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Communicative art through a critique of instrumental reason

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COMMUNICATIVE ART THROUGH A CRITIQUE OF INSTRUMENTAL REASON

SUSSI PORSBORG CONLIN
2004
#3033088

Only the wearer knows where the shoe pinches (Ancient Greek adage)

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The Wearer Principle:

'(Political) Participation of an individual in the decision making process is valuable as it produces better community decisions, it protects the individual from the detrimental effects of decisions taken without her/ his knowledge by some elite set of rulers, but most of all because the activity of (political) participation itself has beneficial effects on the mind and personality of the individual engaging in it, it is above all an educational experience.'

(Graham Maddox within 'Australian Democracy in Theory and Practice', Longman Cheshire,1991 - p.89)

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INTRODUCTION:

Since Brian O'Doherty's essay <u>The White Cube</u> the gallery can not be viewed as a neutral space. [1] The gallery has become an institutionalised, administered and organised space. The three projects discussed in this paper were developed within the parameters of institutions and the guidelines that establish these institutions. The intention was not to represent or specifically critique the institutional framework, rather to reconstitute the process, by which and through which, an audience interacts with an institution. O'Doherty describes the gallery as, white, clean, and artificial - a space that is devoted to the technology of aesthetics.

The traditional economy of the gallery is based upon the works of art within. The un-saleability of each project I have undertaken, and the objects constructed, attempts to define a new form of economy. Each of the three projects described within this paper have shifted the commodity of object exchange to one which entails the 'hire of concept'. The traditional exchange of art objects has been substituted by a 'conceptual rental' agreement between myself and the institutional framework under which each project has been developed. The frameworks I have utilised positions the viewer as a participant in the activation of the projects – they become vehicles through which the projects function. The process for each project, in one form or another, involved the making of functional 'objects' – useful items which the participants would fashion within the frameworks I have established. Yet this activity has been positioned to initiate the activity and compel the interest of the participants rather than as the purpose of their activity.

Two of the projects described herein – <u>CLOG</u> and <u>Bricolage</u> – repositioned external areas of 'labour' to the site of the 'gallery'. In effect, the 'activity of creation' assumed the guise of 'work' within the framework of an art activity. One of my main interests in the development of each of the projects would be to dispel the alienation that many

may feel towards the sacred site of art (the gallery). In addition, each of the projects proposed a base of activity that substituted the pure 'exchange value' of object-based commodification in art with a functional 'use value' purpose of production.

Karl Marx's theory of alienation and commodity fetishism retains its currency today. The four pronged theory of alienation based on the division of labour and published within a climate of mass industrial revolution appears extremely relevant within the present economic landscape of globalised post-Fordism. As Marx stated:

> ' The Bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the
> instruments of production and thereby the relations of production, and
> with them the whole relations of society...all that is solid melts into air..'[2]

Commodity fetishism has developed into a logo/lifestyle fetishism called branding. Alienation is more prevalent than ever through the post-modern emphasis upon the individual, and the subjectivity of an individual.

The three projects described within this examination shared a certain democratic vision. Each had been developed so that they could be offered free and openly to anyone who wished to take part. Communal aspects would develop within each of the frameworks and the participants were required to share resources, equipment and information or technique. The community that developed from each project would share particular sets of knowledge and skills over the course of their participation – these had been acquired in order to permit the individuals to create the objects unique to the project.

Interactive audience participation is neither new, nor is it a cutting-edge idea in art - it retains a long history in both practical and theoretical art practice. Contemporary examples, which operate as social aesthetics, address the inter-human sphere.[3] The difference with recent participatory art is that it strives to somehow change the process

of alienation (including commodity fetishism) rather than offer a representation, or token, of the activity.

Jurgen Habermas positions art as representation, and furthers the negation of its form within his theory of 'Communicative Action'.[4] Communicative Action is the free dialogue that occurs in the realm of the 'Lifeworld'. The Lifeworld is the space that sits outside of the systems of control which attempt to govern and shape human experience - it describes the world of human activity and everyday sociability. Lifeworld is a realm of intersubjectivity as opposed to the systems governed by the logic of 'Instrumentalism'. Instrumentalism can be summarised as:

> *'Ideas, concepts, and judgements are instruments functioning in experienced situations and determining future consequences. Propositions are to be regarded as means in the process of enquiry; as such, they cannot be true or false but are characterizable only as effective or ineffective...Ideas and practice work together as instruments: ideas relate experiences, making prediction possible, and are in turn tested by experience.*[5]

To challenge Habermas' dismissal of art as representation, stressing change, it questions the role of the artist and thus the role of the artwork. If an artist's work is to change the world but not to represent it; then an artwork should initiate change and not simply form a representation (or reproduction), which attempts to depict it.

In the following discussion on interpellation within my work, I acknowledge that the camera does act as a device of interpellation. I chose visual images, moving and stills, to collect documentation from all three projects - the visual aids are for purposes of documentation, and should not be considered as art-works.[6]

In one form or another, each of the three projects I detail within this paper, entails a form of democratic participation. 'Participatory Democracy' is a theory of politics, that was formed on a belief that the representative and administrative structures of the liberal democratic state were oppressive and excluded the voice of the ordinary people. The motivation of the participatory democracy movement is to restore an ordinary person to their rightful place of autonomous self-government within a democratic community.

All of the projects employ the use of the domestic sewing machine. Its recurring use holds a personal history to me as an object maker and as to the history of my family.[7] Technology has yet to revolutionise the basic design of the sewing machine – that is, to delete its operator.

The discussion which follows is a critical commentary on the three projects undertaken over the course of my Honours studies: CLOG (2003), Drapery (Service)/Drapery (Tour) (2003) and Bricolage (2004). Each of the projects is described and analysed in relation to those areas of theory and practical development which I had either researched during the conceptual growth, or while the projects were active. The post-event reflection on each lead to a range of reconsiderations – these have provided the motivation for the discussion which follows.

CLOG

CLOG was an activity-based installation project that ran from February to April 2003. The project was framed and initiated through the Emerging Artists Residency program at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Art (PICA). [8] The residency was offered through the institutional framework of PICA, at a time of reopening after an extended summer closure period. Framed within the much publicised reopening of PICA, CLOG utilised the process of valorisation to encourage participation in the project.[9]

Centrally located in the Perth cultural area, PICA holds a wide membership and status within the local art scene. Initiating CLOG within PICA was, in effect, the negotiation of a craft based union within a contemporary art institution. The intention was to develop a three-way relationship between audience, artwork and artist, where participants would essentially become the medium, or the vehicle, through which a critique of the activity of making and its frameworks could occur.

CLOG was a do-it-yourself shoemaking space that offered participants a means of production to fabricate a pair of 'clogs'. As a form of shoe, the clog holds a long history as a traditional work-shoe and still used in many countries as a part of a labour uniform. In Luddite history, the clog was hurled into machinery to try to clog the industrial revolution developing the phrase 'throwing a clog in the works'. The French term for clog is *sabot*, thus the participants active in the CLOG project were, in effect, *saboteurs* of a sort.

CLOG was visually, and conceptually framed in emblems of the Labour movement. The design of union banners during the 19th century followed a number of themes, but central to the banner was the representation of work. Unions would often build false histories relating to their craft links, often linking their specific trade to medieval guilds, by way of pictorial motifs or slogans[10]. The handshake is a recurring motif within labour heraldry, emblematic of unity and strength. When depicted in the relationship between

the capitalist and the worker, the later is always willing to negotiate, showing tolerance to the oppressor. The handshake was used to negotiate a partnership between the artist (myself) and the participant in CLOG. Acting as an interpellatory contract; the audience member becomes a participant once the pact has been made through the handshake.

traditional Union banner (circa 1890)
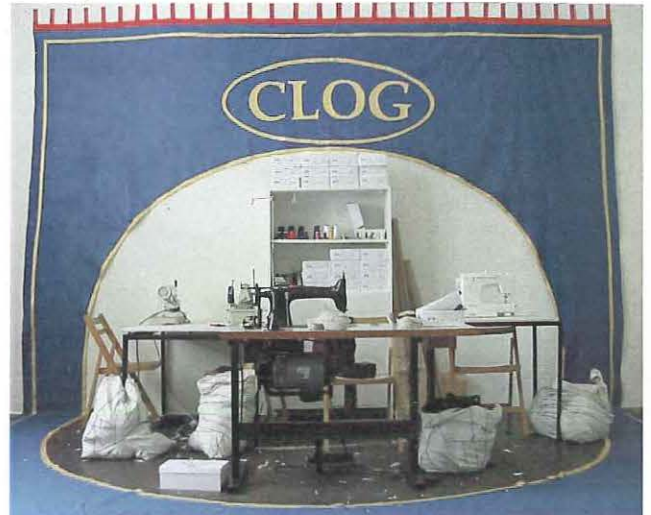
CLOG banner in PICA

Within 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' Louis Althusser describes interpellation as the mechanism that produces subjects in such a way that they recognise their existence in terms of the dominant society. He states:

> 'The subject does not exist prior to its interpellation but comes into being because of it.'[11]

When entering the tower gallery of PICA, the audience were greeted with a handshake and my introduction of "Hi, welcome to CLOG, this is a do-it-yourself shoemaking space". The rhetoric of this greeting, followed by anecdotal information about the history of the clog, it's relationship to labour relations and the project was an attempt to forge a strong valorised framework. The participant would stand in front of a large, mock 1890's union banner, which served as a backdrop to the project work space.
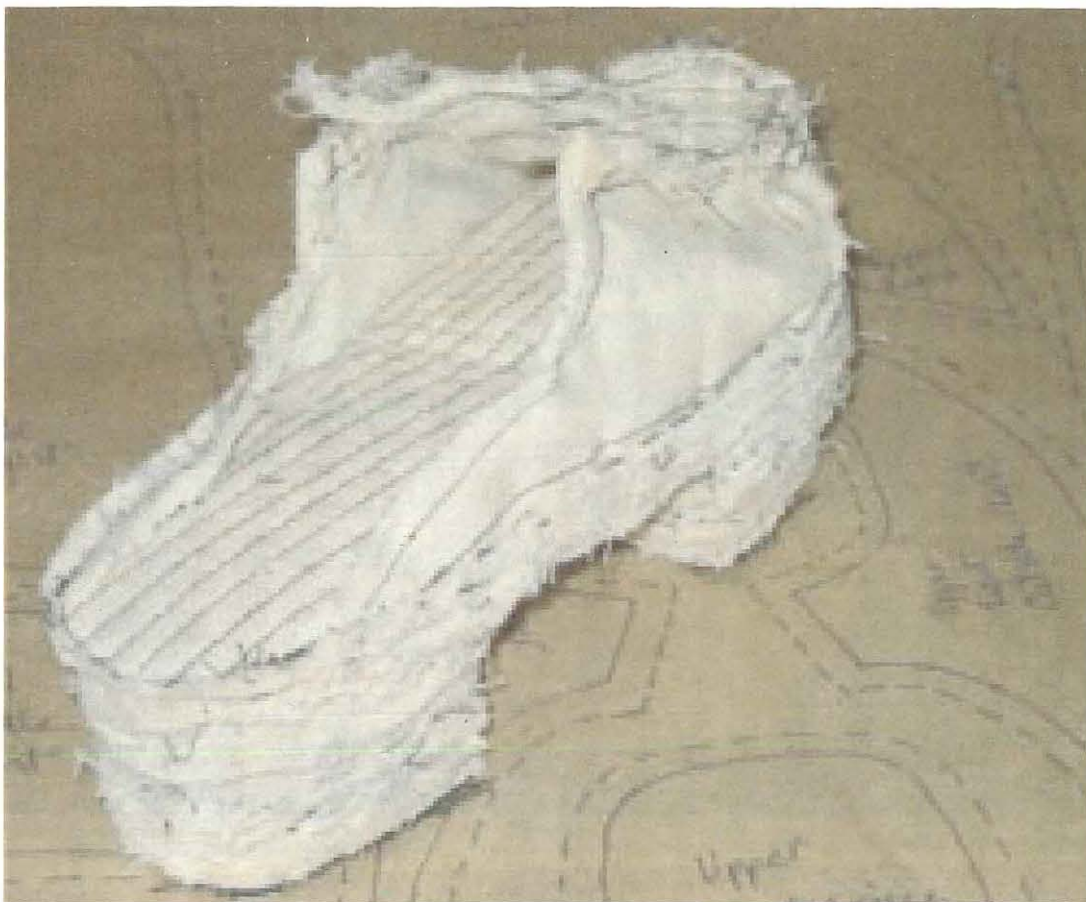
the clog

The mock union banner hung against the eastern wall and extended four metres along the floor of the gallery. With the centre removed, and replaced with an active workshop, the dimensions of the banner exaggerated and framed the importance of the construction of <u>CLOG</u>. By framing itself with the sensibility of a 'pop-up-book' further enhanced the false history of the idea, a fairytale "once upon a time there was a responsible arts union that...". The pop-up book was also intended to extend notions of Inbetweeness (discussed below) and framed the project within the white cube of the gallery and the art institution, - in effect, <u>CLOG</u> acted as a bookend to the concept of the project and the framework of the institution .

<u>CLOG</u> ran as an 8-hour day, 40-hour week project over the course of a nine-week period. The Labour emblem of '888' was painted on a doormat that lay central to the floor space in <u>CLOG</u>.[12] Some participants would walk over the symbol without even noticing it. One participant wiped her feet on the doormat as an announcement of leaving the workspace earlier than she had originally intended.

the doormat

The textiles industry has a tumultuous history in labour relations. Battles centred on pride in work verses work houses that were situated in hospitals, prisons and factories, monitored institutions[13]. The separation of specialized craft from 'sweated work' was obviated through union membership and peer acceptance within the trade union movement. The hierarchal structure between different labour unions had been distinguished by levels of skill specialisation – similar to the valorisation of artworks that have been framed within the different levels of institutionalised art.

In the abhorrent tradition of the sewing work-houses a newer, post-Fordist class of worker develops - the outworker. An outworker is a subcontracted garment machinist that works from home. They are classified as subcontractors, which relieves the parent company of any obligation to adhere to the labour based regulations of Australia (such as minimum wage, workers' compensation, sick leave, and so forth).[14] The workspace of CLOG intentionally used domestic sewing machines and domestic furniture to index notions of the cottage industry and the post-Fordist workspace of the outworker in this country.

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In response to Fordism the Trade Union movement experienced a drastic change by moving towards the development of the 'One Big Union' (OBU) with the amalgamation of many smaller specialised unions.[15] Smaller unions, which had large memberships and covered various areas of industry would now be considered as 'cottage industries' external to the 'OBU' concept.[16] The move away from Fordism's emphasis upon the forces of production towards post Fordism's emphasis upon the relations of production has weakened the traditional power of trade unions. As a result, there has been a noticeable increase in low paid and part-time jobs attributed to the localization of wage bargaining. Flexible specialization is an inherent feature of Post-Fordism - the factory becomes mobile and can be relocated if an area seems politically unstable. Some economists have paralleled the areas of flexible specialization as a return to craft production.[17] The irony of this sits within the history of craft production - the pride of guild and union membership, which resulted in the formation of communities sharing common work-related goals. 'Participation theory' is the basic substance of Unionism and the 'wearer principle' (see definition preceding introduction) it is based upon an idealist industrial democracy – that is Trade Unionism. Post-Fordist theory ignores this.

Labor heraldry holds the same fetishised qualities as the flag – each is emblematic of a specific social grouping of people (or a 'community'). Danish based artist Jens Haaning installed a flag production situation, shown at 'Traffic', Bordeaux, France, 1996. The participants involved in the Bordeaux event did not hold French citizenship - they were 'foriegners', only 'foriegners' could sew the flags during this event. Void of any indexing to the textiles industry, the four sewing machines used were for the production of the national emblems of unity. The flags were in fact fictitious, designed by the artist and later hung through the streets of Bordeaux. Haaning addresses the overcoming of alienation in a two-fold action by uniting people under a variety of flags, and by those participating in the action of making the flag. The dissonance of citizenship within the making process foregrounded the alienation of the worker from the emblems of unity being constructed.

Jens Haaning - flag production, 'Traffic Show' (1996)

Anyone could sign into CLOG, and aside from a donations box to cover thread usage, it was free. The investment of the viewer/participant therefore would be limited to the time it would take them to construct their fetishised object.

Within CLOG, the negation of labour production and human labour in the fetishised object was subverted by bringing both labour production and the activity of human labour to the forefront. Whilst the framework of the project would remain consistent, CLOG was in a constant state of negotiation. The project's concept was continually explained, and discussed, and it's meanings negotiated on a continuous basis. My intention with CLOG was to provide anyone with the means of production, by way of machinery and individualised tuition, to produce the object. The experience gained from using three different domestic sewing machines and an access to a variety of fabrics would give the participant a practical insight into the textiles industry and instil self-confidence through a skill developing exercise. Many participants were intrigued with the development of a community; and some questioned the need for, or the viability of, a union in today's political climate.[18]

The negotiation of materials and tool usage became a vehicle for interaction. CLOG was a shared workspace that could comfortably situate up to four participants at any given time. I gave individual instruction on how to use the sewing machines and how to construct a pair of clogs. The previous alienation which may have resulted from the lack

of skills (in relation to production) had therefore been dismissed at the start of the project. In effect, the 'wearer principle' became the vehicle for CLOG.[19] Because of the 'do-it-yourself' structure of the project, the audience experienced the 'wearer principle' – that is, the practical understanding of the meaning of theory. Through the making of clogs, the participants began to own the project. They often explained the project to new audience members, brought in family and friends, and would often exchange procedural insights in their own use of the material. Discussion between participants and the occasional viewers who had wandered into PICA was generally positive and occasionally critical. The participants within the CLOG workspace assumed conceptual ownership of the project - those who were once the audience, had become the artwork itself.
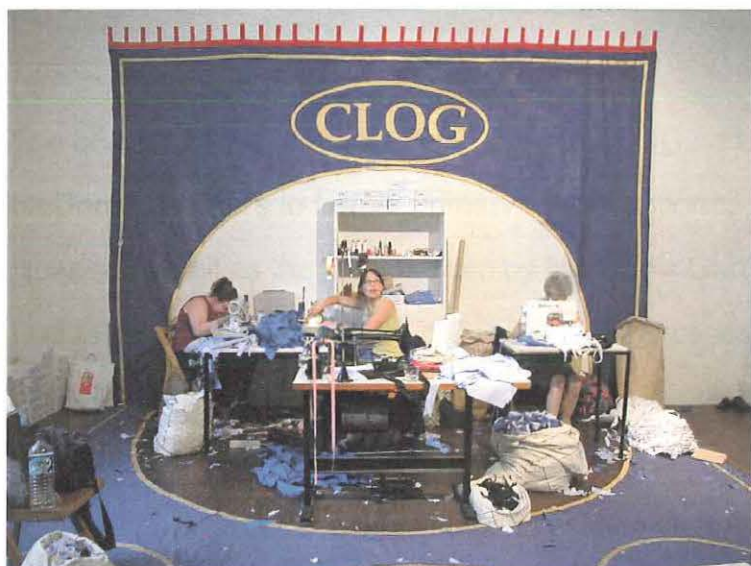
at work in the CLOG workspace (image Ben Joel)

participant at work

The clogs that were constructed from the refuse of uniform manufacturers made a direct reference to the textiles industry (the rag trade). The fabric scraps used in CLOG, had been given the name of 'Inbetweeness' from the beginning of the project. The term describes the space between two fixed points, it is an area that has had no name. The fabric refuse which had been provided for the participants to use in the project had been left-over from the same cloth used in the manufacture of uniforms previously. Yet it is a discarded material which sits external to the body of the uniform and is already removed from it – it resides between the manufacture of one article and its incorporation into another – 'inbetween' the uniform and the clog.

choosing Inbetweeness

The content of the refuse material used in <u>CLOG</u> had ranged from the uniforms of McDonald workers to former primary school uniforms, South Australian Police leather jackets, as well as the jackets worn by the God's Garbage motorbike gang. The intention was to 're-unionise' the cloth, collage the inbetweeness and eventually fabricate a pair of clogs from the scraps of material acquired for the project. An outline would be taken of the participants' feet and each would be assigned their own shoebox. Each participant would book time in the workspace and would note these date slots on the 'time wall' on the south side of the gallery.[20] In turn, the participant was handed an appointment slip and a brief discussion was held regarding the next step in the production of their clogs.

the shoeboxes

inside the shoebox

the timewall

The contractual signing-in to the project was by measurement of foot and measurement of time of commitment. I announced that it should only take 8 hours to complete a pair of clogs, but many would take up to 4 times as long.

Over the course of the project, 90 people signed in and 19 pairs of footwear were finished - many more had been turned away due to the lack of time remaining. Often the of desire to at least imagine the making of a pair of clogs was enough for some to sign up – many took the initial steps to sign into the project (and acquire their own shoe box) with no intention of coming back to spend the time making their clogs. Participants included PICA members and gallery staff, artists, students, gardeners, teachers, tourists, arts administrators, and a plethora of other occupations. The common thread between the active participants was an enthusiasm and sympathy to the general ideas of CLOG and the connection of the project to PICA. Generally the audience were not representative of a broad range of interests from society – I was selling to the converted.

The temporal structure of CLOG created an intensity of self-monitoring for the participants. On occasion, if a participant were unable to make the allocated appointment they would leave an apologetic message with the front-of-house staff at PICA. The time-wall was directly opposite to the workspace and the individual shoeboxes lined the walls on three sides of the gallery space. The time wall became both a public record for the operational construction and emblematic of the hours that each participant had invested in the project. CLOG ran as an 8-hour a day, 40-hour a week project until the 29th April. The conclusion of the project was planned to occur on May Day.

In 2003, May 1st, the original date of May Day, was publicly acknowledged by the Socialist Alliance as M1 and there were plans for a continual series of protests to be held throughout the city.[21] Eight CLOG participants took the workplace banner and their clogs to the streets of Perth on May Day. PICA had organised for *The Australian* newspaper to publish a 'news story' detailing the project and the intent to take the banner to the streets and march on Mayday. On arrival at the American Consulate, the CLOGers were greeted by four police officers, whom casually escorted us back to PICA.

May Day, 2003

the escorts

The constant rhetoric of CLOG had been activated every time an audience member would enter the room - I would greet them with a welcome handshake and describe the concept of the project. This action would repetitively retain the basic meaning of the

project throughout its duration at PICA. The May Day March would reinforce this at the end of the residency program. The rhetoric of labour-based relations within CLOG had been established as a form of interpellation and the final celebration in the form of a protest seemed an appropriate way to conclude the project.[22]

The idea of interpellation demonstrates that subjects are always products of ideology and thus it subverts the idealist thesis that subjectivity is primary or self-founding. Through the process of interpellation an artwork, when viewed in a gallery, establishes that any object or item on display within is a work of art. Debord articulates a parallel theory in the Society of the Spectacle, stating:

> '...confronted with the flow of signs and images that constitute the society of the spectacle people are constantly interpellated by posters, advertisements and stereotypes offering universal images in which they are invited to recognise themselves'.[23]

As the ideas of CLOG were multi-faceted and in a constant state of flux, when one person asked, "how is this art?" the question would be swiftly met with the reply from a participant, of "how is this not art?". The conceptual framework was constantly under question, called to attention by all the authorities/preconceptions/images/myths, the interpellation of an institutionalised art framework. But through CLOGs own process of valorisation the authority of the art industry/institution came to question itself, not the project (or framework). The participants, who had originally come to the project within the context of the PICA gallery space, forged the transition between alienation and activity.

The term alienation is a widely and loosely used concept, which originates in its modern form from Karl Marx. Marx defines alienation as the unhappy consciousness of being. For Marx alienation is a condition occurring in pre-socialistic societies where the human nature of a person is made other than (alien to) what that individual is really capable of being. In the framework of a capitalist society, Marx developed a sophisticated theory of alienation.[24]

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The four stages, in which alienation occurs, are all interconnected and stem from the division of labour. In the first instance, people can be alienated from their own selves or nature.[25] Secondly, alienation from other people can create an absence of a supportive fraternity. Thirdly, alienation from their working life, because it is meaningless and involves legally abandoning their right to own the property their labour has produced, is for the benefit for others. Fourthly, the alienation of the person from the composite product of labour – most industrial workers do not have the satisfaction of designing and creating an entire product through the exercise of their particularised skills.

fraternity   owning what is made   making what is owned

Skills have been specialised to such an extent that there is an assumption that they cannot be acquired in even the most rudimentary of forms to construct an object. Divided and contradictory, modern capitalism creates a devaluation of the human world which is proportional to the over-valuation of commodities. It is this devaluation that becomes a vehicle in each of these three project I have undertaken. Commodity fetishism is regarded as an extreme form of alienation induced by the two-fold nature of the commodity (or object) - it has both use-value and exchange-value. For example, a jacket can be both worn for protection against the elements and can be also used for exchange for another commodity. Marx made a distinction between goods produced for the makers own use and the commodities that are created solely for exchange. When the goods are produced solely for exchange it evolves from the relationship between capitalist and maker/worker The exchange creates an alienation between the maker/worker and the commodity as it does not take into account the wage relationship

between capitalist and worker, nor an account of their respective social positions or relations. The social characteristics thus take on the appearance of objects that appear to exist independently of social relations, whilst the products of labour appear to possess magical properties that bear no relationship to the labour that produces them.

A fetish is an object invested with unique properties to those who worship it. The mystical character of the commodity does not arise out of it's use value, it arrises from the form itself. Marx holds that the commodities that are exchanged in a capitalist economy are invested with similar magical powers and an illusory autonomy similar to the amulets used in traditional West African religious worship.[26].

The valorisation of art is an integral element in the art market process of commodity fetishism, the art object gains value through a desire to own, or participate in the exchange with the unique nature of the 'pure' art object.

Clog also addressed the system of wage negation. In classic Marxist terms, the fetishised object negates the wage relationship between the capitalist and worker and their respective social standings. If the participant is both the producer and the consumer, the 'wage' relationship is negated. In CLOG the time and labour of the participant would become their investment - the desire to construct would obviate the vehicle of production. Similarly, the wage relationship between the capitalist and worker takes no account of their respective social positions or of their social relations. The social characteristics thus take on the appearance of objects that appear to exist independently of social relations, whilst the products of labour appear to possess magical properties that bear no relationship to the labour that produces them.[27]

In capitalist society exchange value is more important than use value. The value prompted by fetishism creates the need to obtain substitute artefacts which 'stand in' for the experience – a replacement which objectifies experience.[28] Whilst the CLOG event was to remain a situational experience, it did create commodities. The post-event

commodities were the shoebox, booking slips and the clogs themselves. Although the shoes would be exhibited in the static installation based exhibition at PICA following the running of <u>CLOG</u> they remained the property of the individual participants. The shoes were functional to them as they were emblematic of the process of labour that had lead to their construction. However, for PICA and myself, the shoes - the artefacts which verified a 'successful conclusion' – would be irrelevant. It was the process and activity of their construction, which valorised the conceptual process of the project.

finished clogs

Drapery (Service) - Drapery (Tour)

Drapery (Service) developed from an invitation to participate in the 'Open Space Emerging Artist' residency at the International Art Space, Kellerberrin, Australia (IASKA).[29]

Kellerberrin is a small, saline affected town in the Wheat-belt, 250km from Perth. The gallery space that IASKA now inhabits was formally a drapery store owned by Mr Scarf. The store serviced all clothing and drapery needs to most of the immediate Wheat-belt area. I arrived by train and soon realised I had forgotten an item of clothing - following the closure of the Drapery Store there was no place in Kellerberrin to replace my clothing. With these immediate experiences, I developed the idea for the Drapery (Service). The intention was to revert the gallery space back to its former history, offering Kellerberrin access to a service that economic compression had removed.

I also wanted to initiate a home-visit sewing service that would provide willing participants an opportunity to construct a set of floor length drapes to hang in their lounge room. It was emphasised, by the organisers of the 'Open Space' Emerging Artists program, that my work should make some connection to the landscape. The sounds of trains passing through the town hourly, and with only four in one day actually stopping at Kellerberrin, magnified the isolation of this town. The connection that the drapes made to the landscape was quite literal – the drapes would be floor length and a particular yellow hue (unique to the form of transport that connects this isolated town). I designed the drapes to make use of the external and internal views of each house – that which is viewed from the street and that which can only be viewed from inside. I chose the external colour of 'Westrail yellow' to paint on the side facing outwards from the window while the fabric used for the interior of the drapes, was chosen by the participant.[30]

The participants that did eventually sign up for the service did so from a needs basis. There was a functional purpose for the interested people to participate in the project

- they wanted drapes for their homes and they wanted to learn how to sew. The project began with visiting each participant in their home to discuss the window requiring the drapes. I photographed and measured the window, made notes on additional hardware, if required, to hang the drapes. A time was then arranged to meet at Betty's Sewing Centre - the only place in Kellerberrin that we could buy fabric and haberdashery products. Although there was a limited selection of fabrics, the participants would have the opportunity to select the type of fabric they wanted on their windows. Some of the fabrics chosen could be considered unsuitable for drapes – for instance, one participant selected a 'sweat-shirt knit' (these problems were overcome through the use of different methods of construction).[31]

On the second visit to each home, I arrived equipped with a domestic sewing machine, scissors, tape measure and fabric to construct the drapes. The kitchen became the common place to set up a temporary workspace for the construction of the drapes.

the home service
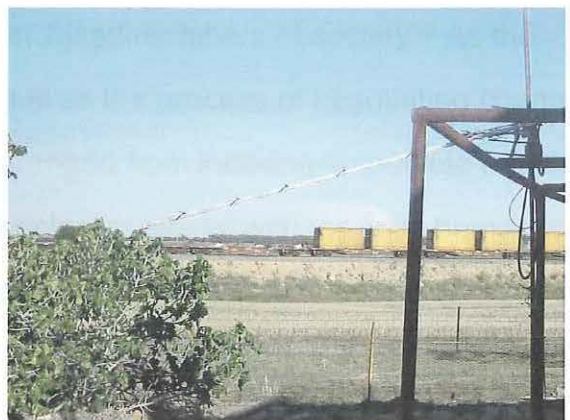
Westrail yellow

The train that had brought me to this place determined not only the colour, but inturn forced me to reconsider my role as an artist. My residence at IASKA was a vehicle to re-connect the community with a shared hue - the common element of yellow drapes. Simular to CLOG, the shared ownership of material particular to the project would form a grouping of previously separate people. With the shared colour of yellow adorning the external view of their windows they become a visible form of community.

The two mentoring artists I worked with, Simon Levin and Laurie Long, were trying to initiate a community based project called The Centre for SALT Expression, using the concept of SALT as an acronym-based umbrella for all the ideas generated from the process.

The Drapery (Tour) was conceived and advertised within the umbrella concept, and before the Drapery (Service) had been initiated. The intention was to drive around Kellerberrin in a bus with the audience on the opening night of the IASKA based exhibition. The purpose of the tour would be to view the finished drapes at the homes where they now hung whilst discussing my ideas and experiences. Many unforeseen circumstances had occurred during the process of the drape construction and as a result, the tour had become a growing problem. Whilst the mentoring artists Levin/Long followed the argument of supplying a system of valorisation to all ideas generated under the Centre for SALT Expression, it was actually a form of cultural 'branding'.[32]

Dialogical aesthetics is a term coined by Grant Kester, to describe the process of interaction between artist groups and disenfranchised members of society.[33] As the name suggests, the emphasis is on the dialogue as the process of negotiating change for the better in the community. Projects have ranged from initiating immediate health services to emergency housing.[34] Relational aesthetics works with the inter-human sphere and service industries – '...a main impetus is a growing need for contacts and bonds in a de-humanized and individualistic society. Artists felt the increasing need to explore the fields of relations'.[35] Termed as 'Art after the Homepage' relational aesthetics involves the three-way relationship between the artist, artwork and audience.[36] Whilst it could superficially find similarities in community art, through the need to re-connect and re-bond alienated individuals within society, its activities are generally gallery based and curatorialy supported. The mechanisms of relational aesthetics simply reiterate the Culture Industry. Through the process of valorisation the term and its activities have become vogue. It was the gallery curator Nicolas Bourriaud who coined the term relational aesthetics in the mid 1990s. His historical analysis of the rise of relational aesthetics was one of treating critical theory as objects that he had re-

arranged to suit his thesis.[37] Whilst patchy at times, the rise of relational aesthetics has permitted the gallery to be challenged as an exclusive site of direct dialogue between the viewer and the activity of art.

Upon completion of the home based project - Drapery (Service) - two bus tours were organised for the Centre for SALT Expression exhibition opening night at IASKA.

Drapery (Tour)

On entering the bus, the audience were each handed a bus timetable that gave a brief history of the idea and the route of the tour. I was careful in not disclosing too much information about each participant (referring to first names only through relaying anecdotal experience). Whilst the opening night audience enjoyed the tour immensely, the tour deconstructed the Drapery (Service) into a spectacle, by constructing a mocking of ethical issues, namely the invasion of personal space for the purpose of 'entertainment'. In effect, the intoxicated opening night audience became an artwork/ spectacle in itself.

the bus service

The Drapery (Service) provided a functional object of and the tour initiated a spectacle. The problematics of the service being subsumed under The Centre for SALT Expression suggests a folding of the use value system at work in art, leaving me with the question of what the purpose of cultural branding was and why there was a need for a spectacle on the opening night. The Drapery (Service), as a project, did not need the tours to valorise or complete the project. The participants had made the drapes and put them to their functional purpose - each in use within the participants lounge room. The dialogue that developed during the time of construction and the sewing experience gained from sewing a set of drapes, provided a seeding opportunity for further home based projects. The skills developed could be utilised in sewing more drapes, bed linen, constructing tea towels, and any number of household items constructed from fabric. The relaxed conversation with the participants in their homes gave insights into other, and more urgent, furnishing needs. Through these processes, the project had its own validation. The Centre for SALT Expression needed the bus tours to valorise the opening night event. The tour became emblematic of cultural imperialism projected upon socio-economic differences.

outside of Charlotte's home

The service that <u>Drapery (Service)</u> offered was a community based arts project, taking the gallery into the homes of the residents of Kellerberrin, and creating small but simple changes to the everyday experience of life. [38] The project aligns itself to the purposes of dialogical aesthetics whilst in contrast the <u>Centre for SALT Expression</u> utilised the loose ideas based around the theory of relational aesthetics, resulting in an unfortunate form of 'model branding'.

It was IASKA, and not the <u>Centre for SALT Expression</u>, that had provided the initial funding of materials for the project. IASKA also assisted the project with the initial connection to the community through an introduction to possible participants. As a result, the <u>Drapery (Service)</u> received further funding from the Country Women's Association (CWA). This was the first time that the CWA had financially supported a project at IASKA. To rectify my personal reservations with the <u>Drapery (Tour)</u>, and the issues of the spectacle, the participants of the (future) project became the audience of a bus tour viewing their own finished drapes.


the tour guide

BRICOLAGE.

Bricolage was a participant-based interactive installation project that held between April 11 – 25, 2004 at the Windowbox Gallery in Northbridge.[39] The project established a garment reconfiguration space on the immediate footpath in front of the gallery on James Street. Participants were invited to construct their re-assembled clothing using three domestic sewing machines and an overlocker that were positioned on café styled tables. Weather permitting, the stage of Bricolage was folded out of the Windowbox Gallery and established for a four-hour period every evening (6:30 – 10:30pm).[40]
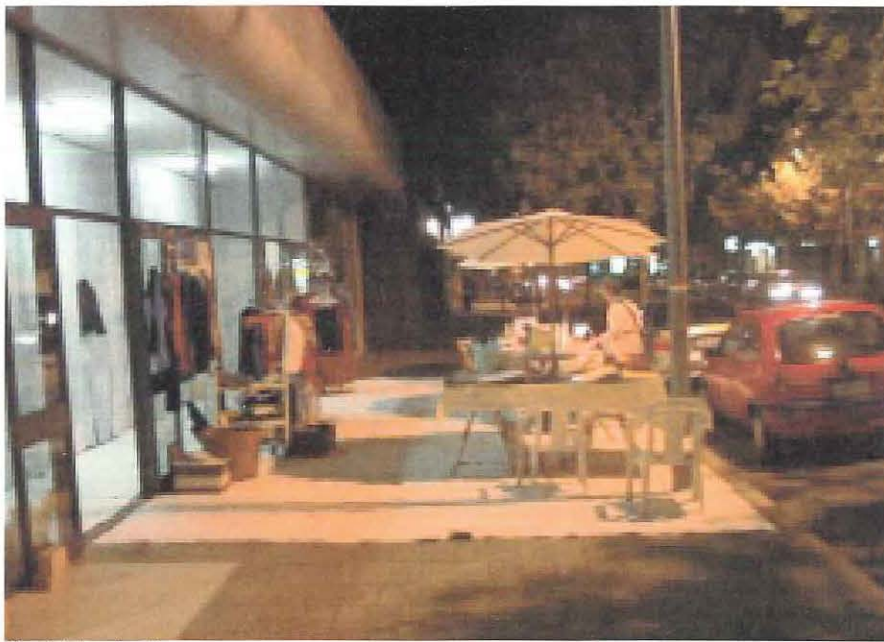
the fold-out gallery

I arrived at the gallery 30 minutes before the scheduled opening time and set up the working space on the footpath – in effect, a hybrid of a theatre costume department and a second-hand clothing store. The working space had been constructed from white painted fabric which would fold out of the narrow Windowbox space and fit the exact dimensions of the footpath in front. Fabric curtains, also painted white and suspended from the ceiling inside covered the back wall and provided a backdrop for the temporary workspace. Three tables and an ironing board, all covered in fabric, were placed on the 'soft white cube' fold-out gallery and the sewing machines were provided as the main machinery upon which the participant constructed their 'bricolage'.

The outside windows were lined with racks of clothes, bags of remnants, a trolley cart loaded with an eclectic collection of haberdashery, fabric samples and assorted other materials for the participants to use. The final 30 minutes of each night were used to pack away the equipment and material inside of the gallery - the fabric defining the temporary workspace was refolded and placed over the equipment and material to form a soft white enigmatic sculptural form within for the following day. The 'presence' of Bricolage would therefore assume two forms – an non-descript sculptural form within the gallery space during the day and an active 'fold-out' workspace outside during the evening.[41]


the fold-up gallery

Every evening people were invited to participate in the conceptual framework of Bricolage. I introduced the concept to anyone with an interest in the event – at times these explanations would become quite involved. With an array of materials at hand any individual would have the opportunity to form unique wearable constructions during the hours that Bricolage was in operation. I provided the service of explaining the conceptual framework of the project and help with technical advice or ideas to anyone requiring them. Every evening I wore a constructed bricolage as my uniform. Anything could be deconstructed and reconstructed during Bricolage – there was a limitless

scope for anyone to engage with during the operational hours of the project. Yet, despite the wide variety of articles made, I had insisted that each piece constructed within the framework of the project was badged with the Bricolage label. No finished article would be permitted to leave the site without the label attached - this was the only stipulation that had been demanded of the participants during the project.[42]
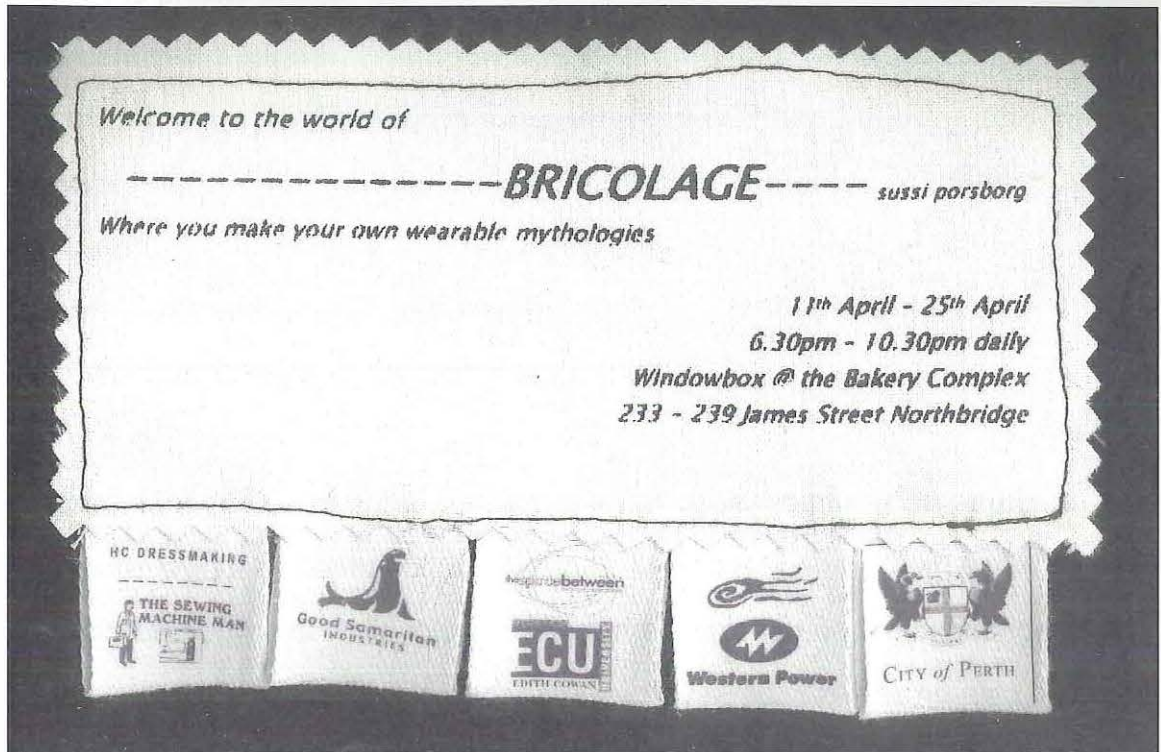
the Bricolage label

The Bricolage label was an important conceptual part of the Bricolage concept. Prior to the event I had personally designed and manufactured the label which was also distributed as an invitation, or advertisement, for the event. Attached to the main body of the label were small looped tags of printed cotton tape, which acknowledged the corporate sponsorship that enabled the project to occur - five 'tags' graphically presented the nine sponsors of Bricolage. The 'corporate tags' had been designed to resemble the care and content labels attached to all manufactured clothing. I had intentionally used valorisation to parody the process of valorisation of the design by the use of the label.

> *'Who ever speaks of culture speaks of administration as well, whether this is the intention or not'[43]*

As a participant-based interactive installation project, Bricolage would be conceptually framed within a multi-tiered institutional context. Artrage (and their corporate sponsor Western Power), The Space Between (a Textile Exchange Project hosted by Curtin University of Technology), Edith Cowan University (SoCA), Good Samaritan Industries, the Sewing Machine Man, and HC Dressmaking all provided support which enabled the running of the project in April. The City of Perth was the main corporate/cultural sponsor and had demanded specific requirements for the inclusion of their logo and the public posting of their support.[44] Despite the 'bricolage' of sponsorship required to initiate and run the event there would be a number of difficulties which would threaten the project throughout. In effect this is symptomatic of many similar contemporary art projects in Perth, community or otherwise, which occur within the reach of institutional control and have an effect upon the autonomous nature of art.

The autonomous nature of art, according to Adorno, derives from its nature to provide 'pure' works as commodities. The non-functional nature of artworks provides the hypocritical source of their value – the market surrounding the exchange of art commodities is pure because it is unconstrained by need. Yet Adorno also notes the process of inversion which can result when there is an 'offering of culture goods, exhibition or concerts on the television or radio, free of charge, as a public service; in truth, the price for them has been long-since paid for by the labouring masses'.[45] This is also the case with many cultural events and festivals which occur in Perth. Adorno's term the 'labouring masses' had retained a measure of currency when a large percentage of the work force was labour based. Largely through the sophistication of technology the term 'labour' has become much more of an abstract notion than a condition of existence.

The Bricolage label therefore highlights the complex nature of securing support for local cultural projects. Utilising Adorno's terminology, the labouring masses could be seen as the rate payers of the City of Perth, the consumers of Western Power electricity and the various sponsors of Artrage. Similarly the institutional presence of both Edith

Cowan and Curtin University are supported through public funds and the revenue levels subsidised by the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS fees) of students. Extended further, the 'labouring masses' would also include members of the community who had donated clothes to the Good Samaritans as well as the previous customers of the Sewing Machine Man and the clients of H.C.Dressmaking. The meagre financial funds required to stage Bricolage could be said to have come from an eclectic collective of contributors.[46]
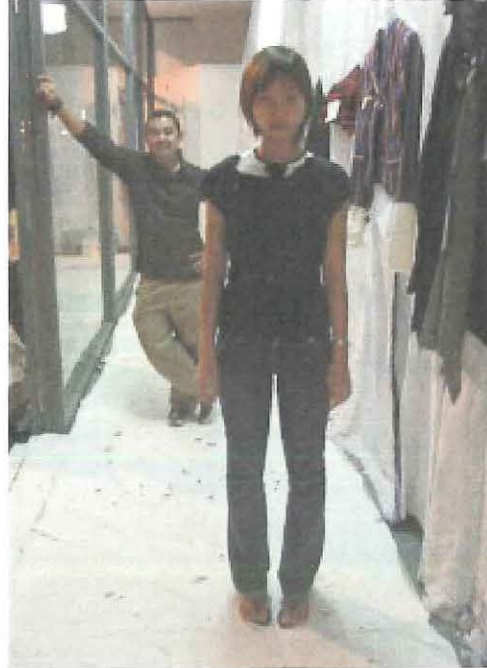

the Bricolage workspace

Bricolage is a term normally associated with the theories of the French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss.[47] Generally the term *bricolage* was coined to describe 'a characteristic feature of mythical thought'[48] In relation to the focus of this discussion, *bricolage* describes the space between 'do-it-yourself 'and 'making do' – the term notes the process of deconstruction (or severance from an existing meaning) and the creation of fresh forms apart from the existing frameworks compelled by history. Levi-Strauss positions the term *bricolage* as an intellectual mechanism that allows the subject to use what it has at hand to make new constructions of meaning, implied relations and thus begin the process of creating a new form of mythology. Roland Barthes develops the theory relating to the process of myth creation which is closer to Marx's examination of how certain mechanisms are utilised in the development of ideology (than to Levi-

34

Strauss' proposition of limitless instability).[49] Ideology for Marx is the product of a driven political agenda that purports to be fact while at the same time serves to mask real contradictions within the social system. Marx labelled the 'ruling ideology of capitalism – the displacement of human relations by commodity exchange – commodity fetishism'.[50]

finished bricolage

a bricoleur

I established the Bricolage project to operate within the fields described by Levi-Strauss and Marx. The temporary structure of the project – set-up and dismantled on a daily basis – formed the parameters of the space within which a unique form of critique could occur. The process of dismembering existing second-hand clothing and the construction of fresh individuated articles epitomises the process described by Levi-Strauss'. The collective framework of directed labour which utilises the discarded objects of an industry feeding upon the desires of commodity fetishism (the 'fashion industry') effectively embraces the theories of Marx. Bricolage would therefore be established as a critique of both the mechanisms of commodity exchange and the 'ruling ideology' which directs the purpose of art. In my project there would be a merging of the separate areas of the gallery and the street (as there had been with CLOG earlier) as well as a compositing between the exclusively aesthetic (art) and purely functional (clothing) within the activity of the project.

35

Levi Strauss proposed that formations of language could be stripped from their intrinsic 'value' when juxtaposed within unique contexts for use. Traditional use of terminology, in this sense, would become fractured and recomposed. The Danish based artist Jens Haaning uses the site of language to position the alienation in the facade of multiculturalism[51]. In particular, his project Turkish Jokes focused on linguistic difference and its social effects.[52]

Through a performative negotiation of the white cube and its institutional ramifications, Haaning circumscribes artistic activity as anti-disciplinary agency. The poster work 'Turkish Jokes' (unsigned and without reference to the 'City Spaces' exhibition of which it was a part) provided an anti-image of cultural competence, discursively located in the margins of white Europe. The poster's depiction of a topless, Danish bottle-blonde is accompanied by three jokes in Arabic - an existential one, a dirty one, and a political one.[53]

Jens Haaning 'Turkish Jokes' (1996)

Haaning's work attempts to bring the notions of cultural alienation to the forefront – as he has stated:

> *'One of my interests in language is based on the psychological effect of*
> *contacting people in a language they do not understand. Language is basically*
> *a tool for communication between people. If you are confronted with a*
> *language you do not understand, the human brain is working in a certain way;*
> *it wants to understand, to come to a conclusion based on the information it is*
> *given and the knowledge already contained in the human being.'[54]*

36

Haaning uses language as a site to position and invert the cultural alienation which occurs in relation to art. Whereas Haaning uses elements of language, Bricolage would utilise clothing - components would become words and garments phrases.

Deconstruction and reconstruction formed the fabric of the activity of Bricolage. The discarded clothing - donated by Good Samaritan Industries – constituted the basic material substance. Despite the pragmatics of acquiring this material for the project – that is, within the limits of a meagre budget - the need to use this material was specific. In effect, the second hand garment is a form which embodies a collaboration of former histories, and within each garment is a form of semiotic language unique to that article. Separated from its former owner and 'use value' the garment becomes a pliable article that can be cut apart and reformed with elements taken from other garments. For instance, when the collar of a business shirt is cobbled to the pocket of a pair of army pants, the Bricolage begins to take visual form as a unique alliance between function and form – between use and appearance.

creating a new myth

By dismembering garments into isolated components, it disassociates the former use-value of the clothing and creates elemental parts for a new functional object. The process of reconstruction also creates a severance from the garments former history, the item of clothing that had once communicated the personality of the wearer can be used in another constructed and individuated form of expression. The constructed article becomes a fresh wearable 'myth', its many juxtaposed histories restructured into a new amalgamated form. This article would be 'badged' with the Bricolage label securing its history to a specific art activity.[55]

Cultural funding for Bricolage had been obtained under the guise that the project would give the residents of Perth a form of after-hours 'leisure activity'. The City of Perth had assumed that 'leisure activity' and 'cultural activity' were one-in-the-same – identifying that 'leisure activity' is possible only during the periods of 'free time'- after the hours of work. Adorno argued that the notion of 'free time' would lead to a desire to engage in a form of 'pseudo activity' - a basic desire to assume some form of activity during 'free time'. According to Adorno, this has become a 'behavioural norm of the bourgeois character' stating:

> *'...free time must not resemble work in any way whatsoever, in order,*
> *presumably, that one can work all the more effectively afterwards. Hence the*
> *inanity of many leisure activities. And yet, in secret as it were, the contraband*
> *of modes of behaviour proper to the domain of work, which will not let people*
> *out of its power, is being smuggled into the realm of free time."*[56]

The participants who engaged with the conceptual framework of Bricolage, pursued the construction of their garments with a high level of enthusiasm – this is indicative of the pleasures associated with the 'do-it-yourself' culture which forms the backbone of an industry feeding off of the condition described by Adorno. The syndrome of 'do-it-yourself' prompts the interpellated myth of self-sufficiency, applicable skills and knowledge which lead to a unique form of pride in the accomplishment of the eventual

construction. The object which results, the objectification of the effort undertaken, assumes a privileged position once completed. It becomes indicative of the inherent appeal of 'do-it-yourself' – the direct application of labour in the construction of an item for functional use (use value) and the acquisition of an individuated article of value (exchange value). Individuated construction, whether that takes the form of assembling a mass produced article of furniture or renovating a bathroom, is based upon the experience of an alienated individual working relatively alone.[57] Within Bricolage there was a reclamation of the collective spirit of the labour union – a natural fraternity formed in a participant based communal structure. Participants took pride with their own articles and those of their fellow workers, but also developed an unusual form of loyalty to the conceptual framework of the project.

Capitalism privileges exchange value over use value. Bricolage merged these two 'values' together within its conceptual framework. The construction of wearable items within the workspace did not lead to any form of monetary exchange.[58] Despite the fact that all of the items made over the duration of the event were functional, they retained their unique fetishised presence as particular creations of an individual. These garments were not made for mass consumption, but for the expression of a singular personality. The fetishised object is the individuated article of clothing badged with the Bricolage label – it is both the artefact and the objectification of a particular experience. Part of the uniqueness of the experience for the participants was the uncertainty of whether of not the Bricolage space would be open (due to the changing weather patterns in April). Unlike CLOG, which retained a strict reliability during the course of its time in PICA, Bricolage did not open if there was prediction, or occurrence of rain. This accentuated the inherent instability of its context as an external and temporary site of activity – its situation was fragile to the fluctuations of many factors.[59]

By the conclusion of Bricolage, it became clear that projects of this nature were subject to the limitations of institutional frameworks under which are established. The strands of critical theory, which had formed the conceptual base of Bricolage, would establish the

Bricolage at work

consequence of the activity. The ironic juxtaposition between critical thought and active engagement did not inflect Bricolage during its operation to any significant extent. Largely the success of the project was determined by the level of participation that it attracted, this was due to the unique nature of experience it offered.

CONCLUSION

The three projects explored in this paper constituted all of my 'studio based' work over the past fourteen months. The conceptual framework for each project differed in substance yet each retained a basic commitment and belief in the spirit of participatory democracy. I have been, for some time, interested in the theory of participation and how it operates within the field of art.

My practical work has also been heavily inflected by an entrenched system of political beliefs which have developed throughout my life. These beliefs have in turn fostered the unease I feel when approaching traditional representational objects of art. Over recent years, I have been concerned with the lack of critical gratification that these works seem to offer me (and perhaps others). For reasons which I am not altogether comfortable with, the diminishing criticality of art seems to be mirroring the demise in left wing utopianism. Part of what concerns me a great deal is the apparent failure of most contemporary practices in art to engage with the human desire to interact.

The act of making, the pleasure involved in creating with your own hands something designed by yourself and for yourself, sits outside the alienated experience of commodity exchange. Most of the participants in my project struggled to place a nominal price on the objects that they created in each project. One participant felt that his/her clogs were priceless. Through this observation of the participant's experience, in all of the three projects I have returned to Marx's theory of alienation. Though first published one hundred and fifty years ago, I feel it still retains a vitality in the contemporary climate of art and life.

Likewise Adorno's critique of the Culture Industry has made an important impact upon my thoughts during the operation of <u>Bricolage</u> this year.

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Many of the problematics which have effected the breadth of my work became visible with my first audience participatory work, 'LIFE SUIT' (for the Artrage Festival in 2002). Since that time the many compromises which have impacted upon my projects have resulted largely from the gaps within institutional frameworks. Having experienced the effects of this dissonance for sometime I wonder if the frameworks purporting to foster the development of contemporary art are not, in fact, sublimating its progress to a set of unpronounced homogenised ideals.

ENDNOTES

1 O'Doherty, Brian Inside The White Cube: The Ideology Of The Gallery Space, The Lapis Press, San Francisco, 1986. p.15

2 Marx, Karl and Engels, Freidrich The Communist Manifesto: The Centenary Edition. (Ed. Harold Laski), Allen & Unwin, London, 1948. pp 123-5

3 The terms aesthetic and aesthetics are used to describe the philosophical principles of the framework of activity, not the visual meaning of aesthetics i.e. Beauty.

4 Habermas, Jurgen The Theory of Communicative Action: Volume Two Lifeworld and the System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason, tr. Thomas McCarthey, Beacon Press, Boston, 1989.

5 Flew, Antony (Ed.) 'A Dictionary of Philosophy', Pan, London, 1979. p. 162

6 For instance, artists such as Richard Long and Christo would aestheticise the document into terms of art.

7 Both my mother and maternal grandmother were dressmakers, my paternal grandmother was a furrier, and both my aunt and uncle were tailors.

8 The terms emerging, mid-career and established artist are terms that can be debated as institutional frameworks that are purely administrative - some would say that all artists should always be in a process of emergence.

9 Valorisation is the diverse mechanisms whereby a particular artwork becomes an object of interest and the subsequent transformation of such interest into economic, or nominal, value. The artwork begins a network of exhibitions, critical discussion and accumulates the notoriety of its maker. The process must be continuous if the exchange rate is to be maintained. The critical exchange of works of art, through the auspices of the 'taste makers' or 'critics' can also lend credible value to the process of discussion. It is a transaction, always being in the circuit. This feeding system, whilst it may forge connections and relationships, only holds currency in the system that they exist, or one which they can be interpreted into. Refer to Michael Carter in 'Framing Art: Introducing Theory and the Visual Image', Hale & Ironmonger, Sydney, 1990.

10 Refer to John Gorman in 'Banner Bright: An Illustrated History of Trade Union Banners', Scorpion, Essex, 1986.

11 Contained within 'Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays', (Ed. Ben Brewster), New Left Books, London, 1971.

12 The labour emblem of '888' appeared on many banners, the symbol of a long and hard fight for the eight-hour day. '888' represents the philosophical equilibrium of work, rest and recreation, based on the 40-hour week.

13 Mental institutions and prisons were not dissimilar in exploiting labour from the imprisoned individual.

14 When one views the 'Made in Australia' statement on a clothing label, one cannot be guaranteed that the maker of this garment has received all the basic protection and rights that would be expected from Australia's boasting of regulated/unionised work place. The reality of this situation often leads to the exploitation of non-English speaking migrants with pressing needs to establish their families in this country. Over 40 000 out-workers construct garments for all the designer labels which include the 'Made in Australia' tag. In effect, they can be considered, the 'backbone' of the garment industry.

15 Fordism is based on the scientific management that breaks down the labour process into repetitive and unskilled tasks to be performed within a limited time-period. It destroys the traditional skills of craft workers and directs their expertise to be utilised by a new class of planners and managers.

16 Unions such as the Pastry Cooks Union and the Pressers Union are two such examples.

17 Krishan Kumar's "From Post-industrial to Post-modern Society: New Theories of the Contemporary World", Cambridge, Blackwell Publishers, 1995

18 The firm entrenchment of economic rationalism within Australia has prompted many to question the necessity of unionism.

19 The 'Wearer Principle' to this extent stands as a praxis between the theory and practice of creative production of artworks.

20 The individual participants would therefore utilise discarded fragments of uniforms to conform to the uniformity of the clog form.

21 In the climate of the 'war on terror' following the September 11, 2001 attacks on America, the Union movement decided to celebrate the traditional May Day three days later on a Sunday (May 4). It was the decision of the Union to support the Socialist Alliance celebrations but distance their event from it on a separate day.

22 All of the clogs from the project, finished or incomplete, would be exhibited in the workspace for a three week period in May at PICA. The exhibiting of the CLOG workspace as a 'static' installation was a requirement of the Open Studio Program.

23 Guy Debord, 'Society of the Spectacle', Black & Red, 1983.

24 As summarised within the 'Penguin Dictionary of Politics', Second Edition (Ed. David Robertson), Penguin, London, 1993.

25 Though this can be philosophically disputed by questioning whether there is such a thing as human nature, and whether a person would have a different nature if the construct of the society had been different.

26 Refer to Marx within 'Capital: A Critique of Political Economy – Volume 1', (Trans. Ben Fowkes), Penguin, 1976.

27 This diverges from the general materialist view that the unique properties of material form an important constituent part of a work of art. In general terms, a work of art is rarely discussed in relation to either the physical labour which produces them nor the specific materials which have been used.

28 For instance, a consumer who buys a ticket to the Rolling Stones farewell concert can also worships the amount of money paid for it – the more it costs, the more importance is placed upon its value. The fetishised object however, is

the ticket stub – the proof of purchase and the proof of experience.

[29] The emerging artist residency at PICA offers gallery space, access to workshop facilities, inclusion on the institution's website and mailing list. The offer is made through letter of invitation thus providing the emerging artist with the situation of accessing funding themselves. The only available institutional based funding for the residency, is the 'emerging artist quick response grant' offered through ArtsWA, but has an age limit of twenty five. As a result of my age I fall outside of this category. IASKA provides the emerging artist with access to the artists-in-residence as mentoring support, accommodation and $500.00 (which incorporates a *per diem* allowance, travel expenses and exhibition materials).

[30] 'Westrail' yellow is a particular shade of yellow that indexes the main form of transport that travels to and from Kellerberrin and could only be obtained through the use of paint (which I purchased from the local hardware store).

[31] Lining the drapes with a stabilising fabric, such as calico, overcame this problem - the use of a second lining provided further insulation and support.

[32] Branding is a device of late capitalism, it is the act of naming things by way of corporate logo. Companies are no longer producing a product and adding their name to it, rather buying prefabricated products and branding them with their corporate logo. Klein details the rise of the 'Brand' in NO LOGO, with a focus on lifestyle, not one product. Products that will flourish in the future will be those presented not as commodities, but as concepts – that is, the brand as an experience. The act of 'branding' is a more powerful tool for the fetishisation of commodities as it offers a perception of the security of an idealised lifestyle denoted by an emblem. Refer to Naomi Klein, "No Logo: No Space, No Choice, No Jobs" Picador, New York, 2002

[33] Grant Kester "Dialogical Aesthetics: A Critical framework for Littoral Art", Variant, Issue 9. http://www.variant.ndtilda.co.uk/9texts/KesterSupplement.html.

[34] One example Kessler uses is an artist group in Vienna, who had organised the purchase of a bus to be converted into a multi-purpose ambulance service to accommodate for people that were homeless. The artist group then further lobbied local government to provide a physician to work with the bus.

[35] Nicolas Bourriaud, "Relational Aesthetics, Dijon: les presses du reel, 2002

[36] Nicolas Bourriaud within the forward to the exhibition catalogue 'Touch: Relational Art from the 1990s to Now', San Francisco Art Institute, 2002.

[37] Ibid. Bourriaud parallels relational aesthetics use of commodity fetishism with Pop Art.

[38] The term 'community based art' does not refer to any specific activity or group of activities; rather it defines an approach to creative media embracing many kinds of events and a wide range of media. It should bring together both artists and local people within various communities to use art forms as a means of communication and expression. These activities occur in ways that critically use and develop traditional art forms, adapting them to present needs and thus developing new forms. Frequently the approach is directed towards social change. Refer to Owen Kelly within 'Community, Art and the State', Comedia, London, 1984.

[39] The Windowbox Gallery is part of the Bakery complex administered and operated by Artrage.

[40] The lighting required for working on the street at night would be provided by three small table mounted elbow lamps in addition to the existing streetlights.

[41] The action of unfolding the gallery space onto the footpath was to drag the gallery back into the street. The action of whiting out everything with paint was to initially to pull focus back upon the intersubjectivity and the action of making. In effect, it would be an attempt to remove the external structures which surrounded the temporary workspace (the gallery). In return for uniformly priming each surface with a flat white paint I was hoping to draw attention to each detail of the elements within the installation. The painted white curtains, which acted as a back-drop, would reinforce the 'two dimensional' nature of the Bricolage fold-out space (a similar attribute I was hoping to inflect the CLOG workspace with in PICA earlier).

[42] This would be an insistence on the cultural banding of the garments. The participant faced the question of where they would place the label on their bricolage and if they wanted to include the corporate sponsorship. One participant removed all but one of the corporate logos. Another participant, who chose to line her own existing garments with Bricolage made from the materials available on the night, insisted that the label be placed on every thing she had created in the work space. For myself, the finished garment was unimportant, for the participant it had been the vehicle through which they would legitimise their efforts.

[43] Adorno T. W. 'The Culture Industry', Routledge, London, 1991. p. 93

[44] The design of the City of Perth logo includes a crop mark in the top right hand corner and dominates the placement of the corporate shield. They argue that the crop mark is an integral part of the overall design. Despite its relatively insignificant presence, the crop mark does determine the placement of the logo within the body of advertising corporate support (that is, in the top right corner of all publicity material).

[45] Bernstein, J. M., 'Introduction' within 'The Culture Industry', ibid.

[46] For the Bricolage project I had received $800.00 from the City of Perth, a 30% reduction in the normal rental costs for hiring the Windowbox Gallery from Artrage, reduced charges from the Sewing Machine Man for servicing and repairing the sewing equipment used, one large bale of second hand clothes from Good Samaritan Industries, paint from the Bernt Porridge Group, moral support from Edith Cowan University and a place on the Space Between website (managed by Curtin University).

[47] Levi-Strauss' writings investigate the relationship between culture (an exclusive attribute of humanity) and nature, based upon the distinguishing characteristic of man: the ability to communicate in language. His four volume *Mythologies* (completed between the years 1962 – 1972) analyses the myths not as explanations of natural phenomena but as attempts at resolving the problems of human existence and social organization. As a proponent

of Structuralism his writings would become influential in defining the problematic areas of communication.

[48] Macey, David (Ed.) 'The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory', Penguin, London, 2000. p. 52

[49] Barthes uses interpellation is as defining the mechanism of a myth, the image of a black soldier saluting a French flag in an advertisement. The interpellatory character of the myth/image speaks directly to the viewer (as a commodity in exchange) a magical object, without any trace of the history of the history that produced it – refer to 'Mythologies', (trans. Annette Lavers), Hill and Wang, NY, 1983. p. 116

[50] Desai, Meghnad 'Marx's Revenge: The Resurgence of Capitalism and the Death of Statist Socialism', Verso, London, 2002. p.211

[51] Multiculturalism is used as an Ideological State Apparatus (as defined by Althuser, op. cit., 1971).

[52] 'Turkish Jokes ' aims the juxtaposition the emblematic liberal views of Danish culture, the naked attractive blonde women, with jokes in a different language that have no reference to the image.

[53] Bang Larsen, Lars. Twenty five Swiss Francs and a Coconut for Free', Art/Text, Issue 66, August/October, 1999 (reproduced on http://www.nicolaiwallner.com/artists/jens/text8.html)

[54] Hou Hanru, in collected interviews "Hello My Name Is Jens Haaning", www.jenshaaning.com , 2003

[55] The participants would be quite enthusiastic about 'branding' their constructions with the Bricolage label. In effect this would be indicative of celebrating their work and uniting their efforts under an idea (or concept). The finished garments would vary from hats to jackets and skirts – the only uniformity would be the label.

[56] 'The Culture Industry', op. cit., p. 164.

[57] More often than not this process would be directed by specific written instruction. The instructions given in Bricolage would be given as verbal advice and further negotiated in dialogue.

[58] For example, none of the participants would attempt to sell their works from the space, nor had there been any attempt to purchase the works of their co-workers. Instead there was a different form of currency frequently used during the Bricolage event – one of material usage and negotiation to access the equipment provided.

[59] For instance, the City of Perth decided to close the Bricolage event, three days after it opened. The project had begun without an official permit to 'obstruct the footpath' as one had not been provided by the City of Perth, nor acquired by Artrage (who operated the Windowbox Gallery). There would be an additional $55.00 application fee payable back to the City of Perth as a result. Only one day was lost because of this.

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