Plausible Artworlds

Introduction

Plausible Artworlds is a project to collect and share knowledge about alternative models of creative practice. From alternative economies and open source culture to secessions and other social experiments, Plausible Artworlds is a platform for research and participation with artworlds that present a distinctly different option from mainstream culture.

The aim of the project is to bring awareness to the potential of these artworlds as viable "cultural ecosystems" that provide both pedagogical and practical solutions to a range of emergent socio-cultural challenges. We view Plausible Artworlds as an opportunity to discuss the interdisciplinary role of artist as creative problem solver and the expanding notion of what an artworld looks and feels like.

This handbook represents an introduction to more than 50 wide ranging examples of what we insist on calling Plausible Artworlds. These were the focus of a year long series of weekly public potlucks - hosted by the Basekamp group in Philadelphia and elsewhere - during which open informal discussions took place with representatives of these artworlds, along with other artists, writers, curators and anyone interested. Each of the examples in this book links to more resources online - podcasts, audio transcripts, skype text and images - from that year-long discussion series. Please accept this book, and online expanded version, as both an introduction and invitation to join us in an ongoing collaborative effort to research, discuss, and work towards new Plausible Artworlds…

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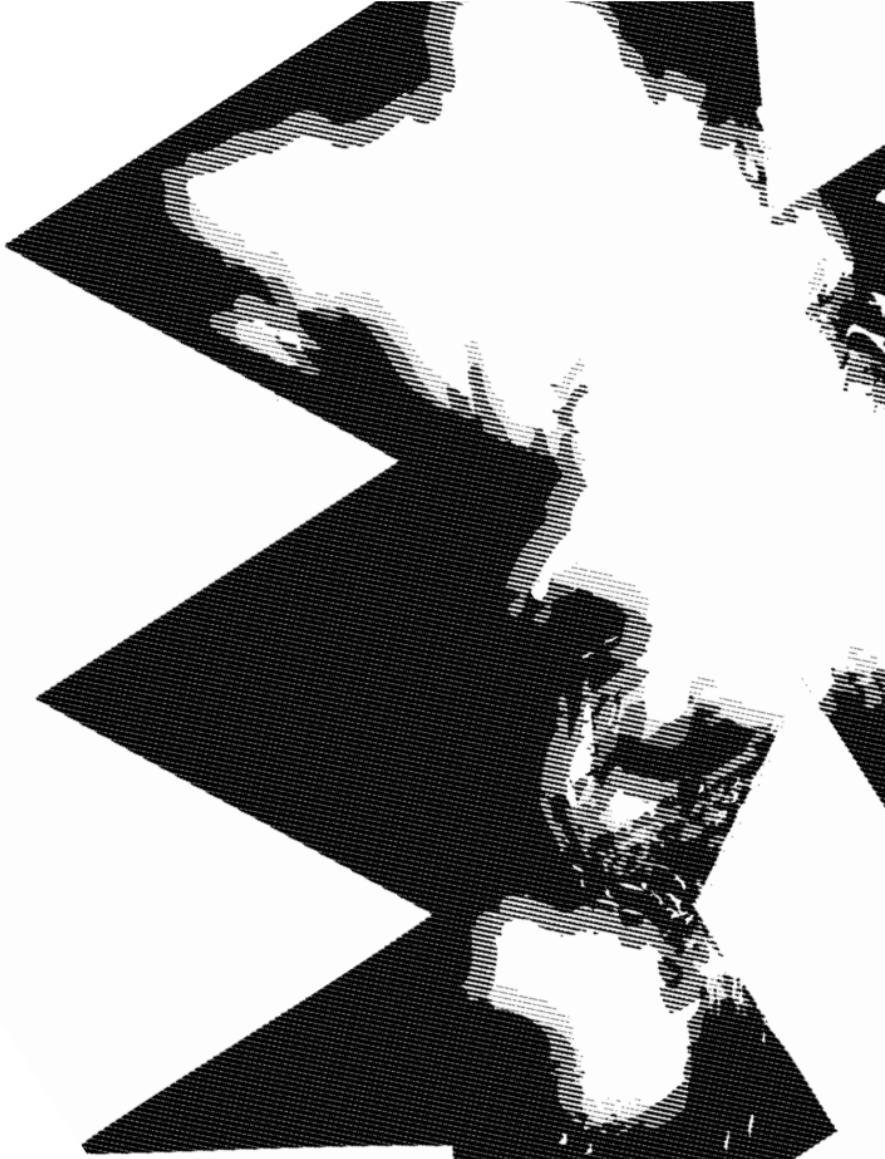Sunday Soup (85) / Eating in Public (87) / Art Work (89) / FEAST (93) / Loveland (95) / n.e.w.s. paid usership (97)

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How many kinds of artworlds are there?

"Kinds" is a nice way of putting it, since it dedramatizes the whole question of taxonomy – which is important to us since Plausible Artworlds focuses on the singularity of its "examples." The short answer, then, is that there are as many kinds of artworlds as there are examples. However, for convenience's sake we have drawn up an informal typology of several "kinds" of artworlds we're interested in examining: Organizational Art; Secessions and other social experiments; art(www)orlds and open-source culture; Alternative Economies; Autonomous information production; Archiving creative culture. The list is anything but exhaustive, and it may even be less helpful than misleading given that the projects we're looking at tend to overlap several of those "kinds" and remain ultimately undefined by any of them! Still, the list sometimes helps us be sure we are striking a balance in terms of what features of the mainstream variant people are seeking alternatives to. We deliberately avoided categorizing artworlds geographically: the artworlds we have looked at have been from all latitudes and longitudes and we've found as much common ground between the most far-flung as diversity amongst groups in close proximity to one another. The important thing, is that the projects actually exist, for again, this is not about "possible worlds" but all about looking at experiments exemplifying "plausible artworlds."

Why do you insist on writing "artworlds" in a single word like that? And why do you always use the plural form?

For one thing, so that those very questions get raised! It was Arthur Danto who first gave currency to referring to the artworld as a discrete, relatively autonomous entity requiring a single world: not the sphere of the world where art happens, but a world unto itself, with its own ontological specificity. As he puts it, "an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld."

Something has happened to art that makes it different than any other walk of human activity – precisely because anything can be art without ceasing to be whatever it also happens to be. Danto again: "These days one might

not be aware he was on artistic terrain without an artistic theory to tell him so. And part of the reason for this lies in the fact that terrain is constituted artistic in virtue of artistic theories, so that one use of theories, in addition to helping us discriminate art from the rest, consists in making art possible."

Of course, we don't want to underwrite the sort of separation between the artworld (the mainstream, museum- or market driven variant) and other life worlds the way Danto does! Quite the contrary, which is why we follow sociologist Howard Becker in pluralizing the term. In his book Art Worlds (1982), Becker offers a plausible definition of that concept: "Art worlds consist of all the people whose activities are necessary to the production of the characteristic works which that world, and perhaps others as well, define as art. Members of the art world co-ordinate the activities by which work is produced by referring to a body of conventional understandings embodied in common practice and in frequently used artefacts."

Art, in other words, is not the product of those professionals of expression known as artists alone; it can emerge, be sustained and gain value only within the framework of a specific artworld. Interestingly, Becker always speaks of artworlds *plural* – as if there were many of them, as if others were possible, as if still more were *plausible.* What is a plausible, as opposed to a merely possible or just plain existent, artworld? This project stems from the desire to unleash the potentiality of the plausible, as communities and collectivities around the world seek to redefine new, more plausible artworlds. For in a sense, what could be more *implausible* – that is, all too dismally plausible – than today's mainstream institutional artworld? The project is thus premised on a desire for irreducibly different plausible artworlds, not merely contrived takeoffs on existent organizational forms; a desire born not of a perceived lack or impoverishment of current models, but stemming like all genuine desire from a sense of excess of collective energies which are proactively coalescing in new artworlds.

From a philosophical perspective, it may seem a moot point to insist on the plurality of worlds. As Nelson Goodman eloquently argues in *Ways of Worldmaking* – following upon William James' *A Pluralistic Universe* –"if there is but one world, it embraces a multiplicity of contrasting aspects; if there are many worlds, the collection of them all is one. The one world may be taken as many, or the many worlds taken as one; whether one or many depends on the way of taking."

Why, then, insist on the multiplicity of worlds? Discursive strategy has something to do with it: it seems far more conceptually satisfying to insist on the multiplicity of artworlds than the overarching, all-encompassing, all-inclusive presence of a single artworld. It also seems important to stress that we are not talking about multiple *possible* alternatives to a single actual world; but of multiple, actual and hence plausible (albeit embryonic) worlds. But these plausible artworlds are not other-worldly: all worlds are made from bits and pieces (assemblages of symbols, words, forms, structures and still other assemblages) of existent worlds; making is remaking – though the outcomes can be incommensurately different.

If what you say is true, then no world is "a world unto itself." How do artworlds mesh with other lifeworlds?

An artworld is a relatively autonomous, art-sustaining environment or eco-system. Outside of an artworld, art – as it is currently construed – cannot be sustained over the long term. Art can, and of course does, make forays outside of its established circuits, but it invariably returns with the booty: repatriating into the confines of the artworld the artefacts and documents it has gleaned in its expedition into the lifeworld. This is mainstream art's predatory logic, all too reminiscent of colonialism; and though it may push back the boundaries of the artworld, it can by no means reconfigure or imagine any plausible alternatives to the status quo.

On the other hand, contrary to what the spatially determined metaphor might misleadingly suggest, an artworld is not a discrete "world" unto itself, un-tethered to the lifeworld. Spatially, these "worlds" are overlapping; there is nowhere that the lifeworld is, that the artworld cannot go.Their distinction is systemic (or chemical, like oil and water) not geographic. As ought to be obvious to any critically minded, participant-observer, the current mainstream artworld – and the plethora of variants which, in our pluralist societies, thrive upon it and parasite its resources, providing it with a permanent pool of innovation – curtails art's potential, impedes its unfettered development, defangs it.

Artworldly economies are inevitably bound up with other, broader economies. But plausible artworlds need not be mimetic of the restricted economy

of artificial scarcity, which sustains the exchange value of art today; they may be linked to a general, open-ended economy. A plausible artworld is an inherently critical proposition, in that it embodies a questioning of the apparent self-evidences of what an artworld entails: Does an artworld imply a reputational economy? Is an artworld premised on the struggle for recognition? Is an artworld necessarily founded upon the almost self-evident "holy trinity" of objecthood, authorship and spectatorship? That is, on the model that an artist produces objects for consumption by an audience?

Though artworks, artists and audiences have become naturalized features of some artworlds, they may be entirely foreign to other, equally plausible, artworlds. An example from fiction may help bring out the unforeseeable though plausible properties of competing or parallel world orders. In his fictional essay, "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins," Jorge Luis Borges describes "a certain Chinese Encyclopedia," the *Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge*, in which it is written that animals are divided into: "1. those that belong to the Emperor, 2. embalmed ones, 3. those that are trained, 4. suckling pigs, 5. mermaids, 6. fabulous ones, 7. stray dogs, 8. those included in the present classification, 9. those that tremble as if they were mad, 10. innumerable ones, 11. those drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, 12. others, 13. those that have just broken a flower vase, 14. those that from a long way off look like flies." As Michel Foucault admits in his preface to The Order of Things,

"This book first arose out of a passage in Borges, out of the laughter that shattered, as I read the passage, all the familiar landmarks of thought—our thought, the thought that bears the stamp of our age and our geography—breaking up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things and continuing long afterwards to disturb and threaten with collapse our age-old definitions between the Same and the Other."

This sort of artworld-shattering laughter may well prove contagious freeing us from clutches of a single world, leading not to a "Noah's Ark" of worlds but a broader spectrum of plausible, mutually irreducible artworlds.

Wouldn't it make more sense to just try and integrate the mainstream artworld rather than trying to change the world? It seems juvenile, utopian even dreamlike to try and change the artworld or any other world!

One has to be pretty mean-spirited to find much wrong with dreaming. But what I like best about dreams is that they put the lie to the increasingly prevalent idea that we all live in the same world – the very quintessence of contemporary ideology. Clad in the decidedly dad-reminiscent rhetorical garments of "common sense," the one-world argument is regularly trotted out by our neoliberal realists to encourage us to fall into line, wake up to reality, singular, and give up our insistence on alternatives to the merely existent. In the name of the efficient governance of the existent order, they trivialise the fictionalising imagination – that is, the imagination that splinters and multiplies the real – as utopian dreaming, claiming that the real is one. But in making such a claim, they let the cat out of the bag – if only because everyone has that extraordinary and yet perfectly ordinary experience of dreaming. Everyone experiences the fission, fusion and overlapping of on-tological landscapes that is the stuff of dreams. Dreams – however stereo-typed, reassuring or troubling – are the most basic and intimate form of that world-fictionalising function that adds an "s" to the notion of a world. The possible and impossible worlds of dreams, their very plurality, should be enough for us to intuitively refuse the injunction to align our dream worlds with the so- called "real world." And an injunction it invariably is, because the very mention of the "real world" is intrinsically congenial to the powers-that-be.

A generation ago, Herbert Marcuse sought to defend dreamspace as a placeholder if not indeed a crowbar of the imagination in the established order."Today it is perhaps less irresponsible to develop a grounded utopia than to write off as utopian the idea of conditions and possibilities which have for a long time been perfectly attainable."

His point, I take it, is not just that other worlds are possible, but that they are this one. However, I am prepared to make a brief concession to the realists in the form of a thought experiment (realists can't possibly like thought experiments – they fly in the face of their whole mindset, so it isn't much of a concession anyway). Rather than talking about possible worlds, let us consider plausible ones – and not just of the conjectural variety but worlds which have actually found some inchoate form of embodiment. Which is why we love so much Miss Rockaway Armada's self-description: "We want to be a living, kicking model of an entirely different world — one that in this case happens to float."

But what you insist on dismissively calling the "mainstream artworld" is actually a very plural environment! In the name of art, one can get away with almost anything! Is that benevolence genuine or just an illusion upon which its hegemony is founded?

It must be clear that those would-be artworlds that are merely parasitical on the mainstream artworld's resources – its money, its reputational economy, its conventions, its acceptability – are not plausible artworlds, but merely a by-product secreted by any intelligent system (and an artworld is an intelligent system) in its attempt to shore up its legitimacy and ensure its long-term hegemony. One is never more enslaved to a system than when one imagines oneself to be free from it – and given the blasé, been-there-done-that outlook of many critical artworlders, it is staggering to observe their epistemological naiveté in overlooking the extent to which they and their contrivances are the pure product of the mainstream artworld. To imagine a substantively different artworld necessarily entails deconstructing the conceptual norms and conventions (along with the devices through which they are expressed) in order to reconstruct a plausible alternative. Such apparently self-evident conceptual institutions as objecthood, authorship, spectatorship, visibility and a host of others need to be subjected to sustained and systematic scrutiny in order to reveal them as the product of history (an inheritance of the Renaissance) rather than the natural order of all things artistic.

We *assume*, for instance, that art must engender *expectation* (see something, do something, be something) and that an artworld can be circumscribed by the horizon of expectation specific to it. But is expectation a necessary or merely an artworldly contingent feature of art? Any plausible artworld must provide for the sustenance of those who are in it. But does that necessarily entail an *economy* – that is, an internal order of monetary and reputational value where expenditure is ultimately commensurate with income, loss on par with profit?

What you call "plausible artworlds" is actually a description you ascribe from without. The projects you invite to take part and describe as plausible artworlds were not initially conceived as such. There would seem to be a difficulty inherent in representing an artworld when one is immanent to it.

Very true. Because of divergent value systems, it is comparatively easy for one artworld to observe another and objectify its workings. But to understand why there are artworlds, one requires empathetic, and thus to some extent participatory observation, which at the same time makes any fully integrated representation impossible – for how is one to account for one's internal yet privileged observation point? To put it differently, no transcendent perspective is available on the artworld to which we are immanent. This paradox, which tends to further naturalise the status quo, cannot be wished away. It means that there is no outside perspective from which to observe and deconstruct the artworld.

In an incisive article, entitled "From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique" drawing heavily on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, institutional-critique artist Andrea Fraser writes: "Just as art cannot exist outside the field of art, we cannot exist outside the field of art, at least not as artists, critics, curators, etc. And what we do outside the field, to the extent that it remains outside, can have no effect within it. So if there is no outside for us,

it is not because the institution is perfectly closed, or exists as an apparatus in a 'totally administered society,' or has grown all-encompassing in size and scope. It is because the institution is inside of us, and we can't get outside of ourselves."

Though there is something not only frustrating but logically scandalous about this kind of discursive self-limitation, which only just allows reflecting on one's own enclosure, Fraser's position deserves to be taken very seriously. In the face of art's enduring desire to break free from the by now quite implausible mainstream artworld, Fraser maintains that art is, and must by definition be autonomous."With each attempt to evade the limits of institutional determination, to embrace an outside, we expand our frame and bring more of the world into it. But we never escape it."

This is a schoolbook-class instance of one-world theory at work in the artistic imagination, or what remains of it.

There is not single recipe for thinking out of and around this kind of logical closure, but again, we must be clear not to merely play at finding alternatives – tantamount to mere gaming in a slightly eccentric creative sandbox that the mainstream is only to happy to provide and maintain. Perhaps then our best prospect is to imagine the artworld to which we are immanent, yet with which we are dissatisfied, as if it were freed from the normative structures that curb art's potential. And rather than seeing that plausible space as empty – without authorship, without spectatorship, without visibility, without objecthood and so on – to see it as replete with plausible potential. A note on the plausible, to suspend reflection for the time being. Unlike the possible, which implies an as yet unactualised variant on a presumed "real" world, the plausible almost inherently invokes worlds in the plural. In Nelson Goodman's words,"With false hopes of a firm foundation gone, with the world displaced by worlds that are but versions, with substance dissolved into function, and the given acknowledged as taken, we face the questions of how worlds are made, tested, and known."

Organizational art

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Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking about Cittedellarte, the interdisciplinary laboratory founded in 1998 by artist Michelangelo Pistoletto, near Turin, Italy. Parts of Pistoletto's project have recently been activated at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Plausible Artworlds has been invited to host a debate — this coming Friday, 12 November — in the museum's exhibition space as to whether Cittedellarte is (or not) plausibly an artworld. Tonight's conversation will be the occasion to take a first, and informed, stab at that question.

The name, Cittadellarte, implies both a fortified enclave and a (plausible) city of art. As a quasi institution in and of itself, the project is structured around several autonomous and self-organized offices geared toward a multiplicity of topics such as art, economics, education, politics, ecology, and communication. Indebted to Pistoletto's participatory work of the mid- to late 1960s, for which is he renowned, Cittadellarte places at the core of these diverse offices and activities the artist's commitment to an "art [that is] at the center of a responsible process of transformation of society."

However praiseworthy those aims, one cannot but wonder to what extent a project that is so comfortably at home within the physical and conceptual architecture of the mainstream attention economy can be considered a genuine alternative. To what degree does the project merely expand the artist's notoriety within the reputational economy? On the other hand, what elements, components or ingredients of Cittadellarte may be truly useful for rethinking artworlds, their structure and use? From its very inception, Plausible Artworlds has struggled with the ticklish question as to how to deal with projects (like Cittadellarte and others) that seem both to be, and not to be, plausible art-sustaining systems… A debate it is high time to open.

Organizational art

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Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Geoff Lowe, Jacqueline Riva and a half dozen or so other members of A Constructed World.

A Constructed World make whatever they make — events, installations, videos, drawings and publications — using the media of not-knowing, idle banter, pamphleteering, live eels, dancing, absences and errors, sleight-of-hand and mistakes. In addition to talking about their projects over the years, which has focused largely on raising the question "what is a group?" collectively, and approaching working with other people as constituting what psychoanalysts call a shared space of "not-knowing", the group will discuss their recent "Fragments in A Constructed World" project, premised on the hypothesis that there may be a lot of unknown overlaps, or potential points of shared interest between people who aren't aware of that yet. The project has entailed setting up spaces for dialogue, using fragments of Morse code, Chinese pictograms, telepathy… In fact, this week's discussion will be an open-ended instantiation of the project, even as the group discusses specific tangible methods and infrastructures which they have set up.

This is of course all very much in the spirit and undefined ambit of Plausible Artworlds, which by design is committed to the idea that all (art)worlds are constructed worlds — yet in both popular and learned parlance to describe a world as "constructed" is not trivially tautological. Why is it that worlds appear invariably natural to those operating in them? Or do we "not-know" they are constructed as a form of knowing? Perhaps this is the key to the experimental epistemology of not-knowing. Who knows? And by extension, who brings what to group making? What form of not-knowing do artists — or other categories of not-knowers — bring to world-construction sites?

Organizational art

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Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Julie Martin, one of the founders — with artist Robert Rauschenberg and Billy Klüver, then a research scientist at Bell Laboratories — of Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.), a groundbreaking initiative in the late 1960s that brought artists, engineers and scientists together in an attempt to rethink and to overcome the split between the worlds of art, science and technology that had come to characterize and warp modernity.

A series of performances organized in 1966 incorporating video projection, wireless sound transmission, and Doppler sonar — now commonplace but at the time emergent technologies, still untried in art production — laid the way for the group's founding in 1967. Until the early 1980s (and the beginning of the Reagan era), E.A.T. promoted interdisciplinary collaborations through a program pairing artists and engineers. It also encouraged research into new means of expression at the crossroads of art and such emerging technologies as computer-generated images and sounds, satellite transmission, synthetic materials and robotics.

The whole experiment, with all its utopian energy, is somehow reminiscent of a Thomas Pynchon novel: born of a union between the anything-is-plausible outlook typical of art and science at the time and the blossoming technology industries indirectly funded by the Vietnam war, E.A.T. is undoubtedly one of the most inspiring and emblematic attempts ever undertaken to bridge the gap between the worlds of art and technique. As instructive in its measurable success as in its ultimate inability to correct for the ideological bias inherent to an industrial laboratory, E.A.T. continues to point to a horizon shared by many collectives today — as for instance in its 1969 call for PROJECTS OUTSIDE ART, dealing with such issues as "education, health, housing, concern for the natural environment, climate control, transportation, energy production and distribution, communication, food production and distribution, women's environment, cooking entertainment, sports…"

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Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Jeremy Beaudry from the anomalously named "Think Tank that has yet to be named", a sort of roving creative public policy institute that initiates site-specific conversations, performative actions, and educational projects questioning contemporary urban issues wherever they happen to crop up. Specifically, the group is concerned with how artists and their creative practices so often end up embroiled in urban (re)development strategies, gentrification and the general homogenization of urban space.

Since its inception in 2006, the Think Tank's permanently open-ended de-nomination draws particular attention each time it is enunciated to the perils and pitfalls of name giving — above all naming's inherent tendency to a assign a fixed identity, something any would-be plausible artwork must be wary of. Naming is a powerful political act when it makes a previous-ly unauthorized body appear; yet perhaps only "as-yet-to-be-naming" can perpetuate this political potential over time. As Jeremy Beaudry, Director of the Dept for the Investigation of Meaning, explains, "the Think Tank is comprised of several Departments, each led by a single Director. There can be no Department without a Director, and there can be no Director without a Department. Directors are both autonomous agents and cooperative col-laborators. In this respect, the Think Tank has no members, only directors. The declaration of a directorship in a Department amounts to a statement of that individual's bias and agenda. Nothing is more offensive to the Think Tank than the pretense of neutrality." The list of names of the Think Tank's Departments (past and present) wryly makes the point:

The list of names of the Think Tank's Departments (past and present) wryly makes the point:

Dept. for the Investigation of Authenticity (DIA)
Dept. for the Investigation of Cross-Pollination (DICP)
Dept. for the Investigation of Documentary Subjectivity (DIDS)
Dept. for the Investigation of Ecological Subjectivity (DIES)
Dept. for the Investigation of Failure (DIF)
Dept. for the Investigation of InterSubjectivity (DIIS)
Dept. for the Investigation of Meaning (DIM)
Dept. for the Investigation of Metaphorical Agency (DIMetA)
Dept. for the Investigation of Neutrality & Palatability (DINP)
Dept. for the Investigation of Radical Pedagogy (DIRP)
Dept. for the Investigation of ReHumanization (DIRH)
Dept. for the Investigation of the Structure of Expectations (DISE)
Dept. for the Investigation of Tactical Education (DITE)
Dept. for the Investigation of Tactical and Strategic Alignment (DITSA)
Dept. for the Investigation of the Unmentionable and the authentic
Dept. for the Investigation of the Unthinkable (DIUT)

Organizational art

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with the founders of the CIA or El Centro de In-
vestigaciones Artísticas — more casually referred to by those in its immedi-
ate periphery as "El Centro", in Buenos Aires. A literal translation would be
the "Center for Artistic Research" but the founders of the southerly Centro
— artists Graciela Hasper, Roberto Jacoby, and Judi Werthein — tend to
nudge the acronym toward a "center for intelligence in art".

El Centro is an artist-run space of interaction and debate for artists and
thinkers from around the world, with an emphasis on rethinking norms
imposed by northern "centers". The CIA began operations in 2009, but
emerged from intensive discussions in 2006 on the need for renewing art
education, devising more plausible teaching models and education envi-
ronments going beyond disciplinary and geographical frontiers were. The
CIA's activities are extradisciplinary, with a strong pedagogical focus on
historic research and art theory conducted virtually and physically. The CIA
seeks to hone the critical tools needed to challenge the frontiers of genres
and disciplines, expanding the borders of practice, genre and media; pro-
moting those that propose new ways of production, of exhibition and ex-
change; those that explore broader social contexts than the institutional or
market-based mainstream.

Though El Centro operates an international residency program, its lec-
tures, seminars, courses and workshops are also very much neighborhood
based: neighbors are encouraged to participate, implicitly challenging the
artists' exclusive expert position on art-related questions, thereby ironically
decentering the axis of the artworld — socially as well as geo-politically.

Organizational art

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Marisa Jahn, currently in the throes of compiling and editing a collection of essays and conversations entitled "Byproducts: On the Excess of Embedded Art Practices," to be published this fall by YYZ Books (Toronto).

"Byproducts" examines art-related projects — many of which have been discussed in the context of Plausible Artworlds — whose artfulness lies in building micro-worlds within other non-artworld systems. While parasitically reliant on the socioeconomic structure and symbolic order of other dominant systems, these artworks or "byproducts" — exploit loopholes, surpluses and exceptions in order to affirm individual agency and complexify the mechanisms of their dominant "host." As pivots or turning points between art and other sectors, these works function as carriers for meaning across disciplines.

Through examples from the late 1960s through to the present (including Au Travail / At Work, Experiments in Art and Technology, The Yes Men, Mr. Peanut, Reverend Billy, Kristin Lucas, Janez Jansa), 'Byproducts' explores what vocabularies may be required to describe, and what criteria needed for evaluating these practices. The book draws both on Jahn's involvement in the arts as an artist/writer, her invitations as a practitioner-from-the-outside into other disciplines, and her work as an outreach/campaign coordinator and community organizer with a variety of grassroots advocacy-based organizations. Plausible artworlds within "Plausible Artworlds"…

Organizational art

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Kent Hansen from the Copenhagen-based initiative, Democratic Innovation.

Democratic Innovation was founded in 1998 by Kent Hansen as a way of fostering greater interplay between art, free association and working life. Though not a collective/group per se, the initiative's focus is definitely on collective work — and the collective workplace is the site of its interventions. Responding to the challenges facing democracy in today's neoliberal economy, Democratic Innovation instigates collaborations within institutions, organizations and corporations. Typically, Hansen and his collaborators work with people in factories and businesses, seeking to integrate other artists and groups using art as an organizing platform, to consider how democracy — as it is currently understood, but also as it could be reconfigured — might be used to improve people's working lives.

Experiences and knowledge creation in the workplace play an extensive role in cultural and societal developments — and are carefully scrutinized by neo-management as a way of increasing profits. But what if they were to be taken seriously on their own terms? Would that not be something of a "democratic innovation"? Thus, the initial 'platform' for democratic innovation is the notion that the 'collective workplace' is a time-space where different norms and conceptions about 'production', 'procedures' and 'life' are struggling for legitimacy — and where collective aesthetic strategies can challenge the 'ordinary' practice of organizing and decision-making regarding 'production' – be it cultural, societal or industrial.

Democratic Innovation is thus seeking alternative models to 'managerial practices'. Can art practices contribute to the development of a critique of current neo-management practices and organizing regimes? Do participatory collaborative art practices merely mimic soft-management tactics or do they have the potential to point the way to democratic innovation?

Organizational art

~~Cittadellarte (19) / A Constructed World (21) / E.A.T. (Experiments in Art and Technology) (23) / The Think Tank that has yet to be named (25) / Centro de Investigaciones Artisticas (29) / byproducts (31) / Democratic Innovation (33) /~~ **Au travail - At Work collective (35)** ~~/ Orgacom (37) / Artist Placement Group (39) / Reinigungsgesellschaft (41)~~

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with some of the people AT WORK / AU TRAVAIL, which is not so much a collective as an open call to artists and workers around the world to regard their workplace – whatever it may be – as a site of clandestine art production. Members are invited to consider their current employment as a kind of readymade artist's residency, complete with wages, social connections, resources, and downtime. At Work / Au travail's members, far from attempting to unite labor in order to leverage its power against capital, have simply stopped believing in work altogether, while continuing to be "At Workers." Rather than sabotaging the means of production, they use their right to manage their won labor time in order to turn the machines to other experimental purposes — or just turn them off for a bit. In so doing, "At Workers" seek to transform their conditions of exploitation into the conditions of freedom, with no further goal than the continued practice of their own personal freedom. While this strategy might be read as so much playful resignation in our era of generalized precarious labor, it offers the following provocation: the onus is on each of us individually, and all of us collectively, to produce our own freedom, regardless of how hopeless the conditions might appear.

Created in Montreal around 2004, AU TRAVAIL / AT WORK now has members worldwide — indeed, one wonders how many people are NOT potential members! It offers its members a network of relations as well as methods for sharing, and organizing exhibitions that ensure the dissemination of their ideas, actions, and accomplishments. Immersed in highly diverse sectors of the economy, does AT WORK / AU TRAVAIL sketch the contours of a new form of commitment, where the all-too-stifling workaday world is a plausible artworld?

Organizational art

Hi Again,

This week we'll be talking with Orgacom, a group located between Istanbul & Amsterdam.

Orgacom (a combination of the words 'ORGAnization' and 'COMmunication') aims to develop and introduce new roles for art within businesses and non-profit-organizations.

Orgacom is primarily concerned with visualizing the culture of companies and groups through contemporary art. Through this visualization, Orgacom encourages companies and organizations to reflect on their group culture in a nontraditional manner. Through creating images that express the specific culture in which participants are involved, Orgacom wants to encourage them to reconsider the various roles art can play in their lives.

Though employees of companies are often highly educated and interested in culture, the images and ideas relevant to their experiences within business life are rarely found in the most visible artworlds. Orgacom has chosen the experiences of people in companies as a subject. This choice may result in the discovery of new themes, new methods of presenting art, a new audience, and may even make the development of a new vocabulary of images possible. Or, given the dramatic disparities in the power relations between art and business, it may lead to art becoming still more vulnerable to co-optation by so-called creative capitalism.

What makes Orgacom's plausible artworld compelling is that it boldly challenges the assumptions of both activist artists (for whom the group's practice is tantamount to sleeping with the enemy) and of more market-based practitioners (who basically want no truck with the collective "experiences" and identities of wage laborers, except in their capacity as art lovers).

Organizational art

Hi Everyone,

We'll be talking with Barbara Steveni, co-founder of the legendary APG, or Artist Placement Group (later renamed O + I, for Organization + Imagination), an important precursor for many later "organizational art" practices, who are not always fully aware of the scope of APG's proposal to rethink artist's place in our lifeworlds, while at the same time maintaining art's fundamental autonomy.

The discussion will happen in-person both at Apexart in New York, and Basekamp in Philadelphia. And just like other weeks, people will be joining by Skype from many other locations.

About Artist Placement Group / O + I
The Artist Placement Group (APG) emerged in London in the 1960s. The organisation actively sought to reposition the role of the artist within a wider social context, including government and commerce, while at the same time playing an important part in the history of conceptual art during the 1960s and 1970s. APG as is undoubtedly one of the most radical social experiments of the 1960s, yet it raises many questions as to where artistic agency can be most effective, palpable — and corrosive.

This conversation will take place in the context of the exhibition, "The Incidental Person", curated by Antony Hudek at Apexart. The term "incidental person" was coined by the late artist John Latham (co-founder, with Steveni and others, of APG) to describe the status of the artist as he saw it: both "incidentally" a farmer, a cook, a thief, a scientist, a house painter or real estate agent and, no less incidentally, an artist. Indeed APG saw no opposition between art and other fields of human endeavor — the latter being support systems for the former. Talk about plausible artworlds!

Organizational art

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Henrik Mayer and Martin Keil from REINI-GUNGSGESELLSCHAFT, (whose German implications range from "Cleaning Service" to "Purification Society"), an "artistic venture" as they call it, working "at the point of intersection between art and social reality". Of course art is itself a social reality, though the mainstream artworld encourages artists to remain aloof from other realities, representing them, exploiting them as material, rather than merging with them. Reingungsgesellschaft, however, operates in open, project-oriented collaboration, taking the form of autonomous organisations. They place unresolved social questions at the heart of their practice, integrating critical content into advertising-style strategies, which differentiate themselves from traditional product or target-group promotional models. Through their work with partners from different fields of human endeavour, inventing platforms for non-disciplinary activities, they use art as an art-specific form of social inquiry ("The Readymade Demonstration"), and a catalyst of social and economic processes. The collective's work method seeks to connect different spheres of society and, potentially, to find other, more substantive life-sustaining environments for both art-making and art-doing.

Secessions and other social experiments

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Secessions and other social experiments

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Miran Mohar, founding member (with fellow artists Dušan Mandiⵌ, Andrej Savski, Roman Uranjek, and Borut Vogelnik, who may also skype in) of IRWIN, a collective of Slovenian artists, primarily painters, which would become the visual-arts wing of the broader collective Neue Slowenische Kunst (NSK).

IRWIN was founded in 1983 by a group of guys from the punk and graffiti scene in Ljubljana, who decided to call themselves Rrose Irwin Sélavy. The name of course is a wink to Marcel Duchamp, who used "Rrose Sélavy" (pronounced, tautologically, as éros c'est la vie) as one of his feminine pseudonyms. The group subsequently shortened the name to R Irwin S. In 1984, the group co-founded a larger collective known as Neue Slowe-nische Kunst (NSK), with like-minded artists from other fields, including the rock band Laibach, and the Scipion Nasice Sisters Theater group. NSK's modus operandi was what their contemporary and compatriot Slavoj Zizek has called "over-identification": that is, rather than critiquing powerfully con-noted political imagery (including Soviet, fascist, religious and Suprematist images), they would endorse it to an excess, to considerable traumatic and provocative effect, engendering confusion that could only be resolved by acknowledging that no space, no frame — no world of interpretation — is neutral. In some ways, it was a particular, post-Yugoslavian brand of institu-tional critique; but the insistence on collective, depersonalized production, pushed IRWIN and NSK as a whole in the direction of imagining alternative forms of political communities, including the project "A State in Time", which led to opening embassies and consulates in Moscow, Ghent and Florence, issuing NSK passports to "citizens" who have used them to cross borders.

More recently, IRWIN has developed the large-scale, open-ended carto-graphic project "East Art Map" (presented at Basekamp in 2006), one of the most ambitious attempts to map the vectors of influence and development

SK GARDA
PRIŠTINA

in collaboration with Kosovo Army, November 8, 2007

of conceptual art in the countries of the former Soviet bloc — reappropri-
ating a history and horizon of aspirations and production, challenging the
hegemony of the Western art-historical canon. With humor and meticulous
detail — not to mention some beautiful maps — IRWIN has shown the im-
portance for any plausible world to be able to map its trajectory. The group
refers to this approach with the paradoxical term "Retro-avant-gardism",
drawing attention to the temporal provincialism inherent in conventional art
history with the 1987 statement: "The Future is the seed of the past." With
one week left to go in our year-long cycle of discussions, and before Plau-
sible Artworlds morphs into a new project, what could be more important to
address than that performative paradox?

Secessions and other social experiments

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with J. Morgan Puett, co-founder (with Mark Dion) of Mildred's Lane, a long-term collaborative experiment in research and event-based practices situated on a 92-acre farm compound in the upper Delaware River Valley region of Pennsylvania.

Mildred's Lane might be simply described as an "artists' colony" — a remote location, bringing artists and art-related practitioners together for discussions, shack building, worldmaking and dinners — except that given the methodological agenda, it is actually more oriented toward "decolonizing" our very conceptions of art and the world. As they put it: "The project is actively reassembling the terms of exchange and collaboration, and enthusiastically soliciting participation to co-evolve our (inter and intra) institutional engagements. It means to be a revolutionary rigorous rethinking (the 3 Rs) of the contemporary art complex." "Complex" is a nice term, largely but not quite synonymous with "world", adding an interesting nuance by suggesting an intricate plurality within a single expanded field.

The project statement suggests that this is not so much art about life, but literally life about art — everyday living as practice: "The core of the project practice and educational philosophy at Mildred's Lane is an attempt to collectively create new modes of being in the world — this idea incorporates questions of our relation to the environment, systems of labor, forms of dwelling, new sociality — all of which compose an ethics of comportment – and are embodied in workstyles. As a participant at Mildred's Lane these issues will be negotiated daily through the rethinking of one's involvements with food, shopping, making, styling, gaming, sleeping, reading, thinking and doing. This is a program and a place where a work-live-research environment is developed to foster a rigorous engagement with every aspect of life. The entire curriculum is based on experimentally rethinking being as a practice."

Secessions and other social experiments

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with some of the sailors and crew from Miss Rockaway Armada, "both a collection of individuals and an idea", as they put it with their characteristic understatement.

The idea takes the form of a flotilla of rafts the 30-odd individuals cobbled together themselves out of trash and which they are using to float down the Mississippi River. How plausible does that sound for an artworld adrift on America's major inland waterway, in wake of eighteenth-century performance artist Johnny Appleseed? "The catch," as they disarmingly put it, "is that we don't much about boats or rivers, and we don't have any money." Why would that stop anyone? "Last year we met in Minneapolis in late July with sections of our raft in tow. We pieced together our pontoons and filled them with salvaged blocks of foam. We made it beautiful and tied on anything that would float, adding it to our junk armada, our anarchist county fair, our fools ark. Our precious cargo is everything we hold dear: pieces and parts of the culture we are already creating. Our zines and puppets, sewing projects and poster campaigns, mutant bicycles and punk rock marching bands. Plus our thoughts and dreams and irrepressible energy."

The Mississippi float is not the group's first voyage. Under the name of The Swimming Cities of Serenissima, members of the group last year sailed on the Adriatic Sea from Slovenia to Venice on a fleet of boats homemade from junk.

Fun? Adventure? Not only.

"We want to be a living, kicking model of an entirely different world — one that in this case happens to float."

Can we borrow that one for Plausible Artworlds mission statement?

Secessions and other social experiments

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Vienna-based artist Ralo Mayer who has been researching "Biosphere 2," a radical experiment from the 1980s that sought to reproduce the earth's biosphere in a gigantic, hermetically sealed greenhouse in the middle of the Nevada desert, where a group of eight artists — self-described for the purpose as "bions" — went to live in total isolation from the rest of the world for two years. Inside, they would produce, seed and harvest all the food they needed to live, while closely tracking biospheric conditions.

As it happened, the group's mission in this Noa's Ark of the desert coincided with the fall of the Berlin wall and the subsequent redefining of global priorities, including scientific priorities. The project drew sharp criticism from the academic community — perhaps jealously guarding its role as arbiter of biospheric knowledge — which dismissed it as crackpot science, leading the project's financier to withdraw his support, and the group disbanded. Today, the greenhouse and the property on which it is located has been purchased by a local real estate developer, who has applied to turn the area into an upscale gated community.

Named after Biosphere 1 (that is, our Earth), the project was both a time machine and a scale model. It was above all, in the words of its initiators, a "time microscope enabling the witnessing of as many events as possible in a short period of time." In many respects, Biosphere 2 has exceeded all expectations in the witness it continues to bear to life here in Biosphere 1. Ralo Mayer's extensive research into the hopes, prospects, dreams and illusions of Biosphere 2, as well as its all too prosaic fate, is part of his long-term research series, "How to do things with worlds."

CALL TO FARMS

Continental Drift throu
t Radical Culture C

Secessions and other social experiments

IRWIN (45) / Mildred's Lane (49) / Miss Rockaway Armada (51) / Biosphere 2 (53) / **Continental Drift through the Midwest Radical Cultural Corridor (56)** / House Magic: The European squatted social centers movement (57)

Hi everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Brian Holmes about Continental Drift through the Midwest Radical Cultural Corridor.

Continental Drift through the Midwest Radical Cultural Corridor is an invitation to look at our collective existence on all the relevant scales: the intimate, the local, the national, the continental and the global. It is a mobile assemblage of people presenting their projects, observations, experiments, discoveries and questions, and producing value through social exchange and a self-educating tour through our concrete world and its abstract representations, discovering distant lives in familiar situations, and embracing the interdependency that links what is usually treated as separate. Continental Drift is intended for anyone seeking to locate global economies, pressures and possibilities in daily life and to reorient aesthetic invention in response to an ethics of equality.

CORRESPONDENCE

Secessions and other social experiments

~~IRWIN (45) / Mildred's Lane (49) / Miss Rockaway Armada (51) / Biosphere 2 (53) / Continental Drift through the Midwest Radical Cultural Corridor (56)~~ / **House Magic: The European squatted social centers movement (57)**

Hi everyone,

This week Alan Moore will join us in person to talk about the research project and exhibition House Magic: Bureau of Foreign Correspondence, which will be opening at Basekamp the same night.

House Magic: Bureau of Foreign Correspondence is a first step in a project to explore squatted social centers in Europe. The social center was a key feature of the Italian Autonomist movement of the 1970s and 80s. Squats on the Lower East Side of New York City borrowed elements of English and German social centers, including cafes, infoshops, performance spaces and art galleries. Across Europe, social centers became important organizing foci of the global justice movement during the first decade of the new century. House Magic will present this important movement through an accumulation of printed material, videos and public events.

Art(www)orlds and open-source culture

Art(www)orlds and open-source culture

Abriendo Caminos/La Comunitaria TV (61) / kuda.org (65) / Post autono-
my (69) / Pad.ma (73) / Design Studio for Social Intervention (75) / Free Art
License (77) / Beyond Participation: Toward Massively Collaborative Worlds
of Art (79) / Freenode (81)

Hi everyone,

This week we'll be talking to Federico Geller, a founding member of the Bue-
nos Aires-based group Abriendo Caminos / La Comunitaria TV, a collective
which uses popular pedagogy principles to carry out training workshops on
media tools — including video, radio and other art-related practices — with
groups and communities whose use of media is all to often as consumers
rather than producers.

"Communication", the group asserts, "is a human right that is curtailed
when the media of expression and distribution are concentrated in a few
hands alone. With our own media, we seek to multiply the voices, the per-
spectives and proposals that enable us to move toward a more democratic
society." On this basis, the group works very concretely to construct and
share popular communications tools to produce a diversity of voices — and
above all to open spaces where voices typically dismissed as noise make
themselves heard as necessary and dissenting parts of the conversation
in an non egalitarian society. The collective also works towards producing
documents and records of social struggles, and on political intervention in
public space using different types of visual and other media. It produces
Radionautas, a weekly radio program in and for Don Orione, a densely pop-
ulated but neglected neighborhood in the outskirts of Buenos Aires.

What does it mean to use art-related communications tools and practices
for such purposes? To deploy them in lifeworlds so far outside the frame-
work of the mainstream artworld? At the very least, by suggesting that these
tools and practices are potentially empowering — and may even be threat-
ening to an unequal social order — they seem to stake out a very strong
position with regard to a question which has come up countless times in the
course of our discussions this year: What does art bring, if anything, to the
collaborative endeavors in which it partakes? By seeing art as competence
rather than object, as a tool rather than the end product, they believe that

art does have a crucial role in lifeworld transformation. The type of television produced by La Comunitaria TV in the course of the workshops jars expectations geared toward the horizon of the mainstream — suggesting that the post-conceptual practices we call "plausible artworlds" are often very close in terms of their values to the mainstream they are seeking to escape. And this becomes clear in comparison with the collective work and world of Abriendo Caminos, an artworld utterly unlike any other we have examined, focusing on the desire to give world extension to the overlooked and the unheard. And perhaps the reason why the group's latest project is called "Que Viva la Diversidad!" — whose subtitle alone explains the kinship with the outlook of Plausible Artworlds: "Los mundos posibles son mundos diversos"

Art(www)orlds and open-source culture

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Branka Curcic and Zoran Pantelic of new media center_kuda.org, an independent organization in Novi Sad, Serbia, which brings together artists, media activists, and researchers interested in the political uses, creative misuses and social repurposing of free and open information and communications technologies.

"Kuda" means "where to?" and that open-ended query is pretty much the conversation-starter that underlies all the organization's activities and programs. Initially, the question was quite literally about the world in which the small media center was trying to emerge. Its current day offices, and former activities space, is situated between a post office and a fishmonger in an industrial working class neighbourhood far from the city center. The original set of old computers that made up the center's internet café were discarded Bavarian government machines from the 1990s, picked up by kuda.org director Zoran Pantelic, who hauled them to Serbia shortly after the NATO air raids, reconfiguring them all with Linux operating systems. Those prehistoric beasts now stand on a selfmade bar in one of the rooms of the center. Today as before, for all visitors to kuda.org, Internet access (on much newer machines!) is as free as a free beer.

Kuda.org's work focuses on questions concerning the interpretation and analysis of the history and significance of the information society, the potential of information itself, and its influence on social policy making. New Media Center_kuda.org opens space for both cultural dialog and alternative methods of education and research through a series of programs, including kuda.lounge (a series of presentation, talks and lectures — some 100 events since 2000), kuda.info (providing free internet access), kuda.production (a matrix for publishing and exhibition) as well as offering free bandwidth to artists and activists.

Clearly, the world in which Kuda.org operates is utterly at odds with the mainstream political, cultural and artistic landscape of post-Socialist Yugoslavia and contemporary Serbia — a lifeworld adverse and often hostile to the types of practices kuda.org thinks of as "art". Looking at kuda.org's track record, one cannot but wonder whether worldmaking is not inevitably informed by a performative "where-to" logic. But at the same time, kuda.org has provided a platform for assembling answer's to its eponymous question — one that seeks to extract its own consistency from the components of the assemblages which it has produced. The enduring question is how to do just that over the long term — how to assemble plausible collectivities that function as counter-currents against all the seductions of fall-back positions, become aware of their own pitfalls and blindspots, while finding ways to realize their potential, risking themselves in the face of others.

What is Past Autonomy?

The phrase is

not applicable to
any aspect of
ont∞logical
contiguity.

Art(www)orlds and open-source culture

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with London-based artist David Goldenberg, who several years ago launched a website called "Post Autonomy", which functions as a research platform into the concept and loose-knit movement of "postautonomous" art.

Goldenberg attributes the term "Post Autonomy" to German Conceptualist Michael Lingner, but has subsequently sought to further develop this idea into a full theoretical concept and working practice. If "autonomy" — whatever that term may be construed to mean — is widely understood as the dominant paradigm of modernist art practice (i.e.- a private or at least individual art practice), unpacking some of the ways and means of whatever goes "beyond autonomy" is indeed a crucial task for any plausible artworld today. Thus Goldenberg's emphatic stance with respect to "Post Autonomy", which he sees as a reflection of art's current condition:

"Post Autonomy reflects the state of contemporary art… It stems from the idea that modern art=autonomy, as research or understanding of autonomy, has reached its limits in comprehending autonomy, in that respect art can be seen to have exited autonomy. What comes after Autonomy in art can be discussed by Post Autonomy. Using a practice-orientated analysis of cultural, social, and political forces the aim is to develop a new mental framework out of which art can be reinvented."

That's a feisty claim to be sure — and one which has perhaps been implicit in many Plausible Artworld discussions, looking at the various ways art practices have freed themselves from the autonomy-informed structures of the mainstream. But what does Post Autonomy really mean? Is it chronological (art "after" autonomy) or extensive (art "beyond" autonomy)? Plausible Artworlds has often explored the category of "usership" as integral to practices breaking with a regime of spectatorship, Post Autonomy has advocated the more inclusive (but perhaps less incisive and extensive) concept of

"applied participation", linking Post Autonomy to Systems theory, "where the methodology of a participatory practice replaces the orthodox role of the artist, curator, audience." Does this methodology of participatory practice really challenge hierarchies, thereby opening spaces for art's reconstruction within the space of Post Autonomy? Is postautonomy a plausible conceptual underpinning for emerging artworlds?

EAL T S FILM

Art(www)orlds and open-source culture

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with the instigators and developers of Pad.ma.
The Pad.ma project is a result of the efforts of oil21.org from Berlin, the Al-
ternative Law Forum from Bangalore, and three organizations from Mumbai:
Majlis, Point of View and Chitrakarkhana/CAMP.

Pad.ma, short for Public Access Digital Media Archive, is an interpretative
web-based video archive, which works primarily with footage rather than
"finished" films. Pad.ma provides access to material that is easily lost in the
editing process as well as in the filmmaking economy, and in changes of
scale brought about by digital technology. Unlike YouTube and similar video
sites, the focus here is on annotation, cross-linking, downloading and the
reuse of video material for research, pedagogy and reference. The entire
collection is searchable and viewable online, and is free to download for
non- commercial use. For the past two years, Pad.ma has been operating
as an online archive of digital video, in essence creating a folksonomy of
"tagged" footage. During this period, the focus has been on gathering ma-
terials, annotating densely, and growing the archive.

What are some ways to begin thinking about retrieving and utilizing mate-
rial from Pad.ma? From the onset, pad.ma has had an API (documented
at http://wiki.pad.ma/wiki/API), a programming interface that allows a user
to access videos, perform searches, seek to exact time-codes, fetch tran-
scripts, and obtain map data, all of which can be shared by any given online
user. As such, Pad.ma's General Public License is designed specifically
for the reuse of the material on Pad.ma. Through the experience of running
the archive, there have been various imaginations of multiple and layered
forms of time-based annotation over video, including: pedagogical tools for
learning and discussion; presentation tools that combine text and video in
new ways, along with essays and other writing formats enabled by rich and
context-specific media.

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Art(www)orlds and open-source culture

This week we'll be talking with some of the initiators of the Design Studio for Social Intervention (DS4SI).

Founded in 2005, DS4SI is a creativity lab for social justice work, a space for artists, activists, teachers and other social interventionists to reframe and reinvigorate the possibilities of the non-profit sector. Design studios are typically places where companies develop innovative products. In this case, it's a place where progressive organizations within the non profit sector develop inventive practices to address real social problems. To do that, DS4SI borrows methodologies from design practices and implements them in unconventional and innovative ways. DS4SI brings together urban designers, cultural architects, community activists, game designers, performance artists, and youth organizers to translate design theory into public interventions.

In a sense, worlds – including artworlds – can only be said to be "plausible" if they are made plausible by design, that is, if people set out and redesign the existent and ultimately implausible worlds on offer. What DS4SI has done is to take the world-design imperative seriously, convinced that design concerns not only physical objects and spaces but also — perhaps above all — forms of social justice. DS4SI is dedicated to changing how social change is imagined, developed and deployed. Does effective social intervention mean breaking with exhausted forms, designing new ways to be interventionists? Designing new frames in which to intervene?

Art(www)orlds and open-source culture

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Antoine Moreau about "Free Art License"

Free Art Licence (or FAL) is a contract that applies the "copyleft" concept to artistic creation of all kinds, without formal or aesthetic discrimination of any kind. If you or your artworld call it art, you can protect it under FAL by making it free. The License authorizes a third party (a person or legal entity) to proceed to copy, disseminate, transform and use work on the express condition that it always be possible for others to copy, disseminate and transform it in turn. That is, what is free must remain free, copyleft cannot be copyrighted.Far from running roughshod over authors' rights, the Free Art License acknowledges and protects them. It allows anyone to make creative use of ideas and forms, regardless of genre, medium, form or content. Strict respect for authors' rights has often tended to restrict access to works of the mind; FAL, however, fosters access, the being point to authorize use of a work's resources; to create new conditions of creation so as to extend and amplify the possibilities of creation.
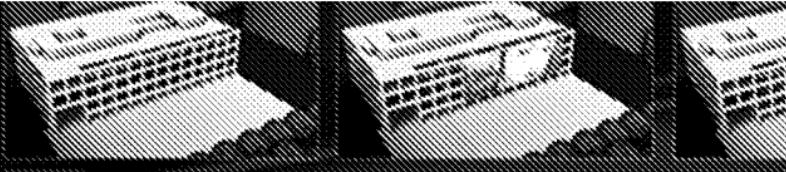
The License was drafted in Paris in July 2000, following a series of meetings of the group Copyleft Attitude by lawyers Mélanie Clément-Fontaine and David Geraud, and artists Isabelle Vodjdani and Antoine Moreau. The Licence is legally binding without modification in all countries having signed the Bern Convention, which established the international legal norms regarding intellectual and artistic "property". Copyleft Attitude, which devised the license, has always sought to extend the whole notion of copyleft to the realm of the arts and beyond.

The License is suitable for all types of non-software creation. It is recommended by the Free Software Foundation in the following terms: "We don't take the position that artistic or entertainment works must be free, but if you want to make one free, we recommend the Free Art License."

Art(www)orlds and open-source culture

~~Abriendo Caminos/La Comunitaria TV (61) / kuda.org (65) / Post autonomy~~
~~(69) / Pad.ma (73) / Design Studio for Social Intervention (75) / Free Art~~
~~License (77) /~~ **Beyond Participation: Toward Massively Collaborative**
Worlds of Art (79) / ~~Freenode (81)~~

Hi Everyone,

This Tuesday is another event in a year-long series of weekly conversations
and exhibits in 2010 shedding light on examples of Plausible Artworlds.

This week we'll be talking with Carl Skelton of the Brooklyn Experimental Me-
dia Center, co-initiator (with Martin Koplin, University of Applied Sciences,
Bremen) of Beyond Participation: Toward Massively Collaborative Worlds of
Art. The project focuses on the case study of the digital platform Betaville.

While in recent weeks, we have tended to celebrate usership and participa-
tion, these terms may be fraught with a side-effect that Betaville is designed
to prevent: the implicit acceptance of a separation between active design-
ers, determinant clients, and taking-it-or-leaving-it-end-users.

The extensibility of concepts and practices of "participatory culture" to fully
peer-to-peer collaboration with citizens beyond the art world is a practi-
cal matter and a challenge to artists. The session chairs work together on
Betaville, a massively multiplayer online environment for previsualization,
development, and public participation in new proposals for public art, ur-
ban design and development – stretching the current "city limits" of partici-
pation by artists in public culture. With Betaville, the project seeks to enquire
into "massive participation", that is, an extreme form of relational aesthetics
praxis, within which the role of the artwork is as a framework, rather than a
procedure or product, and subject to evolution/adaptation at the behest of
anyone with the gumption to do their own work with/on it.

.net

Art(www)orlds and open-source culture

Hi Everyone,

This week, however, we shift away self-described "art" worlds altogether to strike up a conversation with the 'volunteers' at freenode (chat.freenode. net) – an Internet Relay Chat (IRC) network freely provided to a variety of groups and organizations. IRC itself is a bit like skype without the business model — that is, a form of real-time conferencing, essentially designed for group communication in discussion forums, called channels.

freenode, formerly known as Open Projects Network, is a popular IRC net- work used to discuss peer-directed projects — such as Plausible Artworlds amongst countless others. freenode provides discussion facilities for the Free and Open Source Software communities, for not-for-profit organiza- tions and for related communities and organizations. In 1998, the network had about 200 users and less than 20 channels. Ten years down the line the network currently peaks at just under 60,000 users and 10,000 channels, making it the largest free and open-source software-focused IRC network.

Though some aspects of freenode philosophy are specific to the workings of its medium, because the network exists to provide interactive services to peer-directed project communities, some of the group's basic principles may prove invaluable to rethinking we we are calling artworlds. They in- clude:

Community members benefit from better access to each other. Putting a number of projects in close proximity in an interactive environment creates linkages and exchange between developers and projects.Communication and coordination skills are important to community projects. Peer-directed projects work because the paradigm works. Developers and community members are not unusually gifted at project coordination and communi- cation. But improving those skills can make projects work better. Friendly interaction is more efficient than flaming. Calm, relaxed discourse without angry contention provides for better exchange of information.

Alternative economies

Alternative economies

Sunday Soup (85) / Eating in Public (87) / Art Work (89) / FEAST (93) / Loveland (95) / n.e.w.s. paid usership (97)

Hi Everyone,

We'll be talking to Abigail Satinsky and other members of InCUBATE, particularly about their initiative called Sunday Soup, a platform for the international network of food-based micro-granting initiatives, highlighting the growing community of granting projects with over 35 now in operation including FEAST, STEW, Philly STAKE, Detroit Soup, Portland STOCK, amongst others.

What is Sunday Soup? The Soup Grant is a grassroots model for funding small to medium sized creative projects through community meals. The basic formula is that a group of people come together to share a meal and that meal is sold for an affordable price. All the income from that meal is given as a grant to support a creative project. Grant applications are accepted up until the meal, everyone who purchases the meal gets one vote to determine who receives the grant. The grants are completely unrestricted and will be awarded at the discretion of the customers. Granting projects affiliated with Sunday Soup in different cities operate based on their own needs and context. The meals are more or less elaborate in different places and some people have presentations by potential grantees or past grantees as part of the event.

Why do they do it? The Soup grant not only generates independent funding but sparks dialogue about resource allocation within the mainstream art-world. In an environment where governmental support for experimental art practice is scant, and private support is dictated by the values and priorities of granting foundations, innovative and potentially controversial work is compromised in order to fit within categories deemed "fundable." It needs a different "world"… in this case, the world of soup. The Soup grant, while raising money, also serves as a way to build a network of support and community that reaches beyond purely monetary assistance. We like to think of it as an open platform to discuss ongoing projects with new audiences, meet new collaborators, and share ways of working."

Alternative economies

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Gaye Chan and Nandita Sharma about the Hawaii-based artist collective 'Eating In Public'.

Since 2003, Eating in Public has, among other projects, engaged in 'remaking the commons'. Drawing on the example of the 17th century Diggers, the group began planting papaya seedlings on public land – 'public' land, not 'common' land. As they explain, 'in doing so, we broke the existing laws of the state that delineate this space as "public" and thereby set the terms for its use. Our act has two major purposes: one is to grow and share food; the other is to problematize the concept of "public" within public space.' In a scrupulously well-documented and lively narrative, the group describes the challenges to their attempts at 'commoning' in a society where every legal provision has been made to prevent it. The first papaya crop was eventually uprooted before the trees bore fruit, and the land fenced off. The group has subsequently shifted its strategy to another commons: the Internet, where they have set up FreeBay, an on-line service something like eBay, with the notable exception that everything is free – including papaya seedlings.

Eating in Public is thus explicitly interested in promoting — and testing the plausibility of — a truly "free world", something which Plausible Artworlds has also been examining over the past six months. "Free" as in freewheeling. Free, certainly, from asking the powers that be for 'permission' to develop a growing chain of free stores where anyone and everyone can leave or take goods. Free as in freedom — pointing to those common spaces tolerably free from the logic of capital, in the very midst of capitalist society itself.

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Alternative economies

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Salem Collo-Julin, one of the founders of Art Work. http://www.artandwork.us/

Artwork is "a national conversation about art, labor, and economics" — a conversation that takes the form of a website and a free, 40-page newspaper comprised of writings and images from artists, activists, writers, critics, and others on the topic of working within tody's depressed economies and how that impacts artistic process, compensation and artistic property.

Freely downloadable, the newspaper "asks us all to consider how to use this moment to do several things: to work for better compensation, to get opportunities to make art in diverse and challenging settings, and to guide art attitudes and institutions, on all levels, in more resilient directions. It is also an examination of the power that commercial practices continue to wield and the adverse effects this has had on artists, education, and our collective creative capacity."

Art Work was conceived and produced by Temporary Services, an Illinois-based group formed in 1998, which, over the years has produced a wide variety of exhibitions, events, projects, and publications.Temporary Services, along with the help of SPACES Gallery in Cleveland, have distributed over 10,000 copies of Art Work internationally since its initial publication in November 2009. Recipients of these free copies have been encouraged to create their own programming using the themes in Art Work as a starting point.

As well as looking closely at the Art Work project and the work of Temporary Services that produced it, tonight's conversation may be a good occasion to touch on a phenomenon that appears recurrent amongst "plausible artworlds" — that is, their propensity to engender or fructify other artworlds. This would seem to raise a series of further questions: What are plausible

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TRODUCTION – We can see how the collapse
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artworlds' mode of reproduction? What kind of "family resemblance" can be observed? Is there a lineal — or even patrilineal or matrilineal — relationship between Temporary Services and Art Work, amongst other examples? Or is the relationship not more "avuncular" — introducing a shift, like the knight's move in chess — meaning that Art Work might better be seen as Temporary Services's nephew?

FEAST

Alternative economies

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with some of the people behind F.E.A.S.T.— Funding Emerging Arts with Sustainable Tactics.

FEAST is a recurring public dinner designed to use community-driven financial support to democratically fund new and emerging art makers. At each FEAST, participants pay a sliding-scale entrance fee for which they receive supper and a ballot. In the course of the evening, diners vote on a variety of proposed artist projects. At the end of dinner, the artist whose proposal receives the most votes is awarded funds collected through the entrance fee to produce the project. The work is then presented during the next FEAST.

FEAST emerged in Brooklyn in February 2009, inspired by Incubate Chicago's Sunday soup, and now has sister programs in Minneapolis, Portland OR, St Louis, Detroit, Baltimore, and many other cities nationally and internationally, always tapping into the individual fabric of each community. In Philadelphia, preliminary meetings strongly suggest growing interest in this model. It seems Philadelphia is ripe for an occasion of arts support and community at the "bottom-up" level, with its wealth of artists, arts schools (recent graduates with few opportunities), collectives, thinkers, community organizations and emerging sustainability groups.

All too often "tactics" are considered situational rather than sustainable. But an artworld economy, if it is to be truly plausible needs to embody sustainable tactics. How does FEAST fulfill the mandate stated in its name? To address that broad question in practical terms, Tuesday's potluck conversation will also double as a practical organizing session — part of an ongoing conversation about shaping a "FEAST in Philly". What does Philadelphia need? What existing structures can be built on? Who will be involved? How does Philadelphia define community? What will Philadelphia support? How will proposals be directed or selected? And beyond Philadelphia, can this kind of a conversation spark similar initiatives in similar communities?

Alternative economies

Hi Everyone,

Our discussions over the past weeks have foregrounded an understand-ing of plausible worlds as largely immaterial nodes of shared desire and exchange — as collective constructs in time, which exist as long as the collective will to pursue them is sustained. This conceptual mapping has gently helped avoid any excessively down-to-earth take on the notion of a "world". But even worlds online and in time must contend with the question as to the relationship between "world" and "land". So this week we'll be talking with the Detroit-based instigators of LOVELAND, a micro real-estate project premised on using social microfunding and online tools to get peo-ple experimenting with and rethinking collective land use and ownership.

LOVELAND sells square inches of land in Detroit for $1 an inch. The project then uses these virtual, tiny-scale investments to fund real-world projects throughout the city. Inchvestors — that is, the people bankrolling the ini-tiative one buck at a time — are able to access their land both on and offline, transforming the land in a mutually agreed-upon manner, with a goal of purchasing numerous pieces of real estate throughout the city and de-veloping them around certain themes. Anyone involved can also transfer or sell inches to others.

Practically speaking, LOVELAND owns the property and merely extends social ownership to its inchvestors, making them less titleholders than stakeholders. The purchased inches are not legally binding and are not registered with the City of Detroit, keeping taxes and other unpleasantries of officialdom out of the picture. But it also puts the onus on the stakehold-ers to contend with existent legal instruments to ensure their interests are acknowledged. Art-historically, LOVELAND harks back to projects such as Gordon Matta Clark's never fully realized "Fake Estates" — the interstitial gutterspaces he purchased from the City of New York in the 1970s — but significantly throws into the mix the unresolved issues of collective agency, common investment, and social use value.

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Alternative economies

Hi Everyone,

We'll be talking with the contributors and organizers at n.e.w.s. (www.north-eastwestsouth.net) about their "paid usership" initiative.

n.e.w.s. itself is an online platform for the analysis of art-related activity, put-ting the emphasis on rethinking art's economic underpinnings, focusing on the relationships between the attention economics of the mainstream and the smaller-scale shadow economies being experimented with. Recently, the group has initiated an open forum on the question of "remunerated us-ership" – and it is this aspect of the group's work that will be at the heart of tonight's discussion. Since its inception in 2008, n.e.w.s. has sought to maintain a model of payment (or partial payment) for putting content online, contending that value is always collectively produced through linguistic cooperation (polemics or just idle chatter) – that is, through the collective intellect. "People already get paid for online content," they argue in the in-troduction to the forum, "but they are often the wrong people, because they are not all the people who worked to produce that content." The forum's objective is to discuss and evaluate the pros and cons of a paying people to use the internet, perhaps taking to heart Jean-Luc Godard's remark in Six fois deux that television viewers ought to be paid to watch TV. Is it possible to leverage the potential of participative technologies and communities to ensure that user-produced value be remunerated? The very question is par-adoxical inasmuch as n.e.w.s. itself is a non-commercial platform, without any institutional structural subsidy to pay its users, obliging the collective to both explore and test drive alternative models of exchange and collabora-tion – including gift economics.

Though fascinating, and perhaps economically coherent, the whole idea of moving from pay-for-use to paid-to-use seems to fly in the face of common sense. But could it be that for this very reason that it may point to a key component of a more plausible artworld?
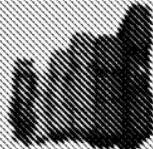
Autonomous information production

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Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Doina Petrescu and Constantin Petcou, initiators of the Paris-based network Atelier Autogéré d'Architecture (AAA), a collectively-run, self-managed architecture studio which, for reasons we will no doubt want to discuss, translates into English as Urban Tactics.

AAA is a collective platform which conducts explorations, actions and research concerning urban mutations and cultural, social and political emerging practices in the contemporary city. AAA acts through 'urban tactics', encouraging inhabitants to take part in the self-management of disused urban spaces, bypassing contradictions and stereotypes by proposing nomad and reversible projects, initiating interstitial practices which explore the potential of contemporary city (in terms of population, mobility, temporality). It is at the level of the micro-political that they seek "to make the city more ecological and more democratic, to make the space of proximity less dependent on top-down processes and more accessible to its users."

So-called "self-managed architecture" is an architecture of relationships, processes and agencies of persons, desires, skills and know-hows. Such an architecture does not correspond to a liberal practice but asks for new forms of association and collaboration, based on exchange and reciprocity and involving all those interested (individuals, organisations, institutions), on whatever scale. As they put it, their architecture "is at the same time political and poetic as it aims above all to 'create relationships between worlds'." More plausible ones perhaps… At any rate, those objectives and vocabulary are obviously right up Plausible Artworlds' alley, as it were. It seems that in the practice of AAA, architecture becomes an overarching metaphor for rethinking, repurposing, reskilling relationships and forms of engagement amongst city dwellers as much as for producing (re)built environments.

Autonomous information production

Hi Everyone,

This week, with any luck, we'll be talking with Karen Andreassian, an ambulant artist based in Yerevan, Armenia, and initiator of a number of collective undertakings in and about the post-Soviet landscape, including Voghchaberd and Ontological Walkscapes, which will be included in the "Blind Dates Project", opening later this week in New York City. As its name suggests, "Blind Dates" is more or a matchmaking than curated project, pairing up artists and non-artists from "what remains" of the peoples, places and cultures that once constituted the diverse geography of the Ottoman Empire. Andreassian's own contribution is a fragment of his ongoing Ontological Walkscapes project — an invisible but undeniable form of dissent-by-walking against the current regime and its oligarchs.

Inspired by the "factography" practices of the Russian avant-garde (LEF 1923) Andreassian examines two apparently unrelated phenomena in contemporary Armenia: the slow disappearance of 1970s Soviet-Armenian architecture and the shrinkage of public spaces due to the construction boom during the last decade; and the peaceful protests which led to the forceful dispersion of the demonstrators during the last post-presidential election at Azatutyoun [Freedom] Square.

Ontological Walkscapes is itself an extension of Andreassian's also ongoing Voghchaberd project, in which he does literally nothing but accompany a small village near Yerevan as its inhabitants — historically escapees of the 1916 Genocide — cope with the slow but irrevocable collapse of their geological landscape, following an earthquake in 1995, which mirrors the parallel collapse of their geopolitical landscape with the demise of the Soviet Union. Andreassian is the focusing device for a project of which the village inhabitants are the self-organized coauthors.

Autonomous information production

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with urban forager, seed archivist and inner-city homesteader Nance Klehm, founder of a project called Spontaneous Vegetation.

Nance engages in what — in art-critical parlance — might be called "expanded farming", the way some talk about "expanded cinema." She is interested in things edible, how to grow them, and particularly how to find them when they conveniently and spontaneously just grow themselves; how to compost them, can them, preserve them — and how to mutualize her bio-instigation skills with others. Nance lives and farms in the middle of Little Village, a densely packed, diverse urban neighborhood in the heart of Chicago. Her house and land are daily practice in permaculture and urban living.

Nance runs workshops in greywater conversion, water-harvesting earthworks design and installation, community greenwaste-to-fertility systems, horticultural systems design and green waste composting – including vermicomposting and humanmanure (hence the festival). Since 2006, she has been leading urban-foraging walks — Situationist-inspired deambulations through the spontaneous and cultivated vegetation of the urbanscape, where walkers learn to identify plants, hear their botanical histories and stories of their use by animals and humans, sharing anecdotes of specific experiences with plants. We have talked extensively about integrating art-worlds into lifeworlds — but perhaps hastily assuming that those lifeworlds were human constructs or at least inattentive to the more extensive and diverse biodynamics of those worlds. Urbanforaging seems to apply the logic of the free and open software movement to the realm of vegetation and the edible in general.

Autonomous information production

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Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Sonal Jain and Mriganka Madhukaillya of the Desire Machine Collective, who operate the Periferry project, an art-ist-led space situated on the M. V. Chandardinga, a ferry currently docked along the mighty Brahmaputra River in Guwahati, Assam, in the North East of India.

To describe Periferry as a floating laboratory for generating hybrid prac-tices, while very true, is to skip a little quickly to the point: it is first of all a 1950s era, former government-run ferry barge, entirely river-worthy despite a bit of rust and a half century of plying the somewhat treacherous waters of the Brahmaputra between Assam and West Bengal through Bangladesh. Like the river itself, the space and its activities provide a connective, bor-der-defiant platform for dialogue across artistic, scientific, technological, and ecological modes of production and knowledge. Periferry regularly hosts art-related, on-deck conferences and debates, regular film screen-ings and is more generally a platform — a floating, diesel-powered and steel platform — for cross-disciplinary flux, exploring new constellations of artistic relationships that challenge traditional hierarchical and autocratic strategies, seeking above all to move away from the center-periphery dia-lectics to renegotiate the role of local in the global.

Collaborating since 2004 as Desire Machine Collective, Sonal Jain and Mriganka Madhukaillya work through image, moving image, sound, and the time and flux of the river. As their name suggests, Desire Machine seeks to disrupt the neurotic symptoms that arise from constricting capitalist struc-tures — of which the mainstream artworld is merely one instance — with healthier, schizophrenic cultural flows of desire and information.

Autonomous information production

Hi Everyone,

This week — as we head into prime mushrooming season — we'll be talking
with Kate Cahill, Caroline Woolard and Chris Kennedy from StrataSpore, a
platform for collective knowledge about mushrooms.

Initiated by Kate Cahill, Christopher Kennedy, Athena Kokoronis, Caro-
line Woolard, and mycologist Gary Lincoff, StrataSpore uses mushrooms
as material and metaphor for latent, often unseen but eminently plausible
worlds. Think about it: mushrooms not only feed communities — to great
gastronomic, nutritional and hallucinatory delight — but at this very moment
are eating oil spills, connecting old members of Fluxus, growing as alterna-
tive packaging material. As the earth's oldest known organism, they may
even have been what turned rock into soil, turning the earth into a plausible
lifeworld. And mushrooms are the pivotal orientation point for members of
StrataSpore to explore urban systems. Drawing inspiration from the connec-
tive function and form of mushroom ecology, StrataSpore uses local fungi in
the New York City area as a model for engagement and re-interpretation of
living in urban spaces. How do mushrooms discretely but radically change
a landscape's ecology? In what way do they insinuate a world within the
world?

Inspired by rhizome networks as tools for bioremediation — a metaphor for
the layers of unseen infrastructure below our feet, and a collaborative niche
upon which to focus a collective narrative — StrataSpore seeks to cultivate
"spores" of knowledge by combining elements of task/performance-based
art, experiential learning, and experimental design practice that imple-
ments a dialogue about unseen, natural and man-made systems as sites
for restorative sustainability applications in local NYC ecosystems. An in-
visible, but eminently edible world? Mushrooms as material and metaphor
for worldmaking…

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Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Federico Zukerfeld and Loreto Garin, two of the co-founders of the Internacional Errorista.

International Errorism was born fortuitously in 2005 when a bunch of artists and activists in Buenos Aires, planning to protest the visit of George W. Bush to Argentina, meant to google "terrorism" but mistakenly forgot the "t" and typed in "errorism"… At the time, that error yielded zero hits; it is some measure of the group's success (or error) that today it elicits over 300,000! With their hybrid blend of carnivalesque street art and savvy, corrosive political analysis, the group hunts down and exposes the errors that pollute our global public sphere, which the powers-that-be generally try to fob off as "the Truth".

Indeed, errorism is a full-fledged if highly heretic philosophy — one that stands opposed to the "verism" that informs virtually all other modes of thought and human endeavor. For rather than being based on a quest for an elusive "truth", it sees error as the founding principle of life: errare humanum est! How wrong could that be?! Proceeding by trial, but more generally by error, they claim in their manifesto that "we are all errorists:"

Errorism : Concept and action are based on the idea that "error" is reality's principle of order. Errorism is a philosophically erroneous position, a ritual of negation, a disorganized organization: failure as perfection, error as appropriate move. The field of action of "Errorism" contains all those practices that aim at the LIBERATION of the human being and language. Confusion and surprise, black humour and absurdity are the favorite tools of the errorists. Lapses and failed acts are an errorist delight. The movement itself emerged from an earlier collective called Etcetera, but has gone global! Is error a plausible (art)world?

Autonomous information production

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Carole Frances Lung, biographer (and some-time impersonator) of Frau Fiber Textile Worker, founder of the Sewing Rebellion.

The Sewing Rebellion began in the fall of 2006 in Chicago, initially as a monthly free sewing workshop and clothing exchange. In January 2007, acknowledging that a rebellion couldn't happen once a month, weekly Sunday afternoon meetings were established until May of 2007, when Frau Fiber went itinerant. Frau Fiber's intention is to bring the Sewing Rebellion to communities around the country — and more recently to Haiti — where she lays the ground work for an economy of what she calls "STOP SHOPPING, START SEWING." The Sewing Rebellion furthers the emancipation from the global garment industry by teaching and learning how to alter, mend and make one's own garments and accessories. Textile work and activist Frau Fiber and / or regional chapter organizers distribute their knowledge of the garment industry, pattern making and sewing, encouraging the reuse, ren-ovation and recycling of existing garments and textiles in the creation of unique items tailored to individual tastes and body shapes.

Whereas many of the plausible artworlds we have looked at over the past months have focused on the worldmaking potential of new digital technol-ogies, the Sewing Rebellion has strove to pick up an older, "ur-analogic" thread — stitching, weaving, sewing, garment making — as an alternative to consumerism. More than that, the Rebellion explicitly links this activity to labor… perhaps the most crucial component of any plausible life world.

Autonomous information production

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Ricardo Dominguez, "principle investigator" of The Electronic Disturbance Theater (EDT), and b.a.n.g lab, a small group of artists and activists, actively engaged in developing the theory and practice of Electronic Civil Disobedience (ECD). In the framework of their U.S./Mexico Border Disturbance Art Project, the group has recently devised what they call a "Transborder Immigrant Tool" (TBT), a code-switch device that repurposes inexpensive, discarded mobile phones that have GPSantennae to function in the hands of "the tired, the poor," as personal safety navigation systems in the Mexican-U.S. borderlands.

TBT thus seeks to have both genuine use value in a geopolitical context where thousands of lives have been needlessly lost, as well as conceptual and poetic value inasmuch as it performatively raises the question: "What constitutes sustenance?" Or suggests that "in the desert, we are all illegal aliens." But above all, the device – like the disturbance-art project of which it is part and parcel – directly raises the question of the politics of art today. What exactly is to be gained by understanding such devices and such projects to be art and not the mere real thing? By disturbing the porous borders between artworlds and lifeworlds, considering civil disobedience decidedly within the purview of artistic practice, the group clearly wants to give art political teeth; but how does art in turn add its own specific value to the device's usership? And what kind of artworld would make that possible?

HOME
WORK

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Autonomous information production

Hi Everyone,

This Tuesday is the next event in a year-long series of weekly conversations and exhibits in 2010 shedding light on examples of Plausible Artworlds.

This week we'll be talking with some of the participants in the Home Works Forum, a multidisciplinary platform held in Beirut, Lebanon about every other year. Since its inception in 2002 at the initiative of the Ashkal Alwan Association, Home Works has evolved into a vibrant platform for spirited exchange on art and art-related practices in the region and beyond. Artists, writers, and thinkers gather for ten days in order to share their works, which take the form of exhibitions, performances, lectures, videos, artists' talks, workshops and publications. What links the forum's usership is a desire to engage a common set of urgent questions, to produce and consider aesthetic forms capable of embodying those questions meaningfully — and above all to work toward the emergence of a public with the agency to carry the project forward through action and not just in contemplation. Now mid-way through its 5th edition, the Home Works Forum is a space in which po-litical, social and economic realities can be explored, reflected, and made manifest as visual and verbal articulations.

"Home Works" suggests an intertwining of public and private spheres, the outside world of work and the inside space of home. More broadly, "Home Works," itself an impossible plural, implies a process of internal excavation, of digging and burrowing deeper while simultaneously constructing and accumulating new practices.This year, the Forum's focus is on "In and Out of Education … What Can We Teach Nowadays", looking at the crisis in arts education, the so-called "pedagogical turn" in artistic discourse and prac-tice — all in the context of the plan to set up a new educational program, The Home Works Academy, which will use the city of Beirut itself as its campus, its research topic and its platform. Beirut as a plausible artworld…

Autonomous information production

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Hi Everyone,

We'll be talking with some of the instigators and founding users of A School of Decreative Methodologies, an as yet unnamed, usership-based initiative favoring decreative approaches to knowledge production. It decreative process is not classroom based, nor even linked to any site at all, but is deployed through a series of collegial moments. Its objectives and structure are perhaps best summed up by its founding Charter, according to which it is:

A collegial moment without students, without teachers, without walls, without curricula, in rupture with all notions that institute art and how it is taught. The initiative accompanies forms of usership disposed to sundering art from itself.

The college's goal is to activate practices whose purpose and finality is not art. It asserts its institutional exodus. It deploys and takes form through satellite propositions, which are at once extradisciplinary and depersonalized. It functions on the basis of users alone, impugning any binary opposition between teachers / students, experts / non-experts. It operates through networks with or without affinities.

The initiative emerged in 2008 as an "extension" of the the Paris Biennale, an exhibitionless biennale, lasting two years (instead of taking place every two years) comprised of practices outside the regime of spectatorship. Recently it has asserted its autonomy from the Biennale.

Autonomous information production

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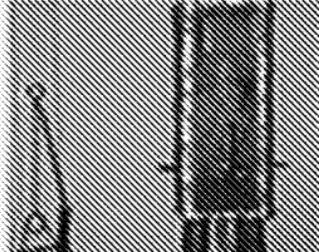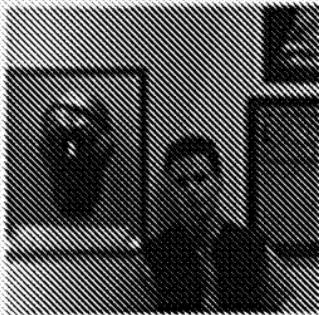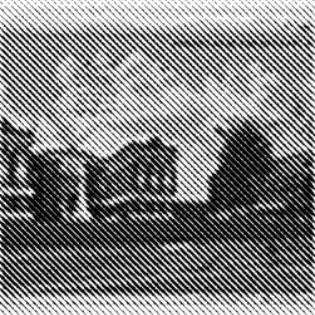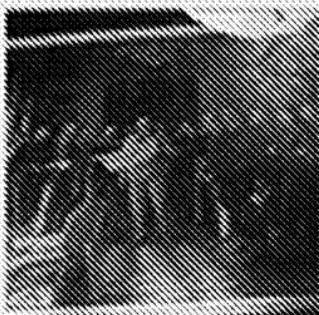
Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Cassie Thronton and Chris Kennedy about two interrelated projects based in New York: Teaching Artist Union, and School of the Future.

About Teaching Artist Union
The Teaching Artist Union is composed of NYC artists for whom teaching is — or is part of — their creative practice. The Union seeks to define the role of the "teaching-artist" through developing a supportive community, drawing attention to the work produced in teaching situations, and advocating for the rights and needs of the teaching artist. The Union works in a wide range of environments, including non-profit arts organizations, schools, museums, and other agencies. Contending that art can invigorate, agitate, and reorient stale institutional habits, the Union wants to develop a lasting structure to sustain and promote the various manifestations of the Teaching Artist. The Union came into existence in the spring of 2009 as the only organization in NYC for and by Teaching Artists, undertaking projects to support and change the art and education landscapes that we live in.

About School of the Future
School of the Future is the launching pad for the art movement of education. This artist-run school focuses on teaching artists as "experts" in the study of information through performing and visual arts. Opening this July in Bushwick's Sgt. Dougherty Park for a month of 24-hour programming, the school serves as the first site devoted to the resourcefulness and adaptability of teaching artists. Each curriculum developed for the school is an art project, making the school a group show. The projects will be designed to use art as a learning process that both takes into account and activates the site of the school.

Autonomous information production

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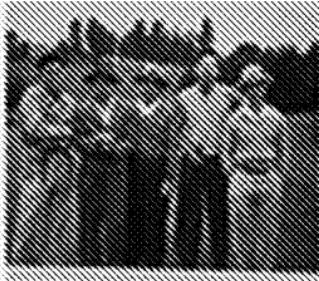
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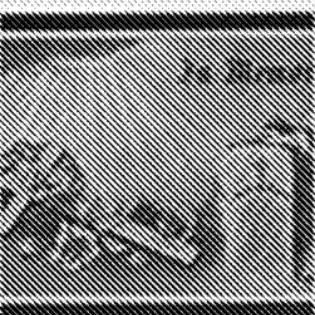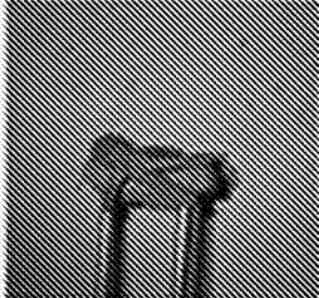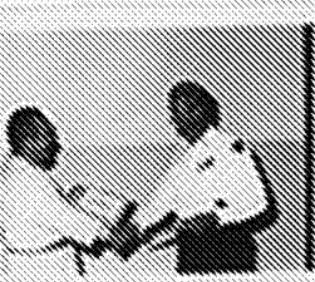
This week we'll be talking with folks from The Public School and AAAARG. ORG. This is a rare opportunity to get people who have been involved in organizing, theorizing, participating in (or newly interested in) these projects to convene online for a couple hours in a public and open setting.

Accompanying this conversation will also be a hands-on public event to officially launch The Public School in Philadelphia, with a history of past "courses", and plenty of room to propose new ones. Please come and join us!

AAAARG.ORG is an online pirate library integrated with The Public School – initiated by Sean Dockray with Fiona Whitton as a project for TELIC Arts Exchange at the end of 2007. The Public School is a school with no curriculum, located underneath TELIC Arts Exchange. The Public School is an open structure, or maybe a stage, on which ideas about school perform new realities. To put it another way, The Public School is invested in the idea of public space – not in the sense of state-controlled plots of land, but rather in the sense of spaces for the political.

Archiving creative culture

Archiving creative culture

Public Collectors & Against Competition (127) / ~~KEIN (129) / Ultra-red (131) / Groundswell Collective (133) / Dark Matter Archives & Imaginary Archives (135) / Collective Foundation (137) / Groups & Spaces (139) / Community Museum Project (141) / The Library Of Radiant Optimism For Let's Remake The World (143)~~

Hi Everyone,

We'll be talking with Marc Fischer, one of three members of Temporary Services, about his project "Public Collectors" network. In conjunction with this project we will also be discussing Marc's manifesto entitled "Against Competition"

The Public Collectors project seeks to redress what amounts to a massive and systemic cultural oversight whereby countless cultural artifacts are either deemed unworthy for collection by public libraries, museums and other institutions or the archives currently in existence are not readily accessible to the viewing public. Therefore, Public Collectors invites individuals who have had the occasion to amass, organize, and inventory various cultural artifacts to help reverse this bias by making their collections public.

An initiative of this kind gains its meaning and importance against the backdrop of the culture of artificial scarcity upon which mainstream artworld values are founded. The majority of this artworld is structured in this way, and not surprisingly so, as competition between individuals is at the heart of free market capitalism. Grants are competitive. Students compete for funding. Hundreds compete for a single teaching position. Artists compete with artists – stealing ideas instead of sharing them, or using copyright laws to prohibit thoughtful re-use. Artists typically compete for exhibitions in a limited number of spaces rather than seeking alternative exhibition venues. Artists conceal opportunities from their friends as a way of getting an edge up in this speculative capital-driven frenzy. Gallerists compete with other gallerists and curators compete with curators. Artists who sell their work compete for the attention of a limited number of collectors. Collectors compete with other collectors to acquire the work of artists. Essentially, these are the many reasons that make Plausible Artworlds plausible; that make alternate artworlds, premised on pooling resources and mutualizing incompetence, so important. We felt that it was all too fitting to conclude 2010's discussions with some words that might help describe art beyond competition.

KEIN.

Archiving creative culture

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Florian Schneider, one of the founders and administrators of KEIN.ORG, a collaborative networking environment that offers a wide range of internet services to activists and artists, groups and individuals from around the globe.

KEIN.ORG started in 1997 at Documenta X with the launch of the "no one is illegal" campaign. The group soon set up its own server and developed its own networking infrastructure. The idea of KEIN.ORG is self-supply in terms of networking techniques, operating on a strictly self-authorized and self-organized basis. KEIN.ORG runs eleven servers situated at various locations in Europe and beyond, hosting more than 500 websites, some 200 content management systems and countless mailing lists and email-accounts. A plausible world of plausible worlds, one might venture to say — except that the people at KEIN.ORG would likely point out that this is "KEIN world" — "kein" being the negative indefinite article in German that negates whatever noun follows it (translating as "no" or "none"): the KEIN.ORG website abounds in straight-faced play on the word that they are, featuring "KEIN manifesto", "KEIN history", "KEIN community — KEIN.ORG eluding identity by stating it is not what it is. But the word play makes a serious point, as their manifesto points out. It's short and very much to the point:

"KEIN.ORG implies no organization: No organs, no shared purpose, no common ground, no identity and no feedback. But rather than a negation KEIN marks the moment of withdrawal, an escape, an indefinite line of flight out of the overcoded structures of networks as formed-matter, of networked economies, of a standardized and controlled production of networked subjectivity. KEIN is a machine for the production of production. It is asignificant as such: it produces not meaning, but means. But it has itself no means: it is free, free of charges, free of advertisement, free of liability, free of claims, free of complaints, free of duties, free of representation.

Archiving creative culture

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Janna Graham and Robert Sember of the sound art collective ultra-red.

Founded in Los Angeles in 1994 by two AIDS activists, ultra-red has since expanded across Europe and North America its membership of artists and activists in such social movements as struggles of migration, anti-racism, participatory community development, and the politics of HIV/AIDS. Over the years, ultra-red has developed a kind of ambient sound activism combining situationist radicalism with the sound research techniques of the acoustic ecology movement.

"Exploring acoustic space as enunciative of social relations," as the group puts it, ultra-red develops uncompromisingly political art projects sometimes in the form of radio broadcasts, performances, installations or recordings — including two albums "Second Nature: An Electroacoustic Pastoral" (1999) and "Structural Adjustments" (2000). They have conducted "militant sound investigations" of the spaces of needle exchange (Soundtrax, 1992 – 1996), public sex (Second Nature, 1995 – 1998), public housing (Structural Adjustments, 1997 – 2003), resistance to global capital (Value System, 1998 – 2003), labor (Social Factory, 1997 – 2002), education (School of Echoes, 2001 – Present), anti-racism and migration struggles (Surveying The Future, 2001 – Present), and HIV/AIDS (SILENT|LISTEN, 2005 – Present). Just to round this sonic world off, the group also runs the fair-use online record label, Public Record.

The acoustic dimension is obviously constituent of any plausible, sentient world — as much as, perhaps more than the visual realm, given that we don't have "earlids" allowing us to naturally filter sonic experience. But it is something that we have yet to really address in Plausible Artworlds. What kind of sound-based research will help us map out the acoustic space of contested spaces and favor the emergence of more plausible (art)worlds?

Archiving creative culture

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with James David Morgan from Groundswell Collective.

Since 2006, the Groundswell Collective has been producing work that fashions and furthers alternative modes of social organization in both visual art and folklore — thereby implicitly acknowledging that there is no one artworld but rather a multiplicity of them. As they put it, their interest is in "how art relates to social movements, especially in its capacity to compose new social relationships. Art as an insular phenomenon (if it ever really was that), where its main focus was itself, is no longer; what it concerns now is its relationship to society, how it is composed and how it affects."

The very fact that many people continue to speak of an artworld, singular (however implausible), is revealing of the extent to which cultural production has been integrated, almost seamlessly and ever increasingly, into capitalist logic over the last half century. And it is this logic that the Groundswell Collective sets out to reverse: "the once avant-garde aspirations of making art an everyday practice have been realized, and the terrain on which power is built and contested has a decidedly cultural composition – producing politics is a cultural endeavor, and vice versa. Taking this second claim first, we recognize that the knowledge economy, or cognitive capital, is a salient force against which the left has yet to develop an effective strategy. Activist art offers extradisciplinary critique, and a theoretical model for this task, for the necessary engagement of power on the terrain which it now inhabits."

Bringing together artists and activists, the group draws self-consciously on the long history of imagination, desire, and creativity on the radical left — which they refer to under the umbrella concept of "affective composition" — to alter, disrupt, channel, or otherwise impact hegemonic, one-world discourse, through a mutual aid online store and barter network.

Archiving creative culture

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with artist and writer Gregory Sholette about his ongoing "Dark Matter Archives" project. As Sholette will be joining us from Wellington, New Zealand, where he is currently organizing his "Wellington Collaboratorium", the conversation will also focus on the related "Imaginary Archive."

Performative archiving is obviously a key component of many plausible artworlds but it has remained largely implicit in our weekly discussions until now. Though we have focused on practices with deliberately impaired coefficients of artistic visibility, this week we hope to explicitly tease out some of the paradoxes around the politics of that (in)visibility. The wonderfully and elusively titled "Dark Matter Archives" is dedicated precisely to those who resist visibility, as well as to those who are refused visibility by mainstream culture. In doing so, the Archives seek to provide knowledge, documents, and tools about the history and current practices of culture's "missing mass." Their goal is to reinforce whatever degree of autonomy marginalized artists, informal artists, and art collectives have wrested from the mainstream institutions of culture.

The "Wellington Collaboratorium" issues forth from the ambitious project, taking the notion of collaboration as a living, working material to be uncovered, explored, and put into motion. One of the collaboratorium's outcomes is the Imaginary Archive, comprised of novels, brochures, catalogues, pamphlets, newsletters, and other material inserted into second-hand bookstores and other public places, seeking to present an alternative vision of the realities our society plausibly might inhabit, had the world been shaped differently. And perhaps more plausibly.

Archiving creative culture

Hi Everyone,

This week we'll be talking with Joseph del Pesco about three experimental grants developed by the Collective Foundation.

As recently mentioned in Art Work newspaper:

The Collective Foundation (CF) describes itself as "…a research and development organization offering services to artists and arts organizations. The Collective Foundation focuses on fostering mutually beneficial exchange and collective action by designing practical structures and utilizing new web- based technologies. Ultimately the central concern of the Collective Foundation is to serve as an ongoing experimental process and catalyst for new ideas. CF proposes 'bottom-up' and decentralized forms of organization and investigates the formation and distribution of resources. This means inventing new forms of funding and new ways of working together. Like the Art Workers' Coalition, who proposed pragmatic solutions to problems faced by artists, the Collective Foundation seeks alternative operational solutions, while reducing the bureaucratic formalities of overhead and administration."

Groups
& Spaces
Library Card

www.groupsands[...]

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YOU ACCESS TO THE GROU
LIBRARY AND UNREFE[...]

To access the library logon to www.groupsandspaces.net. To re[...]
your community for physical access to the archive, contact your[...]

Name _____

Archiving creative culture

Hi Again,

We'll be talking with Chris Kennedy, Brett Bloom and Scott Rigby, about the history and future of Groups & Spaces.

Groups & Spaces is an online platform, initiated by Temporary Services with the help of many contributors, which gathers information on people making art in groups and collaborative situations, and groups that independently run artist spaces and centres. In the site relaunch we will discuss the potentials for the Groups & Spaces project to provide historical reference points, opportunities for networking and the chance to visualize collaborative cultural production and its impacts on situated and global communities.

The discussion will touch on a preliminary research project initiated by Chris Kennedy called Artiscycle which explored the inner workings of various independent art spaces around the country. Brett Bloom of Temporary Services and Scott Rigby of Basekamp will talk about the early manifestations of the Groups & Spaces site, its intention and current content.

The deliberately unrestricted scope of "groups" and "spaces" — avoiding any mention as to whom the groups are comprised of or what the spaces may plausibly contain — raises a crucial question: Is the Groups & Spaces platform a catalyst for plausible artworlds? Or is a federating initiative such as this a plausible artworld in and of itself?

Archiving creative culture

Hi Again,

This week we'll be talking with the instigators of the Hong Kong-based Community Museum Project (CMP).

The CMP was founded in 2002 by Howard Chan (cultural programs curator), Siu King-chung (design educator), Tse Pak-chai and Phoebe Wong (cultural researchers) — basically a group of disaffected curators who believed that another museum is possible and, pointing at the streets, shops and housing of Kowloon, that it was this one. The Community Museum Project thus focuses not on establishing conventional "museum" hardware and elitist collections, but carrying out flexible exhibition and public programs, within specific community settings and driven by timely issues. Through this process the Community Museum Project aims to nurture platforms that articulate personal experiences and under-represented histories. For though Hong Kong is highly multicultural, it is not transcultural: CMP seeks to foreground overlooked forms of everyday, non-professional creativity and to reevaluate the cognitive contributions of the city's marginalized populations, by creating platforms that can also be occasions which facilitate cross-disciplinary collaborations and neighborhood participation. To CMP, the word "Community" has three connotations: subject matter, settings and creative public interface. It is the site of their reframed museum — a plausible artworld.

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access to tools.

BAT

...www to "The Library of Radical Optimism" for Let's Re-Make the...

e archive site for Let's Re-make.

Download books from the late 60s / early 70s

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Archiving creative culture

~~Public Collectors & Against Competition (127) / KEIN (129) / Ultra-red (131)~~
~~/ Groundswell Collective (133) / Dark Matter Archives & Imaginary Archives~~
~~(135) / Collective Foundation (137) / Groups & Spaces (139) / Community~~
~~Museum Project (141) /~~ **The Library Of Radiant Optimism For Let's Re-
make The World (143)**

Hi everyone,

This week we'll have a converstion with Brett Bloom and Bonnie Fortune
about The Library of Radiant Optimism for Let's Re-Make the World, which
is both a historic archive and a generative project focused on connecting
current related practices. During this event, books will be available for folks
to take, a live video will be projected, and The Book of the Month Club will
be launched.

The Book of the Month Club is an opportunity to share some newly selected
titles with you. Each month during 2010, a new book will be scanned and
uploaded to their website. Books that are hard to find, or particularly capture
the spirit of the Library, will be selected to share with you during the Book of
the Month Club project.

The Library of Radiant Optimism for Let's Re-Make the World was started
as a way to gather, look at, and catalog a groundswell of optimistic and
visionary activities in the late 1960s and early 1970s represented by how-
to books. Many people organized around freely sharing information and
materials. The books they generated embrace a grass roots exchange of
information and themes of self and community empowerment. These books
are written from the counter-culture. Their authors were interested in com-
municating their direct experience as it related to their experiments for living
in harmony with the natural landscape, building sustainable communities,
and more. They offer practical applications of optimistic ideas for radical
change.