world, to changing lives, ways of thinking, doing or being. This opens up Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrera's practices to evaluative judgements that correspond with their values. This elucidates a discussion of their capacity to contribute to radical social transformation, which is taken up in chapter 7. "Enjoying the View" considers the threads of utopianism, participation and value-orientation as a whole, and from this draws some conclusions regarding the contribution that Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrera may or may not make to the kinds of social transformations they envisage. Chapter 7 then takes these conclusions further through a wider discussion of practices within the field of creative social action as a whole. However, before moving on to that concluding chapter, attention is returned to the issue raised above regarding value and evaluation. The analysis set out above indicates that the framework used does not account for the most significant impacts in terms of transformative change; it is not able to provide conclusive answers regarding shifts in innerbeing. On the other hand, examining Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrera through these critical lenses reveals, with increasing clarity, that complexity and flexibility not only permeate these practices and strategically resist the formation of such answers, but that these characteristics are inherently valuable in themselves.

Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex appear to have mapped out an excitingly dynamic position for themselves in an attempt to distance themselves from pathogenic systems and to subvert the associated value-orientations. The shifting, durational, unquantifiable nature of these practices corresponds with their motivations and aspirations; to contribute to a radical re-valuing of qualities such as complexity, radical democracy, permanent conference, passion, imagination and hope. This shift begins, as many of the theorists cited in *WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?* argue and La Fiambrera, Superflex and Skart believe, in the individual. Therefore, this may be the most important starting point for the development of a viable and appropriate critical engagement with such practices. However, as suggested above, aesthetic reawakening is a cumulative process of small unintended shifts, usually imperceptible internally or externally. Perhaps, as Kaprow has indicated, critically engaging with creative social action's contribution to revolutionary changes demands a more long-term approach that engages with participants in depth, an approach that would raise a completely new set of questions.¹⁶⁹ On the other hand, considering alternative approaches to evaluating these practices, also raises a more fundamental question, does the value of these practices lie, in part, in the very indemonstrability of their anticipated achievements? Do they demand not only a rethinking of value-bases at play in such critical engagement, but a reconsideration of an issue at the very core of this; the urge to provide answers.

Across the various facets explored here, the practices of Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex turn attention to the value of complexity; as shown, this is fundamental to their utopianism and strategies of participation. In a significant text discussing the alternative values underpinning such work, the political scientist and art critic Mika Hannula reiterates the point made by Beck, Steiner and Cleaver regarding the importance not only of complexity, but of messy, unharmonious, uncontrollable complexity.

Certain values cannot be achieved when pursued directly or consciously ... for example, political contribution and generousness are not things you can order or achieve by straightforward demand or aim. In other words, and moving to the realm of contemporary art, these values are or are not formed in the often uncoordinated interactive process What is essential, these processes always contain a clash of wishes and cultures - and ultimately the risk of failure in them.¹⁷⁰

According to such perspectives, complexity of the uncontrolled type is essential to “various types of alternative ways of being and existing ... of what it means to be with - and to act with and within.”¹⁷¹ Nurturing these alternatives appears to depend on a context of messy complexity and, it seems, valuing failure. Does Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex’s political aptitude, their contribution to social transformation, lie in part in their challenge to the need to talk about notions of success and effectiveness, and that they ask that we exercise that much-derided quality hope? Solnit expands on this,

To hope is to gamble ... It's to bet on the future, on your desires, on the possibility that an open heart and uncertainty is better than gloom and safety. To hope is dangerous, and yet it is the opposite of fear, for to live is to risk.¹⁷²

As Solnit asserts, in matters of radical social transformation there is no promise, no guarantee.¹⁷³ It seems that ‘changing the imagination of change’ involves embracing complexity and failure, and even uncertainty.¹⁷⁴ As discussed in *Do or Die*, a journal that has vocalised the hope of “movements that take action to defend nature, create revolution and re-wild humanity,” ecologists appear to have led the way in this re-valuing of uncertainty.¹⁷⁵ For example, William M. Adams, a conservation and development theorist, draws attention to the resistance among many conservationists to ‘consider letting nature go,’ and argues that this caution is partly about the loss of control.

Much of our conservation is based very precisely on the idea of control. Zero tolerance for wild nature. Wildness must be quarantined ... Kept in its place and made, literally, 'manage-able.'¹⁷⁶

In other words, traditional values permeate the conservationist worldview and prevent it developing a radical or transformative practice.

At worst, it smacks of the hubris of the technocrat, inhabiting an ordered, predictable and empirical universe - the tyranny of the measurable - and a reluctance to admit to uncertainty and doubt - There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your management plan. Not being armed with a plan is to go naked and exposed into the wood.¹⁷⁷

As Beck explains, the ecological movement's exploration of issues of control and uncertainty positions it as a key contributor to the revolutionary terrain. Skart, La Fiambra and Superflex appear to occupy this terrain, to avoid this 'tyranny of the measurable' and to go unarmed, dancing with uncertainty.¹⁷⁸

Jordan points out that, in terms of radical social transformation, "to 'let go' ... [is] the most powerful thing we can do."¹⁷⁹ In turning their backs on notions of purity and perfection, Superflex, Skart and La Fiambra seem to align their practices with this urge to let go, to inhabit a territory that has no need for answers. However, the fundamental uncertainty that accompanies such an approach can also present a challenge to radical transformation:

In a chaotic world people need something to hold onto and something to hold them ... hope is often found in certainty. Not necessarily certainty rooted in a predictable future, but certainty that they are doing the right thing with their lives.¹⁸⁰

Jordan raises a key point here, which echoes Beuys' concerns regarding a directional force; without a rigorous critical framework to offer an element of certainty, those taking part in creative social action may lose hope that they are 'doing the right thing,' and despite its passion and commitment its practices will not succeed in slowly collectively changing the world. Like the value of complexity, this need for both openness and certainty seems to persistently raise its head, and it matters because, as Holloway asserts with some urgency, "change the world we must."¹⁸¹ This leaves us with the question, where do we go from here.

Part Three - Conclusions

7: Enjoying the View

“Enjoying the View” reflects on the study recounted through “WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?” This focuses primarily on the analysis of La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex’s practice set out in chapter 6, “Asking Questions,” which constitutes the first section of this chapter. From this, conclusions are drawn regarding La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex’s contribution to radical social change. The first section of chapter 7 then further asserts the validity of these conclusions. It does so by expanding its discussion to encompass the application of the evaluative tools developed in this study to other instances of creative social action, and to creative social action as a whole. This section also takes up the comments made at the close of chapter 6 regarding the viability and appropriateness of the evaluative approach developed in this thesis; it encompasses a consideration of the use of open questions as evaluative tools for example.

Section two of “Enjoying the View” presents a reflection on the processes and methodologies used during the research project. For example, it turns attention to unanticipated outcomes and possibilities that have emerged from this research. Following on from this, chapter 7 ‘ends’ with a third section, which opens up new vistas and raises further questions. In this way, the closing chapter of “WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?” locates new pathways for investigation of creative social action and other radically expanded art practices, and begins a new journey.

1: The answer to most either/or questions is both ... the question is about negotiating ... not signing up with one and shutting the other out.¹

Identifying co-ordinates that define creative social action, then studying these co-ordinates in order to develop a critical framework appropriate to this practice.²

Through rigorous engagement with a broad range of practices that have been framed as creative social action, the study has identified three core aspects of this practice; its focus on *utopian thinking* and *participatory strategies* as a means to nurture *alternative value-orientations*. These three aspects have then been explored through current discourse in relation to each. Having located pertinent voices, the study then synthesises a range of perspectives to form three evaluative tools, against which creative social action can be evaluated by examining the values reflected in:

- the form of utopianism these practices mediate
- the types of participation they foster
- their evaluative strategies

These qualitative indicators offer a new approach to critical engagement with creative social action; a means of examining the threads that connect its practices, and exploring its contribution to sustainable revolutionary social change.³

As the following passages show, in directing questioning along relevant pathways, these qualitative indicators enable an analytical unpacking of creative social action through three strategic themes. In fact, as chapter 6 has demonstrated, the three qualitative indicators give rise to an array of questions

- In relation to the utopian dimension of creative social action, these questions include:
 - Is the utopianism envisaged as ever-evolving, or as concluding with the implementation of a perfect world?

- Is it actually utopianism - does it focus on critique without giving equal attention to shaping alternatives or does it look forward and work towards alternatives?
 - Who defines the something missing?
 - Whose dream of a better world does this utopianism pursue?
 - Are opportunities opened up for the exercise of utopian imagining among those at the grassroots?
 - How is the taken-for-granted nature of the present disrupted?
- In relation to the participations of creative social action, these questions ask:
 - What types of participatory strategies are used?
 - Do these strategies involve 'non-hierarchical decision-making, decentralised organising and deep community democracy?'⁴
 - Does the approach to participation foster complexity?
 - Who 'takes part' and how?
 - What are the roles of participants?
 - Does this form of participation 'turn the present world upside down' in a way that offers opportunities for 'imaginings to expand their limits?'⁵
 - In relation to the evaluative frameworks applied to creative social action, the questions posed include:
 - What kind of evaluative strategies are applied, and what are their value associations?
 - When and why is evaluation undertaken?
 - What is evaluated?
 - What are the criteria of success and what is used as evidence?
 - Who is involved, and are the perspectives of the grassroots communities engaged in the work sought?
 - Who makes use of the value judgements reached, and how?

Together, these questions focus attention on establishing types and associations rather than absolutes; they are in the main open questions. In other words, they do not lead to a simple 'yes' or 'no.' Rather, in combination, these questions provide the basis for a sharply focused transdisciplinary analysis of themes underpinning Superflex, La Fiambrera and Skart.

The basis of 'either-or' has come to be overshadowed by 'and.'¹

Using this framework to analyse the ways in which selected examples of creative social action contribute to sustainable social changes.⁶

In terms of La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex's utopianism, and the values reflected in this, the questions posed open up a rich area of discussion. Primarily, these questions move discussion from the perspective of 'utopian' as a meaningless, derogative or advocative adjective, and into a consideration of Superflex, La Fiambrera and Skart with reference to a scale of utopianisms. In fact, these questions lead to a much deeper level of exploration. For example, rather than asking whether this utopianism is of an 'imageless' or a 'blueprint' type, the discourse moves on to look into the complex areas beyond such 'either-or' positions. In this instance, the questions have drawn attention to the fact that transformative utopianism is neither imageless nor implementing a blueprint; transformative utopianism makes space for the visions of others to grow, but also offers images of a better future as a driving force for change.

As chapter 6 has shown, Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex appear to give equal attention to critiquing current conditions and shaping sustainable futures, rather than simply focusing on critique and the here-and-now. In other words, while La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex clearly focus on disrupting the taken-for-granted nature of the present in numerous ways, they are also forward looking in that they do seem to offer images of a better world, albeit in rather loose form. In short, the shape of this better world is defined by a particular value-orientation, which, for example, centralises a shift from 'money values' to 'life values.'⁷ While Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrera work towards this alternative future, there seems to be no suggestion that they anticipate a final implementation of a perfect world. Rather, the proposed value-orientation appears to provide the 'directional force' for an ever-evolving process, for evolution-revolution.⁸ In addition, while Superflex, La Fiambrera and Skart offer images of an alternative future delineated by a particular value-orientation, they also create situations that offer opportunities for others to exercise their own utopian imagining. This suggests something of a balance between the groups' images of a better world and those emerging from among participants, and between utopian imaginings as a fundamentally important directional force and an essential part of a *process* that nurtures these alternative

value-orientations. That is, these practices appear to bring together means and ends that correspond in terms of their values. Therefore, it is possible to talk of this as a radical 'transformative' type of utopianism, which is nurtured by and among Skart, Superflex and La Fiambrrera and their participants, and crucial to sustainable revolution.

The second group of questions set out above opens up a discussion of the participatory strategies used by Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrrera, which turns out to be as rich as the discussion of the utopianisms driving these practices. These questions move beyond identifying a single type of participation that might define these practices. They prompt an indepth discussion of the nature and form of participation, which draws attention to complexities rather than offering neat answers. Likewise, these questions push discussion of La Fiambrrera, Superflex and Skart's participatory strategies beyond either-or positions. As the material set out in chapter 6 evidences, the strategies, durations and contexts of La Fiambrrera, Superflex and Skart's participations are varied, and to a large extent constantly shifting. This appears to be a significant point, one that suggests these practices do more than 'shape an active citizenry' able to participate in an existing social structure.⁹ It seems that the participations centralised by these practices might offer the means by which a powerful and transformative utopianism can grow, developing alternative social forms as it does.

When Skart, La Fiambrrera and Superflex's participatory strategies are analysed using the questions above, it becomes clear that their participations are of a bottom-up type, and to some extent non-hierarchical and decentralised. It also becomes clear that Skart, La Fiambrrera and Superflex overturn normative and anesthetising patterns of engagement with the world by using participatory strategies incorporating several characteristics: they tend to be unexpected, unauthorised, ongoing while ever-changing, and enlivening rather than cathartic.¹⁰ Furthermore, the nature of these participatory strategies suggests that Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrrera nurture, rather than nullify, social complexity. As shown in chapter 6, there are several ways in which these practices foster dynamic complexity rather than pursue formulaic approaches. For example, individuals involved in these practices tend to move between a complex range of roles, with distinctions between 'protagonists' and 'participants' often overturned or altogether

subsumed. In short, analysis of these practices shows that they might affect the type of rupture through which individuals engage in radical forms of community democracy and experience the transformative power of their own creative capacities. On a community level, it seems that these strategies do lead to significant changes; communities autonomously developing activities that nurture alternative value-orientations for example. However, on that most fundamental level - overcoming the ways in which socio-cultural norms oppress on an internal level and fostering the growth of power and utopianism within the individual psyche - there is evidently considerable difficulty in ascertaining if any, and what, changes are actually made.¹¹

It seems that the forms of utopianism Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrera nurture and the types of participation involved do reflect the alternative values articulated in their aims and rhetoric. At least, it is possible to conclude this based on the way in which these participations and utopianisms prioritise qualities such as heterogeneity, complexity, indeterminacy, radical democracy, connectivity and fluidity, alongside hopefulness and creativity. As with the utopianisms underpinning Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrera's practice, their participations appear to establish a correspondence between means and ends; they simultaneously aspire to and realise alternative value-orientations. As chapter 4, "Crossing Borders," suggests and chapter 6 confirms, critical discussion of their capacity to affect this value shift must incorporate an evaluative approach that does not replicate the dominant value-biases but recognises value in different places. As John Jordan notes, "it is now the quantitative, monetary measure of value which provides social validation for the doing of people," but the value of practices such as La Fiambrera, Superflex and Skart cannot be effectively measured in these terms.¹²

Exploring Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex through the third set of questions mooted above reveals that these groups are alert to the gap between the values underpinning their practices and the value-biases of orthodox evaluative strategies. As shown in chapter 6, while they occasionally look to traditional means of measuring success, Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrera tend to favour critique of an entirely different kind. Consequently, there is some integrity between the values their practices mediate and the value judgements applied to them. For instance, these practices incorporate ongoing reflective processes rather than pursue

summative judgements. In this, Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex take responsibility for making evaluative judgements into their own hands, and the hands of those participating in the work. This strategy also acknowledges that the immediate and identifiable outcomes of these practices are always part of an ongoing, ephemeral and deeply personal process.

In general terms, the analysis undertaken suggests that La Fiambrera, Superflex and Skart repeatedly draw attention to the potentiality of a value shift, and provide opportunities for new value-orientations to be exercised within the habitual and the everyday. To varying extents, they achieve this by:

- working creatively within normative everyday situations
- overturning everyday ready-made forms in unexpected ways
- prioritising the complex relationship between the individual and the social body
- valuing and nurturing the 'power of doing, of utopian dreaming and aesthetic enlivening'¹³
- maintaining a directional energy throughout an ongoing and radical participatory process
- avoiding formulaic and homogenising strategies of participation
- nurturing complexity
- 'response-able participation.'¹⁴
- pursuing an evolving critical awareness and dialogue around dominant values and their pathogenic prevalence

On the basis of the perspectives synthesised in chapter 4 and the development of this synthesis in chapter 6, these characteristics suggest that Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex could contribute to sustainable revolutionary social transformation. While there are clearly issues to be addressed, specifically in terms of their impact on the individual psyche and how this might be identified, it is nevertheless possible to conclude that the practices in question can contribute to sustainable grassroots social changes.

Shedding new light on the transformative potential of these practices and affecting future activities in this area.¹⁵

Together, the three qualitative indicators generated by this research offer a means of engaging with La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex in considerable depth. In fact, these indicators and their associated questions offer a new type of evaluative framework, one that values messy discourses, openness and complexity. This framework centralises an issue that John Jordan rather succinctly summarises; “Don’t ask me what to do to change the world. Ask yourself what makes you feel alive, because the world needs more people who feel alive.”¹⁶ In other words, this framework recognises ‘aesthetic enlivening’ as a valuable kind of political power that drives sustainable social change, and focuses attention on the ways in which Superflex, La Fiambrera and Skart might make it possible for individuals to experience something beyond the anaesthetising normative patterns of the everyday.¹⁷ While the indicators and questions proposed here do not make it possible to conclude whether value shifts and aesthetic enlivening take place where it matters the most, in the individual psyche, they do focus attention on the likelihood of such shifts and enlivening and take discussion of La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex’s transformative potential into new territories. The evaluative framework proposed here sheds light on Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex from a new perspective, opening up a view not previously explored in detail.

We can pool information about experiences, but never the experiences themselves.²

According to the analysis of La Fiambrera, Superflex and Skart recounted in chapter 6, a response can be formulated to the question: are these practices revolutionary? That is, are they contributing to what John Holloway describes as “revolution with a small ‘r’, rather than Revolution with a capital R?”¹⁸ The answer must be ‘yes,’ in many ways these practices are ‘r’evolutionary. Close reading through the critical lenses developed here reveals that these practices do contribute to the slow, creative, permanent and almost imperceptible process that is sustainable societal transformation. In fact, the analysis adds further weight to the conclusion that these practices contribute to radical grassroots social changes, in that it shows that *they* are not the revolution; Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrera’s revolutionary

When politics leaves the space of boredom and bureaucracy, when resistance becomes joyful and not a sacrifice, then the process of changing the world becomes dangerously infectious.³

force comes in part from their deep engagement with other groups and discourses as part of a continuous and messy shaping of 'contingent communities.'¹⁹

In terms of revolutionary potential, an interesting aspect of these practices has come to light as a result of this study. An emphasis on complexity and response-ability permeates the three aspects of creative social action studied; their utopianism, participatory strategies and value-orientation. This emphasis has presented something of a problem in terms of traditional analyses of La Fiambrera, Superflex and Skart's practices. However, these groups value complexity and flexibility, and these qualities have been shown to be a strength in terms of potential contribution to radical and sustainable social change. Therefore, traditional evaluative strategies are clearly inappropriate: using a fixed set of criteria that provide an orderly body of findings would be inadequate as such criteria are not consistent with the core values of these practices. On the other hand, the critical approach developed here offers such consistency, in that it also values complexity and flexibility. For instance, this approach is not positioned as a fixed or fully resolved framework, and in mooting malleable tools it acknowledges the need to continually re-think and re-negotiate evaluative judgements. In other words, while the lenses developed here cannot be used to confirm that a value shift is affected by the utopian hope coursing through the patterns of participation Superflex, La Fiambrera and Skart offer, they do focus attention on the values and processes at the heart of these practices and allow these to be seen in terms of a certain type of revolutionary movement.

It is far wiser to ask for a question than an answer. When you think you have all the answers, it simply means you have run out of questions.⁴

Beyond their application to the work of La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex, the critical tools developed through this study can make a significant contribution to the field of creative social action as a whole. The indicators and questions have been tested out and can now be usefully applied to other instances of creative social action. While the case studies presented here demonstrate how these indicators and questions provide lenses through which the value and 'success' of instances of creative social action can be viewed, these lenses can be similarly useful in the development of such practices. In other words, alongside validating cases of creative social action these lenses can also reveal aspects of projects and groups that limit their 'r'evolutionary potential, identifying focal points for further development. At the same time, demonstrating an ability to identify 'failure' would

further validate the efficacy of these lenses, alongside indicating ways in which they too could be improved. While this ability to identify groups or projects that 'fail' to meet their aims has not been demonstrated through the case studies presented here, it seems that such demonstration would be assured if an array of cases were given in the same indepth and focused attention as Superflex, Skart and La Fiambrera.

The survey of creative social action undertaken as part of this research, and the understanding of such practices that has been developed, suggests that bringing the evaluative tools set out above to bear on groups such as WochenKlausur, Yomango, Mejor Vida Corporation (MVC), Oda Projesi and PLATFORM will confirm these tools' ability to identify failure. For example, using the lenses developed here to examine WochenKlausur's participatory strategies, which on the surface appear formulaic rather than 'strategically inconsistent,' could show that they are in fact nurturing radical utopian hope and alternative values on individual and collective levels.²⁰ On the other hand, asking questions such as how is the taken-for-granted of the everyday overturned, how is power manifest in these participations and is WochenKlausur a 'response-able participant' would reveal any pertinent weaknesses in those strategies.²¹ Similarly, the questions and indicators set out above offer a means to examine the type of utopianism at play in Oda Projesi's projects. In aligning this work with a spectrum of utopian temporalities and ends, such examination would shed light on a dimension of the group's work that a cursory glance suggests may limit its ability to meet its aims. However, it is clear that realising the potential of the lenses developed here depends on examining such practices in all their complexity, and with the depth of attention that this study has given to the work of Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex.

This study has shown that Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex critically reflect on their own work, and embrace weaknesses as an important evolutionary force. Just as this happens within the cases studied, it is equally clear in practices such as Ala Plastica, Grupo de Arte Callejero and Ne Pas Plier.²² In addition, there is an evident tendency among practitioners to move fluently between groups, and from this discourses are evolving among these reflective communities of practitioners; flexible dialogic networks are forming, tools and experiences are being shared, and questions asked. The significance given to such discursive networks is

evident in Ala Plastica's insistence that it works "in relationship to other transformative arts practitioners," and in Grupo de Arte Callejero's claim that it's "practice is rooted in the cooperation with others."²³ It seems that this may be where "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" could make its most significant contribution to the field; the indicators and questions mooted here can bring a new transdisciplinary critical dimension to these discourses. They can contribute to the development of a richer understanding of creative social action, and strengthen both theory and practice within the field. This suggests the evaluative model offered for consideration and debate in "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" could also provide an important directive energy to these ongoing discourses.

2: I want ... to excite general enlightenment I don't want to foreclose it with a catchy, half-baked orthodoxy.²⁴

The overall strength of the research project recounted in "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" is evident in its ability to draw innovative conclusions regarding creative social action's contribution to radical social change and offer a new and appropriate evaluative framework to the field. Careful consideration of creative social action as a whole has allowed patterns and connections underpinning these practices to emerge. In conjunction with the attention given to theoretical research, this has effectively directed a transdisciplinary analysis of selected cases. This analysis has led to some generalised explanations and conclusions that can be taken back to the field as a whole, as shown in the previous section of this chapter. However, alongside achieving its aims and demonstrating several strengths, "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" inevitably has several weaknesses.

A thesis can't change
the world.⁵

Some weaknesses came to light during the research; some have become clear during the writing up process. Some were resolved as part of the research process, others remain unresolved, and some of these are intrinsic to the research.²⁵ For example, categorisation and definition of creative social action can be seen as problematic, a self-defeating objectification, or deadening, of an elusive

and dynamic practice. On the other hand, such categorisation has been necessary to the research. In fact, stimulating debate has been a key motivation for the research and this need to categorise was taken up as another opportunity to provoke questions and debate. In this sense, the categorisation undertaken here can be seen as both an implicit weakness and a strength of the research.

Criticism may be levelled at this research regarding the number of cases subject to focused study. It could be argued that in a field of this nature it is not viable to make generalisations from a study of three cases, particularly when all the variables at play in creative social action are considered. In fact, the cases were carefully selected with this in mind. Of course there are limits to the generalisations that can be drawn from this study; on the other hand, working with this number of cases has allowed for an extremely detailed study focusing on several complex issues. In terms of the case studies, perhaps more justified issues could be raised, such as the limited attention given to aspects of La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex's practices that might contradict the general conclusions drawn here. For example, aspects of their work that do not come under the definition of creative social action have been, at the most, positioned as evidence of their complexity and flexibility.²⁶ While the study had also intended to open up the Euro-American focus of the existing literature, which it achieves in several ways, the research could also be criticised in terms of giving the majority of its attention to three cases of creative social action that have emerged from within this territory.²⁷

As explained above, the aim of this research has been to develop a deeper understanding of these practices and their contribution to radical social change, not an homogenising framework. As chapter 6 and "Enjoying the View" have shown, the qualitative indicators and associated questions developed through the research have what could be seen as limitations; they do not make it possible to pin down absolutes and draw firm conclusions. However, their focus on tendencies and generation of further questions rather than answers is not a weakness; it deepens the discourse around creative social action in an appropriate and meaningful way and this is of far more value than providing boxes to be ticked and neat answers.²⁸

The research began with the intention of finding a critical framework appropriate to creative social action. While the intention was not to become a social theorist or utopian philosopher, or contribute to discourses around participatory development and notions of revolution, appropriate frameworks could not be found in the author's field so the research expanded to find them in other fields. Clearly, some of the sources could be used in much greater depth than they are here.²⁹ However, the research has drawn a range of sources together and developed new tools. With this useful set of 'differentiated lenses' valuable forces at the heart of creative social action can be viewed in considerable depth.³⁰ In addition, by using these sources in a new way the research might in turn feed into fields such as utopian studies and theories of sustainable revolution.

A specialist understanding of creative social action was one of the anticipated outcomes of the research project. Indeed, it has led to an understanding that is detailed, in its grasp of some of the finer points of these practices, and holistic, in its understanding of their interconnection with discourses of radical social change. The research process has also led to a sophisticated appreciation of terms such as 'specialist knowledge' and 'expert,' which were accepted as relatively neutral at the outset; they have been unpacked and an understanding of their alignment with particular value-bases and worldviews has developed. In this way the research has provided a more focused image of the type of 'specialist' that this field requires; not a scholar standing outside of the object of study and holding knowledge as a form of hierarchical power but, a specialist in a sense that involves a reversal of the traditional disciplinary myopia often associated with scholarship. In this sense the specialist has an informed perspective and a valid set of tools, but also a particular attitude or manner, a way of looking that includes an appreciation for characteristics such as generosity and openness to complexity. To some extent, this figure corresponds with the "researcher-militant,' whose quest is to carry out theoretical and practical work oriented to co-produce the knowledges and modes of an alternative sociability."³¹

An understanding of the specialist debate concerning the nature of politics and the social sphere in which attempts to use art to radicalise democracy or address political issues can be located.⁶

'Parallel journeys.'⁷

The journey is more important than the destination.⁸

3: Where now?

Possibilities for further work were anticipated at the outset of this research, such as the dissemination of its findings through contributing papers to relevant seminars, conferences and web-based resources, and publication of “WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?” This text could be an invaluable resource. Alongside being of interest to those concerned with creative social action, and radically expanded art in a more general sense, in exploring Skart, La Fiambrera and Superflex’s contribution to radical social change and elaborating on their utopianisms, participatory strategies and value-orientation, “WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?” also has potential to feed into many other discourses; those around social transformation and radical political action for example. In addition, several other possibilities for further work have emerged.

As explained in chapters 1 and 3, an early stage of the research incorporated a substantial survey of contemporary art practices, potential cases of creative social action. The wealth of material gathered and collated through this process is a unique resource; it has a place beyond a personal database. Consequently, some of this material is presented in “WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?” as an appendix, “A Guide to Creative Social Action and other Relevant Practices.” However, during the course of the research and its ongoing dissemination, the value of developing a web-based version of this database has become increasingly clear. Consequently, there are plans for a project to follow the Doctoral research, which will involve launching an innovative web-based resource. This will share information on over forty practices, alongside links to key areas of information such as further reading on each. It will complement resources already assisting the evolution of the field.³² It is anticipated that this unique database will initially be made available through an existing resource, such as the website of the Social Sculpture Research Unit.

Other opportunities for post-doctoral activity will also be pursued, such as consultancy work. While the possibilities for and value of such activity was not considered at the outset of this research, this is clearly an appropriate means of

disseminating the findings of this research in a way that can directly engage and benefit practitioners. Consequently, entering into dialogue with groups in this way, to find new paths together, will be prioritised. An expanding network of contacts in the field will provide the starting point for this development, alongside new connections made through the dissemination of the research.³³

There appears to be considerable work that could be done in terms of further research. While the findings might be taken to suggest that investigation could be usefully undertaken into critical approaches that allow for an indepth examination of participant's internal shifts, these findings indicate other, equally apposite, directions for further research.³⁴ For instance, discourse could be developed by pursuing theories that expand on the perspectives synthesised in this thesis. For example, the work of theorists such as Moylan and Rebecca Solnit has been used to construct an understanding of 'transformative' utopianism. Consequently, this research focuses on utopianism with certain qualities as a necessary component of revolutionary social transformation. However, that the research has found points of contention, in terms of the value of 'imageless' utopianisms and the value invested in carnivalesque participatory strategies for example, suggests that other positions asserted in this thesis can in fact be unpacked further to enrich the critical approach mooted here.³⁵ Furthermore, as shown in chapter 2, considerable work has been done on the prevalence, diversity and lineage of various forms of contemporary 'activist' art and art in its expanded sense. It would be both interesting and valuable to return to some of the threads that this has revealed and to explore the correspondence between creative social action and the historical tendency to position art as a practice with revolutionary capacity. What, if anything, distinguishes these contemporary practices from those 'revolutionary' forms of art that have gone before? Do these practices continue a cycle that has stretched through modernity? Do they conflict with it? Do they offer something different?³⁶

When you get there, there isn't any there there.⁹

The research project recounted in "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" has generated an urge to continue moving discourse in this field forward; primarily to continue walking and asking questions.³⁷ As Reinsborough points out "questions are always more radical than

Utopia is on the horizon: when I walk two steps, it takes two steps back.... I walk ten steps, and it is ten steps further away. What is utopia for? It is for this, for walking.¹⁰

answers.”³⁸ In fact, one of the most pertinent realisations that have emerged from this study in both personal and academic terms is summarised by Holloway’s statement that, “revolution is redefined as a question rather than an answer.”³⁹ The research has shed light on the value of taking up a set of questions and pursuing them until they reveal not answers but other more pertinent questions, and then taking these up with a passionate excitement. In short, the research project recounted in “WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?” has generated a consolidated commitment to questioning, risking and living as a political adventure, an infectiously joyful act of refusal and revolution. Consequently, in a reiteration of Holloway’s pertinent statement, “we should embrace a world with commas, but no full stop,” the closing of “WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?” signals a pause for breath rather than an end.⁴⁰

We shall not cease from exploration ... and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and to know that place for the first time.¹¹

Appendix

Notes

Notes to Asides

Bibliography

Appendix: A Guide to Creative Social Action and other Relevant Practices

The research recounted in “WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?” involved many hours spent with fascinating books, internet sites, journals and individuals. This has nurtured a growing awareness of the wealth of activist art practices spread across the globe, and an expanding collection of reference material. From this, two databases have emerged: one collating examples of creative activist practice, detailing aspects pertinent to the research project, such as their aims, participatory strategies and funding sources; the other a less rigorous listing, noting practices closely related to creative social action, alongside the reasons for their exclusion from the first database.¹ As the research project has progressed, groups and projects have been encountered, deliberated, responded to, listed, smiled at, questioned and included in these databases as appropriate. As a result, the databases have grown into fairly extensive resources, which reflect the richness, passion and international scope of contemporary activist art practice in an ‘expanded’ sense.² In fact, these databases offer a unique resource that could prove invaluable to others in the field; a potential development following the completion of “WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?”³ What is offered in this appendix is but a taste of that potential resource.

Inevitably, “WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?” refers to many of the practices incorporated in the databases, and some readers may wish for a little more information on particular practices, or on creative social action as a whole. Consequently, this appendix has been added to “WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?” not as an attempt to offer an exhaustive list of creative social action, but to give comprehensive information on the wide array of practices mentioned in the main body of the text. In short, this appendix is intended to offer a limited but nonetheless valid and useable resource. The usefulness of such supplementary material has already been demonstrated by several seminal books in the field. For

¹ This research process is explained in chapter 3, “Moving Forward.”

² The use of this term is explained in chapter 1, “Setting Out,” 4-11 and n. 2.

³ As explained in chapter 7, “Enjoying the View.”

instance, Gregory Sholette and Nato Thompson's *The Interventionists: User's Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life* (2004), Ted Purves' *What We Want is Free: Generosity and Exchange in Recent Art* (2005) and Suzanne Lacy's *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (1995), which thoughtfully incorporate 'encyclopedic [sic] entries,' a 'handbook' and a 'compendium' respectively.

Consideration of the possibilities for this appendix has led to the compilation of an easily accessible 'guide,' which is designed to accompany readers through "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" Like the research project itself, realising this guide has involved the difficult task of imposing a rational, justifiable framework on flexible and complex practices; in other words, drawing up criteria for inclusion. Consequently, the following should be noted. This guide includes projects and groups that appear by name in the thesis, and are: instances of creative social action, or closely related practices; post-1960; not named as individual artists; and not individual art objects. The information included with the entries has been drawn from a range of sources, and this leads to each entry being accompanied by a list of useful resources. In addition, the guide includes a supplementary list, introducing a few useful and accessible web-based sources for further information. Alongside providing information, this guide is also intended to promote the generation of the willing readers' own questions. In other words, the guide has been compiled to encourage consideration of the many layers of each practice, and the links between various practices. In short, it is simply that, a guide, motioning readers towards further debate and inquiry.

"Something must happen and something must be done,
we made things happen, we got things done."⁴

"We must be the change we wish to see."⁵

⁴ It Can Change, statement for an exhibition (2004) <http://www.667shotwell.com/Projects/Itcanchange.html>. It Can Change is an art collective, based in Oakland since 1999, see www.itcanchange.com. See also Ted Purves, ed. *What We Want is Free: Generosity and Exchange in Recent Art* (New York: State Univ. of New York Press, 2005), 113.

⁵ Mahatma Gandhi quoted in John J. DeRosalia *Mental Training for Skydiving and Life* (New York: SkyMind Publishers, 2000), 19.

Useful Web-based Sources for Further Information

Artists Network of Refuse and Resist! <http://artists.refuseandresist.org/index.html>.

This organisation formed in 1997, as an offshoot of the radical human rights activist group Refuse and Resist! which was active from 1987 to 2006. Although not all areas of the website have been updated recently, it provides a wealth of information and links in relation to “artists dedicated to creating a culture of resistance.”

Cartography (at) 16beavergroup.org: <http://www.16beavergroup.org/links.htm>.

The website is part of the ‘counter/cartographies’ project, initiated in February 2003 in collaboration with the collective c.cred. This project attempts to map “artists, activists, collaborative frameworks, groups and collectives who work (or have worked) with different notions or ideas of resistance and social engagement, outlining the different tactics, strategies and approaches being employed ... to map sites of interest and resistance, places and spaces within cities where certain events have occurred, where actions, demonstrations, projects, protests, strikes, interventions, discussions, and dissent have been produced or have the potential of being produced.” The information has been gathered from artists, but also “historians, sociologists, critics, passers-by; and other interested parties in order to draw from as vast a pool of knowledges as possible.” The result is an extensive list of groups, collaboratives, societies, interventions and other resources, which are generally accompanied by comprehensive links.

Greenmuseum: www.greenmuseum.org.

This online museum of environmental art focuses on creative efforts to improve the human relationship with the natural world. Its aim is to “inform, inspire and connect people through environmental art, and encourage the creation of new work that serves communities and ecosystems.” The website has three main sections: documentation of artwork alongside writings and exhibitions: listings of events and opportunities alongside a forum, discussion area and links to other organisations and artists’ sites: invitations to contribute information. The website largely focuses on individual practices within the USA.

The Notes from Nowhere Collective, The Restless Margins: <http://artactivism.gn.apc.org/timeline.htm>.

Subtitled ‘moments of resistance and rebellion: 1994 – 2003’ this webpage offers an easily accessible timeline of such moments on a global scale.

Red76 Arts Group: <http://www.red76.com>.

Red76 is a fluid international collaborative focusing on the “facilitation of discussion, thought and action within public space.” The group’s website includes links to collaborating organisations, and incorporates the *Journal of Radical Shining* and associated forum, which centre on activist art, activism, environmental action and ecological issues from an international perspective. The section ‘friends’ offers a useful list of related practices which are generally accompanied by links.

Republicart.net: <http://transform.eipcp.nettransform>.

The website is an outcome of a research project investigating activist and interventionist practices in public art across Europe (2002-05). This multilingual website has continued to build on that research and incorporates a database of arts organisations, an archive and a web journal *transversal*, and a wealth of texts from both well-known and emergent writers in the field of activism, intervention and art.

The Social Sculpture Research Unit: <http://www.social-sculpture.org/>.

This website offers a wealth of information on social sculpture and connective art practices, including explanations of social sculpture, its history and territory, its influences and current developments.

Temporary Services’ Groups and Spaces: <http://www.groupsandspaces.net/>.

This is an online database that gathers, and presents, information on groups (spaces are not currently included). It includes an alphabetical listing of groups in art or arts-related collaborations, some entries include a brief summary and many include a website for further information. The website is an extension of the research behind Temporary Services’ book *Group Work* (New York: Printed Matter, 2007). The book offers a collection of materials around the theme of ‘group work’ from 1960s to the present, which includes interviews conducted by Temporary Services, along with original essays, and two lists: one of words used to describe ‘group work;’ and one of collectives working between 1960 and 2000.

Subsol index: http://subsol.c3.hu/subsol_2/index.html.

This website contains a useful database, which includes links to range of organisations grouped under the following headings: art of commodification; art on the edge of politics; collectives and institutionality; media culture and autonomy; tactical media; technologies of truth and fiction; media concentration and dispersal; sovereign media; borders; and urban space in movement. From this index, links can be followed to more detailed information on each entry, and on the additional database provided under ‘other worlds.’

Adbusters

1989 – ongoing: Vancouver, Canada

Adbusters describes itself as “a global network of culture jammers and creatives working to change the way information flows, the way corporations wield power, and the way meaning is produced in our society.”¹ To this end the group publishes Adbusters magazine, a “120,000-circulation magazine concerned about the erosion of our physical and cultural environments by commercial forces.”² The group’s website is positioned as ‘Culturejammer’s Headquarters;’ “the most versatile activist tool ever reckoned with. From cyberpetitions to Critical Mass tips, from exposing corporate propaganda, to downshifting your lifestyle and treading lightly on the planet, we hope this site will inspire you to move -- upon your return to the real world -- from spectator to participant.”³ In addition, Adbusters has initiated several international social marketing campaigns, such as Buy Nothing Day and Digital Detox Week, and the website offers downloadable posters, flyers, stickers and other items to insert into public spaces in order to support and draw attention to these events. The group is perhaps best known for its ‘subvertisements,’ which spoof popular advertising campaigns. Adbusters also works as a not-for-profit agency offering services to “other organizations [sic] deliver[ing] the messages the world needs to hear.”⁴

→ <https://www.adbusters.org/>.^{1, 2, 3, 4}

→ Wendi Pickerel, Helena Jorgensen, and Lance Bennett, "Culture Jams and Meme Warfare: Kalle Lasn, Adbusters, and media activism: Tactics in Global Activism for the 21st Century" (April 19, 2002) <http://depts.washington.edu/gcp/pdf/culturejamsandmemewarfare.pdf>.

→ Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter, *The Rebel Sell: Why the Culture can't be Jammed* (Canada: Harper Collins, 2005), 3-6 and others.

AfroReggae

1993 – ongoing: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Incited by the infamous massacre of twenty-one local people by Rio’s police in 1993, this organisation emerged as “a force for real social change in the favelas.”¹ In essence, the group is a response to the poverty and violence systemically perpetuated among communities inhabiting these favelas, which it seeks to address. AfroReggae uses element of the everyday, such as Afro-Brazilian dance, music, poetry and film, as tools to rally local communities, to “counteract the violent oppression enforced by teenage drug armies and sustained by corrupt police.”² In essence, AfroReggae’s work has led to the exposure of systemic and individual corruption, engaged local drug lords in talks with the community, provided social support mechanisms for young people, constructed ‘Culture Community Centers,’ organised recycling workshops and organised free regular concerts in the favelas, which do not just to aim to entertain but also bring communities together and

empower them.³ This work has centered around the shaping of Banda AfroReggae, which, since 2000, has been providing some funding for the other aspects of AfroReggae's work through its earnings from performances and record sales. The group has continued to expand and now runs over 70 projects engaging more than 3,000 young people in Rio de Janeiro with a range of disciplines including music, dance & theatre, circus, radio and new media.⁴ AfroReggae's work has also expanded globally; it now has a strong UK partnership and its bands have played to sell-out audiences in India, South Africa, China, and across the USA and Europe.⁵

- www.afroreggae.org.br; website of Grupo Cultural AfroReggae (in Portuguese).⁴
- <http://www.favelatotheworld.org/>; website of AfroReggae UK Partnership.⁵
- Patrick Neate and Damien Platt, *Culture is Our Weapon: AfroReggae in the Favelas of Rio* (London: Latin American Bureau, 2006).¹
- UNICEF, *AfroReggae: The Beat of Change* documentary film (New York: UNICEF in association with Off Ramp Films, 2003).
- George Yudice, "AfroReggae Parlaying Culture into Social Justice," *Social Text* 69, vol. 19 no. 4 (Winter 2001), 53-65.
- Jeff Zimblalist and Matt Mochary, *Favela Rising* DVD 80mins (USA: THINKFilm, 2006), see <http://www.favelarising.com/index.html> (Spanish with English subtitles).^{2,3}

[trans. Plastic Wing] **Ala Plastica**

1991 - ongoing: Argentina

Ala Plastica focuses on exposing the socially and environmentally pathogenic nature of institutional structures and affecting direct interventions to address this. Ala Plastica identifies what it describes as 'place vocation,' which links both communities and environments, and then shapes a range of collaborative activities involving other artists, local residents and activists, scientists and environmental groups.¹ This has included, for example, the development of recycling programs and educational initiatives.² In essence, Ala Plastica's activity focuses on improving the quality of life through creativity, education and urban waste-management.³ Underlying this is a concern with interconnectivity, not with 'sentimentality or mysticism but with nature as a cultural and biological extension of human kind,' and with what the group describes as the "recovery of the social power of doing."⁴ For example, in 1998, the group worked with residents around the swamps of Rio de La Plata to develop methods to clean the ecosystem that Shell had polluted with crude oil. In this, Ala Plastica included the knowledge of the native population alongside that of external biologists and, eventually, UNESCO. Thereby, the group created a dynamic relationship between local knowledge and a global institution.⁵ Consequently, the land was recuperated and transformed into a public space, which has since been used for the environmental education of schoolchildren among other things. Ala Plastica's participatory projects have taken up 'place vocations' throughout Argentina, including a "collective civic plan based on a harmonic comprehension of the ecosystem and the infrastructure" created for the Rio Santiago basin.⁶ In the group's terms, this work is 'bio-regional,' in the sense of taking place within the nation of Argentina, and international "in relationship to other transformative arts practitioners."⁷

- <http://www.alaplastica.org.ar/>; the group's website offers information on several projects, accompanied by visual material.⁷
- <http://www.alaplastica.org.ar/grafica/ingbrief.pdf>; a substantial text by the group, with visual material.
- Ala Plastica, "Artist's Statement" presented at Groundworks: Environmental Collaboration in Contemporary Art, exhibition curated by Grant Kester (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon Univ. October 14 - December 11 2005), available online, <http://3r2n.cfa.cmu.edu/groundworks/statements/alaplastica.pdf>; this includes a brief statement and a small amount of visual material.^{2, 4, 6}
- <http://archive.balticmill.com>; Ala Plastic's contribution to a one-day conference is available from this site (Newcastle: Baltic Mill, April 6 2004).
- Bruce Barber, "Littoralist Art Practice and Communicative Action" catalogue essay (1996), available online, <http://www.imageandtext.org.n2>.³
- Grant Kester, "Conversation Pieces" (n.d.) <http://www.capagallery.com/cepa/exhibits>.
- <http://www.parkfiction.org/unlikelyencounters/gruppen.php>; offers a brief account of the group.⁵
- wocheklausur.t0.or.at/symposium/texte_en.htm; this site for Was Ton Art-and-Social Engagement, conference organised by Wochenklausur (2000) includes a brief contribution from Ala Plastica.¹

AMD&ART

1994 – current status not ascertained: Vintondale, Pennsylvania, USA

The group describes itself as a 'community enhancement initiative,' working to repair the physical damage and social distress suffered in the Vintondale area during and since the era of pre-regulatory coal mining and acid mine drainage (AMD).¹ The damage caused includes destabilisation of clean water sources, destruction of forests by acid rains and high rates of local poverty. AMD&ART's response is holistic, in the sense of striving to "re-create a sense of place, instil hope for the future of the area and build stronger, pro-active communities."² In brief, AMD&ART aims to give "art-full form to community aspirations" for their spaces, the environment and the future.³ In doing so, the group works closely with the communities affected by these problems to construct 'artful public places,' such as the 35-acre project in Vintondale *Litmus Garden*, a series of water restoration basins.⁴ The group places considerable emphasis on long-term sustainability and sees the process of public engagement is an integral part of this. Funding partners for such projects have included the US Environmental Protection Agency and the Pennsylvania Rural Arts Alliance.

- <http://www.amdandart.org>; the group's website offers an extensive account of its work, a statement by the Founder and a list of web-based publications about the group.^{1, 2, 3}
- www.greenmuseum.org has a brief entry for AMD&ART.
- Sue Spaid, *Ecoventions: Current Art to Transform Ecologies* (Cincinnati: greenmuseum.org and ecoartspace in association with The Contemporary Arts Center, 2002), 128-130 and 137.⁴

1981 - 2004: London, UK

The Art of Change has described itself as primarily concerned with ‘decentring and democratising power’ through ‘confidence building and empowerment,’ and with the transformation of urban environments and the impact this has on quality of life, on community and on cultural identity.¹ In response to the concerns the Art of Change has sought to replace the ‘Grand/Mono-Narrative’ mentality with ‘diverse local narratives.’² The Art of Change has worked to engage and extend these local narratives to “achieve a new consensus where it is needed ... but one which is capable of embracing difference.”³ The Art of Change was known as the Docklands Community Poster Project from 1981 to 1986, which is also the title of its most well-known project. Working with tenants and action groups affected by property developers’ regeneration of London’s ‘Docklands’, the Art of Change nurtured a coherent campaigning community among a ‘politically invisible’ group of people.⁴ The Art of Change is seen to have achieved this by: meeting residents’ requests for publicity materials, such as posters, banners, badges and newsheets; organising community actions, such as *The People’s Armada to Parliament*, which engaged over 4,000 people; producing a series of narrative photomurals placed on billboards in prime Docklands locations; and organising a roadshow.⁵ According to Suzanne Lacy, in “actively [participating] as an integrated part of sustained social activism” the Art of Change has become “a worldwide model for activist art.”⁶ In its contribution to John Bird’s anthology, the group gives considerable attention to its use of participatory strategies, and elsewhere these are discussed in terms of an ‘adaptable model.’⁷ The group describes its use of a ‘three-stage process of engagement’ as fundamental part of this model, claiming that participation is consequently both ‘sustaining’ and ‘transformative.’⁸ The group also carefully scrutinises the term ‘community’ in order to develop a dynamic view of those it works with, and a better understanding of these intermeshed ‘micro-cultures’, or ‘spheres of discourse.’⁹

- Bruce Barber, “Littoralist Art Practice and Communicative Action,” catalogue essay (1996), available online, <http://www.imageandtext.org.n2>.
- Will Bradley and Charles Esche, eds. *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader* (London: Tate Publishing in association with Afterall, 2007), 245-248 and 471.
- Peter Dunn, “Global Town Square,” public seminar hosted by Towncentric (Gravesend, June 22 2004).⁷
- Peter Dunn and Lorraine Leeson, in *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*, ed. John Bird et al. (London: Routledge, 1993), 136-149.^{1, 2, 3, 8, 9}
- Grant Kester, “Conversation Pieces” (n.d.) <http://www.capagallery.com/cepa/exhibits>.
- Suzanne Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Washington: Bay Press, 1995).^{4, 5, 6}

1997 – current status not ascertained: Buenos Aires, Argentina

Grupo de Arte Callejero uses tools such as carefully designed traffic signs and posters to intervene in the public spaces of Buenos Aires, it alters logos that mark specific instances of repression. Claiming that it is not possible to make any distinction between art and activism, the group explains that it uses these “tools for a range of immediate collective actions that try to create social bonds and disrupt hegemonic normalization“ and stimulate political reflection.¹ The focus of this work is explained as the “modes of injustice under democracy, such as the criminalization of social protests, the impunity of police officers in the state of security, the news media’s monopoly and the housing market.”² In short, Grupo de Arte Callejero seeks to “subvert the discourses that authorize, legitimize and legalize [sic] injustice.”³ In order to effect such subversion, Grupo de Arte Callejero anonymously implements collective actions, which use a diverse range of performative, graphic and textual tools to draw attention to “specific places where dictatorship has carried out its injustice and impunity.”⁴ For example, these actions have centered on ‘current homes of ex-torturers, alongside buildings that were used as detention and torture centers.’ The poster campaign and public ceremony of desecration of the monument in the historic centre of Buenos Aires, *Anti-Monumento a Roca* (n.d.), focused attention on the structural process of domination and repression, from the colonization of the native inhabitants of Patagonia in an epoch of national consolidation to “the alliance with transnational capital of the last dictatorship and its continuity in the neo-liberal democracy of the 1990s (represented by the Spanish corporation Repsol which has exploited Patagonian oil wells since that decade of privatization of national companies, and by Benetton).”⁵ Similarly, *Cartography of Control* (2003) involved the exhibition of a video projection and collaged map of an area along the heavily polluted river Riachuelo in Buenos Aires, noting ‘centers of economic power, acts of military repression, places of warlike conflicts, militarized zones and US military bases, among other things.’⁶

- http://www.exargentina.org/_es/_02/plaene02.html; includes a very brief passage on the group.¹
- gacgrupo.ar.tripod.com; the group’s website (in Spanish, with English translation ‘under construction’ since 2006).
- Grupo de Arte Callejero, (September 25 2006)
<http://criticalspatialpractice.blogspot.com/2006/09/grupo-de-arte-callejero.html>.^{2, 3, 4, 5}
- Grupo de Arte Callejero, “Artist’s Statement,” paper presented at Groundworks: Environmental Collaboration in Contemporary Art, exhibition curated by Grant Kester (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon Univ., October 14 - December 11 2005), available online, <http://www.3R2N.cfa.cmu.edu/groundworks/statements/gac.pdf>.
- Grupo de Arte Callejero, “Artist’s Statement,” paper presented at Klartext Konferenz, organised by Marina Sorbello and Antje Weitzel (Berlin: January 14-16 2005), available online, <http://www.klartext-konferenz.de/>.
- <http://www.universes-in-universe.de/car/venezia/bien50/survival/e-calle.htm>; brief details on the group’s contribution to the 50th Venice Biennial (Venice: June 15 – November 2 2003).⁶

1968: Argentina

In protest at the repressive strategies perpetuated by bourgeois cultural institutions and Argentinean authorities, this loosely formed group of artists withdrew their work from an exhibition at the Di Tella Institute in Buenos Aires, Experience 68. Describing this removal and subsequent public destruction of the work as 'a collective work of art,' members of the Avant Garde Artists' Group sought 'independence and freedom' not only in terms of culture, but as a social and political necessity.¹ Their intention appears to have been to prise open the official cultural structures, which strategically repressed any dissenting or critical articulation. The group also pursued this through other activities, including *Tucuman Arde* (Tucuman is burning) (1968), which focused on denouncing the Tucuman authorities "in order to unmask the profound contradictions caused by an economic-political system based on hunger and unemployment and the creation of a false and gratuitous cultural superstructure."² In other words, the Avant Garde Artists' Group responded to a violent and repressive socio-political regime with what it saw as a form of art capable of fulfilling its revolutionary potential, a form of art that 'agitates' and "radically denies this way of life and says: let's do something to change it."³

- Will Bradley and Charles Esche, eds. *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader* (London: Tate Publishing in association with Afterall, 2007), 157-163 and 469.^{1, 2, 3}
- Co-ordinating Committee of the Revolutionary Imagination, "Argentine Subversive Art: The Vanguard of the Avant-Garde," *The Drama Review* vol. 14, no. 2, Latin American Theatre (Winter 1970), 98-103.
- Maria Teresa Gramuglio and Nicolas Rosa, "Tucuman is Burning" in *The Argentina Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Gabriela Nouzeilles and Graciela R. Montaldo (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2002), 358-371.
- Santiago García Navarro, "Live and Learn," *Frieze* vol. 111, (November - December 2007), available online, http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/live_and_learn; an account of the Argentinean artist Roberto Jacoby, which includes descriptions of the activities mentioned above.
- Clemente Padin, "Tucuman Arde: Paradigm of Revolutionary Cultural Action" in *Art and People: Latin American Art in our Time*, trans. Harry Polkinhorn (n.p.: Atticus Press, 1997), available online, <http://www.concentric.net/~Lndb/padin/lcptuc.htm>.

Artway of Thinking

1993 – ongoing: Venice, Italy

This 'cultural association' describes itself as transdisciplinary and innovative; as making art in a social context in way that depends on observation and listening, and responding to "create [an] interaction between context and creativity."¹ Artway of Thinking appears to focus primarily on urban contexts subject to regeneration and the group claims that its practice is 'relational,' in that it is based on working with 'communities living that context' and with the varied contents of any given context.

The relational process set in motion by Artway of Thinking are seen as having 'creative potential for transformation,' for generating 'shifts in perception' and 'developing a new collective vision.'² In essence, the group describes this 'new vision' as 'giving value to, or loving,' something currently undervalued; for example, "giving value to history and to the contemporary resources of the city, to collectivity and to the individual."³ While information on Artway of Thinking in English is rather sparse, the material found suggests that this is indeed an innovative practice: in describing its methods, this group states that it "aims at unity ... [and] cannot leave complexity out of consideration" that it "does not seek completeness, but realizes itself in the process of becoming."⁴

- Artway of Thinking, a paper describing the group's 'method' for Love Difference (2006)
http://www.lovedifference.org/eng/network/eventi/img/artway_metodo_eng.pdf.^{1, 2, 4}
- <http://www.artway.info/>; the group's website, in Spanish.
- <http://www.lovedifference.org/eng/network/eventi/unidee06.htm>; website of the Love Difference project (2006), with an extract from Artway of Thinking's website in English translation.³

The Biotic Baking Brigade

Dates not ascertained: New York, USA

Seeing itself as a movement rather than a group, the Biotic Baking Brigade (BBB) opposes corporate neoliberalism, and extends its criticism to any institution or individual who commits "crimes against people and the land."¹ Members of this 'amorphous, international organisation' take on pseudonyms to retain their anonymity, which is generally necessary given the nature of their action: "the Biotic Baking Brigade believes that under neoliberalism, we can all throw a pie in the face of economic fascism," and that is exactly what it does.² The list of recipients is long and varied, including Bill Gates, of Microsoft fame (Belgium 1998) and the British Shadow Home Secretary Anne Widdecombe (Oxford 2000). BBB declares, "what we want to change is the entire system of corporate control over our lives ... we're most concerned about multinational corporations and big business running roughshod over our rights - and in the meantime are destroying our planet. While the issues we try to tackle are serious - clear-cutting redwoods and the global economy - there's something very valuable in getting people to laugh."³

- The Biotic Baking Brigade, *Pie any Means Necessary: The Biotic Baking Brigade Cookbook* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2004).³
- www.bioticbakingbrigade.org; the group's website (currently unavailable).¹
- Gregory Lewis, "Pie-pitch recipe: Activism with Humor [sic]: Group uses pastries to draw attention" (November 9 1998) <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/examiner/archive/1998/11/09/NEWS15983.dtl#ixzz0k1xSjVRc>.
- Mark Liiv and Jeff Taylor, ed. and dir. *The Pie's the Limit* video 28 mins. (A Whispered Media Production, 1999)
- Gregory Sholette and Nato Thompson, eds. *The Interventionists: User's Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 69-70.²

Black Mask

1966 - 1968: New York, USA

Seeking “total revolution, cultural, as well as social and political,” the Black Mask collective was dedicated to “replac[ing] the burnt bodies and dead minds” produced by current social systems.¹ In October 1966 Black Mask closed the Museum of Modern Art in New York as a symbolic action, in February 1967 the group organised a community garbage collection followed by a march to the Lincoln Centre for a mass ‘garbage planting.’² Black Mask also produced a newspaper bearing the same name. Stuart Home describes how “Black Mask disrupted reified cultural events in New York by making up flyers giving the dates, times and location of art events and giving these out to the homeless with the lure of the free drink that was on offer to the bourgeoisie rather than the lumpen proletariat.”³ These activities were driven by the group’s belief that revolutionary art should be “an integral part of life, as in primitive society, and not an appendage to wealth,” that art had a crucial role in the political program of revolution.⁴ By 1968, Black Mask had evolved into Up Against the Wall, Motherfucker, which pursued this strategy of direct action along a more anarchist path.

- Black Mask, “Art and Revolution” in *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader*, ed. Will Bradley and Charles Esche (London: Tate Publishing in association with Afterall, 2007), 130-4.^{1,2}
- Will Bradley and Charles Esche, eds. *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader* (London: Tate Publishing in association with Afterall, 2007), 468.
- Ron Hahne, *Black Mask & Up Against the Wall Motherfucker* (London: Unpopular Books, 1993).
- Eve Hinderer, “Ben Morea, Black Mask And Motherfucker: A Saga of the ‘60s Lower East Side” (n.d.) <http://www.16beavergroup.org/monday/archives/001031print.html>.⁴
- Stewart Home, *The Assault on Culture: Utopian Currents from Lettrisme to Class War* (London: Aporia Press and Unpopular Books, 1988).³
- Stewart Home, ed. *Black Mask and Up Against the Wall, Motherfucker: The Incomplete Works of Ron Hahne, Ben Morea and the Black Mask Group* (London: Unpopular Books, 1993).

Border Art Workshop/Taller De Arte Fronterizo

1984 - ongoing: San Diego, USA.

This collective of artists, activists, educators, scholars, journalists and collaborators from local communities initially formed as ‘the active visual arm’ of the Centro Cultural de la Raza, a Chicano showcase in Balboa Park, San Diego, California.¹ Since its inception, BAW/TAF has worked across the San Diego-Tijuana border, using parody and visual subversion to combine art and activism and open up the life world within that particular context. Taking the issues specific to the border with Mexico as a starting point, BAW/TAF also addresses the broader implications for all Latinos living with a dominant US culture. Key to this is the group’s view of the

border as “a place where social upheaval ... produces the possibility of constructive transformation of both Mexican and American cultures,” and understanding of art as a catalyst for such transformation.² BAW/TAF’s work has included billboards, bus signs, installations, such as *La Casa de Cambios / The Money Exchange* (1988), and open site-specific performances. A notable example of this work is the 15-month Centro Comunitario Aguascalientes project with the people of Maclovio Rojas (1998). This project generated a community centre, a space for and of community activity directed by the community and constructed from old doors, imported cast-offs from the US, which local residents decorated with murals.³ *Border Structures* (1990) involved a zigzagging journey along the length of the border with a series of rituals performed along the way. This fluid participatory work centred on a motor home, which acted as an ‘intrasocial laboratory,’ living space and conference room, and interventions made along the border included *Border Staple*, literally stapling the two countries together, alongside informal interviews and *Border Tug of War*, a ritualistic performance at known illegal crossing sites.⁴ Through such activities, BAW/TAF sees itself as drawing attention to, and overturning, the “social tensions of the Mexican-American border, while asking [citizens] to imagine a world in which this international border has been erased.”⁵ In short, the collective focuses on “reconceptualis[ing] social relations through the application of extraordinary art practices.”⁶

- <http://www.borderartworkshop.com/index.html>; the group’s website offers a wealth of information on its activities from 1984 to 1997.
- Will Bradley and Charles Esche, eds. *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader* (London: Tate Publishing in association with Afterall, 2007), 270-275 and 472.¹
- Patricio Chávez and Madeleine Grynsztejn, *La Frontera / The Border: Art About the Mexico/United States Experience* exhibition catalogue (Centro Cultural La Raza and the Museum of Contemporary Art of San Diego, 1993).^{5,6}
- Nina Felshin, ed. *But is it Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995); briefly mentions the group in several chapters.¹
- Shifra M. Goldman, *Dimensions of the Americas: Art and Social Change in Latin America and the United States* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1994), 313-316; offers a brief chapter on the *La Casa de Cambios / The Money Exchange* project, and BAW/TAF are mentioned elsewhere in the book.
- Guillermo Gomez-Pena and Jeff Kelly, eds. *The Border Art Workshop (BAW/TAF), 1984-1989: A Documentation of 5 Years of Interdisciplinarity* exhibition catalogue (New York: Artists Space, 1989).
- Suzanne Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Washington: Bay Press, 1995).^{2,4}
- Antonio Prieto, “Border Art as a Political Strategy” (n.d.) www.igc.org/isla/features/border/mex6.html.³

[trans. What is to be done?] **Chto Delat?**

2003 – ongoing: Petersburg, Russia

Seemingly taking up the title of Lenin’s famous pamphlet, which argued for the institution of an all-Russian political newspaper to instigate revolutionary activity on the part of the masses, Chto Delat?’s primary project is a free newspaper. According to the group, this take-away paper, produced in Russian and English,

“addresses issues and themes that are in demand of reconsideration in contemporary artistic practice and political activism.”¹ 8 issues of the newspaper have appeared so far, incorporating reprints of fundamental historical texts, questionnaires, dialogues, comic strips and open-source texts. Each issue has taken up a different theme, for example, issue 5 focused on “Love and Politics” (May 2004) and issue 6 asked “Revolution or Resistance?” (August 2004). Alongside the newspaper, Chto Delat? encompasses a ‘workgroup’ directed by a collection of artists, philosophers and writers. The group is described as providing a crossdisciplinary space for the international discussion of “the indelible connection between poetics and politics with a deep focus on the development of the situation of cultural production in Russia.”² In 2005, the group contributed to a multimedia exhibition featuring works by artists and artists’ collectives who are informed by issues such as communities, strategies of resistance, Soviet history and its post-Soviet developments and the notion of ‘national construction’ in art exhibitions. Chto Delat?’s contribution involved discussions focusing on issues of resistance and states of emergency, which were then presented in a newspaper-like reader.³ Beyond such print-based activity, the workgroup engages in a range of projects, including actions and ‘artistic examinations of urban space,’ such as *Drift – Narvskaya Zastava* (2004), which has been described as “a community examination of a ... neighbourhood in contemporary Petersburg” and was the focus for the seventh issue of the group’s newspaper.⁴

- Chto Delat? “Artist’s Statement,” presented at Klartext Konferenz organised by Marina Sorbello and Antje Weitzel (Berlin: January 14-16 2005), available online, <http://www.klartext-konferenz.de>.^{1, 2, 4}
- www.chtodelat.org; the group’s website offers a considerable body of material in English. This includes texts from each of the newspapers it has published and a small library of related texts, along with other background materials on the group and its activities.
- <http://www.artcal.net/event/view/2/1191>; this site details the 2005 exhibition *Russia Redux #1* to which Chto Delat? contributed, however, it contains the briefest of information on the group.³

Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army

2003 - ongoing: UK

Also known as Smile LiberAction Front, the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (CIRCA) currently has units throughout Europe. The group uses clowning and non-violent tactics to act against diverse but inter-related issues, such as corporate globalisation and war. Recruits to the army are trained in clowning by officers, and then exercise their creative activism when and where-ever conditions call. For example, this has included *Operation H.A.H.A.H.A.A (Helping Authorities House Arrest Half-witted Authoritarian Androids)* (April 2005), during which the army ‘did everything it could to help the security forces keep the leaders attending the G8 Summit in Glasgow under indefinite house arrest.’ This involved, for instance providing gifts for the security forces to keep them entertained while on duty. CIRCA articulately summarises this use of clowning tactics with the following key statements: ‘without real names, faces or noses, we show that our words, dreams, and desires are more important than our biographies, by hiding our identity we

recover the power of our acts; insurrection of the imagination is irresistible; the key to insurgency is brilliant improvisation, not perfect blueprints; we don't want to change 'the' world, but 'our' world; and a clown can get away with anything.' In short, CIRCA aims to "make clowning dangerous again, to bring it back to the street, reclaim its disobedience and give it back the social function it once had: its ability to disrupt, critique and heal society ... spreading a spirit of creativity that dances on the edge of chaos and order."

→ <http://www.clownarmy.org/>; an extremely comprehensive website (all information on this group has been drawn from this website).

[trans. the Debris Group] **Grupo Escombros**

1988 – 2008: La Plata, Argentina

This group has consistently drawn attention to the tumultuous socio-political reality of Argentina through work that is "created for and by the people of La Plata."¹ Always reflecting social, political and environmental concerns, in essence a concern with the 'dehumanisation of humanity,' these works are produced using discarded materials and simple everyday strategies; they may incorporate "plants, posters, murals, artefacts, poems written in earth, pamphlets, performances, lectures, visual poems, graffiti, postcards or net art."² In fact, the group seems to use anything to hand, which also appears true of the public spaces in which these works appear, such as 'a street, a plaza, a wine cellar or an urban stream.'³

→ <http://www.grupoescombros.com.ar/>; the group's website, includes several essays by and about the group, alongside its series of 6 manifestos. (in Spanish).^{2,3}

→ Grant Kester, "Conversation Pieces" (n.d.) www.capagallery.com/cepa/exhibits; this essay briefly mentions the group.¹

Exchange Values

1993 - ongoing: St. Lucia, Windward Islands and Nottingham, UK

Exchange Values highlights "the effects of 'free trade' on both people and planet, [and creates] an imaginative space to explore alternatives to egocentric globalisation."¹ Following a three-year research period, a slow and complex project emerged that has involved: the multinational organisation Geest, which supplied twenty numbered boxes of Windward Island bananas; passers-by in Nottingham city centre who ate the fruit, left the skins and engaged in discussion of the issues raised by the project; banana farmers in the West Indies and their representative organisations; and numerous other groups and individuals who have engaged in various activities including discussions on a wide range of issues such as expanded

art practices and world trade.² After giving the bananas away in Nottingham and gathering the 3000 empty skins, Exchange Values traced individual growers through the identification numbers stamped on each box and then visited them individually in St. Lucia. This led to discursive exploration of 'imaginative, sustainable and practical alternatives' to the control of the banana trade by multinational companies, and Exchange Values putting those with a common interest in developing alternative strategies in contact with each other.³ Alongside involving those in offices, high streets and Caribbean farms, the project has engaged people visiting gallery spaces including three different venues in England (2000), the Johannesburg Gallery, as part of the World Summit for Sustainable Development (2002) and the Social Sculpture Today exhibition in Dornach, Switzerland (2007). These exhibitions have presented the 3000 banana skins, cured, flattened and stitched into dark uniform sheets held taut by minimal frames and accompanied by "voice recordings of 19 of the 'invisible producers' [which whisper throughout the gallery space and] create a momentary interface in the global economic processes where each of us as citizen and consumer come into contact with a few of the many millions of people who produce for us each day."⁴ These manifestations of the project often incorporate associated events, such as a specially developed bulletin board enabling gallery visitors to communicate with producers in the Windward Islands, workshops and open public forums focusing on 'free trade' and our responsibilities as global citizens as well as an 'expanded conception of art,' which involves us all as 'artists' in shaping a more democratic and ecologically sustainable world.⁵ This touches on the heart of this complex flexible project, which as Shelley Sacks explains, focuses not only on 'the interface between producers and consumers in the global economy but also on the relationship of the sense perceptible to the social.'⁶ The centrality of this concept is underscored by the explicit dedication of the project "to all human beings working to shape a non-exploitative, life sustaining social order based on interconnectedness and mutuality" and its conviction that becoming "an active, creative participant in the shaping of our society is not only the right of all, but lies within every individual's reach."⁷

- "Exchange Values: Images Of Invisible Lives" press release for an exhibition of the project, an open public forum and workshops (Birmingham: Ips Bourneville, April 26 - May 27 2004), available online, <http://www.uce.ac.uk/web2/releases/3462.html>.^{1, 4, 5}
- www.exchange-values.org; this website offers extensive audio and visual material alongside several essays, and an introduction to the history of the Exchange Values project and links to a substantial body of texts, debates and discussions aligned with the project³
- Shelley Sacks, ed. *Exchange Values: Images of Invisible Lives*. (n.p.: published in association with the World Summit on Sustainable Development exhibition, Johannesburg Art Gallery, 2002). This small book contains visual material, a CD titled *the Grower's Voices* and several essays, some discussing Exchange Values' engagement with issues of globalisation, multinational production, consumption and multi-stakeholder processes.^{2, 7}
- Enno Schmidt, http://a-r-c.gold.ac.uk/a-r-c_Three/printtexts/print_Enno.html; an interesting essay which mentions the Exchange Values project.⁶
- Wolfgang Zumdick, ed. *Exchange Values on the Table*, catalogue for exhibition Social Sculpture Today (Switzerland, 2007).

1999 - ongoing: New York, USA

The E-Xplo collective uses carefully configured and context specific bus tours of between one and two hours duration to encourage a 'contemplative form of viewing' focusing on everyday aspects of the local environment.¹ Essentially, these tours are auditory experiences involving "local interviews, field recordings, sound archives from local libraries and other sound sources," alongside music, citations and other 'found' sounds, which are juxtaposed with carefully choreographed meandering bus routes.² Describing itself as a 'topographical agent' e-Xplo engages with the local space and those that inhabit it, the 'local experts.'³ E-Xplo works internationally; tours have taken place in Brooklyn (2000), London (2003) and Rotterdam (2003) as well as Berlin and Turin.⁴ For The Interventionists exhibition (2004) e-Xplo provided a meandering bus tour with an 'auditory environment' that incorporated an on-board computer and GPS technology, which allowed the speed, location and heading of the tour bus to determine the sounds triggered at any given point.⁵ E-Xplo claims that utilising the bus tour genre enables it to engage an incredibly diverse public due to the fact that it is both familiar and unique. In addition, the group tries to expand the range of participants by encouraging non-arts publications, such as tourist magazines and local papers, to promote the tours. These tours are overtly playful their attentiveness to the everyday, the political significance of which is indicated by Nato Thompson's alignment of the work with the Situationist notion of derive and the connections that Levente Polyak makes between the group's practice and the Situationist concept of detournement.⁶ E-Xplo itself cites numerous theoretical sources including Hannah Arendt, Alain Badiou, Julia Kristeva, Guy Debord and Walter Benjamin to explain its intentions.⁷ These intentions are succinctly articulated by Thompson, who describes e-Xplo's bus tours as a vehicle to "transform preconceived notions of the collective environment."⁸ Elsewhere e-Xplo's bus tours are described as "a response to the growing privatisation of public space" and as taking "familiar sites and open[ing] them up to new readings and possibilities."⁹ As Rudi Gabri explains, "these sites range from the physical sites we explore to the discursive sites we inhabit; even the 'tour' itself becomes something to interrogate and question. Rather than an end point, the tour is really a tool for introducing questions, a familiar departing point for a set of overlapping journeys ... [e-Xplo's tours create] a heightened sensual awareness ... a more attentive, active and critical subject."¹⁰

- <http://www.e-xplo.org>; the group's website incorporates information about the group, reviews and essays, interview material, details of past and planned projects and visual material.³
- Steven Morton, "An Interview with e-Xplo about Dencity" (2000), available from <http://www.e-xplo.org>.⁹
- <http://navigatelive.org/explo.html>; this website gives brief details of an e-Xplo project in the Gateshead area of Newcastle, and incorporates links to some of the group's other projects.
- Levente Polyak, "Exploring Exploration," trans. Adele Eisenstein (2004) available from <http://www.e-xplo.org>.^{3,6}
- Gregory Sholette and Nato Thompson, eds. *The Interventionists: User's Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 2004), 18, 41-46 and 154; includes an interview with a member of e-Xplo.^{1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10}

2000 - 2008: Lisbon, Portugal

Malcolm Miles describes works by the Extra]muros[collective at some length, such as the transdisciplinary project *Capitaldonada* (capital of nothing) (2001). Extra]muros[organised this project in the Marvila area of Lisbon, a district largely comprised of high-rise social housing for immigrants from rural areas of Portugal.¹ The project involved exhibitions, discussions and events focusing on interventions in public space and 'giving voice to the marginalised of the city.'² It brought together 'artists, landscape architects, designers, geographers, anthropologists and architects alongside representatives of local communities and several local institutions' to effect a 'de-sacralisation' and 'de-differentiation' of art in relation to the everyday and social conditions.³ Extra]muros[also seems to have continued this approach through other such projects within the city, although it is difficult to locate further information on this work. In essence, Extra]muros[appears to have sought to escape from the worlds of conventional art and to align art with the social context believing that this has "the capacity to generate participation, co-responsibility and a real empathy on behalf of common fate."⁴

- Mario Caeiro, "Lisbon Capital of Nothing" in *Cultures and Settlements*, ed. Malcolm Miles and Nicola Kirkham (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2003), 133-146.
- Malcolm Miles, "Interrupting the Public Realm: Performative Excursions," *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, vol. 12 no. 1 (February 2007), 15–25.¹
- Malcolm Miles, *Urban Avant-gardes: Art, Architecture and Change* (London: Routledge, 2004), 120 and 169-173.⁴
- Sandra Xavier, "Art in the Neighbourhood" http://homelessmonalisa.darq.uc.pt/SandraXavier/arte_fora_de_portas.htm (in Portuguese); this article details two of the works involved in *Capitaldonada*.^{2,3}

Factory of Found Clothes

1995 - ongoing: St. Petersburg, Russia

This collaborative group combines relatively traditional installation and performance work with what it describes as 'environmental works, Situationist action, video, sound recording and direct contact exhibitions.' As a member of Chto Delat?'s workgroup, Factory of Found Clothes contributes to discourses around art and social change, and the group clearly articulates its own position in this field: "Art is not an abstract game but an adventure; not cold rationalism, but live emotion. The artist is not a mentor or tutor, but a friend; not a genius, but an accomplice. Rather than enacting didactic social projects, we must help people to stop fearing themselves, help them to accept themselves and grow better. Society is made up of people. Only by helping these people follow the path of self transformation, do we change society ... there is no other way."¹ Pursuing this conviction, Factory of Found Clothes uses various forms of 'collective-processual' work to nurture young

peoples' connection with their own inner being. For example, *Shop of Utopian Clothing* (Bath, England 2004-6) engaged five young women in discussion, which focused on key words from a statement by Paulo Freire, such as 'freedom' and 'oppression.'² From these discussions and phrases, the girls shaped a video and a collection of clothes, which were then sold through the 'shop.' This reflects the essence of most projects by Factory of Found Clothes; clothing is used as a tool to explore the relationship between inner and outer worlds. The group's work is described as having "always addressed the inner world. It's always been about the poetization [sic] of ordinariness, so that life would stop being so dull and depressing, so that the routines of everyday life would take on the infinitely gripping spirit of a performance. ... always connected to opposing the existing order of things."⁴

- Factory of Found Clothes, (November 4 2006) http://www.chtodelat.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=287&Itemid=147; a brief introduction to the group's work.²
- Factory of Found Clothes, "Manifesto" (n.d.) <http://www.galeriebluesquare.com/artist/29/-Gluklya-Tsaplya>.¹
- Factory of Found Clothes and David Riff, "Dialogue #2" (November 4 2006) http://www.chtodelat.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=760%3Afactory-of-found-clothes-dialogue-1-david-riff-tsaplya&catid=129%3A5-love-and-politics&Itemid=325&lang=en.
- Factory of Found Clothes and Dmitry Vilensky, "Dialogue #1" (November 4 2006) http://www.chtodelat.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=759%3Afactory-of-found-clothes-dialogue-1-dmitry-vilensky-gluklya&catid=129%3A5-love-and-politics&Itemid=325&lang=en.⁴
- Dmitry Pilikin, "Factory of Found Clothes," *Khudojestveny Journal* no. 18 (1998), available online, http://artnode.se/artorbit/issue2/i_russia_factory/i_russia_factory.html.
- <http://www.raumantaidemuseo.fi/rbb06/gluklya.htm>; presents basic information such as listing exhibitions and grants.

[trans. Lunchbox] **La Fiambrera**

1991 – ongoing: Valencia, Spain

See chapter 5, "Looking Closely," section 2.

Group Material

1979 – current status not ascertained: New York, USA

Since its formation, the much-cited Group Material has had a changing membership and each of its exhibitions has been shaped by a different team. Group Material's exhibitions, both in and beyond traditional art institutions, have generally

incorporated texts and commercial advertising, and featured an eclectic mix of artwork, from known and unknown artists, alongside everyday objects. One of the group's earliest exhibitions, *People's Choice* (New York 1979), involved verbally inviting local residents to contribute 'precious' objects of 'cultural value' displayed in their own homes, Group Material then 'democratically' presented the objects in their storefront gallery.¹ The 1989 exhibition, *AIDS Timeline*, involved a classroom style installation of medical, personal and social histories alongside artefacts, artworks and advertisements. One external wall of the venue was used as a site for the display of locals' responses to AIDS related questions, such as 'How does AIDS affect you and your lifestyle?'² An important element of the exhibition was the interaction with local AIDS organisations, which became collaborating forces in the exhibition. Beyond such relatively conventional exhibitions, Group Material has used a rich array of strategies to engage diverse audiences in difficult issues. For example *Inserts* involved a supplement placed inside copies of the Sunday New York Times. For Group Material, such activity is a response to the fact that "the social purpose of a particular artwork has [often] been clouded by the way it gets seen within the [art] market and the museum. The juxtaposition with other practices, some not even by artists, shows that art has other possible functions and readings."³ This is bound to Group Material's explicit aim of including diverse groups in its work, and creating, exhibiting and distributing art that increases awareness of social and political issues.

- Jan Avgikos, "Group Material Timeline: Activism as a Work of Art" in *But is it Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism*, ed. Nina Felshin (Washington: Bay Press, 1995), 85–116; includes an extensive bibliography relating to Group Material.
- Dan Cameron, "Group Material talks to Dan Cameron - '80s Then – Interview," *ArtForum International* XLI, no. 8 (April 1 2003).
- Philip Glahn, "Public Art: Avant-Garde Practice and the Possibilities of Critical Articulation," *Afterimage* vol. 28 no. 3 (November - December 2000).
- Suzanne Lacy, ed. *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Washington: Bay Press, 1995).^{1,2}
- <http://www.leftmatrix.com/grouptlist.html>; lists writings by and about the group alongside other useful information, much of which is accompanied by links.
- Gregory Sholette and Blake Stimson, eds. *Collectivism After Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination after 1945*, (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2007), 204-208 and others.
- Brian Wallis, ed. *Democracy: A Project by Group Material* (Seattle: Bay Press in association with the Dia Art Foundation, 1990).

Guerrilla Girls

1985 - ongoing: New York, USA

This collective consists of artists, provocateurs and art critics, who deliberately retain anonymity by obscuring their individual identities with guerrilla costumes and the names of dead women artists. Since the origination of the group with a street poster campaign in New York, several independent Chapters have formed in other cities to create a loose federation of anonymous members, and Guerrilla Girls have performed political actions in public spaces in the USA, Europe, Australia, Brazil, Mexico, Guatemala and New Zealand.¹ Describing themselves as 'cultural

terrorists' and 'the conscience of the art world,' the Guerrilla Girls aspire to combat institutional sexism and racism on both local and global scales.² Guerrilla Girls' concern is articulated through humorous and satirical 'weapons' such as posters about abortion rights, the Gulf War, homelessness and rape. These posters adopt the design of advertising slogans, using pointed language to convey information and provoke discussion.³ For example, *The Banana Report: The Guerrilla Girls Review the Whitney* (Manhattan, 1987) used statistics, text and billboard art alongside posters and flyers sharing 'an analysis of recent curatorial and acquisition practices of the Whitney Museum of American Art' and raising questions about the position of women and other minorities in the art institution.⁴ Through such projects, the Guerrilla Girls have exposed sexism and racism in social, cultural and political systems through posters, downloadable stickers, postcards, bus ads, photocopyable flyers, magazine spreads, books, printed projects, protest actions and a newsletter, *Hot Flashes*. By generally providing a range of associated material with each project, the Guerrilla Girls reach a large and diverse audience, which the group aims to prompt into similar critical action, by providing a model, motivation and inspiration.

- www.guerrillagirls.com/; the group's website containing a wealth of information including a chronology, a bibliography and interview material.³
- Elizabeth Hess, "Guerrilla Girl Power: Why the Art World Needs a Conscience" in *But is it Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism*, ed. Nina Felshin (Washington: Bay Press, 1995), 309–332. Hess' essay gives an account of the group's formation drawn largely from interviews with members, and includes an extensive bibliography.
- Suzanne Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Washington: Bay Press, 1995).^{1, 2, 4}
- Malcolm Miles, *Urban Avant-gardes: Art, Architecture and Change* (London: Routledge, 2004).

[trans. not ascertained] **Huit Facettes**

1995 - ongoing: Dakar, Senegal

This collective has organised projects and exhibitions, described as 'processual social interventions,' within Senegal's rural areas.¹ This has involved events such as a performance/concert in Dakar *Carrement pour la Paix* (Directly for Peace) (1997) and *Les ateliers d'Hamdallaye* (1998). The latter example involved workshops set up with the village community focusing on skills such dyeing, glass painting, embroidery, sculpture and traditional design. In this, local and international artists worked together 'as both leaders and participants' and exchanges were effected between local and global art worlds, between urban and rural domains and "between spheres that are traditionally alien to one another ... contemporary urban artists, a village community and a nongovernmental organization [sic]."² This is positioned as an attempt to reverse "the more common trajectory where peripheral, local artworks are exported to the global system of museums, galleries and art-fairs, a decontextualising process that frequently alters or deprives the work of its inherent social meaning."³ Okwui Enwezor explains how this is also a form of "direct engagement with the crisis in African social, political and cultural discourse in order to produce new networks that link [these discourses] to local communities."⁴ Huit

Facettes claims that its practice does not 'simply incorporate the local into the global,' confronting the workings of global modernity and redirecting the established flow of cultural capital, but achieves something of far more significance.⁵ For Huit Facettes it is "not a matter of making artists out of the inhabitants of Hamdallaye, but rather simply of putting them in a position to exercise their creative energy using the means available to them, showing them how it is possible to have a positive formative influence on one's environment (especially by acquiring new ways of seeing things) ... it is a question of setting into motion or stimulating the creative energy that is potentially present in every one of us, and that expresses itself in a variety of forms."⁶ In other words, "utilizing the capacities of creative energy, [Huit Facettes] aim to highlight and alter aberrations in the mostly rural Senegalese socio-political and economic systems ... [by] helping the participants to rediscover their creative abilities and cultural identities."⁷ In short, Huit Facettes aims "to free itself of the more haphazard and vulgar aspects of artistic means of expression as they are defined from the traditional western perspective" and to "engage with the most elemental aspects of artistic creation and transformation, based upon the restorative benefits of creativity and inventiveness for the dignity of all human life."⁸

- Okwui Enwezor, "The Production of Social Space as Artwork: Protocols of Community in the Work of Le Groupe Amos and Huit Facettes" in *Collectivism After Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination after 1945*, ed. Blake Stimson and Gregory Sholette (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press), 222-251.⁴
- F(r)iction project, "Le Groupe Amos and Huit Facettes" (December 8 2009) <http://frictionproject.wordpress.com/2009/12/08/le-groupe-amos-huit-facettes/>.^{3, 6}
- Huit Facettes, "Artist's Statement," paper presented at Groundworks: Environmental Collaboration in Contemporary Art. Exhibition, curated by Grant Kester (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon Univ., October 14 - December 11 2005), available online, <http://groundworks.collinsandgoto.com/statements/HuitFacettes.pdf>.^{1, 5, 7}
- Amadou Kane-Sy / Huit Facettes, "Beyond 'Postism: The Workshops of Hamdallaye,'" trans. Jennifer Taylor-Gaida (n.d.) http://www.springerin.at/dyn/heft_text.php?textid=1277&lang=en.
- Ted Purves, *What We Want is Free: Generosity and Exchange in Recent Art* (New York: State Univ. of New York Press, 2005), 128-9.^{2, 8}
- Nadja Rottner, "Huit Facettes" in *Documenta 11 Platform 5: Short Guide*, ed. Okwui Enwezor (New York: Hatje Cantz, 2002).

Imagine / RENDER

1990 – ongoing: Michigan, USA

Imagine / RENDER explains that its activities are geared to promote the objectives of a just and healthy society, that it "strives to create positive and lasting social change through the arts, education and projects that build community."¹ Central to this is *Imagine / RENDER*'s understanding of creativity, as involving both the imagination and the ability to shape life in the form of those imaginings. In order to nurture such creativity and enhance the possibilities of sustainable social change, the group pursues what are described as 'grassroots' activities such as gardening projects, workshops, seminars and its *Empty Bowls Project*. The latter project began as a local initiative, described as offering a model for action, "a tool which all can use in working towards the goal of ending hunger."² It has now expanded to

have a worldwide presence, implemented by those who take up *Imagine / RENDER*'s original model and involving small communities in shaping and developing projects in response to their own circumstances. "Each group that participates in the *Empty Bowls Project* works with their community to create their own event," which essentially involves each participant making a bowl and then hosting a meal at which the bowls are used.³ Guests at the meal keep the bowls they use, in return for an agreed donation, and the funds raised are donated to a range of hunger charities, such as food banks or soup kitchens, which are selected by the participating groups. According to *Imagine / RENDER* this is more than an attempt to address pathogenic social injustices by raising money; it focuses on nurturing creativity and awareness in an effort to "bring about an attitude that will not allow hunger food insecurity to exist."⁴

- Bruce Barber, "Littoralist Art Practice and Communicative Action" catalogue essay (March 1996) available online, www.imageandtext.org.n2; this essay sets out group's aims.³
- <http://www.emptybowls.net/imaginerender.htm>; the group's website is currently undergoing redevelopment, in its current limited form it gives brief details of the *Imagine / RENDER* group and the *Empty Bowls Project*.^{1,2,4}

[loosely trans. Exhaled Air] **Ip-Gim**

2000 – current status not ascertained: Seoul, South Korea

This all-female collaborative group aims "to bring art out of a traditional institutional setting and make it more accessible to the public ... [and] to dissolve the ice wall separating the art worlds of Korea along lines of gender and social class."¹ To this end, Ip-Gim's primary work has been the *Abanggung Occupation Project at Jongmyo* (2000), which was "initiated to rethink [South Korean] social and cultural tradition."² The project infiltrated the Jongmyo civic park, a public space containing the much-revered Jongmyo shrine, a "physical relic of Korea's male-dominated society and culture."³ This 'festival-type' infiltration involved placing images of women's bodies around the shrine, making caramel candy in the shape of genitalia and offering it to passers-by, surrounding the boundaries of the park with traditional pink skirts, symbols of female sexuality, encouraging children to run through a long narrow tube of pink cloth simulating a vagina and providing a karaoke and dancing area.⁴ Through this, Ip-Gim 'intended to raise awareness of the discriminatory practices of the royal culture, which has prohibited women from using the royal palaces, gardens and shrines and underpins continuing social inequalities.'⁵ When the project was met by considerable violence, the group used this to stimulate discussions, which culminated in a colourful protest march from Jongmyo to Insadong involving various women's organisations and non-government organisations, and Ip-Gim, alongside "thousands of men and women who joined in support to protest the violence against the Jongmyo Project ... [and] the behaviour of the patriarchs and demanded intervention by a government that had implicitly condoned the violence through silence and inaction."⁶

- Will Bradley and Charles Esche, *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader* (London: Tate Publishing in association with Afterall, 2007), 31 and 472.

- Linda Choy Inson, "Breaking Through: A Right of Passage for Feminist Artists in Korea (Continued)" (n.d.) <http://www.artwomen.org/Jongmyo/article-p3.htm>; an extensive essay detailing the Jongmyo project and giving a substantial body of contextual information.^{1, 3, 4, 5, 6}
- Ip-Gim, "Statement by the Feminist Artist Collective Ip-Gim" in *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader*, ed. Will Bradley and Charles Esche (London: Tate Publishing in association with Afterall, 2007), 293-296.²

[trans. ART://OFF THE NETWORK] **KUNST://ABSEITS VOM NETZ**

1997 - ongoing: Graz, Austria

KUNST://ABSEITS VOM NETZ (KAVN) describes itself as implementing 'artistic, political, medial, social and architectonic interventions' within public places.¹ These 'real-world political and artistic interventions' take place beyond the established systems of art, generally involving the urban structures of Graz, although more recently the group has been working further a-field. Each intervention is "conceived as a social sculpture," and shaped in collaboration with local residents, such as homeless people, alongside NGOs, communal public authorities and administrative bodies.² This is exemplified by interventions such as, *Abseits vom Netz* (Outside the Net) (1997 ...) and *Das vergessene Dorf* (The Forgotten Village) (1999 to 2003). The latter example involved the group working with a community living in old containers on the outskirts of Graz to improve living conditions and give this systematically marginalised community a voice. This involved renovating the containers alongside building a communication room on the premises, which would include a public phone booth, a library and a media link-up through satellite TV and radio. KAVN explains how each intervention is accompanied by 'scientific sociological studies' and then carried on by partner-organizations to extend over several years. These interventions are described as long-term projects that "favour the preservation and development of social surviving-zones" and are intended to 'promote effective, lasting and positive changes.'³ The group sets out concise aims, claiming that its basic intention is to "achieve real changes for margined groups of the population, concrete improvements in living-conditions in response to social and political issues that are characteristic of an increasingly aggressive capitalistic oriented, globalised economic world."⁴

- <http://kavn.mur.at/>; the group's site gives information on several projects accompanied by visual material.¹
- <http://offsite.kulturserver-graz.at/personen/401>; provides visual material and locations of projects.
- <http://cym.net/1999/12/23/?size>; includes photographs of *The Forgotten Village* accompanied by a brief text.
- <http://dvd.mur.at/base/story01e.html>; a short film on *The Forgotten Village*.
- <http://www.scca.ba/minimal.htm>; this includes a profile of the group and details of KUNST://ABSEITS VOM NETZ's *Permanent / Temporary Urban Sculpture* (Graz 2003) and its *Permanent / Temporary Urban Sculpture* (Sarajevo, Bosnia/Herzegovina 2003).^{2, 3}

1989 - ongoing: Lancashire, UK

Littoral describes itself as an 'arts trust' "working for social change, cultural equity and environmental sustainability." For Littoral, this involves organising conferences and conducting social research alongside developing and promoting 'socially engaged public art' projects. In brief, these activities support social inclusion initiatives in urban and rural contexts, respond to the crisis in British agriculture and address economic regeneration in a variety of ways. Littoral explains that the aim underlying this activity is "to bring a wide range of creative and critical strategies to bear on the complexities of real life problems." The group states that it 'attempts to gain a purchase in social, economic and environmental zones of complexity, uncertainty, underinvestment, marginality and social instability' and that it focuses on nurturing "new ways of understanding and responding to the life world." While Littoral's activity has generally focused on the North West region of England, it has also developed national initiatives and organised international events. For example, the group was involved in *Routes* (2000-1), a collaborative project in Northern Ireland, that aimed to promote anti-sectarianism initiatives and better community relations. In this Littoral worked in collaboration with Trade Unions, bus workers, artists and film makers. In fact working with others in this way is central to Littoral's practice. Discussing this dimension of its work, Littoral uses terms such as 'immersion strategies,' 'interface working,' 'seamless working' and working from the 'inside,' to explain itself as moving away from the restraints of Enlightenment/Modernist practices. This group also asserts that it is part of an emerging international network of artists who, with other voluntary organisations and partners, are working to address similar concerns.

- www.greenmuseum.org; the group is briefly on this website.
- Ian Hunter, "New Critical Centres for Art in Ireland," *Circa*, vol. 102 (Winter 2002), 38-42.
- Ian Hunter, ed. *Littoral: New Zones for Critical Art Practice* (n.p.: Projects Environment in association with University College Salford, 1996).
- Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces* (n.d.) www.capagallery.com/cepa/exhibit.
- <http://www.littoral.org.uk>; the group's website containing extensive visual and textual material, including a bibliography, the group's background and aims, and future Littoral programmes (all references in the passage above are drawn from this source).

Los Angeles Poverty Department

1985 - ongoing: Los Angeles, USA

Since its inception, Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD) has focused on creating "performance work that connects lived experience to the social forces that shape the lives and communities of people living in poverty."¹ LAPD has initiated an array of projects that align day-to-day experiences of the economically impoverished and homeless residents of Los Angeles with a larger social and political context while exposing the root causes and policies that help perpetuate such poverty. For

LAPD, 'performance' appears to involve inviting others to participate, or to take the more conventional role of observer. For instance, *UTOPIA/dystopia* (2007) was a response to the 'displacement of the majority population of poor people living in the greater downtown area and the constant harassment and daily arrests of people living on the streets' as a consequence of the real estate boom and consequent regeneration of the area. LAPD asked 'homeless and formerly homeless members of the community, the working poor, immigrants and their families and the area's burgeoning loft-living population' to articulate their individual dreams, and to meet and share those dreams in the city's public spaces. This involved several strategies, including workshops, discussions and film screenings alongside indoor and outdoor performance events, such as *220 Glimpses of Utopia an Outdoor Utopian Movement Chain*. LAPD explains that this brought together diverse visions of a utopian downtown Los Angeles, which informed and broadened the public discourse around regeneration. As a whole, according to LAPD, these 'strategic public art actions' exercise the essence of art, "flexing the muscle of vision, the muscle of imagination."²

- Tom Jones, *The Real Deal* DVD 78 mins. (New York: Halo Group); this documentary details the evolution and impact of the Los Angeles Poverty Department. An excerpt, the 'Jim Beam story,' is available online, <http://halogroup.net/jimbeame.mov> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbewD3gY3Aw>.
- <http://www.lapovertydept.org/about-lapd/index.php>; LAPD's website offers an accessible and comprehensive collection of material on the group.^{1, 2}
- Ferdinand Lewis, "Case Study: Los Angeles Poverty Department" (January 2001) <http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archive/perfcomm/lapd/index.php>.
- Ferdinand Lewis, "Los Angeles Poverty Department: Field Notes" (January 2001) <http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archive/perfcomm/lapd/lapd-fieldnotes.php>.

[trans. the Better Life Corporation] **Mejor Vida Corporation**

1998 - ongoing: Mexico City, Mexico

Mejor Vida Corporation (MVC) strategically imitates the structure of a private corporation, but it defies the notions of commodification and profit fundamental to such structures, it also contradicts corporate values of prestige, authority and expansion by restricting the possibilities for its own growth and centralising interpersonal exchange.¹ The corporation is described as a parasite, using the corporate system to make its pathogenic nature visible, and as 'exploring the politics of contemporary hope.'² Working with technicians, engineers, sociologists, various publics and, occasionally, other artists, the corporation devises products, services and campaigns that are "effectively gratuitous giveaways and urban guerrilla interventions that explore the deficiencies, inequity and ethical dilemmas of the capitalist socio-economic system."³ For example, MVC intervened in the Mexican National Lottery by giving away free lottery tickets to passers-by, which was intended to highlight the fact that the huge prizes offered obscure the fact that it finances public assistance. Other unexplained gifts given by the corporation have included pre-stamped envelopes, subway tickets during rush hour and customised scanner bar codes that reduce the price of goods in supermarket chains.⁴ The

corporation also addresses issues of social inequality by disseminating information regarding poverty in Mexico, providing services such as letter writing on request and cleaning public buildings.⁵ Furthermore, the MVC undertakes projects such as poster campaigns highlighting local poverty-related issues and the unethical nature of multinational companies' practices. In essence, these activities are intended to provoke reactions among specific publics, to make people question everyday issues, and ask new questions about common things. The corporation aims to promote ideological critique and generate alternative perspectives, to "open up previously linear and authoritative exchanges to public critique and challenge."⁶ Consequently, Ted Purves describes its work as a combination of "utopian thought, social democracy and economic critique."⁷

- "Conversation between Hans Ulrich Obrist and Minerva Cuevas" (2001)
<http://www.antiNATO.org>.⁶
- Cuauhtemoc Medina, "Recent Political Forms, Radical Pursuits in Mexico" (n.d.)
<http://www.irational.org/mvc>.²
- Minerva Cuevas, "For a Human Interface – Mejor Vida Corp." (2003)
http://www.irational.org/minerva/cuevas_interface-EN.pdf.
- Minerva Cuevas, "Public Lighting and Moonlight" (2005)
http://www.irational.org/minerva/minerva_gaga11.pdf.²
- Minerva Cuevas, "Statement" for the Biennale of Sydney (2004), available online,
http://esvc000946.wic004u.server-web.com/downloads/minerva_cuevas.pdf.^{1,3}
- Ruben Gallo, *New Tendencies in Mexican Art: The 1990s*, New Directions in Latino American Culture (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 101-156 and others.
- <http://www.irational.org/mvc>; an expansive website offering texts, visual material, information on MVC campaigns, products and services, and the possibility of ordering these products and services.^{4,5}
- Ted Purves, ed. *What we Want is Free: Generosity and Exchange in Recent Art* (Albany, New York: State Univ. of New York Press, 2005), 159; a brief description of the *Student Identification Cards* project.⁷

Mindbomb

2002 – ongoing: Cluj, Romania

Mindbomb is a community of anonymous graphic artists, architects, writers and IT specialists, combining their ideas, interests, resources and skills to 'change attitudes not politics.'¹ In other words, Mindbomb is concerned with stirring the forces that can counteract pathogenic environmental, social and political issues; our "innermost nature ... our intimate thoughts and principles."² Mindbomb aims to 'coax people into becoming active participants in discussions that should be tackled as part of a collective process of deliberation and decision making.'³ Mindbomb's approach to achieving this has involved developing a series of critical but inspirational 'social posters,' which 'absorb latent themes that everybody knows are floating around, and mix images and slogans to ultimately foster critique and action among individuals and communities; these poster campaigns are intended to prompt questioning and reflection on the Romanian reality – social, political, cultural.'⁴ For example, the poster action *Mindbomb for Rosia Montana*, involved a series of potent posters drawing attention to an environmentally and socially destructive gold mining project planned for Rosia Montana, a town in western Romania. However, Mindbomb is

clear that its work is more than a series of street posters, more than pointing to issues or seeking solutions to issues such as local gold mining and the exercise of corporate power; “We are hurting ourselves, but we can’t stop ... where and when does this confusion end? Mindbomb gives you the images. The answers are for you to find ...”⁵

- Dan Mercea, “Exploding Iconography: the Mindbomb Project,” *EastBound* no.1 (2006), 246-283, available online, http://eastbound.eu/site_media/pdf/060112mercea.pdf; a highly informative essay including a bibliography and interviews with ‘mindbombers.’^{2, 3, 4}
- Mindbomb, “Mindbomb Manifesto” (2004) <http://www.mindbomb.ro/index.php?vid=90&item=f343ba3fd133156d61dcaac01d0cb083&mod=fullpage&lang=RO>.¹
- <http://www.mindbomb.ro/index.php>; informative website, contains images and descriptions of posters, the group’s manifesto and other writings (translation of this material into English is pending, according to site).⁵

[trans. Do Not Bend] **Ne Pas Plier**

1991 - ongoing: Paris, France

Brian Holmes describes Ne Pas Plier as “a small French association that distributes graphic art productions in collaboration with social movements.”¹ The group was founded “so that the signs of misery [would] not be doubled by the misery of signs” and “the goal from the start was not just to make socially engaged images, but to use them, to get them out on the street, to unfold their meanings in public confrontations.”² In essence, this collaborative group brings together all kinds of skills, passions and information, it gives these form and then lets them slip away; diffuse through society.³ For instance, the group produces a tape printed with ‘resistanceexistence’ that can be used to demarcate public spaces, and transform transit spaces into discursive places. For the 2001 protests in Quebec, Ne Pas Plier produced posters and stickers with slogans such as ‘utopiste debout’ [upstanding utopian] and words such as ‘free’ in various languages. These stickers and posters were a ‘political gift’, part of a ‘dispersive art’ that was given away to strangers, often in considerable quantities so that the act of giving a political sign was open to anyone.⁴ Such action is typical of Ne Pas Plier’s focus on hand-to-hand exchanges that can be multiplied over time, on giving free tools and support to those concerned with radical social change. For example, Ne Pas Plier collaborates with and supports a range of other social organisations, ‘ordinary people’ and activists, such as the anarchist alliance CASA and l’Apeis (Association for employment, information and solidarity for jobless and casual workers).⁵ The group has also worked with Sans Papier, a movement supporting immigrants and refugees and others without papers. In other words, Ne Pas Plier tackles social issues, but it does this in collaboration with people who are part of that issue on a daily basis. Ne Pas Plier is concerned with social transformation, with the counter power of artistic action, and primarily with addressing the logic of inequality, but emphasises the playful and the paradoxical throughout. Holmes explains that the group aims to “express the violence of contemporary capitalism, to make it real here and now where the power is and to go beyond it in the same movement.” “Ne Pas Plier aims

to take us somewhere we have never been before, to change politics and to change life.”⁶

- Mona Chollet and Thomas Lemahieu, “Dans l’atelier de Ne Pas Plier, à Ivry-sur-Seine: Des Images Plein les Mains,” *Peripheries* (March 2001), available online, <http://peripheries.net/article290.html>.
- Brian Holmes, “Carnival and Counterpower – Québec FTAA Summit” (2000) <http://www.nettime.org>.^{1, 4, 6}
- Brian Holmes, “Liar’s Poker: Representation of Politics: Politics of Representation,” *Springerin* (2003), available online, <http://www.springerin.at/en/>; one of many texts by Holmes published in the German journal *Springerin*.
- Brian Holmes, “Ne Pas Plier – Déplier” (n.d.) http://www.k3000.ch.bulletin/kollegiale_arbeit/archive/site009.html.^{2, 3}
- “The Non Place Urban Realm,” supplement *Variant* vol. 2 no. 10 (Spring 2000), 1-3.
- Unattributed, “Nous ne sommes pas en trop, nous sommes en plus: Incursions avec l’APEIS et Ne Pas Plier,” *Peripheries* (March 2001), available online, <http://www.peripheries.net/article285.html>; a lengthy essay (in French).⁵

Nine Mile Run - Greenway Project

1997-2000: Pittsburgh, USA

This project began in response to the Pittsburgh City Council’s planned construction of housing and open spaces on a 100-acre slag heap, illegally dumped by-products of the steel industry. Nine Mile Run – Greenway Project (NMR – GP) responded to this plan by implementing the model of ‘conversational drift,’ ‘engaging the public in meaningful conversations about public opportunities for reclaiming this area and its urban rivers and streams.’¹ For NMR – GP, this area is a ‘complex system of land, water and historic socio-political inequities’ and addressing these inequalities has involved engaging a diverse group of ‘citizen stakeholders’ from the among the local communities and concurrently ‘relinquishing the group’s authorship.’² This led to the collaborative initiation of discussions, site tours, workshops and other activities that eventually shaped a “an integrated ecosystem restoration indicative of nature’s complex goals.”³ The collective explains that this project encompasses much more than reclamation of land, that value shifts are the primary focus of its creative practice.⁴ Sue Spaid notes that the project has had far-reaching consequences; “NMR – GP-related activities eventually altered everybody’s cultural, aesthetic, economic and ecological values.”⁵

- http://greenmuseum.org/content/artist_index/artist_id-32.html; a brief description of the project.^{2, 4}
- Sue Spaid, “Agents of Perceptual Change” in *Ecoventions: Current Art to Transform Ecologies* (Cincinnati: greenmuseum.org and [ecoartspace](http://ecoartspace.org) in association with The Contemporary Arts Center, 2002), 61-64.^{1, 3, 5}

1997 - ongoing: Istanbul, Turkey

Oda Projesi describes itself as “a social sculpture in process, an unfinished everyday life experience being shaped by the relationships between people and spaces.”¹ Most of Oda Projesi’s work takes place in the Galata neighbourhood of Istanbul, where, since its formation, the collaborative has rented a small ground floor apartment with a courtyard. Rather than living in this apartment, the group uses it as a platform for its projects. Oda Projesi, explains that this allows the group and its projects to function as a continuous part of the local community, rather than part of any institutional framework, which corresponds with its focus on building long-term collaborative relationships with the people in Galata.² The ‘works’ that have taken place in this flat and its neighbourhood include installations, conversations, birthday parties, film screenings, actions, picnics, discussions, events and workshops, alongside exhibition events all aimed at addressing the local sense of isolation.³ The group has reluctantly left the rented flat in Galata, due to gentrification of the area, however it continues to develop its activities. Oda Projesi claims that it has developed an ‘organic relationship model’ through the work in Galata, which it implements when invited to work in other contexts. For example, in response to an invitation to work with Kunstprojekte_riem (Munich 2003), the group rented an apartment in Munich’s outskirts and, following a period of research into the local area, used one of the rooms as a site for its work with local communities, for ‘temporary togetherness and identification.’⁴ Oda Projesi’s emphasis on everyday relationships is explained in a brief summary of the group’s activities, which states that it “is interested in art as a means to create new ways of living and dynamic relations among different uses of private and public spaces, bridging the gap between artists, non-artists and communities.”⁵ According to Maria Lind, Oda Projesi’s work is “about using art as a means for creating and recreating new relations between people through diverse investigations and shaping of both private and public space ... Oda Projesi wants to contribute to a change in how society functions ... [by changing] consciousness of the life codes that surround us.”⁶ Oda Projesi itself claims, “what’s provided is quite simply a multidimensional space for ourselves and the neighbours.”⁷ The group is careful to avoid stating any ideological objective or making any claim of offering empowerment, education or improvement; as Lind notes, the group avoids “‘reform’ or ‘do-gooder’ rhetoric in relation to ‘the other.’”⁸

- <http://www.fkv.de/de/OdaProjesiEN.htm>; website for Frankfurter Kunstverein offering a press release for an artist’s talk and workshop by the group (2006).
- Erden Kosova, “Face to Face” (March 2006) <http://www.tenstakonsthall.se/?subDir=doc&id=254>; this essay focuses on the conditions of Turkish society, in which Oda Projesi is embedded, and gives lengthy descriptions of the political terrain of Istanbul, with particular focus on Galata.
- http://www.kunstprojekte-riem.de/English/projects/projekte_oda_projesi_1_e.html; a brief statement regarding the group and its involvement with kunstprojekte_riem, in the City of Munich.⁵
- Maria Lind, “Actualisation of Space: The Case of Oda Projesi” (October 2004) <http://www.republicart.net>; Lind visited the group in 2001 and 2003 to conduct research for this paper.^{3, 6, 8}
- Nina Montmann, “Mixing with the Locals: Process and Identity in the Work of Oda Projesi” (March 2006) <http://www.tenstakonsthall.se/?subDir=doc&id=252>.^{2, 7}
- <http://www.odaprojesi.com>; the group’s website includes texts and copious visual material relating to its various projects.^{1, 4}

→ <http://www.odaprojesi.com/reim/index.html>; a text outlining the group's activity with reference to public art and the avoidance of hierarchical positioning.

PLATFORM

1983 - ongoing: London, UK

Although PLATFORM primarily works in London and the Thames Valley, it has made major presentations of its work nationally and internationally. This connection with place is central to PLATFORM's application of "creative and critical strategies to real life social and ecological problems."¹ In response to such problems, PLATFORM combines the activity of artists, activists, social scientists and environmentalists, bringing individuals from different arenas together so that they may work collectively establishing "an open space for dialogue and ideas."² For example, since 2002, PLATFORM has periodically run experimental *Critical Walks in the City* around London's square mile. These walks are described as 'rolling discussions,' run according to specific themes and engage around 20 participants in each session. PLATFORM notes that, in many of its works, it has facilitated intimate engagement among invited audiences of between 6 and 20 individuals. For example, *Killing us Softly* events have typically involved 9 people in each of the 10-hour performances, such as a corporate psychologist, an environmental activist, a performance student and a Holocaust historian.³ The group has also used strategies such as distributing 26,000 copies of a free newspaper, *Ignite*, around London (1996 and 1977) to engage wider 'communities of interest.'⁴ PLATFORM explains that it primarily seeks to engage audiences in "the most intense and moving way possible" and to "connect audiences in London with the wider world, [to] enable individuals to understand their own power and ethical responsibilities."⁵ The motives underlying this intense discursive engagement of 'communities of interest' are articulately expressed in PLATFORM's six clearly defined aims, or core principles, which focus on "promoting creative processes of democratic engagement to advance social and ecological justice."⁶ These aims are as follows: 'operating as a catalyst for change, unleashing citizens' creative and democratic potential; creating space for individuals not representatives, for 'communities of interest'; using practical and poetic strategies; fostering interdisciplinary creativity; evolving long-term projects with a deep commitment to London's socio-ecological development; generating infectious visions, feeding them into the social bloodstream.'⁷ In short, PLATFORM follows a "vision of using creativity to transform the society we live in; a belief in every individual's innate power to contribute to this process."⁸

- Wallace Heim, "Slow Activism. Homelands, Love and the Lightbulb" in *Nature Performed: Environment, Culture and Performance*, ed. Wallace Heim et al. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 183–202.
- An interview with Jane Trowell in "Think Local / Act Global, Public Art and Social Change," issue of *Public Art Journal, The Magazine of Art and the Social Domain*, vol. 1 no. 2 (October 1999), 28-9.
- Malcolm Miles, "Seeing Through Place: Local Approaches to Global Problems" in *Recoveries and Reclamations*, ed. Judith Rugg and Daniel Hinchcliffe (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2002) 77-105.

- Malcolm Miles, *Urban Avant-gardes: Art, Architecture and Change* (London: Routledge, 2004).
- <http://www.platformlondon.org/>; the group's website containing sections on current, future and past projects, underlying theory and publications, alongside an archive and a wealth of visual material.^{1, 6, 7}
- PLATFORM, "Artist's Statement" presented at Groundworks: Environmental Collaboration in Contemporary Art, exhibition curated by Grant Kester (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon Univ. October 14 - December 11 2005), available online, <http://3r2n.cfa.cmu.edu/groundworks/statements/platform.pdf>.
- PLATFORM, "Participant's Position Paper" presented at the Monongahela Conference, organised by 3R2N (n.p.: October 2003), available online, <http://moncon.greenmuseum.org/papers/platform.pdf>.^{2, 3, 4, 5, 8}
- www.remembersarowiwa.com; the website of a project initiated and co-ordinated by PLATFORM, and involving a coalition of organisations and individuals.

Reclaim the Streets

1991 - ongoing: London

Reclaim the Streets describes itself as a 'disorganisation,' a "direct action network for global and local social-ecological revolution(s) to transcend hierarchical and authoritarian society, (capitalism included), and still be home in time for tea."¹ From its inception, this disorganisation has experimented with radical forms of street protest, asserting that "ultimately it is in the [streets](#) that power must be dissolved: for the [streets](#) where daily life is endured, suffered and eroded, and where power is confronted and fought, must be turned into the domain where daily life is *enjoyed, created and nourished*."² The group has made particularly effective tactical use of the street party, reclaiming it from the "inaneities of royal jubilees and state celebrations," and re-valuing it as "the magical collision of carnival and rebellion, play and politics."³ This 'potent recipe,' involving performances, dancing, bizarre costumes and props, games, parties, pranks and pleasure, has enabled the group and its participants to occupy places such as Camden high street (1995), the M41 motorway (1996) and, using 'non-violent gardening action,' Parliament Square (2000). Since the inception of Reclaim the Streets, this model of non-violent playful protest has been taken up on a global scale by a wide range of movements. For example, Global Street Party (1998) involved protest actions in over 24 cities, including Bogota, Brisbane, Tel Aviv and Turku, while the most recent manifestation occurred in Zurich (2010). Reclaim the Streets is articulate in its assertion that this type of direct action is "about destroying ... power and authority, and people taking responsibility for themselves. Direct action is not just a tactic; it is an end in itself. It is about enabling people to unite as individuals with a common aim, to change things directly by their own actions."⁴

- Notes from Nowhere, "Reclaim the Streets: An Arrow of Hope" in *We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anticapitalism* (New York: Verso, 2003), 50-61.³
- Reclaim the Streets, "The Evolution of Reclaim the Streets," *Do Or Die: Voices from the Ecological Resistance* no. 6 (Summer 1997), 1-10, available online, <http://www.eco-action.org/dod/no6/rts.htm>.⁴

- <http://rts.gn.apc.org/>; Reclaim the Streets website offers a comprehensive resource, with archives of past works, reports, a rich array of essays and many links to other groups and initiatives.^{1, 2, 3}
- Benjamin Shepard, "A Post-Absurd, Post-Camp Activist Moment: Turning NYC into a Patriot Act Free Zone" (February 5 2004) <http://www.counterpunch.org/shepard02052004.html>; an extensive account of the group's work in New York (2003).
- Gregory Sholette and Nato Thompson, eds. *The Interventionists: User's Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 17; briefly mentions the group, but also has a whole section taking the group's name as a title to encompass similar groups.

®™ark

Dates not ascertained: Chicago, USA.

The organisation of this anonymous collaborative is described as "a close parody of a corporation, intended specifically to foster opposition to the manifestations of corporate globalisation."¹ In effect, the group provides a hub for those engaged in such opposition. Alongside shaping 'artful actions of protest' the group 'serves as an historian as well as a source of funds.'² That is, its website gathers information and financial donations from visitors, who are also encouraged to generate their own actions, and presents a wealth of documentary material on otherwise obscure and marginalised actions. The wealth of material and inspiration provided for and with the activist community is best appreciated by visiting the website.

- Ted Purves, ed. *What We Want is Free: Generosity and Exchange in Recent Art* (New York: State Univ. of New York Press, 2005), 111; a brief description of the group's *Archimedes* project (2001).^{1, 2}
- <http://www.rtmark.com>.

[trans. scraps] Skart

1990 – ongoing: Belgrade, Serbia

See chapter 5, "Looking Closely," section 2.

1996 – ongoing: Denmark

See chapter 5, “Looking Closely,” section 2.

The Surveillance Camera Players

1996 – ongoing: New York, USA

This group describes itself as “part of the revolution of everyday life,” a “model for autonomous networked activity.”¹ In essence, the Surveillance Camera Players effect a form of ‘detournment’ that uses “the placement of surveillance cameras in public places to create a theatre of rebellion and trust, rather than a theatre of conformity and fear.”² For the group, its simple walking tours and performances in front of surveillance cameras, turn the mechanism of state control back on itself. Using everyday materials as props the group presents its performances as a form of objection and resistance to increasing privatisation, which it sees as occurring on three levels; spatial, functional and socio-psychological. In this the group “offers analyses of the right to privacy, the militarization of the police, the ideology of transparency, the mass psychology of fascism, the society of the spectacle, the Patriot Act, September 11th, face recognition software, reality TV, webcams and wireless systems,” among other things.³ Consequently, according to one commentator, it offers “an inspiration for those despairing of the dearth of creative political dissent in today's world.”⁴

- Gregory Sholette and Nato Thompson, eds. *The Interventionists: User's Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 83-86; includes a brief interview with the group.^{1,2}
- “The Surveillance Camera Players: completely distrustful of all government” (2006) <http://www.notbored.org/the-scp.html>; the group's highly comprehensive homepage, which provides access to a wealth of material on the group, its concerns and its co-rebels.
- The Surveillance Camera Players, *We Know You Are Watching: Surveillance Camera Players 1996-2006* (n.p.: Southpaw Culture Factory School, 2006).^{3,4}

Temporary Services

1998 - ongoing: Chicago, USA

Temporary Services claims that its work is a form of resistance to the myth of the 'rugged individual' and the extreme exploitation that frequently underpins such individualism, and that it is a "validation of the complexity of social relations in which each individual operates."¹ Temporary Services describes its focus as seeking to "both create and participate in relationships that are not competitive and are mutually beneficial," and stimulating shared "aesthetic experiences that are built upon trust and unlimited experimentation."² In other words, the group tests out and develops "tactics for harnessing the generosity of many individuals in order to produce projects on a scale that [could not be achieved] in isolation."³ For Temporary Services, this involves working within the everyday, in 'publicly trafficked spaces' favouring temporary, ephemeral projects that can be encountered serendipitously by those who may avoid art, the element of surprise is an important aspect of their work.⁴ This approach has led to projects such as a daylong bicycle ride for children and teenagers in an empty city lot, the distribution of free clothes, the production of informational materials that have been distributed among diverse groups and the production of tools, including a range of wearable inflatable devices, such as walls, instant crowds and arm extensions that can be used to create 'spontaneous spectacles or disturbances.'⁵ In this way, Temporary Services sees itself as putting a range of tactics into the everyday domain that can then be taken up by others. This focus on communication and mutually beneficial action, on "the creation of spaces for dialogue, reconfiguring social formations and experiencing aesthetics in transparent and focused ways," is similarly evident in the way that the group presents its website, as a space for the transmission and archiving of ideas, concerns and practices.⁶

- Gregory Sholette, "Dark Matter" (2003) www.NeMe.org; this essay is also available from <http://www.rtmark.com/>.
- Gregory Sholette, "Some Call It Art: From Imaginary Autonomy to Autonomous Collectivity" (January 2002) www.NeMe.org.
- Ted Purves, ed. *What We Want is Free: Generosity and Exchange in Recent Art* (New York: State Univ. of New York Press, 2005), 122-124.
- <http://www.temporarieservices.org>; the group's website offers extensive information on its various activities, visual material, copies of many of the group's booklets and related texts.^{1, 2, 3, 6}
- Temporary Services, "As We Live, So We Work" (n.d.) <http://www.temporarieservices.org/contact.html>; a brief paper introducing the group's practice.
- Temporary Services, "Participant's Position Paper" presented at the Monongahela Conference, organised by 3R2N (n.p.: October 2003), available online, <http://moncon.greenmuseum.org/papers/temp.pdf>.^{4, 5}

1973 - ongoing: Los Angeles, USA

As the name suggests, this organisation focuses on tree planting. This is seen as a means of improving ecological relations and social interactions, of addressing the 'technologisation' and bureaucratisation of the everyday in Los Angeles and further afield.¹ TreePeople is primarily concerned with the increasing co-optation of social and individual responsibilities and power by governments and institutions, and centres on 'creating community' in a way that enables those communities to recapture power and self-sufficiency. TreePeople aims to demonstrate the power and potential of coordinated grassroots community action, and to facilitate direct experience of this power.² In essence, in response to requests from individuals and groups in the Los Angeles area, TreePeople initiates long-term urban planting projects that depend on co-operative action among local communities and sub-communities where they 'work, shop, play and live,' or as the group puts it, on 'voluntary citizen action.'³ In planting events, such as the 400-tree 7-mile *Martin Luther King Boulevard Tree Planting* (1990), small units of 4 to 6 participants take responsibility for each tree and once planted these are cared for by a local resident or shopkeeper. This example began with the formation of *The King Boulevard Memorial Committee*, which spent four months planning, negotiating, canvassing, fundraising and conducting outreach work, and ended up directly involving over 3,000 participants.⁴ Through such actions, TreePeople has generated the 'Citizen Forestry Movement,' which has a 25,000 strong grassroots membership. In addition, TreePeople published *The Simple Act* as a handbook for other organisations or individuals and many international projects have been inspired by this model, such as *Target: 200 Million Trees by 1988* (Australia 1983-88).⁵

- Andy Lipkis and Kate Lipkis, *The Simple Act of Planting a Tree – A Citizen Foresters' Guide to Healing Your Neighbourhood, Your City and Your World* (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher Inc., 1990).^{1,5}
- Andy Lipkis, in *Sculpting with the Environment: A Natural Dialogue*, ed. Baile Oakes (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1995), 202-15.^{2,4}
- <http://www.treepeople.com>; this website offers a wealth of information, on the group and related initiatives, alongside visual material.³

University of the Trees

2002 – ongoing: Exeter, UK

University of the Trees (UoT) describes itself as an alternative, mobile, "participatory, global, social sculpture for developing creative responses to the ecological crisis, through new ways of perceiving our relationship to the world."¹ UoT clearly articulates the focus of this work; it "offers 'instruments' and approaches for exploring the connection between imagination and transformation, between the poetic and the practical, and for developing new forms of creative action in response to the huge challenges facing us all."² While UoT has a clear vision of the means to

respond to these challenges, it avoids adopting an overly prescriptive stance; it provides tools, or 'a kit of elements and processes,' which can be used by an existing group, or by individuals to set up a self-determined group.³ In this way, UoT "enables groups and individuals around the world to participate in processes of joined up thinking, perception and action" in a very particular and yet open way. This 'social sculpture network' currently has branches growing in Darmstadt, Exeter, Oxford and Bangalore, with each of these groups developing 'instruments of consciousness' and "connecting individual insight, focused dialogue and collective action towards the shaping of a humane and ecologically viable world."⁴

- <http://www.social-sculpture.org/developments/projects-processes-and-transactions1/untitled-document.htm>.
- <http://www.universityofthetrees.org/>; the project's website is highly accessible and informative.^{1, 2, 3, 4}

[trans. Weeks of Enclosure] **WochenKlausur**

1993 – ongoing: Vienna, Austria

WochenKlausur's projects always begin with an invitation; using the host's exhibition space as a nucleus WochenKlausur develops what it describes as 'concrete proposals aimed at small, but effective, improvements to socio-political deficiencies which are invariably translated into action.'¹ Developed within the physical and temporal framework of the exhibition, these proposals focus on local 'deficiencies' and are shaped by collectives made up of a selection of group members, artists from the communities where projects are to be held and specialists from relevant fields, such as medicine, youth work or refugees' rights. All WochenKlausur's projects are titled *Intervention in ...*, *to ...* or *for ...*, such as *Intervention in Voting Systems* (Stockholm 2002) and *Intervention to Improve the Public Perception of Subcultures* (Helsingborg 2003-4).² This emphasises the fact that "WochenKlausur's motivation for their projects is not merely to pose socio-political questions, but to incite action."³ In other words, WochenKlausur focuses on instigating small sustainable socio-political changes that can continue evolving in the hands of local communities once the group has left.⁴ For example, WochenKlausur's interventions have made free medical care available to homeless people in Vienna (1993), established a social centre for older residents of Civitella d'Agliano (1994), provided immigration assistance to refugees in Graz (1995) and given various subcultures and interest groups in Helsingborg "a chance to participate more intensely in public life" (2003-4).⁵ The group claims that focusing on clearly defined problems and goals allows it to observe the achievement of objectives in concrete terms, and its work is consistently held up as a model of radically expanded art practice.⁶

- Bruce Barber, "Littoralist Art Practice and Communicative Action," catalogue essay (1996), available online, <http://www.imageandtext.org.n2>.
- "Concrete Social Interventions: Interview with Jeanne Pascale of the Artists' Group WochenKlausur," *Variant 16* (Winter 2003), available online, http://www.variant.org.uk/16texts/Concrete_Interventions.html.⁴
- Grant Kester, "Conversation Pieces" (n.d.) <http://www.capagallery.com/cepa/exhibits>.

- Katharina Lentz (representing WochenKlausur), presentation at Curating Post-Institutions, conference organised by Homeless and the Institute of Contemporary Art (London, 1999).
- Ted Purves, ed. *What We Want is Free: Generosity and Exchange in Recent Art* (New York: State Univ. of New York Press, 2005), 133 and elsewhere.
- Gregory Sholette, "Some Call It Art: From Imaginary Autonomy to Autonomous Collectivity" (January 2002) www.NeMe.org.
- Gregory Sholette, "Dark Matter" (2003) www.NeMe.org. This essay is also available from <http://www.rtmark.com/>.
- <http://www.wochenklausur.at/>; the group's website contains a range of texts about and by the group, alongside detailed descriptions and visual material for most of its interventions and reflexive accounts of the group's methods.^{1, 3, 4, 5, 6}
- WochenKlausur, "Artist's Statement," presented at Groundworks: Environmental Collaboration in Contemporary Art, exhibition curated by Grant Kester (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon Univ., October 14 - December 11 2005), available online, <http://3r2n.cfa.cmu.edu/groundworks/statements/wochenklausur.pdf>.
- WochenKlausur, information leaflet, distributed at the 48th Venice Biennale (Venice: June 8-17 1999).²
- Wolfgang Zingl, *Wochenklausur: Sociopolitical Activism in Art* (Vienna: Springer Verlag, 2001).

The Yes Men

1999 – ongoing: Unspecified

This "genderless, loose-knit association of three hundred imposters" has become infamous for its 'undercover' infiltrations of corporate domains and government departments.¹ In short, this group mimics the multifarious strategies of these domains, turns them upside down and reveals their absurdity by using a variety of bizarre PowerPoint presentations, costumes, objects and activities. The Yes Men's practice has included numerous satirical lectures, packs of playing cards parodying a set produced by the Pentagon (2002) and the *GoBush* project, which involved the Yes Men constructing a satirical campaign for George W. Bush complete with a reworked version of the former President's website (1999).² The group attracted widespread attention following its presentation, on behalf of the World Trade Organisation, of a keynote address to three hundred international conference attendees (Finland 2001). The Yes Men concluded their contribution to the conference with what has been described as an "over-the-top, farcical finale."³ This project actually began in 1999 when the group launched a website using the domain name gatt.org, a 'slightly modified' version of the General Agreement of Trades and Tariffs official site. A misreading of the site led to the group's invitation to make a presentation to a panel of international trade lawyers; an opportunity to infiltrate 'the system' that it took up with vigour. From this, further invitations were received and taken up. The sense of satire, spoof and subversion playfully underpinning this notorious work runs through the Yes Men's practice. The group states that it aims to leave people "wanting to act, needing to help effect progressive political change ... to laugh ... they must become laughing revolutionaries."⁴ For the Yes Men, this is part of a larger movement to derail the neo-liberal capitalist steamroller that has been steadily "starving the world's poor and ruining the environment."⁵

- www.gatt.org; see above.
- www.GWBush.org; see above; this is also attributed to ®™ark, and both groups are clearly closely aligned.
- Notes from Nowhere, ed. *We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anticapitalism* (New York: Verso, 2003), 246-252; this includes a transcript of the keynote address given at the Textiles of the Future conference (Tampere, Finland: Univ. Of Technology, 2001).
- Gregory Sholette and Nato Thompson, eds. *The Interventionists: User's Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 103-106; includes an interview with the Yes Men and transcripts of email conversations arising from its spoof GATT website.^{2, 3, 4, 5}
- www.theyesmen.org.¹

[trans. I shoplift (slang)] **Yomango**

2003 - ongoing: Barcelona, Spain

Initially founded in Spain, Yomango now has franchises in countries such as Chile, Argentina, Mexico and Germany. Yomango has a permanently changing membership; it is described as a thing that happens, rather than a group of people.¹ In other words, “Yomango never stands still, it isn’t and never will be defined. It is anywhere that capitalism expands its territories, opening shopping centres and colonising your desires.”² Its work is primarily a response to the pathogenism of the global capitalist system: its tendency towards increasing reification, homogenisation, consumerism and alienation, for example. In response, Yomango positions itself as a ‘brand’ which promotes the reappropriation of what was once part of the commons” rather than the sale of products.³ In short it is a form of creative “social disobedience and direct action against multinational corporations” which takes place through a range of ‘anti-consumer’ products, services and everyday acts of playful collective ‘sabotage’ using forms such as knitting, radio jingles, tango dancing and billboard advertisements, alongside direct action workshops.⁴ Yomango describes itself as “an open-ended process generating tools, prototypes and dynamics that flow and proliferate, waiting to be re-appropriated.”⁵ This sharing appears to be a fundamental aspect of Yomango’s practice; considerable emphasis is placed on the way in which all its actions are ‘open, public and publicised,’ and it encourages others to take up the Yomango label’s ‘logo,’ imagery and tools to develop their own actions.⁶ Examples of Yomango’s work include the fashion show that launched the group, the *Mega-gourmet-subversive-dinner* event held alongside the European Social Forum in Florence (2002) and the *Yomango Tango* action in Barcelona (2002) to celebrate the first anniversary of the popular rebellion in Argentina.⁷

- Gregory Sholette, “Dark Matter, Las Agencias, and the Aesthetics of Tactical Embarrassment” (n.d.) <http://www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org/1/yomango/index.html>.
- Gregory Sholette and Nato Thompson, eds. *The Interventionists: User's Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 107-108 and 152.^{1, 4}
- <http://www.yomango.net> provides a considerable body of information and visual material from various actions (in Spanish).^{2, 3, 5, 6, 7}
- <http://www.yomango.org/>; Yomango’s website with texts and visual material (in Spanish).

Notes

1: Setting Out

1. Gregory Sholette, "Dark Matter – Activist Art and the Counter-Public Sphere" (2003) www.NeMe.org.

2. The nature of this 'expanded' art practice is taken up in detail later in this chapter; see section 2, 4-12.

On the subject of expanded practices, in the sense of a radically expanded *concept* of art, see Heiner Stachelhaus, "The Expanded Concept of Art" in *Joseph Beuys*, trans. David Britt (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991), 61-78, the Social Sculpture Research Unit, (2008) <http://www.social-sculpture.org/> and Jane Rendell, "Section Three: Chapter Two: Social Sculpture" in *Art and Architecture: A Place Between* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 163-180. On the subject of an expanded *field* of art, see Jane Rendell "Section One: Chapter 2: The Expanded Field" in *ibid*, 41-56 and Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field" in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1986; first published 1979 in *October* 8 Spring), 276-290.

Beuys' sought to stimulate deep reflection on 'false concepts' of revolution, freedom and art through his drawings, performances, actions and other works, including a series of statements such as 'art is the only revolutionary force.' Beuys' response to these false concepts and the alternatives he proposed are fundamental to this thesis; Beuys' perspective on revolution is discussed in some depth at a later point in this chapter, 11-12, and his 'expanded concept of art' is a key thread throughout the thesis. On this challenge to 'false concepts' see Joseph Beuys, *Joseph Beuys, Ideas and Actions* (n.p.: Hirschl & Adler Modern, 1988); Alain Borer, *The Essential Joseph Beuys* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1997); Richard Dailey, "Where is Joseph Beuys When we Need Him?" Editorial, *Afterart News* #4 (July 1 2006), available online, <http://www.afterartnews.com/index.php?s=beuys&submit.x=23&submit.y=7>; Volker Harlan, "Conversation with Joseph Beuys: What is Art?" in *What is Art? Conversation with Joseph Beuys*, ed. Volker Harlan, trans. Matthew Barton and Shelley Sacks (Sussex: Clairview Books, 2004).

3. The 'expanded concept of art' underpinning the practices discussed in this thesis is inherently bound to a similarly expanded concept of aesthetics. The basis of this expanded concept is mapped out by John Jordan's observations regarding its root, "aesthetics – from the Greek word *aes-thesia* - meaning the ability to perceive, to experience, to feel through our bodies" and Beuysian notions of this aesthetic force as overcoming the numbing and alienating power of the anaesthetic; see John Jordan, "In the Footnotes of Library Angels: A Bi(bli)ography of Insurrectionary Imagination" (2006) available online, http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/pdf_docs/SRG_Jordan.pdf, 5 and the Social Sculpture Research Unit, 'Our Questions' section of website (2008) <http://www.social-sculpture.org/focus-ssru/our-questions1.htm>. respectively. See also chapter 4, "Crossing Borders," 57-58, 70-71 and n. 4.

4. Suzi Gablik, "Connective Aesthetics: Art after Individualism" in *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, ed. Suzanne Lacy (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), 76.

5. In broad terms, the twentieth century has witnessed a commodification, co-optation and castration of artistic practices. Consequently, in the hands of some, the established notions of art have been challenged; art has engaged in institutional critique, become dematerialised and conceptualised, and in some instances, taken up positions within a terrain of dissent and protest. While the historical dimension of creative social action offers many potential avenues for worthwhile exploration, such investigations are not taken up in this study; rather,

the focus here is on potentialities. These historical challenges are discussed extensively elsewhere, for example in: Will Bradley and Charles Esche, eds. *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader* (London: Tate Publishing in association with Afterall, 2007); Lucy Lippard, *Get the Message? A Decade of Art for Social Change* (n.p.: E P Dutton, 1984); Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialisation of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1973); and Gerald Raunig, *Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century*, trans. Aileen Derieg (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007). Stewart Home, *The Assault on Culture - Utopian Currents from Lettrisme to Class War* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 1991).

6. The Argentinean Avant-Garde Artists' Group quoted by Will Bradley and Charles Esche "Experience 68" in *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader*, ed. Will Bradley and Charles Esche (London: Tate Publishing in association with Afterall, 2007), 469.

7. Arne Naess, "Deep Ecology for the Twenty-second Century" in *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambala, 1995; the essay was first published 1992 in *The Trumpeter* 9, 2), 463.

8. This 'movement' has recently been visible in groupings such as the *Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional* and Carnival against Capital. See Subcommandante Marcos, "The Hourglass of the Zapatistas" in *A Movement of Movements: Is Another World Really Possible?* ed. Tom Mertes (New York: Verso, 2004), 3-15 and <http://www.ezln.org/>; Wat Tyler, "Dancing at the Edge of Chaos: A Spanner in the Works of Global Capitalism" in *We Are Everywhere: the Irresistible Rise of Global Anticapitalism*, ed. Notes From Nowhere collective (New York: Verso, 2003), 188-195 and Marcelo Exposito, *Radical Imagination: Carnivals of Resistance*, DVD 60mins. (Zurich: Sedhalle, 2004). The first example is discussed in more depth in chapter 4 "Crossing Borders," 66-68.

9. Gregory Sholette, "Dark Matter - Activist Art and the Counter-Public Sphere" (2003) www.NeMe.org.

10. John Jordan, presentation on the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army for the conference No Way Back? organised by the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce as part of the Arts & Ecology Program (London: The London School of Economics and Political Science, December 11-12 2006).

11. These descriptive terms have been used by WochenKlausur, Ian Hunter and Bruce Barber, Jane Rendell, Suzi Gablik, Gregory Sholette, Jane Trowell, and Grant Kester respectively. See: WochenKlausur, "From the Object to the Concrete Intervention" (n.d.) http://www.wochenklausur.at/texte/kunst_en.html; Ian Hunter, "New Critical Centres for Art in Ireland," *Circa* 102 (Winter 2002), 38-42, Ian Hunter, ed. *Littoral: New Zones for Critical Art Practice* (n.p.: Projects Environment in association with Univ. College Salford, 1996), Bruce Barber, "Littoralist Art Practice and Communicative Action" (n.p.: 1996), www.imageandtext.org.n2 and Grant Kester, "Dialogic Aesthetics: A Critical Framework for Littoral Arts," *Variet* (2002); Jane Rendell, "Section Three: Chapter Two: Social Sculpture" in *Art and Architecture: A Place Between* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 163-180; Suzi Gablik, *Has Modernism Failed? 2nd ed.* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004); Gregory Sholette, "Dark Matter;" Jane Trowell, *The Body Politic: Social and Ecological Justice, Art and Activism* (short course, Stratford, London: Birkbeck College, March 18 - April 4 2009); Gregory Sholette, "Counting On Your Collective Silence: Notes on Activist Art as Collaborative Practice," *Afterimage* (November 1999), 18-20; Gregory Sholette, "News from Nowhere: Activist Art & After," *Third Text* 45 (Winter 1999), 45-56; and Kester "Dialogic Aesthetics."

12. <http://wochenklausur.t0.or.at>.

13. Ted Purves, "The Handbook for Gift and Exchange-based Art" in *What We Want is Free: Generosity and Exchange in Recent Art*, ed. Ted Purves (New York: State Univ. of New York Press, 2005), 133; Wolfgang Zumdieck, *Everybody is an Artist: Transforming Society by Developing Individual Potential* (lecture, Oxford: Oxford Brookes Univ., November 18 2008).

14. Each of these alignments emphasises particular qualities of the work and connects it with specific developments in art practice. In order to maintain the brevity of this chapter these are not attended to here, but the reader is directed to the texts in n. 5 and n. 11 above.

15. Sholette, "Dark Matter."

16. Examples of such institutionally driven practices can be found in Sara Selwood, *The Benefits of Public Art: The Polemics of Permanent Art in Public Places*. (n.p.: Policy

Studies Institute, 1995), and through resources such as Public art Online, <http://www.publicartonline.org.uk/> and Ixia, <http://www.ixia-info.com/>.

17. Patricia C. Phillips quoted by Wallace Heim, "Slow Activism: Homelands, Love and the Lightbulb" in *Nature Performed: Environment, Culture and Performance*, ed. Wallace Heim et al. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2003), 186. See also Patricia C. Phillips, "Public Constructions" in *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, ed. Suzanne Lacy (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995).

18. See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1984), Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life, Volume II: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday*, trans. John Moore (New York: Verso, 2002) and Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life, Volume III: From Modernity to Modernism*, trans. Gregory Elliott (New York: Verso, 2005). For a more contemporary and radical perspective on this alignment of the everyday and radical social change see the political theorist Ulrich Beck, *The Reinvention of Politics: Rethinking Modernity in the Global Social Order*, trans. Mark Ritter (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997).

19. Nina Felshin in *But is it Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism*, ed. Nina Felshin (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995). The examples given here are taken from the following: Superflex, <http://www.superflex.dk>; Mejor Vida Corporation, <http://www.irational.org/mvc>; Border Art Workshop/Taller de Arte Fronterizo (BAW/TAF), Antonio Prieto, "Border Art as a Political Strategy" www.igc.org/isla/features/border/mex6.html and Jeff Kelly, ed. *The Border Art Workshop (BAW/TAF), 1984-1989: A Documentation of 5 Years of Interdisciplinary Art Projects Dealing with U.S.- Mexico Border Issues* (New York: Artists Space, 1989); Grupo de Arte Callejero, "Artist's Statement," presented at Groundworks: Environmental Collaboration in Contemporary Art, exhibition curated by Grant Kester (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon Univ., October 14 - December 11 2005), available online, <http://www.3R2N.cfa.cmu.edu/groundworks/statements/gac.pdf> and Stephen Wright, "Behind Police Lines: Art Visible and Invisible," *Art and Research*, vol. 1 no. 2 (Summer 2008), available online, <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n1/wright.html>; PLATFORM, <http://www.platformlondon.org/>; the Church of Stop Shopping, <http://www.revilly.com>; and Guerrilla Girls, www.guerrillagirls.com/ respectively.

20. This thesis does not suggest that these convictions and aspirations are exclusive to creative social action. However, the concatenation of these aspirations and everyday life across a range of contexts sets this practice apart from that of a plethora of artists individually and collectively pursuing such aspirations but generally within the more conventional frameworks of the art system. See for example, groups such as the Guerrilla Girls, and similarly orientated but lesser-known collectives including Factory of Found Clothes, Huit Facettes, Open Circle, Raqs Media and Ip Gim: www.guerrillagirls.com/; <http://www.raumantaidemuseo.fi/rbb06/gluklya.htm>; Ted Purves, *What We Want is Free: Generosity and Exchange in Recent Art* (New York: State Univ. of New York Press, 2005), 128-9, Nadja Rottner, "Huit Facettes" in *Documenta 11 Platform 5: Short Guide*, ed. Okwui Enwezor (New York: Hatje Cantz, 2002), Okwui Enwezor, "The Production of Social Space as Artwork: Protocols of Community in the Work of Le Groupe Amos and Huit Facettes" in *Collectivism After Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination after 1945*, eds. Blake Stimson and Gregory Sholette (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2005), 223-251 and Huit Facettes, "Artist's Statement," presented at Groundworks: Environmental Collaboration in Contemporary Art, exhibition curated by Grant Kester (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon Univ., October 14 - December 11 2005), available online, <http://www.3R2N.cfa.cmu.edu/groundworks/statements/huitfacettes.pdf>; <http://www.opencirclearts.org/>; <http://www.raqsmediacollective.net/>; Ip Gim, "Statement by the Feminist Artist Collective" in Bradley and Esche eds. *Art and Social Change*, 293-296 and Linda Choy Inson, "Breaking Through: A Right of Passage for Feminist Artists in Korea (Continued)" (n.d.) <http://www.artwomen.org/Jongmyo/article-p3.htm>. An interesting example of such ambitions pursued through the medium of painting is found in the exhibition *Are We Changing the World?* (Antwerp: Extracity Centre for Contemporary Art, March 19 – July 17 2006) http://www.extracity.org/changing/catalogue_en.htm.

21. WochenKlausur, "From the Object to the Concrete Intervention" (n.d.) http://www.wochenklausur.at/texte/kunst_en.html and "Concrete Social Interventions: Interview with Jeanne Pascale of the Artists' Group WochenKlausur," *Variation 16* (Winter 2003), available online, http://www.variant.org.uk/16texts/Concrete_Interventions.html.

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22. On 'communities of interest' see PLATFORM, <http://www.platformlondon.org/>.
23. See <http://www.alaplastica.org.ar/grafica/ingbrief.pdf> and Ala Plastica, "Artist's Statement," presented at Groundworks, available online, <http://3r2n.cfa.cmu.edu/groundworks/statements/alaplastica.pdf>.
24. See Steven Morton, "An Interview with e-Xplo about Dencity" (2000) <http://www.e-xplo.org>. Both quotations are from Nato Thompson, "Trespassing Relevance" in *The Interventionists: Users' Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life*, ed. Gregory Sholette and Nato Thompson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 18. See also <http://www.e-xplo.org>.
25. Nato Thompson, "Trespassing Relevance" in *The Interventionists: Users' Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life*, ed. Gregory Sholette and Nato Thompson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 18.
26. See <http://www.treepeople.com>, Maria Lind, "Actualisation of Space: The Case of Oda Projesi" (October 2004) <http://www.republicart.net>, <http://www.platformlondon.org/> and <http://www.temporaryservices.org> respectively.
27. The intertwining of creative social action and radical forms of contemporary activism is the focal point of later chapters; see chapters 4 and 6.
28. See <http://www.treepeople.com>, <http://www.platformlondon.org/>, <http://www.exchange-values.org> and Shelley Sacks, ed. *Exchange Values: Images of Invisible Lives* (n.p.: Johannesburg Art Gallery, 2002) respectively.
29. "An exchange between Asa Nacking and Superflex," *Afterall* no. 0 (1998), available online, http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/an_exchange_between.shtml.
30. A set of criteria for identifying creative social action has been drawn up as part of this research. These clearly set out a series of defining features; see chapter 3 "Moving Forward," 46-47.
31. Rebecca Solnit, *Hope in the Dark: The Untold History of People Power*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Canongate, 2005), 35-6 and 112.
32. <http://wochenklausur.t0.or.at> and WochenKlausur, information leaflet distributed at the 48th Venice Biennale (Venice: June 8-17 1999).
33. <http://www.platformlondon.org/> and PLATFORM, "Participant's Position Paper" presented at the Monongahela Conference, organised by 3R2N (n.p. October 2003), available online, <http://moncon.greenmuseum.org/papers/platform.pdf>; <http://www.littoral.org.uk>.
34. *Imagine/RENDER*, <http://www.emptybowls.net/imagerender.htm>.
35. <http://www.skulptur.at/kavn> and <http://kavn.mur.at/>; Ala Plastica "Artist's Statement."
36. See Brian Holmes, "Carnival and Counterpower – Québec FTAA Summit" (2000) <http://artactivism.gn.apc.org/> and Brian Holmes, "Ne Pas Plier – Déplier" (n.d.) http://www.k3000.ch.bulletin/kolletive_arbeit/archive/site009.html.
37. <http://www.sindominio.net/fiambreira>.
38. This expression is used by Mejor Vida Corporation, see <http://www.irational.org/mvc>.
39. For examples of each see the following: Mejor Vida Corporation <http://www.irational.org/mvc> and PLATFORM, <http://www.platformlondon.org/>; TreePeople, <http://www.treepeople.com>; Exchange Values, <http://www.exchange-values.org> and Skart, www.cincplug.com/skart, <http://www.nyfa.org/nyfacurrent/skart/> and <http://www.culturebase.net/>; La Fiambreira, <http://www.sindominio.net/fiambreira>; *Imagine / RENDER*, <http://www.emptybowls.net/imagerender.htm>; Grupo de Arte Callejero, "Artist's Statement," presented at Klartext Konferenz organised by Marina Sorbello and Antje Weitzel (Berlin: January 14-16 2005), available online, <http://www.klartext-konferenz.de/>; and Superflex, <http://www.superflex.dk> respectively.
40. Thomas Berry's writing on the autistic state of the human species and Patrick Reinsborough's analogisation of cancer and global corporate rule have had considerable influence on the analogy asserted in this statement: See Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990) and Patrick Reinsborough, "De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination: Values Crisis, the Politics of Reality and why there's Going to be a Common Sense Revolution in this Generation," *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest* vol. 1 no. 2 (August 2003), available online, http://www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org/1/de_colonizing/index.html.
41. In a move that brings the work of Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx together, both Herbert Marcuse and Erich Fromm consider Western culture and values to be inherently pathogenic.

For example, Marcuse focuses on aspects of this in *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955) and *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964) while in *To Have Or To Be* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976) Fromm concludes that Western socio-economic systems are pathogenic, producing 'sick people and a sick society.' This notion of a 'pathogenic' culture and values is also taken up by Reinhart Koselleck in *Critique and Crisis. Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1988) alongside many subsequent writers, such as Patrick Reinsborough; see "De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination: Values Crisis, the Politics of Reality and why there's Going to be a Common Sense Revolution in this Generation," *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest* vol. 1 no. 2 (August 2003), available online, http://www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org/1/de_colonizing/index.html

42. See Rebecca Solnit, *Hope in the Dark: The Untold History of People Power*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Canongate, 2005), 134 and Reinsborough "De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination;" Rainforest Action Network, "Tools for Creating Change" http://action.ran.org/index.php/Principles_of_RAN's_education_program.

43. "Struggles South of the Pyrenees: Radical Social Movements in the Spanish State," *Do or Die: Voices from the Ecological Resistance*, no. 9 (2001), 30-43, available online, <http://www.eco-action.org/dod/no9/spain.html>.

44. See the Earth Charter Initiative, "The Earth Charter" (2000) http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/2000/10/the_earth_charter.html and The Green Party, "Green Party submission to All-Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution" (November 2004) http://www.greenparty.ie/en/policies/discussion_documents/constitutional_reform_private_property. In this document the Green Party draws on the work of the Foundation for the Economics of Sustainability, www.feasta.org. For a critique of the overuse of the term 'sustainability' among corporate organisations see Markus J. Milne, Kate Kearins and Sara Walton, "Creating Adventures in Wonderland: The Journey Metaphor and Environmental Sustainability," *Organization*, vol. 13 no 6 (2006), 801-839, and for a more general critique see B.D. Ratner, "Sustainability as a Dialogue of Values: Challenges to the Sociology of Development," *Sociological Inquiry* vol. 74 no.1 (February 2004), 50–69.

45. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "Enhancing Social Scientific Understanding of Sustainability" presented at the conference Sustainability as a Social Science Concept within the UNESCOMOST Programme (Frankfurt: November 1996), available online, <http://www.unesco.org/most/sustdecl.htm>.

46. Sam Bower, 'People' section of the Social Sculpture Research Unit website (2008) <http://www.social-sculpture.org/people/wider-network/sam-bower.htm>.

47. See Ivan Illich, *Celebration of Awareness: A Call for Institutional Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1973), 137-139, Ivan Illich, 'Rebirth of Epimethian Man' in *Deschooling Society* (London: Harper & Row, 1971), Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1972) and Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Robert R. Barr (New York: Continuum, 2004).

48. This emphasis on 'new' or 'alternative' values is taken up in greater depth in chapter 4.

49. Rafael Santos, "How to Deconstruct Antivalues" presented at Groundworks, available online, http://groundworks.collinsandgoto.com/conference/papers/Panel%20Land/ALa-PLastica_groundworks.pdf.

50. This form of radical contemporary activism and thinking is considered in depth throughout chapter 4. As Rebecca Solnit and others point out, the distinction between reform and revolution is not clear cut. In fact, the type of revolution sought here is based on the idea of incremental changes, which brings it close to some aspects of reformist thinking, of the radical rather than conservative type. See Solnit *Hope in the Dark*, 138.

51. See Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1990; first published 1963 by Viking Press) and Gerald Raunig, *Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century*, trans. Aileen Derieg (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007). The concept and practice of revolution as something other than a violent rupture, as slow and sustainable, is evident, to some extent, in diverse examples such as: Immanuel Kant's discussion of revolution in terms of sustainable 'metamorphosis' (gradual organic change) and unsustainable 'palingenesis' (catastrophic change); The 'Singing Revolution' (1987 - 1990) that led to Latvia, and Lithuania and Estonia regaining independence; the series of

related movements in Central and Eastern European post-communist societies known as the 'Colour revolutions,' and the 'slow food revolution.' See Howard Williams, "Metamorphosis or Palingenesis? Political Change in Kant," *The Review of Politics*, vol. 63 issue 4 (2001), 693-722; James Tusty and Maureen Castle Tusty, *The Singing Revolution*, film 96 mins. (Mountain View Productions, Ltd., 2007); Joshua A. Tucker, "Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Post-Communist Colored Revolutions," *Perspectives On Politics* vol. 5 issue 3 (September 2007), 535-551 and Sreeram Chaulia, "Democratisation, NGOs and 'Colour Revolutions'" (January 19 2006) http://www.opendemocracy.net/globalization-institutions_Government/Colour_Revolutions_3196.Jsp; and Geoff Andrews, "The Slow Revolution" (25 October 2006) http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-protest/slow_food_4032.jsp respectively. The author is indebted to Roger Griffin for insights into these connections.

52. Paraphrasing of Joseph Beuys cited in Heiner Stachelhaus, *Joseph Beuys*, trans. David Britt (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991), 61–64.

53. See Thierry de Duve, "Joseph Beuys, or the Last of the Proletarians (1988)" in *Joseph Beuys: The Reader*, ed. and trans. Claudia Mesch and Viola Michely (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007; essay first published summer 1988 in *October* 55), 135-142 and Claudia Mesch, "Institutionalizing Social Sculpture: Beuys' *Office for Direct Democracy through Referendum* Installation, 1972" *ibid.* (essay first published 1997 in *Problems of Remembrance in Postwar German Performance Art* by Ann Arbor), 198-217. In short, Beuys' concept of 'permanent conference' was articulated through materials such as copper and iron rods, and honey and beeswax, through works such as *Honey Pump in the Workplace* (Kassel: Documenta 6, 1977) and proposals such as the Organisation for Direct Democracy. Volker Harlan describes such articulations of 'permanent conference' as 'dialogue actions,' which succinctly summarises the core of the concept that Beuys expressed through such materials, works and proposals, and also articulated many times on blackboards, and through discussion and actions. In essence, 'permanent conference' is an ongoing exchange of ideas through debate regarding the shape of a 'better' future. Hence, 'permanent conference' is not only concerned with stimulating dialogue but also with action, with giving that dialogue direction, in order to stimulate democratic thought and a form of direct democracy, which works towards that 'better' world. Volker Harlan, ed. *What is Art? Conversation with Joseph Beuys*, trans. Matthew Barton and Shelley Sacks (Sussex: Clairview Books, 2004), i.

54. Joseph Beuys, "I am Searching for a Field Character" in *Art in Theory, 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 929.

55. Joseph Beuys, *We Are the Revolution (La rivoluzione siamo Noi)*. Screenprint of a photograph by Giancarlo Pancaldi with the rubber stamped inscriptions 'Joseph Beuys' and 'La rivoluzione siamo Noi.' On paper, 75³/₈" x 39¹/₂" (191.5 x 100.3), edition of 180. (Heidelberg: Edition Staeck, 1972). The same image and text also appear as a poster (1971) and as an unlimited edition postcard (1972).

56. Malcolm Miles, "Does it Work?" *Public Art Review*, no. 07 (Summer-Fall 1992), 4.

57. Arne Naess articulates this position in numerous essays, such as "Deep Ecology and Lifestyle," "Politics and the Ecological Crisis: An Introductory Note" and "Deep Ecology for the Twenty-second Century" in *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambala, 1995; these essays were first published 1984 in *The Paradox of Environmentalism*, ed. Neil Everndon, 1991 in *ReVision* vol. 13 no. 3 and 1992 in *The Trumpeter* vol.9 no. 2 respectively), 259-261, 445-453 and 463-467 respectively.

58. See <http://wochenklausur.t0.or.at>; Peter Dunn and Lorraine Leeson, "The Art of Change in Docklands" in *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*, ed. John Bird et al. (London: Routledge, 1993), 136-149 and www.arte-ofchange.com; David Goldenberg, "Art's Future Requirements: The End of Exhibition Art" (event, Art Frankfurt, March 2000) <http://www.multitru.de/frame.html?./kunstm2000/davidg-intro.html>; Patricia C. Phillips, "Peggy Diggs: Private Acts and Public Art" in *But is it Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism*, ed. Nina Felshin (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), 283-308; Eleanor Heartney, "Ecopolitics / Ecopoetry: Helen and Newton Harrison's Environmental Talking Cure" in *ibid.*, 141-164; Lynne Hull, <http://www.eco-art.org/> and http://greenmuseum.org/content/artist_index/artist_id-7.html; and Suzi Gablik, "Connective Aesthetics: Art after Individualism" in Lacy ed. *Mapping the Terrain*.

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- 59.** Rich, Kate, Feral Trade, workshop for No Way Back? conference organised by the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce as part of the Arts & Ecology Program (London: The London School of Economics and Political Science, December 11-12 2006).
- 60.** Reinsborough "De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination." For critical perspectives on social change initiatives, such as carbon offsetting and fair trade, see the following: Vanessa Baird, "Trade Justice! Yes, but what is it?" *New Internationalist*, no. 388 (April 2006); the "CO2nned: Carbon Offsets Stripped Bare" special issue of *New Internationalist*, no. 391 (July 2006); the "Ethical Shopping: A Magic Bullet to Save the World?" special issue of *New Internationalist*, no. 395 (November 2006); David Ransom and Anita Roddick, *No-Nonsense Guide to Fair Trade* 2nd ed. (New York: Verso in association with New Internationalist Publications Ltd., 2006; first published 2001); Andy Webb, "How Fair is Fair Trade?" *BBC Money Programme* (March 9 2006), available online, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/4788662.stm>.
- 61.** The author's periodic reconsideration of the central aims of the research project has been supported and guided by Shelley Sacks and Roger Griffin, alongside processes such as Registration for a Research Degree, involving interview with Diarmuid Costello and Janice Howard (April 12 2004) and Transfer of Registration from MPhil to PhD, involving applications to the Humanities, Environment and Social Sciences Committee and the University Research Ethics Committee (October 2007).
- 62.** Harold V. Melchert, source unknown. This well-known saying was encountered by the author during UK Grad School, a residential training programme funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (Brighton: October 22-26 2007).
- 63.** The term 'transdisciplinary' is used here to denote the fact that the research and the resulting framework cut across several disciplinary borders in order to develop a new and holistic perspective on creative social action that unifies several threads from distinct disciplines and seeks to overcome the tendency towards increasing separation and specialisation within disciplinary domains. Since its introduction in 1970 by Jean Piaget this term has been developed and clarified most notably by Basarab Nicolescu, who uses it to indicate the dynamic integration of different realities and possibility of moving beyond either-or thinking. See for example Basarab Nicolescu, *Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity*, trans. Karen-Claire Voss (New York: SUNY Press, 2002). Suzi Gablik pertinently references Nicolescu's perspective, see Suzi Gablik, "Transdisciplinarity" in *Has Modernism Failed?* 149-161. Within the context of "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" this term has been preferred to 'interdisciplinary,' which suggests the creation of a new disciplinary territory between existing fields, or the transference of methods from one discipline to another. While in rejecting all fixed disciplines 'postdisciplinary' has some merits, in this context it would not be appropriate as the research draws from across clearly defined disciplines and so is largely dependent on them rather than rejecting them. However, it could be claimed that creative social action strives to occupy a postdisciplinary position. The differences between these terms are subject to debate within Suzi Gablik, ed. *Conversations before the End of Time: Dialogues on Art, Life and Spiritual Renewal* (London: Thames & Hudson. 1995). For example Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's contribution suggests that "interdisciplinary says the more disciplines the better, but postdisciplinary ... says, "Forget them." Who needs them?" see Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "The Aesthetics of Everyday Life," 410-433.
- 64.** The concern with reflecting the geographical spread of creative social action is explained in chapter 2 "Circumambulating" and chapter 3 "Moving Forward," 31-34 and 44 and 46 respectively.
- 65.** As it was not practical or helpful to include every practice mentioned, some criteria were constructed and exclusions made. These are explained in the opening passages of the appendix.

2: Circumambulating

1. Rebecca Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost* (New York: Canongate, 2006), 7.
2. The sense in which the term 'expanded' art practices is used in this thesis is explained in chapter 1; see n. 2.
3. The literature survey undertaken in the course of this research project has focused on accessing current publications. This is a rapidly evolving field with an almost continuous emergence of new material. Therefore, in order to reflect on materials gathered and write up the research a decision was made to significantly restrict the process of surveying and gathering after April 2009.
4. For an example of the former see Malcolm Miles, "Art and Social Transformation: Theories and Practices in Contemporary Art for Radical Social Change" (PhD diss., Oxford Brookes Univ., 2000) and Malcolm Miles, *Urban Avant-Gardes: Art, Architecture and Change* (London: Routledge, 2004); for examples of the latter see Nick Crossley and Michael J. Roberts, eds. *After Habermas: New Perspectives on the Public Sphere* (Oxford: Sociological Review in association with Blackwell Publishing, 2004) and Rebecca Solnit, *Hope in the Dark: The Untold History of People Power* 2nd rev.ed. (New York: Canongate, 2005).
5. See Martha Rosler, *If You Lived Here: The City in Art, Theory, and Social Activism: A Project*, Discussions in Contemporary Culture, ed. Brian Wallis (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991); Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 2004), 82–123; Wayne Clark, *Activism in the Public Sphere: Exploring the Discourse of Political Participation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001) and Peter McLaverty, introduction to *Public Participation and Innovations in Community Governance*, ed. Peter McLaverty (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); Stephen Healy, "Public Participation as the Performance of Nature" in *Nature Performed: Environment, Culture and Performance*, ed. Wallace Heim et al. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 94–108.
6. John Jordan, "In the Footnotes of Library Angels: A Bi(bli)ography of Insurrectionary Imagination" (2006) available online, http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/pdf_docs/SRG_Jordan.pdf, 3.
7. Nina Felshin, ed. *But is it Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), 9–29.
8. Jan Avgikos, "Group Material Timeline: Activism as a Work of Art" in *But is it Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism*, ed. Nina Felshin (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), 89-97.
9. Jan Avgikos, *ibid.*, 87.
10. Miles does also incorporate more recent references such as Ernesto Laclau's theories of emancipation and radical democracy, which are significant to the framework developed in this thesis, but in general he keeps the focus on these earlier thinkers.
11. See the seventh chapter of Miles' book, "1993 (ii) - Participation and Provocation." This 'Benjaminian' framework is drawn from the theoretical work of Walter Benjamin; see Walter Benjamin, "The Work of art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in *Illuminations* ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Random House Inc, 2002).
12. See the fourth chapter of Miles' book, "1967 - Why Tomorrow Never Dies."
13. Such perspectives continue to play an important part in the interpretive frameworks applied to activist art, and in the wider discourses of contemporary activism. Consequently, they are also drawn into chapter 4, "Crossing Borders."
14. The continuing significance of these perspectives is equally well indicated by the burgeoning demand for key texts from thinkers such as Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin and Ernst Bloch. For example, in 2002 Theodor Adorno, et al. *Aesthetics and Politics*, trans. ed. Ronald Taylor (New York: Verso, 1980) was in its 6th printing.
15. See W. J. T. Mitchell, "Introduction: Utopia and Critique," Michael North, "The Public as Sculpture: From Heavenly City to Mass Ornament" and John Hallmark Neff, "Daring to Dream" in *Art and the Public Sphere*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992), 1–5, 9-28 and 6–8 respectively. The discussion of expanded art practices in this book is largely limited to the sense of an 'expanded field,' rather than an 'expanded concept,' of art; see chapter 1 "Setting Out," n. 2. Notably the collection of essays presented in Mitchell's book originated with a special issue of the journal *Critical Enquiry* based on Art

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- and Public Spaces: Daring to Dream, a symposium organised for the event Sculpture Chicago (1989).
16. W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., *Art and the Public Sphere* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992), 4.
 17. See for example bell hooks, *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics* (New York: The New Press, 1995), Stewart Home, *The Assault on Culture - Utopian Currents from Lettrisme to Class War* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 1991), Noel Carroll, *A Philosophy of Mass Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998) and Boris Groys, *Art Power* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008).
 18. See Jacques Ranciere, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (New York: Continuum, 2004)
 19. Grant Kester, ed. *Art, Activism, and Oppositionality: Essays from Afterimage* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 1998), 13.
 20. Noel Carroll, *On Criticism Thinking in Action* series (London: Routledge, 2008).
 21. Avgikos, in Felshin ed. *But is it Art?* 85-116.
 22. See for example Theodor Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture* Routledge Classics (London: Routledge, 1991).
 23. Conceived by Lucy Lippard in 1979, and organised by Barbara Moore and Mimi Smith, this archive of material documenting the activities of artists and art groups with an interest in social or political change has been held by the library of the Museum of Modern Art, New York since 1989, and is made 'accessible' via the library's website.
 24. Malcolm Miles, *Art for Public Places: Critical Essays* (Winchester: Winchester School of Art Press, 1989), 150.
 25. Miles *Art for Public Places*, 175; see also Malcolm Miles, "Does it Work?" *Public Art Review* 07 (Summer - Fall 1992), 4.
 26. The call for a critical approach to the more conventional branch of 'public' artworks has been extended by writers such as Liz Lerman and the contributors to *Animating Democracy: The Artistic Imagination as a Force in Civic Dialogue* ed. Barbara Schaffer Bacon, Cheryl Yuen, and Pam Korza (n.p.: Americans for the Arts, 1999). See also Liz Lerman, "Toward a Process of Critical Response" in *Are Miracles Enough? Selected Writings on Art and Community 1983-1994* (Takoma Park, Md.: Dance Exchange, 1995).
 27. Littoral: New Zones for Critical Practice - Artists' Projects in the Context of Social, Environmental and Cultural Change, conference organised by Ian Hunter and Celia Lerner (Manchester: Univ. College Salford, 1994): For edited papers see Ian Hunter, ed. *Littoral: New Zones for Critical Art Practice* (n.p.: Projects Environment in association with Univ. College Salford, 1996); see also Suzanne Lacy, ed. *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995) and Carol Becker, ed. *The Subversive Imagination: Artists, Society and Social Responsibility* (London: Routledge, 1994).
 28. See Daina Augaitis et al., eds. *Questions of Community: Artists, Audiences, Coalitions* (Banff, Canada: Banff Centre Press, 1998).
 29. Felshin ed. *But is it Art?* and Grant Kester, ed. *Art, Activism and Oppositionality: Essays from Afterimage* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1998); Suzi Gablik, "Connective Aesthetics: Art after Individualism" in *Mapping the Terrain* ed. Lacy, 75.
 30. Felshin ed. *But is it Art?*, 26.
 31. Malcolm Miles, *Art, Space and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures* (London: Routledge, 1997).
 32. This book was derived from the influential interdisciplinary journal *Block*, in production from 1979 to 1989, and the Futures conference (Tate, London, 1990).
 33. Malcolm Miles, *Art, Space and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures* (London: Routledge, 1997), 85 and 188 respectively.
 34. John Bird, introduction to *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*, ed. John Bird et al. (London: Routledge, 1993), xiv.
 35. Steven Connor, "Between Earth and Air: Value, Culture and Futurity" in *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change* ed. John Bird et al. (London: Routledge, 1993), 234.
 36. Gregory Sholette, "News from Nowhere: Activist Art & After," *Third Text* vol. 45 (Winter 1999), 45-56 and Gregory Sholette, "Dark Matter: Activist Art and the Counter-public Sphere" (2003) <http://www.NeMe.org>.
 37. For discussion of these terms see chapter 1, 4 and n. 11.

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38. Lacy ed. *Mapping the Terrain*; Eleanor Heartney, "Ecopolitics / Ecopoetry: Helen and Newton Harrison's Environmental Talking Cure" in *But is it Art?* ed. Felshin, 141–164.
39. Gregory Sholette, "Counting On Your Collective Silence: Notes on Activist Art as Collaborative Practice," *Afterimage* (November 1999) 18-20, Gregory Sholette, "News from Nowhere: Activist Art & After," *Third Text* vol. 45 (Winter 1999), 45-56 and Gregory Sholette, "Dark Matter: Activist Art and the Counter-public Sphere" (2003) <http://www.NeMe.org>; Grant Kester, "Dialogic Aesthetics: A Critical Framework for Littoral Arts," *Variet* (2002); Bruce Barber, "Littoralist Art Practice and Communicative Action" (n.p.: 1996), available online, <http://www.imageandtext.org.n2>; Ian Hunter, ed. *Littoral: New Zones for Critical Art Practice* (n.p.: Projects Environment in association with Univ. College Salford, 1996).
40. See for example Jessica Morgan, ed. "Introduction" in *Common Wealth* (London: Tate Publishing, 2003) and Oliver Lowenstein, "500 Years from Now ...," *Resurgence* vol. 231 (July–August 2005), available online, <http://www.resurgence.org/contents/231.htm>.
41. Sue Spaid, *Ecoventions: Current Art to Transform Ecologies* (Cincinnati: greenmuseum.org and ecoartspace in association with The Contemporary Arts Center [sic], 2002), 1; Suzi Gablik, *Has Modernism Failed?* 2nd ed. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004), 16; Felshin, introduction to Felshin ed. *But is it Art?* 9-29.
42. For example, see those offered in: Felshin ed. *But is it Art?* Carol Becker and Ann Wiens, eds. *The Artist in Society: Rights, Roles and Responsibilities* (Chicago: New Art Examiner Press, 1995); Mary-Jane Jacobs, Michael Brenson and Eva M. Olson, *Culture in Action: A Public Art Program of Sculpture Chicago* (Seattle: Bay Press in association with Sculpture Chicago, 1995); Lacy ed. *Mapping the Terrain*; and Steven Durland and Linda Frye Burnham eds. *The Citizen Artist: 20 Years of Art in the Public Arena; An Anthology from High Performance Magazine, 1978–1998, vol. 1* (New York: Critical Press, 1998).
43. Lorraine Leeson and Peter Dunn founded the now disbanded London-based group The Art of Change.
44. John Bird, "Dystopia on the Thames" in *Mapping the Futures* ed Bird et al., 133.
45. Shifra M. Goldman in *Dimensions of the Americas: Art and Social Change in Latin America and the United States* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1994).
46. Carol Becker and Ann Wiens, eds. *The Artist in Society: Rights, Roles and Responsibilities* (Chicago: New Art Examiner Press, 1995).
47. Virginia Maksymowicz, "Through the Back Door - Alternative Approaches to Public Art" in Mitchell ed. *Art and the Public Sphere*, 147-157; Guillermo Gomez-Pena, "The Streets: Where do They Reach" in *The Citizen Artist: 20 Years of Art in the Public Arena: an Anthology from High Performance Magazine 1978-1998, vol. 1*, ed. Steven Durland and Linda Frye Burnham (New York: Critical Press, 1998), 73-9; Robert L. Pincus, "The Invisible Town Square: Artists' Collaborations and Media Dramas in America's Biggest Boarder Town" in Felshin ed. *But is it Art?* 31-49.
48. For example see Malcolm Miles, "Millennial Thinking," *Public Art Review*, vol. 21 (Fall-Winter 1999), 15–19; Bruce Barber, "Littoralist Art Practice and Communicative Action" (n.p.: 1996), available online, <http://www.imageandtext.org.n2>; Wallace Heim, "Slow Activism: Homelands, Love and the Lightbulb" in *Nature Performed* ed. Heim et al; Grant Kester, "Conversation Pieces" (n.d.) www.capagallery.com/cepa/exhibits.
49. Grant Kester, "Dialogic Aesthetics: A Critical Framework for Littoral Arts," *Variet* (2002).
50. Felshin, introduction to Felshin ed. *But is it Art?* and Kester "Dialogic Aesthetics."
51. Gerald Raunig, *Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century*, trans. Aileen Derieg (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 265.
52. Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 2004) and Miles *Urban Avant-Gardes*.
53. Heim "Slow Activism."
54. See for example Gregory Sholette and Nato Thompson, eds. *The Interventionists: User's Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), published to accompany the exhibition *The Interventionists: Art in the Social Sphere* (MA Museum of Contemporary Art, May 2004–March 2005); Lars Bang Larsen, Henrik Plenge Jakobsen, and Superflex, eds. *Remarks on Interventive Tendencies – Meetings between Different Economies in Contemporary Art* (Copenhagen: Borgen in association with The Danish Contemporary Art Foundation, 2000); Ted Purves, ed. *What We Want is*

Free: Generosity and Exchange in Recent Art (New York: State Univ. of New York Press, 2005), published following a series of artists' projects and a symposium, Generosity Projects, Strategies for Exchange in Recent Art (CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, 2002); Max Andrews, ed. *Land, Art: A Cultural Ecology Handbook* (Manchester: Cornerhouse Publications, 2006), published by the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce to accompany the first phase of its Arts and Ecology programme; Sue Spaid, *Ecoventions: Current Art to Transform Ecologies* (Cincinnati: greenmuseum.org and ecoartspace in association with the Contemporary Arts Center, 2002) published in conjunction with the exhibition Ecovention (Cincinnati: Contemporary Arts Center, June 9–August 18 2002).

55. Miles *Urban Avant-Gardes* 193-195, 195-203 respectively, and elsewhere.

56. <http://www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org>.

57. Oleg Kireev, "Art and Politics in Moscow" (July 2002)

<http://transform.eipcp.net/transform>.

58. Temporary Services' 'Groupsandspaces' section provides a database of links to an extensive range of collaborative groups, <http://www.groupsandspaces.net/groups.html>; www.ljudmila.org, presents more than one hundred and twenty sites focused on civil initiatives and art projects; <http://blog.groundswellcollective.com/> links art and activism in its database of practices; the 'counter cartography' page of 16beavergroup's website offers links to an impressively international range of groups, collaborations, projects and organisations, <http://16beavergroup.org/links.htm>; the Subsol website contain links to, and brief descriptions of, a broad range of practices, http://subsol.c3.hu/subsol_2/index.html and http://subsol.c3.hu/subsol_2/otherworlds.html.

59. See <http://artists.refuseandresist.org> and <http://www.greenmuseum.org> respectively.

60. See <http://www.irational.org> and <http://www.r-a-i-n.net/> respectively. The latter has evolved from a research project, the Rijksakademie Artists Initiatives Network (RAIN) (2000) and the website offers information on international art practices alongside links to the seven initiatives of RAIN: the Centre Soliel D'Afrique (Bamako, Mali), Pulse (Durban, South Africa), Open Circle (Mumbai, India), Ruangrupa (Jakarta, Indonesia), El Despacho (Mexico City, Mexico), Ceia (Belo Horizonte, Brazil), and Trama (Buenos Aires, Argentina).

61. Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004) and Jessica Morgan, "Introduction" in *Common Wealth* ed. Jessica Morgan (London: Tate Publishing, 2003).

62. Suzi Gablik, "Transdisciplinarity" in *Has Modernism Failed?* 2nd ed. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004), 152–159. See also Ken Wilber, *A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science, and Spirituality* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2001) and Karen-Claire Voss, "Review of Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity, by Basarab Nicolescu," *Esoterica* (May 15 2001), available online, <http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/main.html>.

63. See Jennifer Roche, "Socially Engaged Art, Critics and Discontents: An Interview with Claire Bishop" (July 2006) http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2006/07/socially_engage.php; Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents," *Artforum* (February 2006), 178-182, Grant Kester's response to the latter, "Another Turn," and Bishop's brief reply *Artforum* (May 2006), 22 and 24 respectively.

64. Gablik *Has Modernism Failed?* 19.

65. Suzi Gablik, "Connective Aesthetics: Art after Individualism" in Lacy ed. *Mapping the Terrain*, 74-87.

66. Raunig *Art and Revolution*, 19.

67. *Ibid.*, 19–24. This example is taken from Gerald Raunig, "The Many ANDs of Art and Revolution" in *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader* ed. Will Bradley and Charles Esche (London: Tate Publishing in association with Afterall, 2007), 384-394. Numerous other examples can be found throughout Raunig, *Art and Revolution*.

68. Raunig *Art and Revolution*, 265.

69. *Ibid.*

70. Linda Frye Burnham, "Conversations at the Intersection of Art and Activism" presented at FOCAS: Focus on Community Arts South (Kentucky: April 17-21 2002).

71. Aldo Milohnic uses the term artivism in "Artivism" (n.d.) <http://www.republicart.net>.

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72. Linda Frye Burnham, "Conversations at the Intersection of Art and Activism" presented at FOCAS: Focus on Community Arts South (Kentucky: April 17-21 2002).
73. This is considered in depth in chapter 4 "Crossing Borders."
74. Frye Burnham "Conversations at the Intersection of Art and Activism."
75. See Nicholas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. S. Pleasance and F. Woods (n.p.: Les Presses du Reel, 2002).
76. Claire Bishop, in Jennifer Roche, "Socially Engaged Art, Critics and Discontents: An Interview with Claire Bishop" (July 2006), http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2006/07/socially_engage.php.
77. Robert Atkins, Rudolf Frieling, Boris Groys and Lev Manovich, *The Art of Participation 1950 to Now* (New York: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in association with Thames and Hudson, 2008).
78. Johanna Billing, Maria Lind and Lars Nilsson, eds. *Taking the Matter into Common Hands: On Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2007).
79. Johanna Billing, "Introduction" in *ibid.*, 8-10.
80. Brian Holmes, "The Oppositional Device or, Taking Matters into Whose Hands?" in *ibid.*, 35-41. Also see Brian Holmes, *Unleashing the Collective Phantoms: Essays in Reverse Imagineering* (New York: Autonomedia, 2008).
81. Grant Kester, "Participant's position paper" presented at the Monongahela Conference, organised by 3R2N (n.p.: October 2003), available online, <http://moncon.greenmuseum.org/papers/kester.pdf>.
82. Frye Burnham "Conversations at the Intersection of Art and Activism."
83. *Ibid.*
84. Kester "Dialogic Aesthetics."
85. Ian Hunter, "New Critical Centres for Art in Ireland," *Circa* vol. 102 (Winter 2002), 38-42.
86. Klartext Konferenz organised by Marina Sorbello and Antje Weitzel (Berlin: January 16 2005) <http://klartext.uqbar-ev.de/home.html>.
87. See for example Patrick Reinsborough, "De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination: Values Crisis, the Politics of Reality and why there's Going to be a Common Sense Revolution in this Generation" and Benjamin Shepard "Absurd Responses vs. Earnest Politics," *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*, vol. 1 no. 2 (August 2003), available online, http://www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org/1/de_colonizing/index.html and <http://www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org/1/BenShepard/index.html> respectively, and John Jordan, "In the Footnotes of Library Angels: A Bi(bli)ography of Insurrectionary Imagination" (2006), available online, http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/pdf_docs/SRG_Jordan.pdf.

3: Moving Forward

1. Vinay Kumar Srivastava, ed. *Methodology and Fieldwork* (New Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007), 449.
2. For an explanation of this see chapter 1, "Setting Out," 12-14.
3. For example, this is discussed in chapter 2, "Circumambulating," 29-30 and 36-40, and chapter 4, 57-59.
4. The use of the term 'transdisciplinary' in preference to 'interdisciplinary' is explained in chapter 1, "Setting Out," n. 63.
5. For an explanation of the sense in which the term 'expanded' art is used here see *ibid.*, n. 2 and 3.
6. This revision of the research questions was also informed by a deepening understanding of the nature of Doctoral research, by discussions with Shelley Sacks and Roger Griffin and through engagement with Oxford Brookes University's programme of research student training.
7. This phrase is used, and the strategy discussed, by Martyn Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide for Small-scale Social Research Projects*, 3rd ed. (Berkshire: Open Univ. Press, 2007), 88-96.
8. This methodology required a concurrent exploration of practices defined here as creative social action, and theories of social change. This has involved using two distinct methodologies, which are presented separately here; discussion of the development of a theoretical framework follows the discussion of the study of practices. However, it is important to note that there were close links between the two processes throughout.
9. This is explained by Martyn Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide for Small-scale Social Research Projects*, 3rd ed. (Berkshire: Open Univ. Press, 2007), 88-96.
10. See chapter 1, 4 and n. 11.
11. This conflict is also briefly discussed in *ibid.*, 4-5.
12. For an explanation of the 'ideal type' see Max Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, trans. and ed. Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch (New York: Free Press, 1997; first published 1949 by Free Press), 88. For a discussion of this type of 'typology' see Catherine Marshall and Gretchen Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research* 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999), 154.
13. Max Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, trans. and ed. Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch (New York: Free Press, 1997; first published 1949 by Free Press), 88.
14. This necessarily excluded many exemplary practitioners who work under individual names such as Lynn Hull and Peggy Diggs; a loss that was partly mitigated by the phrasing of this criterion to embrace inclusion of projects shaped or directed by individual artists but with a separate identity, such as the Exchange Values project.
15. Peter Labanvi summarises the concept of the public sphere as "a spatial concept denoting the social sites or levels where meanings are manufactured, distributed, and exchanged; as the ideational substance that is processed and produced within these sites; and as a 'general horizon of social experience.'" Peter Labanvi in Alexander Negt and Oskar Kluge *The Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere*, trans. Peter Labanvi (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, December 1993). As the title suggests this book offers an indepth discussion of the phenomenon.
16. For a brief discussion of this see chapter 1, 6-12. For further information on these groups see <http://www.greenpeace.org/international> and <http://www.climatecamp.org.uk/home> respectively.
17. Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 2004), 11.
18. This is also briefly discussed in chapter 1, 7.
19. Sharjah Biennial 8: Still Life: Art, Ecology and the Politics of Change (United Arab Emirates: 2007) and the 27th Bienal de Sao Paulo: How to Live Together (Brazil: 2006). See <http://www.sharjahbiennial.org/en/> and <http://www.bienalsaopaulo.globo.com> respectively.

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- 20.** This term, 'indigenous typology,' is used in Catherine Marshall and Gretchen Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research* 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999).
- 21.** Exploration of these three issues provides the content of chapter 4, which recounts the findings of this part of the research project.
- 22.** The advantages and disadvantages of this methodology are explained in detail in Martyn Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide for Small-scale Social Research Projects*, 3rd ed. (Berkshire: Open Univ. Press, 2007), 38.
- 23.** The research methodologies to be used were necessarily reviewed by the University Research Ethics Committee. This review process generated extensive reflection and debate, which centred on the intended geographical scope of the study; there appeared to be a conflict between ambition and practical constraints. While it was clear those limitations to time and resources must be taken into consideration, the motivation to allow the research to reflect the geographical scope of creative social action was undeniably well-founded. After much deliberation it eventually became clear that this was not necessarily a conflict. It required a change of plan but not of outcome. "WE ARE THE REVOLUTION?" could reflect the geographical diversity of creative social action in the following way, rather than through its three focal cases. In short, a range of practices would be written into the text, and further information on these would be given through an appendix. Thereby this 'conflict' was, to a great extent, resolved.
- 24.** For example these websites included the Forum: Qualitative Social Research, <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/index>; The Qualitative Report, <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/index.html>; The Action Research Network, <http://actionresearch.altec.org/>; and The Institute for Community Research, <http://www.incommunityresearch.org/>.
- 25.** Sara Selwood, *The Benefits of Public Art: The Polemics of Permanent Art in Public Places* Policy Studies Institute research report (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1995); Malcolm Miles, "Art and Social Transformation: Theories and Practices in Contemporary Art for Radical Social Change" PhD diss. (Oxford Brookes Univ., 2000). See also *How was it for You? Assessing the Impact of Artists' Practice in the Public Realm*, full transcript of the seminar How was it for You? organised by Ixia (Burnley: October 2005), <http://www.ixia-info.com/pdfs/publicartassessingimpactquality.pdf>. Wayne Clark, *Activism in the Public Sphere: Exploring the Discourse of Political Participation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001); Peter McLaverty, ed. *Public Participation and Innovations in Community Governance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).
- 26.** In this study Miles draws on perspectives offered by theorists such as Theodor Adorno, Ernst Bloch and Herbert Marcuse, and critics such as Suzi Gablik and Lucy Lippard.
- 27.** These texts also stimulated extensive consideration of the ways in which the research could be effectively presented. For example, Clark presents his material in two clearly divided parts. The first sets out the background for the investigation and a theoretical framework, then details the organisational and structural characteristics of each group studied, and the second attends to the fieldwork, with the findings structured in a way that lends itself to a comparative analysis. The advantages of employing this type of narrative structure are confirmed by similarly accessible texts such as Selwood's. Both Clark and Selwood divide each of their case studies into sections concerned with particular questions or issues, which aids the comparative analysis of the cases by establishing a sense of parity. The differences found in these texts, appear to be intimately linked to the nature of the respective inquiry, its subject, aims, and intended audiences. For example, Selwood's inclusion of maps and photographs with each case study, and her addition of appendices containing material such as interview transcripts and analyses of the various surveys conducted appears to be aligned with her intended audience. Books such as Patrick Neate and Damien Platt's *Culture is Our Weapon: AfroReggae in the Favelas of Rio* (London: Latin American Bureau, 2006) also provided useful examples of the possibilities for recounting the material generated by such studies.
- 28.** For discussion of this see chapter 2, "Circumambulating," 39-41.
- 29.** Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 2004).
- 30.** On this notion of 'unintended consequences' see Robert K. Merton, "The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action," *American Sociological Review*, vol.1 no.6 (1936), 894-904, available online, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2084615>.

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- 31.** This is discussed, for example, in Wayne Clark, *Activism in the Public Sphere: Exploring the Discourse of Political Participation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001) and Peter McLaverty, ed. *Public Participation and Innovations in Community Governance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).
- 32.** The decision to focus on less well-known groups is explained in chapters 2 and 5, 33-40 and 107 respectively.
- 33.** For discussion of these concerns see earlier in this chapter, 51-52.
- 34.** PLATFORM, interview by the author (London: January 12 2009).
- 35.** Catherine Marshall and Gretchen Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999), 153.
- 36.** Marshall and Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research*, 150 and 154.
- 37.** This is written up in chapter 6, "Asking Questions."

4: Crossing Borders

1. Brian Holmes, *Unleashing the Collective Phantoms: Essays in Reverse Imagineering*, (New York: Autonomedia, 2008), 12.
2. Patrick Reinsborough, "De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination: Values Crisis, the Politics of Reality and why there's Going to be a Common Sense Revolution in this Generation," *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*, vol. 1 no. 2 (August 2003), available online, http://www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org/1/de_colonizing/index.html.
3. La Fiambra, "Flamenco Singing against Gentrifying Bishops" (n.d.) http://subsol.c3.hu/subsol_2/contributors/fiambra/text.html. For an elaboration on this perspective see La Fiambra, "Theoretical Texts," trans. the author (May 1999) <http://www.sindominio.net/fiambra/teoricos.htm>.
4. For example, the established definition of aesthetics holds that it is an autonomous disciplinary domain, and that the aesthetic experience is concerned with the contemplation of equally autonomous objects, defined as art, by a disembodied eye. However, the expanded sense of the term underpinning creative social action, and in this thesis, understands the aesthetic experience as incorporating 'enlivened being,' a sensory awareness and a perceptual shift. That is, it is opposed to the 'anaesthetic.' In relation to this, see the work of theorists such as Herbert Marcuse, Suzi Gablik and David Michael Levin, of figures such as Joseph Beuys and organisations such as the Social Sculpture Research Unit; Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilisation* (Boston, MA.: Beacon Press, 1966; first published 1955) and Carol Becker, "Herbert Marcuse and the Subversive Potential of Art" in *The Subversive Imagination : Artists, Society and Social Responsibility* (London: Routledge, 1994); Suzi Gablik, "Connective Aesthetics: Art after Individualism" in *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, ed. Suzanne Lacy (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), 74-75; David Michael Levin, ed. *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision* (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1993); <http://www.social-sculpture.org/>. Many seminal theorists have articulated a similar position towards the aesthetic dimension. See for example: Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man, in a series of Letters*, trans. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967; first published 1794 as *Über die Ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen*); John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: The Berkeley Publishing Group, 2005; first published 1934); and John Dewey, *A Common Faith*, The Terry Lectures Series (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale Univ. Press, 1960; first published 1934).
In addition, Shelley Sacks elaborates on the connection between the aesthetic, in this expanded sense, and response-ability; "the aesthetic - as the opposite of numbness, of the anaesthetic - is closely linked to our ability to respond. In this space beyond the linear, literal, discursive, where the social imagination weaves and moves, we can be moved, inwardly. Responsibility, then, is not so much a moral duty, but rather an ability to respond arising from our sense of connectedness with each other and all other forms of existence." Sacks also discusses this in terms of 'enlivened being;' "If the aesthetic is seen in contrast to the anaesthetic - or numbness, it can be understood more correctly as 'enlivened being.'" Shelley Sacks, "Exchange Values Six Years On" (August 2002) <http://www.social-sculpture.org/> and Shelley Sacks, presentation for the UN Summit on Culture and Development (Stockholm 1998), available online, <http://www.universityofthetrees.org/about/instruments-of-consciousness.html> respectively.
5. As noted in chapter 2, writers such as Grant Kester and Claire Bishop have drawn attention to the disregard these practices have for the borders erected between aesthetic, political and ethical domains, and the ways in which they challenge understandings of each. In fact, as this passage shows, creative social action moves beyond the rather superficial binary positions that frame the dialogue between Kester and Bishop; see "Circumambulating," 36.
6. Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Vol. II: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1981); Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1976), 28.

For an explanation of the use of the term 'pathogenic' in this context see chapter 1 "Setting Out," 9.

7. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in *Illuminations*, Walter Benjamin, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Random House Inc, 2002; first published 1935 in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*).

8. Jacques Ranciere, "Artists and Cultural Producers as Political Subjects: Opposition, Intervention, Participation, Emancipation in Times of Neo-liberal Globalisation" (panel discussion, Klartext Konferenz organised by Marina Sorbello and Antje Weitzel, Berlin, January 16 2005) <http://klartext.uqbar-v.de/dokupdfs/RanciereStatementEN.pdf>.

9. The distinctions made here between post- inter- and transdisciplinarity are explained in chapter 1 "Setting Out," n. 63.

10. Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 2004), 82–123; Gerald Raunig, *Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century*, trans. Aileen Derieg (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007). For examples of groups' statements see: Jordi Claramonte Arrufat's "Del Arte de Concepto al Arte de Contexto" (working paper, sent to author as pdf, July 2 2009); Park Fiction's statement (January 1998), http://www.parkfiction.org/infotainment_urbanist_concept.html, relating the group's activities to Henri Lefebvre's theories of urbanisation and his concepts of the hierarchical division of the contemporary city; E-Xplo's alignment with the theoretical perspectives of Hannah Arendt, Alain Badiou, Julia Kristeva and Walter Benjamin, as explained in "E-Xplo interview by Chavoya C. Ondine" in *The Interventionists: User's Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life*, ed. Gregory Sholette and Nato Thompson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 43–46. See also Malcolm Miles, "The End of Utopia: Imminent and Immanent Liberation," *Spaces of Utopia: An Electronic Journal*, no. 3 (Autumn/Winter 2006), 105-113, available online, <http://ler.letras.up.pt> and Herbert Marcuse, *Art and Liberation (the Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse v. 4)*, ed. Douglas Kellner (London: Routledge, 2007).

11. Gerald Raunig, *Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century*, trans. Aileen Derieg (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007); Suzi Gablik, "Connective Aesthetics: Art after Individualism" in *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* ed. Suzanne Lacy (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), 74-87 and "Transdisciplinarity" in *Has Modernism Failed?* 2nd ed. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004), 152–159; Linda Frye Burnham, "Conversations at the Intersection of Art and Activism," presented at FOCAS: Focus on Community Arts South (conference, Kentucky, April 17-21 2002) http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2003/04/conversations_a.php.

12. This survey was initially assisted by a prior engagement with the work of activist organisations such as Greenpeace, The World Development Movement and A World to Win, alongside a familiarity with discourses articulated through journals such as *New Internationalist* and by writers such as John Pilger. This engagement was extended throughout the duration of the research through events such as the conference Spheres of Action: Art and Politics (London: Tate Britain in association with the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy, December 10 2005), Utopiates: Piece-full Paths to Tomorrow(s), seminar hosted by the Contemporary Ideology Forum (Oxford: Oxford Brookes Univ., April 21 2005) and Jane Trowell, The Body Politic: Social and Ecological Justice, Art and Activism, short course (Stratford, London: Birkbeck College, March 18 - April 4 2009).

13. Such sources are not generally drawn upon in order to develop a critical approach to these practices. However, these texts are occasionally cited by practitioners in the field of creative social action. For example, both John Jordan (Formerly of PLATFORM and Reclaim the Streets) and Jane Trowell (of PLATFORM) refer to Rebecca Solnit's *Hope in the Dark: The Untold History of People Power*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Canongate, 2005) and John Holloway's *Change the World Without Taking Power*, 2nd ed. (London: Pluto Press, 2005); John Jordan, in discussion with the author (London: July 10 2006) and Jane Trowell, The Body Politic: Social and Ecological Justice, Art and Activism, workshop (Stratford, London: Birkbeck College, April 4 2009) respectively. Trowell also references Benjamin Shepard's "Absurd Responses vs. Earnest Politics," *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*, vol. 1, no. 2 (January 2003), 95-113, in *ibid*.

14. For an exploration of these criteria and characteristics see chapter 3 "Moving Forward," 45-47.

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15. Jessica Morgan, ed. introduction to *Common Wealth* (London: Tate Publishing, 2003).
 16. Gablik "Connective Aesthetics."
 17. Rebecca Solnit, *Hope in the Dark: The Untold History of People Power*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Canongate, 2005), 13.
 18. Naomi Klein, "Reclaiming the Commons" in *A Movement of Movements: Is Another World Really Possible?* ed. Tom Mertes (New York: Verso, 2004), 219–229.
 19. For Jurgen Habermas' key writings on the subject of the public sphere see: Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Enquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Oxford: Polity Press, 1989); Jurgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Vol. II: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston, MA.: Beacon Press, 1981); and Jurgen Habermas, "Modernity – An Incomplete Project" in *Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster and trans. Seyla Ben-Habib (London: Pluto Press, 1983), 3-15.
 20. Jurgen Habermas quoted by Nick Crossley in *After Habermas: New Perspectives on the Public Sphere*, ed. Nick Crossley and John M. Roberts (Oxford: Sociological Review in association with Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 9.
 21. See also Nick Crossley, *Making Sense of Social Movements*. Buckingham: Open Univ. Press, 2002 and Nick Crossley, "Even Newer Social Movements: Anti-Corporate Protests, Capitalist Crises and the Remoralization of Society," *Organisation* 10(4), 2003, 287–305.
 22. Miriam Hansen, "Foreword" in *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere*, Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, trans. Peter Labanyi et al. (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1993), ix-xli.
 23. See Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," *Social Text*, vol. 25/26 (1990), 56-80. The quotations included here are taken from Wayne Clark, *Activism in the Public Sphere: Exploring the Discourse of Political Participation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 42 and Nick Crossley and John M. Roberts, eds. *After Habermas: New Perspectives on the Public Sphere* (Oxford: Sociological Review in association with Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 15.
 24. Andrew Edgar, in *Cultural Theory: Key Concepts*, ed. Andrew Edgar and Peter Sedgwick, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), 228; also see Alastair Hannay, *On the Public*, Thinking in Action Series, ed. Simon Critchley and Richard Kearney (London: Routledge, 2005), 45-6.
 25. Miriam Hansen, "Foreword" in *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere*, Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, trans. Peter Labanyi et al (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1993), ix-xli.
 26. Patrick Reinsborough, "De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination: Values Crisis, the Politics of Reality and why there's Going to be a Common Sense Revolution in this Generation," *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*, vol. 1 no. 2 (August 2003), available online, http://www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org/1/de_colonizing/index.html.
 27. Alastair Hannay, *On the Public*, Thinking in Action Series, ed. Simon Critchley and Richard Kearney (London: Routledge, 2005), 45-6.
 28. Wayne Clark, *Activism in the Public Sphere: Exploring the Discourse of Political Participation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 2-42.
 29. Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Enquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Oxford: Polity Press, 1989), 2.
 30. See Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," *Social Text*, vol. 25/26 (1990), 57.
 31. Ulrich Beck, *The Reinvention of Politics: Rethinking Modernity in the Global Social Order*, trans. Mark Ritter (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997).
 32. Naomi Klein "Foreword" in *We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anti-Capitalism*, ed. The Notes from Nowhere Collective (New York: Verso, 2003), 10 and Naomi Klein, "Reclaiming the Commons" in *A Movement of Movements: Is Another World Really Possible?* ed. Tom Mertes (New York: Verso, 2004), 219–229; Immanuel Wallerstein, "New Revolts Against the System" in *ibid.*, 262–273.
 33. David Sloan, "An Ethic of the End: How Planning and Evaluation make Art Political" (September 2008), http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2008/09/an_ethic_of_the.php.
 34. Brian Holmes, "The Oppositional Device: Or Taking the Matter into Whose Hands?" in *Taking the Matter into Common Hands: On Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices*, ed. Johanna Billing, Maria Lind and Lars Nilsson (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2005), 37.

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35. Ulrich Beck, *The Reinvention of Politics: Rethinking Modernity in the Global Social Order*, trans. Mark Ritter (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 145–146.
36. For example see the ‘Direct Action’ and ‘Campaign’ sections of <http://www.cactusnetwork.org.uk/inspiration.htm>, and various links provided through <http://www.indymedia.org/en/static/links.shtml>. See also Benjamin Shepard and Ronald Hayduk, eds. *From ACT UP to the WTO: Urban Protest and Community Building in the Era of Globalisation* (New York: Verso, 2002).
37. Solnit *Hope in the Dark*, 133-134.
38. *!Ya Basta!* translates as Enough! For further information on the *Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional* see Guillermo Gomez-Pena “The ‘Subcommandante’ of Performance” in *Dangerous Border Crossers* (London: Routledge, 2000), 222; Alex Khasnabish, *Zapatismo Beyond Borders: New Imaginations of Political Possibility* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2008); Subcommandante Marcos, *Our Word is our Weapon: Selected Writings Subcommandante Insurgente Marcos* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2001); Subcommandante Marcos, “The Hourglass of the Zapatistas” in *A Movement of Movements: Is Another World Really Possible?* ed. Tom Mertes (New York: Verso, 2004), 3-15; and the movement’s website, <http://www.ezln.org/>. For compilations of information and communications from the movement see <http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico.html> and <http://www.struggle.ws/mexico/ezlnco.html>. See also Chris Brazier, “Local Heroes,” *New Internationalist*, vol. 389 (May 2006), 20, Simon Hooper, “A Nation’s Salvation,” *The Big Issue* (January 23–29 2006), 15–16 and The Venezuelan Revolution Issue, *New Internationalist* vol. 390 (June 2006).
39. Reinsborough “De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination.” This notion of ‘post-issue activism’ is also discussed in chapter 1 “Setting Out,” 9-10.
40. Charles Derber quoted in Solnit *Hope in the Dark*, 134.
41. Reinsborough “De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination.” Also see Darij Zadnikar, “Adorno and Post-Vanguardism” in *Negativity and Revolution: Adorno and Political Activism*, ed. John Holloway, Fernando Matamoros and Sergio Tischler (London: Pluto Press, 2009), 91-92.
42. Solnit *Hope in the Dark*, 2.
43. *Ibid.*, 103. Solnit argues that the origins of such changes are systematically written into history as top-down legislative changes. John Jordan makes a similar point, with reference to the Surrealists. “Dedicated to creating radical social change, the surrealists [sic] even set off a little known revolution. It took place in Haiti in 1946 following a lecture tour there by Breton and it toppled the repressive government. Now their radical political actions have been all but wiped out by the flood of benign coffee table books. Yet in the 1920’s and 30’s it was taken for granted that artists should engage in social change, Expressionists, Dadaists and Futurists all wanted to radically transform society. Diluted by a rewriting of history and subject to commodification by the art market they must all be spinning wildly in their graves.” John Jordan, “In the Footnotes of Library Angels: A Bi(bli)ography of Insurrectionary Imagination” (2006), available online, http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/pdf_docs/SRG_Jordan.pdf, 14, and Helena Lewis, *Dada Turns Red: The Politics of Surrealism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1990).
44. Solnit *Hope in the Dark*, 56.
45. The Social Sculpture Research Unit, the ‘Our Methodologies’ section of website (2008) <http://www.social-sculpture.org/focus-ssru/our-methodologies1.htm>.
46. Solnit *Hope in the Dark*, 35-39.
47. *Ibid.*, 128–9.
48. *Ibid.*, 21-2.
49. *Ibid.*, 138.
50. See Eugen Blume, “Joseph Beuys and the GDR: The Individual as Political” in *Joseph Beuys: The Reader*, ed. Claudia Mesche and Viola Michely (New York: I.B. Taurus, 2007), 304-319.
51. Joseph Beuys quoted in Lukas Beckmann, “The Causes Lie in the Future” in *Joseph Beuys: Mapping the Legacy*, ed. Gene Ray (New York: The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art in association with Distributed Art Publishers, 2001), 105. Beckmann’s essay (92-111) offers a useful account of aspects of Beuys’ political activism.
52. Charles Derber quoted in Solnit *Hope in the Dark*, 134.

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53. John Jordan, "In the Footnotes of Library Angels: A Bi(bli)ography of Insurrectionary Imagination" (March 2006), available online, http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/pdf_docs/SRG_Jordan.pdf, 7.
54. John Holloway, *Change the World Without Taking Power*, 2nd ed. (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 18.
55. *Ibid.*, 11.
56. John Holloway, "The Concept of Power and the Zapatistas," *Common Sense*, vol. 19 (June 1996), available online, <http://libcom.org/library/concept-power-zapatistas-john-holloway>.
57. John Holloway, *Change the World Without Taking Power*, 2nd ed. (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 17.
58. *Ibid.*, 7; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1977; first published 1975 as *Surveiller et Punir: Naissance de la Prison* by Gallimard), 202.
59. Michel Foucault quoted in Alan Sheridan, *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth* (London: Routledge, 1980), 217. Also see Holloway, "Beyond Power" in Holloway *Change the World Without Taking Power*, 19-42 and Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Vol. 1*, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1981; first published 1976 as *Histoire de la Sexualité, 1: la Volonté de Savoir*).
60. John Holloway, "The Concept of Power and the Zapatistas," *Common Sense*, vol.19 (June 1996), available online, <http://libcom.org/library/concept-power-zapatistas-john-holloway>.
61. Holloway *Change the World Without Taking Power*, 38.
62. Holloway "The Concept of Power and the Zapatistas."
63. Holloway *Change the World Without Taking Power*, 158.
64. Reinsborough "De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination."
65. The Notes from Nowhere collective, "Emergence" in *We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anti-Capitalism*, ed. The Notes from Nowhere collective (New York: Verso, 2003), 20.
66. Jordan "In the Footnotes of Library Angels," 7; Raoul Vaneigem quoted by Reclaim the Streets, "Reclaim the Streets!" *Do or Die: Voices from the Ecological Resistance*, no. 6 (1997), 4, available online, <http://www.eco-action.org/dod/no6/rts.htm>. For a seminal exploration of how the dominant system encroaches on everyday life, see Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, trans. D.N. Smith, 2nd rev. ed. (London: Rebel Press, 1983).
67. For further discussion of this notion of the aesthetic see: Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978); Herbert Marcuse, *Art and Liberation (the Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse v. 4)* ed. Douglas Kellner (London: Routledge, 2007); Carol Becker, "Herbert Marcuse and the Subversive Potential of Art" in *The Subversive Imagination: Artists, Society and Social Responsibility* (London: Routledge, 1994); also see references given in n. 4 above.
68. Jordan "In the Footnotes of Library Angels," 5.
69. Holloway *Change the World Without Taking Power*, 46.
70. Holloway "The Concept of Power and the Zapatistas."
71. Holloway "The Scream" in Holloway *Change the World Without Taking Power*, 1-10.
72. Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation* (London: Penguin, 1969), 77.
73. Similar assertions can be found in the following, Reinsborough "De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination," Shepard "Absurd Responses vs. Earnest Politics" and Shepard *Play, Creativity, and Social Movements*.
74. For an elaboration on groups, movements and tactics that broke away from stereotypical 'activist' practices of this era, which John Jordan summarises as "the tedium of traditional demonstrations and protests – the ritual marches from point A to B, the permits and police escorts, the staged acts of civil disobedience, the verbose rallies and dull speeches by leaders," see George McKay, ed. *DIY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (New York: Verso, 1998). Quotation from Jordan "In the Footnotes of Library Angels."
75. "Give up Activism," *Do or Die: Voices from the Ecological Resistance* no. 9 (September 2001), available online, <http://www.eco-action.org/dod/no9/activism.htm>, 166-170. This article is unattributed but appears to be written by John Jordan.

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76. Reinsborough "De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination." See <http://www.revbilly.com>, <https://www.adbusters.org>; <https://www.clownarmy.org>; Gregory Lewis, "Pie-pitch recipe: Activism with humour: Group uses pastries to draw attention," *The Examiner* (November 9 1998), available online, <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/examiner/archive/1998/11/09/NEWS15983.dtl>; <http://www.notbored.org/the-scp.html>; http://www.markthomasinfo.com/section_writing/ and <http://rts.gn.apc.org/> respectively. These examples have been drawn from the author's immediate experience, which necessarily means that their range is limited and does not adequately represent the strategic diversity and geographical spread of this type of activism. Links provided by Temporary Services, Affinity Projects and the Groundswell Collective's websites offer a useful starting point for engaging with a wider range of examples, www.temporaryservices.org, <http://affinityproject.org/home.html> and <http://www.groundswellcollective.com/>. Also see: "Carnival: Resistance is the Secret of Joy" in *We Are Everywhere* ed. Notes from Nowhere collective; Shepard, *Play, Creativity, and Social Movements*; Stephen Duncombe, ed. *The Cultural Resistance Reader* (New York: Verso, 2002); and Marcelo Exposito, *Radical Imagination: Carnivals of Resistance*, DVD 60mins. (Zurich: Sedhalle, 2004).
77. For example see Julia Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel" in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi, trans. Sean Hand and Leon S. Roudiez (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984).
78. Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1981; first published 1975 as *Voprosy Literaturny i Estetiki* by Khudozh.lit-ra), 7; Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* (Indiana: Indiana Univ. Press, 1984; first published 1965 by Indiana Univ. Press), 10; Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1984), 302.
79. Shepard "Absurd Responses vs. Earnest Politics," 96.
80. Shepard "Absurd Responses vs. Earnest Politics," 99 and 106-110; Solnit *Hope in the Dark*, 86. Also see Shepard, *Play, Creativity, and Social Movements*.
81. Holloway *Change the World Without Taking Power*, 211, paraphrased by the author.
82. Solnit *Hope in the Dark*, 91.
83. Reinsborough "De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination," Solnit *Hope in the Dark*, 35 and 5–14 respectively.
84. Wolfgang Zumtack, "Joseph Beuys: Evolution. An Artistic Perspective on the Development of Mind and Earth," working paper, with the Social Sculpture Research Unit (Oxford: Oxford Brookes Univ., January 2 2009), 6.
85. Joseph Beuys quoted in *ibid.*, 17; Mertes ed. *A Movement of Movements*.
86. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (London: Penguin, 2005). Also see the journal *Multitudes*, available online, <http://multitudes.samizdat.net/> (French with some English translations).
87. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (London: Penguin, 1990), 62. See also Antonio Negri, "Approximations: Towards an Ontological Definition of the Multitude," trans. Arianna Bove (n.d.), available online, <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/aggp/space/multitude.htm> and Antonio Negri, *Time for Revolution*, trans. Matteo Mandarini (New York: Continuum, 2003; first published 1997 as *La Costituzione del Tempo* by Manifestolibri).
88. See Anna-Marie Smith, *Laclau and Mouffe: The Radical Democratic Imaginary* (London: Routledge, 1998); Lukas Beckmann, "The Causes Lie in the Future" in *Joseph Beuys: Mapping the Legacy*, ed. Gene Ray (New York: The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art in association with Distributed Art Publishers, 2001), 91-111; Mark Rosenthal, *Joseph Beuys: Actions, Vitrines, Environments* (London: Tate, 2005); and Regina Brenner, "Joseph Beuys: Political Activism," <http://www.walkerart.org/archive/F/9C4309B0B50D8AA36167.htm>
89. Lewis Mumford, *The Story of Utopias* (Charleston, SC: BiblioBazaar LLC, 2008; first published 1922 by Boni and Liveright).
90. See Heim, "Slow Activism" 183–202 and Claire Doherty, "Social Work, Social Sculpture" in *Supermanual: A User's Guide* (Liverpool: FACT, 2000).
91. See Carol Becker, *Surpassing the Spectacle: Global Transformations and the Changing Politics of Art* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, 2002), 8.
92. Lewis Mumford, *The Story of Utopias* (Charleston, SC: BiblioBazaar LLC, 2008; first published 1922 by Boni and Liveright).

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93. Examples of such rationalist approaches to utopia abound. They include the small experimental communities set up by political reformists and religious groups, and the architectural utopias of the 1920s. On the failure of such ventures, see Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000).
94. See Russell Jacoby, "An Anarchic Breeze" in *Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an Anti-Utopian Age* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2005), 1–36; Eric D. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press, 2003).
95. Fredric Jameson, "Introduction: Utopia Now" in *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (New York: Verso, 2007), xi.
96. Susan Buck-Morss, "Preface" in *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000).
97. Buck-Morss, "Preface" in *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*.
98. Krishan Kumar, *Utopianism* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1991).
99. Barbara Godwin and Keith Taylor also made a fundamental contribution to this call for a rethinking of utopianism; see Barbara Godwin and Keith Taylor, eds. *The Politics of Utopia: A Study in Theory and Practice* (London: Hutchinson, 1982).
100. Fredric Jameson, "Varieties of the Utopian" in *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (New York: Verso, 2007), 1.
101. Tom Moylan, "Utopian Studies: Sharpening the Debate," *Science Fiction Studies* 56, vol. 19, no. 1 (March 1992), available online, http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/review_essays/moyl56.htm. See also Tom Moylan, *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination* (New York: Methuen, 1986), another seminal text in the call for a re-valuing of utopianism.
102. For early examples of these developments see Frances Bartkowski, *Feminist Utopias* (Lincoln, USA.: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1989), Lucy Sargisson, *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism* (London: Routledge, 1996) and Ernest Callenbach, *Ecotopia: The Notebooks and Reports of William Weston* (New York: Bantam Books, 1977).
103. Tom Moylan, "Utopian Studies: Sharpening the Debate," *Science Fiction Studies* 56, vol. 19, no. 1 (March 1992), available online, http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/review_essays/moyl56.htm.
104. The international and interdisciplinary Society for Utopian Studies was founded in 1975; the journal *Utopian Studies* was founded in 1988, formerly edited by Nicole Pohl and currently by Lyman Tower Sargent.
105. A Millennium of Utopias: The Theory, History and Future of Utopianism (conference, Univ. of East Anglia, June 23–26 1999); Nowhere: A Place of Our Own: Exploring the Uses of Utopia, (conference, Univ. of Warwick, May 8 1999); Utopia: The Search for the Ideal Society in the Western World (exhibition, Paris and New York: Bibliotheque Nationale, Spring 2000 and New York Public Library, Oct 14 2000 - January 27 2001), see <http://utopia.nypl.org/Pt3resources.html> and New York Public Library, *Utopia: The Search for the Ideal Society in the Western World*, ed. Roland Schaer, Gregory Claeys and Lyman Tower Sargent (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001).
106. The Second World Social Forum (Porto Alegre, Brazil, 2002).
107. See Paul Raskin, Tariq Banuri and Gilberto Gallopín, et al. *Great Transition: The Promise and Lure of the Times Ahead*, A report of the Global Scenario Group. no. 10 (Boston, MA: Tellus Institute, 2002), available online, http://www.gtinitiative.org/documents/Great_Transitions.pdf.
108. Molly Nesbit, Hans-Ulich Obrist and Rirkrit Tiravanija, "What is a Station?" in *Participation*, Documents of Contemporary Art series ed. Claire Bishop (Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel in association with MIT Press, 2006), 184-189. Utopia Station (exhibition, Venice: 50th Venice Biennale, 2003).
109. Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini, eds. *Utopia Method Vision: The Use Value of Social Dreaming* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007).
110. Fatima Vieira in *Exploring the Utopian Impulse: Essays on Utopian Thought and Practice*, Ralahine Utopian Studies series ed. Tom Moylan and Michael J. Griffin (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007), back cover.
111. See Jameson *Archaeologies of the Future*.

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112. Tom Moylan, "Warm and Cold Utopianism" presented at A Millennium of Utopias: The Theory, History and Future of Utopianism (conference, Univ. of East Anglia, June 23–26 1999).
113. See Barbara Goodwin and Keith Taylor, eds. *The Philosophy of Utopia* (Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001). See also Christopher Yorke, "Three Archetypes for the Clarification of Utopian Theorising" in *Exploring the Utopian Impulse: Essays on Utopian Thought and Practice*, Ralahine Utopian Studies series, ed. Tom Moylan and Michael J. Griffin (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007).
114. Ruth Levitas, "Future Perfect: Rethorising Utopia" in *The Concept of Utopia* 2nd ed. (New York: Philip Allan, 1996), 180-181.
115. Fatima Vieira, "Still Learning with More and Morris: Old Recipes for a New Utopianism," *Utopia and Utopianism*, no. 1 (2006), 59-72, available online, <http://www.utopiaandutopianism.com/vieira.html>. See Thomas More, *Utopia, Latin Text and English Translation*, ed. G. M. Logan, R. M. Adams and C. H. Miller (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995; first published 1516).
116. For elaboration on this perspective see Fatima Vieira, "Still Learning with More and Morris: Old Recipes for a New Utopianism," *Utopia and Utopianism*, no. 1 (2006), 59-72, available online, <http://www.utopiaandutopianism.com/vieira.html>. Also see Jameson *Archaeologies of the Future*.
117. Ruth Levitas cited in *The Philosophy of Utopia*, ed. Barbara Goodwin and Keith Taylor (Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001), 42 and Russell Jacoby, "Preface" in *Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an Anti-Utopian Age* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2005).
118. Solnit *Hope in the Dark*, 56 and 135.
119. *Ibid.*, 11–112.
120. Holloway *Change the World Without Taking Power*, 245.
121. Solnit *Hope in the Dark*, 5, 14 and 111-112 respectively.
122. Levitas "Marxism, Romanticism and Utopia," 33.
123. Lyman Tower Sargent, "Choosing Utopia: Utopianism as an Essential Element in Political Thought and Action" in *Utopia Method Vision: The Use Value of Social Dreaming*, Ralahine Utopian Studies series ed. Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007), 301-318. See also Fredric Jameson, "Introduction: Utopia Now" in Jameson *Archaeologies of the Future*, xii-xvi.
124. Lyman Tower Sargent, "Choosing Utopia: Utopianism as an Essential Element in Political Thought and Action" in *Utopia Method Vision*, ed. Moylan and Baccolini, 308 and 311 respectively.
125. Fredric Jameson, "The Utopian Enclave" in *Archaeologies of the Future*, 10.
126. See Antonio Negri, "Approximations: Towards an Ontological Definition of the Multitude," trans. Arianna Bove (n.d.), available online, <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/space/multitude.htm> and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005).
127. Holloway *Change the World Without Taking Power*, 17.
128. Broadly speaking, theorisations of the revolutionary potential of the routines of ordinary life, from those offered in Ernst Bloch's work to those proposed by writers and theorists such as Michel de Certeau and Henri Lefebvre, have had considerable influence on this expanded understanding of utopia.
129. Gablik *Has Modernism Failed?* 81; Fredric Jameson's description of Herbert Marcuse in *Archaeologies of the Future*, xv.
130. Jacoby *Picture Imperfect*, 22.
131. Lucy Sargisson, "Green Utopias of Self and Other" in Goodwin and Taylor eds. *The Philosophy of Utopia*, 140.
132. Herbert Marcuse, "Liberation from the Affluent Society" in *The Dialectics of Liberation*, ed. Douglas Cooper (London: Penguin, 1968), 184.
133. Jacoby *Picture Imperfect*, 148.
134. Lucy Sargisson suggests 'transgressive utopianism' while Fatima Vieira offers the term 'contemporary utopianism.' See Lucy Sargisson, "Green Utopias of Self and Other" in Goodwin and Taylor eds. *The Philosophy of Utopia*, 140 and Vieira "Still Learning with More and Morris," 59.

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- 135.** Ailsa McPherson cited by Peter McLaverty in "Is public participation a good thing?" in *Public Participation and Innovations in Community Governance*, ed. Peter McLaverty (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 185-197. Paraphrased by the author.
- 136.** See Maria Lind, "Actualisation of Space: The Case of Oda Projesi" (2004) <http://www.republicart.net>; <http://www.irational.org/mvc>.
- 137.** <http://www.treepeople.com>; Andy Lipkis and Kate Lipkis, "Getting It Together: Planning and Funding Your Project" in *The Simple Act of Planting a Tree – A Citizen Foresters' Guide to Healing Your Neighbourhood, Your City and Your World* (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher Inc., 1990).
- 138.** Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (Indiana: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1984); Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990); Gablik *Has Modernism Failed?*
- 139.** For example, see Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2002; first published 1944 as *Philosophische Fragmente* by Social Studies Association Inc).
- 140.** The phrase 'communities of interest' is used by PLATFORM.
- 141.** The first three examples are drawn from papers in Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari, eds. *Participation: The New Tyranny?* (New York: Zed Books, 2001). The latter example is discussed by Fawzia Sheikh, who describes the approximate meaning of *gacaca* as "justice on the grass;" Fawzia Sheikh, "Justice After Genocide, Community Alternatives: Trial and Error," *New Internationalist*, no. 385 (December 2005).
- 142.** Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 2004); Nicholas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. S. Pleasance and F. Woods (n.p.: Les Presses du Reel, 2002); Stephen Wright, "The Delicate Essence of Artistic Collaboration," *Third Text*, vol. 535 (June 18 2004), 534-535. Participatory rhetoric and practice is prevalent within the art world. In general terms, this is the result of two relatively distinct developments. On one hand, since the 1960s artists who perceive the institutional framework as implicitly bound to pathogenic social structures, and resolutely reject top down initiatives to address socially and ecologically unviable practices, have increasingly turned to participatory strategies. On the other hand, since the 1990s a plethora of 'social inclusion' initiatives and institutional attempts to demonstrate social accountability, accompanied by developments of cultural funding policies has orientated institutions and their advocates towards the inclusion of diverse publics. Threads of these discourses can be traced through a general 'social turn' in contemporary art that has surfaced in various forms including 'dialogic,' 'relational' and 'process-orientated' art. For a critique of 'social inclusion' initiatives in relation to the art world see Francois Matarasso, "Towards an Inclusive Culture," *Matters* no. 16 (Spring 2003), 11. Also see Claire Doherty, "Social Work, Social Sculpture" in *Supermanual: A User's Guide* (Liverpool: FACT, 2000).
- 143.** Neil Marsland, "Participation and the Qualitative – Quantitative Spectrum" research paper for the Natural Resources Institute, Univ. of Greenwich (n.d) http://www.reading.ac.uk/ssc/publications/guides/tp1_part.pdf.
- 144.** See Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari, "Introduction: The Case for Participation as Tyranny" and Uma Kothari, "Participatory Development" in *Participation: The New Tyranny?* ed. Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari (New York: Zed Books, 2001). Also see McLaverty, "Introduction" in *Public Participation and Innovations in Community Governance*.
- 145.** John Haily, "Beyond the Formulaic" in Cooke and Kothari eds. *Participation: The New Tyranny?*
- 146.** On the issue of participation as a mechanism for avoiding responsibility see Heiko Henkel and Roderick Stirrat, "Participation as Spiritual Duty" in Cooke and Kothari eds. *Participation: The New Tyranny?*
- 147.** See also the International Association for Public Participation, "IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation" (n.d) http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/IAP2%20Spectrum_vertical.pdf and its associated online journal, the *International Journal of Public Participation*.
- 148.** Samuel Hickey and Giles Mohan, eds. *Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation? - Exploring New Approaches to Participation in Development* (n.p.: Zed Books Ltd., 2004).
- 149.** Sherry R. Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, vol. 35 no. 4 (July 1969), 216-224.
- 150.** Wayne Clark, Usman Khan and Peter McLaverty, "Reformulating the Activist, Reformulating Activism," *Policy and Politics*, vol. 30 no. 4 (October 1 2002), 455-468.

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151. The Social Sculpture Research Unit, (2008) <http://www.social-sculpture.org/>.
152. K. T. Elsdon, "Voluntary Organisations: Citizenship, Learning and Change" cited in "Evaluation: Learning What Matters," Alan Rogers and Mark K. Smith (conference booklet, YMCA George Williams College in association with Rank Foundation, London, September 18-19 2006).
153. McLaverty ed. *Public Participation and Innovations in Community Governance*, 188.
154. See *ibid*.
155. Clark *Activism in the Public Sphere*, 173.
156. John Haily, "Beyond the Formulaic" in Cooke and Kothari eds. *Participation: The New Tyranny?*
157. Sherry R. Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, vol. 35, no. 4 (July 1969), 216-224. See for example, Samuel Hickey and Giles Mohan, eds. *Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation? - Exploring New Approaches to Participation in Development* (n.p.: Zed Books Ltd., 2004).
158. Here McLaverty draws largely on the work of John Stuart Mill and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, see McLaverty "Is public participation a good thing?" in McLaverty ed. *Public Participation and Innovations in Community Governance*. See also Hickey and Mohan eds. *Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation?*
159. The term 'innerwork' is employed by the Social Sculpture Research Unit, and others; see <http://www.social-sculpture.org/>.
160. Ivan Illich, *Celebration of Awareness: A Call for Institutional Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1973), 17. Also see McLaverty ed. *Public Participation and Innovations in Community Governance* and Cooke and Kothari eds. *Participation: The New Tyranny?*
161. See Chantal Mouffe, "Liberal Socialism and Pluralism: Which Citizenship?" and Jeffrey Weeks, "Rediscovering Values" in *Principled Positions: Postmodernism and the Rediscovery of Value*, ed. Judith Squires (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993), 69-84 and 189-211 respectively.
162. Steven Connor, "The Necessity of Value" in *Principled Positions: Postmodernism and the Rediscovery of Value*, ed. Judith Squires (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993), 31.
163. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. and ed. Douglas Smith (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1996; first published 1887 as *Zur Genealogie der Moral: Eine Streitschrift*) and Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of Idols and Antichrist*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Classics, 2003; first published 1889 as *Gotzen-Dammerung, oder: Wie man mit dem Hammer philosophirt*).
164. See Paul Grice, *The Conception of Value* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991).
165. W. J. T. Mitchell, "Value" in *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, ed. T. Bennett, L. Grossberg and M. Morris (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 366-367.
166. Steven Connor, "The Necessity of Value" in *Principled Positions: Postmodernism and the Rediscovery of Value*, ed. Judith Squires (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993), 31.
167. W. J. T. Mitchell, "Value" in *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, ed. T. Bennett, L. Grossberg and M. Morris (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 366-367.
168. John Fekete quoted by Connor in "The Necessity of Value," 31.
169. See chapter 1, 8-11. The issue of a shift in values is overtly centralised in the work of *imagine / RENDER*, TreePeople, Grupo de Arte Callejero and the aptly named Exchange Values, and it underpins each of the practices described here as creative social action.
170. The sense in which the term 'pathogenic' is used here is explained in chapter 1, 9.
171. Gablik "Connective Aesthetics," 74-75 and 84-85; see also Frederic Jameson, "Reflections in Conclusion" quoted by Antje Weitzel and Marina Sorbello in "The Status of the Political in Contemporary Art and Culture" (2003) http://www.societyofcontrol.com/library/culture/artandpolitics_e_s.pdf.
172. On 'contingent communities' see n. 161 above.
173. John Dewey, *Reconstruction of Philosophy* (n.p.: Dover Publications, 2004; first published 1919) and John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty* (New York: Putnam Publishing Group, 1960; first published 1929).
174. See Kate Soper, Martin Ryle and Lyn Thomas, eds. *The Politics and Pleasures of Consuming Differently*, Consumption and Public Life Series (n.p.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
175. Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus Vol. 2 of Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (New York: Continuum, 2004; first published 1980 as

Mille Plateaux by Les Editions de Minuit); Felix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (London: The Athlone Press, 2000; first published 1989 as *Les Trois Ecologies* by Editions Galilee).

176. Andrew Simms, "The Final Countdown," *The Guardian* (August 1 2008), available online, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/aug/01/climatechange.carbonemissions>.

177. Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1991).

178. Joel J. Kassiola, "Can Environmental Ethics 'Solve' Environmental Problems and Save the World? Yes, but First we Must Recognise the Essential Normative Nature of Environmental Problems," *Environmental Values*, vol. 12 (2003), available online <http://bss.sfsu.edu/kassiola/docs/ENVIRONMENTALVALUESarticle.pdf>.

179. On the term 'contingent communities' see n. 161 above.

180. Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1993). See also Giorgio Agamben, *Means Without End: Notes on Politics*, trans. Vincenzo Binetti and Cesare Casarino (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2000; first published 1995 as *Moyens sans Fins: Notes sur la Politique* by Rivages).

181. Reinsborough "De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination."

182. Ibid.

183. Andrew Simms is policy director and head of the climate change programme at the New Economics Foundation, see <http://www.neweconomics.org/> and Andrew Simms, *Ecological Debt: The Health of the Planet and the Wealth of Nations* (London: Pluto Press, 2005); Reinsborough "De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination."

184. Orion Kriegman, "Dawn of the Cosmopolitan: The Hope of a Global Citizens Movement," GTI Paper Series no. 15 *Frontiers of a Great Transition* (Boston: Tellus Institute, 2006), available online, <http://www.gtinitiative.org/documents/PDFFINALS/15Movements.pdf>. The Tellus Institute focuses on developing an alternative future based on the principles of sustainability, equity, and well-being, see <http://www.tellus.org/index.php>. The Institute describes the project co-ordinated by Kriegman as 'a pioneering project in global social movement formation.'

185. Inglehart and Welzel's use of the term 'self-expression values' can appear to link the values they advocate with those traditionally emphasised, such as individualism and misguided notions of freedom. However, close reading of their use of this term suggests that it is used in an 'expanded' sense, one in which the 'self' includes community and context. This is an expression of personal and collective selves, and of individual and collective value shifts

186. Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005), 64, available online, <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>.

187. For examples of the numerous communities aspiring to contribute to this shift in value orientation see: The Global Greens (the international network of Green parties and political movements), *Charter of the Global Greens: Defining what it Means to be Green in the New Millennium* (Canberra, 2001), available online, <http://www.global.greens.org.au/Charter2001.pdf>; Camp for Climate Action, <http://www.climatecamp.org.uk/>; Permaculture Association (Britain), <http://www.permaculture.org.uk/>.

188. Squires ed. *Principled Positions*, 2-3.

189. On Joseph Beuys' notion of the 'permanent conference' see Eugen Blume, "Joseph Beuys and the GDR: The Individual as Political" in *Joseph Beuys: The Reader*, ed. Claudia Mesche and Viola Michely (New York: I.B. Taurus, 2007), 304-319 and Lukas Beckmann, "The Causes Lie in the Future" in *Joseph Beuys: Mapping the Legacy*, ed. Gene Ray (New York: The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art in association with Distributed Art Publishers, 2001), 92-111.

190. Mika Hannula, "The Principle of Second Wave Values" (December 18 2000) <http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/mikahannula.shtml>.

191. Connor "The Necessity of Value," 31.

192. Squires ed. *Principled Positions*, 6.

193. For example see Holmes Rolston III, "Value in Nature and the Nature of Value" in *Philosophy and the Natural Environment*, eds. Robin Attfield and Andrew Belsey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 22-25 and Holmes Rolston III, "Intrinsic, Instrumental and Systemic Values" in *Environmental Ethics: Duties to and Values in the*

Natural World (Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 1989), 186-189. See also the arguments put forward by environmental ethicists such as Joel J. Kassiola, "The 'Tragedy' of Modernity: How Environmental Limits and The Environmental Crisis Produce the Need for Postmodern Values and Institutions" and Robert E. Goodin, "A Green Theory of Value" in *Explorations in Environmental Political Theory: Thinking about what we Value*, ed. Joel J. Kassiola (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2003).

194. The New Economics Foundation, <http://www.neweconomics.org/programmes/valuing-what-matters>.

195. Discussions of the ideology of the Modern era with relevance to this interconnection are numerous. The author recommends the following: Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2002; first published 1944 as *Philosophische Fragmente* by Social Studies Association Inc.); Gablik "Connective Aesthetics;" Gablik *Has Modernism Failed?*; Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (London: Routledge Classics, 2002; first published 1964 by Routledge and Kegan Paul). For an interesting reflection on the need to evaluate value and values in light of critique of the modern era see Steven Connor, "Between Earth and Air: Value, Culture and Futurity" in *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*, ed. Jon Bird et al. (London: Routledge, 1993), 229-36; also Steven Connor, "After Cultural Value: Ecology, Ethics and Aesthetics" in *Ethics and Aesthetics: The Moral Turn of Postmodernism*, ed. Gerhard Hoffmann and Alfred Hornung (Heidelberg: Univ. Carl Winter, 1996), 1-12.

196. David Sloan, "An Ethic of the End: How Planning and Evaluation make Art Political" (September 2008) http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2008/09/an_ethic_of_the.php.

197. This movement is discussed by Susan Callahan, *Singing our Praises: Case Studies in the Art of Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: Association of Performing Arts Presenters, 2005). A further example of this movement is provided by Alan Rogers and Mark K. Smith who articulate an alternative approach to evaluation that focuses on ongoing development and feedback rather than providing conclusive evidence; see Alan Rogers and Mark K. Smith, *Evaluation: Learning what Matters* (London: Rank Foundation in association with YMCA George Williams College, 2006), available online, www.ymca.org.uk/rank/conference/evaluation_learning_what_matters.pdf.

198. Michael Q. Patton, *Utilization-Focused Evaluation: The New Century Text*, 3rd ed. (London: Sage, 1997).

199. Joanna Rowlands cited in Mark K. Smith, *Evaluation: Theory and Practice* (2006) <http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-eval.htm>. See also Joanna Rowlands, ed. *Speaking Out: How the Voices of Poor People are Shaping the Future* Programme Insights series (n.p.: Oxfam Publishing, 2009).

200. Michael Q. Patton, *Utilization-Focused Evaluation: The New Century Text*, 3rd ed. (London: Sage, 1997), 20-22. Also see Michael Q. Patton, "The Roots of Utilisation-Focused Evaluation" in *Evaluation Roots*, ed. M.C. Alkin (London: Sage, 2004).

201. Doherty "Social Work, Social Sculpture."

202. Thomas Berry discusses this 'dis-ease' in, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990).

203. Claire Bishop, "Viewers as Producers" in *Participation Documents of Contemporary Art* series, ed. Claire Bishop (Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel in association with MIT Press, 2006), 10-17.

204. Mark K. Smith, *Evaluation: Theory and Practice* (2006) <http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-eval.htm>.

205. Ibid.

206. Ibid.

207. This expression is used in Rogers and Smith *Evaluation: Learning what Matters*.

208. Smith *Evaluation: Theory and Practice*.

209. Solnit *Hope in the Dark*, 3 and 89.

5: Looking Closer

1. Martyn Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide for Small-scale Social Research Projects*, 3rd ed. (Berkshire: Open Univ. Press, 2007): 41.
2. For example, Border Art Workshop/Taller de Arte Fronterizo (BAW/TAF) is referenced in the majority of key texts, including Suzanne Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Washington: Bay Press, 1995), Nina Felshin, ed., *But is it Art?: The Spirit of Art as Activism* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995) and Shifra M Goldman, *Dimensions of the Americas: Art and Social Change in Latin America and the United States* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1994).
3. Was Ton Art-and-Social Engagement, conference organised by WochenKlausur (2000), wocheklausur.t0.or.at/symposium/texte_en.htm.
4. For examples, see <http://www.undo.net/artway> and www.artnexus.com.
5. Grant Kester, "Conversation Pieces," (n.d.) <http://www.capagallery.com/cepa/exhibits>. For an example of these Spanish-language websites see, <http://www.grupoescombros.com.ar/>.
6. Malcolm Miles, *Urban Avant-Gardes: Art, Architecture and Change* (London: Routledge, 2004); Chto Delat?, "Artist's Statement" presented at Klartext Konferenz organised by Marina Sorbello and Antje Weitzel (Berlin: January 14-16 2005) <http://www.klartext-konferenz.de/>, see also, www.chtodelat.org and <http://www.artcal.net/event/view/2/1191>.
7. This focus is discussed in chapter 2, "Circumambulating," 31-34.
8. While the 'partial inventory' has generally lacked entries from the African continent and Indio-China, and contains a relatively small number from other non Euro-American regions, this appears to have stemmed from the limitations of the research project and the difficulties implicit in accessing examples outside one's own culture, language and contacts. The initial survey of practices suggests that with sustained investigation this lack could, at least partly, be mitigated. The survey has revealed many avenues for further investigation of the geographical scope of creative social action, including a more sustained exploration of the various groups associated with organisations such as Open Circle (Mumbai, India), Artists' Village (Sembawang, Singapore), Ruangrupa (Jakarta, Indonesia) and Soleil d'Afrique (Bamako, Mali): See, <http://www.opencirclearts.org/>, <http://tav.org.sg/>, <http://www.ruangrupa.org/>, and <http://www.soleildafrique.org/> respectively. However, such persistent investigation was not possible within the confines of the research project.
9. Approximately twenty-five percent of the examples contained in the 'partial inventory' are active solely within the locale in which they are based, while almost fifty percent work across globally diverse contexts.
10. For example see, www.afroreggae.org.br, afroreggaeuk.org, also Patrick Neate and Damien Platt, *Culture is Our Weapon: AfroReggae in the Favelas of Rio* (London: Latin American Bureau, 2006); www.exchange-values.org; <http://www.emptybowls.net/imagerender.htm> and Bruce Barber, "Littoralist Art Practice and Communicative Action" (n.p.: 1996) <http://www.imageandtext.org.n2>; <http://www.universityofthetrees.org/>.
11. See, <http://www.irational.org/mvc>, <http://www.klartext.konferenz.de/> and <http://www.alaplastica.org.ar/> respectively.
12. For an indication of this similarity cf. the section of this chapter concerned with La Fiambrera, and Brian Holmes, "Ne Pas Plier – Déplier" (n.d.) http://www.k3000.ch.bulletin/kollektive_arbeit/archive/site009.html and Brian Holmes, "Carnival and Counterpower – Québec FTAA Summit" (May 1, 2001) <http://www.nettime.org>.
13. These core elements are indicated by the criteria for creative social action, as set out in chapter 3, "Moving Forward," 45-47.
14. La Fiambrera, "Artist's Statement" presented at Klartext Konferenz organised by Marina Sorbello and Antje Weitzel (Berlin: January 14-16 2005) <http://www.klartext-konferenz.de/>.
15. Ibid. and La Fiambrera, "The Fiambrera: Art in General and Political Jokes" (n.d.) http://www.ayp.unia.es/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=447. The latter text also explains how branches have occasionally grown from La Fiambrera and how the group has become the subject of several urban legends.

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16. For example see, La Fiambrera's website <http://www.sindominio.net/fiambrera>; texts edited by the collective, including *Manual de la Ciberguerrilla* (Barcelona: Virus, 2004); *Manual de la Guerrilla de la Comunicación*, with Luther Blisset, Sonja Brunzels, Grupo Autónomo A.F.R.I.K.A (Barcelona: Virus, 2000), and *Modos de Hacer: Arte Político, Esfera Pública y acción Directa*, (Madrid: Univ. de Salamanca, 2001); audio-visual documentation of the collective's founder Jordi Claramonte i Arrufat in discussion, such as <http://www.vimeo.com/1840335>; a range of websites offering texts in Spanish such as <http://www.lanzadera.com/mortadela>; and various texts written in broken English, such as La Fiambrera, "The Fiambrera: Art in General and Political Jokes" (n.d.) http://www.ayp.unia.es/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=447.
17. La Fiambrera, "Fiambrera in its Place" in "The Non Place Urban Realm," supplement *Variant* vol. 2 no. 10 (Spring 2000), 1-3, available online, <http://www.variant.randomstate.org/Issue10.html>; La Fiambrera, "Flamenco Singing against Gentrifying Bishops" (n.d.) http://subsol.c3.hu/subsol_2/contributors/fiambreratext.html; La Fiambrera, "Bordergames" (n.d.) <http://www.medialabmadrid.org/medialab/medialab.php?l=1&a=a&i=227#>.
18. These unpublished sources include texts from the collective setting out its theoretical associations and perspective, such as Jordi Claramonte i Arrufat, "Del Arte de Concepto al Arte de Contexto" working paper not yet available in English translation and Jordi Claramonte i Arrufat "Modal Aesthetics" (April 21 2008) <http://jordiclaromonte.blogspot.com/2009/04/modal-aesthetics.html>. They also include personal communication, such as La Fiambrera, e-mail interview by the author (July 26 2009) and La Fiambrera, e-mail conversation with the author (July 2 2009).
19. La Fiambrera, "Fiambrera in its Place" in "The Non Place Urban Realm," supplement *Variant* vol. 2 no. 10 (Spring 2000), 1-3, available online, <http://www.variant.randomstate.org/>.
20. La Fiambrera, "Flamenco Singing against Gentrifying Bishops," (n.d.) http://subsol.c3.hu/subsol_2/contributors/fiambreratext.html; La Fiambrera, "Fiambrera in its Place."
21. Ibid.
22. For example see Lena Magnusson, "Gentrification – the Prospect for European Cities?" *Open House International* vol. 30 (n.d.), available online, http://www.openhouse-int.com/abdisplay.php?xvolno=30_3_6, a study of the Ostermalm district in Stockholm city, and Rowland Atkinson and Gary Bridge, eds. *Gentrification in a Global Context* (London: Routledge, 2005).
23. For example see Jordi Claramonte and Javier Rodrigo, "Collaborative Art and Relational Experiences in Public Space" (December, 2007) <http://radical.temp.si/node/112>.
24. La Fiambrera "The Fiambrera: Art in General and Political Jokes."
25. See Andres Walliser Martinez, et al. "National and City Contexts, Urban Development Programmes and Neighbourhood Selection" working paper, UGIS Urban Development Programmes, Urban Governance, Social Inclusion and Sustainability (Madrid: Complutense De Madrid, 2001), available online, http://webh01.ua.ac.be/ugis/results/NR1/NR1_Spain.pdf.
26. La Fiambrera "The Fiambrera: Art in General and Political Jokes."
27. La Fiambrera "Artist's Statement" and La Fiambrera "Fiambrera in its Place."
28. La Fiambrera, "Politically Significant 'Morcillas'" (n.d.) <http://www.sindominio.net/fiambrera/cartelcinema.htm>.
29. See, La Fiambrera, "Flamenco Singing against Gentrifying Bishops" (n.d.) http://subsol.c3.hu/subsol_2/contributors/fiambreratext.html and La Fiambrera, "Fiambrera (Spain)" http://subsol.c3.hu/subsol_2/contributors/fiambrerabio.html. Benjamin Shepard, "Absurd Responses vs. Earnest Politics," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Protest* vol. 1 no. 2 (January 2003), 95-113, available online, <http://www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org/1/BenShepard/index.html>.
30. See La Fiambrera "The Fiambrera: Art in General and Political Jokes" and La Fiambrera "Flamenco Singing against Gentrifying Bishops."
31. Ibid.
32. This alignment of La Fiambrera's aspirations and the Zapatista movement is made specifically in La Fiambrera "The Fiambrera: Art in General and Political Jokes." Also see <http://palabra.ezln.org.mx/>.
33. La Fiambrera, e-mail interview by the author (July 26 2009).
34. Jordi Claramonte and Javier Rodrigo, "Collaborative Art and Relational Experiences in Public Space" (December 2007) <http://radical.temp.si/node/112>.

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35. La Fiambrera "The Fiambrera: Art in General and Political Jokes."
36. La Fiambrera, "Fiambrera (Spain)" (n.d.) http://subsol.c3.hu/subsol_2/contributors/fiambrerabio.html; La Fiambrera, "Bordergames" (n.d.) <http://www.medialabmadrid.org/medialab/medialab.php?l=1&a=a&i=227#>.
37. La Fiambrera, e-mail conversation with the author (July 2 2009).
38. For example, the collective curated the exhibition Ninguna Persona es Ilegal (trans. No Person is Illegal), (Madrid: Casa Encendida, 2002) as described in La Fiambrera, "Bordergames." This quotation is taken from La Fiambrera "Flamenco Singing against Gentrifying Bishops."
39. Claramonte and Rodrigo "Collaborative Art and Relational Experiences in Public Space."
40. See La Fiambrera "Bordergames" and La Fiambrera, "Lavapies, from Intervention to Interaction" (n.d.) <http://www.sindominio.net/fiambrera/lavafeet1.html>.
41. Andres Walliser Martinez, et al. "National and City Contexts, Urban Development Programmes and Neighbourhood Selection" working paper, UGIS Urban Development Programmes, Urban Governance, Social Inclusion and Sustainability (Madrid: Complutense De Madrid, 2001), 16-19, available online, http://webh01.ua.ac.be/ugis/results/NR1/NR1_Spain.pdf.
42. La Fiambrera, "Lavapies, from Intervention to Interaction" (n.d.) <http://www.sindominio.net/fiambrera/lavafeet1.html>. Unless otherwise stated, all further reference to the Lavapies project made in this passage are taken from this source.
43. Martinez et al. "National and City Contexts."
44. Jeremy Hazlehurst, "In Lavapies, Multiculturalismo Has Gone Pear-Shaped," *New Statesman* (March 22 2004), available Online, <http://www.newstatesman.com/200403220004>.
45. Martinez et al. "National and City Contexts," 16-19 and Daniel Wagman, "Areas of Ill-Repute, Immigrants, the City and Security" (n.d.) <http://www.ciudad-derechos.org/english/pdf/aaf.pdf>.
46. "Struggles South of the Pyrenees: Radical Social Movements in the Spanish State," *Do or Die: Voices from the Ecological Resistance* no. 9 (2001), 30-43, available online, <http://www.eco-action.org/dod/no9/spain.html>.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Martinez et al. "National and City Contexts."
50. La Fiambrera, "Lavapies, from Intervention to Interaction," (n.d.) <http://www.sindominio.net/fiambrera/lavafeet1.html> and La Fiambrera, "Fiambrera in its Place."
51. La Fiambrera "Lavapies, from Intervention to Interaction."
52. Martinez et al. "National and City Contexts," 19.
53. La Fiambrera "Flamenco Singing against Gentrifying Bishops."
54. Ibid.
55. La Fiambrera, "Intervening in the City: A Proposal for an Alternative Forum and a 'Sustainable' City Falling Down to Pieces," (n.d.) <http://www.sindominio.net/fiambrera/sevillinglis.html>.
56. La Fiambrera "Flamenco Singing against Gentrifying Bishops."
57. Claramonte and Rodrigo "Collaborative Art and Relational Experiences in Public Space."
58. La Fiambrera "The Fiambrera: Art in General and Political Jokes."
59. An overview of this project is given in La Fiambrera "Fiambrera in its Place." Unless otherwise stated, further information on the *Si 8 Do* project given here can be found in this paper.
60. La Fiambrera "Flamenco Singing against Gentrifying Bishops."
61. Annika Salomonsson, "Art Action Group Speaks to the World: Humble Artists Create Touching Work on the Trials of Humanity" (n.d.) <http://www.culturebase.net/artist.php?677>.
62. Eloise de Leon, "Skart: Artists Continue their Work during the Belgrade Protests," *In Motion Magazine* (February 17 1997), available online, <http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/skart.html>.
63. From February 2003, Belgrade was the capital of the newly formed State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. In May 2006, Montenegro declared its independence and Belgrade became the capital of Serbia. However, Belgrade has retained the status of a separate

territorial unit in Serbia, with its own autonomous city government. Serbia is not currently a member of the European Union but is in negotiations as a potential candidate for membership.

64. SKART: On the Origin of Wishes (East London: Space, April 4 – May 22 2009); see www.spacestudios.org.uk/.../Exhibitions_Archive/SKART%3A_On_the_Origin_of_Wishes. For further information on the *Mekanika Popular* project see http://www.culturebase.net/project_detail.php?1.

65. For example see www.cincplug.com/skart, <http://www.nyfa.org/nyfacurrent/skart/> and <http://www.culturebase.net/>.

66. Annika Salomonsson, "Art Action Group Speaks to the World: Humble Artists Create Touching Work on the Trials of Humanity" (n.d.) <http://www.culturebase.net/artist.php?677> and "Project Space," *NYFA Current* (January 19 2005), available online, <http://www.nyfa.org/nyfacurrent/skart/>.

67. For example, Skart, e-mail interview by the author (September 8 2009).

68. Salomonsson "Art Action Group Speaks to the World."

69. http://www.pilotlondon.org/artists/cv/CVskart07_june_A.doc.

70. www.cincplug.com/skart.

71. Stevo Zigon, quoted in Salomonsson "Art Action Group Speaks to the World."

72. Sophie Hope, "We all Make Mistakes" (May 2009) http://www.spacestudios.org.uk/images/pdf/skart_text.pdf.

73. Skart e-mail interview by the author and Eloise de Leon, "Skart: Artists Continue their Work during the Belgrade Protests," *In Motion Magazine* (February 17 1997) <http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/skart.html>.

74. Paraphrased from Skart e-mail interview by the author.

75. Skart uses these terms in De Leon "Skart: Artists Continue their Work" and http://www.nyfa.org/nyfa_current_archive.asp?id=272&fid=1&sid=17.

76. This 'post-issue' type of activism is explained in chapters 1 and 4, 9-10 and 66 respectively.

77. See De Leon "Skart: Artists Continue their Work" and http://www.nyfa.org/nyfa_current_archive.asp?id=272&fid=1&sid=17.

78. http://www.nyfa.org/nyfacurrent/skart/skart_page6_front_t_part1.htm and Skart e-mail interview by the author.

79. Skart quoted in de Leon "Skart: Artists Continue their Work."

80. See Salomonsson "Art Action Group Speaks to the World."

81. For further information on these protests see the Balkan Peace Team International Office, "Protests in Belgrade and throughout Yugoslavia - 1996/1997: Unexpected Election Results," (December 10 1996 and January 23 1997), available online, <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/62/063.html>.

82. Ibid.

83. John Jordan, "In the Footnotes of Library Angels: A Bi(bli)ography of Insurrectionary Imagination" (2006), available online, http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/pdf_docs/SRG_Jordan.pdf. See also Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989* (New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press 2002).

84. www.cincplug.com/skart.

85. Skart, (July 2002) http://www.fingerweb.org/html/finger/finger8_12/finger11/skart.html.

86. Skart, interview (n.d.) <http://www.roeda.at/on-going/pdf/11.pdf>.

87. http://www.nyfa.org/nyfacurrent/skart/skart_page8_yourshit_part1.htm.

88. http://www.pilotlondon.org/artists/cv/CVskart07_june_A.doc.

89. Skart e-mail interview by the author.

90. De Leon "Skart: Artists Continue their Work."

91. Skart interview (n.d.).

92. Skart e-mail interview by the author.

93. Salomonsson "Art Action Group Speaks to the World." Skart's activities in professional graphic design have included developing graphic identities for a wide range of events and organisations, including the the following: Women in Black, a feminist anti-war resistance group (1992-3); REX, an independent cultural centre in Belgrade (1994); Center [sic] for Cultural Decontamination, an independent cultural centre that aims to "contribute to the democratic transformation of the social and cultural environment ... and to promote human

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- rights and values" (1996); HAOS, an anti-fascist resistance movement (2007). See http://www.pilotlondon.org/artists/cv/CVskart07_june_A.doc.
- 94.** Jan Verwoert, "Manifesta 3: Ljubljana," *Frieze* no. 55 (November – December 2000), available online, http://www.frieze.com/issue/print_back/manifesta_3/. For further information on Manifesta 3: International Biennial of Contemporary Art, (Ljubljana: June 23 – September 24 2000) see <http://www.manifesta.org/manifesta3/index.htm>. For further information on Skart's participation in exhibitions see <http://www.culturebase.net/artist.php?677>. See also Skart's participation in Selected: 10 Years of < rotor >, exhibition (Graz, Austria: June 26 2009) http://rotor.mur.at/frameset_derrotor-eng.html.
- 95.** For instance, in 2004 Skart presented ephemera from *Your Shit—Your Responsibility* in Flipside, a group show at Artists Space, New York, and in 2007 On the Origin of Wishes involved the collective taking up a residency and presenting retrospective at SPACE studios in Hackney, London.
- 96.** Paraphrased from New Embroideries: Embroidery-Project, exhibition in collaboration with Reunion, B+B and Womens' Embroidery Groups (London: February 2007) <http://www.visitingarts.org.uk/casestudies/07skart.html> and http://reunionprojects.org.uk/blog/2007/03/event_with_skart_at_space.html; Skart interview (n.d.).
- 97.** As set out in Grant Kester, "Dialogic Aesthetics: A Critical Framework for Littoral Arts," *Variet* supplement (2002) and Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. S. Pleasance and F. Woods (n.p.: Les Presses du Reel, 2002).
- 98.** "Joining the network of embroideries" (March 30 2007) http://reunionprojects.org.uk/blog/2007/03/joining_the_network_of_embroid.html.
- 99.** See Skart interview (n.d.) and Sophie Hope, "We all Make Mistakes," (May 2009) http://www.spacestudios.org.uk/images/pdf/skart_text.pdf.
- 100.** Hope "We all Make Mistakes;" Skart e-mail interview by the author.
- 101.** This disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, lasting from 1991 to 2001, is commonly referred to as the 'Yugoslav Wars,' and encompasses a series of events that have become known as the 'Bulldozer Revolution,' the first of the 'Colour Revolutions.' For further information see, for example: The World Socialist Movement, "The Yugoslav Wars: Myths & Realities," (August 13 2006) http://www.worldsocialism.org/articles/yugoslav_wars_myths_realities.php; BBC News, "Milosevic's Yugoslavia," (n.d.) http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in_depth/europe/2000/milosevic_yugoslavia/communism.stm; <http://www.beograd.rs/cms/view.php?id=201267>; Joshua A. Tucker, "Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, And Post-Communist Colored Revolutions," *Perspectives On Politics* Vol. 5 Issue 3 (September 2007), 535-551; and Sreeram Chaulia, "Democratisation, NGOs and 'Colour Revolutions'" (January 19 2006) http://www.opendemocracy.net/globalization-institutions_government/colour_revolutions_3196.jsp.
- 102.** See <http://www.beograd.rs/cms/view.php?id=201271>.
- 103.** Skart e-mail interview by the author; Franklin Furnace, "World of Art," *Goings On* (May 15 2003) http://www.franklinfurnace.org/goings_on/goings_on/03_05_15.html#skart; http://www.nyfa.org/nyfacurrent/skart/skart_page4_survivalcommons_part1.htm.
- 104.** Skart, (July 2002) http://www.fingerweb.org/html/finger/finger8_12/finger11/skart.html.
- 105.** De Leon "Skart: Artists Continue their Work."
- 106.** See *ibid.*; for example, see Skart, (July 2002) http://www.fingerweb.org/html/finger/finger8_12/finger11/skart.html; SPACE, "Skart: On the Origin of Wishes " (n.d.) http://www.spacestudios.org.uk/All_Content_Items/Exhibitions_Archive/SKART%3A_On_the_Origin_of_Wishes/.
- 107.** Hope "We all Make Mistakes."
- 108.** Skart e-mail interview by the author.
- 109.** Skart, (July 2002) http://www.fingerweb.org/html/finger/finger8_12/finger11/skart.html.
- 109.** The Future of the Present (December 2000) http://www.franklinfurnace.org/artists/FOTP/ftotp00/skart/skart_residency.html. [fingerweb.org/html/finger/finger8_12/finger11/skart.html](http://www.fingerweb.org/html/finger/finger8_12/finger11/skart.html).
- 110.** http://www.nyfa.org/nyfacurrent/skart/skart_page4_survivalcommons_part1.htm and Skart, (July 2002) http://www.fingerweb.org/html/finger/finger8_12/finger11/skart.html.
- 111.** Skart e-mail interview by the author.
- 112.** See http://www.yihr.org/news.php?id=420&lang=_eng
- 113.** For information on these early performances see <http://www.culturebase.net/artist.php?677>; quotation taken from Skart e-mail interview by the author.

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114. Skart e-mail interview by the author.
115. Ibid.
116. Barbara Steiner, "Radical Democracy, Acknowledging the Complexities and Contingencies" (August 1999), available online, <http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/acknowledging.shtml>.
117. See "Sustainable 'Hoods' and "Superflex: Excerpt from 'Appropriate Technology and Design'" in *Ecoventions: Current Art to Transform Ecologies*, Sue Spaid (Cincinnati: greenmuseum.org and ecoartspace in association with The Contemporary Arts Center, 2002), 106-107 and 143 respectively.
118. Octavio Zaya, "Don't Waste Waste," *Flash Art* no. 199 (March–April 1998), available online, <http://www.superflex.net/text/index.shtml>.
119. From <http://www.superflex.dk> and <http://www.superflex.net/>.
120. Superflex has also produced several works specifically for exhibition, see, <http://www.superflex.net/>.
121. Jessica Ingram, "Superchannel (1999-present) Superflex" in *What We Want is Free: Generosity and Exchange in Recent Art*, ed. Ted Purves (Albany: New York, 2005), 159-160; "On Superflex: Birgitte Feiring Interviewed by Barbara Steiner and Doris Berger, August 1999" in *Remarks on Interventive Tendencies: Meetings Between Different Economies in Contemporary Art*, ed. Lars Bang Larsen et al. (Copenhagen: The Danish Contemporary Art Foundation in association with Borgen, 2000), 130-147.
122. While initial research had indicated that Superflex would be the most straight forward of the three groups to contact, in practice this proved to be otherwise. Although contact could not be made through e-mail or telephone, and therefore an interview could not be conducted, the wealth of writing around this group provided adequate indepth information on the group's practice.
123. This concept of the work as a tool is expanded on considerably in Barbara Steiner and Superdesign, eds. *Tools* (Cologne: Walther Konig, 2003).
124. Jessica Ingram, "Superchannel (1999-present) Superflex" in *What We Want is Free: Generosity and Exchange in Recent Art*, ed. Ted Purves (Albany: New York, 2005), 159-160.
125. Sue Spaid, *Ecoventions: Current Art to Transform Ecologies* (Cincinnati: greenmuseum.org and ecoartspace in association with The Contemporary Arts Center, 2002), 106.
126. Superflex cited in Barbara Steiner, "Radical Democracy, Acknowledging the Complexities and Contingencies" (August 1999), available online, <http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/acknowledging.shtml>.
127. Steiner "Radical Democracy."
128. "An Exchange between Asa Nacking and Superflex," *Afterall* no. 0 (1998), available online, http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/an_exchange_between.shtml.
129. See <http://www.superflex.dk> and <http://www.superflex.net/>.
130. Steiner "Radical Democracy."
131. Will Bradley, "Superflex/Counter-Strike/Self-Organise" essay written for the Superflex Solo Show (September 2003), available online, <http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/>.
132. Paraphrasing of Superflex in "An Exchange between Asa Nacking and Superflex," *Afterall* no. 0 (1998), available online, http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/an_exchange_between.shtml.
133. Superflex in *ibid*.
134. For further information on these projects see, <http://superflex.net/projects/freebeer/>, <http://superflex.net/projects/outsourcing/> and <http://superflex.net/projects/freeshop/> respectively; Superflex in "An Exchange between Asa Nacking and Superflex." This concern links Superflex with global discourses around radical alternative socio-economic systems; see for example the New Economics Foundation, www.neweconomics.org/, The E. F. Schumacher Society, <http://www.smallisbeautiful.org/> and the 'copyleft movement,' <http://creativecommons.org/> and Lawrence Lessig, "The Creative Commons," *Florida Law Review* no. 55 (July 2003), 763–777, available online, <http://homepages.law.asu.edu/~dkarjala/OpposingCopyrightExtension/commentary/LessigCreativeCommonsFlaLRev2003.htm>.
135. Will Bradley, "Superflex/Counter-Strike/Self-Organise" essay written for the Superflex Solo Show (September 2003), available online, <http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/>.

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136. Birgitte Feiring, in "On Superflex: Birgitte Feiring Interviewed by Barbara Steiner and Doris Berger, August 1999," in *Remarks on Interventive Tendencies: Meetings between Different Economies in Contemporary Art*, ed. Lars Bang Larsen, et al. (Copenhagen: The Danish Contemporary Art Foundation in association with Borgen, 2000), 134.
137. *Ibid.*, 135.
138. Steiner "Radical Democracy."
139. Feiring in "On Superflex," 140.
140. Superflex has produced an array of such items, which are distributed through the group's own record label, Superflex Music; see <http://www.superflex.dk>.
141. For further information on *Superchannel* see Will Bradley, "The Local Channel for Local People," *Nifca Info* Issue 01/01 (2001), available online, http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/the_local_channel.shtml and Ingram, "Superchannel."
142. Steiner "Radical Democracy," Will Bradley, "The Local Channel for Local People," *Nifca Info* Issue 01/01 (2001), available online, http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/the_local_channel.shtml.
143. Superflex, "Coronation Court," (n.d.) <http://www.superflex.net/tools/superchannel/users/coronationcourt.shtml>.
144. Ingram "Superchannel."
145. Superflex, "Coronation Court," (n.d.) <http://www.superflex.net/tools/superchannel/users/coronationcourt.shtml>.
146. *Ibid.*
147. Superflex, "Tenantspin," (n.d.) <http://www.superflex.net/tools/superchannel/users/tenantspin.shtml>.
148. Charles Esche, "Superhighrise: Community, Technology, Self-Organisation," in *Supermanual* (Liverpool: FACT, 2000), available online, <http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/superhighrise.shtml>.
149. Steiner "Radical Democracy."
150. Superflex in "An exchange between Asa Nacking and Superflex."
151. Bradley "The Local Channel for Local People."
152. Steiner "Radical Democracy."
153. For example, *Supergas* has been developed in collaboration with an African organisation, Sustainable Rural Development and a Thai engineering company, CMS. On *Supergas* see <http://www.superflex.net/tools/supergas/> and Feiring in "On Superflex," on *Guarana Power* see Will Bradley, "Supertropical" (May 2003) <http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/supertropical.shtml>, <http://www.superflex.net/tools/supercopy/guarana.shtml> and <http://www.guaranapower.org/>.
154. Bradley "Superflex/Counter-Strike/Self-Organise."
155. Bradley "The Local Channel for Local People;" For Superflex's perspective see Superflex in "An exchange between Asa Nacking and Superflex,"
156. *Ibid.*
157. Bradley "The Local Channel for Local People."
158. See Sue Spaid, *Ecoventions: Current Art to Transform Ecologies*, (Cincinnati: greenmuseum.org and ecoartspace in association with The Contemporary Arts Center, 2002), 106 and <http://www.superflex.dk>.
159. Simone Preuss, "McDonald's After the Apocalypse" (n.d.) <http://www.environmentalgraffiti.com/featured/fast-food-apocalypse-a-la-superflex/7492>.
160. Extract from handout at *If Value, Then Copy* exhibition curated by Brian Butler (Auckland, New Zealand: ARTSPACE, October 25 - November 22 2008).
161. Chris Fite-Wassilak, "Superflex: Flooded McDonald's (2009)" review of exhibition (London: South London Gallery, January 1 2009) <http://www.frieze.com/shows/review/superflex>.
162. Superflex in "An exchange between Asa Nacking and Superflex."
163. Steiner "Radical Democracy."
164. The notion of 'post-issue activism' is explained in chapters 1 and 4, 10-11 and 66 respectively.
165. La Fiambrera e-mail interview by the author.
166. Claramonte and Rodrigo "Collaborative Art and Relational Experiences in Public Space."
167. Steiner "Radical Democracy."

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- 168.** La Fiambrera e-mail interview by the author and Grant Kester cited in Claramonte and Rodrigo "Collaborative Art and Relational Experiences in Public Space."
- 169.** La Fiambrera referring to its ongoing *Bordergames* project, in e-mail interview by the author. For more information on this project see, <http://www.Bordergames.org>.
- 170.** Hope, "We all Make Mistakes."
- 171.** Steiner "Radical Democracy."
- 172.** La Fiambrera e-mail interview by the author.

6: Asking Questions

1. John Holloway discussing his research into the Zapatista movement, in John Holloway, "The Concept of Power and the Zapatistas," *Common Sense* 19 (June 1996), available online, <http://libcom.org/library/concept-power-zapatistas-john-holloway>.
2. On Joseph Beuys' notion of 'permanent conference' see chapter 1 "Setting Out," n. 53.
3. Russell Jacoby, *Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an Anti-Utopian Age* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2005), 33.
4. See <http://www.irational.org/mvc>.
5. PLATFORM, "Participant's position paper" presented at the Monongahela Conference, organised by 3R2N (n.p.: October 2003), available online, <http://moncon.greenmuseum.org/papers/platform.pdf>.
6. See <http://www.platformlondon.org/>.
7. Ruth Levitas "Marxism, Romanticism and Utopia: Ernst Bloch and William Morris," *Radical Philosophy* 51 (Spring 1989), 33.
8. La Fiambrera, in e-mail interview by the author (July 26 2009); Tom Moylan, "Realizing Better Futures: Strong Thought for Hard Times" in *Utopia Method Vision: The Use Value of Social Dreaming*, eds. Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007), 218.
9. Skart, in e-mail interview by the author (September 8 2009).
10. See for example John Jordan cited by Rebecca Solnit, *Hope in the Dark: The Untold History of People Power*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Canongate, 2005), 135-137, John Jordan "The Art of Necessity: The Subversive Imagination of the No M11 Campaign and Reclaim the Streets" in *The Cultural Resistance Reader*, ed. Stephen Duncombe (New York: Verso, 2002).
11. La Fiambrera, "Politically Significant 'Morcillas,'" (n.d.) <http://www.sindominio.net/fiambrera/cartelcinema.htm>.
12. For a description of this intervention, and of La Fiambrera's problematisation of neoliberalism see chapter 5 "Looking Closer," section 2.
13. Superflex in "An exchange between Asa Nacking and Superflex," *Afterall*, no. 0 (1998), available online, http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/an_exchange_between.shtml.
14. Superflex, "superflex/tools/supergas/" (n.d.) <http://superflex.net/tools/supergas/>.
15. Jan Mallan, "Biogas in Tanzania" (October 22 1990) http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/biogas_in_tanzania.shtml.
16. Superflex in "An exchange between Asa Nacking and Superflex," *Afterall*, no. 0 (1998), available online, http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/an_exchange_between.shtml.
17. Barbara Steiner, "Radical Democracy, Acknowledging the Complexities and Contingencies" (August 1999), available online, <http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/acknowledging.shtml>.
18. See Will Bradley, Mika Hannula, Cristina Ricupero and Superflex, eds. *Self-Organisation/Counter-Economic Strategies* (Frankfurt: Sternberg Press, 2006).
19. Birgitte Feiring, in "On Superflex: Birgitte Feiring Interviewed by Barbara Steiner and Doris Berger, August 1999" in *Remarks on Interventive Tendencies: Meetings between Different Economies in Contemporary Art*, ed. Lars Bang Larsen et al. (Copenhagen: The Danish Contemporary Art Foundation in association with Borgen, 2000), 134.
20. Fredric Jameson, "Varieties of the Utopian" in *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (New York: Verso, 2007), 8.
21. Jordi Arrufat Claramonte and Javier Rodrigo, "Collaborative Art and Relational Experiences in Public Space" (December 2007) <http://radical.temp.si/node/112>; Rebecca Solnit, *Hope in the Dark: The Untold History of People Power*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Canongate, 2005), 139.
22. John Jordan cited in *ibid.*, 135-136.
23. Heiner Stachelhaus, *Joseph Beuys*, trans. David Britt (New York: Abbeville Press Inc., 1991), 157.
24. The majority of available information on Joseph Beuys' *Richtkrafte* (Directional Forces), positions it as a series of installations, or 'environments' for debate with and among gallery visitors, which took place between 1974 and 1977, as documented in *Joseph Beuys*

RICHTKRAFTE, exhibition catalogue (Berlin: National Galerie Berlin, 1977). However, *Richtkrafte* expresses one of Beuys' seminal notions regarding the ongoing development of a sustainable future; it cannot be driven forward by dialogue that lacks directional force. In other words, 'permanent conference' needs utopian models and proposals to ensure it continues evolving in the direction of viable alternatives, rather than stagnates, dissipates or becomes limited to critique of current conditions. The author is indebted to Shelley Sacks for prompting an awareness and understanding of this concept.

25. Suzi Gablik offers some interesting thoughts on the consequences of 'unlimited alternatives;' see Suzi Gablik, "Pluralism: The Tyranny of Freedom" in *Has Modernism Failed?* 2nd ed. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004), 83-97.

26. Ruth Levitas on Ernst Bloch in *The Concept of Utopia* 2nd ed. (New York: Philip Allan, 1996), 190.

27. *Ibid.*, 182.

28. *Ibid.*, 111 and 199. For an explanation of the use of the term 'pathogenic' in this context see chapter 1 "Setting Out," 9.

29. Peter Fitting, "Beyond this Horizon: Utopian Visions and Utopian Practice" in *Utopia Method Vision: The Use Value of Social Dreaming* eds. Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007), 259 and 261.

30. Ruth Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia* 2nd ed. (New York: Philip Allan, 1996), 191.

31. Solnit *Hope in the Dark*, 56, paraphrased by the author.

32. This is elaborated on in chapter 4 "Crossing Borders," section 2 and elsewhere.

33. La Fiambrera, "Flamenco Singing against Gentrifying Bishops" (n.d.)

http://subsol.c3.hu/subsol_2/contributors/fiambrerertext.html and <http://www.sindominio.net/fiambrera/convocatoria.html> respectively.

34. As explained in chapter 5 "Looking Closer," 110 and elsewhere, this is also shared globally.

35. The term 'contingent communities' is used in Chantal Mouffe, "Liberal Socialism and Pluralism: Which Citizenship?" and Jeffrey Weeks, "Rediscovering Values" in *Principled Positions: Postmodernism and the Rediscovery of Value*, ed. Judith Squires (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993), 69-84 and 189-211 respectively.

36. La Fiambrera, <http://www.sindominio.net/fiambrera/>. For further information on the *saeta* intervention see La Fiambrera, "Flamenco Singing against Gentrifying Bishops" (n.d.) http://subsol.c3.hu/subsol_2/contributors/fiambrerertext.html and <http://www.sindominio.net/fiambrera/saeta.htm>, and on the ruined houses contest <http://www.sindominio.net/fiambrera/convocatoria.html> respectively.

37. La Fiambrera, "Theoretical Texts," trans. the author (May 1999) and La Fiambrera, "Interventions in the Public Spaces of the Lavapies District" (n.d) <http://www.sindominio.net/fiambrera/teoricos.htm> and <http://www.sindominio.net/fiambrera/convocatoria.html> respectively. On this 'tactical' approach see Jordi Arrufat Claramonte and Javier Rodrigo, "Collaborative Art and Relational Experiences in Public Space" (December 2007) <http://radical.temp.si/node/112>, La Fiambrera, "Flamenco Singing against Gentrifying Bishops" and La Fiambrera, "Theoretical Texts," trans. the author (May 1999) <http://www.sindominio.net/fiambrera/teoricos.htm>.

38. *Ibid.*

39. Russell Jacoby, *Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an Anti-Utopian Age* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2005), 33.

40. La Fiambrera, Skart and Superflex frequently talk about their respective projects as 'tools.' For example see Barbara Steiner and Superdesign, eds. *Tools* (Cologne: Walther König, 2003); Claramonte and Rodrigo "Collaborative Art and Relational Experiences" and La Fiambrera "Flamenco Singing against Gentrifying Bishops;" http://www.nyfa.org/nyfacurrent/skart/skart_page4_survivalcommons_part1.htm and Skart, (July, 2002) http://www.fingerweb.org/html/finger/finger8_12/finger11/skart.html.

41. Skart, e-mail interview by the author (September 8 2009).

42. Asa Nacking, 'All Humans Are Potential Entrepreneurs' in *Three Public Projects: Mike Mode, Superflex, Wikström*, ed. Tullan Guner et al. (Karlskrona: Blekinge Museum, 1999), 41-42 cited by Troels Degn Johansson, "Visualising Relations: Superflex' Relational Art in the Cyberspace Geography" in *Report from the Asia Europe Forum 2000: Culture in the Cyber-Age*, eds. C. Rongchen et al. (Singapore: Asia-Europe Foundation, 2001), available online, http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/visualising_relations.shtml.

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43. Johansson "Visualising Relations."
44. Will Bradley, "Superflex/Counter-Strike/Self-Organise" (September 2003), available online, <http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/counterstrike.shtml>. See also Will Bradley, "COAIMA, Superflex, and Guarana Power" in *Self-organisation/Counter-economic Strategies*, ed. Will Bradley, Mika Hannula, Cristina Ricupero and Superflex (n.p.: Sternberg Press, 2006). For an extended discussion of 'relational' work see Nicholas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. S. Pleasance and F. Woods (n.p.: Les Presses du Reel, 2002).
45. "An exchange between Asa Nacking and Superflex."
46. Grant Kester, "Dialogic Aesthetics: A Critical Framework for Littoral Arts," *Variet Suppl.* (2002).
47. La Fiambrera, in e-mail interview by the author (July 26 2009).
48. Solnit *Hope in the Dark*, 135 and 138.
49. John Jordan cited in *ibid.*, 135.
50. Troels Degn Johansson, a 'discussion partner' uses these terms to describe working with Superflex; see Johansson "Visualising Relations."
51. See Patrick Reinsborough, "De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination."
52. Shelley Sacks has used the term 'fragmenting individualism' in dialogue with the author (February 1 2010).
53. Peter Fuller quoted in Suzi Gablik, *Has Modernism Failed?* 2nd ed. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004), 41.
54. Ivan Illich, *Celebration of Awareness: A Call for Institutional Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1973), 17.
55. Krishan Kumar, *Utopianism* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1991).
56. For example see Ivan Illich, *Celebration of Awareness: A Call for Institutional Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1973); Ivan Illich, "Rebirth of Epimethian Man" in *Deschooling Society* (London: Harper & Row, 1971); Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1972); Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Robert R. Barr (New York: Continuum, 2004).
57. Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978) and Reinsborough "De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination." For an elaboration on this point, see chapter 4, 66-72 and elsewhere.
58. Claramonte and Rodrigo "Collaborative Art and Relational Experiences."
59. Wayne Clark, *Activism in the Public Sphere: Exploring the Discourse of Political Participation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 189.
60. For example, both WochenKlausur and TreePeople focus on engaging those directly affected by specific social or environmental issues, and on facilitation of dialogue among diverse communities. In both cases, the information available through their websites provides an accessible overview of the participatory strategies encompassed by creative social action. See the following: <http://wochenklausur.t0.or.at>, <http://www.wochenklausur.at/index1.php?lang=en> and WochenKlausur, information leaflet, distributed at the 48th Venice Biennale (Venice: June 8-17 1999); <http://www.treepeople.com> and Andy Lipkis and Kate Lipkis, "Getting It Together: Planning and Funding Your Project" in *The Simple Act of Planting a Tree – A Citizen Foresters' Guide to Healing Your Neighbourhood, Your City and Your World* (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher Inc., 1990).
61. <http://wochenklausur.t0.or.at>.
62. The author has encountered the term 'response-ability' in the work of Michaela Muller, David Goldenberg, Rebecca Solnit and John Jordan. See Michaela Muller, "Participatory Art or the Art of Choosing," unpublished paper (London: Goldsmiths College, 1998), 10; David Goldenberg, "Overview of the Homeless Project" presented at an Institute of Contemporary Arts offsite event (London: Mota Gallery, February 14 1999); Jordan "In the Footnotes of Library Angels," 10; and Solnit *Hope in the Dark*. The same sense is expressed in the term 'ability-to-respond' used by the Social Sculpture Research Unit, see the 'Our Methodologies' section of website (2008) <http://www.social-sculpture.org/focus-ssru/our-methodologies1.htm>.
63. Grant Kester, "Dialogic Aesthetics: A Critical Framework for Littoral Arts," *Variet Suppl.* (2002); Nina Felshin, "Introduction" in *But is it Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism* ed. Nina Felshin (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995).

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64. Peter McLaverty, "Is public participation a good thing?" in *Public Participation and Innovations in Community Governance*, ed. Peter McLaverty (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).
65. Naomi Klein quoted by Solnit *Hope in the Dark*, 135.
66. Frances Cleaver, "Institutions, Agency and the Limitations of Participatory Approaches to Development" in *Participation: The New Tyranny?* eds. Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari (New York: Zed Books, 2001), 36-55.
67. Claramonte and Rodrigo "Collaborative Art and Relational Experiences."
68. Ibid.
69. Wayne Clark, *Activism in the Public Sphere: Exploring the Discourse of Political Participation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 189. In short, in this sense, the anaesthetic is the antonym of the aesthetic, with the latter incorporating 'enlivened being;' a sensory awareness and a perceptual shift, see chapter 4 n. 4. See for example Suzi Gablik, "Connective Aesthetics: Art after Individualism" in *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, ed. Suzanne Lacy (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), 74-75 and the Social Sculpture Research Unit (2008) <http://www.social-sculpture.org/>.
70. Skart's participation in *The Future of the Present* (2000) provides an example of this moulding; funded through a grant from Franklin Furnace, *Additional Survival Coupons* for 'Fear, More, and (R)Evolution' emerged on New York's subway, as a short-term intervention detached from its original context. For example, Skart's evolution has occasionally been assisted by grants from various organisations such as Franklin Furnace (2000), which strives to "present, preserve, interpret, proselytize, and advocate on behalf of avant-garde art, especially forms that may be vulnerable due to institutional neglect, their ephemeral nature, or politically unpopular content." See http://www.pilotlondon.org/artists/cv/CVskart07_june_A.doc; <http://www.vsarts.org/x2340.xml> and <http://www.franklinfurnace.org/>. For further information on Skart and Superflex's occasional alignment with these frameworks through mechanisms such as funding and contextualisation see chapter 5, section 2.
71. Clark *Activism in the Public Sphere*.
72. Sophie Hope, "We All Make Mistakes" (May 2009) http://www.spacestudios.org.uk/images/pdf/skart_text.pdf.
73. Ibid.; Skart, interview (n.d.) <http://www.roeda.at/on-going/pdf/11.pdf>.
74. See for example chapter 5, section 2.
75. John Hailey discusses this with reference to Foucauldian analyses of power, see John Hailey, "Beyond the Formulaic: Process and Practice in South Asian NGOs" in *Participation: The New Tyranny?* ed. Cooke and Kothari, 88-101.
76. Frances Cleaver, "Institutions, Agency and the Limitations of Participatory Approaches to Development" in *ibid.*, 36-55.
77. Hope "We All Make Mistakes."
78. Uma Kothari, "Power, Knowledge and Social Control in Participatory Development" in *Participation: The New Tyranny?* ed. Cooke and Kothari, 139-152.
79. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, quoted by Barbara Steiner in "Radical Democracy, Acknowledging the Complexities and Contingencies" (August 1999), available online, <http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/acknowledging.shtml>.
80. Ibid.
81. Hope "We All Make Mistakes."
82. Skart, in e-mail interview by the author (September 8 2009); Franklin Furnace, "World of Art," *Goings On* (May 15 2003) http://www.franklinfurnace.org/goings_on/goings_on/03_05_15.html#skart.
83. Hope "We All Make Mistakes."
84. Jordan "In the Footnotes of Library Angels," 12.
85. Shelley Sacks, in discussion with the author (Oxford Brookes Univ. February 1 2010). The author is indebted to Shelley Sacks for giving her this term.
86. Grant Kester, "Dialogic Aesthetics."
87. Ian Hunter, "New Critical Centres for Art in Ireland," *Circa* 102 (Winter 2002), 38-42; Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004).
88. See La Fiambrera, "Intervening in the City: A Proposal for an Alternative Forum and a 'Sustainable' City Falling Down to Pieces" (n.d.) <http://www.sindominio.net/fiambrera/sevillinglis.html> and other La Fiambrera resources.

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89. Peter McLaverty, "Is public participation a good thing?" in *Public Participation and Innovations in Community Governance*, ed. Peter McLaverty (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002)
90. Heiko Henkel and Roderick Stirrat, "Participation as Spiritual Duty; Empowerment as Secular Subjection" in *Participation: The New Tyranny?* ed. Cooke and Kothari, 168-184.
91. Gablik *Has Modernism Failed?* 81.
92. Jordan "In the Footnotes of Library Angels," 14. The same passage is also found in The Notes from Nowhere collective, "Carnival: Resistance is the Secret of Joy" in *We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anti-Capitalism*, ed. The Notes from Nowhere collective (New York: Verso, 2003), available online, <http://www.narconews.com/Issue34/article1097.html>.
93. This point is elaborated on in Illich *Celebration of Awareness*, 17, McLaverty ed. *Public Participation*, Cooke and Kothari eds. *Participation: The New Tyranny?* and the Social Sculpture Research Unit (2008) <http://www.social-sculpture.org/>.
94. Reinsborough "De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination."
95. John Jordan, "The Art of Necessity" in *DIY Culture: Party and Protest in 90's Britain*, ed. George Mackay (New York: Verso, 1997), 7.
96. Clark *Activism in the Public Sphere*, 173.
97. Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari, "The Case for Participation as Tyranny" in *Participation: The New Tyranny?* ed. Cooke and Kothari, 8.
98. For example, see John Jordan, <http://labofii.net/>. Also see Reinsborough "De-Colonising the Revolutionary Imagination," Benjamin Shepard, "Absurd Responses vs. Earnest Politics," *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*, vol. 1, no. 2 (January 2003) and Benjamin Shepard, *Play, Creativity, and Social Movements* (London: Routledge, 2009).
99. Jordan "In the Footnotes of Library Angels," 14.
100. The Notes from Nowhere collective, "Carnival: Resistance is the Secret of Joy" in *We Are Everywhere*, ed. the Notes from Nowhere collective.
101. Ibid. The collective illustrates this point with examples such as Carnaval in Rio de Janeiro and the Notting Hill Carnival in London. On the other hand, examples are also given to demonstrate that unconstrained carnival is alive and kicking, these include the Zapatista, and the following "in India, 50,000 farmers from all over the state spent an entire day outside the Karnataka state government, laughing. The government, unable to handle the ridicule, was replaced the following week." Notes from Nowhere is an editorial collective involving Katharine Ainger, Graeme Chesters, Tony Credland, John Jordan, Andrew Stern, and Jennifer Whitney.
102. This point has been considered in response to dialogue with Shelley Sacks.
103. Ivan Lozica, "Carnival: A Short History of Carnival Customs and their Social Function," *Nar. Umjet*, no. 44/1 (February 2007), 71-92, English translation available online, <http://hrcak.srce.hr/file/36632>.
104. Umberto Eco, "The Frames of Comic 'Freedom'," in *Carnivale!* Umberto Eco, V.V. Ivanov and Monica Rector, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (New York: Mouton, 1984), 1-9.
105. Ibid.
106. David Sloan, "An Ethic of the End: How Planning and Evaluation make Art Political" (September 2008) http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2008/09/an_ethic_of_the.php.
107. An interesting, and relatively well-known example of the 'carnivalisation' of such normative frameworks is provided by the Yes Men.
108. See Feiring in "On Superflex" in *Remarks on Interventive Tendencies*, ed. Bang Larsen et al. 134, and Johansson "Visualising Relations."
109. La Fiambrera, "Intervening in the City."
110. On La Fiambrera's dismissal of such strategies see La Fiambrera, "Flamenco Singing against Gentrifying Bishops;" on the 'experimental wall intervention' see La Fiambrera, "Intervening in the City."
111. Ibid.
112. See chapter 5 "Looking Closer," section 2 for more information on these interventions.
113. Superflex, "Free Shop" <http://www.superflex.net/freeshop/>. See also Superflex, *Free Shop* (Copenhagen: Pork Salad Press, 2009).
114. The infamous Allan Kaprow provides a seminal example of the use of such strategies, see Jeff Kelly, ed. *Allan Kaprow: Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life* (California: Univ. of California Press, 1993)

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115. Benjamin Shepard, "Absurd Responses."
116. "Belgrade Students Dance for Democracy," *CNN.com* (January 21 1997) <http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/9701/21/yugo.wrap/index.html>. For further information on these protests see the following: "Belgrade Protests may be Losing Steam," *CNN.com* (January 22 1997), <http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/9701/22/yugo/index.html>; Mark Heinrich, "Police block Belgrade protests," *The Independent* (December 30 1996), available online, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/police-block-belgrade-protests-1316483.html>; and Balkan Peace Team International Office, "Protests in Belgrade and throughout Yugoslavia—1996/1997: Unexpected Election Results" (December 10 1996 and January 23 1997), available online, <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/62/063.html>. For further information on the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army, see <http://www.clownarmy.org/index.html>.
117. Balkan Peace Team International Office, "Protests in Belgrade and throughout Yugoslavia—1996/1997: Unexpected Election Results" (December 10 1996 and January 23 1997), available online, <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/62/063.html>.
118. Annika Salomonsson, "Art Action Group Speaks to the World: Humble Artists Create Touching Work on the Trials of Humanity," (n.d.) <http://www.culturebase.net/artist.php?677>.
119. Umberto Eco, "The Frames of Comic 'Freedom'," in *Carnivale! Approaches to Semiotics*, Umberto Eco, V.V. Ivanov and Monica Rector, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (New York: Mouton, 1984), 1-9.
120. The 'strictly controlled freedom' of carnival is discussed earlier in this section.
121. Mark K. Smith, *Evaluation: Theory and Practice* (2006) <http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-eval.htm>.
122. See chapter 4, 69-70.
123. The sociologist Robert K. Merton popularised this notion, as the law of unintended consequences, in his paper, "The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action," *American Sociological Review*, vol.1 no.6 (1936), 894-904, available online, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2084615>.
124. Mark K. Smith, *Evaluation: Theory and Practice* (2006) <http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-eval.htm>.
125. Gablik *Has Modernism Failed?*
126. David Sloan, "An Ethic of the End: How Planning and Evaluation make Art Political" (September 2008) http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2008/09an_ethic_of_the.php.
127. Malcolm Miles, *Art for Public Places: Critical Essays* (Winchester: Winchester School of Art Press, 1989), Malcolm Miles, "Does it Work?" *Public Art Review* vol. 07 (Summer-Fall 1992), Linda Frye Burnham, "Conversations at the Intersection of Art and Activism," paper presented at FOCAS: Focus on Community Arts South (Kentucky: April 17-21 2002) and Clark *Activism in the Public Sphere*.
128. The term 'innerwork' is employed by the Social Sculpture Research Unit, and others; see <http://www.social-sculpture.org/>.
129. On 'response-ability' see n. 62 above.
130. David Sloan, "An Ethic of the End: How Planning and Evaluation make Art Political" (September 2008) http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2008/09an_ethic_of_the.php.
131. Examples are easily accessible. For instance, PLATFORM's projects receive funding from trusts, foundations and institutions across various sectors, including Arts Council London, which generally associate value with the quantity of participants engaged, while Mejor Vida Corporation tends to rely on self-funding as a means to avoid complicity with externally delineated value-bases, and appears to consider the number of its products taken up by passers-by as an indication of its own effectiveness, which suggests a qualitative approach to evaluation. See: <http://wochenklausur.t0.or.at>; <http://www.littoral.org.uk>; PLATFORM, (October 2003); and <http://www.irational.org/mvc>; La Fiambrera, "Flamenco Singing against Gentrifying Bishops" (n.d.), http://subsol.c3.hu/subsol_2/contributors/fiambreratext.html; Maria Lind, "Actualisation of Space: The Case of Oda Projesi" (October 2004) <http://www.republicart.net>; <http://www.irational.org/mvc>. This tendency towards self-funding as a means to avoid complicity with other value-bases is evident among a range of groups, movements and organisations including Greenpeace and the World Development Movement.
132. Hope "We All Make Mistakes."

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133. "An exchange between Asa Nacking and Superflex."
134. Superflex in *ibid*.
135. For extended discussions of 'relational' and 'connective' practices see Nicholas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. S. Pleasance and F. Woods (n.p.: Les Presses du Reel, 2002) and Gablik, "Connective Aesthetics" respectively.
136. La Fiambrera, "Lavapies, from Intervention to Interaction." (n.d.) <http://www.sindominio.net/fiambrera/lavafeet1.html>.
137. La Fiambrera, in e-mail interview by the author (July 26 2009).
138. La Fiambrera, "Intervening in the City."
139. See http://www.spacestudios.org.uk/All_Content_Items/Exhibitions_Archive/SKART%3A_On_the_Origin_of_Wishes/.
140. Skart, in e-mail interview by the author (September 8 2009) and La Fiambrera (July 26 2009).
141. Explained by Skart in e-mail interview by the author.
142. *Ibid*.
143. *Ibid*.
144. David Sloan, "An Ethic of the End: How Planning and Evaluation make Art Political" (September 2008) http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2008/09an_ethic_of_the.php.
145. See for example Ala Plastica, "Artist's Statement" and Grupo de Arte Callejero, "Artist's Statement" presented at Klartext Konferenz, available online, <http://www.klartext-konferenz.de/>; on Ne Pas Plier see Brian Holmes, "Ne Pas Plier – Déplier" (n.d.) http://www.k3000.ch.bulletin/kolletive_arbeit/archive/site009.html and Gregory Sholette, "Some Call It Art: From Imaginary Autonomy to Autonomous Collectivity" (January 2002) www.NeMe.org.
146. See Donald Schon, *The Reflective Practitioner. How Professionals Think in Action* (London: Temple Smith, 1983), and Wilfred Carr and Stephen Kemmis, *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research* (London: Routledge, 1986) and Ernest T. Stringer, *Action Research*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage, 1999) cited in Mark K. Smith, *Evaluation: Theory and Practice* (2006) <http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-eval.htm>. Interestingly, as Stringer explains, writers such as Carr and Kemmis are nurturing a revaluing of action research, which has been generally marginalised since the 1960s due to its association with radical political activism; see Stringer *ibid.*, 9.
147. Wilfred Carr and Stephen Kemmis, *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research* (London: Routledge, 1986) and Ernest T. Stringer, *Action Research*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage, 1999) cited in Mark K. Smith, *Evaluation: Theory and Practice* (2006) <http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-eval.htm>.
148. Ernest T. Stringer, *Action Research*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage, 1999), 9-10.
149. Donald Schon describes these processes as 'learning systems;' Donald Schon quoted in Mark K. Smith, "Donald Schon: Learning, Reflection and Change," *the Encyclopaedia of Informal Education* (2001) www.infed.org/thinkers/et-schon.htm.
150. These phrases and terms are borrowed from Donald Schon quoted in *ibid*. See also Donald Schon, *The Reflective Practitioner. How Professionals Think in Action* (London: Temple Smith, 1983).
151. Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury, eds. *Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice* (Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage, 2001). The latter statement is paraphrased from the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice, "A Layperson's Guide to Co-operative Inquiry" http://www.bath.ac.uk/carpp/publications/coop_inquiry.html#co-op.
152. See Franklin Furnace, "World of Art," *Goings On* (May 15 2003) http://www.franklinfurnace.org/goings_on/goings_on/03_05_15.html#skart.
153. Skart (September 8 2009).
154. Paraphrased from an unattributed interview with Dragan Protic and Djordje Balmazovic (June .2006) <http://www.amorfon.com/HTM/AM007INT.HTM>.
155. Steiner "Radical Democracy."
156. Solnit *Hope in the Dark*, 35-36.
157. Allan Kaprow, in *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, ed. Suzanne Lacy (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), 157.

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158. The limitations and possibilities of such strategies are discussed in chapter 7, 184 and elsewhere.
159. La Fiambra (July 26 2009).
160. Mark K. Smith, *Evaluation: Theory and Practice* (2006) <http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-eval.htm>.
161. Mika Hannula, "The Principle of Second Wave Values" (December 18 2000) <http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/mikahannula.shtml>.
162. Eleanor Heartney, *Defending Complexity: Art, Politics and the New World Order* (MA: Hard Press Editions, 2006).
163. Claramonte and Rodrigo "Collaborative Art and Relational Experiences;" Solnit *Hope in the Dark*, 134.
164. Levitas *The Concept of Utopia*, 111; Peter Fitting, "Beyond this Horizon: Utopian Visions and Utopian Practice" in *Utopia Method Vision* eds. Moylan and Baccolini, 259 and 261.
165. 'All beings are potential entrepreneurs' is one of Superflex's key phrases, see <http://superflex.net/tools/>.
166. La Fiambra "Theoretical Texts."
167. La Fiambra (July 26 2009).
168. Holloway *Change the World*, 225.
169. Allan Kaprow, in *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, ed. Suzanne Lacy (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), 157
170. Mika Hannula, "The Principle of Second Wave Values" (December 18 2000) <http://www.superflex.net/text/articles/mikahannula.shtml>.
171. Ibid.
172. Solnit *Hope in the Dark*, 5.
173. Ibid., 5.
174. Ibid.; 'Changing the Imagination of Change' provides a pertinent title for chapter 11, 85-90.
175. Unattributed, "Take a Sad Song and Make it Better?" *Do or Die: Voices from the Ecological Resistance* no. 8 (June 1999), available online, <http://www.eco-action.org/dod/no8/restoration.html>, 159-173.
176. William M. Adams, *Future Nature: A Vision for Conservation* (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd, 1996), 162, quoted in *ibid.*
177. Ibid.
178. Ulrich Beck, *Ecological Politics in an Age of Risk*, trans. Amos Weisz (Oxford: Polity Press, 1995).
179. Subcommandante Marcos and John Jordan quoted in Solnit (2005), 137.
180. John Jordan quoted in *ibid.*, 136.
181. Holloway *Change the World*, 18.

7: Enjoying the View

1. Rebecca Solnit, *Hope in the Dark: The Untold History of People Power*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Canongate, 2005), 142.
2. This phrase is taken from the author's statement of aims, as introduced in chapter 1, "Setting Out," 3.
3. The sense in which terms such as 'sustainable social change' are used here is explained in chapter 1, 9-11.
4. Naomi Klein quoted in Rebecca Solnit, *Hope in the Dark: The Untold History of People Power*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Canongate, 2005), 135.
5. John Jordan, "In the Footnotes of Library Angels: A Bi(bli)ography of Insurrectionary Imagination" (2006), available online, http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/pdf_docs/SRG_Jordan.pdf, 14. The same passage can also be found in the following; the Notes from Nowhere collective, "Carnival: Resistance is the Secret of Joy" in *We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anti-Capitalism*, ed. The Notes from Nowhere collective (New York: Verso, 2003), available online, <http://www.narconews.com/Issue34/article1097.html>.
6. This phrase is adapted from the author's statement of aims, see chapter 1, 3.
7. Patrick Reinsborough, "De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination: Values Crisis, the Politics of Reality and why there's Going to be a Common Sense Revolution in this Generation," *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*, vol. 1 no. 2 (August 2003), available online, http://www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org/1/de_colonizing/index.html. Also see chapter 4, "Crossing Borders," 57 and 95.
8. An explanation of this notion of a 'directional force' and its significance to transformative utopianism can be found in chapter 6, 140 and n. 24.
9. On this point see chapter 6, 154.
10. The sense in which the term 'anaesthetic' is used here and the ways in which normative patterns of engagement can be anaesthetising are explained in chapter 1, n. 3, and chapter 4, 58 and n. 4.
11. On this internalisation of oppressive norms see chapter 4 "Crossing borders," 70-71, and chapter 6, "Asking Questions," 154-156, also Patrick Reinsborough, "De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination: Values Crisis, the Politics of Reality and why there's Going to be a Common Sense Revolution in this Generation," *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*, vol. 1 no. 2 (August 2003), available online, http://www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org/1/de_colonizing/index.html.
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19. The term 'contingent communities' is explained in chapter 4, see n. 161.
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- 27.** See chapter 5, 107-108 and n. 8.
- 28.** See chapter 6, section 5.
- 29.** Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini's *Utopia Method Vision: The Use Value of Social Dreaming* (2007), Ulrich Beck's *The Reinvention of Politics: Rethinking Modernity in the Global Social Order* (1997), Samuel Hickey and Giles Mohan's *Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation? - Exploring New Approaches to Participation in Development* (n.p.: Zed Books Ltd.) and Benjamin Shepard's *Play, Creativity, and Social Movements* Routledge Advances in Sociology series (London: Routledge, 2009) to name a few.
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- 33.** This process has already been initiated; the findings of this study have been sent to the three cases studied in depth here, as a starting point for dialogue about their usefulness and further development 'on the ground.'
- 34.** For example, this could be pursued through strategies such as questionnaires, diaries and long-term observational studies.
- 35.** The notion of imageless utopianisms is discussed in chapter 4 and then revisited from a more critical perspective in chapter 6.
- 36.** The author is indebted to Roger Griffin and Shelley Sacks for their thoughts on this point.
- 37.** On the significance of walking and asking questions, or in John Holloway's words 'asking we walk' and in John Jordan's 'walking we ask questions;' see John Holloway, "The Concept of Power and the Zapatistas," *Common Sense* 19 (June 1996), available online, <http://libcom.org/library/concept-power-zapatistas-john-holloway> and John Jordan, "In the Footnotes of Library Angels." See also The Notes from Nowhere collective, "Walking: We Ask Questions" in *We Are Everywhere* ed. The Notes from Nowhere collective.
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