# Art Administration as Performative Practice / Organizing Art as Institutional Critique

**By**

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**ART ADMINISTRATION AS PERFORMATIVE PRACTICE /**
**ORGANIZING ART AS INSTITUTIONAL CRITIQUE**

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**ABSTRACT:**

A propositional rethinking of art administration within the artist-run institution, this thesis contributes new conceptualizations of operations of the artist-run centre in Canada. The suggestion is that art administration practiced therein is a specialized embodied expression of the institution as apparatus. Proposing that the Canadian artist-run context is a form of and forum for institutional critique, this analysis argues that the art administrator is a unique practice of mediation in art called "diagnostic organizing;" a negotiative role gesturing toward performative relationships to protocol. Recontextualizing art administration as embodying the interface between art and policy, this study also names "performing the context" as an experimental and critical approach to arts facilitation. The work of artist Andrea Fraser is investigated for her writing and practices of institutional critique, as is the arts presentation project Kunstverein Toronto where Co-Director's Kari Cwynar and Kara Hamilton's performative language and gestures communicate their facilitative practices.

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> *Is there virtue in reconceptualizing curators and administrators as artists in order to maintain fidelity to the moniker "artist run"? Might the reclamation of "parallel" offer any value in better describing what these organizations have become? Can "alternative" act as inspiration?*
>
> — Cheyanne Turions [1]

> *It is within the shifting ground of questioning, experimentation, and engaging with non-artists that we might come together to create models that further challenge current forms of power...we as cultural workers need to start at places of not knowing in order to build up knowledge together.*
>
> — Dana Claxton and Tania Willard [2]

With this thesis I offer a propositional rethinking/rewiring/reconceptualising of the role of the art administrator within the framework of the small artist-run non-profit contemporary art organization. This research promotes art administration as a practice offering contextually-specialized services, and aims to reframe the significance of these services to help enhance strategies by artists and non-artists who organize and operate alternatives to the museum model, the commercial gallery, and other forms of cultural industry in "the artworld."[3] Of the alternative organizations that utilize the services of art administration, this study is particularly invested in exploring the practice as it appears

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[1]   This epigraph is sourced from Turions' post from 14 October 2014, entitled "Thinking Again about Artist-run Culture" (Turions).

[2]   Writing after the proceedings of the 2012 *Institutions by Artists* conference, Claxton and Willard respond to the invocation by AA Bronson of ceremonial ritual to open the conference. Commenting on the need for such measures as means to counter "the globalized professionalization of the artist," Claxton and Willard also state that "artist-led initiatives are now even more important and urgent. Artists need to reclaim their own spaces" (Claxton, "Imperfect Compliance: A Trajectory of Transformation").

[3]   Critic Arthur Danto is credited with coining the term "the artworld" in his 1964 essay "The Artworld." In it he defines the cultural context for art as institutional, where we create "an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld" (580).

within Canadian artist-run centres. The story of the artist-run centre is well-known. Established as a wave of sites in Canada — ostensibly a part of the emergence of the countercultural socio-political resistance to forms of authoritarianism in the late 1960s and 1970s — artist-run centres developed in response to artists' need for autonomous and accessible spaces for the then emerging forms of art production and presentation which didn't suit the interests of the museum or commercial exhibition spaces (Canada 13).[4]

In the forty years since the first artist-run centres surfaced several generations of artists activating and making use of the resources have performed labour within the centres to support programming and operations.[5] Today, these artists are (or have been replaced by) art administrators and they are known by a variety of titles. Appearing in some centres as Administrative Director and Artistic Director, in others the role is called Executive Director, Program Director, Program Manager, Managing Director, Admin Assistant, or Office Manager. With divergent job descriptions based on the particular centres' framework of operations, all are connected by their involvement in the facilitation of art and artists' presentations.

[4] Examples of early practices that were supported by artist-run spaces include video art, performance art, installation, and the development of artist-made publications to distribute the writing that helped communicate the distinction of these spaces in comparison to commercial or large institutions. AA Bronson writes about two of these practices, video and publications, in his essay "The Humiliation of the Bureaucrat" saying that "[in] Canada in the late Sixties there was no way to see ourselves, no way to know we existed. Certain media had a magnetic importance. Video had a magnetic importance. We all knew the importance of seeing ourselves. In 1971, A Space started its video programme with Lisa Steele and Tom Sherman. In 1972 Video Inn opened its doors in Vancouver. In 1973 the Canada Council started video funding. In 1974 Art Metropole began video distribution. And then suddenly everyone everywhere in Canada was making video and this was a Canadian thing. So video is a connective tissue and periodicals are a connective tissue. Together they delineate the disjunctive configuration of the various nodes of this hybrid and various art scene in interaction" (35).

[5] In Canada, to credit "the first" artist-run centre is not necessarily a simple matter of chronology due to overlapping notions of what constitutes the origins of the artist-run apparatus coupled with the longest-standing history of operations. That said, generally the first few artist-run centres are: Intermedia (now closed, started in Vancouver in 1967); 20/20 Gallery (in London, circa 1969, now closed); A Space Artist-Run Centre (Toronto, 1971), considered by many, including Bronson, to be the first artist-run centre ("Humiliation" 32); AKA artist-run (then Shoestring Gallery, Saskatoon, 1971); Eyelevel Gallery (then Inventions Gallery, in Halifax, 1972); Open Space (Victoria, 1972); Western Front (Vancouver, 1973); Galerie SAW Gallery (Ottawa, 1973); La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse (Montreal, 1973); Forest City Gallery (London, 1973); and, Art Metropole (Toronto, 1974). After 1975, with the availability of funding support from the federal government, artist-run spaces began opening in larger numbers across Canada including the Parachute Centre for Cultural Affairs (now closed, Calgary, 1975); The New Gallery (Calgary, 1975); Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre (then Kingston Artists' Association Inc., in Kingston, 1977); Mercer Union (Toronto, 1979); Articule (Montreal, 1979); YYZ (Toronto, 1979); and many more.

In order for these different positions and their titles to emerge within the artist-run centre, the social and political conditions of the centres had to change. After the spaces began to appear across Canada there was an attempt to construct an identity for the artist-run centres as a series of "parallel" projects with a penchant for network affinities (Robertson 26). As a term which Diana Nemiroff points to in her 1994 essay "Par-al-lel," Nemiroff notes that parallel did not "adequately define the artist-run centre as an alternative" (Nemiroff 180). Suggesting that artist-run centre operations did not disrupt but instead ran alongside, it was felt that parallel clashed with what many in the centres understood to be their mandate to support art and attitudes that questioned the conventional. Since artist-run cultural identity was connected to opposing the mainstream and making spaces for artists that spoke to the interests in self-governance and support for new forms of artistic practices emerging at the time, the artist-run centres in the 1970s through the 1980s and into the 1990s were in many ways guided by a sense of social and political purpose (183; Robertson 4).[6]

Simultaneous to these influences, beginning in the 1970s, many artist-run centres formalized as non-profit corporations in order to access government funding and maintain or expand operations. Though the following chapters will review and reflect upon the history of the seeming contradiction of opposing convention while welcoming bureaucracy, we do already know it was a product of extenuating circumstances. As Keith Wallace, art writer and Canadian artist-run centre archivist, recently remarked,

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[6]  Robertson states that "artist-run centre" is a term that "becomes gradually accepted sometime between 1976 and 1978" (15). Noting that in "1976, twenty-two Canadian artists' spaces/galleries had their first national meeting in Ottawa as existing funding clients of the Canada Council and at this meeting decided to form and name an association of 'artists' centres'" (CANPAC, later ANNPAC/RACA (Association of National Non-Profit Artists' Centres/Regroupement d'artistes des centres alternatifs)), Robertson suggests that this self-naming indicated a sense of exclusion from the approach to decision-making in known organizational models (15). Robertson, with Marcella Bienvenue representing The Parachute Center for Cultural Affairs (Calgary), has also laid claim to the first printed use of the term "artist-run centre" in their texts published in *Parallélograme Retrospective* in 1976-7 (15). Before then, existing artist' centres were characterised by the commonplace functions they served, such as community centre or gallery.

"artists who were seeking in the late 1960s and early 70s to create their own kinds of

institutions... had an innocence and experimentation and considered themselves part of an

art scene… in the 80s and 90s that scene turned into an art system...but in the 2000s that

art system has actually turned into an arts industry with billions of dollars invested in it

and requiring a new set of protocols" (Wallace, "Institutions by Artists").

This thesis suggests that the art administrator in the artist-run centre, labouring in

support of the centres' governing boards and programming directions, is uniquely

situated to help develop this new set of protocols.[7] As the position is already mechanized

to maneuver and negotiate the crucial terrain between art and policy, there is justification

to propose that the role is already strategically well suited to the task.[8] Aiming at more,

however, than the championing of the largely under recognized tactical potential of the

administrator within the contemporary art context, the interests of this study are also

mirrored in recent scholarship making productive connections between artist-run centres

(and their social and infrastructural histories) and the genre of conceptual art practice

known as institutional critique.[9] With a new generation of Canadian contemporary art

historians and scholars like Cheyanne Turions and Vincent Bonin beginning to push

different agendas, an awareness of institutional critique as an artistic practice as already

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[7]    Situatedness follows from the Feminist scholarship of Donna Haraway, describing the degree to which knowledge is positioned within sites of contextual and relational exchange and understanding, what she calls a Feminist objectivity (Haraway 581)

[8]    Looking at the contributions of the administrator to artist-run culture through the lens of policy development has yield foundational research, such as Clive Robertson's *Policy Matters: Administrations of Art and Culture*. This study owes much to Robertson's influence on how policy affects the cultural by creating conditions of measurement in which results or outcomes can be compared and pragmatically thought-through. Robertson's use of cultural policy as a tool of activism is incorporated in this study as a method of resistance, and strengthens the additional claims for the embodied performative affect that this study asserts for the administrative role.

[9]    Andrea Fraser is often credited with coining the term "institutional critique," using it to describe the methodological influences of Louise Lawler's work in "In and Out of Place" for *Art in America* in 1985 (Fraser, "In and Out" 124; Bonin 54). This etymology has been contested: "'Institutional critique' may have been coined by Benjamin Buchloh in 1989, or in the casual 1980s conversations of students in the Whitney Independent Study program" (Jackson 106). Some say the term emerged earlier via Mel Ramsden, who used the term to describe politicised art in his essay "On Practice" published in 1975 in *The Fox* 1.1(Alberro, *Institutional Critique* 8). That said, the term's origins do not signal the beginnings of institutional critique—historians like Buchloh connect the emerging aesthetic back to early Minimalism in 1960-5, and even further back to Duchamp from the first quarter of the 20th century (Buchloh, "Conceptual" 115).

innate to artist-run centre strategies is being honed.[10] This study builds from these new

beginnings and asserts that the administrator has a relationship to critique as the

performer of the centre's operational alterity. Looking to Turions and Bonin, who are

following in the footsteps of AA Bronson, Diana Nemiroff, Clive Robertson and others in

their investigation of artist-run centre histories, their analyses serve to situate and

stimulate the various critical considerations of the artist-run centres as sites of

investigation.

As an embedded forum for institutional critique within the artist-run centre,

working in support of practices by artists the art administrator in this study is partially a

social actor who performs their administrative context as an embodied negotiation

between art and protocol.[11] Suggesting too that the administrative role in the artist-run

context is in part an analytic agent, the administrator assesses and supports nuance and

alternative approaches to normative (capitalist, hierarchically corporate) socio-political

interactions inside and outside the art institution. This dual conceptual functionalism,

which I call "performing the context" and "diagnostic organizing," works to connect

critical and art historical research with social theories of agency and dynamics of power.

Creating a position which ventures that art administration has the capacity to be

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[10]    Cheyanne Turions is an independent Toronto-based curator and writer, and the Curatorial Assistant at the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery. The writing she shares on her blog (which she prefaces as a "Dialogue around curatorial practice") is just the sort of radical rethinking practice that this study connects to. Vincent Bonin's ground-breaking essay "Here, Bad News Always Arrives Too Late," explores the links between artist-run culture and the artistic practice of institutional critique, and provides this study with a much needed infusion of historical analysis of the Canadian context. To date there has not been further research published that investigates these conceptual art practices in parallel, despite Bonin's consideration that his attempt has "methodological shortcomings" (71).
[11]    Embodiment is used here to refer to the locating of intellectual expression in the gestures and actions made through or with the body. In art discourse this promotes the idea that an artwork as a non-object can instead be understood as a performed process by the artist. These arguments are supported by Maurice Merleau-Ponty who, after Edmund Husserl, proposed the notion of the body as subject, an idea which has been central to theoretical inquiry into the phenomenon of human experience. Influencing philosophers and theorists like Jacques Derrida due to the interest in overcoming mind-body dualism (an early expression of what would later be deemed a target for Derridian-style deconstruction) Merleau-Ponty describes embodiment by stating that "Our constant aim is to elucidate the primary function whereby we bring into existence, for ourselves, or take a hold upon, space, the object or the instrument, and to describe the body as the place where this appropriation occurs" (Merleau-Ponty 178).

reconfigured to spec as contextually responsive, this study follows from the writing of both Julia Bryan-Wilson and Shannon Jackson on the radical articulations of artistic labour, professionalization, and performance, respectively considering the histories of how "art workers strove to bring together their radical politics with their reinvented aesthetic strategies" (Bryan-Wilson, "A Curriculum" 8) where there is an "affinity between artistic labor and social labor" (Jackson 32). This study is also in league with interdisciplinary practices by artists, curators, and critics who are experimenting with ways to approach these blurry lines between art and its institutional ties.

## *Propositional and Irreverent Methods*

It is awareness for how complicated and potentially empirically ethnographic applications of this thesis might be which feeds this study's chosen identity as "propositional." Given the complexities of the framing of the role of art administration herein, it needs to be expressed that a practical response to this proposal's thesis in its current stage of development would likely rely on observing and accounting for the attentions and methods of the individuals performing administrative tasks; an uncertain method with potentially questionable and overly directive policy outcomes associated. I hope to distance this particular study from such associations and therefore avoid a "vulgar culturalism" that reduces multi-faceted relationships and layered processes of art production and presentation to a narrow set of structures based on bureaucratic transactions (Sayer 167). By naming the research as theoretical the intent is to communicate that this is (by necessity) an open field of inquiry.

That said, as the framing of this study recommends, future engagement with this concept of the art administrator as critical agent is a notion that I feel manifests best

within the artist-run centre (although it is also viable in small collective art contexts and

other forms of artist-run culture such as the practices of artist-run spaces in the US and

Europe).[12] Given that the concerns here hope to avoid a prescriptive analysis, I instead

foreground the Foucauldian "apparatus" (as a system of relations of power within

institutions; mechanisms that maintain controls over aspects of social and political

structures) to conceptually align this study with considerations in the broad field of

relations associated to the reassessment of the apparatus that is the artist-run centre. On

the construction of cultural separations between the managed and the unmanaged (such as

the administrative and the aesthetic) in Western democratic society, Michel Foucault's

term apparatus is used in this study in service of his assessment that:

> "... this difference is not one between the purity of the ideal and the disorderly
> impurity of the real, but that in fact there are different strategies which are
> mutually opposed, composed and superposed…This is what gives the resulting
> apparatus (*dispositif*) its solidity and suppleness… the said as much as the
> unsaid…The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established
> between these elements… what I am trying to identify in this apparatus is
> precisely the nature of the connection that can exist…Thus, a particular
> discourse can figure at one time as the programme of an institution, and at
> another it can function as a means of justifying or masking a practice which
> itself remains silent, or as a secondary re-interpretation of this practice, opening
> out for it a new field of rationality." (Foucault, "The Confession" 194-228).

In addition to a Foucauldian discourse analysis, the methodological approach I

am using is one which I describe as an "ethic of irreverence" in that this study takes the

position that there is such a thing as productive impertinence. Directed toward the study

of human interactions and institutional practices that are otherwise not understood as

critical or "mattering" (to use the vernacular of the cultural studies field as conceived by

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[12]     Such comparisons are the subject of the essay and interview compilation *Artist-run spaces: nonprofit collective organizations in the 1960s and 1970s*. Edited by Gabriele Detterer and Maurizio Nannucci, the essays describe a difference between the practices of early centres and contemporary artist-run initiatives. Detterer notes in his introduction entitled "The spirit and culture of artist-run spaces" that today the activities are perhaps less conceptual and more invested in networking and professionalism, which create different working methods and outcomes that potentially result in less experimentation and risk (14). In a review of the book published in the *Journal of Curatorial Studies*, Peter Anderson writes "What is important here is not just the artwork, but the work of making art, or perhaps the way the art emerges in the work, with any residue being a trace of the artwork, rather than the work itself" (Anderson 425).

sociologist Morris Rosenberg), describing my method as irreverent does not mean I intend to disavow the authority/authorities this study challenges.[13] Instead, I utilize the existence of dichotomous opposition and (following Jacques Derrida's "deconstruction") enable marginal observations and challenge the framing of ideas using a tactical irreverence which I define as a provocative, incongruous, yet restrained derision as a form of negotiation. Irreverence in this study is proposed as an approach to deconstruction, where "Deconstruction must neither reframe nor fantasize the pure and simple absence of the frame" (Derrida 33). What this is intended to suggest is that in the intervention of the institution, the institution is not considered irrelevant or displaced, but is instead a matter of a process of making/unmaking. With this strategy the aim is to acknowledge, utilize, yet challenge the socio-political privilege that comes with the right to question authority while conducting any (re)consideration of institutional conditions. In the context of artist-run centre administration, this approach is found in the need to be constantly engaged in a practice of contestation. As a means of resistance, to be irreverent in this context is to probe the gaps and explore the edges of accepted approaches to, and articulations of, institutional structure.

This argument for art administration's reassessment involves forming a position based on one part reiterative historical review of both fields (artist-run centres and institutional critique), and one part proposition for reconfiguring art administration as a new form of specialized practice by looking at other practices that have emerged in the contemporary and artist-run field. By reframing the administrator, this study supports the need for changes to the artist-run centre model. To highlight the artist-centric priorities of

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[13] Originating from theories on self-concept, "mattering" as a construct was introduced by sociologist Morris Rosenberg in 1981. Mattering theory explores one's perceived importance to others. Exploring how the self "I" perceived the importance of the other "You" Rosenberg defines mattering as a motive, an encouraging sense of feeling significant in the world around you (Rosenberg).

the artist-run centre operations, I call upon administrators to aid and abet potential

strategic organizational transformations and (at the same time) help realign the terms of

empowerment from which the taxonomy of "artist-run" was first derived.[14]

## *Positioning the Administrative Narrative*

Rather than fall into a prescriptive empirical study, this inquiry is preliminary

and exploratory and hopes to encourage and support further research. The interest I have

in expanding the valuation of the field of art administrative is in many respects a way to

build a sociological reading of how theories of art's autonomy are generally disconnected

from the experiential notion of "art as a way of life." Not to be confused with art therapy,

nor with "art for art's sake" such a focus on the significance of context and process is

presented here as an essential consideration of the social art experience, and echoes what

both sociologist Pierre Bourdieu says about art, "In a word, it must educate" (78), and

what art historian Claire Bishop has called "a *return* to the social, part of an ongoing

history of attempts to rethink art collectively" (3). In Bourdieu's philosophic analysis, he

works to reconcile the influences on external social structures in light of subjective

experiences of the individual. Such interests resonate with the analysis in this study.

Sociologist and social geographer Nigel Thrift has written about the importance

of the space of "everyday social life, a flow of responsive and relational activities that are

joint, practical-moral and situated in character and constitute a new understanding 'of the

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[14]  As this study will show, the artist-run centre is no longer understood to be radically challenging social and political conventions of self-organization and autonomous governance. Such activities defined the zeitgeist of the era in which artist-run centres originated (the 1960s-1970s). Instead, this study supports the regeneration of the model of artist-run in the spirit of what AA Bronson has called "a position of service, not only to the artists' community but to the general public" (Bronson, "Transfiguration" 40). Adding that "The artist is facilitating culture, the growth of culture at a local level, and, through networking, at a national level" Bronson has called for artist-run centres to take up this task that "requires a humbling, a humility, which is not foreign to the Canadian artist" saying that "While the American artist takes on the role of the hero, the Canadian artist takes on the role of the humble servant" (40).

third kind'" (20).[15] A space for joint action in which agency is "understood as both the

production of action and of what counts as action (and of actors and of what counts as

actors)" there is a concern for new value classifications "in which the bounds between

subject and object become less easily drawn, both because the inside and the outside of

the subject are seen as folded into each other" (2). A follower of Pierre Bourdieu whose

writings on the dynamics of power within society are pivotal to this study alongside the

work of Foucault and Judith Butler, Thrift's work is buttressed by the thought of these

prominent theorists in ways similar to my own. In light of this, the narrative I propose

reflects a need to better integrate the lived practices of mediating social and political

powers in the artist-run centres' culture of discourse and exchange.[16]

By focusing on the artist-run context, and aiming to create alternative

conceptualizations of value for administrative methods, I argue that reconfiguring and

understanding the significance of organizing for art has a lot to contribute toward the

future of artist-run culture. The origins and trajectory of artist-run centres as a movement,

presented as parallel to the development of institutional critique, teases out considerations

of inspiration and influence for artists to both reflect upon and act to improve the

conditions of their arts communities and meet infrastructural needs within their cultural

and social contexts. That is where this inquiry must begin in order to project ahead and

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[15]    Thrift's concept of 'non-representational theory', developed along with his colleagues J.D. Dewsbury (University of Bristol) and Derek McCormack (University of Oxford), is important as a potential thread of future incorporation. As a theory of practice, 'non-representational theory' focuses on the importance of embodied actions as the force behind how human and nonhuman knowledge is formed. Thrift's central concern for context reflects its role as a determining agent to knowledge creation, where "contexts are not passive; they are productive time-spaces which have to be produced" (43). In light of this study, Thrift's analysis can be considered as an approach that takes the tensions posed by a reconfiguration of art administration as a performative role to be a problem of "ontology, epistemology, the subject and subject-object relations [that are] radically contextual" (41).

[16]    Bishop's analysis, contrasting Thrift, doesn't look to Bourdieu but instead to Jacques Rancière who is not a follower of the work of Bourdieu despite their conceptually connecting spheres of study.  As outlined in Bishop's *Artifical Hells*, Rancière focuses on the aesthetic of the sensory to guide social participation instead of a Bourdieuian moral ethic that he claims preserves the status-quo (Bishop 38). I note this here as a useful cue for future comparison, as the social and participatory theory differences between Rancière's aesthetic ethic and Bourdieu's embodied ethic could prove a fruitful field for work on the productive practice of an aesthetic of art administration.

consider what reconceptualizations might come next. In order to introduce this thread, I first need to offer the following positioning of my own personal narrative as an art administrator before I can begin to present my analysis of the greater critical and art historical narratives that locate this study. I am doing this because my experiences within artist-run culture are what led me to pursue this line of inquiry, so it is important to situate myself in relation to the practices I am proposing to connect.

## "*Aren't art administrators just failed artists?*"

In 2003-4, I was enrolled in the Arts and Cultural Management–Certification Program at Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton, Alberta. On spring break, I visited a friend in Victoria, British Columbia, and as it happened came to meet her friend, Max. While seated at the kitchen table drinking tea in the mid-February west coast sunshine, Max and I exchanged introductions. All these years later, I don't recall Max's last name, but to be honest, I also really don't care to. I vaguely remember that he was either a filmmaker or a musician, and had (under no uncertain terms) an air of opinionated indiscretion about him. Proof of this came when, after engaging in a brief chat about my studies, Max asked me the rather haughty question presented above. Plainly calling my ambitions subordinate, what he had suggested (indirectly but we can assume he had full awareness of the implications) was that no "real" artist would side step their individual artistic practice unless they lacked resolve and therefore had succumbed to failure. A rude dismissal to be sure, I remember that the comment hung in the air awkwardly as I blinked once, then twice, before calmly shrugging it off. Breaking the tension, I laughed and recall thinking "what does he know?" I was an artist, I eventually said in reply. I just needed to get a job, too.

Having a job and being an artist were to me, at that time, not connected expressions. As a young person growing up in a (pre-internet) rural setting, I had limited exposure to information about the art world like that in New York (save for one twelfth grade school trip to Soho). At the time, my understanding of art and employment was that they linked to different kinds of outcomes and exchanges and had different relationships to money and motivation. Looking back, my perspective on the separation of the artist from employment and commerce was, admittedly, extremely naïve. Of course I had previously engaged with the systems of support for artistic presentation via galleries and museums, but my understanding of these systems as having capacity to be alternative to the product-driven object-oriented sales economy had not found an anchor yet, as it would in the artist-run centre.

My interest in art administration arose circumstantially. Prior to enrolling in the arts management program I had been living in Victoria, developing my own visual arts practice. During this time I discovered (as many young artists do) that there were few exhibition opportunities for emerging artists who were practicing outside of the university and commercial art context. I knew of Open Space, Victoria's artist-run centre, but it seemed out of reach. Instead I began to exhibit and produce shows for my friends and other artists in experimental, pop-up, and community arts related spaces that were more immediately available on short-notice. These experiences — co-producing five exhibitions and events in the year 2002 —eventually led me to invest my energies in pursuing organizing as a program of study and field of employment. In other words, I became invested in pursuing organizing as a profession to get me out of the hospitality service industry that had supported me and my art practice until then. As event production and the variety of creative tasks associated were also rewarding to me

socially, it seemed fitting to pursue organizing as a potential career and I admit that it

never occurred to me that supporting art production and presentation was a lesser

ambition or in conflict with being an artist. That is until Max asserted it. Today, having

studied the history of artist-run centres and heard the general coming-of-age tales of

artists who confronted similar questions about art-making and their own economic

survival, I recognize the familiarity in my own trajectory.

I was lucky to find my first art administrative position immediately following my

program's six-week long placement within the organizational context of my choice — an

internship at Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre, located in my hometown of Kingston,

Ontario. After learning about the operations and programming policies of the non-profit

artist-run world as an intern, I was hired as the Program Director for the organization.

Headed into the role (and my first professional paying position) my understanding of the

field of art administration comprised a wide variety of tasks, including: financial, human

resource, and facilities management; programming development; marketing; public

relations; event coordination; policy development; strategic planning; board relations;

and, fundraising. In the Program Directorship position however, which I held from 2004

until 2007 (as the only full-time staff member), I not only managed these administrative

operations but also worked in support of the exhibitions programming and served as grant

writer, exhibitions and publications designer, occasional curator, municipal arts advocate,

and lecturer; roles for which I had no prior training but (thankfully) learned how to

perform on the fly. In collaboration with a part-time assistant and the Board of Directors I

facilitated the presentation of over 36 exhibitions and more than 50 events including artist

talks, screenings, concerts and the like. I worked long hours, and found the job to be

personally rewarding and incredibly multifaceted (despite being not especially well paid).[17]

What I came to observe however, and which feeds into the context of this study, was that within the contemporary artist-run world the art administrative position is not well understood. Not characterized as a specialist position of expertise like that of the curator or critic, the administrator is more or less understood as responsible for the rudimentary bureaucratic conventions and policies of the institution; tasks treated with about as much warmth as one might expect in light of how AA Bronson called bureaucracy "the curse of the artist-run space" ("Humiliation" 36). Clashing completely with the experience of the position as I knew it — as a dynamic and intensely creative, collaborative role in confusing contrast to the moniker "artist-run" — I took note of the other specialist categorizations that the artist-run centre endorsed and began to comprehend, and then create, my own self-deterministic response.

I have come to know and love the artist-run centre, and my anecdotal narrative should not be misconstrued as a lack of recognition for the privilege of being employed in support of artists and the appreciation of art by audiences. Yet, in the context of my role within Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre, at what was the half-way point of my tenure, my sense of artistic identity was in flux. I found myself drawn to expressing my disenfranchisement and need for boundaries, and felt a desire to move away from my

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[17]　The level of remuneration, statistically, for working in artist-run centres varies between organizations. According to a 2011 study commissioned by the Canada Council for the Arts, the average artist-run centre employee (both artistic and administrative staff) earns $26,000 per year for a 30 hour work week (Canada 50). To disparage any stable employment income within the non-profit contemporary arts sector might seem crass and obnoxious if not simply over privileged given the low-level of income available to the average professional artist, but it is worth noting that in general the organizational culture of the artist-run centre is not sustainable without the contributions of unpaid overtime and volunteer labour — a fact noted in two recent studies: the "National Compenzation Study – 2009 Update for Management and Administration in Not-for-Profit Arts Organizations" (published by the Cultural Human Resources Council); and, a study entitled "Recommended Employment Standards and Human Resource Management Tools in Canadian Artist-Run Media Arts Organizations" (published in 2011 by Independent Media Arts Alliance/ Alliance des arts médiatiques indépendants).

organizational position of non-artist and toward a sense of myself as an "artist

administrator." At that time, I was coming to understand the role of art administration in

the artist-run centre as a form of service provision — or what Robertson has called

"caring-through-governance" (ix), following Foucault's "caring for".[18] Taking the form

of two collaborative performance-based projects in 2006, in hindsight my responses each

promoted the notion of art administration as socially "performative," and the artist-run

centre as a generative forum of organizing art as a contextually responsive social

expression.[19]

• **The Artel: Arts Accommodations and Venue Co-op** (a collaborative community

development project). After initiating and creating the project structure and concept, I

became a member of this collective of emerging artists formed to operate a new artist-run

house complete with a public event/exhibition venue. As an artist collective, the

productive output of the group took shape through experimental administrative processes

in the context of weekly/bi-weekly meetings; processes demonstrated by the presentation

of regular programming and exhibitions by local and visiting artists and musicians. The

collective's collaborative efforts also foregrounded cooperative ethics, consensus-based

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[18]    'Caring for' is at the root of Foucault's thought, and is featured as a foundation of the majority of his works on moral rationality and agency. In his lecture (1981) "The Hermeneutics of the Subject," Foucault claims: "with this notion of *epimeleia heautou* [care of the self] we have a body of work defining a way of being, a standpoint, forms of reflection, and practices with make it an extremely important phenomenon not just in the history of representations, notions, or theories, but in the history of subjectivity itself" (*Hermeneutics* 11). Placing 'caring for' at the juncture between the Socratic 'care for oneself' and 'know oneself', Foucault explains caring for oneself as an attitude toward oneself but also toward others in the world —arguing that to meditate and reflect upon one's own perspective is to engage practices of care and perhaps realise an ideal state of being (even if only temporarily).
[19]    In Chapter 5, art administration is outlined as a practice that is "performative." The performative or "performativity" is credited to J. L. Austin as a theory about particular words that, when uttered, function as actions (rather than as symbolic descriptions of actions) (Austin 6, 8). Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick elaborates on Austin's theory by extending it to include whole utterances, sentences, and phrases as performative, with each harbouring contextual potential as "transformative performatives" which create an instant change of personal or contextual status (Sedgwick 3). Judith Butler corroborates these arguments that all communication is performative and contributes to the construction of identities as caused by actions, behaviors, gestures, and speech (Butler, *Gender* 19).

decision-making, and a socially supportive mandate.[20]  I remained in the collective until

August 2008, and the project has maintained operations since 2006.[21]

- ***figurehead: an exercise in re-claiming publicly-funded identity through multi-tasking and time management*** (a performance series). Premised on the notion that the

public identity of 'Program Director' had colonized and usurped my sense of personal

identity as an artist and community member; I performed as a mascot of myself. An

artist-friend named Vincent Perez was asked to create a costume which I could wear

while performing my duties as an employee of the artist-run centre. Produced as a box-

like construction onto which four portrait photographs of the front/back/left/right sides of

my head were affixed, the piece was performed three times over the course of one month

(January - February 2006), and took place in three different institutional contexts/

configurations: First as a guest lecturer at Queen's University, for which the performance

was entitled "Professionalism in the Arts"; next in the context of a board meeting at

Modern Fuel, for which the performance was entitled "Program Direction"; and, finally,

for a performance entitled "Promotional walk, 'Valentine's Day fundraiser,'" an act

which landed an image of the work on the cover of the local newspaper (see Fig. 1).

While I don't expect the existence of these projects alone will serve as testament

to the validity of the proposal that this study makes, what their presentation is intended to

do is to illustrate two divergent types of performative response that an embodied art

administrative practice might take. While artist-run centre administrators have arguably

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[20]    Kevin Rogers' article on The Artel (2014) speaks to the project's power of "collective gesture." Characterizing its continued operations, "there is a steadiness to the organization, but one that has within its structure a place for change: the result is a dynamic tension between 'administration and experimentation'" (Rogers, 2). As The Artel operates with a fluidity that often borders on utter chaos or at least precarity, that adaptability to the mechanisms of policy is the collective's strongest tool which has given the project a sense of itself as social and invested in the relationships which maintain its connection to the Kingston emerging artist community.
[21]    On the project website, the rationale is described: "The Artel collective and venue came into being as a direct result of the efforts of a group of emerging artists from Kingston, who sought council with others whose ambitions and interests included creative communion and production with other artists, outreach to the community, and general support for 'art as a way of life'" (The Artel-About Us).

**Figure 1:**
Gjen Snider, figurehead*: an exercise in re-claiming publicly-funded identity through multi-tasking and time management*, 2006. Performance series, documentation: "Promotional walk, 'Valentine's Day fundraiser'" February 14, 2006. [22]

been essential to the artist-run model of contemporary art presentation for more than forty

years, the context of these two projects points to a culture of tension that (in my

experience) hovers between artists and administrators. Perhaps due to an operational

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[22]    In the context of my artistic practice between 2002-2012, I went by the name Gjen Snider. The use of an alternative spelling of my name Jennifer was yet another play on reaffirming a sense of identity and was, in essence, a long-standing experiment in pseudonym use. Gjen was coined as a reaction to the popularity and prevalence of the name Jennifer within my social circles at the time.

ethos that maintains art and the bureaucratic are distinct, even oppositional, at its worst

the latter has seemed to represent a threat to artistic freedom.

A side-effect of this study, perhaps, is that in acknowledging this strain there is

an opportunity. For example, Robertson contends that "there remains a suspicion of self-

administrative responsibilities and bureaucratic functions" that he argues "are inherent if

the project of turning art from a commodity to a service is to be seen as a useful

adjustment" (2). Following from, if anything, the decades of relatively peaceful

coexistence, one would think that artists might have grown to trust their particular kind of

administrators and, channelling Foucauldian wisdom, know that it is possible for a citizen

to work with government but not work for government while expressing solidarity with

alternatives (Donzelot 173).

While other professional roles and forms of institutional expertise have found

support within the context of the artist-run centre, like curator and critic, the role of

administrator has not received equal mobility, flexibility, or acknowledgment as a

specialized role. This statement is one I assert based on observations of how rare it is to

hear or read of the role of art administration approached as a radical practice in and of

itself, or as a field in which its practitioners are considered experts.[23] To approach from

the side of the artist however, the "hyphenated" artist (artist-curator, artist-administrator,

artist-educator) is one area where there are more recent exceptions. As argued by Mariane

Bourcheix-Laporte, the "artist-as" position as an expanding area is "not only due to the

growth of artists' professionalization since the late 1960s, but is also attributable to the

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[23]    Of university-level training programs in Arts Administration my research found only one, Columbia University's Arts Administration program, which used a language of social value for the art and artists. Indicating an awareness beyond or besides the economic product-centic interest, Columbia's program overview is as follows: "The program in Arts Administration (ARAD) encourages integration of all the arts, while focusing on the role of the artist, and the missions and activities of arts and cultural agencies, collectives, and institutions. The program reflects the conviction that the management of cultural institutions and enterprises is a profession that requires both creativity and commitment and that, at its best, the profession has a positive impact on the quality of artistic life" (Program in Arts Administration).

creative potential that lies perhaps in the very median space that hyphenation procures: in

the zone of mediation between multiple points of interests, abilities, and duties"

("Interrogating").

To make such a claim however — that the social value and impact of art

administrators is habitually overlooked — requires clarification on what these activities

are and how the responsibilities of those performing "art administration" in the artist-run

centre context differs from the art administration identified in this study. Specifically, the

administrator here is named as such not because they are the only professional doing the

administrative and managerial labour (certainly curators engage in administrative labour,

as do many artists), but because there is (generally speaking) no significant artistic or

intellectual prestige automatically associated to the role by which to otherwise identify its

significance (as there is in the role of artist, curator, or critic). Raising this issue to clarify

and differentiate the administrator in this study from the contemporary curator,

administration as it is identified in the artist-run centre and in this study is as much a role

as it is a type of identity that is seemingly inextricably institutionally-bound.[24] This

comparison of the curator as distinct from the art administrator is explored in more depth

in Chapter 5, and is done so to point to the curator as an example of a non-artist role that

is not burdened with the same ideological oppositions that (I argue) reside between art

administrators and artists.

The administrator presented in this study is ready to be repositioned in the hopes

of continuing to advocate for the artist-run centres decentralist ambitions. Fundamentally

I raise the issue of the identity of the curator versus the art administrator to note that the

lines of privilege and labour still heavily tint the art world's hierarchical power structures.

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[24]     Noting as a point of contrast the ability of a curator to be both in-house or independent whereas an
administrator outside the institution itself it perhaps at best a professional consultant.

With support from those like Cheyanne Turions who suggests that "like any ecology, artist-run culture requires periods of growth and periods of destruction," I think that artist-run culture is set for new considerations and configurations of its apparatus, with the administrator as both an agent on the inside and an advocate for agency outside (Turions).

## *Proceedings: chapter summaries*

The chapters that follow will present further detail on the art historical context and theoretical framework of this study, and will offer analysis and elaboration of the key points I have established in this introduction.  Composed of two interwoven conceptual domains — represented loosely by the opening epigraphs by Turions, and Claxton and Willard — the theoretical investment in both the performed and the pragmatic together build viable alternatives to the conventional model of art administrator as bureaucrat. With an alternative theoretical framework comprised of two overlapping areas of consideration, in this framework art administration is both a mechanism of critique and evaluation and capable of enabling performative expression as an embodied relationship to protocol.

An ambition of this study is to reflect upon art administration and consider how to activate it as a supportive apparatus to challenge and refocus what Jackson calls the ambiguity of social art forms "that measure artistic radicality by its degree of anti-institutionality" (Jackson 14). To break from assumptions about which forms and actions can help "art practices contribute to inter-dependent social imagining" this study is interested in disrupting the notion that working within societally-structured conditions of obligation and care (also known as administration and management) is oppositional to

aesthetic and political terms of freedom and expression by focusing on how, as Jackson says, they "in fact depend on each other" (14). The following four chapters each address a component of this ambition.

In Chapter 2, "Paradox and Policy: Artist-Run Centres and Institutional Critique" I present a review of pertinent literature, scholarly research, and historical profiles that address the subject of the paradox of artistic agency in light of the institutionalization of art and art presentation. Particularly, as this subject pertains to two central movements in artist activities arising in the late 1960s and 1970s — namely the development of artist-run spaces (artist-run centres in Canada) and the emergence of the genre of artistic practice known as institutional critique — this chapter will situate both attendant histories before correlating each to the conceptual and social turns in critical art discourses; debates which influence and continue to impact understandings of each movement's productive arc.

In Chapter 3, "Diagnostic organizing: What *kind* am I? What *kind* are we?" I argue for the situating of the artist-run administrator as an agent of what I call "diagnostic organizing;" a focus on generating dialogue on and around an institution's social activities and expressing its political power. As a taxonomic dialogue on institutional power encouraging the blurring of boundaries between the social, political, and historical, practising institutional critique as method is a concept explored via methodological overlaps between artist practices in Canada with European and American artists known for their works of institutional critique. Paying particular attention to the work of artist Andrea Fraser, I discuss the development of her style of institutional critique and self-reflexive performance and writing. Arguing that a reading of her work draws close relationships to an affective reflexive experience of the role of the administrator in the

institution, I locate the art administrator in relation to Fraser's practice to speak to the ways in which administration in small art presentation settings inherently walks a line of negotiation between the freedoms of art making and the procedure and policies of bureaucratic operation.

In Chapter 4, "Organizing Art: Maneuvers of Policy and Negotiation" I pay attention to the history of cultural policy development in Canada that may have influenced the performative communication and gestural connections between institutions and individuals within the Canadian artist-run art world. Leading to my argument that there are bold connections and comparisons to be made by contextualizing the role of art administration in the artist-run organization, I present policy as an opportunity to explore the origins of artist-run administrative identity within policy development. Drawing connections to the notion of the professionalization of artists and cultural workers, I also consider the emergence and domination of the curator in organizing art practices.

Building to Chapter 5, "Performing the Context: Kunstverein Toronto's Performative Gestures," the non-profit nomadic exhibition and event production collective Kunstverein Toronto is profiled and the concept of "performing the context" is articulated as a process of self-reflexive exploration in carrying out administrations as organizing practices of hospitality and support. I follow the work on performance and embodied social support by Shannon Jackson, after Judith Butler, and I consider the networked connections between institutions and individuals within the art world. In pointing to bold connections for development that compare and associate administration to participatory/social art forms, I argue for this crossover by dovetailing Kunstverein Toronto's application with the theories of "performativity" supported by theorists J. L. Austin and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. Asserting that the facilitations and administrations

of Kunstverein Toronto are evident in their language and gestural communications, in this chapter I contextualize the role of the Co-Directors as performative and decentering. I also argue that they approach an experimental form of power displacement that uses relationships and recognizes the labour of organizing as an investigative social art metric. Through these interests I argue that the art administrator is both a method and a conceptual touchstone that helps to ascertain the collective sensibility of the institution by fostering an awareness of said institution as a social and cultural context.

In the concluding Chapter 6, I return to the terms of this propositional study and summarize how I have approached the definition of this new conceptual practice and institutional analysis. I take stock of the arenas activated by this proposal for artist-run administration as a performative practice of embodied institutional critique and note those avenues which exceed the scope of this particular study. Re-marking new possibilities for future development, the concluding notes evaluate potential paths for further investigation and analysis.

# *Chapter 2*
# Literature review

### *Paradox and Policy:*
### *Artist-Run Centres and Institutional Critique*

Within the field of art historical and critical analysis of cultural policy in Canada, the history and practices of the artist-run centre has not been the subject of extensive published scholarly consideration. As a step toward the amelioration of this circumstance, this review incorporates different areas of scholarship, historical profiles, and theoretical fields which overlap and correspond to a specific facet of artist-run administration that this study illuminates: the ongoing paradoxical conditions for artists who seek to define and determine the directions for their artistic practices regardless of institutionalized infrastructures for art production, presentation, and preservation.

As this study considers the parallel developments of the Canadian artist-run centre and the artist practice of institutional critique, the particular paradox being proposed is one born from similar tensions explored by each. The alternative logics, arguments, and motivations within artist-run centres and institutional critique each challenge the status quo. Through their methods, paradox arises as a result of mutual dependencies on the continued dominance of that which they oppose. An assertion I argue in subsequent chapters, here paradox is discussed through the review of materials that document the origins of artist-run centres and practices that run parallel to artist-run culture. Presented alongside materials that chart the trajectory that the genre of institutional critique has taken since the 1960s, this assessment transitions to a consideration of the bigger picture of conceptual art and social art practices that have

contextualized both artist-run centre politics and institutional critique over the last fifty

years. I conclude by returning to the artist-run context to account for some of the existing

research that considers ongoing tensions between theory and practice (or cultural policy

and the social/relational) in the context of artist-run centres as established institutions.


## *Social Subject: Agency, identity, and paradox of critique*

To critique the institution is to encounter paradox. Institutions shape and regulate

society in the conventional sense; an apparent and layered structure of social, economic,

and political territories and relationships that exercise profound sway over "souls and

lives" (Foucault, "Governmentality" 87).  Foucault claims that "power is not an

institution… it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a

particular society" (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* 76). As Foucault's scholarship is

dedicated to the illumination of the workings of institutional structures and to exploring

ways to dislocate their impact, in both his writings and lectures, he analyzes the history of

governed forms of social control. Identifying the general generative outcome as

"governmentality" Foucault defines this as a condition characterised by the collective

impact of institutions; processes, analyses, reflections, calculations and strategies that

enable a particular yet complex form of power to emerge, as administered through the

social subject (Foucault, "Governmentality" 102; Rabinow 229).

In much of his work, Foucault notes that the individual citizen is made into a

subject (the base unit) of an ethical condition of moral agency;[25] a site of debate about

cause and effect and the interdependence of the relationship between the notions of Self

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[25]    In a 1983 interview, Foucault replied to a question about ethics and interpreting the genealogy of the subject (in the Foucauldian-sense, subject as a technique of the self rather than an origin, after Nietzsche), stating: "Three domains of genealogy are possible. First, a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to truth through which we constitute ourselves as subjects of knowledge; second, a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to a field of power through which we constitute ourselves as subjects acting on others; third, a historical ontology in relation to ethics through which we constitute ourselves as moral agents" (Foucault, "On the Genealogy" 262).

and Other.[26] In his efforts to critique and move beyond such Cartesian dualism, Foucault

deconstructs the modern subject and redirects the concept of agency from residing within

the individual to instead seeing the individual subject as a site of exchange: "Power is

everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere"

(Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* 93). By illuminating the inhibiting restrictions placed

on individual autonomy via external and internalized programs of power that structure

and self-regulate as a means of social control, Foucault's work invigorates questions of

self-knowledge and reflexivity. He explores the underlying assumptions that feed

discourse and the categorization of behaviour. Moreover, he describes how we develop

relationships with power and its representation by defining ourselves according to what

we're not.[27]

In her book *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics* (2011), Shannon

Jackson engages Foucault's theories of the modern subject by establishing a vocabulary

that acknowledges the role of infrastructural support in art-making. She argues that the

opportunity to further develop conceptual and socially-experimental artistic practices

depends upon the recognition of how profoundly interdisciplinary and interconnected

infrastructure is in social and performance-based practices. Her study focuses on the

social as decidedly political, drawing from Foucault and Butler to argue that power is

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[26]    Foucault conceives of the Self as a conglomeration of different ways that regulating culture makes people into subjects, and/or encourages people to make subjects of themselves. He explains ways in which processes of relating to self, history, culture, and the social other objectifies the human being, making them subjects that are divided inside or divided from others (or both). Examples are the categories mad and sane, sick and healthy, criminals as bad people and law abiding citizens as good people (Foucault, "Afterword" 208).

[27]    See Foucault's work in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the College de France 1981-82* (Frederic Gros, ed. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005); *The History of Sexuality* (1978. New York: Random House, 1990); *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Routledge, 1989); the 1977 interview with Foucault "The Confession of the Flesh," in *Power/Knowledge Selected Interviews and Other Writings* (Colin Gordon, ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980).  Analysis of his work is also broad, including *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, eds. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983); *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Trans. Rosi Braidotti, revised Colin Gordon. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); and, *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984, vol. 1, Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (Paul Rabinow, ed. London: Allen Lane, 1997).

productive and subjugation is necessary to the formation of individual expression in the complex social and affective sphere (33). Citing Butler, whose early work foregrounds Foucault's tactics to decentre individual identity to develop her persuasive theory of gender identity as performed, Jackson uses Butler's theories of identity to articulate the formation of the social Other. Butler has described the configuration of the Other in terms of gender and language, based upon her work in feminist theory, and on gender and queer identity in *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies That Matter* (1993). Butler has also acknowledged Jackson's work and the use of her theories to consider the representation of all identities as socially constructed and interdependent (Butler, "When gesture").

In addition to Foucault, Butler is also influenced by Jacques Derrida and his concept of "différance". Her theories encourage the understanding of identity, including gender, as performing "that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains" (Butler, *Bodies* xii).[28] Both Foucault's and Butler's arguments attend to the impacts of a discursive network of interdependent relationships and rituals that (in theory) establish jurisdictions which then (in practice) permit forms of regulation over the social and political Other. By tracing the political origins of universalistic thinking and analyzing social conditioning through representation, Foucault, Derrida, and Butler speak to the manner in which institutional forms of power are exerted through the individual. Though all go to great lengths to insist that subjugation is not unproductive,

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[28]   In *Bodies That Matter: On the discursive limits of 'sex'*, Butler follows Derrida (and also Luce Irigaray) on the subject of the Self and Other: "For both Derrida and Irigaray, it seems, what is excluded from this binary is also produced by it in the mode of exclusion and has no separable or fully independent existence as an absolute outside. A constitutive or relative outside is, of course, composed of a set of exclusions that are nevertheless internal to that system as its own nonthematizable necessity. It emerges within the system as incoherence, disruption, a threat to its own systematicity" (Bodies 13). To mark the occasion of Derrida's death, Butler wrote the following commemoration: "This term he wrote as 'différance', not only to mark the way that signification works – one term referring to another, always relying on a deferral of meaning between signifier and signified – but also to characterise an ethical relation, the relation of sexual difference, and the relation to the Other. If some readers thought that Derrida was a linguistic constructivist, they missed the fact that the name we have for something, for ourselves, for an other, is precisely what fails to capture the referent (as opposed to making or constructing it)" (Butler, "Jacques Derrida").

each express a sense that systemic interdependence is necessary to the formulation of the

individual subject (Jackson 36, 104).

## *Canada's artist-run culture and relationship to the State*

> And yet we can and do exercise freedoms that are not acceptable to the state,
> and these are forms of dissent, and even potentially forms of revolution. […]
> On the one hand, the state should protect the freedom of expression; on the other
> hand, there is always the possibility of freedom of expression that does not
> depend upon the paternalistic protection of the state. Democracies depend upon
> this paradox. (Butler, "Performing")

In the Canadian context, the emergence of artist-run culture through the artist-run

centres provides a historical framework for the consideration of the paradoxical tensions

between theory and practice. As we know, artist-run centres arose in the late 1960s and

spread across Canada in the 1970s-1990s. Though the peak figure was over one hundred

centres in the 1990s, numbers have declined to around sixty registered incorporated non-

profit artist-run centres active today.

Artist-run centres arose as collectives as part of a social movement of

ideologically countercultural, anti-authoritarian, anti-institutional ambitions, which then

quite quickly confronted economic pressures and government interests (Turions;

Nemiroff 183). Federal cultural policy intervened in artists' activities with the intent to

involve these artist-spaces in a national cultural policy investment that steered the

collective drive into non-profit incorporated institutions. A history that is explored in

depth in later chapters, the general understanding is that the state's involvement in the

affairs of artist-run centres is a reflection of the broader scope of arts and culture in

Canada as an interconnected national scene primarily tethered together by economic

frameworks and impact value measurements.

This history is investigated in resources like *Capital Culture: A Reader on Modernist Legacies, State Institutions and the Value(s) of Art* (2000), edited by Jody Berland and Shelley Hornstein and published as part of a centenary celebration of the work of Canadian economic and communications theorist Harold Innis. The essays in this collection consider the relationships between Canada's "nationalism and aesthetic ideologies, cultural and economic frameworks for government policy" (2). Furthermore, with essays framed as an exploration of "the relationship between national cultures and the globalization of cultural marketplaces, or more broadly, the perceived relationship between culture, space and economics as a whole," contributions also ponder how "all these have been radically altered" (2).

One such essay is Michael Dorland's "Policying Culture: Canada, State Rationality and the Governmentalization of Communication", which contrasts the impact of national cultural policy with local practices and processes of identity formation. He provides a Foucauldian assessment and considers how Canada's style of governmentality has produced a controlled, moderately absolutist state. With policies supporting apparatuses that conflate institutions and culture indiscriminately, Dorland argues that the Canadian cultural economy is unique. Its intertwining of civil society through funding and arts subsidies programs is considerably different than other Western nations (147). Dorland notes that there has not been enough research done on the subject of Canadian cultural policy to determine the qualitative impact that economic protocols and procedures have had on the development of the arts (149). Moreover, Dorland refers to Innis on how the discursive context of Canadian cultural policy has largely been based on "panic literature rather than exhaustive studies of the field as a whole" (qtd. in Dorland, 149).

AA Bronson has been a significant voice on the subject of artist-run culture in

Canada and one that, while not panicky, has certainly been protective of the early

ambitions of the artist-run cultural scene. As an example of a Canadian interdisciplinary

artist whose practice intertwines artist-run actions and policy-making, Bronson is best

known as a member of the artist collective General Idea — with Felix Partz and Jorge

Zontal (active from 1967-1994) — who created Art Metropole as a work of art in 1974

(now one of Canada's oldest and most successful artist-run centres).

A mentoring voice on the Canadian artist-run culture scene since the early days,

Bronson wrote and organized several narrative anthologies and retrospectives of initial

artist-run centre development across the country. In 1983, he co-edited the publication

*Museums by Artists* with Peggy Gale (published by Art Metropole, which accompanied

the touring exhibition of the same name).[29] His opening contribution, provocatively titled

"The Humiliation of the Bureaucrat: Artist-Run Centres as Museums by Artists," has

become a signature document of early artist-run centre ambition. In it, he characterizes

the artist-run movement as a multifaceted response to the impact of cultural policy on

artist's practices *vis-à-vis* museums: "We have tried to evoke, rather than analyze, that

multiple vision of overlapping realities resulting from the response of the artist to this

cultural frame, their attempts to distance, engage, alter and simulate - that is, deconstruct

- as an act of consciousness" (*Museums* 7). In 1987, Bronson organized the exhibition

and co-authored the catalogue for *From Sea to Shining Sea: Artist-Initiated Activity in*

*Canada, 1939-1987* (co-authored with Renée Baert, René Blouin, Peggy Gale, and Glenn

Lewis), a presentation at The Power Plant in Toronto which aspired to profile Canada's

history of artist-initiated activity after World War II, including artist-run centres. In the

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[29] The exhibition was presented at the Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto), Musee D'Art Contemporain (Montreal), and the Glenbow Museum (Calgary), in 1983.

catalogue, Bronson shares that "As an artist writing about museums by artists, about my own history, which is a history beginning in 1968, a Canadian story with elaborately Canadian characters dreaming the Canadian dream of one community, that is a network of communities, sea to sea..." and encapsulates the vision he and others had for an artist-run centre movement to connect artists across the vast landmass of the country (Bronson *From Sea*).

An early devotee to the importance of authoring histories of the formative years of the Canadian art scene, Bronson has produced evidence that, as a movement, artist-run culture was created and directed by artists, and not just through their art. Bronson has focused on the importance of the periodicals that were published and distributed by artists, collectives, and artist-run galleries. As one example, General Idea produced *FILE Megazine* from 1972 to 1989 as a visual arts magazine. While *FILE* was created as a subversive alternative to the mainstream mass-media (an early precursor to the punk zine culture of the 1970s and 1980s), periodicals did more than circulate countercultural sentiment and artist projects in these early years. From 1976 to 1995, *Parallélogramme* magazine (later *Mix: the magazine of artist-run culture* from 1995-2007) was issued regularly (mainly in Toronto) by ANNPAC/RACA (Association of National Non-Profit Artists' Centres/ Regroupement d'artistes des centres alternatifs). Published upwards of six times a year, *Parallélogramme* provided artists (and ANNPAC/RACA) with a vehicle to support and distribute critical writings and reviews of programming and policy development information about artist-run centres to artists, arts workers, and policy-makers across the country and internationally.

Though in its lifetime it became a more independent source, at its outset *Parallélogramme* was a reflection of the identity of the artist-run centres as a network

and collective movement. Under the influence of ANNPAC/RACA and its
representatives from centres across Canada, *Parallélogramme* often circulated materials
pertinent to the representation of artist-run centres within cultural policy and government
spheres. *Parallélogramme* was an important component of ANNPAC/RACA's voice as
an advocacy channel. As the validity of ANNPAC/RACA as a national voice for artist-
run cultural interests waned as the years passed and the artist-run movement changed,
eventually ANNPAC/RACA was dissolved (in 1994) and *Parallélogramme* ceased being
published (reformed as *Mix* shortly thereafter) (Robertson 21).[30]

During its period of facilitating the sharing of critical views on matters of policy
and representation, *Parallélogramme* was a significant source of support for the advocacy
of artist-centric interests. Another important Canadian periodical was *FUSE* magazine
(originally *Centrefold*, launched in 1976, published in Toronto), which maintained
circulation/publication until 2014.[31] Both *Parallélogramme* and *FUSE* facilitated a
valuable focus on conceptual, visual, and time-based contemporary art and attendant
politics, arts policy developments, and issues of implementation. What's more, in

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[30] ANNPAC/RACA's role in artist-run centre history is important to the consideration of art administration's
capacity for advocacy within the artist-run context, and is a subject that should be explored in future research on the
subject of artist-run administration. As ANNPAC/RACA formed in 1976 as a result of conversations with the
Canada Council for the Arts (CCA), their mandate of collective representation came at the same time as the groups
running each artist space were encouraged by the CCA to formalize operations and transition from artist collectives
to a model of non-profit operations in order to access funding support. ANNPAC/RACA was created as an internal
support structure to the artist-run movement to encourage the notion that the centres represented a national artist
community. Representatives were selected for participation in ANNPAC/RACA from across Canada to ostensibly
mediate and negotiate on behalf of collective interests (Robertson 8). A historical overview of the policies
development history and tribulations of ANNPAC/RACA, as well as profiles of the descendant initiatives that
followed — ARN (Artist-Run Network), and the presently active ARCCC/CCCAA (Artist-Run Centres and
Collectives Conference/Conférence des collectifs et des centres d'artistes autogérés) (now ARCA) — are available
in *Policy Matters: Administrations of Art and Culture* (2006). For now we can say that as the cultural policy
implications of government combined with internal concerns for the viability of ANNPAC/RACA's
representational politics, in the end these tensions, accompanied by increased competition for government funding,
made the cooperative identity of ANNPAC/RACA problematic.
[31]    *Parachute* magazine, published in Montreal from 1974-2007, is also important. Despite not expressly
representing artist organized activities *Parachute* did focus on aspects of the Canadian art scene in which artist-run
centres are central. *C* magazine is still being published, in Toronto since 1984, with an international demographic
including artist-run culture and related issues. *Canadian Art*, not a periodical dedicated to artist-run culture but still
inclusive of its significance, has also maintained publication and circulation since 1984, when it was created in the
wake of the loss of two long-standing Canadian art periodicals *Artmagazine* and *artscanada*.

hindsight both served major facilitative roles by documenting activities for posterity; a function not yet paralleled in scholarship.

As the source for the bulk of research and archival materials available on artist-run culture in Canada, these magazines exist as a primary record of the early concerns and achievements of the artist-run centre movement. Publishing and distributing critical and journalistic writing by artists and scholars, the editorial boards of these publications (comprised of artists, critics, and scholars) took on issues that helped define artists' relationships to the cultural policies that helped or hindered opportunities available to those making and exhibiting work in Canada.[32] Given the struggle to maintain these publications in the current Canadian marketplace, the sustainability of any future artist-run culture-based periodical is unfortunately unknown. Distribution channels for writing and research on artist-run culture continue to have value, despite the difficulty of maintaining operations. Over the last decade, strategies have shifted and organizations like ARCCC/CCCAA (Artist-Run Centres and Collectives Conference/ Conférence des collectifs et des centres d'artistes autogérés — now ARCA) and the provincial bodies like ARCCO (Artist-Run Centres & Collectives of Ontario) have invested in the production of semi-annual conferences and symposia to share and build resources between artist-run initiatives and across borders. Examples include the *InFest International Artist-Run*

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[32]    While there are dozens of examples of essays and articles published by *Parallélogramme* and *FUSE* that took on the issues of cultural policy on the side of the federal government and/or administered via the Canada Council for the Arts, or issues of policies development within the artist-run centre movement via ANNPAC/RACA or ARCCC/CCCAA, some well cited examples include: "The Value of Parallel Galleries" (*Parallélogramme*, 1977); Clive Robertson and Lisa Steele's "The Story Behind Organized Art" (*FUSE*, 1980); Rosemary Donegan's "The Applebert Collapse: Visual Art." (*FUSE*, 1983); "The Social and Economic Status of the Artist in English Canada" (*FUSE*, 1986); Chris Creighton-Kelly's "Strategies for Survival" (*FUSE*, 1986); "Statement of Ethics: A Checklist of Artists' Rights & Artist-Run Centre's Responsibilities" (*Parallèlogramme*, 1987); Dot Tuer's "The Art of Nation Building: Constructing a 'Cultural Identity' for Post-war *Canada"* (*Parallèlogramme*, 1992); Cameron Bailey's "Fright the Power" (*FUSE*, 1992); Kwarne Dawes' "Negotiating Difference: 'About Face, About Frame' Coalition Formed at Historic Banff Meeting" (*Parallèlogramme*, 1992); Richard Fung's "Working Through Cultural Appropriation" (*FUSE*, 1993); "Building Diverse Artist-run Community" (*Parallèlogramme*, 1994); "A New Initiative for Artist Collectives Gets Underway" (*Parallèlogramme*, 1994); "Building Diverse Artist-run Community" (*Parallèlogramme*, 1994); and, "Welcoming the New Artist-Run Network" (*Parallèlogramme*, 1995).

*Culture* summit in 2004, the *Institutions By Artists* conference in 2012 (both organized by

ARCA and PAARC (Pacific Association of Artist Run Centres)), and the upcoming

*Artists at the Center: Moving from the Margins to Inclusion* conference set for November

2015 (organized by ARCA with ARCCO).

Even at its outset, the artist-run centre movement was valued by federal cultural

policy makers and administrative bodies for providing artists with development and

presentation opportunities while also serving national identity and nation-building

interests (Tuer 32).[33] Two resources which consider distinct perspectives on the impacts

of these early government interests in artists' development are George Woodcock's

*Strange Bedfellows: The State and the Arts in Canada* (1985), and the collection of

essays *Vancouver Anthology* (edited by Stan Douglas, released as a 2nd edition in 2011,

originally published as *Vancouver Anthology: Institutional Politics of Art*, 1991).

Woodcock presents an analysis that considers the prospects of an autonomous

artist in Canada, where "the artist's work has to be recognized as being of equal social

value to [other] occupations" (19). *Strange Bedfellows* was written as a reflection on how

the recommendations of Canada's federal reports and cultural policy developments to

date were impacting artists' economic realities.[34] Woodcock states that the continued

poverty experienced by most artists was a reflection of the dangers in reliance on state

support. He suggests that under such economic paradigms, artists are either becoming

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[33]  As an example of early framing of artist-run centre significance by the Canada Council for the Arts, in their 1976-7 Annual Report the introductory remarks refer to "the rise of the 'parallel' galleries" and describe a certain understanding of their significance (Canada, "1976-77" xvi): "At the prompting of artists, the Canada Council has been an active supporter of these galleries for several years now. Since each one is different, they are difficult to describe. They may present readings, mixed media, film, video or dance performances as well as displays of visual arts. They bring together a number of artists working in the locality, most of them young, to work either together or in fraternal separation to produce their work. They operate in 'spaces', storefronts or attics in some cases, rather than in museums. …They have articulate trade magazines in such periodicals as *Parachute* and *Parallélogramme*, in Montreal, and *File*, in Toronto. What is important is that they produce lively and valuable work and provide many points of contact for artists and people who wish to develop their artistic skills (xvi).
[34]  The Massey-Lévesque Report was completed in 1951, which established the Canada Council for the Arts, was followed by the Applebaum-Hébert Committee Report, which was completed in 1982.

servants of the state, or must use their art to generate profit by other means through the

culture industry if not successful in receiving grant funding (8). Woodcock's analysis

investigates how cultural policy might improve the economic status and agency of artists

(8-9). His central thesis explores the important differences between culture and the

cultural by writing about the impacts that cultural policy has made after over thirty years

of granting program operation (139-40). He describes the complications of their

differentiation and considers alternative outcomes that state-supported economic security

can achieve, and reflects upon the limits of funding bodies' autonomy in light of cultural

policies that (even with essential arm's length provisions) remain charged with enabling a

vital and imaginative Canadian sovereignty (107).[35]

In *Vancouver Anthology*, editor Stan Douglas brings together essays about artist

activities taking place in Vancouver, British Columbia, from 1965-1990 to profile the

impact that cultural policies and practices have had on the city's artist communities over

this twenty-five year period.[36] Creating a portrait of an arts scene, the contributing

authors reflect the social and political context and economic conditions for different

groupings of artists active in Vancouver at that time — what Melanie O'Brian calls the

"once marginal city" that grew into a hotbed of Canadian contemporary art production

(O'Brian 7). With contributions from Keith Wallace, Sara Diamond, Nancy Shaw, Maria

Insell, William Wood, Carol Williams, Robin Peck, Robert Linsley, Scott Watson, and

Marcia Crosby, the collection is a meditation on the politics at play in an emerging

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[35]   It is worth noting that the book was published three years after Canada had been granted cultural independence, after legal ties between the United Kingdom and Canada were ended with the passing into law of the Canada Act (1982) which granted the nation constitutional sovereignty. Such context is perhaps reflected in the tone of Woodcock's queries — important if not dishearteningly hard to answer questions about how the arts in Canada can have a relationship to the state (via funding) and still purport to empower artists and allow for identities to form that are autonomous from the collective interests of the nation-state.

[36]   The anthology originated as a lecture series presented in 1990 entitled *Vancouver Anthology: Lectures on Art in British Columbia*. The resulting collection of essays was initially released as a limited edition printing by the artist-run centre Or Gallery.

Canadian artist-run cultural ecology and expresses a sense of lament for the loss of the

collaborative spirit of artist collectives in the 1960s and 1970s.[37] The contributions from

Keith Wallace, Sara Diamond, and Nancy Shaw discuss facets of Vancouver's strong

artist-run culture through chronological surveys of alternative approaches to organizing

artist practices, such as experimentation in video-making, performance art, and critical

consideration on the role of collaboration and the art institution.[38] Though the

contributions stop short of analyzing these histories as part of a broader art movement

(the fault and fate of many Canadian artist-run culture history-making projects to date),

the profiles they create do imply that artists' ambitions were influenced by financial and

cultural capital.

As noted, when this collection was re-released in 2011 the original 1991 title was

altered, with the subtitle "Institutional Politics of Art" removed. While Douglas has noted

that the original title spoke to the contributors' "common preoccupation: a critique of the

institutionalization of previously alternative art activities in North America…" no explicit

reason is given for the change in the latest edition (7). One possible rationale for the title

change is that the genre of institutional critique, which the original subtitle alludes to, is

no longer considered a distinguishing feature, despite being a prominent element of

contemporary art practices throughout the 1980s (Witt).  Perhaps this is a tacit

acknowledgment that while there was once a time when widespread consideration was

given to the critical impact of institutional influences on art to raise "political

consciousness," dropping this reference reflects a developing theoretical difficulty in

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[37]  A recent archival exhibition curated for The Art Gallery of York University considers Toronto's contemporary art community development history. Called *Is Toronto Burning? 1977/1978/1979 Three Years in the Making (and Unmaking) of the Toronto Art Community* (17 September – 7 December 2014) the premise explores the politics and the disciplinary experimentation that helped create what exists today as an arts community in Canada's largest city.
[38]  The contributions addressing artist-run centres and culture are Keith Wallace's "A Particular History: Artist-Run Centres in Vancouver," Sara Diamond's "Daring Documents: The Practical Aesthetics of Early Vancouver Video," and Nancy Shaw's "Expanded Consciousness and Company Types: Collaboration since Intermedia and the N.E. Thing Company."

distinguishing between art and the workings of culture as industry, with relationships between art and institutions in the art world closer than ever before (Witt).

## *The methods and concerns of Institutional Critique*

In appreciating the artistic ambitions of those who founded the artist-run centres — artists that, for the most part, were invested in creating and exhibiting conceptual, experimental, and interdisciplinary works — it is the contention of this study that these same creative inclinations also informed the politics and approaches to the collaborative facilitative activities at the heart of these early artist organizations. The counterculture of the late 1960s and 1970s fostered a wide-spread distrust of authority by the citizenry of many Western nations. The artists who created alternative-to-museum art presentation contexts did so in the spirit of the times, and they criticized the institution's role in directing and sanctioning artists' public presentations. These artistic strategies that challenged the implicit hierarchies of the museum's dominance and the artist's subordination came to be known as institutional critique.

As an artistic practice, institutional critique has had what historians have deemed to be first, second, and now perhaps third waves of artistic concern. Outlined by Simon Sheikh in his essay "Notes on Institutional Critique" (*Art and Contemporary Critical Practice: Reinventing Institutional Critique*, 2006) the trajectory of artist practices that interrogate the terms by which art enters and is influenced or supported by the institution have shifted. Citing Benjamin Buchloh's seminal essay "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions" (1990), Sheikh notes that the first wave of institutional critique from the late 1960s and early 1970s was very contextually specific and narrowly defined (with artists responding to the role of the art

museum in presenting artwork). What emerged in the decades after the second wave of

the 1980s in which "the institutional framework became somewhat expanded to include

the artist's role" was that the institutionalized subject performing the critique became the

site of investigation, and expanded into other institutional spaces (and practices) of

criticism (Sheikh 29). Today, Sheikh asserts, both the first and second waves have been

enveloped by the institution through inclusion in art history and education, and are now

considered a part of the broad social practices of contemporary art (29). Suggesting that

there is a "convergence between the two waves" into a possible third wave, where the

discourse seems to come from inside the institution, Sheikh notes that interests now fall

on the side of modifying the institution as a dynamic site of expression (29).

Recent treatises on the changing roles within the institutions of art seem to agree

with Sheikh's assessment. Consider David Balzer's study of the modifications to the role

of the curator in *Curationism: How Curating Took Over The Art World and Everything*

*Else* (2014). Balzer describes the curator as a role which grew out of the medieval

archivist/museum cleric into a philosophic-intellectual position that facilitates the

interpretation of artists' work for audiences as a kind of poetic project manager (34, 45).

What's more, the curator emerged from conceptual art's criticisms of the institution's

role in art presentation (94). These condemnations, described by Balzer as the

underpinning upon which the emergence of institutional critique *vis-à-vis* identity politics

in art of the 1970s-1990s entered the institution, spoke to how "the art world increasingly

yearned for a figure to make sense of things, to act as advocate for an ever more obtuse,

factionalist art scene" (45).

There has been a shift, then, and institutional critique has become a methodology

in the hands of both artists and non-artists working within institutions. It has, in essence,

become an inside job. Julia Bryan-Wilson's article "A Curriculum for Institutional Critique, or the Professionalization of Conceptual Art" (2003) takes on the task of analyzing this new broadened definition of institutional critique. Emphasizing the wide range of forms that an institutional critique might take, Bryan-Wilson reappraises the practice, saying that institutional critique "interrogates the ideological, social, and economic functions of the art market, particularly museums, patronage, and other mechanisms of distribution and display" (91). Further, her essay considers critical reception and differences in "the relationship between academic and artistic forms of institutional critique" (91).

Bryan-Wilson's characterisation of institutional critique as both an art historical form and ongoing practice, and her acknowledgement that "institutional critique hones viewers' awareness about disciplinary efforts of institutional power and its authority to shape meaning" is also reflected in *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists' Writing* (2009), edited by Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (91). Looking back to institutional critique's origins in the 1960s and chronicling the thoughts of artists on the different stages of the genre's development, Alberro notes in his introduction "Institutions, Critique, Institutional Critique" that the role of history in influencing the meanings of the aesthetics produced today is that it will contribute to any dialectic evident in an application of institutional critique as a method (12). It is a broad and interpretable theory and practice. Considering intervention of the institution as the basis of all aesthetic politics of representation, Alberro notes that future practices of institutional critique can purport to alter the institution internally (13). As many artists now create works that build from the institutional context itself, criticism has turned to

the mechanisms or "the conventions that currently manage and configure it," which are theoretically easier to change (14).

As an evaluative process of public discourse surrounding the roles of art institutions and museums within the public sphere, institutional critique initially worked within structural logics of the museum to promote artistic ideals (3). By disrupting the processes of the museum, artists intervened in what they perceived to be activities counteracting the museum's mandate to service public good and support artistic freedoms (3-5). These actions, taken under the auspices of institutional critique, reflected the values of the conceptual art movement's radical interrogation of assumptions about art and denounced what artist Daniel Buren called the "careful camouflage undertaken by the prevalent bourgeois ideology" that generally informed the museums of the time (6). Such ambitions have faded as a primary concern.

## *Conceptual Art and Social Art Practices*

Conceptual art generated several different, and even contradictory, forms of art practice, and established the terms of what became contemporary art practice today. Institutional critique came from the considerations of conceptual art as a response to the entailments of modernism in an era of anti-establishment attitudes. At its outset, institutional critique was a directed form of analysis that channeled the rigorous deconstruction of form onto the social and political implications of the art institution on artistic practices (Buchloh, "Conceptual" 137-9). As outlined above, over its history, institutional critique has transformed from a directed means of confrontation into a generalized methodology for a range of conceptual art practices. In this section, I review several scholars who provide historical analysis of the wider context within which

institutional critique manifest, and the relationships between institutional critique and the general category of social art practices under which much experimental contemporary art now falls. By tracing this development, I hope to pave the way for an elaboration on how the practices of institutional critique as a genre of conceptual art both paralleled the emergence of artist-run centres and also describe a methodological approach to policy and relationally-based administration within the centres today.

In his essay for *October*, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions" (1990), Benjamin Buchloh presents the concept of conceptual art as creating an "aesthetic of administration," the result of a collision of artists' interests in the years following World War II. He describes how the origins of conceptual art practices go back as far as Marcel Duchamp in the 1920s, with Duchamp's *readymades* representing a form of political resistance against conservative and capitalist influences on artistic production. Buchloh provides insight into the aesthetic model of early institutional critique by considering the reception and perceptions of works by successful conceptual artists in the 1960s (including Sol Lewitt, Robert Morris, and Edward Ruscha) (117).

An aesthetic of administration is the point when the theoretical strategies countering the phenomenological weaknesses of Modernism met the "rigorous and relentless order of the vernacular of administration" (Buchloh, "Conceptual" 142). Buchloh's theory names the end of what was the dominating rise of conceptual art practices and the beginning of the end for the first wave of institutional critique. Describing how conceptual artists' radical use of rules and regulations as a form of mimesis and strategy could no longer stand in strong opposition to the institution, Buchloh notes that they began collapsing, methodologically, under the weight of their

own complexity (a development predominantly internal to the art world but impactful on

history, nonetheless) (142).

Buchloh provides deeper historical analysis with the book *Neo-Avantgarde and*

*the Culture Industry* (2000), including a broad analysis of the developments of

conceptual art practices, and a focus on institutional critique after the emergence of the

aesthetic of administration. Buchloh looks at how the neo-avant garde of the 1960s

transformed between the 1970s through to the 1990s. The book traces how artists

transitioned from the opposition of broad aesthetic themes to mounting resistance to

specific political circumstances. Buchloh explains that these shifts encouraged a "model

of posttraditional [sic] identity formation" in art production and critical discourses

(Buchloh, *Neo-Avantgarde* xvii). Buchloh's scholarship opens the door to this study's

reinterpretation of the development of conceptual art forms — with institutional critique

as the primary tool and artist-run social politics as a forum.

Blake Stimson provides further articulation of this historical trajectory for

conceptual art in his essay "The Promise of Conceptual Art" (2009). Positing that it is

impossible to understand early forms of conceptual art practices outside of the socio-

political context within which they originally manifested, Stimson's arguments position

conceptual art as a socially-bound articulation of a practice constrained by its own

inward-facing contextual relationships (Stimson, xxxix). In considering this history,

Stimson outlines how (after a generation of practice) many of the artists began to heavily

criticise the output of others working in their discipline (xiv). A move that eventually (in

the 1970s-1980s) led many artists to abandon the practices associated to conceptual art

forms (including institutional critique), this self-cannibalizing nature of early conceptual

artists eventually led to what Stimson calls the "turning point" of conceptual art (xiv).

Stimson echoes Buchloh's analysis, and describes this time as one in which "general changes in artists' social ambition from the critique of its own institutions to a critique of larger social processes" took artists outside of the art world and into forms of engagement with socio-political and cultural interests (such as the feminist and human rights movements, environmental causes, discussions of labour rights, and distinctions between public and private domains) (xiv). By tying the emergence of prominent social concerns to what is now understood as the relationship between conceptual art and social art, identity politics entered the art academy and with it a new discourse for art as a sociological forum.

An important mitigating factor to this narrative is the art historian Claire Bishop's book *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (2012), which focuses on the rise of interactive and participatory forms of conceptual art practices since the 1990s. Bishop takes a wide-ranging look at the theoretical frameworks behind social art movements that involve collaboration and participation in projects that use as their medium aspects of human social engagement (2, 5). Intimately tied to the creation of spectacle and practices of social art where "the artist is conceived less as an individual producer of discrete objects than as a collaborator and producer of situations," this perspective hinges on the need for terms of critical discourse by which social art practices can be debated and discussed (2). Bishop's ambitions are to create a more nuanced critical vocabulary for collective authorship and spectatorship (8).

Where Bishop's analysis connects to this study is in the sharing of concerns. She notes that many artists invested in social and participatory art forms do not always negotiate the terms of their relationship to the institutions of art (6). Bishop also points out that artists do not always acknowledge their role as institutional figures representing a

facet of the art world for their audience-participants (7). Moreover, Bishop notes that

although the more recent practices of social art (since the 1990s) actually constitute a

return to collaborative practices (after the neo-avant garde interests in collectivity of the

1960s-1970s) they do not necessarily carry with them the same political articulations as

anti-capitalist/pro-Marxist ideologies. Instead, Bishop argues, the contemporary

participatory artist often uses their labour as a model for the creative worker "who can

creatively adapt to multiple situations, and become his/her own brand" (12). Why this is a

potential concern, and where an awareness of the methods of institutional critique as a

practice factor in, is explained by Bishop as follows: "social participation is viewed

positively because it creates submissive citizens who respect authority and accept the

'risk' and responsibility" (14). In other words, to present self-administration as simply a

matter of social behaviour incites "participation" as a capitalist consumer interaction, as

opposed to a knowledge-building tool of cooperative pedagogy.


## *Identity Politics and today's Artist-Run Centre*

The current milieu of artist run culture is primarily a response to the development

in the 1980s and 1990s of a contemporary identity politics. In line with the general shift

from Marxism to a socio-political activist politics across numerous disciplines in the

1980s, artist-run centres changed from a site of social collectivity and community to

politically-engaged social art institutions. A reaction to a number of factors including

funding development stagnation/ government cuts coupled with the growing authority of

operating mandates and administrative functioning, artist-run centres became (from a

macrocosmic point of view), less artistically and socially dynamic than they had been yet

more engaged with the world beyond the artist as self-interested. As a conclusion to this

chapter, this section builds on the earlier mention of artist-run centre development to explore the emergence of a focus on identity politics in artist-run centre in the 1980s-1990s, and looks briefly at sources that attempt to connect these histories to current operating conventions and conditions of support for artist-run interests and activities.

Clive Robertson outlines how identity politics has come to fuse with the role of the artist in the community in his book *Policy Matters: Administrations of Art and Culture* (2006). While this resource is key to many arguments presented in this study, specific to artist-run centres and identity politics Robertson's analysis occurs in two different ways. Firstly, Robertson links the development of identity politics within the sphere of artist run culture via "statements of purpose" in operational mandates that provide the basic foundation of an ethical framework for any particular artist run centre (vi). By incorporating the needs of individuals and groups typically marginalized, Robertson explains that the artist-run centre as apparatus was able to be enacted as a *de facto* supporter and public advocacy vehicle. By recognizing and incorporating the values of social and political movements, artist-run culture established itself as a platform for the enacting of political goals via art practices, and as a venue for alternative political statements.

Further, as a contentiously potential social movement unto itself, Robertson notes that alignment with this sociological terminology helped provide structure and stability to an otherwise chaotic and transitory collection of disparate centres already (by this time: the 1980s-1990s) caught in a grey area of its own identity as a national artist network (26). Via the bounding box of an ideologically centered social concept, individual artist-run centre cultures could collect under single banners and act with apparent collective focus (26). While these specific ideological social and political affinities mainly impacted

artist-run centres in Canadian cities (rural centres remained, for the most part, defined by the demographic investments of its more immediate communities), the sense of unified support in theory, and (in some cases) in practice via collaborations between centres, helped make artist-run culture seem collaborative once more.

The single ideological and political ideal is difficult to dislocate, and the machinery of change trapping the artist-run centre in its current form has been, in some ways, its demonstrated value. Active in the presentation and ongoing production of artistic activity and opportunities for public engagement in contemporary art programming, artist-run centres have been a highly successful social and economic innovation for the Canadian visual and media contemporary arts communities. Caught in a paradoxical condition due to the incorporation of the legal and bureaucratic necessities of running an organization artist-run centre culture has grown to be somewhat calcified, unable to embrace any real potential for change without the risk of destabilization; centres can adapt within reason but are not free to experiment, infrastructurally.

Part of this difficult relationship between ideology and logistics can be seen in AA Bronson's "The Transfiguration of the Bureaucrat" (2012), itself a response to the previously mentioned essay he wrote twenty years earlier, "The Humiliation of the Bureaucrat" (1983). In "Transfiguration", Bronson outlines the difficulties encountered in artist-run culture due to the Canada Council's stipulation that then-collectives become, instead, not-for-profit corporations (46). He argues that the existing granting model in Canada has shaped the lives of artists today such that they think and create under the auspices of the Canada Council as opposed to their own artistic drive (37). With such a focus on the ends rather than the means, Bronson claims that the majority of contemporary artists working within the mainstream artist-run culture are in fact

bureaucrats in the same way that their American counterparts are financiers due to the

rampant market struggle at play in the United States (37). When logistics becomes an

ideology among others, the danger is that it may smother alternative concerns under the

all-encompassing demands of economic survival; hence the need for experimental,

evolving methods of administration and organization.

In recent years, attempts have been made to determine whether or not artist-run

centres should (in the court of public [artist-community] opinion) attempt to reformulate

and assume alternate identities. One such foray into this question about breaking new

ground can be found in *decentre: concerning artist-run culture* (2008), a collection of

essays, letters, and anecdotes from over 100 Canadian and international artists on the

subject of the future of artist-run initiatives and a sense of the issues at play. By

conducting this survey, *decentre* taps into an ongoing and active reconsideration that

spans the country and stretches across decades of organizing practices. It is a book filled

with a diverse and contradictory array of competing visions, perceptions, and

meditations. The premise that emerges is that the reformulation of the artist-run centre is

in theory a project of boundless imagined promise that in practice it would likely be met

with an overwhelming and assorted chorus of opinions and disagreements all

understandably entitled, given the depth of the Canadian artist-run cultural investment.

This review profiles existing materials but also highlights the need for more

research into the socio-political implications of cultural policy on artist-run cultural

practices. Through historical scholarship that places practices by artists after the

conceptual turn in line with critical discourse about the social and political ramifications

of cultural policy, the artist-run centre in this study is framed by a shared disregard for

conservative convention as well as mutual support for autonomous expression and

agency for artists through and/or in spite of cultural policies.

In the following chapters, I propose that artist-run centre administration is an

institutional identity created through policy and expressed as a social role that negotiates

and performs the conceptual divide between bureaucracy and art. By focusing on the

relationships and social maneuvers of the administrator in the artist-run culture context, I

reject an analytic that divorces administration as a site of subjective interpretability on the

grounds that it exists within an institutional context and has no capacity for agency,

despite the artist-run centre's role as a service provider and performer of the

government's investments.

# *Chapter 3*
# Diagnostic organizing:
**What kind *am I? What* kind *are we?***

> *It's not a question of being against the institution: We are the institution. It's a question of what kind of institution we are, what kind of values we institutionalize, what forms of practice we reward, and what kinds of rewards we aspire to. Because the institution of art is internalized, embodied, and performed by individuals, these are the questions that Institutional Critique demands we ask, above all, of ourselves.*
>
> – Andrea Fraser [39]

> *The best criticism is an inside job. You can't rely on the authorities; you have to know the enemy better than he knows himself.*
>
> – Hal Foster [40]

Proposing that art administration in artist-run centres has the potential to be a specialized practice of organizing as critique, performed from within the institution, this chapter continues the consideration of the histories of artist-run centres alongside the conceptual art genre of institutional critique in order to map out how the ideologies of these two distinct yet parallel movements converge in the art administrative role. As an institutionally embedded form, art administration is proposed in this study as a set of methods and embodied practices that engage (through an awareness of their relations to) both the social aspects of the operations of artist-run centres as well as how the role itself is reflected by the ideological origins of the artist-run movement in Canada. Promoting the art administrator in artist-run centres as a malleable agent, this chapter aims to build the sense for how a slide from typical bureaucratic oversight toward an administrative tactic of "diagnostic organizing" might be possible. Coming to better understand the

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[39]    From Fraser's 2005 essay in *Artforum*, "The Critique of Institutions to the Institution of Critique" (284).
[40]    Foster, interviewed by Christopher Bollen for *Interview Magazine*, 12 May 2014 (Foster, interviewmagazine.com).

relationships between bureaucratic processes and artistic practice in the role of the

administrator, a supporting objective is to grasp the "helping or hindering" question about

the relationship between art and administration in art organizing projects. While

bureaucratic processes have proven necessary for the basic operations of art institutions,

the assertion of this study is that art administrators in Canadian artist-run centres offer a

unique set of services.  As a built-in component of their role, administrators in artist-run

spaces negotiate the potential problems that institutions and art world infrastructure

present to artistic autonomy. Drawing comparisons to the practices of artists in the genre

of conceptual art practice known as institutional critique creates an appropriate

theoretical nesting place for an investigation of art administration's relationship to artistic

agency within the bureaucratic structures and history of the artist-run centre, and asks

how recognizing what Canadian author and curator Vincent Bonin calls "The gap

between official and officious discourse" creates a critical opportunity to question these

institutional forms and their activities anew (60).

The previous chapters identified the contextual influences and interests that

helped form the artist-run movement in Canada, and presented institutional critique

through the work of scholars who have tackled the historicization of the complex subject

as a pivotal component of conceptual art's narrative origins. This section builds from that

foundation and asserts that there are confluences between the administrative position in

artist-run centres and the artistic practice of institutional critique; practices which both

emerged at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s and have each since changed in response

to needs and concerns, opportunities and threats (Robertson v; Bryan-Wilson, "A

Curriculum" 90).[41] As this chapter's opening epigraph from Andrea Fraser suggests, championing and revitalizing the fifty-year old art practice of institutional critique is itself a process that must ask "who can speak on behalf of an institution?" (Fraser, "Critique" 282). If we are all, in some way, already institutionalised, questioning the parameters of these relationships demands consideration of the terms and jurisdiction of a critical practice about the art institution, including analysis of who the performers are on the inside.

By connecting the revaluation of art administrative to the theoretical trajectory of an artistic practice of institutional critique, the shifting landscapes of both the artist-run centre and institutional critique ideologies outlined in this chapter are well fitted to an argument for a revalued administrative role. The premise of this study draws attention to the anecdotal notion that the administrators working within the centres are often artists (Bonin 69; Robertson 2, 4).[42] The acknowledgement of the presence of an artistic sensibility in administrators who have decided to put their individual artistic work aside to focus on the project of operating the institution is not a contentious point, per se, given that the origin of the "artist-run" nomenclature is hardly obscure. However, given the undercurrent of the assertion of this study—that art administrators have perhaps become, in some ways, the "artists" who run the centres—the insinuation that the artist as administrator can perform the role as a kind of creative practice makes this a potentially controversial point for many artists and scholars alike. Without a fully developed

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[41]    From the introduction to Robertson's book *Policy Matters*, Robertson summarizes his review of debates held at the 2004 InFest: International Artist-Run Culture conference as "the current administrative role of artist-run centres and their affinities with alternative art practices are then connected back to historical moments of art practice changes in the 1960s and the aesthetic, social, and finally political re-orientations of art-making to 'context.'"
[42]    To date, no study has been done to quantify this observation. A complicating factor might be the interpretation of the terms by which an artist is recognized as an artist. The Canada Council for the Arts cites a professional artist as someone who is considered an artist by their disciplinary peers, has had training, and has a history of showing their work (Canada). Even if an administrator has achieved these terms however, how long is a person considered an artist relative to the last public presentation of their work?

epistemological response to this implied association, I acknowledge it as a methodological limitation that must remain at this stage of research development. Nevertheless, in an effort to side-step the question of "is it art?" I propose that the applicability of the ideas put forth in this study imply an equal focus on the pedagogical aspirations of knowledge building — a territory already shared with artists, curators, scholars and educators alike. Following Duchamp, Andrea Fraser says the following about the naming of a practice as art or not: "Art is not art because it is signed by an artist or shown in a museum or any other 'institutional' site. Art is art when it exists for discourses and practices that recognize it as art, value and evaluate it as art, and consume it as art, whether as object, gesture, representation, or only idea. The institution of art is not something external to any work of art but the irreducible condition of its existence as art. No matter how public in placement, immaterial, transitory, relational, everyday, or even invisible, what is announced and perceived as art is always already institutionalized, simply because it exists within the perception of participants in the field of art as art, a perception not necessarily aesthetic but fundamentally social in its determination" ("Critique" 281).

Finally, while this proposal for resisting the institution comes in full view of the paradox that Foucault points to in terms of "governmentality" or the inextricable bond between state power as both facilitator and arbiter of social rights, this interest in developing new knowledge about existing ideas is a proposal to broaden the field of discourse about self-deterministic practices.[43] With acknowledgment that "artists" and the

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[43]    Foucault's work sought to build a history of the present and understand the influence and power of the state over the development of knowledge and the formation of the individual subject. The paradox of resistance to the social and political conditions therein can be delineated in his thought thusly: "Conflict over the meaning of social rights and civil society also meant conflict over the role of the state. […] The paradox here, if there is one, is easily explained: the generalized anxiety and contention over the question of the state coincides with a common recognition of the demise of reason of state, of a rationality intrinsic to the state's actions" (Gordon 29).

state as "institution" represent forms of established certitudes/the status-quo (where in the past as much as in the present, each has had a hand in validating the other), the hope is that by drawing foundational intersections between artist-run centres and institutional critique we can reveal ways in which both have something to offer the other in terms of strategies for continued resistance against the institutionalization and instrumentalization of artists.[44]

## Artist-run Administration and Institutions of Critique

The artist-run centre is a distinctly Canadian apparatus that is now over forty years old. The most prominent practitioners of institutional critique have been American and European artists who first made waves with their practices in the 1970s and 1980s (including Daniel Buren, Hans Haacke, Andrea Fraser, and Michael Asher). The proposal that these two fields share ideological interests originates from a few obvious sociological similarities, and follows from recent discourse on how both movements are in the process of indeterminate reformulation.

With artist-run centres as social apparatus, and institutional critique as conceptual art practice, we can note that both originated from the same cultural era in the late 1960s through the 1970s. Despite their geographic and national separations they share critical aesthetic and political interests in fostering the autonomy of artistic expression from the utility and influence of the institution (be it in the form of the market or the museum or

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[44]     In general, to instrumentalize is to make something a tool or instrument to achieve objectives or goals. To instrumentalize is therefore to utilize. If that which is being used is a person, then they are potentially being coopted (even if the use is with consent). In art, and specifically within institutional critique, a criticism has been that artists are being used and exploited by the institution in the production of their work. Even where the intention of the artist is to produce a commentary on the role and impacts of the institution, such as in the work of Andrea Fraser, the results can be cause for questions as to the consequences for the agency of art and the artist. In his interview with Fraser, titled "What do we want from art, anyway? A conversation" Gregg Bordowitz says of Fraser "through your work and its accumulations, we are led to contemplate the figure of the artist arrested in the face of seemingly irresolvable problems: the alienation and instrumentalization of artists instituted by structures that do not have our interests (our desires) in mind" (Bordowitz).

other political extension of the state). As the functional and objective differences between these movements are significant, this proposal that art administration has the capacity to combine them to create a new forum of critical practice comes with certain caveats in order to proceed. This propositional analysis needs to be received with the full recognition that it is located in relation to its fields of inquiry as a project of "research-creation," and that the methodologies it supports rely upon a sort of disciplinary slipperiness and hybridization that is still in its nascent stages in art scholarship today.[45] In the academic arenas of art criticism and art history, there are fundamental theoretical questions being asked around performance studies, social art, artist research practices, and the role of critique in considering how art and artists relate within broader social and institutional contexts (Butler "When Gesture"). This scholarship is born in those crosshairs.

Considering how artist-run centres developed, this proposal finds harmony with the way many centres grew ideologically with the interests of their artistic and extended non-artist communities. In the 1980s and 1990s, many centres began directing their programming toward artistic projects which expressed solidarity with marginalized groups through art as activism and advocacy (Fernie 16; Bonin 67; Robertson 26). This episode of artist-run centre history highlights a sympathetic note with this thesis, as there is a spirit of change and organizational self-awareness that the artist-run model facilitates. It is a potentially dynamic system.

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[45]     In 2012, SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council) added 'research-creation' to its methodological glossary as an "approach to research that combines creative and academic research practices, and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation…situated within the research activity and produces critically informed work in a variety of media (art forms)." This study speaks to the need for developing practice-based research within art administration; a prospect which I began in the project's early stages before it became apparent that using art administration as a practice while simultaneously arguing for its validity as a method exceeded the scale of a graduate-level thesis project.

It should also be noted that an adoption of institutional critique by administration should not be understood as an explicit challenge to disenfranchise or destabilise the artist-run centre. Rather, in respectful recognition of the general consensus on the current state of artist-run centres — as made by members of the very large population of Canadian artists, critics, curators and administrators who have worked or exhibited within them, written about them or otherwise contributed to one or more of them over the now forty-plus years of their existence — this proposal itself is intended to be part of that productive conversation about the future of artist-run centres and what has been referred to as a need to "decentre" and refocus. Canadian artist and scholar Bruce Barber has suggested that rather than "reproduce utopian stereotypes of artistic autonomy… The coming community should be more focused upon the potential of individual agency and the collective will to commune within organically structured organizations that do not merely reinforce the knotty characteristics of previously means/ends privileging institutions" (Chang 22). Similarly, Canadian multidisciplinary artist Vera Frenkel has said that the challenges faced by artist-run centres are like those "in any organization or professional network [where] there's risk of calcification, of creating structures that mimic those of larger, safer entities, and ARCs, despite their noble ideals, are no exception" (96). Adding that organizational struggles are inevitable, Frenkel notes that "the tradition of self-questioning that characterizes the artist-run centre… tend to keep things moving and honest as one generation or power group replaces another" (96).

In view of these opinions, this proposal reflects something like what both Barber and Frenkel describe. In forming this bid to develop research practices by the art administrator within the artist-run centre, I hope to make it clear that artist-run art administration manifests (in both an embodied form and as an attendant framework) the

very negotiations that the first policy makers for artist-run institutions had to embrace.

The challenge to art administrators performing the context of critique for their centres

today is how they might communicate (to artists and board members and other agents of

the centre) their prospective neo-alternative ways of reimagining and reactivating existing

alternative methods. To understand the shared operational circumstances, without losing

touch or alienating the valiant, tangible, ideological infrastructure that has been achieved

and maintained, a key to these methods will be their collaborative implementation. While

there can be rogue efforts, supporting new value frameworks and initiatives require being

both on the margins and at the centre of the centres themselves.

      Through research, it is difficult to find many direct instances of correlation in

scholarship between the Canadian artist-run movement and the artistic practice of

institutional critique, despite the fertility of the prospects. Historically in Canada there is

of course the productive consequence of Jack Chambers' challenge to the National

Gallery of Canada in 1967, which inspired the formation of the Canadian Artists'

Representation/Le Front des artistes canadiens (CARFAC).[46] Beyond this seminal

moment in Canadian artist history, and despite the close proximity and dominance of US

media and other cultural exports known to effect the Canadian ethos (and we assume

trends in artistic practices are similarly influenced), there is little evidence of direct

transfer of institutional critique as a recognized practice within the Canadian context on

anything resembling a wide-scale. Of course there was Ingrid and Ian Baxter's art

collective N.E. Thing Co. from 1967-78, credited as one of the first major works of

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[46] As argued by Bonin, perhaps the foundational moment for self-deterministic artist actions in Canada came in 1967 when Jack Chambers leveled dispute against the National Gallery of Canada, and argued for the rights of artists to have control over the use of their art and related materials by public or private institutions (Khonsary 22; Bonin 49). Out of Chambers' argument came actions which soon after resulted in the formation of CARFAC. These initial forays led the way for the establishment of fair use policies and copyright legislation to protect the rights of artists and the use of their work.

conceptual art to emerge in Canada (Bonin 50). Also the early political art strategies of

Carol Condé and Karl Beveridge, occurring around this same time, whose practices

illuminated disjunctions in presenting documentation of activism within art institutions.[47]

But as neither was connected ceremoniously or scholastically to the louder, faster, and

larger discourses happening elsewhere in the Western art world, they were not a part of

the same canonical developments. This may have had something to do with timing. As

examples of critical projects by Canadian artists occurring simultaneous to the cusp of

what would soon become the first forays into creating a Canadian art scene of radical

artist-run galleries, these works came along before they could be channelled and

championed by this network of presentation spaces. But beyond this, addressing the

nature of the relationship between the practices of operating artist-run centres (as a social

and political form of alternative practices of agency-building for artists) and the making

of conceptual art projects of institutional critique (focusing on monitoring and/or

curtailing the powers and policies of institutions threatening artists' agency) it is crucial

to again point to the gap separating one from the other.

   In our present state of conventional analysis, artist-run centres are not considered

historically as an "art practice" while institutional critique is. An important distinction

then is perhaps to be found in describing and considering artist-run centres as a way of

living and working in relation to protocol, while institutional critique is a mode of

commentary on protocol. In this way, they become obliquely related parallel concerns

that both intersect on the basis of interaction with artists, the affective nature of which

will be discussed in the coming chapters. That said the analysis in this chapter is indebted

to Vincent Bonin's research which points to one publication in particular as an artefact of

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[47]     Vincent Bonin provides an excellent historical summarization of the N.E.Thing Co., and of the work of Condé and Beveridge, as well as other Canadian artists or exhibitions which feature works or themes that broach the subject of the sort of institutional critique being developed in the US and Europe (Bonin 49-53).

the connections that can be drawn. Published in 1983 by Art Metropole, the previously

profiled *Museums by Artists* is an anthology of writing on tensions between artists and the

museum as cultural apparatus, and includes contributions from institutional critique

artists Buren, Marcel Broodthaers, and Haacke, alongside essays and images from

(among others) Duchamp, Buchloh, Frenkel, and Robert Filliou.  As the preface by

Bronson and the introductory essay by Gale each provide an overview of the anthology's

theme of the art institution as a central pivot, this use of the museum as metaphor in this

collection is a juxtaposition of Canadian collectivist ambitions and conceptual art's

counter-formalism which Bonin believes casts the institution in the full light of the

paradoxical, even ironic, ambiguity that is created when imagining the museum's

inversion or opposition (Bonin 54). This study is propositional to maintain openness to

the "horizon of possibility" that comes into existence when seemingly disparate interests

collide (59).[48] For good or ill, that is where art administration factors in.

   Turning now to artist-run centres, what we find is a parallel narrative arc with

institutional critique, including shared concerns for artistic agency. As expressed in the

previous chapter, the manifestation of a sort of institutional criticism in the development

of artist-run spaces spoke to the need for more infrastructural options (outside the major

monopolizing attentions of the AGO and the National Gallery). As Robertson, Bronson

and other archivist scholars of artist-run centre history have revealed, it was of course

these particular contextual circumstances that at first hindered and then enabled social

action which was soon reflected in the emergence of small galleries and collectives,

followed by political-economic policies of government that together formed the Canadian

artist-run centre. As Bronson has famously noted, certain essentials of this Canadian

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[48] Following Edmund Husserl's concept of inner horizons and outer horizons of embodied perception, where his focus was epistemological and invested in embodiment as a practical expression as well as an essential origin of knowledge, here "horizons of possibility" is taken from Vincent Bonin (59).

context catalyzed and aligned with the progressive identity politics and alternative life-style practices of the time — as a border-hugging, mass media dependent, US-culture dominated, art market-lacking country with a fledgling national identity, the efforts and energies that it took to create something different through collective action was experienced as a social movement (Bronson, "Humiliation" 33). Possibly factoring in as well, the Canadian psycho-geographic context of a vast landmass and sparse population dramatized and exacerbated the difficulty of moving between and socially connecting artist communities in Canada. Eventually, despite isolation from the American art world and from each other, what did appear was this new network of knowledge sharing enabled discussion about how Canadian artists could bring their work to the world, and their own country.

Early artist-run culture in Canada therefore demonstrated a preference for a collaborative and counter-hegemonic framework of artistic practice. It also revealed close ties to a neo-avant garde Fluxus spirit of collectivism which is recognized as an influence on the ambitiously optimistic prospects of alternative art centres that spread across the country in the early years of the 1970s (Detterer 51). Two of the oldest still-operating artist-run centres, Western Front (which opened its doors in Vancouver in 1973), and Art Metropole (which was founded in 1974 in Toronto), have both cited Fluxist Robert Filliou as a source of inspiration for his concept of the "Eternal Network" — a mail-art project which loomed large in the psyche of connection in the artist-run project of the early 1970s (Detterer 58, 229). Art Metropole in particular grew to embrace the significance of the artist-made publication which now makes up its core programming.[49]

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[49] General Idea produced a prolific array of artist-initiated activities and collaboratively made materials, incorporating what can be construed as institutional critique in much the same way as the N.E. Thing Co. and the work of Condé and Beveridge, despite having much higher rate of recognition internationally (possibly due in part to the migration of GI to New York City in the 1970s, and the impact of AA Bronson within the NYC art scene).

Western Front (also founded by a group of artists: Martin Bartlett, Mo van Nostrand, Kate Craig, Henry Greenhow, Glenn Lewis, Eric Metcalfe, Michael Morris, and Vincent Trasov) recognized the need to support certain realities of artists' social-economic access to live-work and presentation space, and has remained an interdisciplinary artist-run model supporting contemporary art presentations with Fluxist-like investigations that mix experimentation and collaborative social experience (Detterer 229, 235).[50]

Out of this influence to fulfill and pursue a democratically utopic network of connection and communication also came the artist-run centre periodical *Parallélogramme*, as noted in Chapter 2. Returning to the idea of artist-run centres' as ongoing projects of institutional critique, it is interesting to note that the first editor of *Parallélogramme*, Barbara Shapiro, wrote of artist-run centres' as networks of "multi-directional exchange… [where] every centre retains its particular identity, characterizing the specific community (geographical and cultural) to which it responds and the individual interests of its artist-directors" (qtd. in Robertson 8). Written in 1977, Shapiro nicely paints an idealized picture that did not foresee how artist-run centres today would be required to negotiate their identity with the instrumentalization required by government funding program priorities that (despite arm's length policies and artist juries) indirectly regulate centre operations. Through expectations that today emphasize matters like professionalization of the artist, energies are arguably redirected away from the broader discourses of artistic practices by funding programs which (for all their benefit) consequently place artist-run centres in regular competitive association with each other (Chang 17, 52, 93; Robertson 89-96, 106; Bronson, "Transfiguration" 30). Inasmuch as this is it not a founding principle of the sort of spirit of collaboration from

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[50]     Western Front came into existence in Vancouver around the same time that Intermedia, Canada's first recognized artist-run space (1967-74), was winding down.

which artist-run centres originated, it is safe to suggest that the ideological priorities of

the centres have changed so much that they now obscure the otherwise still active

(re)presentation of alternative social formation.

Though as a practice it stands in contrast to the social-institutional framework of

the artist-run centre, institutional critique is presented as parallel in this study more for its

political concern than for aesthetic comparison. Developed as a genre of conceptual art

practice that took as its focus the same sort of concerns for artistic autonomy as the

organizers of many artist-run centres, early institutional critique reacted to the perception

of hegemonic control over the social, political and aesthetic aspects of artistic production

and art presentation. In the spirited context of the 1960's cultural disavowal of

institutionalism and the revitalization of a Duchampian avant garde, the first wave of

institutional critique artists worked to systematically question and disarticulate

boundaries erected by the policies of the art museum.

Holding the museums administration accountable to its founding ideals of public

access and preservation for the common good, institutional critique artists took to

challenging what sort of influence (if any) the museum should yield over art and art's

production (Buren 189). Using semiotic affinities from earlier forms of conceptual art

combined with Minimalism's aesthetic strategies, artists practising institutional criticism

made reductive critical arguments against Modernism and the museum (Buchloh,

"Conceptual" 107). Using tactics like mimesis, these artists sought to objectively

represent and replace the visual art object with that of the institution itself as an analytic

proposition (142). Considering how the trajectory of conceptual art grew through

Minimalism and developed as a response to formalist art criticism in the post-war era,

culminating (in a sense) in institutional critique, Buchloh has rationalized that the

"institutions, which determine the conditions of cultural consumption, are the very ones in which artistic production is transformed into a tool of ideological control and cultural legitimation" (143).

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, projects of increasingly multifaceted critical value exposing the influences of capitalism and institutional power were shown across the Western world, generating discussion as well as proliferation of new forms of conceptual art and critical practices. Simultaneous to the growth of influence for this critical activity however, capitalism evolved and reacted to the cultural pressures by developing even tighter bonds with the art world. In an almost reactionary way, the powers of a capitalist system of supply and demand aligned with government and new tactics were developed that both economically intertwined its materialist-focus while also making consumerism a subject of representation (as in the successful development of Warholian Pop Art) (Bryan-Wilson, "A Curriculum" 91; Buchloh, *Neo* 87). Also, complicating the movement's political platform, institutional critique projects increasingly became disparaged for relying upon the very protocols of the museum to structure dissent. Paradoxically, they positioned their opposition to the museum by presenting criticism from within it, in the form of installations and performances (Bonin 55). Over time, and by the 1990s, art critics and historians and some artists themselves felt that institutional critique as an individual practice had not only lost its thrust but also become too niche, mired in vagueness and complexity and contradiction (Bryan-Wilson, "A Curriculum" 99). Indeed some began to notice the incorporation of the strategies of reflexive criticism being taken up by the museums and other corporate entities (94; Balzer 54). Such contradiction stuck some as a rhetorical failure, though the criticism could have been predicted. As Peggy Gale reflected: "The position contra museums is

always ambiguous, for the museum itself seems to welcome comment, even

confrontation, inside its walls in the comfortable—if unstated—assumption that by so

doing it defuses and co-opts" (Gale qtd. in Bonin 55).

While this study does not centrally take up this question of the art historical

practices of institutional critique and its paradox, it does turn to the work of Andrea

Fraser as an artist who has continued to create work that negotiates these tensions. Fraser,

rather than fight these perceptions of contradiction, has created a practice that turns the

very basis of the question of this paradox on its ear. As an example of an artist working

toward the sort of new horizons this study aims to support, Fraser's approach to

institutional critique involves layering the revaluation of the art institution itself as a

process of critique (Bonin 61; Jackson 118).  As a member of the second (and now third)

wave of artists practicing this genre into the 1990s and 2000s (including Christian Philipp

Müller, Fareed Armaly, Mark Dion, Fred Wilson, and Renée Green, among others)[51] —

Fraser's work recalls what Buchloh refers to as an "aesthetic of administration" in that it

serves to detail a time of conceptual transition.

Since the 1990s, Fraser has redirected the question of being complicit with the

institution away from the institution's impact on art and audiences, and toward

formulating how to embody a critique of its representation ("Critique" 280).  Focusing on

deconstructing the notion of the individual in relation to the institution, Fraser's

performances and writing have demonstrated her intent to challenge assumptions about

autonomous subjective relationships to institutional spaces through a thematic of radical

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[51]   "In the first wave of institutional critique from the late 1960s and early 1970s… the critical method was an
artistic practice, and the institution in question was the art institution, mainly the art museum, but also galleries and
collections. Institutional critique thus took on many forms, such as artistic works and interventions, critical writings
or (art-)political activism. However, in the so-called second wave, from the 1980s, the institutional framework
became somewhat expanded to include the artist's role (the subject performing the critique) as institutionalized, as
well as an investigation into other institutional spaces (and practices) besides the art space. Both waves are today
themselves part of the art institution, in the form of art history and education as much as in the general de-
materialized and postconceptual art practice of contemporary art" (Sheikh 29).

self-reflexivity that both overlooks and simultaneously incorporates the narrative history

of institutional critique as an artistic practice (Khonsary 14). After her success with the

series *Museum Highlights* (1989) (see Fig.2) for which Fraser posed as a museum docent,

she turned her attention to negotiating her own relationship with the institution as an

artist. In *Official Welcome* (2001), a performance about the construct of the "artist talk,"

and *Little Frank and His Carp* (2001) (see Fig.3), a piece in which she performs as a

museum visitor who becomes enamoured with the museum, Fraser speaks to questions

about how we produce criteria that influence the values which orient our actions in

relation to the institution.

Her process of engagement applies a lens of social analysis informed by Pierre

Bourdieu, who she cites as foundational to her artistic practice. [52] In so doing, Fraser

places the single embodied subject (herself) as the site-centre of these questions.[53]

Usually presenting her work in the form of performance, or documentation of

performance, the artist also regularly writes about her work to explicate her intent.

Publishing in various anthologies and collections, Fraser's essays provide the desired

interpretative framework.[54] In them she tends to downplay the idea that her processes of

exposing and layering a discussion of the institution's impacts are intended to destabilise

the institution's structures, and instead uses the opportunity to express her own self-

reflexive subjectivity:

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[52]     From Meredith Malone's essay on Fraser: "Bourdieu understood the work of art as a manifestation of the cultural field as a whole …It was Bourdieu's reflexive methodology, perhaps even more than his account of the cultural field, that turned Fraser into an enthusiast. Reflexivity is one of the major tenets of Bourdieu's sociological practice, and Fraser has openly credited this aspect of his work with convincing her of 'the fallacy of any attempt to think of art outside of or opposed to its institutions'" (Malone 12).

[53]     In consideration of Bourdieu's influence, to illustrate the relationships Fraser responds to in her work, I imagine a diagram that looks something like coaxal or concentric spheres extending from this discrete expression by the subject and moving "outward" to locate the individual within institutional settings and a broader social context, and then "inward" through considerations of motivations, desires, and other discernable forces at play.

[54]     In 2009, Alexander Alberro published an edited collection of Fraser's writing *in Museum Highlights: The Writing of Andrea Fraser*, and in the same year Alberro (with Blake Stimson as co-editor) included Fraser's essays in *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists' Writings*.

**Figure 2:**
Andrea Fraser, *Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk*, 1989.  Live Performance at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia. Courtesy: the artist. Photo credit: Kelly & Massa Photography

> My engagement in institutional critique follows from the fact that as an artist and as a writer, to the extent that I write, art and academic institutions are the sites where my activity is located... If one considers practice—that is, critical practice, counterpractice —as the transformation of social, subjective, or economic relations, then the best, and perhaps only, point of engagement is with those relations in their enactment. The point is not to interpret those relations, as they exist elsewhere; the point is to change them" (Fraser in Alberro, *Museum Highlights* 3).

Fraser's process of constructing her analysis using the written word and her own body positions her work in dialogue with the discourse of social art and performance studies (Jackson 118). As part of a new history of institutional critique, in recent years, Fraser's work has also addressed the art market and the "market's appropriation of particular kinds of artistic subjectivity" (Malone 17). Her practice has become an example of some of the more present and prescient concerns to emerge in both the interests of critical discourse on social art, and the role of the artist in relation to the

**Figure 3:**
Andrea Fraser, still from *Little Frank and His Carp*, 2001. DVD. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Nagel Draxler Berlin/Cologne.

renewed ethical question of art as commodity, particularly in light of the recent upsurges in the power of the art market.

Fraser's contribution to the 2012 Whitney Biennial of Contemporary Art was the essay "L'1%, C'est Moi" which addressed the state of the art museum's collusion with the art market head on. Based on the dismal condition of the world's economic forecast (and also published shortly after the Occupy Movement of Autumn 2011), in the essay. Fraser asks, "How can we continue to rationalize our participation in this economy?" ("L'1%"). Pointing out that in the US, the private non-profit world of the art museum or alternative art space depends on wealthy sponsors; Fraser challenges artists to consider the extenuating circumstances of the relationships they make for their work and the

implications on the world. Concluding that there are major ethical concerns artists should consider as "many of our patrons are actively working to preserve the political and financial system that will keep their wealth, and inequality, growing for decades to come" ("L'1%") this essay, and much of Fraser's overall oeuvre, begs consideration of how are we institutionalised and impacted by what Pierre Bourdieu called "habitus" or the institution made mind (Fraser "Critique" 281; Bourdieu xix, 140).

As I build this research of art administration I argue that it functions as a performative form of embedded and contextually specific dialogic critique expressed through organizing in service of art and artists.[55] I suggest that Fraser's approach to her practice of institutional critique—including her performance, interventionalism, and written analysis—recalls that of the artist turned administrative actor in the artist-run centre. Drawing connections to how she brings forth a representational expression of the administrator's circumstances (which my concept of "performing the context" entices), Fraser's process of self-reflexive exploration demonstrates how a performative administration as support also works effectively as critique. Even when engaged in this way. Even when done parodically.

## *When the Professional is Parodic in Administration*

In the spirit of Andrea Fraser's focus on engaging and critiquing the personal within the institutional, this section builds from observations that the originating administrative structures of artist-run centres mimicked conventional models of

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[55]  The term dialogic is used here as a connection to the literary theory of Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin *The Dialogic Imagination*. A dialogic piece of literature sustains a connection with other works of literature and/or authors, and informs and is ongoingly informed by these other works. Not only about influence, the dialogic process is reciprocal as the other works and their meanings can be changed in relation to consideration in the present. In Bakhtin's theory, influence also occurs with each word or phrase as much as it does in the context of all literary canon; all elements are in dialogue with the history of use and possible future interpretation. In the context used here, all language is dialogical which means that all utterance or communication is responding to things said before and/or anticipating responses to come. In other words, meaning is on a continuum. All language and the ideas therefore are dynamic, and engaged in relational and collective (re)imagining.

organization, and in so doing necessarily invited the bureaucratic. As a move that can be

explained if one understands that adopting these structures (predominantly the non-profit

incorporated charitable organizational model) enabled access to early project funding

support, these structures also helped create stabilizing operating policies. What makes

this observation relevant is when we point to how the parodic approaches to operations

that occurred in the artist-run centres preceded the priorities of "professionalization"

introduced by government funding programs in the 1990s. Making this point, we can

perhaps being to think around the notion of administration as Other and instead

reconceptualise it as essential and inextricable composite of the autonomous and the

operative working together in support of artistic agency.

　　　While the politics that spawned the moves by funding bodies to prioritize

professionalization in the centres are outlined in the following chapter, this section

approaches understanding the ramifications of the engaged apparatus by proposing that

the "professional" aspect of management practices of the artist-run centre might benefit

from a conceptual reconfiguration that views it through the lens of the parodic. This

approach to repositioning the role of administrator as a parody of the professional is a

lens which might help free the narrative of the bureaucratic within the centres' culture

and open up the field for alternative discursive models for organizing practices. Not

aiming to re-author artist-run history, instead what I offer here is a perspective that

wishes to shift the distribution of perceived power in the centres by suggesting that an

awareness of processes that satirize professionalism in the artist-run centres has potential

to be used as a conceptual tactic to trouble the general artist-run centre operational

structure. What I propose as a lead-in to the conclusion of this chapter is to set both

"diagnostic organizing" and "performing the context" in the light of this notion of the

professional as parodic. I wish to do so as means to illuminate and alleviate some

prospective concerns about a relationship to artistic practices which might come along

with recognizing the supportive agency of an administrative role emphasizing social

process over or at least as equal to protocol.

As mentioned previously in this study, Robertson has written that the

administrator in the artist-run centre serves as an advocate that performs "caring-through-

governance" by developing flexible arts policies that guide transitions of art and artists

into the particular frameworks of artist-run centres and artist-centric concerns (iii). About

this focus he says, "'administration' refers to more than the deployment of a professional

skill and includes the importance of examining administrative 'logics' or coherences that,

in turn, draw attention to the mechanisms of bureaucratic power" (iii). As many of the

first administrators of artist-run centres were artists, it is possible that in the spirit of

defiance of the late 1960s and 1970s the artists who became administrators did so in a

way that used parody as a tool of mediation between their artistic identity and the

operation of their centre.[56] As a feature that both Robertson and Bronson have accounted

for, Bronson has described artist-run centres as a "parody of that museum world we all

supposedly were trying to escape" ("Humiliation" 34), while Robertson has suggested

that the centres "share characteristics of other service organizations within the non-profit

arts sector to the extent that they mimic a federal machinery of political representation"

(6). While this speculation on the motivations of artists participating in the centres back

in the early years should be taken as imprecise, the implications of a reformed narrative

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[56]    The use of the term "mediation" here takes its meaning from communication and media studies, and follows definition of the word found in Robertson: "i) mediation is an intervention between two parties for the purpose of effecting/affecting a relationship between them…;ii) mediation as an act of channeling social knowledge and institutional agency to an audience; and iii) mediating institutions chose a mediator…who personalizes the values and public identity of the cultural institution by offering a familiar face and personality with which to identity (154).

for the bureaucratic in the artist-run centre provides a compelling setting for rethinking

the framework of relations that was established for policy purposes and governance.

By the beginning of the 1990s, the spirit of these practices in the centres had

changed, and the critical discourse that surrounded the artist-run centre began to

recognize just how fundamentally different the operational philosophies of many centres

had become. Particularly in relation to the founding priorities of collectivism, many of

the artist-run centres of the 1990s were no longer strongly identified with radical

alternative operating practices and collaborative actions. Anxieties about the co-option of

artist-run centres were high, though the co-opted accusation was not against members of

the artist-run community. As Diana Nemrioff explains, the sense was that the larger

institutions were now lifting personnel, ideas, and styles of art from the artist-run cultural

context that they had previously excluded: "if I remember it correctly, [it] went

something like this: Read about it in *Parallélogramme*, see it later at the AGO" (189).

Such practices were certainly "a long way from the spirit of collaboration," that the artist-

run centre as social movement had been originally motivated by (189).

This pilfering of the edge that artist-run centres thought they had carved out as its

own was accompanied in the 1990s by new policies from funding bodies like the Canada

Council which began to exercise more influence over centres to build

"professionalization" into their core activities and priorities (Canada 17). With some

founding members of artist-run centres also working for funding bodies as program

officers in government (like Tom Sherman, an artist who was employed by the Canada

Council for the Arts (CCA) beginning in 1981 as the Video Officer within the Visual

Arts Section, and soon went on to found the Media Arts Section in 1983), the good news

that came from having someone on the inside did not go far enough to mitigate the

resulting confusions over an identity increasingly entangled with hierarchical processes

of government. All these matters generated understandable concern for artist-run centres

during the decade of the 1990s and into the 2000s, as it was unknown what impact such

integration would have on the freedoms needed to maintain artist-run culture as adaptable

and open to self-determination.

As described in Chapter 2, both Bonin and Robertson have pointed to the social

and political difficulties that artist-run centres faced in the 1990s as being in many ways

about trying to decide how to continue to function as a network of organizations in the

face of ideological impasse based on differing notions of the movement's identity. Bonin

calls the period in artist-run centre history "a stalemate" when the original identity of an

informal network of peer-driven centres clashed with how the centres were feeling the

need to differentiate their operations and argue for their distinctiveness (Bonin 64).

Conceivably influenced by the increasing competitiveness born from the limited

availability of grant monies, centres' focusing on their distinct organizational identities

brought about additional complexities and parallels to cultural industry.  Identified by

Robertson as a shift from a collectivist ideology toward a hierarchical structure where

"some understandings of the project-as-movement appear forgotten" (Robertson 5), he

points to:

> The mutation of the role of the artist through a collective project of self-governance changes the policy role of the artist as cultural producer. Whereas conceptual art usefully critiqued the idea of autonomous art and authoritative artists through artworks that commented on the decentered artist and as work that functioned to reduce the role of the artist as producer, interesting questions remain about what artists can and do produce (4).

Throughout the 2000s, and up to and including our present, these issues have

lingered. Defining what "professional" means in art continues to register as divisive and

controversial, as the connotations to the conservative and bureaucratic have not been

abetted or relieved of their oppressive insinuations. This general uncertainty was recently

reflected when it became the subject of a staged debate in 2012 at the *Institutions by*

*Artists* conference. An event premised on asking simply "should artists professionalize?"

the discussion focused on aspects of who decides what professional means in the context

of art and art's presentation. A particularly important point to the prospects of this study

came when a debater for the No side, an American artist and member of the collective

Red 76 named Sam Gould spoke about the problem of professionalization as parody.

Suggesting that using economic and corporate vernacular to describe an artist is "to use

professionalization as a mask, but a mask that never comes off… becomes your real face.

Embodying it to the degree that you become it" Gould highlighted the core issue at play

in the delineating of artists practices into conservatively acceptable forms (Bruguera et

al.). The contradiction which Gould identified — that the administrator performing

professionalism parodically cannot step back to gain perspective on their role — has

implications on this study's assertions of embedded agency, yet, to critique an

institutional structure that perpetuates a paradoxical set of relationships lends weight to

this study's consideration of the performative as a reflexive process. As Julia Bryan-

Wilson, a debater for the Yes side, stated "it also makes sense to redefine professionalism

so that it does not denote walking lock-step to the beat of the neo-liberal entrepreneurial

drum but rather managing yourself; practicing an 'ethics of care' when you engage with

others" (Bruguera et al.).

   Reminiscent of the sociologically recognized behavioural practice known as

"passing" (a method of integrating undetected with a dominant socio-political

categorization to protect and/or elevate oneself for the purposes of survival or personal

gain), the response by artists and arts advocates to the notion of the professional is

perhaps telling of bigger issues at play.[57] As Shannon Jackson has noted, "When a political art discourse too often celebrates social disruption at the expense of social coordination, we lose a more complex sense of how art practices contribute to inter-dependent social imagining" (14).

## *Conventions of Embedded Critique*

This final section highlights pertinent relationships between social policies, processes, and the artist-run institution, and advocates that art administration be developed as a practice to confront the paradox of protocol and its deconstruction (conceptual twisters which both factor into institutional critique as a genre of conceptual art practice and artist-run centres as a social movement of policy and institutional critique). Arguing that art administration provides services I call "diagnostic organizing," this form of practice can be understood as mechanistic action as critique. Through analysis it can be understood as a basic support structure that is maintained through awareness for how the art and social / bureaucratic and procedural entanglement by the administrator within the institution is the mimetic lens through which we can identify the services that bridge between the art/artist and the institution. A mediating position, the art administrator essentially performs organizing impartially while negotiating and diagnosing the instances of inherent contestation/incompatibilities between art and protocol.

To reflect upon the social functions of the administrator as mediating agent, it is necessary to position the interests in pursuing this theoretical argument in light of the

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[57]    See Maria C. Sanchez's book *Passing: Identity and Interpretation in Sexuality, Race, and Religion* for a comprehensive study on the behaviour of passing. Sanchez states that: "Passing as practice questions the commonly held assumption that visibility is necessarily positive, pleasurable, even desirable...although it may often represent social progress for an individual, it generally holds larger social hierarchies firmly in place" (3).

broader socio-political picture. Considering how awareness of the art administrator as a

mechanism of critique points to their engagement with the performative aspects of their

work, situating the role within a larger social and economic scope of art and privilege is

significant to the narrative of both the Canadian artist-run culture movement and the

second and third waves of institutional critique. As the latter did not proliferate around

the world in the same way as conceptual art did in the practices of artists after the 1960s-

1970s, Bryan-Wilson has suggested this fact says more about the socio-political

conditions of artistic freedoms than its conceptual cultural transferability ("A

Curriculum" 95).

That said wherever the authority of institutions is explicitly or inherently opposed

by individuals or groups, the means used to organize actions arise from some form of

institutionalised pattern. Be it behaviours, expectations, or laws, the paradox of the

institution then is the problem of its resistance. Resistance is at heart the quintessence of

institutional critique in action, for or against change. Writing around the time of the art

market's first major upswing in 2003-4, Bryan-Wilson warned that perhaps in this age of

new dimensions of power for art, the influences on trajectories for scholars were being

affected. Noting that new strategies (like research-creation) edging into curatorial studies

might graft onto institutional critique, Bryan-Wilson cautioned that interests in new

directions for art criticism could set the practice of institutional critique on the path of

becoming a conceptual gimmick. A shift she framed as "...witnessing what might be

called the professionalization of institutional critique: young artists and up-and-coming

art administrators alike cut their teeth on the premise that the museum itself is a loaded

space, that the framing of art contributes mightily to its reception" (103). These warnings

of turning a critical practice into a totem for a rather muted variation on speaking truth to

power are important (103).

Privileged rhetoric about the ideological autonomy for art and how to protect it

from the interests of the state can overshadow sobering perspectives on the reality and

inseparability of meaning from its most powerful political and economic contexts.

Despite good intentions and a basis in affective awareness and collaborative social

processes, these practices can suffer from what Bryan-Wilson notes as the realization that

the art institution "is still just as broadly defined as its earliest practitioners imagined: not

merely a physical set of walls and rooms, but the labyrinthine procedures of capitalism

itself …[where] institutions are contradictory - bound with corporate interests, fraught

with ideological agendas, but also vibrant with real moments of pleasure, knowledge, and

resistance" (106).  In line with what Andrea Fraser expresses in her call for the

recapitulation of institutional critique in art as a site of resistance and criticism of the art

institution's self-representation and symbolic intervention, the work of Bryan-Wilson and

also of Jackson speak to the problems that occur when critique is qualified as radical only

when it is productive to anti-institutional resistance (Fraser 283). "If our critical language

only values agency when it is resisting state structure, then we can find ourselves in an

awkward position when we also want to call for the renewal of public institutions"

(Jackson 9).

These matters touch on issues that implicate arenas beyond art practice,

sociology, and philosophy. In the interdisciplinary fields of political science and business

studies, the paradox of institutional resistance is framed by the concept of "embedded

agency."[58] At the same time, in the world of anarchist scholarship, attention has been paid

to the paradox of living resistance by operating according to one's own practical and

moral contract as opposed to the broader social contract imposed by a democratic statism

producing the body politic.[59]  Both of these examples (polarities according to societal

convention) address ways to consider the notion of power on the "inside" and how it is

perceived to be impacting possibilities and potentials for alternatives. Where there is an

"outside" the institution, it tends to appear and quickly dissolve (Fraser 281); perhaps a

variant form of autonomy that escapes broad recognition due to having no familiar formal

qualities (as "formal" tends to denote institutionalized refinement) nor a non-institutional

means of engaging or sharing it (as language is yet another extended institutional

system).

In the introduction to a recent public discussion on the subject of institutional

critique called "The Museum Divide: Beyond Institutional Critique" — featuring Haacke,

Dion, and Gavin Grindon — moderator Steve Lyons made the following statement about

what artists like Haacke, Fraser, and others intimate:

> If institutions are to be reappropriated and put to use we need to recognize ways of speaking in their name without necessarily operating under their authority. And if we can both recognize institutions for what they are, collective infrastructures, and for how they can be seen in the most general sense as unimpeachable and monolithic totalities or entities, the question might become this: how can institutions be radicalized and put to use in progressive ways? (Lyons)

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[58]    Within the field of institutional management studies, the concept of "embedded agency" is presented as an institutional contradiction driving change from inside the organizational environment. Suggesting that encouraging the behaviours associated to such expressions of agency can help assist the appreciation of multiplicity and heterogeneity of institutions, and create a dynamic form of stability that reframes normative contextual pressures in the institutionalized model (Seo 226).

[59]    Citing Rousseauian discourse on the problems of establishing political community (from *The Social Contract*), Herbert Read presents the paradox of the anarchist ambition toward a true democracy in light of the precedence of parliamentary or representational government: "A people cannot be continuously assembled to govern; it must delegate authority as a mere matter of convenience, and once you have delegated authority, you no longer have a democracy" (Read; Rousseau).

As Theodor W. Adorno claims that "Art… always was, and is, a force of protest of the humane against the pressures of domineering institutions… no less than it reflects their substance" the assertion here is that administration is a dynamic component of the art institution ("Theses" 238). Yet in order to liberate it from its identity dependencies and build a case for its place as strategic social mechanism within the institutional apparatus performing an intervention is required. Where Fraser argues that institutional critique has become an "institution of critique" and has been incorrectly understood to be, definitively, a form of disruption, in her work she asks how the practice can be productive as a forum of reflexive analysis that seeks out "the competencies, conceptual models, and modes of perception that allow us to produce, write about, and understand art, or simply to recognize art as art" (Fraser "Critique' 282).

Identifying art administration as an embedded form of critique within the institutional context of art discourse and presentation invites an inward-facing view of the artworld that depends upon just such an appropriation. Generally outlining a territory that could enable a specialized practice of art administration, the agenda I push with this research is ultimately to demarcate concerns and conventions of a practice that also speculates possible conditions for a larger investigation of the art administrator as artist and advocate, specialist, and otherwise self-determining agent. In this neoliberal time of hierarchically corporate mediatized and militarized capitalist society, reassessing the role of the art administrator in artist-run spaces and other small scale self-organized art activities is particularly apt when cast as a method of resistance to instrumentalization, despite its apparent pressure. In many respects, the questions that underlie this study address how we live and work in relation to the ideologies of art and artistic practice in

light of societal forces, where "Denaturalizing dominant relations is the first step toward imagining the possibility of transformation" (Kohn 9).

The comparison of these two movements, artist-run centres and institutional critique, has allowed me to present a conceptual connection between them and I have argued for this correlation in order to situate the art administrator within the artist-run context as a personification of the paradox that accompanied the pressures and possibilities described above. The connection I define between artist-run centres and institutional critique is sociological and chronological and has a corresponding relationship to protocol. While institutional critique as a mode of conceptual art can be described as a disruptive commentary on protocol, artist-run centres on the other hand provide ways of presenting art and living in relation to protocol where the administrative position negotiates the tension between art and policy.

Following Andrea Fraser, the theoretical ambitions of this study have set out not to escape the institution but rather "to evade the limits of institutional determination, to embrace an outside, to redefine art or reintegrate it into everyday life" and "expand our frame and bring more of the world into it" (Fraser, "The Critique" 282). Crucially, as Fraser has noted, escaping the institution is (at present) not possible and she claims this is because our efforts "often fail to account for the underlying distributions of power that are reproduced even as conditions change and can at best transform the framework of our perception in the process" (282). Fundamental to both Fraser's practice and the premise of this study is the aforementioned question of how. How do we alter the framework of our awareness and recognise alternative relationships. Speculating some directions in which we might find useful theoretical propositions, I follow Fraser who is herself a devotee of Bourdieu's theories which emphasize the physical in social life and stress the

logic of practice and embodiment as influential mechanisms that both assist the comprehension of dynamic social processes. I also look to Foucault, Butler, and Jackson for their socio-political analysis of relationships of the individual to both power and knowledge as site and source of social control and its resistance. In so doing, I have suggested that rather than look outward to understand, we look in.

Within the artist-run centre, the operations and facilitations of art presentation are the responsibility of the art administrators, with oversight by a board of directors usually comprised of artists and arts professionals such as professors, curators, and other administrators. The coming chapter considers the division of the roles within artist-run operations — specifically the creation of the board and administrative roles as well as the invocation of the role of the curator into the artist-run scene during the mid-1970s through to the 1990s and beyond (Robertson 216) — yet resolutely depends upon the identification of the administrators as the armature, the bones and joints of the artist-run centres; the literal embodiment of the practice of organizing alternative art spaces. This characterization exists in tension with the notion that as a profession art administration is a conservative role of formulaic process and regulation, a sentiment to be found in glib comments such as "the artist turned businessman or worse is one of the legacies of conceptual art" (Stimson qtd. in Robertson 2). Looking at the complexity of this association between art and the bureaucratic, art administration in this study is a subject reframed as an inherent practice of critique of the institutional terms that structure cultural perceptions therein. Following Foucault's critique of liberal governance models, this study aligns with the need for analysis of the techniques and strategies that encourage citizens to self-govern while maintaining power and authority over personal expression.

Institutional critique is utilized as a practice with applicable social and political insight for such analysis, specific to an art institutional context. The concepts of performing the context and diagnostic organizing are themselves reflective of the paradoxical conditions of institutional criticism I've suggested are at play within the artist-run centre, as at the core of this thesis is the argument that art administration demonstrates autonomous agency despite facilitating disciplined policy-based maneuvers on behalf of the institution, and bridging between art and protocol. This chapter has presented the foundation of this conceptual recapitulation as situated and embedded in the conventional operating relationships of the artist-run centre administrator, activated through awareness of how its embodied presentation implicates the role as a potential method of critique. In the remainder of this study this institutional "situatedness" is taken up in the arguments that suggest the performative nature of the role of the art administrator (as a parodic performer of the professional) within the artist-run centre can be demonstrated by exploring the stylistic use of language, space, and affective relationships in administration as act.

Situatedness follows from the Feminist scholarship of Donna Haraway, describing the degree to which knowledge is positioned within sites of contextual and relational exchange and understanding, what she calls a Feminist objectivity (Haraway 581).[60] Given the counter-hegemonic and ambitious irreverent ethic of this study, the manifestations of situated conditions for the relationships explored herein makes a Feminist objective stance perfect as a rhetorical device underlying the rest of this study (583). An exploration of performative potentials of artist-run administration foregrounds

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[60]   Feminist cultural analysis holds strong potential for future scholarship on art administration in artist-run centres as a non-hierarchical collective expression, as in a situated embodied Feminist objectivity, contextual knowledge "is about vulnerability; location resists the politics of closure, finality…because feminist embodiment resists fixation and is insatiably curious about the webs of differential positioning" (Haraway 590).

the significance of the social origins and political influence of cultural policy on self-determinism and reflexivity within the artist-run centre. Together, the next two chapters explore the importance of policy and protocol to the performative decentering potentials of gesture and language for administration within the small art institution.

# *Chapter 4*
# Organizing Art:
## *Maneuvers of Policy and Negotiation*

To restate, this thesis proposes a reconceptualization of art administration by
positioning the role as a practice of organizing art within the context of the contemporary
artist-run centre in order to argue that the role also functions as a form of implicit
critique. In Chapter 3, I presented this conception of the administrator's facilitative role
as "diagnostic organizing." I built the rationale for this claim by arguing that the
development of conceptual art's genre of institutional critique and the origins of the
artist-run centre share ideological concerns for artistic autonomy and the desire to foster a
sense of agency to pursue the "aesthetic [that] exists in the critical exchange, in the
debate, within the context of the art world" (Alberro qtd. in Bonin 58).

Artists cultivated artist-run centres as critical contexts where such debate could
occur. In this study's reconsideration of the role of the administrator it is important to
again note this point: that artist-run centre administration was initially (and often still is) a
position performed by artists. I have made this relationship a vital one in this study in
order to promote the proposition that the operation of the artist-run centre can be
understood as a critical and conceptual, socially engaged, ongoing practice of
institutional critique. By reflecting on the similarities between the two discrete discursive
formations of institutional critique and the artist-run centre, I have pointed out that both
were apparently influenced by corresponding socio-economic and political circumstances
along parallel timelines. To this end, I have proposed that the art administrator within the
centre facilitates crucial negotiations between artist's interests and bureaucratic tasks.

Therefore, they are an embodied forum of institutional critique that performs the organization as apparatus. I have proposed this understanding as a method to build knowledge about how we might come to understand the classification "artist-run" differently.

Up to this point, this proposal has not articulated how the role of art administrator might bridge between theory and practice in this new territory of organizing as performative action. Addressing the subject of "How" is the focus of the remaining chapters. However, to make the argument that the artist-run administrator has a capacity for "performing the context," it is first necessary to speculate ways in which the historical and operating context has had ramifications on the creation of the art administrative role. Primarily, I explore this history in order to illuminate how art administration was cultivated as a subservient position facilitating the ideological ambitions of the artist-run centre. In this chapter I reference the history of cultural policies that impacted the emergence and development of the Canadian artist-run centre. I do so in order to propose an analysis of the policy progressions and their consequences for artist-run culture, and to argue alternative viewpoints on artist-run administration's identity within the context of artist-run centre history.

As previously outlined, by the 1990s the methodologies of both artist-run centres (as a national network) and institutional critique (as a genre of artist practice) had encountered criticism for their dependency upon the institutional systems they ostensibly opposed (Bonin 64, 70). In general, a part of art's dematerialization and hegemonic deconstruction after the conceptual turn, both movements developed new methodologies to address the insistent questions about instrumentalization, artists' strategies, and

engagement with institutional systems (Bryan-Wilson, "A Curriculum" 94).[61] In the

discourse surrounding practices of institutional critique by artists working within state-

funded museums (in European nations and, I suggest, in Canada via artists' practices and

the development of artist-run centres) the critique of institutions became and has

remained a broad tactic in a critique of art's use-value in society, whether or not it is

always identified (Alberro, *Institutional Critique* 6). In general, the contention at the root

of institutional critique is that institutions don't do enough to offset the ideological

framing and categorizing that takes place when art is shown in their spaces (on account of

the institutions prescribed authoritative power). While this issue has not subsided, it has

certainly shifted. Indeed, in the decades of debate and positioning that have taken place,

the matter has become so complex that rather than protest, many artists have become

complacent and arguably complicit in their own instrumentalization (Meyer 14). The

theoretical considerations of artist-run centres as alternative organizational structures and

institutional critique as a viable artistic practice (and rhetorical method) represent aspects

of this struggle, both of which have become somewhat stagnant in the face of entrenched

complication (Bonin 69).

Overall, this chapter looks at the history of opportunities and challenges posed by

cultural policy; developments in line with what art history and communications scholar

Jonathan Sterne has argued are the difficulties in navigating the politics of a dichotomous

"reform vs. revolution" approach to relations with the state (60). Given that "the move to

cultural policy is shot through with an unreconciled contradiction between a humanist

philosophy of political reform and liberation (however modest or modulated) and an

antihumanist philosophy of power that undermines the very politics of representation,"

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[61] Bryan-Wilson cites Michael Newman and John Bird from the anthology *Rewriting Conceptual Art*, who outline the phases of conceptual art in order to position the current time as the third phase (beginning in the 1990s) in which the tactics of institutional critique are being used within the institution itself (93).

Sterne has also noted that results are "predictably, something of a split between theory and practice" (61). Through this lens of split interest, I identify important aspects of the antagonism that exists between artists in artist-run institutions and the institution's administration; a relationship of ideologically opposed motivations that are also interdependent and result from decades of negotiation and compromise.

I suggest that government cultural policy has impacted the organizational culture of artist-run centres by making a form of economic support available while also rendering artists and artist-run administrators complicit in nation-building by supporting the interests of the state via access to government funding.  Considering this tension between theory and practice as it pertains to the question of restructuring or radicality, it is apt to look at the first decade of artist-run centre development here in Canada. Arguably the movement's most robust time, it was in this first ten to fifteen years that artist-run centres developed what Bonin calls their "paradigm of self-management in the art field" (64). What began as a radical social movement of collective action, looking for evidence of the artist-run model of autonomous and community-led actions of artistic agency that presumably existed before negotiations with government representatives took place is one possible area where the history of artist-run culture might be understood as a tale of tension between revolutionary actions and the hopes for societal reformation through policy.

In particular, this subject considers the division of labour that resulted from state involvement in formalizing the operation of these centres as the first sign of an imposed notion of "professionalism" on the artist and artist-run culture of Canada.[62] Key to

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[62]    While the Canada Council for the Arts website defines "professional artist" as someone who has specialized training in the field, is recognized as an artist by their peers, and has a history of public presentation or publication, there is no parallel explanation for what professionalism is in terms of operations by administrative staff (Canada). One can presume that us because the term professional in the administrative context refers to the notion of "being

considering ideological and functional consequences of professionalization, or what Eliot

Freidson refers to as "professionalism as a 'third logic' besides the market and

bureaucracy for the social division of labour," this analysis is fundamentally focused on

how social movement structures conceived in response to immediate need have

necessarily unforeseen long term impacts (qtd. in Torstendahl 12). That these impacts can

be reviewed to advise reform, revolution, or both (depending upon preference and

politics) motivates this rereading of administrative behaviours in the artist-run centre.

## *Long division of cultural labour in the artist-run centre*

I have laid groundwork for why the art administrative role is an alternative

approach to theorizing the artist-run centre through practice. I have also endeavoured to

tie it exclusively to the Canadian artist-run scene to communicate the solidarity of the art

administrative role with the two guiding priorities of artist-run culture: artist-centricity

and non-profit operations. As we know, after the artist-run movement's identity shifted

away from a utopian-like network of artist collectives (cf. 4, 42-5, 54-6) it adapted to a

more formally structured organizational mode — a non-profit corporate model with a

board of directors and administrative staff (Robertson 41, 61). These initial shifts to the

infrastructural development of the centres were instigated by the government as a caveat

accompanying access to government funds administered by funding bodies like the

Canada Council, and helped artist-run centres become "a hybrid model of aesthetic and

social organization" (v).

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professional;" a matter of broader societal cultural consensus and behaviour. For more information on the history of
societal definitions of professionalism, see *The Rise and Propagation of Historical Professionalism* by Rolf
Torstendahl which provides analysis of the development of international values of a historical professionalism
based not on a fixed set of skills, but instead a fluid concept dependant on changing dominance in socio-political
and cultural norms (12).

In previous chapters I have cited Robertson's views on how within artist-run centres, "the representational politics of policy and administration produce a dual identity for artist-run culture as both movement and apparatus," and I endorse his conception of artist-run centres as a shared project of infrastructure creation and preservation between artists who took differing positions based on strengths and abilities (v). I agreed with Robertson's assessment that over the course of its history, administration in the artist-run context has found directive agency expressed through cultural policy as "a way to manage individuals and form citizens, as well as the managerial and discursive processes that make up the conditions of the production and reception of art" (Conlin 226). I have also added that, in thinking through the early period of the artist-run centre's evolution, it is useful to consider that the art administrator evoked a mimetic professionalism as a strategic method of early artist-run identity creation.

Those working in the administrative positions within artist-run centres are skilled cultural workers who perform essential and valuable labour, but this study presents the role in contrast to other specialized positions in the artist-run centre in order to illustrate how these roles haven't had to endure the same sort of ambiguous connections to both activisms and procedural convention as the administrator. I have also pointed to how administration is perhaps valued differently, in an abstract sense, as a kind of conceptual by-product of the shift from artist collectives/community space to non-profit incorporated organizations (Robertson 6; Nemiroff 186). While today the artist-run administrative role is a sought-after career populated by dedicated art advocates, in the early years the creation of the administrative role represented the dividing of cultural labour into the distinct roles of "artist," "board member," and "administrator" in the artist-run model. It was this division that helped firm up the shift from individual collectives to a network of

artist institutions (Robertson 65; Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers* 1).[63] By positioning mimesis

as a mechanism of adaptation to live and work in relation to the influence of the Canadian

government's cultural policy priorities the idea of a parodic approach by early artist

collectives in their creation of the administrative role speaks to the artist-run centre's

connection to strategies of institutional critique.[64]

I make these points to suggest that there have been consequences for artist-run

organizational culture shaped by the shift from collective to non-profit corporation that

have proven detrimental to artist-run culture's development and capacity for innovation.

The framework of the non-profit corporation has been beneficial, but inflexible,

especially in terms of the regulations that guide the activities centres can invest in

economically. The control by government over administrative operations of the centres

began during the Trudeau-era of federal reforms (1968-1984), when artist-run centres

evolved to the institutional structure they are known for today (Bonin 65). Considering

the forces at play during this time of formation, radicalization, and change (broadly felt

social and political unrest, protest, and economic recession), Bonin has argued that the

government contributing public funds to arts groups may have had an ulterior motive:[65]

> In offering young beneficiaries the possibility of realizing projects that
> ostensibly satisfied the ideals of emancipation and decentralization of the period,
> government authorities attempted to eradicate risks of popular uprising.
> Complex contractual relationships were thus created between artists and the
> state when cultural producers were granted civic responsibilities (66).

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[63]  I include Julia Bryan-Wilson even though her work on artist labour and representational politics of the art institution are from the American context: "Art in the United States went to work in the late 1960s and early 1970s, as both artists and critics began to identify themselves as art workers—a polemical redefinition of artistic labor vital to minimalism, process art, feminist art criticism, and conceptualism" (*Art Workers* 1). Bryan-Wilson's analysis indirectly reaffirms the Canadian artist-run identity as collective movement compared to the US where "group identity of the art worker exerted pressure on individual understandings about artistic labor" (2).

[64]  See Buchloh for analysis of mimetic tactics used by artists in developing institutional criticism: "the moment when Buren's and Haacke's work from the late 1960s onward turned the violence of that mimetic relationship back onto the ideological apparatus itself, using it to analyze and expose the social institutions from which the laws of positivist instrumentality and the logic of administration emanate in the first place…Conceptual Art was revealed as being intricately tied to a profound and irreversible loss: a loss not caused by artistic practice, of course, but one to which that practice responded in the full optimism of its aspirations" ("Conceptual Art" 143).

[65]  Here "radical" is not political: "Adversarial radicalism was rarely a force in the artist-run centre. The revolution to which their members sometimes referred was usually the revolution of consciousness" (Nemiroff 185).

While Bonin's allegation that defusing unrest was behind the seemingly altruistic gestures of the state's art policy and funding ambitions regarding artists in the 1970s, his is one interpretation of the strategic political manoeuvres regarding power and policy made by the Canadian government. Another, more conventional view is that the government invested in cultural policy to protect a vision of national identity that was expressed in *The Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences* (known as The Massey Commission) (Litt 248).[66] The foundational cultural policies born from The Massey Commission (which culminated in The Massey Report, published in 1951) were supported under the auspices of bringing the nation together and finding ways to articulate what "Canadian consciousness" was, long before artist-run centres emerged (Litt 19). As the history of cultural policy development and its impact on artists and arts organizations is notoriously difficult and complex, it stands to reason that "The task of the commission as it defined it was a difficult one: how to construct an identity for a nation that was comprised of isolated regions of diverse histories and to which the threat of American influences was always present" (Lum).

Having established that artist-run centres are inherently interventionalist and the artist-run administrators who operate the centres are methodologically implicated, the remainder of this chapter explores cultural policy as a factor that streamlined operations and relationships between artist-run centres and government policy-makers. Additionally, the remainder of this section considers how policy influenced and impacted relationships between the administrative role, the role of the artist, and others operating within the

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[66]   Canadian cultural policy history essentially began with The Massey Commission. A significance described by Paul Litt: "In the postwar era, Canadians were becoming increasingly affluent, educated and leisured… Nationalistic feelings spurred by a sense of independence, accomplishment, and international status also made them eager to embrace the cultural trappings of nationhood that were associated to other more mature nations. Since the state was becoming increasingly interventionalist in the same period…it assumed greater responsibility in cultural affairs. The Massey Commission was itself a product of these changing postwar conditions…By associating high culture with national development, the culture lobby identified its vested interests with the contemporary aspirations of the Canadian nation" (248).

artist-run cultural context, such as the curator. In previous chapters I outlined the

organizational development history and self-deterministic philosophy of the artist-run

centre movement and how it ideologically, chronologically, and sociologically parallels

significant features and phases of the genre of institutional critique.

Pointing out that in its history artist-run centres have never been "any one thing"

Robertson argues that his interest in administration therein refers to more than the

deployment of professional skill (14). Robertson's perspective is like my own and

mirrors that of institutional critique. It highlights the importance of examining

administrative coherences that outline the mechanisms of bureaucratic power within

alternative and mainstream art and cultural organizations. As a goal here is to begin to

build an alternative framework for assessing art administration's facilitative judgements

and gestures, in so doing we need to also reflect upon the ways in which power is inferred

and deferred by institutional governance systems. This is accomplished by exploring how

these systems and their implementation alter the functional agency and existence of the

artist-run administrative role. I argue that, like that of the artist-run centre, the artist-run

administrative role has never been just one thing and it can be other things again.

With this in mind, I point to the relationship between the identities of artists and

administrators within the artist-run context in order propose that the division of labour

that ties the artist-run administrator to a status of both non-artist and non-specialist within

the artist-run apparatus emerged as a result of two socio-political forces. First, as a

reaction by artists disenfranchised with the museum (a model historically led by art

administrators in the role of Executive or Managing Directors); and second, as a result of

cultural policy development objectives by the Canadian government promoting

regulation and professionalization via legal incorporation which required the creation of roles and hierarchies within the centres.

Continuing this proposal for the reformulation of the artist-run administrative role, this brief review of cultural policy developments in Canada that impacted the early operational formations of the artist-run centre is undertaken in order to consider this history as a discursive and still developing field. Engaging funding programs and federal cultural policy history incorporates existing knowledge about the origins and functions of the artist-run centre and the administrative role. As a possible starting point for a broader analysis on the cultural policies and identity politics that informed the role of administrator in the artist-run context, the historical overview presented here is not intended to be thorough or counter to the artist-run centre histories and research reviewed in Chapter 2. Rather, the following synopsis considers a select history of cultural policy milestones — from the perspective that suggests that axiomatic priorities and tactical manoeuvres breed procedural obligations — in order to speculate how the art administrator as an identity within the artist-run centre apparatus came to be.

## *Funding "professionalism" as paradigm shift*

> "An exploration of this history might be one way to open a discussion that recognizes what is critically *distinctive* about this movement's organizations and, just as importantly, what administratively is not. The history of the artist-run movement demonstrates how possible it has been to create new organizational models for production, display and dissemination. Alongside claims that the artist-run centre has helped reform the traditional art institutions, there is some unease that the process of professionalization embraced in turn have reformed artist-run organizations, erasing certain functional and ethical distinctions" (Robertson 5).

Let us briefly consider the chronology of early cultural policy developments by the Canadian government that have impacted artist-run centres. After tabling The Massey Commission in 1951, the Canadian government established the Canada Council for the

Arts (CCA) in 1957; the first broadly influential milestone of federal cultural policy

development. After the first decade of CCA activities, from the late 1960s to the mid-

1970s, funding for artist organized activities began to roll out slowly in the form of

project support.[67] CCA established a vernacular for supporting new developments when,

beginning in 1971, grants to individual artists were given through two programs: the Arts

Awards Service and the Explorations Program. In particular, the Explorations Program

signalled the CCA's interest in supporting the work of new artists and "encouraged the

development of innovative ideas in the interpretation of the arts" ("Patterns of Canada

Council Individual Artist Grants"). Two years later, access to funding for the new

"parallel galleries" (aka artist-run centres) was permitted and a few artist spaces

submitted applications and were successful.[68] Not long after, programs were further

diversified and the Grants for Organizations program expanded to include video as a

supported discipline. In 1976-77, artist-run centres received the bulk of the funding in

that section, reflecting how video had emerged within these new galleries and

community/collective art spaces as a distinctive experimental disciplinary interest setting

them apart from museums (Nemiroff 187; Robertson 3, 7; Bronson, "The Humiliation"

35).[69]

  As a pivotal component to these funding programs, the institutionally favoured

terminology of "professionalization" and its precursor "professional artist" were present

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[67] The first program of the CCA that impacted funding for artist organized activities came in 1967, when the CCA granted support for "nontraditional venues for art." The first artist spaces to receive funding were Intermedia (in Vancouver, receiving a grant of $40,000) and Fusion des Arts (in Montreal, receiving $19,500) (Nemiroff 182). In 1970-1971 more funding became available with the establishment of the Federal government's OFY (Opportunities for Youth) and LIP (Local Initiatives Programme) initiatives, both managed by the CCA. Next, also in 1971, a program for funding new artistic practices was created called the Canadian Horizons Program (renamed the Explorations Program in 1973).

[68] With their eligibility championed by Suzanne Rivard Le Moyne, Head of the Visual Arts section at the CCA from the 1960s-1980s, the first to receive funding under the "parallel galleries" program in 1973 were The Western Front, Véhicule Art Inc., and A Space.

[69] For a list of the artist-run centres that were first funded under the CCA's project and operating programs in 1976 see Robertson, who notes that the successful applicants were also the first members of CANPAC, which later became ANNPAC/RACA (24).

from day one, subject to consistent review and revision regarding its application and

representation in cultural policy. Before Canada's *Status of the Artist Act* passed into law

in 1992 (most recently reviewed in 2002-03 and amended in 2014), artists had lobbied

the Canadian government for over a decade. They advocated for artistic freedom through

a living wage for artists, asking to be recognized by the state for their contributions to the

enrichment of Canada's cultural, social, economic and political profile.

Throughout the 1980s there were over a dozen federal actions that convened to

study, debate, and make recommendations on the economic and social status of the artist

(Cliche; Robertson 57).[70] The most significant of which, in terms of federal cultural

policy initiatives, came after the 1980 UNESCO Belgrade Convention on the status of the

artist. Canada's response to the UNESCO recommendations was to create the

Applebaum-Hébert Committee. Completed in 1982, the Applebaum-Hébert *Report of the*

*Federal Cultural Policy Review* recognized the need for efforts to improve the conditions

of autonomy for arts funding bodies, and improve the status of artists in society. With

recommendations that became reflected in the policies of the Canada Council for the

Arts, and eventually helped inform the *Status of the Artist Act*, the intent was to recognize

the value of the arts in society by encouraging stability and training (Walden).[71] Within

the CCA, these policy investments impacted the emergence of professionalization as a

fully implementable funding priority in the 1990s (Robertson 50). With interest on both

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[70]   In 1987 a federal Advisory Committee on the *Status of the Artist* was formed, followed by a series of research reports, additional advisory committees, and standing committees from 1987-1990 (Robertson 57). For information about the history of the simultaneous response from the artist community on status of the artist advocacy, see the activities of the IAU (Independent Artists Union) and their efforts to bring political and public attention to these issues, beginning in 1985-1986 (51, 263).

[71]   See ""Status of the Artist in Canada - 2010 Update" for a history and analysis of "Part 1 of the Act, which outlines important principles, including: 'The Government of Canada hereby recognizes: (a) the importance of the contribution of the artists to the cultural, social, economic and political enrichment of Canada; (b) the importance to Canadian society of conferring on artists a status that reflects their primary role in developing and enhancing Canada's artistic and cultural life, and in sustaining Canada's quality of life; (c) the role of the artist, in particular to express the diverse nature of the Canadian way of life and the individual and collective aspirations of Canadians; (d) to propose measures, based on research and studies, to improve the professional working conditions of artists…'" (11)

sides (artists and government) in establishing clearer terms for recognizing art as intrinsic

to cultural value, the CCA had additional reasons to pursue "this nudging of individuals

and collectives into more formal entities" under the auspices of promoting "professional"

activities (18). By the early 1980s, it had become clear that accommodating the explosion

of experimental practices by artists in these artist-run centres thoroughly exceeded what

was fiscally possible for the funding agencies. The result was that artist/collective

ambitions were shuffled to fit, or not, into eligible "performance criteria," meaning that

those not deemed professional or professional enough could be eliminated from

consideration in rounds of adjudication (18).

As professionalization and professionalism is a normalizing and conservative

socio-political notion that is entirely culturally-derived, the ascribing of expectations for

professional conduct onto artists has been cause for what Robertson has called "unease"

(5). In reviewing this history, my objective has been to trace the possible origins of an

assumed identity of non-artist and bureaucrat prescribed onto artists who choose to work

as art administrators in support of artist-run cultural interests. As art administrators in the

artist-run centres have adapted to the role of service provider and supportive agent, for

whom recognition and celebration is often overlooked, at worst the position has been a

reminder of an ongoing threat to artistic freedom (2).

Perhaps this is why, despite multi-faceted initiatives that aim to improve social

and economic conditions for artists, artist-run centre administrators are not celebrated or

as widely acknowledged for their work as both service providers and knowledgeable

stewards (and in some cases activators) of artist-run centre culture. While this line of

inquiry must remain speculative and pending further ethnographic research, within this

study the assumption is that for the artists who became artist-run centre administrators,

the bureaucratic role was representational at first. Despite being engaged consciously,

symbolically, and parodically to meet formal organizational demands encouraged by

funding bodies on behalf of government interests, over time, the identity of non-artist

became assumed for the administrator as their origins as artists grew increasingly

obscure. What this has meant is that while artist-run administrators' work within the

centres has been appreciatively accepted, it has nevertheless not been considered

particularly specialized or representational of artistic concern, despite the presence of

evidence to the contrary:

> The procedure of incorporation, and the reasons for the establishment of the
> artist-run centres have given these centres institutional status. In tracing the
> development of art institutions there would be no reason to assume that one
> would find the elements of an art movement, per se….yet there is evidence of a
> movement in the traditional sense which surfaces through the activities of the
> artists involved (Sauchuk qtd. in Robertson 41).

This evidence is present in the artist-run centre story of self-determination as, in

the late 1960s and early 1970s before funding had been established, artist-led project

spaces formed to serve specific regions, particular practicing artist communities, and/or

disciplinary-interests without regulations and administrative directors. As outlined, when

cultural policies and funding program priorities were developed by the CCA (in response

to the interests of government) "professionalism" was emphasized to frame the arts

funding as enabling career training, and to guide the terms of recognition and assessment

on peer juries for granting programs (Walden). Many artist-run collectives and spaces

adapted to meet granting bodies' eligibility criteria by incorporating as non-profit

organizations, thereby establishing the necessity of administrators. The artists who

became the artist-run centre administrations and the artists who became board members

were active from that point on as stewards of cultural production, distribution, and

presentation on both the national scene and within their regional or disciplinary areas.

They acted as repositories of a kind of public trust for each centre's self-defined community (Robertson 63).

In part this study is concerned with posing the question: At what point did the role of the artist-run administrator become the non-artist Other? Within the movement and the organizational structures there is perhaps a clue. Naming is powerful; it connects to the political economy of categorization (Wallerstein 1).[72] The names given to the roles (director, administrator, board) and the apparatus itself (parallel, collectives, artist-run) enabled some interests and investments while limiting opportunities for others (18). Though naming the organizing apparatus as artist-run helped solidify its socially constructed identity as artist-centric and self-determined, the names given to the roles within the centres were automatically derived from the adopted non-profit corporate structure and came with connotations and codes of conduct (Robertson 18). It remains a curious occurrence that the corporate terms where so thoroughly adopted, because at the time of the establishment of these centres in the 1960s-1970s, the term bureaucrat was practically a pejorative one within the countercultural context. What we can ascertain is that this naming influenced operations and organizational cultural formation.

Given this, it stands to reason that through common use, the naming of the administrator as a position in service of artists established a hierarchy of mutually constructed identities. With artists' interests at the heart of the artist-run centre, all other interests and organizational identities were necessarily subordinate.[73] Nemiroff has

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[72]    A matter of boundaries, the sense that in the early artist-run spaces part of the drive was to flip the script and give artists the power; putting the administrators on a tight leash. In his paper on the politics of categories and identities, Immanuel Wallerstein states: "The names for social categories keep changing. A group that demands more rights than it is presently being accorded by the others frequently feels that the language the others use to describe it is pejorative and therefore seeks to reframe their status by employing a new term" (3).
[73]    "Wherever and whenever there is a group, there is a countergroup… A group of any kind is a relational concept, not an analytic essence. Since all groups are socially created, they are socially created for some purpose. And the purpose is to advance the rights (and privileges) of the group. It is therefore inevitably the case that doing this is at the expense of some other group" (Wallerstein 5).

suggested that "survival necessitates the implementation of better business practices" and while this study is not suggesting fault with these decisions to pursue public funding and take on the structure of the non-profit corporation, what I point to is the lived consequences of these directions for these apparatuses of artistic agency ("Par-all-el" 185).[74] Karl Beveridge, artist, Canadian artist-rights activist and long-time CARFAC member said in the wake of the early 1980s' cultural policy swells and surges: "unless the modifications of cultural production are accounted for, the artist has little chance of collective survival" (qtd. in Robertson 50-51). Later stating that funding support from the CCA effectively stopped the political potential of the artist-run organizations (50-51), Beveridge's views are reflected in the position I have argued: that funding priorities which emphasized professionalization and legal incorporation profoundly influenced the socio-political aesthetics of the movement's alternativeness (Robertson 41, 61, 134; Nemiroff 184).

## *Demarcating terms of administrative alterity*

I have proposed that the founding administrators in the artist-run centre movement responded to professionalization: by using mimesis as a rhetorical strategy. I have also proposed that reformulating the perception of the artist-run administrative role may serve to empower and reconnect the present-day artist-run centre to the founding artist-run centre interests in collectivity by enabling affective exchange and the building of knowledge for how the position bridges between art and bureaucracy in service of

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[74]   Diana Nemiroff writes that artist-run spaces converged with business models as a matter of survival, explaining that in "the implementation of better business practices; some specialization and hierarchization must occur" ("Par-al-lel" 185). Adding her  perspective on the challenges faced by the artist-run centre in the 1990s, Nemiroff states that "in spite of a growing willingness on the part of artist-run centres to appropriate institutional postures...marginality remains a threat...economic rather than ideological, reinforced by the resistance of the funding bodies themselves to the 'institutionalizing' of the artist-run centres...[providing] inadequate funding levels where their ability to challenge the larger institutions is compromised by insufficient (paid) manpower" (185).

artist-interests. In support of these proposals I have explained that the art administrator in

the artist-run context is a diagnostic organizer. I have also noted that the role is a

performative one. The intent behind exploring these tactical choices has been to help

redefine perceptions of the role as strictly formulaic and ridged. I have argued that

diagnostic organizing is a strategic pivot invested in showing how administration is

responsive to the particularities of the artist-run cultural framework. In the remainder of

this chapter, I explore the contextually specific and individual practice potential of the art

administrator through the concept "performing the context;" the practical element of this

thesis. As prefaced above (cf. note 18), performative is a term that describes an innate

capacity of communication to imply intentions that serve to construct the identity of an

individual as a result of their use, particularly over time (Austin 6). Taking this notion of

art administration as the performer of the artist-run apparatus, I suggest that this role

occupies a third space between the art/artist/audience relationship and the

policy/protocol/processes of professional institutional practices and procedures. This

space is one I characterise as performative, as it pertains to the social day-to-day realities

of engaging with the persons doing the work, and I suggest it as one way of considering

how the artist-run administrative role bridges theory and practice.

Such a perspective is in line with what Thrift has called "the geography of what

happens,"[75] and what Fraser has referred to as a kind of critique pertaining to "the entire

field of art as a social universe" (Thrift, Non 2; Fraser, "From the Critique" 281).[76]

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[75]   Thrift proposes a pragmatic questioning of experience or what he calls "the contours and content of what
happens" (*Non-Representational Theory* 3), noting that as perceptions "constantly change…there is no stable
'human' experience because the human sensorium is constantly being re-invented as the body continually adds parts
in to itself; therefore how and what is experienced as experience is itself variable (3). This sociological inquiry is
important to this study as it is attempting to consider the impact of affective human relationships within a shared
space or place (environment), and is working to encourage a valuation of these experiences in a way that tries to
break from what Thrift calls the "official structures of power" in social sciences and humanities discourse (3).
[76]   Fraser describes how perception of importance in the art world has changed: "From 1969 on, a conception of
the 'institution of art' begins to emerge that includes not just the museum, nor even only the sites of production,

Jackson has heralded these matters as directly pertaining to the question of what

recognizing the affective contributions of supportive roles in art presentation might mean

for the engagement and emphasis of other potentials integral to supporting roles, such as

the artist-run centre administrator.[77] Rather than holding to rigid definitions of who and

what is inside and outside of art, this study incorporates the complex affective perspective

of interdependence wherever it appears. This positioning is intended to signal that efforts

to resist the instrumentalization of any citizen subject should not be privileged to the most

visible or celebrated cultural identities (Jackson 29, 36). We are all connected and

socially, politically, and phenomenologically interwoven.

In the decades since the conceptual turn in contemporary art practices, the

particular movements which this study focuses on have appeared alongside social and

conceptual art practices that have continued to develop. New artistic forums have

appeared, and material and dematerialised forms have inspired, reflected, and demarcated

new sites of activation and creation. Making these proposals, it has not only been artists

but curators (and artists-as-curators) who have emerged as key figures articulating

important distinctions and interpretations. Art critics have continued to contribute

arbitration of the ideas and approaches presented. Performance studies has enjoyed a

renaissance in the last twenty years, as has social art practices by artists in collaboration

with organizers and curators invested in engaging a broad public sphere. These practices

— going by a wide variety of names and involving a diverse array of experiential

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distribution, and reception of art, but the entire field of art as a social universe. In the works of artists associated
with institutional critique, it came to encompass all the sites in which art is shown… It also includes the sites of the
production of art … and the sites of the production of art discourse: art magazines, catalogues, art columns in the
popular press, symposia, and lectures. And it also includes the sites of the production of the producers of art and art
discourse: studio-art, art-history and, now, curatorial-studies programs" (Fraser, "From the Critique" 281).

[77]    Affect theory is attributed to psychologist Silvan Tomkins. In this study, affect is considered by recognizing
attributes of the performative in the artist-run administrative role. Tomkins proposes that aesthetic characteristics of
affective response are essentialist (can't be reduced) and are phenomenological qualities subject to a variability that
can't be defined except by association to behavioural responses (essentially punishment or reward). Tomkins also
argues that the gap between affect and instrumentation is necessary for human motivation (Kosofsky-Sedgwick 20)

methods and foci for participation including process, context, embodiment, representation, dialogue, etc.[78] — are often directly or secondarily concerned with the ways in which "people constitute the central artistic medium and material" where "the creative rewards of participation [are explored] as a politicised working process" (Bishop 2). As these contemporary practices have presented themselves in largely temporal or ephemeral forms, the vocabulary used to discuss and analyze them has emerged as an important frontier, as has naming the distinctions between types or kinds of participants (Balzer 65). Institutional critique (now utilized methodologically rather than under the auspices of an identified movement[79]) has found application in the consideration of the edges of these social practices that negotiate relationships between participants and power-structures. As a practice, institutional critique is still apparent in what Bishop calls "the best examples of participatory art" where an "organisation dialectically sustains a tension between freedom and structure, control and agency" (Bishop 267).

Summarizing all of this activity — over fifty years of artistic development and experimentation  — is (like much of this propositional study) not intended to provide a thorough overview of what sorts of disciplinary developments and theoretical distinctions have emerged that speak to this proposal for a reconceived artist-run administrative role. Instead, this quick characterisation is intended to introduce the practices of Kunstverein Toronto; a preface to their profile that explains how their practices neither suit definition as an artist-run institutional model nor that of an explicit institutional criticism but do fall under the purview of critical discourse about the performative, social, and conceptual practices that have arisen or persisted in art practices that connect these histories.

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[78]  The most successful social and collaborative practices have coined banner terminologies such as Relational Aesthetics, New Genre Public Art, Connective Aesthetics, Kontextkunst and Dialogical Art (Lind 57).
[79]  Today "The very term "institutional critique" seems to indicate a direct connection between a method and an object: the method being the critique and the object the institution" (Sheikh).

# *Chapter 5*
# Performing the Context:
## *Kunstverein Toronto's Performative Gestures*

> *What if…the negotiation of an externalized governance can itself be conceived as part of an art project? What if such aesthetic negotiation defamiliarizes the social processes that might otherwise be defined as exterior, as milieu, or as instrumentalizing? Finally, what if we remember the contingency of any dividing line between autonomy and heteronomy, noticing the dependency of each on the definition of the other, watching as the division between these two terms morphs between projects and perspectives?"*
>
> – Shannon Jackson [80]

In this chapter I explore the alternative organizing practices found in the facilitations of Kunstverein Toronto, a nomadic art presentation project that exhibits performance and ephemeral temporal works by predominantly non-Canadian artists in a variety of public and private sites of engagement. Explored as a case study in organizing art as critical practice, Kunstverein Toronto is considered in light of the historical and theoretical connections drawn between social artist-run organizational practices and artist practices of institutional critique. I continue my argument for the reconfiguration and recognition of value in the art administrative role by claiming that there is a performative "administrative 'logics'" (Robertson iii) in Kunstverein Toronto's organizing approach.

Fashioned as a facilitative programme, Kunstverein Toronto is presented in this study as a collaborative experimental exhibition platform that aims to critically engage artists and audiences in meaningful exchange. As an extension of the collaborative art and experimental curatorial influences that have risen to the fore in conceptual and social art, Kunstverein Toronto's Co-Directors Kari Cwynar and Kara Hamilton provide

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[80] From Jackson's book *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics* (29).

services and participate in the development and presentation of artists' work in ways that express their roles as contextually affective and socially performative. Informed by language and gestures that invite the performative as method, the approach of Kunstverein Toronto to their exhibitions facilitation is, I argue, a radical expression of reorganizing protocol focused on the need to demonstrate the workings of support in the presentation of art. I propose that an apparatus of caring in Kunstverein Toronto's productions endeavours to circumvent the hierarchies and privileges associated with certain identity constructs within the art world.

This case study is explored via Cwynar and Hamilton's conceptual positioning of the project. I suggest that each director performs the administrative apparatus as an embodied, relational mechanization of facilitation via what they identify as providing "hospitality" when bringing art and audiences together. I also discuss how they frame their practice as disinterested in the characterization of art organizing as necessarily curatorial (Balzer 11).[81] Kunstverein Toronto's art presentation and programming ambitions are "dedicated to experimentation, discussion and hospitality in art and exhibition practices" (Kunstverein Toronto). Reminding me of the quotation from Bryan-Wilson presented earlier in this study, that it "makes sense to redefine professionalism so that it does not denote walking lock-step to the beat of the neo-liberal entrepreneurial drum but rather managing yourself; practicing an 'ethics of care' when you engage with others" (cf. 68). Hospitality is a term used by Kunstverein Toronto to denote the project's

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[81]   Balzer cites "*to curate*" as "an extension of museum and gallery practice, an act of selecting, organizing and presenting items in the vein of an arbiter-editor" (11), and  asserts that "since about the mid-1990s, we have been living in the curationist moment, in which institutions and businesses rely on others… to cultivate and organize things in an expression-cum-assurance of value and an attempt to make affiliations with, and to court, various audiences and consumers" (12). Kunstverein Toronto's Cwynar states that "I don't care about being called the curator, but Kunstverein Toronto does have a curatorial voice in that there is alignment to an artist's work. These questions about what an artist is (and what a curator is) are important and there is interest in opening that up a little bit…. I respect the institutions that are here, but I don't often see what I want reflected in their programming, which is maybe a bit slippery and hoping to expose some values from art-making in the 1970s which are not as visible anymore, where it is about creating networks and experimenting" (Cwynar).

engagement with an affective and emotive discourse of collaboration in artistic practice. As an example of a collaborative, facilitative, and administrative practice of diagnostic organizing and contextual-responsiveness, the embodied, performative organizing by the Co-Directors of Kunstverein Toronto promotes art administration as a practice offering specialized services that function as an embedded and ongoing critique. As a nuanced application, the social significance of their services helps enhance their project's strategies in support of the artists they present; an affective aim that promotes the alternativeness of their art apparatus and allows them to subtly lean across boundaries of accepted institutional identities to engage fresh and reflective possibilities.

A choice of language usually not used to describe practices in the art world, hospitality references an "exterior" social process most often associated to the leisure industry or to private domestic etiquette. Instead, here referring to the public presentation of an artist's work, the use of this term by Kunstverein Toronto reflects the kind of rhetorical reconfiguration that this study posits. Picking up where Jackson's questions left off, I propose that Kunstverein Toronto's facilitative position serves to raise awareness and functions as an example of an inclusive model of supportive sociality. Kunstverein Toronto's use of hospitality negotiates and highlights the necessary but often overlooked interdependencies within the art world's hierarchical structures. In what follows, I present an analysis of their performance of hospitality as an example of Jackson's dividing line: a space of mutual interdependent autonomous and heteronomic displays (31).

## *Kunstverein Toronto – About us*

Presented as this thesis' case study, Kunstverein Toronto is an example of an organizing practice that performs its context as an implicit component of its apparatus. To

achieve this, the Co-Directors are profiled as the art administrators and performers of

their project's capacity for negotiating alterity and maneuvering between artist's needs

and operational protocols. By using performative language and gesture to relate to the

arts presentation apparatus and mediate the contextually-derived forces at play, Cwynar

and Hamilton are a living embodiment of performing the context as a form of diagnostic

organizing, reflected in both their priorities and the procedures of Kunstverein Toronto.

A part of a "domestic franchise," with partners in Amsterdam, Milan and New

York, the Toronto iteration is the most recent branch of the Kunstverein series.  The first,

founded in Amsterdam in 2009, anchors the objectives of the others, taking their name

from the German word Kunstverein (meaning "Art Association"). Historically a non-

profit group usually associated to the operations of a Kunsthalle (gallery) or Kunsthaus

("Art House"), a Kunstverein has traditionally been an artist hub for the city it serves.[82]

Kunstverein Toronto is invested in creating connections between non-Canadian artists

and the artists, audiences, and arts professionals working in Toronto in order to have "a

conversation about different ways of bringing people into the process" (Cwynar). With a

mandate to bring international artists into conversation with the Canadian arts scene, their

programming predominantly focuses on the presentation of the performance event and

their core elements of networked collaboration, performance, and hospitality through

dialogue and care are apparent in all of the major projects presented to date:

- ***Hypnotic Show*** (June 12-13 and 17, 2014), the first event series presented by

Kunstverein Toronto, is a project by Raimundas Malašauskas (Lithuania) and Marcos

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[82]     Each Kunstverein is independent and fairly unique. Maxine Kopsa and Krista Brodhausen founded the Kunstverein in Amsterdam in 2009. Kopsa is from Toronto and studied art history and cultural analysis, and also writes and teaches theory at the Verclats typography design school in Amsterdam. Brodhausen is Dutch, and is a director at the Klampsburgh institute so is an educator, and also runs the Grats in Kunstverein in Amsterdam. Kunstverein New York (dormant at present) is the most artist-directed, having been started by a group of artists, one of them being the artist Michael Portly. Kunstverein Milan (Milano) is run by founders/co-Directors Katia Anguelova, Alessandra Poggianti, and Andrea Wiarda, with their assistant curator, Daniele Maffeis.
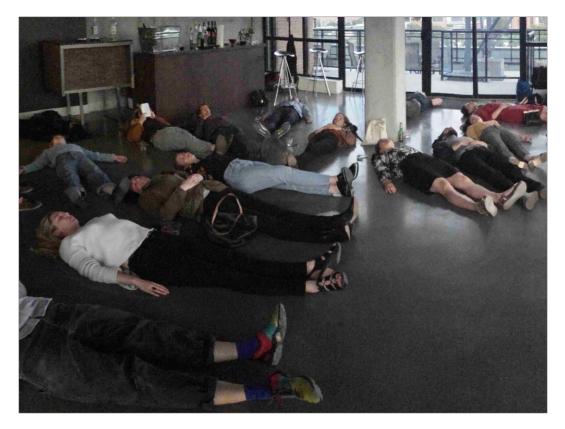
**Figure 4:**
Kunstverein Toronto: Marcos Lutyens and Raimundas Malasauskas, *Hypnotic Show*, 2014. Performance with text by Angie Keefer. Courtesy: Kunstverein Toronto. Image credit: Marcos Lutyens

Lutyens (UK), with Tamara Henderson (Canada), Angie Keefer (US), and Maryse Larivière (Canada)(See Fig. 4). Kunstverein partnered with Gallery TPW to host the presentation, and also housed several of the events in Hamilton's home. As an ongoing proposition for cognitive exhibition-making, Malašauskas and Lutyens collaborate with other artists and writers to create scripts for scenarios and objects to be experienced through hypnosis. For the Kunstverein Toronto *Hypnotic Show*, Tamara Henderson, Angie Keefer and Maryse Larivière prepared scripts that were performed by Lutyens.

• *K-Tanglement* (September 14, 2014), is a work by Marcos Lutyens that was projected simultaneously in public squares in New York, Toronto, Amsterdam, and Milan. In all four places, Lutyens's video and sound art project *Colour Therapy* was

**Figure 5:**
Kunstverein Toronto: Marcos Lutyens, *K-Tanglement*, 2014. Live hypnosis performance at Dundas Square, Toronto.
Courtesy: Kunstverein Toronto.

broadcast with the intent to investigate "the possibilities of bridging space across time

and sensing in multiple places at once" (See Fig. 5)("K-Tanglement"). A project to

"decolonize the mind from the sense of unitary location," participants listened to audio on

headsets to "enter a trance state in which their unconscious minds will be invited to

dematerialize, decontextualize themselves from the surrounding branding, dissolve into

color-based emotions and finally develop a sense of simultaneous entanglement with

participants in the other three cities" ("K-Tanglement").

• **_Dear Carolee: Carolee Schneemann in Letters_** (November 27, 2014 – January 10,

2015) presented at G Gallery was an exhibition profiling Schneemann (US), the iconic

and canonical artist best known for her radical feminist performances in the 1960s and

1970s. By presenting a retrospective archive of her correspondences, the exhibition

**Figure 6:**
Kunstverein Toronto: Carolee Schneemann, *Dear Carolee: Carolee Schneemann in Letters*, 2014. Reading event with Mat Laporte and Laura McCoy. Courtesy: Kunstverein Toronto. Image credit: Joseph Devitt Tremblay.

played with the notion of the retrospective by situating the artist in relation "to her life in

the world," as evidenced in a selection of letters, writings, ephemera, artist books,

photographs and films. *Dear Carolee* is a portrait of Schneemann as her own written

record (Cwynar). Including performances by guests who read from the correspondences

(See Fig. 6), the project also launched an edition of Schneemann's iconic book, *Cézanne;*

*She Was a Great Painter* (originally published in 1976).

• Alex Waterman (US), a composer, performer and scholar screened video of his

production of **The Trial of Anne Opie Wehrer and Other Unknown Accomplices for**

**Crimes Against Humanity** (January 18, 2015), a "speaking opera" by Robert Ashley

originally staged in 1968. Waterman spoke about the performance work's origins and

production history. In 1974, Anne Opie Wehrer wrote a letter to the Whitney Museum

outlining her desire to reproduce the opera there as a live performance and installation.

Waterman uses this letter as the template for his staging and production of the piece at the

2014 Whitney Biennial. In Toronto, he spoke about the approach he took to staging and

casting the work, including building a television studio and installation space inside the

museum. The public screening was held at the home of Cwynar.

- *I'm that angel* (January 22-23, 2015), by Tyler Coburn (US), is a publication that

explores the conventions of work in light of the conditioning of labour via the computer,

the new baseline tool for contemporary production. Explored through a narrative

perspective of an online journalist writing about trending words as tracked by Google,

Coburn himself performs readings from the work hosted at data centres, including

Google New York, Google Zurich and the Wikileaks Bunker of Bahnhof Stockholm. The

work poses critical questions about how to live and work in atmospheres networked by a

form of exclusive yet shared access. Readings in Toronto were held at the Villa Toronto

Reading Room at Union Station.

- *Getting to Yes* (February 5-8, 2015), in which Kunstverein Toronto travelled to the

Material Art Fair held in Mexico City to present prints by Angie Keefer (Canada) scored

by Leila Peacock (Germany), and performed by Steve Kado (US-Canada). With Kado

performing as a gallerist, under the purview of representing Kunstverein Toronto as an

institution, this intervention of the art fair also underlined how the presence of

Kunstverein Toronto in the context of a commercial art fair was itself a form of

performative parody, as both Kunstverein director Cwynar, and the artist, Kado, each

performed as the gallerist in the context of the three-day long event (Cwynar).

- ***Where Wild Flowers Grow*** (April 18 – May 9, 2015), is a publication of select stories, poems and dialogues by Maryse Larivière (Canada), extended as texts into the format of an exhibition of sculpture, collage, sound, and performance. Dialogues and monologues are recorded and included in the exhibition—"Be Your Tears Wet?" read by Vera Frenkel and Liz Peterson, "The Sun" by Deragh Campbell, and "Character Paintings" by Dexter Storey. The exhibition was set in a home on King Street West in Toronto, accessed through the backyard.

The schedule of Kunstverein Toronto's programming to date — outlined here with additional focus placed on the roles of the Co-Directors — makes evident the organization's guiding priority to encourage and support forms of experimentation by artists, and to roam the cityscape to present in a variety of places and public and private spaces. Thus far dedicating the majority of programming to event-based formats, Kunstverein Toronto's location selections have primarily been alternative institutional or non-institutional settings in order to engage new audiences as well as speak to their prioritized provision of creating welcoming environments in collaboration with artists and audiences (the characteristic cool exclusivity of the standard contemporary gallery being something they hope to avoid) (Cwynar). As to the additional project priorities of discussion and hospitality, those lie in the hands of the Co-Directors who coordinate the operations while working in service of artists and artistic production, presentation, and interpretation by audiences.

This profile focuses on how, through the combination of their different skill sets, Cwynar and Hamilton work as complementary and essential collaborators in activating and performing the apparatus of Kunstverein Toronto. Coming to the project from distinct perspectives, as individuals they each cut impressive art world profiles with

accomplishments that hit the notes of success and connect to networks that no doubt

compliment their select professional identities. For her part, Cwynar is trained as a

curator and art historian with an MA in Art History from Carleton University who has

held positions as a curatorial researcher at the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Banff

Centre. At present she is Assistant Editor for *C Magazine*, and also writes as an

international correspondent for *Metropolis M* magazine, out of Utrecht (Netherlands).

Cwynar has studied at the Independent Curators International in New York, and in the de

Appel curatorial programme in Amsterdam. Winning *C Magazine*'s C New Critics

Competition in 2011, Cwynar was also awarded the inaugural Hnatyshyn Foundation-

Fogo Island Arts Young Curator Residency in 2014. As the other half, Hamilton is a

practicing artist. Trained as a sculptor, jewellery maker, and architect, she received her

Bachelor of Architecture from the University of British Columbia, and her MFA in

sculpture from Yale University. The recipient of Yale's Barry Cohen Memorial Prize in

1999, Hamilton has been exhibiting internationally for over fifteen years, with her most

recent showing at The Taut and Tame gallery in Berlin (Germany) in 2013, and the

publication of a catalogue of her sculpture and jewellery forthcoming in 2015. She is

represented by Salon 94 in New York City.

  Hamilton and Cwynar's focus for the facilitation of Kunstverein Toronto is

invested in generating an alternative tone. With discursive interests in the decentring of

their role as directors and generally disrupting the usual naming and role-making

conventions that accompany art institutional models, Hamilton and Cwynar take cues

from artists and others who blur role distinctions (such as with practices of the artist-

curator) when pursuing experimental frameworks and countering conventional cultural

and curatorial conditions. [83] For example, even though Kunstverein Toronto does have a curatorial voice that aligns itself to the artists' work, Cwynar acknowledges that she is not interested in being called the curator in light of what she states is the importance of opening up dialogue about what an artist can be, professionally, and what the other roles that support the artist are able to do (Cwynar). Citing Canadian artist-curator and collector Ydessa Hendeles as a role model, Cwynar notes that Hendeles' practice as an artist has been celebrated simultaneous to her curatorial voice being questioned — as it has been for many curators who have traversed the line of interpretation into personal and creative "exhibition-making" (Hoffman).[84] While acknowledging that "It really has to do with the kind of work being presented," Cwynar's sense is that "the existence of these questions [about roles] sort of show how the cultural landscape of the art world is functioning right now… how some of us yearn to view it in a different way" (Cwynar).

## *Ethics of practice: Hospitality as a transitive tool*

While the practices of hospitality or "being hospitable" are common everyday occurrences (a way of treating each other; an expression of compassion and care), Derrida suggests that hospitality is the foundation of ethics. "Hospitality is culture itself and not simply one ethic amongst others… it has to do with the *ethos*… the familiar place of dwelling, inasmuch as it is a manner of being there, the manner in which we relate to

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[83]   Balzer notes that during the decade of the 1990s and its featured rise of the curator there was also a surge in "roles taken up by artists themselves, who, in this period of incipient multidisciplinarianism, were eager to try on new hats, appropriate art-world machinery and confuse fixed notions of who was supposed to do what" (46). These interests have continued, and have persisted despite reservations that such play with distinctions might erode the curator as "the most hallowed iterations of the profession to the art world and beyond" by exposing just how vulnerable the curator's distinction as authority might be (60).
[84]   Citing Jens Hoffman, who is well-known as a curator, has called himself an "exhibition-maker" and cites Hendeles as someone who has had "a big influence on me…Her way of making exhibitions is certainly on the border of artmaking. What I like about her is that she brings very personal elements to her exhibitions—emotional, almost romantic—and she is very interested in the staging of her shows." Hoffman also delineates what I assert are the confusions at play in the territorialism around authorship in organizing art, stating that "if a curator considers his or her work to be art, then he or she is not a curator anymore simply because exhibition-making, as I understand it, is not an artistic practice. It is still about some form of scholarship, even if it is very creative and personalized. But… it is becoming harder and harder to define" (Hoffman).

ourselves and to others, to others as our own… ethics is hospitality" (qtd. in Still 17). Considering Jackson's questions about what negotiations might be embedded in social processes that could enable agency over instrumentalization, Derrida's explication of hospitality reminds us that it is interwoven into every consideration of the other in a system of compassionate exchange. In practice, where "Hospitality is by definition a structure that regulates relations between inside and outside, and, in that sense, between private and public," Derrida's framing brings to light the gesture of transition that a hospitable act entails (20).

I propose that hospitality is a condition of service within the context of art presentation that can be explored as a performative gesture which locates the "situated knowledges" of Cwynar and Hamilton in relation to (and in service of) their organization's artists and audiences (Haraway 581). An uncommon recognition for the role of organizing, this incorporation of the performance of support into the programming mandate is unusual in the way it acknowledges the art apparatus without depending upon institutional authority. While Jackson notes that in art, the performative is necessarily evoked in all art experiences because all art requires infrastructure, all infrastructures in art are therefore a combination of "relational autonomy and heteronomy" that rely on an ever present tension (18). Citing the corresponding network of social relations and support needed to provide the art audience/viewer with the opportunity to consider the associations and tensions being provoked, Jackson explains that in order for the performance of art to occur it needs an attendant structure that connects the artist and the institutional art system (6). Not as a connection between the lead and the subordinate but as an "assemblage" that provokes reflection (18).

As part of an assemblage that evokes behavioural phenomena, hospitality is recognized in this study as a way to highlight how the "performative gesture" impacts the framing of the administrative role, as it does in Kunstverein Toronto's operations. Hospitality is an example of a "performative structure" that "provoke[s] reflection on larger systemic assemblages," and in Kunstverein Toronto's projects it serves as a declarative performative term that challenges conventional conditions of an art administrative operating context by acknowledging the role of facilitation in the collaborative creation of a welcoming atmosphere (6). Following Jackson, highlighting the importance of one performative gesture speaks to how an action or set of actions can combine to express a capacity to perform a broader context — where one "event" can be placed within the much wider arena of human experience and knowledge (15). In a recent talk on the power of the performative gesture to the significance of an event, Butler explains how in Jackson's arguments "performance emerges from broader social worlds, so no matter how individual and fleeting any given performance may be, it relies upon and reproduces an enduring set of social relations, community practises, labour and institutions, all of which turn out to be part of the very performance itself" (Butler, "When Gesture Becomes Event").

By challenging programming expectations and supporting artist and audience experiences along the social and relational lines Jackson speaks of, Kunstverein Toronto has (since May 2014) been performing their apparatus by presenting work by artists in public and private places, institutional settings, and pop-up spaces. Circumventing and decentering certain conventional art presentation tactics through its nomadic exhibition platform, Cwynar and Hamilton have taken Kunstverein Toronto toward direct engagement with the sort of thinking-through facilitation of art as critical practice that

this study proposes. Described by Cwynar as a practice that is not completely in the background but instead as a platform that orchestrates the "accompaniment" of art for audiences, Kunstverein Toronto has invested itself in the support of public dialogue that questions the functionalisms and relations that take place upon the cultural landscape of the contemporary art world (Cwynar).

## *Accompaniment and hospitality: Making accommodations*

For this study, the elements that are most essential to the framing of Kunstverein Toronto's facilitative approach as a diagnostic organizing practice can be found in what Hamilton refers to as Kunstverein Toronto's insistence on "process based" engagements, where process is seen as an opportunity to deepen an awareness of an event or exhibition's needs and attune their mission to connect artists and develop collaborative communicative relationships (Hamilton).  As Co-Directors, the duo collaborates and demonstrates their distinct voices with complimentary skill-sets that together give Kunstverein Toronto a strong, well-rounded, and fresh productive approach. Both directors emphasize the functional and relational to their sense of identity as organizers and facilitators. As administrative organizers performing hospitality Cwynar and Hamilton are variables to the ethos of the art experience, following Derrida. Acknowledging their role and recognising the performative gesture of hospitality embeds a subtle and implicit awareness in the Kunstverein Toronto approach. It can be said that through their process they work at both the centre and the margins of the programming they present. As their deferential, disinterested approach to a curatorial or top-down process locates their role as one that is social and supportive of the art experience — in line with what Jackson calls "challenges [to] inherited methods of curatorship,

installation, and performance production" that require "a different kind of pragmatic expertise and production support" (18) — their situated, embodied practice of hospitality performs their administrative roles in a way that denotes being "not just the bones of something, but the brains and the heart, too" (Cwynar).

Hamilton notes hospitality is "one of our strongest purposes, and probably something we will maintain. It is a bit unique and it is performative, and particularly because we're nomadic we're constantly thinking about how to host in different venues" (Hamilton). Their first project, the *Hypnotic Show,* is as a good example of Hamilton's sense of Kunstverein Toronto's hospitality, where performances by artists were staged in a variety of locations (including Hamilton's home). Hamilton's training as a sculptor and architect is what informs her sense of hospitality: "My architecture background has been part of why I've wanted Kunstverein Toronto to remain nomadic because I find it fulfilling to present projects that respond to space. As the lines of where the artist's work begins and where our work begins are sometimes blurry, to approach that as an aspect of providing hospitality allows us to respond and interject and moderate, and to encourage an audience do so as well" (Hamilton). In a sense, in the absence of the physical institution, the Co-Directors stand-in as a connective element; their visibility helps to tie the programming together as a series, and it allows them to act as "ambassadors in some form or another, while being mediators in the dialogue" (Hamilton).

Since Cwynar and Hamilton approach hospitality in a different way, they each perform their own logic to express their affective perceptions. For Cwynar, hospitality comes from extensive dialogue with artists. A result of devoting time to establishing the kind of understanding that can only come from communicating intent and being responsive rather than prescriptive, Cwynar's sense of the hospitable as a social and

intellectual style is tied to dialogue and exchange. One of their more recent projects,

*Getting to Yes*, demonstrates Cwynar's sense of performing the hospitable action.

Undertaken while participating in the Material Art Fair held in Mexico City, artist Steve

Kado performed the role of the gallerist and appeared alongside Cwynar as a

representative of Kunstverein Toronto to promote the work of artist Angie Keefer.

Cwynar describes the absolute necessity of clear communication of the boundaries of

their difference in that context to understand how they were each identified. Calling

*Getting to Yes* a chance "to work out the layers of the engagement" Cwynar notes that

such interdependent and layered presentations are "the kind of thing we want to do with

Kunstverein, [as] very rarely are we presenting someone's work in isolation but trying to

bring different people in." In this way, "the nuances kind of reveal themselves slowly"

(Cwynar).

As the directors' position their organizing practices as distinct from that of a

curator's practices, it is the differences that illustrate the performative reflexivity of their

context as facilitators. As opposed to the curator's position of power that acts as a catalyst

and centralizes the attentions of audiences, the core difference between the role of the

curator and the role of the facilitator in Kunstverein Toronto is spectacle (Balzer 49).

While there is an implicit sense of spectacle in the curator's impulse to focus the attention

on the artist and gather around to celebrate the work as the impetus for the event, the

deliberate attempts by Kunstverein Toronto to create an atmosphere of the counter-

spectacle under the banner of social inclusion promotes a different sort of connective

network that is both broad and subtle.

Kunstverein Toronto draws on the gesture of hospitality to foreground the

importance of preparation, communication, and environment. In so doing, as facilitative

administrative organizers the Co-Directors effectively decenter themselves from the authority usually attributed to the curator or institutional agent and reframe the attention on the potential for connections between artists, art, and audiences. Enabling the redefinition of the terms of their engagement, thereby transcending and re-evaluating the role of organizer of art through administrative awareness, Kunstverein Toronto's Co-Directors perform the role of their facilitation in the spirit of the social and collaborative collective interest. Though they are not defined as an artist-run centre, Kunstverein Toronto's administration presented in this study is exemplary of the sort of repositioning that speaks to the kind of decentralist ambitions and resistance to hierarchical power structures that this study seeks to inspire.

# *Chapter 6*
# Conclusion
### ***Evidence of Irreverence and Future Relevancies***

Summarizing a largely propositional study is a task made of concluding thoughts without final conclusions. Throughout this text I've deferred to the need and promise of future research into the potential for art administration within the artist-run centre as a critical agent not only because this new field of study exceeds the scope of a single project, but also because there seems to be a need for a (potentially radical) reconfiguration of the artist-run scene. In this conclusion I will recapture some of the extenuating directions for prospective research which I have indicated in the text. However, as a place to begin this process of summing up — the need that is most apparent is to break down the key conceptualizations I have proposed.

Developed to aid the characterization of the artist-run administrative role, throughout the text the theme of "theory and practice" has emerged frequently. Indeed the idea of an interdependent dialogue between the two as a central process of knowledge-building has proven integral to the framework of this argument. Never more present than where a schism or lapse can be identified in the translation of a theory to a practice; in these gaps I argue that there is opportunity. The conceptual armature I have proposed with diagnostic critique and performing the context is a part of this same theme. The former speaks to the theoretical spheres of organizing art and its entailments; the many layers of consideration that (if examined) can illuminate how the institution exerts control and/or impacts the reception and production and positioning of work by artists. In other words, diagnostic critique detects the conditions of legitimization and implication that the

institutional realm plays host to via the defining machinations and pragmatic processes of the administrative role. In the case of the latter concept, performing the context, the focus has been on the embodied expression of specific iterations of how the practice of organizing art manifests performatively in gesture and language and through institutionally-bound relationships.

This pairing of what I call "conceptual functionalisms" works to connect many aspects identified in this study primarily by being a preliminary naming device for institutional spheres and logics that the art administrative role represents to artist-run history and to theories of agency and power. These concepts also serve the purpose of pointing to ways to conceive of organizing and facilitative practices as expressions of their particular contexts. Put more simply, performing the context can be understood as the practice that manifests the theory of diagnostic critique.

In proposing that artist-run administration has the capacity to be an organizing practice of institutional critique I have recognized that it is necessary to challenge the authority of the institution. As reframing the role that manages an institution's operations directly questions the validity of the existing model, this proposal carries with it fundamental questions about the artist-run centre apparatus as it currently stands. By naming this study's ethic as irreverent (and its developmental strategy as deconstructive) the intent has been to guide this intervention of existing institutional contexts and conditions, and propose an approach that makes an appraisal of the art administrator's relegation to the background of artist-run cultural development. As part of questioning this valuation, I have argued that an attitude of irreverence is best characterized as a method of "productive impertinence," where "being irreverent" describes an attitude and

the approach of a deconstructive methodology — where in unmaking, another element is made.

This study is an invitation to abandon preconceived ideas about what art administration in the artist-run centre is, and what the administrator can do, by recapitulating aspects of the artist-run centre narrative and understanding of its history. Certainly, art administration is not a glamorous position, as any one of us who have engaged the material aspects of the work may attest. Even so, by opening up the position for reconsideration I have had to take stock of the privilege associated to both the role and this strategy; with the latter referring to the right to question authority by proposing to review institutional conditions and accepted conventions.  Therefore, to apply the knowledge collected in this study within discourse about the future of the artist-run centre as an art presentation and production infrastructure and apparatus requires, I suggest, two elements. First, a provocative approach and willingness to question convention; and second, an awareness of the privilege needed to engage in contestation despite its tendency to destabilize.

As an applied method, in this thesis I have utilized irreverence in three different ways: 1) I have named the attitude of this study as propositional and acknowledged my own bias via a personal heuristic approach in the introductory narrative framing; 2) I have integrated the practices of artist-run administration into a dematerialized discourse of performative practice and (in so doing) distanced the role from its identification as more commonly associated administrative tasks of material processes and routine labour; and 3) I have engaged this project in the spirit of research-creation, wherein the methodologies this study encourages are freshly interdisciplinary and in some cases speculatively applied. Finally, it should also be noted that, fundamentally the asking of

questions which elevates the art administrative position and destabilizes the artist-run centre institution is itself an irreverent act where it has been conducted under the auspices of an institutionally-supported study (via the University) — a minor caveat, but one that I would be remiss to not include.

As an ethic, concerns for the terms of an approach to action and analysis as I have defined them are in line with Foucault, who argued that a discursive ethics foregrounds the subjective experience of moral conduct over the normalized and prescribed rules of right and wrong (Foucault, "Polemics" 111). As this study sides with Foucault's preference for the non-polemic in posing ethical questions, to clarify how to perform such an ethic I have selected "irreverence" as the term for a method that encourages divergence from normative assumptions but is not predicated on their dissolution. Following a Nietzschean paradigm, as Foucault did, irreverence means to approach analysis as a process of idiosyncratic yet purposeful dismantling; as an aesthetic that disavows prescriptive attitudes toward "truth and systematicity" (Winchester xii; 124, 149). This study's ethic is irreverent because it does not seek to disavow the authority it opposes in the art institution but rather to utilize its existence to anchor alternative observations and ideas so that other potentials can emerge in forms that remain productive yet contradictory, constructive yet paradoxical.

Turning to the elements of this study that have had to remain unexplored, one such direction of major importance is that of ANNPAC/RACA. To the history of artist-run centre administration in Canada, and to understanding the relationships between artists and artist-run centres, the trajectory of ANNPAC/RACA as the committee of artist-run centre representatives that advocated for artist-run centre policies and procedural developments (within the movement and on behalf of it) is an area of narrative

importance to the history of artist-run administration as an organizational identity in Canada.

Another area proposed for future study is the need to better integrate the lived practices within the artist-run centres today. As a major undercurrent of this project, the proposal to develop art administration as a practice that works to confront the paradox of protocol and contend with the social has focused attention on the dematerialized aspects of the administrative role. While this has left the large arena of the material realities of the administrative role unexplored so that the relational and performative could take center stage, this material culture of the artist-run centre (including grants, marketing, and budgeting) represents yet another area for possible consideration in a study of art administration as an experimental organizing practice.

Administration has been not at the centre but on the margins of recognized champions of the artist-run apparatus to date. As a call for more research and more exploration, this study concludes by also opening a door. Artist-run centres and artist-run culture have been pivotal to the support of Canada's contemporary visual and media arts development. With an enhanced infrastructure and a newly engaged administrative understanding, it can continue to serve Canadian artists by also renegotiating the terms of its own survival. With new methods, perhaps alternative channels for support can be cultivated. By diversifying understandings of the roles that make-up the operations of artist-run centres, perhaps artist-run administration can update ideas about what these centres are capable of.

This research has focused on expanding the perceived boundaries of the contemporary artist-run administrative role to include instigator (rather than officiator) of artist-run culture. With a new frame of reference, perhaps the artist-run apparatus can

once again disrupt expectations and develop future relevancies. Self-determinism in artistic organizing recalls the collective expression of their founding, evoking questions that have emerged periodically since Duchampian revelations like "All in all, the creative act is not performed by the artist alone…" (Sanouillet and Peterson, 139). With these questions in mind, may considering who and what else art in the artist-run centre implicates, and by what means, motivate the inquiries to come.

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