# ↑ Post-Scripted Script of a PechaKucha Talk

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![ 1. One of the first tasks I was given, as the new coordinator of the Social Practices programme at WdKA, was to present Beyond Social at this conference. [Beyond-Social.org](http://beyond-social.org/) is a wiki page with information on student work, research, and resources provided by the school and its network. It is a tool that provides an inside look into the workings of the Social Practices programme.

](images/ClaraBalaguer/1.png)

![ 2. The first encounter I had with how students interacted with Beyond Social was during the graduation show. Outgoing fourth years were asked to upload summaries of their final projects, but with all the stress of finishing their work, we found we were running after them to get this done. It became clear that putting information up on Beyond Social was not a part of their process but an afterthought.

](images/ClaraBalaguer/2.jpg)

![ 3. We were also asked to convert the wiki content into a catalogue of graduation works by way of a printer connected to a laptop stationed at the entrance of the show. But sticking a nondescript printer in the middle of a crowded art exhibit does not mean that people will actually print anything. How were we to ensure that the student works actually circulated?

](images/ClaraBalaguer/3.jpg)

![](images/ClaraBalaguer/4.jpg)

4. We gathered contributions from teachers to create more momentum for circulation. A mass email request was sent out with the question: If any of the students were to take a gap year following graduation, what critical readings would you recommend for this time of leisure? It was a simple way to get to know teachers through what they were reading.

![](images/ClaraBalaguer/5.jpg)

5. Because the Gap Year Reading List included copyrighted titles, we only printed five copies of each. Though this act of piracy defended free access to cultural capital, we complexified the transgression by limiting the scale of the piracy. Free access to information is ideal, even romantic, but unregulated markets quickly devolve into mechanisms of oppression towards the most precarious. Rather than copyleft or copyright, could we hint at a copyother?

![](images/ClaraBalaguer/6.jpg)

6. In the end, our incomplete catalogue packages, made of three printed student works and one Gap Year Reading List item, aspired to the immediacy of a home-made gift, the intimacy of a personal recommendation, the flash of anti-modernist design, the rush of breaking a rule. It was a catalogue that came out at the end rather than at the beginning of the show, representing a process as opposed to an object. We were a tiny resistance to the pressure upon students to fossilize their four-year education into a static work that ‘stands alone’.

![](images/ClaraBalaguer/7.jpg)

7. The Kiosk was only supposed to run a couple of hours a day, but ended up running all day, every day of the show, as student volunteers enjoyed the space for congregation. All except one of our volunteers were students of color, even though our student body (and faculty) is primarily white. Daily diary entries in Papiamentu and English were uploaded onto Facebook. As a person of colour myself, I feel like I can make this assertion without it being instrumentalization of race. Or can I? Who knows. But I do feel it’s important to mention demographics.

![](images/ClaraBalaguer/8.jpg)

8. This was the first clue as to how one could increase the relevance of Beyond Social to the school body by making it a physical thing, giving it an actual space to inhabit IRL. Though the advantages of an outward-facing online platform for disseminating research are clear, if the platform is not populated organically, it becomes a front for mediated promotion rather than a community of knowledge production.

![](images/ClaraBalaguer/9.jpg)

9. Next year’s Print Kiosk shall introduce a cyborg xenofeminist printer librarian, ELAINE, short for Electronic Library Artificial Intelligence Networked Entity. Working with this project’s development team is often the highlight of my week.

POST SCRIPT: Due to the workload of my somewhat new position that I’m still getting the hang of after a year and a bit of acclimatization; the organizational scale of a project of this sort; and the fact that all team members are also trying to balance ELAINE’s exigencies with our regular jobs at the academy plus our side-jobs as practicing cultural workers… we have decided to postpone ELAINE’s debut to the next school year. We have hired two graduating students from the Piet Zwart Institute’s XPUB (Experimental Publishing) master to attend to Beyond Social throughout the year, including the responsibility of maintaining ELAINE and making her public. Beyond Social is not a side job. It requires focus, continuous attention, and headspace. And graduating students of our master’s programmes do need landing pads, or jobs that quickly incorporate them into the work force to build up their resume. Alice Strete and Angeliki Diakrousi from this year’s XPUB class have been prepared, quite directly, for this kind of project. And the link between the masters and the bachelors programmes at WdKA/PZI needs to be worked on.

![](images/ClaraBalaguer/10.jpg)

10. The following team are involved in the Print Kiosk project at various levels. André Castro, one of Beyond Social’s initial ideators, is a teacher borrowed from the Piet Zwart Institute and the WdKA Publication Station. Manetta Berends is the developer who was already working on Beyond Social when I got there. Rümeysa Önal is a new graduate who volunteered at Print Kiosk I and won the last year’s Research Prize. Finally, there’s Kimmy Spreeuwenberg, from the Hybrid Publishing research programme.

![](images/ClaraBalaguer/11.png)

11. Most of the content of the wiki is tagged against a category list pre-determined by the previous editorial team. These fifty-four categories are significant because they seemed to be the old roadmap for the programme. Manetta began scraping all text off the wiki to see if the vocabulary actually being used in the content corresponded to this category index. The results were strange.

![](images/ClaraBalaguer/12.jpg)

12. ‘Business’ was in our top fifty most common words, used more frequently than society. Game, art, designers, economy, create, future were also top fifty. Commons, privilege, capitalism, engagement, care, patriarchy, the Other, queer, black, and resistance were not. These were red flags that needed further investigation.

![](images/ClaraBalaguer/13.jpg)

13. Rümeysa was hired to craft a fluid, composite glossary of definitions for these category words, based on how the terms were being used by students and defined by teachers. In face-to-face meetings, she invited faculty to define, add, or remove words so the index would better reflect the pedagogy on the floor.

![](images/ClaraBalaguer/14.jpg)

14. So, if we were still in the process of taking stock of what Beyond Social was then we could not commission any new content. Still, we had to envision a new publication, or at least a new way to perform publishing. The task at hand is what Kenneth Goldsmith calls uncreative writing, based on the idea that nothing new can be written in an era of massive over-information.

![](images/ClaraBalaguer/15.jpg)

15. Some big questions we are working on: By playing with the means of circulation, could we create a new layer of content value that in turn attracted relational value? Could an inanimate repository of information become a living network of exchange and perform emotional labor? Could an institutional instrument engage in earnest self-critique?

![](images/ClaraBalaguer/16.jpg)

16. Why we decided to call our printer ELAINE: she is modeled after Elaine W. Ho, an artist, writer, and publisher from Hong Kong who co-conspires at the performative publishing house Display Distribute with artist Ming Lin. Elaine W. Ho is part of the development process to make sure our printer is not just another machine of the secretariat named after a bland woman who neither exists nor is able to participate in her own mechanic representation.

POST SCRIPT: We haven’t involved Elaine W. Ho as closely as we would like this year, but Alice and Angeliki are tasked with bringing the chatty enthusiasm we whipped up over chat and email with Elaine W. Ho to a more concrete form of engagement.

![](images/ClaraBalaguer/17.jpg)

17. ELAINE serves you information three ways, like going to a Chinese restaurant and ordering three-way duck, based on three filter processes: via metadata, via keyword matches, and via human interaction disguised as artificial intelligence, like in the Wizard of Oz. They’re all fairly simple processes, but these three layers of conversation hope to create a set of feelings on top of serving personalized information digests.

POST SCRIPT: I’m Asian, so I’m talking about three-way duck because it’s a deep childhood memory that has shaped the way I view forms of serving information (food is also nutritional data). Why do I feel like I have to specify these things? But anyway, I don’t know if this is cultural appropriation, by Western standards. Honestly, Western standards confound me deeply. But yeah, I’m not Chinese, heads up. But we have major mestizaje—like, many centuries of creolization—with Chinese culture where I’m from. So yeah. There. Disclaimer for Global North/Westerners.

![](images/ClaraBalaguer/18.jpeg)

18. So far ELAINE, as brought to life by André and Manetta on two separate printers, has made people laugh, think, play, feel listened to, and surprised. She does not believe performing emotional labor is beneath her intellectual capabilities. She is also pretty smart, thanks to the human librarians who sock-puppet her and the collective reading list provided by teachers, recycled from Print Kiosk I.

![](images/ClaraBalaguer/19.jpeg)

19. ELAINE has also been a great excuse to get to know people via collectivized labor. We have worked with people inside and outside the school, in different locations and departments, with students and teachers, across masters and bachelors programmes. It’s a small network for now, but a diverse one and, most importantly, a pretty civil one.

![](images/ClaraBalaguer/20.jpeg)

20. If you want to know more, scroll to the very bottom of [beyond-social.org](http://beyond-social.org/) landing page, there’s a bunch of links to our very intense developer diaries (and the Print Kiosk wiki has a very active talk page). We hope you can meet her soon!