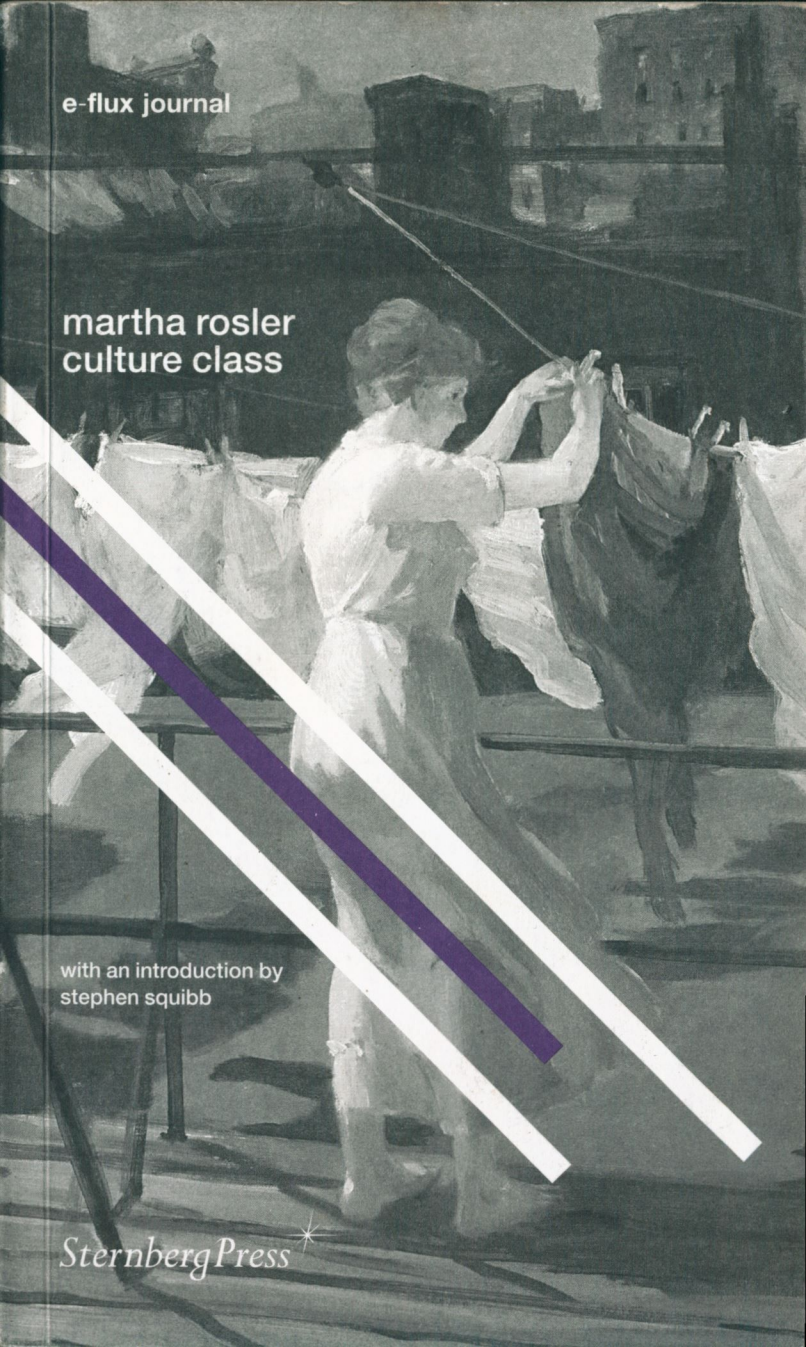

e-flux journal
martha rosler
culture class
with an introduction by
stephen squibb
Sternberg Press

for josh, sari, and phoebe

Contents

Foreword

Since the collapse of what is now generally called the Fordist regime of accumulation in the early 1980s, it has been impossible not to notice a broad overhaul in the physical, social, and demographic fabric of many Western metropolises. Real estate speculation, the outsourcing of industrial production, and the financial and tech-sector monopolies have, in various combinations, produced swaths of ruin and neglect, gleaming centers of culture, and gentrified postindustrial hangouts for screen workers and creative types. And while these sectors often mingle with each other in exciting ways to produce the appearance of economic prosperity, they are at the same time riddled with Potemkin institutions and shell game industries that conceal actual misery and chronic unemployment in both urban and rural areas.

This is the landscape surrounding what "new economy" commentator Richard Florida popularized as the creative class in his 2002 book of that title. Long criticized by the left for being "the human face" of a triumphant neoliberalism, the creative class as Florida has outlined it has since grown from an emerging prospect into a fact of everyday life in cities in the US and many other countries.

But it turns out that the combination of creative production and class analysis is not so recent. Looking back at Martha Rosler's 1989 project *If You Lived Here...* we find an undertaking whose sustained engagement with gentrification and its effects on the urban fabric stretches back into the 1980s. Taking place at the Dia Center for the Arts[1] in New York's then-bohemian SoHo neighborhood, *If You Lived Here...* was an expansive three-part exhibition coupled with several public forums, planted firmly

in the art world but engaging critical elements of the wider world, and focusing on homelessness as produced by the social spending cuts, inflation, urban renewal projects and real estate schemes of the 1980s.[2] Revisiting Rosler's seminal essay "Fragments of a Metropolitan Viewpoint" published in the project's 1991 companion book, *If You Lived Here,* it is startling to find her description of circumstances then bearing a strong resemblance to the situation today, where, for example, a

> pairing of linkage and dispersal has produced the exaggerated urban fragmentation and discontinuity so characteristic of post-modernism and has cast irony on the once-obvious slogan "The Streets Belong to the People." Today, the street has been rendered an imaginary domain.[3]

Moving forward two decades through successive booms and busts, the essays collected here, originally published between 2010 and 2012, present Rosler's most extensive update to her analysis of urban gentrification since *If You Lived Here....* And in *Culture Class*, Rosler shows us a landscape of urban change that has adapted to present exigencies by softening its edge significantly under the banner of creativity to become close to indistinguishable from formerly bohemian artistic milieus. In the creative city, the neutralization or commodification of subcultural movements, the translation of the gritty into the quaint, and the professionalization of the artist combine with armies of eager freelancers and interns to constitute the user friendly interface of a new social sphere in which, for those who have been granted a place within it, an elaborate retooling of traditional markers of difference has allowed class distinctions to be either utterly dissolved or willfully suppressed. The result is a handful of cities nominated by patrician elites for revitalization by upper class liberal arts progeny rather than simply desertion, where artists in search of cheap rent become the avant-garde wedge of gentrification and displacement, and one may no longer even speculate about where all of this came from and how.

At the same time, as Rosler points out, hidden behind the struggle to pay high rents or repay huge student loans, the precarious part of the creative sector has also been a repository for an enormous skepticism that took shape in 2011 as the Occupy movement, fueled in part by the political, always potentially revolutionary, dimensions of art. It is here that we begin to see how the simultaneous collapses of both the bohemian fantasy and the promise of middle-class stability may have given rise to a new political class whose demands can no longer be ignored, in which the very attributes of the creative class, or at least of artists and young professionals, are turned back against the financial interests that have tried both to deploy them but also to keep them firmly leashed.

It is a delight to present Martha Rosler's *Culture Class*, with an introduction by Stephen Squibb, as the seventh book in the series of *e-flux journal* readers.

—Julieta Aranda, Brian Kuan Wood, Anton Vidokle

1
At that time called The Dia Art Foundation.

2
See Nina Möntmann's essay "(Under)Privileged Spaces: On Martha Rosler's 'If You Lived Here... ,'" *e-flux journal* no. 9 (October 2010), http://www.e-flux.com/journal/underprivileged-spaces-on-martha-rosler's-"if-you-lived-here-"/

3
Martha Rosler, "Fragments of a Metropolitan Viewpoint," in *If You Lived Here: The City in Art, Theory, and Social Activism; A Project by Martha Rosler*, ed. Brian Wallis (New York: The New Press, 1991), 16.

Author's Preface

These articles, by and large, were written in response to invitations to speak at various times and places, generally to art-world audiences. Most were contributions to panel discussions, although the three "Culture Class" essays had a different genesis, which I will get to in a moment.

There are lines of argument in all these essays that I have made use of at earlier occasions, and there are other self-quotations or paraphrases. I also found myself reformulating some things I'd written before, returning to the lineage and development of artistic autonomy, commitment, alienation, and resistance, and to the shape and conditions of artistic reception and education. I long ago decided to take to heart Bertolt Brecht's ego-puncturing suggestion to recruit one's own words and writing in the service of talking with other audiences, entering other universes of discourses, to cannibalize those discourses if need be. This determination was bolstered by a conversation with an academic friend who responded to my complaint that I was always being invited to talk about the same things by remarking that that was the way it was: people want to hear you say the same things and explore the same ideas. He suggested I think of it as a kind of performance. In reality, the same themes, the same formulations, run through all the essays published here. And, joining other people who assemble collections of their previously published work, I thought it best to leave the redundancies intact.

The first essay, "Take the Money and Run? Can Political and Socio-Critical Art 'Survive'?" is a good example of this process of composition. The present version began as a talk at the Shanghai Contemporary Art Fair in September 2009, on the

symposium's topic, "What is contemporary art?"—a popular but perfectly impossible question (although I could imagine beginning, perhaps, by asking, "What makes contemporary art contemporary?"). Nevertheless, talk I did. My efforts in converting that talk, developed for a non-US audience with unknown understandings of my art world, into the present essay led me to produce what strikes me as a work written by a committee of one—me—writing at various times and for various readers. An earlier formulation of these thoughts at a different symposium, "Take the Money and Run?—Can Political and Socio-Critical Art 'Survive' in an Increasingly Commercialized Environment?" at the Austrian Cultural Forum in New York in 2007, led to its present title.

"The Artistic Mode of Revolution: From Gentrification to Occupation" is an expanded version of a paper given in the session "Ideological Appropriations: Cognitive Capitalism and Creative Industries," at the international conference "Labour of the Multitude? The Political Economy of Social Creativity," organized by young scholars and activists of Free/Slow University of Warsaw and held at the University of Warsaw in 2011, a month after Occupy Wall Street and the other elements of the Occupy movement had begun. That version saw print, in Polish translation, in *Wieczna Radość: Ekonomia Polityczna Spolecnej Kreatywności/A Joy Forever: The Political Economy of Social Creativity,* published by the Free/Slow University in 2011. In 2012, the version published in *e-flux journal* was also published in Korean in the journal *Art in Culture*.[1]

To turn to the eponymous heart of the book, the three sections of "Culture Class": they are the eventual result of an invitation extended to me by Camiel van Winkel to give the third Hermes Lecture in the Netherlands, in 2010. In response to my question asking him what he'd like me to talk about, van Winkel tentatively suggested I talk about Richard Florida. My startled bemusement led me at first to reject this idea out of hand (like shooting fish in a barrel, I thought). But I reconsidered, thinking that although the Florida thesis was pretty much settled urban doctrine, I actually knew little about its details, its origins, its data sets, and the reasons for its apparent popularity with sectors of the public and, more importantly, with municipal powers that be. I wondered about urbanism and labor as a popular topic, so popular that books like Florida's have displaced the types of self-help books of previous eras, as epitomized by the business evangelism of Tom Peters and of management experts such as Peter Drucker before him. I gave the Hermes lecture at Provinciehuis in Den Bosch and focused on Richard Florida, as planned, but I kept writing. What appears here is a much-expanded version of the thoughts I initially sketched out in my talk.

I was interested in the way that the shaping of the image of artists and other middle-class workers might be implicated in the narrative of the new tech city. What I did not expect was how the highly visible neo- and post-bohemian artistic sectors were conflated with the more highly paid tech sector, under the category of "creative class" workers. I wondered who was the audience for the revamped Style section of the *New York Times,* a section whose own style is ever metastasizing to the point that it now defines almost the entire newspaper. I wondered who was devouring the food issues put out by every magazine, even the *Smithsonian*, organ of our rather staid national museum. Young professionals, I was sure, the next generation of the much-derided yuppies of the

'80s—surely not the more recently denominated hipsters? But of course it *was* hipsters (some of whom are artists), a much more mobile sector of the "flexible workers" who make up the new precariat. In short, the composition and outlook of the group I'd written about earlier, on the cusp of the 1990s, in the book *If You Lived Here*[2]—where I considered the crisis of homelessness and contested housing, gentrification, and (the lack of) urban planning—had changed along with the economy and the fortunes of the city/the City. In that volume, the word "neoliberalism" cannot be found; the term, an eventual import from European analysts, describes a system whose early, deleterious effects were most visibly affecting the poorest city dwellers, a condition that had led me to develop the project with which that book is associated. These effects were taking hold just as New York City was emerging from a dark chapter indeed—a fiscal crisis that today is being suffered by Detroit and other so-called Rust Belt cities such as Pittsburgh, the distressed outpost where Richard Florida first began to formulate his thesis a couple of decades later. Since then, a new generation of mostly young people has flooded into the cities—my main focus here is on New York—from the suburbs and from abroad. They are also shaped by neoliberalism. These city dwellers, at least, have generally grown more sophisticated about urban affairs as a result of the widespread fixation on real estate as well as the generally greater degree of engagement with intellectual and critical discourses centered on *how to make a place and fit in* while hanging on to cultural, stylistic, and even occupational proclivities, in contrast to the earlier, more rejectionist and activist or simply countercultural generation. Coddled by a now-savvy set of city and corporate elites, some of these new in-migrants have felt empowered to follow their tastes and to cater to those of others, forming a new type of low-end luxury service class.

The final essay, "Contemporary Art at Center and Periphery," finds its first publication here, and once again it is the result of an invitation to speak in public. I was invited to participate as an artist in the Third Singapore Biennale, in 2011, and also to give the keynote address during the opening events. I decided to talk about the grand round of worldwide biennales (a number of which I've participated in). I did so partly by talking about the changing political status of post-colonial countries like Singapore and partly by talking about my project there, a garden to be developed locally, which I decided to link with a wholly different, wholly unrealized (although much planned) garden project of mine from a few years earlier, in Helsinki, Finland. Thus, my Singapore garden was called *Proposed Helsinki Garden at the Singapore Biennale* (2011). This title was a sort of provocation perhaps, but more importantly, it served as a hook on which to hang my exploration of the meaning of the burgeoning register of biennials and other internationalized art events and their relationship to an earlier effort of the so-called developing countries to form themselves into a political bloc that was "unaligned" with either the First or the Second World—acting in concert with neither the US nor the Soviet sphere of influence. I concluded with a nod to how culture has become central to the identity of many formerly Third World nations, resulting in the increased circulation of art events not only throughout the global North but throughout the global South as well.

In the two essays bracketing the "Culture Class" essays, I was interested in following the thread of where artists' political sympathies and actions might lie. With the market pressing in on

one side and near-poverty on the other, how might artists' long-standing tendency to identify not with their patrons but rather with the relatively voiceless in society be expressed or suppressed? What might eventuate from the combined effects of the promise of wealth in the great casino—even in the midst of a highly dangerous economic crisis—and a wave of uprisings and revolutions in Arab countries, during this period of ever more immediately available information? I ended the first essay—"Take the Money and Run?," published in 2010, before that wave of rebellions—with this note: "It is wise not to settle back into the image-symbolic realm; street actions and public engagement are basic requirements of contemporary citizenship." The other essay, "Artistic Mode of Revolution," was written in fall 2011, in the flush of optimism about Occupy, made up of people all around the world, people of every generation and every social position, people from big cities and from tiny towns, veteran protesters alongside people who'd never come out to demonstrate their political will before. It expresses my hope and belief that the long arc of history will continue to trend upward and that artists, if not the "creatives," will play a signal role in imagining what future history might be.

For offering me the opportunity to think, speak, and write about these issues, I want to express my gratitude to Camiel van Winkel; to my curators at the Singapore Biennale, especially Russell Storer; to Sabine Breitwieser, who organized the symposium at the Austrian Cultural Forum in New York in 2007, to Gary Garrels, who organized the session "Does It Matter Who Owns It? The Politics of the Commercialization of Politics" at the College Art Association conference in New York all the way back in 1990; and to Anton Vidokle, who organized the symposium in Shanghai; and to Ewa Majewska, Kuba Szreder, and Szymon Zydek, the organizers of the Warsaw symposium. These essays benefited greatly from my time away from New York during most of 2011, while in Berlin at the DAAD Artists-in-Residence Program.

Spending time thinking about these matters gave me the opportunity to revisit the work of those who have set the terms of the discussion—in books and articles that over many years have continued to shape my understanding of the rights to housing, the living history of cities, and the complex, formative relationship to economic and social forces—as well as to discover many more recent contributions. It is not feasible to name each of these works and their authors here (although when I gave the talks associated with these articles, my screen presentation included a host of book covers and even snippets of text). Nevertheless, I want to mention a few important works on the role of artists in gentrification and displacement in New York City. The first is Rosalyn Deutsche and Cara Gendel Ryan's superb article "The Fine Art of Gentrification," published in *October* in 1984. This article also discusses the critic Craig Owens's succinct analysis in *Art in America*; before his sad death at a young age, Craig was a good friend of mine, and we often discussed the role of artists and galleries in the takeover of the Lower East Side.[3] I also want to convey what a great pleasure it was to revisit the work of the urban sociologist Sharon Zukin, whose book *Loft Living* of 1982, an early and still unsurpassed account of the insertion of artists into the redevelopment in New York City, had inexplicably escaped my notice until sometime in the early 1990s; and to discover her recent book, *Naked City*. I have allowed myself to call upon her arguments and evidence throughout these essays.

Virtually all of the works published here benefited from ongoing conversations with Stephen Squibb and from his generous and invaluable insights during the research and editing process. I am doubly pleased that he agreed to write the introduction to this volume.

I offer my thanks as well to Alan Gilbert, Alexander Alberro, and Stephen Wright for their careful reading and critically important suggestions and corrections during the writing of one or more of these essays as I tried to impose clarity, coherence, and some degree of historical adequacy on them. I am deeply grateful to Brian Kuan Wood and Mariana Silva for their editorial work on the essays and the present volume, as well as to my studio assistants Jordan Lord and John Arthur Peetz. I acknowledge, however, that the errors are my own.

—Martha Rosler, New York, summer 2013

1
e-flux journal, no. 33 (March 2012); Korean version in *Art in Culture* 13, no. 5 (May 2012).

2
This book was published as part of an exhibition project I'd done in New York City, *If You Lived Here...*, on housing, homelessness, urban planning, and architectural dreaming, in New York City and a number of other locales in the United States and abroad. This is not to suggest that I'd since abandoned the topic; I've also published quite a few follow-ups in several journals, in several languages, and my lead essay there, "Fragments of a Metropolitan Viewpoint," has also been republished, and translated, several times. Meanwhile, as I write, there are more people without housing in New York than at any time in the city's past, but the "problem" has vanished from public attention, as the city's policing of homeless people, removing them as far as possible from Manhattan shopping districts, has become more efficient and as the concerns of the creatives, tourists, and wealthy consumers have taken center stage.

3
Rosalyn Deutsche and Cara Gendel Ryan, "The Fine Art of Gentrification," *October* 31 (Winter 1984): 91–111; Craig Owens, "Commentary: The Problem with Puerilism," *Art in America* 72, no. 6 (Summer 1984): 162–63.

Introduction: On the Artistic Mode of Production
Stephen Squibb

Jim explained that in the advertising industry, art directors and copywriters alike were called *creatives*. [...]

Jim also told him that the advertising product, whether it was a TV commercial, a print ad, a billboard or a radio spot, was called *the creative*. [...]

"You folks over there," said Max, "you say you call yourselves *creatives*, is that what you're telling me? And the work you do, you call that *the creative*, is that what you said?"

Jim said that was correct. "And I suppose you think of yourselves as pretty creative over there, I bet."

"I suppose so," said Jim, wondering what Max was driving at.

"And the work you do, you probably think that's pretty creative work."

"What are you asking me, Uncle Max?"

"Well, if all that's true," said the old man, "that would make you creative creatives creating creative creative." There was silence as Max allowed Jim to take this in. "And that right there," he concluded, [...] "that's a use of the English language just too absurd to even contemplate."

In Joshua Ferris's novel on the creative class, *Then We Came to the End*, adman Jim explains to his uncle Max, on whom he relies for ideas, how creativity blooms throughout the language of the office. And Uncle Max's diagnosis of absurdity in this case is less a moral judgment than a rhetorical fact: creativity is deployed as a property, an identity, a

process, and a product—as the naturalized condition of office life.

The immense semantic polyamory of creativity that has emerged in recent decades defies contemplation, never mind comprehension. Nevertheless, if anyone is up to the task, it is Martha Rosler.

Today, creativity appears as the language of autonomy and domination alike; not only in offices, but anywhere that globalization has yoked institutions to the fickle whims of finance capital. The creativity of the multitude, produced once as promise, then as threat, then as promise again, is claimed by all sides in a global struggle over resources. All sides believe in creativity, and each claims it as its own. Even individuals happy to extract historic profits from labor performed under unfree and malignant conditions present themselves as champions of a generalized human expression. Efforts to name this ambiguous project—in which each element of the political economy is understood to valorize creativity—have, at various times, settled around the idea of an "artistic mode of production," a concept that moves throughout Rosler's essays in two distinct ways.

In the first case we find questions of funding, institutional support and ideology, education, living patterns, patronage systems, technique; anything, in short, concerning the current status of the forces and relations whose friction informs, frames, and otherwise determines the ways in which art—and artists as well—are produced at local and global levels.

In the second case, the "artistic mode of production" refers explicitly to the thesis—never quite defined by its various interpreters, as Rosler notes—that our present economic conditions have themselves become, in one way or another, "artistic." This could mean that art and artists are increasingly instrumentalized, as Sharon Zukin documents in *Loft Living*, from 1982. In her example, the artistic mode of production is an urban phenomenon and refers not only to the celebration and creation of a *consumption pattern* as a new basis for artistic identity, but also to its active deployment in converting working-class neighborhoods and manufacturing centers into artist lofts and consumer spaces. This shift in land usage and class composition has profound effects on the social and political fabric of the city, replacing unruly constituencies with artists valued for the commercial applications of their vanguard lifestyle, rather than for their productive output. Following the theoretical positions of George Yúdice and Fredric Jameson, the "artistic mode of production" would refer less to a specific urban social formation than to a more abstract model of the contemporary economy that now places culture at its center. How, then, are we to specify the distinctions between this new mode of production and the other kinds? For example, could it be argued that where the feudal mode of production organized relations of honor, loyalty, and rank, and the capitalist kind elevates discipline, planning, and self-sacrifice, the artistic mode of production insists on creativity, autonomy, and flexibility? And while feudalism is characterized by slavery, ignorance, and injustice, and capitalism by exploitation, alienation, and inequality, today we increasingly speak of domination, precarity, and hegemony. At its most vehement then, a theory of the artistic mode of production should explain how art, or culture, or creativity, has displaced capital itself as the force organizing production.

Rosler never goes this far. She understands that any theory of the artistic mode rests implicitly,

at the very least, on a theory of the *mode artistique*. Without, that is, an understanding of the conditions under which art is produced, it is impossible to argue that the general mode of production has become artistic in any concrete sense.[1] The essays "Take the Money and Run?," "Contemporary Art at Center and Periphery," and the third section of "Culture Class" can be read as efforts to map out these conditions. By contrast, the first two sections of "Culture Class" and the essay "The Artistic Mode of Revolution" focus on the extent to which class struggle can, at present, be illuminated by thinking in terms of an artistic mode of production.

In "Take the Money and Run?," Rosler takes up the question of criticality, particularly as it touches upon relations of funding and patronage. Is there any option, she asks, following the query of a student, for an artist today beyond serving the rich? To what extent can a critical artistic practice survive in today's art market? Indicating persuasively that this question has never been an either/or—either selling work or being critical, either starving in a garret or operating wholly without integrity—Rosler traces the shifting coordinates on which such interventions have been staged historically. Essential to her discussion is a distinction between the relations of artistic production and those of artistic consumption. That is, to what extent and in what ways do sources of funding determine what is legible as critique at the moment of audience reception? Throughout much of history, Rosler notes, these factors were mutually coterminous and reinforcing—there was little effective difference between the patron who paid for the production of a work and the audience who encountered it. Or, if there was, the overlying ideological structure was such that any elements of criticality had to be couched in an idiom entirely local to the moment of reception, which complicates the availability of the broadly legible critical gesture implied in the category of critical art. Only with the decay of classical or feudal patronage systems did it become possible for artists to be responsible to an audience other than a commissioning patrician—to sell the work after fabrication rather than before. This too poses problems for criticality, as it sits uncomfortably alongside the imperative for consumer appeal. Even if it is the case, as literary critic Philip Fisher has noted, that the taste of the bourgeoisie for criticism of itself is historically remarkable, this nevertheless represents a constraint of its own. To this day, it remains a much safer strategy for a culture worker to produce an attack on the middle classes *for* the middle classes than any other kind of critique.

Rosler is keen to stress how criticality is itself a historical category. Unlike in the past, when art was celebrated for its cathartic effects, its religious devotion, its moral pedagogy, or its revolutionary solidarity, contemporary art is instructed to be critical. It is not enough to simply ask "To what extent can art be critical today?" without also inquiring after what the discourse of criticality permits, and also what it forbids. And any such inquiry must account for a rapidly globalizing international art circuit, which Rosler treats in "Contemporary Art at Center and Periphery." Where "Take the Money" asked whether the moment of criticality is best located at the moment of production or of consumption—given the relation between the two—"Center and Periphery" considers the circulation and distribution of contemporary art around the world. Taking her own project for the 2011 Singapore Biennale, *Proposed Helsinki Garden at the Singapore Biennale*, as an example, Rosler considers museums, art fairs,

and biennials as the three organizing pillars of the art-world system. Noting the success of biennials in formerly colonized locales, Rosler points out that these spaces often linger in the shadow of imperialism, whose legacy includes severe inequalities in cultural visibility or representation, in addition to the other kinds. Museums and art fairs, though in some sense operating at opposite ends of the circulatory system—the one aspiring to timeless relevance, the other to the latest fashion—nevertheless secure the same distributional effect, already recognized by Sharon Zukin and later theorized by Christian Marazzi. As the share of gains from increased productivity going to labor falls, the resulting shortfall in disposable income for consumption is supplemented by the rising prices of housing and land, especially in urban areas. These appreciating assets serve as collateral for debt taken to maintain the levels of consumer spending necessary for the appearance of sustainable growth. Both museum and fair support this process by lavishing cultural access and prestige on urban space, buttressing an elite regime of cosmopolitan accumulation that operates at some distance from national labor markets riven by unemployment and stagnant wages.

In the third section of "Culture Class," Rosler details how artists and the organizations that support them have recast themselves as consumer services. In the place of high-culture appeals to historical significance there now appear models of reception emphasizing experience and interactivity. What to make of this increasing ludic emphasis among artists and art-producing institutions? How does it sit alongside accounts of a more widespread shift toward an "artistic mode of production"? Rosler considers this in the first two sections of "Culture Class" and in the last essay "The Artistic Mode of Revolution." Taking up Richard Florida's claim—advanced in his turn-of-the-century book *The Rise of the Creative Class*—that the march into the future will be led by the third of the workforce not labeled working or service classes, Rosler shows how this idea emerged amid the postwar intellectual history of advertising, education and management theory, and various paeans to knowledge work and human capital. Separate from the obvious condescension at work in labeling industrial and service workers "uncreative"—which Florida denies precisely as he lodges his terminology ever deeper in the language—there is his much more troubling alliance, under the common banner of the creative class, of what he calls the "super creative core" and "creative professionals." Crucially, the only thing these two groups have in common is that they are not employed in the service or industrial sectors; otherwise their experience as workers—in terms of salary, benefits, hours, and expectations—could not be more different. By knitting them together in a putative class alliance, Florida thus covers over the clearest source of contemporary class antagonism: namely, the division between truly existing precarity, creative or otherwise, and the new managerial elite.[2] It is precisely this split, Rosler argues, that erupted in the international Occupy movement at the end of 2011, and which she foreshadows somewhat with her conclusion to "Culture Class," published in May 2011: "Although Chantal Mouffe exhorts artists (rightly, I suppose) not to abandon the museum—which I take to mean the art world proper—there is nothing to suggest we should not simultaneously occupy the terrain of the urban."

The reference anticipates not only the communes at Zuccotti Park and elsewhere but also the

much shorter-lived occupation of Artists Space in October, and the deployment, by activists, of rumors that the popular band Radiohead would be performing at Zuccotti. Both actions are particularly clear examples of the overlap between culture and political strategy, radical and otherwise, which Rosler pre-historicizes throughout "Culture Class" and examines more specifically in "The Artistic Mode of Revolution."

What emerges is that "creativity," even in obviously ideological articulations like Florida's, does not obscure the contradictions of the postindustrial city in the way that Benthamite claims for the infallible logic of the unfettered market once hid the contradictions of the industrial one. Where the latter explained away the facts of economic history by way of a convenient theoretical fiction, creativity refuses to resolve itself even this far. Sir Philip Sidney, in his late sixteenth-century *Defense of Poesie*, claimed that poets affirm nothing, and therefore never lie, and in such reasoning we find the *immense utility of creativity* as a governing instrument. The regime of creativity conceals no contradictions. Instead, ruling everything and affirming nothing, creativity is the contradiction itself.

This explains, as Rosler consistently mentions, the central position of creativity on both sides of the political divide. On the one hand, there are the likes of Florida, with his careful absorption of college-educated precarious workers into a class alliance with their historically well-compensated counterparts in the financial sector, on account of their ostensibly shared "creativity." And, on the other, neo-autonomists like Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, whose 2000 opus, *Empire*, makes a structurally similar set of claims for the centrality of immaterial labor to the shared experience of the multitude.

The naked imperial provincialism of Florida, who takes for granted that whatever is happening at the center of the world system is representative of what is happening on the periphery, does not, it is important to note, have a direct corollary in the work of Hardt and Negri. Still, even if the latter two are willing to grant that there is nothing particularly immaterial about the labor done by two hundred million Chinese factory workers, the connection between this more traditional form of class struggle and the one taking place at the postindustrial urban core remains undertheorized. Indeed, it is precisely against this kind of international blindness that Rosler aims "Contemporary Art at Center and Periphery." Thus, we have a Shanghai Biennale but not a New York one for the same reason that we also have an expanding Chinese working class but a shrinking American one. Art emerges from the current conjuncture as a particularly clear lens through which to grasp the conflict between the forces of global production—which are almost fully international in character—and the relations that remain, for the vast majority of people, locked within a national framework. Thus, somewhat perversely, an artist's nationality becomes *more* significant as their work achieves international reach, rather than less, and, furthermore, any explicitly political display on their part is tied to a national idiom. And this can be easily seen as a corollary to how the free international circulation of capital hardens the national coordinates of labor. While the international art world regulates and categorizes artists by their nationality, international capital regulates (and exploits) labor by reinforcing its national identity in turn.[3] In this way, the "becoming artistic" of labor at the center of the world system owes everything to the becoming international of capital within and around it.

At the center of each of these essays is an effort to measure the decreasing distance between what I have been calling "the artistic mode of production" and "the mode of artistic production." Of course this shrinking distance affects much more than *production* in the traditional sense. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that for Marx himself the proletariat *was* a creative class, albeit in the prophetic sense of creating an entirely new form of life. Not only this, but Marx took an artistic (or at least artisanal) standard as the implicit one against which to judge the kinds of labor organized by capital. Thus, in contrast to the alienated labor of the factory worker, Marx gives us Milton, who produced *Paradise Lost* in the manner that a silkworm produces silk, "as an activity of his nature." Considering the many thinkers Rosler cites, it seems clear that our standards for what counts as natural have not necessarily evolved much since. Indeed, a consistent virtue of the following texts is their relentless and rigorous push back against any and all attempts to *naturalize* creativity, to locate it as the property of one group at the expense of another, or to crudely valorize an artistic lifestyle as an enlightened method of consumption. Put otherwise, we might say that Rosler systematically reveals that behind every account of creativity valorized as a *natural force*—for production, consumption, or otherwise—lurks a set of unexamined relations between individuals. At every step of the way, Rosler is keen to show how, regardless of the extent to which productive arrangements have become more or less artistic or cultural or immaterial, it is *representation itself* that has become the terrain on which class struggle is played out. Thus, instead of an artistic mode of production, it would perhaps be better to speak of a "capitalist mode of representation," which valorizes abstract creativity in a way analogous to the valorization of abstract labor in those places, either historical or peripheral, where industrial production remains the dominant economic activity.

Or, drawing on Sharon Zukin's account of the instrumentalization of art by city elites to pacify urban neighborhoods (in addition to its being a preferred investment vehicle in times of crisis) could we not, following David Harvey, speak of an artistic or a cultural *fix*—wherein art and culture are precisely *not* indigenous to the productive or circulatory cycle, but are rather recruited by their beneficiaries to act as stabilizing agents in times of crisis?

Or why not an artistic mode of regulation, whereby the value invested in the putative freedom of artists becomes the new standard by which not only production but also circulation and consumption are governed? Thus, following Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello in *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, it could be argued that although the vast majority of consumer goods and salaried labor share some distance from the typically artistic, it nevertheless remains the case that "art," as an engine of authenticity, functions to maintain, expand, and, when necessary, reconfigure the arena of consumption, while simultaneously de-emphasizing production and distribution as sites of social antagonism. Many people now understand being political as a process of buying different things, differently. It is difficult to account for whatever unstable equilibrium such a system has achieved *without* making reference to an engine of artistic critique that consistently translates oppositional sentiment into new consumer patterns.[4]

I offer these three conceptual sketches—the capitalist mode of representation, the cultural fix, and the artistic mode of regulation—as complements to

the idea of an artistic mode of production. They are intended as threads for the reader to follow through Rosler's texts. I am not certain that any hold up to scrutiny, but the evidence for such a judgment can be found in the essays that follow. *Culture Class* is, in this respect, a crucial set of overlapping inventories, equal parts historical and theoretical. Taken together, the essays provide the raw conceptual material necessary to construct a new understanding of class, culture, and the role of art in the contemporary political economy.

1

This gap becomes clearer if we examine what is signified by the model term, "the capitalist mode of production": capital, a social relationship produced in circulation, like commodities and money, begins to organize production as well. Since production is not circulation, labor is not a commodity, and workers are not machines, there is a fundamental tension generated anywhere production is organized by capital. The question then becomes, what are the corresponding tensions, if there are any, for the artistic mode of production?

2

The question is one of hegemony, properly understood. With whom will the former middle class identify? With workers in the service and industrial sectors, whose economic fate they share? Or will they join with the new captains of finance and technology, under the banner of Florida's common creativity?

3

It is thus a mistake, perhaps, to speak of the neoliberal moment as primarily one of deregulation. Capital may have been freed up to move around the planet, but labor, in effect, has become *more regulated*, as its own lack of international mobility is increasingly used against it by free-flowing capital.

4

To expand on this conceptual hypothesis, it could be argued that the global regime of accumulation has multiple modes of regulation, which vary by region and history. The artistic mode of regulation would then be the way that the global regime operates at certain places in the urban core. Thus in the same way that slavery in the American South was regulated differently than was labor in industrial Britain, while both participated in the same accumulative regime, so too must the artistic mode of regulation be understood as distinct, but complementary, to the ones prevailing elsewhere in the global economy.

Take the Money and Run? Can Political and Socio-Critical Art "Survive"?

Just a few months before the real-estate market brought down much of the world economy, taking the art market with it, I was asked to respond to the question whether "political and socio-critical art" can survive in an overheated market environment. Two years on, this may be a good moment to revisit the parameters of such work (now that the fascination with large-scale, bravura, high wow-factor work, primarily in painting and sculpture, has cooled—if only temporarily).

Categories of criticality have evolved over time, but their taxonomic history is short. The naming process is itself frequently a method of recuperation, importing expressions of critique into the system being criticized, freezing into academic formulas things that were put together off the cuff. In considering the long history of artistic production in human societies, the question of "political" or "critical" art seems almost bizarre; how shall we characterize the ancient Greek plays, for example? Why did Plato wish to ban music and poetry from his republic? What was to be understood from English nursery rhymes, which we now see as benign jingles? A strange look in the eye of a character in a Renaissance scene? A portrait of a duke with a vacant expression? A popular print with a caricature of the king? The buzz around works of art is surely less now than when art was not competing with other forms of representation and with a wide array of public narratives; calling some art "political" reveals the role of particular forms of thematic enunciation.[1] Art, we may now hear, is meant to speak past particular understandings or narratives, and all the more so across national borders or creedal lines. Criticality that manifests as a subtle thread in iconographic details is unlikely to be apprehended by wide audiences across national borders. The veiled criticality of art under repressive regimes, generally manifesting as allegory or symbolism, needs no explanation for those who share in that repression, but audiences outside that policed universe will need a study guide. In either case, it is not the general audience but the educated castes and professional artists or writers who are most attuned to such hermeneutics. I expand a bit on this below. But attending to the present moment, the following question from an intelligent young scenester may be taken as a tongue-in-cheek provocation rooted in the zeitgeist, reminding us that political and socio-critical art is at best a niche production:

> We were talking about whether choosing to be an artist means aspiring to serve the rich. [...] That seems to be the dominating economic model for artists in this country. The most visible artists are very good at serving the rich [...] the ones who go to Cologne to do business seem to do the best. [...] She told me this is where Europe's richest people go.

Let us pause to think about how art first became characterized by a critical dimension. The history of such work is often presented in a fragmented, distorted fashion; art that exhibits an imperfect allegiance to the ideological structures of social elites has often been poorly received.[2] Stepping outside the ambit of patronage or received opinion without losing one's livelihood or, in extreme situations, one's life, became possible for painters and sculptors only a couple of hundred years ago, as the old political order crumbled under the changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution, and direct patronage and commissions from the Church and aristocrats declined.[3]

Vittore Carpaccio, *Two Venetian Ladies*, c. 1490. Oil on panel.

Members of the ascendant new class, the bourgeoisie, as they gained economic and political advantage over previous elites, also sought to adopt their elevated cultural pursuits; but these new adherents were more likely to be customers than patrons.[4] Artists working in a variety of media and cultural registers, from high to low, expressed positions on the political ferment of the early Industrial Revolution. One might find European artists exhibiting robust support for revolutionary ideals or displaying identification with provincial localism, with the peasantry, or with the urban working classes, especially using fairly ephemeral forms (such as the low-cost prints available in great numbers); smiling bourgeois subjects were depicted as disporting and bettering themselves while decked out in the newest brushstrokes and modes of visual representation. New forms of subjectivity and sensibility were defined and addressed in different modalities (the nineteenth century saw the development of popular novels, mass-market newspapers, popular prints, theater, and art), even as censorship, sometimes with severe penalties for transgression, was sporadically imposed from above.

The development of these mass audiences compelled certain artists to separate themselves from mass taste, as Pierre Bourdieu has suggested,[5] or to waffle across the line. Artistic autonomy, framed as a form of insurgency, came to be identified by a military term, the *avant-garde*, or its derivative, the vanguard.[6] In times of revanchism and repression, of course, artists assert independence from political ideologies and political masters through ambiguous or allegorical structures—critique by indirection. Even manifestos for the freeing of the poetic imagination, a potent element of the burgeoning Romantic movements, might be traced

to the transformations within entrenched ideology and of sensibility itself as an attribute of the "cultivated" person. The expectation that "advanced" or vanguard art would be autonomous—independent of direct ideological ties to patrons—created a predisposition toward the privileging of its formal qualities. Drawing on the traditions of Romanticism, it also underlined its insistence on subjects both more personal and more universal—but rooted in the experiential world, not in churchly dogmas of salvation.[7] The poetic imagination was posited as a form of knowing that vied with materialist, rationalist, and "scientific" epistemologies—one superior, moreover, in negotiating the utopian reconception and reorganization of human life.[8] The Impressionist painters, advancing the professionalization of art beyond the bounds of simple craft, developed stylistic approaches based on interpretations of advanced optical theory, while other routes to inspiration, such as psychotropic drugs, remained common enough. Artistic avant-gardes even at their most formal retained a utopian horizon that kept their work from being simply exercises in decor and arrangement. Disengagement from recognizable narratives, in fact, was crucial in advancing the claims of art to speak of higher things from its own vantage point or, more specifically, from the original and unique point of view of individual, named producers. Following John Fekete, we may interpret the positive reception of extreme aestheticism or "art for art's sake" as a panicked late nineteenth-century bourgeois response to a largely imaginary siege from the political Left.[9] But even such aestheticism, in its demand for absolute disengagement, offered a possible opening to an implied political critique, through the abstract, Hegel-derived, social negativity that was later a central element of the Frankfurt School, as exemplified by Adorno's insistence, against Brecht and Walter Benjamin, that art, in order to be appropriately negative, must remain autonomous, above partisan political struggles.

The turn of the twentieth century, a time of prodigious industrialization and capital formation, witnessed population flows from the impoverished European countryside to sites of production and inspired millenarian conceits that impelled artists and social critics of every stripe to imagine the future. We may as well call this modernism. And we might observe that modernism (inextricably linked, needless to say, to modernity) initially incorporates technological optimism and its belief in progress, while antimodernism sees the narrative of technological change as a tale of broad civilizational decline and thus tends toward a romantic view of nature.

Art history allows that in revolutionary Russia many artists mobilized their skills to work toward the socially transformative goals of socialist revolution, adopting new art forms (film) and adapting older ones—theater, poetry, architecture, popular fiction, and traditional crafts such as sewing and china decorating, but in mechanized production—while others outside the Soviet Union expressed solidarity with worldwide revolution. In the United States and Europe, in perhaps a less lauded—though increasingly documented—history, there were proletarian and communist painters, writers, philosophers, poets, photographers, architects....

Photographic modernism in the United States (stemming largely from Paul Strand, but with something of a trailing English legacy), married a documentary impulse to formal innovation. It inevitably strayed into the territory of Soviet and German photographic innovators, many of whom had utopian socialist or communist allegiances, although few of

the American photographic modernists aside from Strand shared these political viewpoints. Pro-ruralist sentiments were transformed from backward-looking, romantic, and pastoral longing to a focus on labor (perhaps with a different sort of romanticism) and on workers' milieus, both urban and rural.[10]

The turn of the century brought developments in photography and printing (such as the new photolithographic printing technology of 1890 and the new small cameras, notably the Leica in 1924) that gave birth to photojournalism and facilitated political agitation. The "social documentary" impulse is not, of course, traceable to technology, and other camera technologies, although more cumbersome, were also employed.[11] Many photographers were eager to use photographs to inform and mobilize political movements—primarily by publishing their work in the form of journal and newspaper articles and photo essays. In the early part of the century and until the end of the 1930s, photography was used to reveal the processes of the state behind closed doors (Erich Salomon); to offer public exposés of urban poverty and degradation (Lewis Hine, Paul Strand, German photographers like Alfred Eisenstaedt or Felix Mann who were working for the popular photo press); to provide a dispassionate visual "anatomization" of social structure (August Sander's interpretation of Neue Sachlichkeit, or New Objectivity); to serve as a call to arms, both literally (the newly possible war photography, such as that by Robert Capa, Gerda Taro, David Seymour) and figuratively (the activist photo and newsreel groups in various countries, such as the Workers Film and Photo League chapters in various US cities); and to support government reforms (in the United States, Roosevelt's Farm Security Administration). Photography, for these and other reasons, is generally excluded from standard art histories, which thoroughly skews the question of political commitment or critique.[12] In the contemporary moment, however, the history of photography is far more respectable, since photography has become a favored contemporary commodity and needs a historical tail (which itself constitutes a new market); but the proscription of politically engaged topicality is still widespread.[13]

European-style avant-gardism made a fairly late appearance in the United States, but its formally inscribed social critique offered, approximately from the 1930s through the late 1940s, an updated, legible version of the antimaterialist, and eventually anticonsumerist, critique previously offered by turn-of-the-twentieth-century antimodernism. Modernism is, inter alia, a conversation about progress, the prospects of utopia, and the fear, doubt, and horror over its costs, especially as seen from the vantage point of the members of the intellectual class. One strand of modernism led to Futurism's catastrophic worship of the machine and war (and eventually to political fascism), but also to utopian urbanism and International Style architecture.[14]

Modernism notoriously exhibited a kind of ambiguity or existential angst—typical problems of intellectuals, one imagines, whose identification, if any, with workers, peasants, and proletarianized farm workers is maintained almost wholly by sheer force of conviction in the midst of a very different way of life—perhaps linked experientially by related, though different, forms of alienation. Such hesitancy, suspicion, or indifference is a fair approximation of independence—albeit "blessedly" well behaved in not screaming for revolution—but modernism, as suggested earlier, was suffused with a belief in the transformative power of (high) art.

What do (most) modern intellectual elites do if not distance themselves from power and express suspicion, sometimes bordering on despair, of the entire sphere of life and mass cultural production (the ideological apparatuses, to borrow a term from Althusser)?[15]

Enlightenment beliefs in the transformative power of culture, having recovered from disillusionment with the French Revolution and its path forward to the Terror, were again shattered by the monstrousness of trench warfare and aerial bombing in the First World War (as with the millenarianism of the present century, that of the turn of the twentieth century was smashed by war). Utopian hopes for human progress were revived along with the left-leaning universalism of interwar Europe but were soon to be ground under by the Second World War. The successive "extra-institutional" European avant-garde movements that had challenged dominant culture and industrial exploitation between the wars, notably Dada and Surrealism, with their very different routes to resisting social domination and bourgeois aestheticism, had dissipated before the war began. Such dynamic gestures and outbursts are perhaps unsustainable as long-term movements, but they have had continued resonance in latter-day moments of criticality.

Germany had seen itself as the pinnacle of Enlightenment culture; its wartime barbarism, including the Nazis' perverse, cruel, totalitarian re-imaginings of German history and culture, was an especial blow to the belief in the transcendent powers of culture. Postwar Europe had plenty to be pessimistic about, but it was also staring into the abyss of existentialist angst and the loneliness of *Being and Nothingness* (and Year Zero). In Western(ized) cultures during the postwar period,

Aristide Briand pointing at Erich Salomon sneaking a photo of a closed-door meeting of Briand with Auguste Champetier de Ribes, Edouard Herriot, and Léon Bérard. Paris, Quai d'Orsay, August 1931. Briand reportedly exclaimed, "Ah, there he is, the king of the indiscreet!"

a world-historical moment centering on nuclear catastrophism, communist Armageddon, and postcoloniality (empire shift), the art that seemed best equipped to carry the modernist burden was abstract painting, with its avoidance of incident in favor of formal investigations and a continued search for the sublime. It was painting, in a word, by professionals, communicating in codes known only to the select few, in a conscious echo of other professional elites, such as research scientists (a favorite analogy among its admirers). Abstract painting was both serious and impeccably uninflected with political imagery, unlike the social realism of much of American interwar painting. As cultural hegemony was passing from France to the United States, critical culture was muted, taking place mostly at the margins, among poets, musicians, novelists, and a few photographers and social philosophers, including the New York School poets and painters, among them those who came to be called Abstract Expressionists.

The moment was brief: the double-barreled shotgun of popular recognition and financial success brought Abstract Expressionism low. Any art that depends on critical distance from social elites—but especially an art associated rhetorically with transcendence, which presupposes, one should think, a search for authenticity and the expectations of approaching it—has trouble defending itself from charges of capitulation to the prejudices of a clientele. For Abstract Expressionism, with its necessary trappings of authenticity, grand success was untenable. Suddenly well capitalized, as well as lionized as a high-class export by sophisticated government internationalists and increasingly "appreciated" by mass-culture outlets, the Abstract Expressionist enclave, a bohemian mixture of native-born and émigré artists, fizzled into irrelevance, with many of its participants prematurely dead.

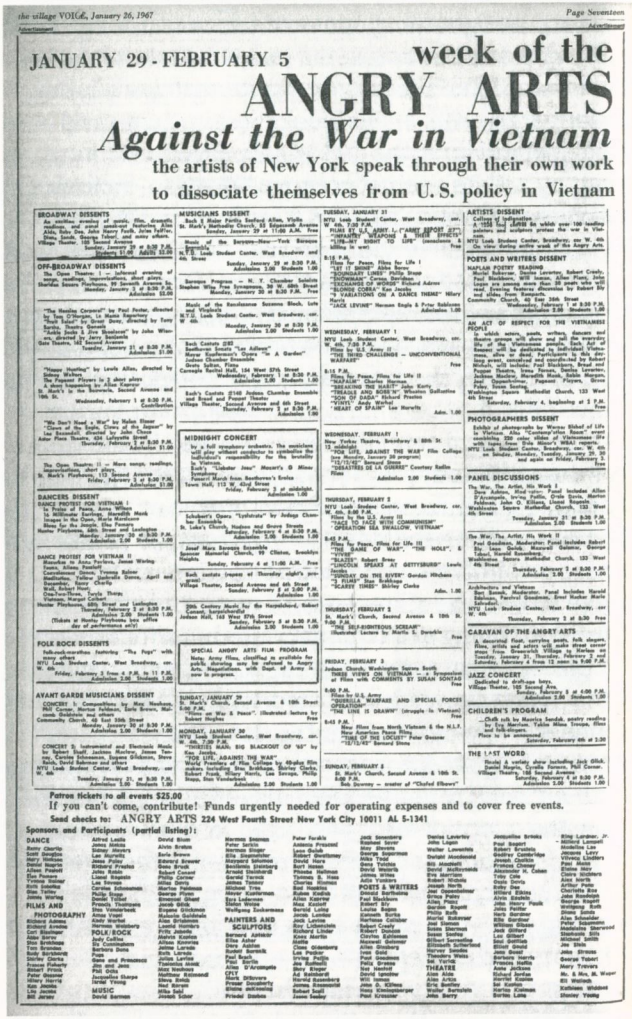
Abstract Expressionism, like all modernist high culture, was understood to be a critical art, yet it appeared, against the backdrop of ebullient democratic/consumer culture, as detached from the concerns of the everyday. How can there be poetry after Auschwitz, or, indeed, *pace* Adorno, after television? Bohemia itself (that semi-artistic, semi-intellectual subculture, voluntarily impoverished, disaffected, and anti-bourgeois) could not long survive the changed conditions of cultural production and, indeed, the pattern of daily life in the postwar West. Peter Bürger's canonical thesis on the failure of the European avant-gardes in prewar Europe has exercised a powerful grip on subsequent narratives of the always-already-dead avant-gardes.[16] As I have written elsewhere, Expressionism, Dada, and Surrealism were intended to reach beyond the art world to disrupt conventional social reality and thereby become instruments of liberation. As Bürger suggests, the avant-garde intended to replace individualized production with a more collectivized and anonymous practice and simultaneously to evade the individualized address and restricted reception of art.[17] The art world was not destroyed as a consequence—far from it. As Bürger notes, the art world, in a maneuver that has become familiar, swelled to encompass the avant-gardes, and their techniques of shock and transgression were absorbed as the production of the new.[18] *Anti-art* became *Art*, to use the terms set in opposition by Allan Kaprow in the early 1970s, in his (similarly canonical) articles in *ARTnews* and *Art in America* on "the education of the un-artist."[19]

After the war, in the United States the search for authenticity was reinterpreted as a search for

privatized, personal self-realization, and there was general impatience with aestheticism and the sublime. By the end of the 1950s, dissatisfaction with life in McCarthyist, "conformist" America—in racially segregated, male-dominated America—rose from a whisper, cloistered in little magazines and journals, to a hubbub. More was demanded of criticality—and a lot less.

Its fetishized concerns fallen by the wayside, Abstract Expressionism was superseded by Pop art, which—unlike its predecessor—stepped onto the world stage as a commercially viable mode of artistic endeavor, unburdened by the need to be anything but flamboyantly inauthentic, eschewing nature for human-made (or, more properly, corporate) "second nature." Pop, as figured in the brilliant persona of Andy Warhol—the Michael Jackson of the 1960s—gained adulation from the masses by appearing to flatter them while spurning them. For buyers of Campbell Soup trash cans, posters of Marilyn or Jackie multiples, and banana decals, no insult was apprehended nor criticism taken, just as the absurdist costumes of Britain's mods and rockers, or even, later, the clothing fetishes of punks or hip-hop artists, or of surfers or teen skateboarders, were soon enough taken as cool fashion cues by many adult observers—even those far from the capitals of fashion, in small towns and suburban malls.[20]

The 1960s were a robust moment, if not of outspoken criticality in art, then of artists' unrest, while the culture at large, especially the civil rights / youth culture / counterculture / antiwar movement, was more than restive, attempting to rethink and remake the cultural and political landscape. Whether they abjured or expressed the critical attitudes that were still powerfully dominant in intellectual culture, artists were chafing against what they perceived as a lack of autonomy, made plain by the grip of the market, the tightening noose of success (though still nothing in comparison to the powerful market forces and institutional professionalization at work in the current art world). In the face of institutional and market ebullience, the 1960s saw several forms of revolt by artists against commodification, including deflationary tactics against glorification. One may argue about each of these efforts, but they nevertheless asserted artistic autonomy from dealers, museums, and markets rather than, say, producing fungible items in a signature brand of object production. So-called "dematerialization": the production of low-priced, often self-distributed multiples; collaborations with scientists (a continued insistence on the experimentalism of unfettered artistic imagination); the development of multimedia or intermedia and other ephemeral forms such as smoke art or performances that defied documentation; dance based on ordinary movements; the intrusion or foregrounding of language, violating a foundational modernist taboo, and even the displacement of the image by words in Wittgensteinian language games and Conceptual art; the use of mass-market photography; sculpture made of industrial elements; Earth art; architectural deconstructions and fascinations; the adoption of cheap video formats; ecological explorations; and, quite prominently, feminists' overarching critique ... all these resisted the special material valuation of the work of art above all other elements of culture, while simultaneously disregarding its critical voice and the ability of artists to think rationally without the aid of interpreters. These market-resistant forms (which were also of course trampling the genre boundaries of Greenbergian high modernism), an evasive relation to commodity and



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Village Voice ad for Angry Arts week, Lower East Side, New York, January 1967. The week of events brought together many artists, writers, poets, playwrights, and musicians actively opposing the Vietnam War.

professionalization (careers), carried forward the questioning of craft. The insistence on seeing culture (and, perhaps more widely, human civilization) as primarily characterized by rational choice—see under Conceptualism—challenged isolated genius as an essential characteristic of artists and furthered the (imaginary) alignment with workers in other fields. These were not arts of profoundly direct criticality of the social order.

An exception is art-world feminism, which, beginning in the late 1960s as part of a larger, vigorously critical and political movement, offered an overt critique of the received wisdom about the characteristics of art and artists and helped mount ultimately successful challenges to the reigning paradigm by which artists were ranked and interpretation controlled. Feminism's far-reaching critique was quite effective in forcing all institutions, whether involved in education, publicity, or exhibition, to rethink *what* and *who* an artist is and might be, what materials art might be made of, and what art *meant* (whether that occurred by way of overt signification or through meaning sedimented into formal expectations), replacing this with far broader, more heterodox, and dynamic categories. Whether feminist work took the form of trenchant social observation or re-envisioned formal approaches such as pattern painting, no one failed to understand critiques posed by works still seen as embedded in their social matrix (thus rekindling, however temporarily, a wider apprehension of coded "subtexts" in even nonnarrative work).

Another exception to the prevailing reactive gambits in 1960s art was presented by two largely Paris-based neo-Dada, neo-Surrealist avant-garde movements, Lettrism and the Situationist International (SI), both of which mounted direct

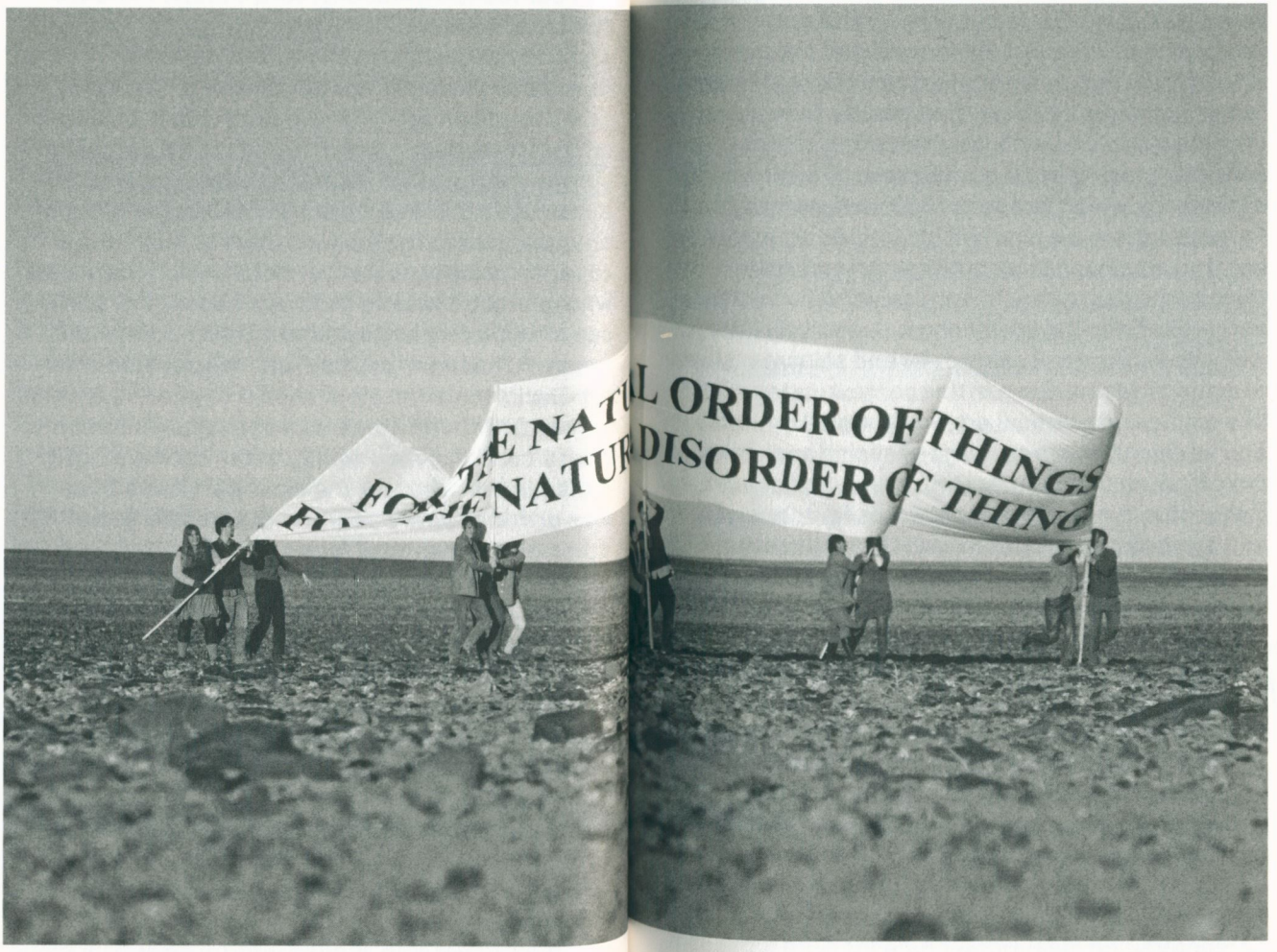
critiques of domination in everyday life. The SI eventually split, in good measure over whether to cease all participation in the art world, with founding member Guy Debord, a filmmaker and writer, among those who chose to abandon that milieu.[21] Naturally, this group of rejectionists is the SI group whose appreciation in the art world was revived in the 1980s following a fresh look at Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* (1967). The book proposes to explain, in an elegant series of numbered statements or propositions, how the commodity form has evolved into a spectacular world picture; in the postwar world, domination of the labor force (most of the world's people) by capitalist and state capitalist societies is maintained by the constant construction and maintenance of an essentially false picture of the world retailed by all forms of media, but particularly by movies, television, and the like. The spectacle, he is at pains to explain, is a relationship among people, not among images, thus offering a materialist, Marxist interpretation. Interest in Debord was symptomatic of the general trend toward a new theoretical preoccupation with (in particular) media theory, in post-Beaux Arts, post-Bauhaus, postmodern art education in the United States beginning in the late 1970s. The new art academicism nurtured criticality in art and other forms of theory-driven production, since artists were being officially trained to teach art as a source of income to fund their production rather than simply to find markets.[22]

There had been a general presumption among postwar government elites and their organs (including the Ford Foundation) that nurturing "creativity" in whatever form was good for the national brand; predispositions toward original research in science and technology and art unencumbered by prescribed messages were potent symbols of American freedom (of thought, of choice...), further troubling artists' rather frantic dance of disengagement from market and ideological mechanisms throughout the '60s. In the United States in the late 1960s, President Johnson's Great Society included an expansive vision of public support for the arts. In addition to providing direct grants to institutions, to critics, and to artists, federal money was also directed to nonprofit, artist-initiated galleries and related venues. This led to a great expansion of the seemingly uncapitalizable arts like performance and video, whose main audience was other artists. Throughout the 1970s, the ideological apparatuses of media, museum, and commercial gallery were deployed in attempts to limit artists' autonomy, bring them back inside the institutions, and recapitalize art.[23] A small Euro-American group of dealers, at the end of the decade, successfully imposed a new market discipline by instituting a new regime of very large, highly salable Neo-Expressionist painting, just as Reaganism set out to cripple, if not destroy, public support for art. Art educators began slowly adopting the idea that they could sell their departments and schools as effective in helping their students find gallery representation by producing a fresh new line of work. The slow decline of "theoretical culture"—in art school, at least—had begun.

The Right/Republican assault on relatively autonomous symbolic expression that began in the mid-1980s and extended into the 1990s became known as the culture wars; it continues, although with far less prominent attacks on art than on other forms of cultural expression.[24] Right-wing elites managed to stigmatize and to restrict public funding of certain types of art. Efforts to brand some work as communist, meaning politically engaged

or subversive of public order, no longer worked by the 1980s. Instead, US censorship campaigns have mostly taken the form of moral panics meant to mobilize authoritarian-minded religious fundamentalists in the service of destroying the narrative and the reality of the liberal welfare state, of "community," echoing the "degenerate art" smear campaigns of the Nazis. Collectors and some collecting institutions perceived the *éclat* of such work—which thematized mostly sex and gender inequality (in what came to be called "identity politics") as opposed to, say, questions of labor and governance, which were the targets in earlier periods of cultural combat—as a plus, with notoriety no impediment to fortune.[25] The most vilified artists in question have not suffered in the marketplace; on the contrary. But most public exhibiting institutions felt stung and reacted accordingly—by shunning criticality, since their funding and museum employment were tied to public funding. Subsequent generations of artists, divining that "difficult" content might restrict their entry into the success cycle, have engaged in self-censorship. Somewhat perversely, the public success of the censorship campaigns stems partly from the myth of a classless, unitary culture: the pretense that in the United States, art and culture belong to all and that very little specific knowledge or education is, or should be, necessary for understanding art. But legibility itself is generally a matter of education, which addresses a relatively small audience already equipped with appropriate tools of decipherment, as I have claimed throughout the present essay and elsewhere.

But there is another dimension to this struggle over symbolic capital. The art world has expanded enormously over the past few decades and unified to a great degree, although there are still local markets. This market is "global" in scope and occupied with questions very far from whether its artistic practices are political or critical. But thirty years of theory-driven art production and critical reception—which brought part of the discursive matrix of art inside the academy, where it was both shielded from and could appear to be unimplicated in the market, thereby providing a cover for direct advocacy—helped produce artists whose practices were themselves swimming in a sea of criticality and apparently anti-commodity forms.[26] The term "political art" reappeared after art-world commentators used it to ghettoize work in the 1970s, with some hoping to grant such work a modicum of respectability while others wielded it dismissively, but for the most part its valence was drifting toward positive. Even better were other, better-behaved forms of "criticality," such as the nicely bureaucratic-sounding "institutional critique" and the slightly more ominous "interventionism." I will leave it to others to explore the nuances of these (certainly meaningful) distinctions, remarking only that the former posits a location within the very institutions that artists were attempting to outwit in the 1960/70s, whereas the latter posits its opposite, a motion outside the institution—but also staged from within. These, then, are not abandonments of art-world participation but acceptance that these institutions are the proper—perhaps the only—platform for artists.[27] A further sign of such institutionality is the emergence of a curatorial subgenre called "new institutionalism" (borrowing a term from a wholly unrelated branch of sociology) that encompasses the work of sympathetic young curators wishing to make these "engaged" practices intramural.



Jesse Jones, *Mahogany*, 2009. Production still from 16 mm film.

This suggests a broad consensus that the art world, as it expands, is a special kind of sub-universe (or parallel universe) of discourses and practices whose walls may seem transparent but that floats in a sea of larger cultures. That may be the means of coming to terms with the overtaking of high-cultural meaning by mass culture and its structures of celebrity, which had sent 1960s artists into panic. Perhaps artists are now self-described art workers, but they also hope to be privileged members within their particular sphere of culture, actually "working"—like financial speculators—relatively little, while depending on brain power and salesmanship to score big gains. Seen in this context, categories like political art, critical art, institutional critique, and interventionism are ways of slicing and dicing the offspring of art under the broad rubric of Conceptualism—some approaches favor analyses and symbolic interventions into the institutions in question, and others, more externalized, publicly visible actions.

Perhaps a more general consideration of the nature of work itself and of education is in order. I have suggested that we are witnessing the abandonment of the model of art education as a search for meaning (and of the liberal model of higher education in general) in favor of what has come to be called the success model ... "Down with critical studies!" Many observers have commented on the changing characteristics of the international work force, with especial attention to the "new flexible personality," an ideal worker type for a life without job security, one who is able to construct a marketable personality and to persuade employers of one's adaptability to the changing needs of the job market. Commentators like Brian Holmes (many of them based in Europe) have noted the applicability of this model to art and intellectuals.[28] Bill Readings, until his death a Canadian professor of comparative literature at the Université de Montréal, in his posthumously published book, *The University in Ruins*, observes that universities are no longer "guardians of the national culture" but effectively empty institutions that sell an abstract notion of excellence.[29] The university, Readings writes, is "an autonomous bureaucratic corporation" aimed at educating for "economic management" rather than "cultural conflict." The Anglo-American urban geographer David Harvey, reviewing Readings's book in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1998, noted that the modern university "no longer cares about values, specific ideologies, or even such mundane matters as learning how to think. It is simply a market for the production, exchange, and consumption of useful information—useful, that is, to corporations, governments, and their prospective employees."[30] In considering the "production of subjectivity" in this context, Readings writes—citing the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben—that it is no longer a matter of either shop-floor obedience or managerial rationality but rather the much touted "flexibility," "personal responsibility," "communication skills," and other similarly "abstract images of affliction."[31]

Agamben has provocatively argued that most of the world's educated classes are now part of the new planetary petite bourgeoisie, which has dissolved all social classes, displacing or joining the old petite bourgeoisie and the urban proletariat and inheriting their economic vulnerability. In this end to recognizable national culture, Agamben sees a confrontation with death out of which a new self-definition may be born—or not.[32] Another Italian philosopher, Paolo Virno, is also concerned with the character of the new global workforce in the present

post-Fordist moment, but he takes a different tack in works like *A Grammar of the Multitude*, a slim book based on his lectures.[33]

> The affinity between a pianist and a waiter, which Marx had foreseen, finds an unexpected confirmation in the epoch in which all wage labor has something in common with the "performing artist." The salient traits of post-Fordist experience (servile virtuosity, exploitation of the very faculty of language, unfailing relation to the "presence of others," etc.) postulate, as a form of conflictual retaliation, nothing less than a radically new form of democracy.[34]

Virno argues that the new forms of globalized flexible labor allow for the creation of new forms of democracy. The long-established dyads of public/private and collective/individual no longer have meaning, and collectivity is enacted in other ways. The multitude and immaterial labor produce subjects who occupy "a middle region between 'individual and collective'" and so have the possibility of engineering a different relationship to society, state, and capital. It is tempting to assign the new forms of communication to this work of the creation of "a radically new form of democracy."

Let us tease out of these accounts of the nature of modern labor—in an era in which business types (like Richard Florida) describe the desired work force, typically urban residents, as "creatives"—some observations about artists-in-training: art students have by now learned to focus not on an object-centered brand signature so much as on a personality-centered one. The cultivation of this personality is evidently seen by some anxious school administrators—feeling pressure to define art less by the adherence of an artist's practice to a highly restricted discourse and more in the terms used for other cultural objects—as hindered by critical studies and only to be found behind a wall of craft. (*Craft* here is not to be understood in the medieval sense, as bound up in guild organization and the protection of knowledge that thereby holds down the number of practitioners, but as reinserted into the context of individualized, bravura production—commodity production in particular.) Class and study time give way to studio preparation and exposure to a train of invited, and paid, reviewers/critics (with the former smacking of boot camp, and the latter sending up whiffs of corruption).

It might be assumed that we art-world denizens, too, have become neoliberals, finding validation only within the commodity-driven system of galleries, museums, foundations, and magazines, and in effect competing across borders (though some of us are equipped with advantages apart from our artistic talents), a position evoked at the start of this essay in the question posed by an artist in his twenties concerning whether it is standard practice for ambitious artists to seek to sell themselves to the rich in overseas venues.

But now consider the art world as a community—in Benedict Anderson's terms, an imagined community—of the most powerful kind, a post-national one kept in ever-closer contact by emerging systems of publicity and communication alongside other, more traditional print journals, press releases, and informal organs (although it does not quite achieve imaginary nationhood, which is Anderson's true concern).[35]

The international art world (I am treating it here as a system) is entering into the globalizing moment of "flexible accumulation"—a term

preferred by some on the Left to "(economic) postmodernism" as a historical periodization. After hesitating over the new global image game (in which the main competition is mass culture), the art world has responded by developing several systems for regularizing standards and markets. Let me now take a minute to look at this newly evolving system itself.[36]

The art world had an earlier moment of internationalization, especially in the interwar period, in which International Style architecture, design, and art helped unify the look of elite cultural products and the built environment of cities around the globe. Emergent nationalisms modified this only somewhat, but International Style lost favor in the latter half of the twentieth century. In recent times, under the new "global" imperative, three systemic developments have raised art-world visibility and power. First, localities have sought to capitalize on their art-world holdings by commissioning buildings designed by celebrity architects. But high-profile architecture is a minor, small-scale maneuver, attracting tourists, to be sure, but functioning primarily as a symbolic assertion that that particular urban locale is serious about being viewed as a "player" in the world economic system. The Bilbao effect is not always as powerful as hoped. The era of blockbuster shows—invented in the 1970s to draw in crowds, some say by the recently deceased Thomas P. F. Hoving during his tenure at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art—may be drawing to a close, saving museums from ever-rising expenditures on collateral costs such as insurance; it is the container more than the contents that is the attractant.

More important have been the two other temporary but recurrent, processual developments. First came the hypostatizing biennials of the 1990s. Their frantic proliferation has elicited derision, but these international exhibitions were a necessary moment in the integration of the art system, allowing local institutional players to put in their chips. The biennials have served to insert an urban locale, often of some national significance, into the international circuit, offering a new physical site attracting art and art-world members, however temporarily. That the local audience is educated about new international style imperatives is a secondary effect to the elevation of the local venue itself to what might crudely be termed "world class" status; for the biennials to be truly effective, the important audience must arrive from elsewhere. The biennial model provides not only a physical circuit but also a regime of production and normalization. In "peripheral" venues it is not untypical for artists chosen to represent the local culture to have moved to artist enclaves in fully "metropolitan," "first world" cities (London, New York, Berlin, Paris), regarded as portals to the global art market/system, before returning to their countries of origin to be "discovered." The airplane allows a continued relationship with the homeland; expatriation can be prolonged, punctuated by time back home. This condition, of course, defines migrant and itinerant labor of all varieties under current conditions, as it follows the flow of capital.[37]

I recently received a lengthy, manifesto-style e-mail, part of an open letter to the Istanbul Biennial, that illustrates the critique of biennials with pretensions to political art (characteristic also of the past three iterations of documenta—a pentennial or quinquennial if you will, rather than a biennial—in Kassel, Germany).[38] It is signed by a group calling itself the Resistanbul Commissariat of Culture:

> We have to stop pretending that the popularity of politically engaged art within the museums

and markets over the last few years has anything to do with really changing the world. We have to stop pretending that taking risks in the space of art, pushing boundaries of form, and disobeying the conventions of culture, making art about politics makes any difference. We have to stop pretending that art is a free space, autonomous from webs of capital and power. [...]

We have long understood that the Istanbul Biennial aims at being one of the most politically engaged transnational art events. [...] This year the Biennial is quoting comrade Brecht, dropping notions such as neoliberal hegemony, and riding high against global capitalism. We kindly appreciate the stance but we recognize that art should have never existed as a separate category from life. Therefore we are writing you to stop collaborating with arms dealers. [...]

The curators wonder whether Brecht's question "What Keeps Mankind Alive" is equally urgent today for us living under the neoliberal hegemony. We add the question: "What Keeps Mankind Not-Alive?" We acknowledge the urgency in these times when we do not have the right to work, we do not get free healthcare and education, our right to our cities, our squares, and streets are taken by corporations, our land, our seeds and water are stolen, we are driven into precarity and a life without security, when we are killed crossing their borders and left alone to live an uncertain future with their potential crises. But we fight. And we resist in the streets not in corporate spaces reserved for tolerated institutional critique so as to help them clear their conscience. We fought when they wanted to kick us out of our neighborhoods.

Resistanbul members demonstrating on September 5, 2009.

The message goes on to list specific struggles in Turkey for housing, safety, job protections, and so on, which space limitations constrain me to omit.[39] I was interested in the implied return of the accusation that socio-critical/political work is boring and negative, addressed further in this e-mail:

> The curators also point out that one of the crucial questions of this Biennial is "how to 'set pleasure free,' how to regain revolutionary role of enjoyment." We set pleasure free in the streets, in our streets. We were in Prague, Hong Kong, Athens, Seattle, Heilegendamm [sic], Genoa, Chiapas and Oaxaca, Washington, Gaza and Istanbul![40] Revolutionary role of enjoyment is out there and we cherish it everywhere because we need to survive and we know that we are changing the world with our words, with our acts, with our laughter. And our life itself is the source of all sorts of pleasure.

The Resistanbul Commissariat of Culture message ends as follows:

> Join the resistance and the insurgence of imagination! Evacuate corporate spaces, liberate your works. Let's prepare works and visuals (poster, sticker, stencil, etc.) for the streets of the resistance days. Let's produce together, not within the white cube, but in the streets and squares during the resistance week! Creativity belongs to each and every one of us and can't be sponsored. Long live global insurrection!

This "open letter" underlines the criticism to which biennials or any highly visible exhibitions open themselves when they purport to take on political themes, even if participants and visitors are unlikely to receive such e-mailed messages.[41] As the letter implies, dissent and dissidence that fall short of insurrection and unruliness are quite regularly incorporated into exhibitions, as they are into institutions such as universities in liberal societies; patronizing attitudes along the lines of "Isn't she pretty when she's angry!" are effective—even President Bush smilingly called protesters' shouts a proof of the robustness of "our" freedom of speech as they were being hustled out of the hall where he was speaking. But I suggest that the undeniable criticisms expressed by Resistanbul do not, finally, invalidate the efforts of institutional reform, however provisional. All movements against an institutional consensus are dynamic, and provisional. (And see below.)

Accusations of purely symbolic display, of hypocrisy, are easily evaded by turning to, finally, the third method of global discipline, the art fair, for fairs make no promises other than sales and parties; there is no shortage of appeals to pleasure. There has been a notable increase in the number and locations of art fairs in a short period, reflecting the art world's rapid monetization; art investors, patrons, and clientele have shaken off the need for internal processes of quality control in favor of sped-up multiplication of financial and prestige value. Some important fairs have set up satellite branches elsewhere.[42] Other important fairs are satellites that outshine their original venues and have gone from the periphery of the art world's vetting circuit to center stage. At art fairs, artworks are scrutinized for financial-portfolio suitability, while off-site fun (parties and dinners), fabulousness (conspicuous consumption), and non-art shopping are the selling points for the best-attended fairs—those in Miami,

New York, and London (and of course the original, in Basel). Dealers pay quite a lot to participate, however, and the success of the fair as a business venture depends on the dealers' ability to make decent sales and thus to want to return in subsequent years.

No discursive matrix is required for successful investments by municipal and national hosts in this market. Yet art fairs have delicately tried to pull a blanket of respectability over the naked profit motive, by installing a smattering of curated exhibitions among the dealers' booths and hosting on-site conferences with invited intellectual luminaries. But perhaps one should say that discursive matrices are *always* required, even if they take the form of books and magazines in publishers' fair booths; but intellectuals talking in rooms and halls and stalking the floor—and being interviewed—can't hurt.

Predictions about the road to artistic success in this scene are easy to make, because ultimately shoppers are in for a quick fix (those Russians!) and increasingly are unwilling to spend quality time in galleries learning about artists and their work: after all, why bother? The art content of these containers and markets should thus avoid being excessively arcane and hard to grasp, love, and own; and to store or lend. Many can literally be carried out under a collector's arm. The work should be painting, if possible, for so many reasons, ranging from the symbolic artisanal value of the handmade to the continuity with traditional art-historical discourse and the avoidance of overly particularistic political partisanship except if highly idiosyncratic or expressionist. The look of solemnity will trump depth and incisive commentary every time; this goes for any form, including museum-friendly video installations, film, animation, computer installations, and salable performance props (and Conceptualism-lite).

Young artists (read: recent art-school graduates) are a powerful attraction for buyers banking on rising prices.

The self-described Resistanbul Commissariat writes of "the popularity of politically engaged art within the museums and markets"—well, perhaps. The art-world core of cognoscenti who validate work on the basis of criteria that set it apart from a broad audience may favor art with a critical edge, though not perhaps for the very best reasons. Work engaged with real-world issues or exhibiting other forms of criticality may offer a certain satisfaction and flatters the viewer, provided it does not too baldly implicate the class or subject position of the viewer. Criticality can take many forms, including highly abstract ones (what I have called "critique in general," which often, by implicating large swathes of the world or of humankind, tends to let everyone off the hook), and can execute many artful dodges. Art history's genealogical dimension often leads to the acceptance of "politico-critical" work from past eras, and even of some contemporary work descended from this, which cannot help but underscore its exchange value. Simply put, to some connoisseurs and collectors, and possibly one or two museum collections, criticality is a stringently attractive brand. Advising collectors or museums to acquire critical work can have a certain sadistic attraction, directed both toward the artist and the work and toward the advisee/collector.

A final common feature of this new global art is a readily graspable multiculturalism that creates a sort of United Nations of global voices on the menu of art production. Multiculturalism, born as an effort to bring *difference* out of the negative column into the positive with regard to qualities of citizens, long ago became also a bureaucratic tool

for social control, attempting to render difference cosmetic. Difference was long ago pegged as a marketing tool in constructing taste classes; in a business book of the 1980s on global taste, the apparently universal desire for jeans and pizza (and later, Mexican food) was the signal example: the marketable is different but not *too* different. In this context, there is indeed a certain bias toward global corporate internationalism—that is, neoliberalism—but that of course has nothing to do with whether "content providers" identify as politically left, right, independent, or not at all. Political opinions, when they are manifested, can become mannerist tropes.[43]

But often the function of biennials and contemporary art is also to make a geopolitical situation visible to the audience, which means that art continues to have a mapping and even critical function in regard to geopolitical realities. Artists have the capacity to condense, anatomize, and represent symbolically complex social and historical processes. In the context of internationalism, this is perhaps where political or critical art may have its best chance of being seen and actually understood, for the critique embodied in a work is not necessarily a critique of the actual locale in which one stands (if it describes a specific site, it may be a site "elsewhere"). Here I ought provisionally to suspend my criticism of "critique in general." I am additionally willing to suspend my critique of work that might be classed under the rubric "long ago or far away," which in such a context may also have useful educational and historical functions—never forgetting, nonetheless, the vulnerability to charges such as those made by the Resistanbul group.

"Down with critical studies," I wrote above, and the present has indeed been seen as a post-critical moment, as any market-driven moment must be ... but criticality seems to be a modern phoenix. Even before the market temporarily froze, there had never been a greater demand on the part of young art students for an entrée into critical studies and concomitantly for an understanding of predecessors and traditions of critical and agitational work. I speculate that this is because they are chafing under the command to succeed, on market terms, and therefore to quit experimenting for the sake of pleasure or indefinable aims. Young people, as the hoary cliché has it, often have idealistic responses to received orthodoxy about humanity and wish to repair the world, while some artists too have direct experience of poverty and social negativity and may wish to elevate others—a matter of social justice. Young artists perennially reinvent the idea of collaborative projects, which are the norm in the rest of the world of work and community and only artificially discouraged, for the sake of artistic entrepreneurism and "signature control," in the art-market world.[44]

I return to the question posed above, "whether choosing to be an artist means aspiring to serve the rich." There was a time when art school admonished students not to think this way, but how long can the success academy hang on while galleries are not to be had? (Perhaps the answer is that scarcity only increases desperation; the great pyramid of struggling artists underpinning the few at the pinnacle simply broadens at the base.) Nevertheless, artists are stubborn. The Resistanbul writers tell us they "resist in the streets not in corporate spaces reserved for tolerated institutional critique," as some artists do in order to "help them clear their conscience." For sure. There are always artworks, or art "actions," that are situated outside the art world

or that "cross-list" themselves in and outside the golden ghettos. I am still not persuaded that we need to choose. There is so far no end to art that adopts a critical stance—although perhaps not always in the market and success machine itself, where it is always in danger of being seriously rewritten, often in a process that *just takes time*. It is this gap between the work's production and its absorption and neutralization that allows for its proper reading and ability to speak to present conditions.[45] It is not the market alone, after all, with its hordes of hucksters and advisers, and bitter critics, that determines meaning and resonance: there is also the community of artists and the potential counterpublics they implicate.

1

To belabor the point: if medieval viewers read the symbolic meaning of a painted lily in a work with a biblical theme, it was because iconographic codes were constantly relayed, while religious stories were relatively few. In certain late nineteenth-century English or French genre paintings, as social histories of the period recount, a disheveled-looking peasant girl with flowing locks and a jug from which water pours unchecked would be widely understood to signify the sexual profligacy and availability of attractive female Others. Art has meanwhile freed itself from the specifics of stories (especially of history painting), becoming more and more abstract and formal in its emphases and thus finally able to appeal to a different universality: not that of the universal Church but of an equally imaginary universal culture (ultimately bourgeois culture, but not in its mass forms) and philosophy.

2

I am confining my attention to Western art history. It is helpful to remember that the relatively young discipline of art history was developed as an aid to connoisseurship and collection and thus can be seen as *au fond* a system of authentication.

3

By this I do not intend to ignore the many complicating factors, among them the incommensurability of texts and images, nor to assert that art, in producing images to illustrate and interpret prescribed narratives, can remotely be considered to have followed a clear-cut doctrinal line without interposing idiosyncratic, critical, subversive, or partisan messages, but the gaps between ideas, interpretations, and execution do not constitute a nameable trend.

4

What has come to be known as the "middle class" (or classes), if this needs clarification, comprised those whose livelihoods derived from ownership of businesses and industries; they were situated in the class structure between the landed aristocracy that was losing political power, and the peasants, artisans, and newly developing urban working class.

5

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu is the most prominent theorist of symbolic capital and the production and circulation of symbolic goods; I am looking at "The Market of Symbolic Goods," in *The Field of Cultural Production*, ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). This article, a bit fixed in its categories, sketches out the structural logic of separation.

6

The first application of the term to art is contested, some dating it as late as the Salon des Refusés of 1863.

7

Forms, rather than being empty shapes, carry centuries of Platonic baggage, most clearly seen in architecture. Formal innovation in twentieth-century high modernism, based on both Kant and Hegel, was interpreted as a search for another human dimension.

8

In his *Biographia Literaria* (1817), the poet and theorist Samuel Taylor Coleridge famously distinguished between Fancy and Imagination.

9

John Fekete, *The Critical Twilight: Explorations in the Ideology of Anglo-American Literary Theory from Eliot to McLuhan* (New York: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1977). Especially in Europe but also in the United States, financial panics, proletarian organizing, and political unrest characterized the latter half of the nineteenth century.

10

Modernism in the other arts has a similar trajectory without, perhaps, the direct legacy or influence of Sovietism or workers' movements.

11

The codification of social observation in the nineteenth century that included the birth of sociology and anthropology also spurred as-yet

amateur efforts to record social difference and eventually to document social inequality. Before the development of the Leica, which uses movie film, other small, portable cameras included the Ermanox, which had a large lens but required small glass plates for its negatives; it was used, for example, by the muckraking lawyer Erich Salomon.

12
For example with regard to the blurred line between photography and commercial applications, from home photos to photojournalism (photography for hire), a practice too close to us in time to allow for a reasoned comparison with the long, indeed ancient history of commissioned paintings and sculptures.

13
There is generally some tiny space allotted to one or two documentarians, above all for those addressing dire conditions in the global periphery.

14
Modernist linguistic experiments are beyond my scope here.

15
This is to overlook the role of that major part of the intellectual class directly engaged in formulating the ideological messages of ruling elites. For one historical perspective on the never-ending debate over the role of intellectuals vis-à-vis class and culture, not to mention the nation-state, see Julien Benda's 1927 book *La trahison des clercs* (*The Betrayal of the Intellectuals*; literally: "The Treason of the Learned"), once widely read but now almost quaint.

16
See Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (1974), trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), a work that has greatly influenced other critics—in the United States, notably Benjamin H. D. Buchloh. On Bürger's thesis, I wrote, in "Video: Shedding the Utopian Moment" (1983), that he had described the activity of the avant-garde as the self-criticism of art as an institution, turning against both "the distribution apparatus on which the work of art depends and the status of art in bourgeois society as defined by the concept of autonomy." I further quoted Bürger: "The intention of the avant-gardists may be defined as the attempt to direct toward the practical the aesthetic experience (which rebels against the praxis of life) that Aestheticism developed. What most strongly conflicts with the means-end rationality of bourgeois society is to become life's organizing principle."

17
Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 53.

18
Ibid., 53–54.

19
Allan Kaprow, "The Education of the Un-Artist, Part I," *ARTnews*, February 1971; "The Education of the Un-Artist, Part II," *ARTnews*, May 1972; "The Education of the Un-Artist, Part III," *Art in America*, January 1974.

20
Nevertheless, in pop-related subcultures, from punk to heavy metal to their offshoots in skateboarding culture, authenticity is a dimension with great meaning, a necessary demand of any tight-knit group.

21
Debord was also a member, with Isidore Isou, of the Lettrists, which he similarly abandoned.

22
Thus the insistence of some university art departments that they were fine arts departments and did not wish to offer, say, graphic arts or other commercial programs and courses (a battle generally lost).

23
Again channeling Althusser.

24
The culture wars are embedded in a broader attempt to delegitimize and demonize social identities, mores, and behaviors whose public expression was associated with the social movements of the 1960s, especially in relation to questions of difference.

25
This is not the place to argue the importance of the new social movements of the 1960s and after, beyond a passing attention to feminism, above; rather, here I am simply pointing to the ability of art institutions and the market to strip work of its resonance. As is easily observable, the term "political art" is reserved for work that is seen to dwell on analysis or critique of the state, wage labor, economic relations, and so on, with relations to sexuality and sex work always excepted.

26
Recall my earlier remarks about both the academicization of art education and the function of art history, a function now also parceled out to art reviewing/criticism.

27
A favorite slogan of the period was "There is no outside." Another, more popularly recognizable slogan might be "Think different," a slogan that attempts to harness images of powerful leaders of social movements or "pioneers" of scientific revolutions for the service of commodity branding, thus suggesting motion "outside the box" while attempting never to leave it. See the above remarks on Bürger and the theory of the avant-garde.

28
See Brian Holmes, "The Flexible Personality: For a New Cultural Critique" (2001), http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/1106/holmes/en#redir.

29
Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997). The relative invisibility of Readings's book seems traceable to his sudden death just before the book was released, making him unavailable for book tours and comment.

30
David Harvey, "University, Inc.," *Atlantic Monthly* (October 1998), http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/98oct/ruins.htm.

Nothing could be more indicative of the post-Fordist conditions of intellectual labor and the readying of workers for the knowledge industry than the struggle over the United States' premier public university, the University of California system, the birthplace of the "multiversity" as envisioned by Clark Kerr in the development of the UC Master Plan at the start of the 1960s. State public universities, it should be recalled, were instituted to produce homegrown professional elites; but remarkably enough, as the bellwether California system was undergoing covert and overt privatization and being squeezed mightily by the state government's near insolvency, the system's president blithely opined that higher education is a twentieth-century issue, whereas people today are more interested in health care, and humorously likened the university to a cemetery. (Deborah Solomon, "Big Man on Campus: Questions for Mark Yudoff," *New York Times Magazine*, September 24, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/27/magazine/27fob-q4-t.html.) The plan for the California system seems to be to reduce the number of California residents attending in favor of out-of-staters and international students, whose tuition costs are much higher. For further comparison, it seems that California now spends more than any other state on incarceration but is forty-eighth out of fifty in its expenditure on education.

31
Readings, *The University in Ruins*, 50.

32
Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993; originally published in Italian in 1991).

33
Paulo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*, trans. Isabella Bertoletti, James Cascaito, and Andrea Casson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004), also available online, http://www.generation-online.org/c/fcmultitude3.htm. I have imported this discussion of Virno's work from an online essay of mine on left-leaning political blogs in the United States.

34
Ibid., 66–67.

35
See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983).

36
Here I will not take up the question of museums' curatorial responses to this moment of crisis in respect to their definition and role in the twenty-first century. I can only observe that some elite museums have apparently identified a need to offer a more high-end set of experiences, in order to set them apart from the rest of our burgeoning, highly corporatized "experience economy." At present the main thrust of that effort to regain primacy seems to center on the elevation of the most undercommodified form, performance art, the form best positioned to provide museumgoers with embodied and nonnarrative experiences (and so far decidedly removed from the world of the everyday or of "politics" but situated firmly in the realm of the aesthetic).

37
Since writing this, I have read Chin-Tao Wu's "Biennials without Borders?"—in *New Left Review* 57 (May/June 2009): 107–15—which has excellent graphs and analyses supporting similar points. Wu analyzes the particular pattern of selection of artists from countries on the global "peripheries."

38
The 11th Istanbul Biennial ran from September through November 2009, under the curatorship of a Zagreb-based collective known as What, How, and for Whom (WHW), whose members are Ivet Ćurlin, Ana Dević, Nataša Ilić, and Sabina Sabolović. Formed in 1999, the group has run the city-owned Gallery Nova since 2003. The title of this biennial, drawn from a song by Bertolt Brecht, is "What Keeps Mankind Alive?"

39
The full version of the letter can be found online, http://etcistanbul.wordpress.com/2009/09/02/open-letter/.

40
Important sites of concerted public demonstrations against neoliberal economic organizations and internationally sanctioned state domination and repression.

41
But they may well be offered flyers.

42
The Shanghai Contemporary Art Fair (where this paper was first presented) is an outpost of the Bologna Art Fair.

43
See "The Artistic Mode of Revolution," in the present volume, for further discussion of this thesis.

44

I experience some disquiet in the realization that, as in so much else, the return of the collective has lingering over it not just the workers' councils of council communism (not to mention Freud's primal horde) but the quality circles of Toyota's reengineering of car production in the 1970s.

45

It is wise not to settle back into the image-symbolic realm; street actions and public engagement are basic requirements of contemporary citizenship. If the interval between the appearance of new forms of resistance and incorporation is growing ever shorter, so is the cycle of invention, and the pool of people involved is manifestly much, much larger.

Culture Class, Part I: Art and Urbanism

When Abstract Expressionists explored the terrain of the canvas and Pollock created something of a disorientation map by putting his unstretched canvases on the floor, few observers and doubtless fewer painters would have acknowledged a relationship between their concerns and real estate, let alone transnational capital flows.

Space, as many observers have noted, has displaced time as the operative dimension of advanced, globalizing (and postindustrial?) capitalism.[1] Time itself, under this economic regime, has been differentiated, spatialized, and divided into increasingly smaller units.[2] Even in virtual regimes, space entails visuality in one way or another. The connection between Renaissance perspective and the enclosures of late medieval Europe, together with the new idea of terrain as a real-world space to be negotiated, supplying crossing points for commerce, was only belatedly apparent. Similarly, the rise of photography has been traced to such phenomena as the encoding of earthly space and the enclosing of land in the interest of obtaining ground rent. For a long time now, art and commerce have not simply taken place side by side but have actively set the terms for one another, creating and securing worlds and spaces in turn.

My task here is to explore the positioning of what urban business evangelist Richard Florida has branded the "creative class," and its role, ascribed and anointed, in reshaping economies in cities, regions, and societies. In pursuit of that aim, I will consider a number of theories—some of them conflicting—of the urban and of forms of subjectivity. In reviewing the history of postwar urban transformations, I consider the culture of the art world on the one hand, and, on the other, the ways in which the shape of experience and identity under the regime of the urban render chimerical the search for certain desirable attributes in the spaces we visit or inhabit. Considering the creative-class hypothesis of Florida and others requires us first to tease apart and then rejoin the urbanist and the cultural strains of this argument. I would maintain, along with many observers, that in any understanding of postwar capitalism, the role of culture has become pivotal.

I open the discussion with the French philosopher and sometimes Surrealist Henri Lefebvre, whose theorization of the creation and capitalization of types of space has been enormously productive. Lefebvre opens his 1970 book, *The Urban Revolution*, as follows:

> I'll begin with the following hypothesis: Society has been completely urbanized. This hypothesis implies a definition: An *urban society* is a society that results from a process of complete urbanization. This urbanization is virtual today, but will become real in the future.[3]

Lefebvre's book helped usher in a modern version of political geography, influencing Fredric Jameson, David Harvey, and Manuel Castells, among other prominent writers and theorists of both culture and the urban. (Harvey, in turn, is cited as an influence by Florida.) In his foreword to Lefebvre's book, geographer Neil Smith writes that Lefebvre "put the urban on the agenda as an explicit locus and target of political organizing."[4]

Succumbing to neither empiricism nor positivism, Lefebvre did not hesitate to describe the urban as a virtual state whose full instantiation in human societies still lay in the future. In Lefebvre's typology, the earliest cities were political, organized around institutions of governance. The political city

was eventually supplanted in the Middle Ages by the mercantile city, organized around the marketplace, and then by the industrial city, finally entering a critical zone on the way to a full absorption of the agrarian by the urban. Even in less developed, agrarian societies that do not (yet) appear to be either industrialized or urban, agriculture is subject to the demands and constraints of industrialization. In other words, the urban paradigm has overtaken and subsumed all others, determining the social relations and the conduct of daily life within them. (Indeed, the very concept of "daily life" is itself a product of industrialism and the urban.)

Lefebvre's emphasis on the city contradicted the orderliness of Le Corbusier, whom he charged with having failed to recognize that the street is the site of a living disorder, a place, in his words, to play and learn; it is a site of "the informative function, the symbolic function, the ludic function."[5] Lefebvre cites the remarks of the foundational urban observer Jane Jacobs and identifies the street itself, with its bustle and life, as the only security against violence and criminality. Finally, Lefebvre notes—soon after the events and discourses of May '68 in France—that revolution takes place in the street, creating a new order out of disorder.

The complexity of city life often appears, from a governmental standpoint, to be a troublesome Gordian knot to be disentangled or sliced through. A central task of modernity has been the amelioration and pacification of the cities of the industrializing metropolitan core; the need was already apparent by the middle of the nineteenth century, when the prime examples were those at the epicenter of industrialism, London and Manchester.[6] Controlling these newly urbanizing populations also required raising them to subsistence level, which happened gradually over the succeeding decades, and not without tremendous struggles and upheaval. Industrialization also vastly increased the flow of people to cities, as it continues to do—even in poor countries with very low income levels per capita—to the extent that Lefebvre's prediction regarding full urbanization is soon to come true; since 2005, there are more people living in cities than in the countryside.[7]

In the advanced industrial economies, twentieth-century urban planning encompassed not only the engineering of new transportation modalities but also the creation of new neighborhoods with improved housing for the working classes and the poor. For a few brief decades, the future seemed within the grasp of the modern. After the Second World War, bombed-out European cities provided something of a blank canvas, delighting the likes of W. G. Witteveen, a Rotterdam civil engineer and architect who exulted in the possibilities provided by the near-total destruction of that port city by Nazi bombing in May 1940. In many intact or nearly intact cities in the US and Western Europe, both urban renewal and postwar reconstruction followed a similar plan: clear out the old and narrow, divide or replace the dilapidated neighborhoods with better roads and public transport.[8] While small industrial production continued as the urban economic backbone, many cities also invited the burgeoning corporate and financial-services sectors to locate their headquarters there, sweetening their appeal through zoning adjustments and tax breaks. International Style commercial skyscrapers sprouted around the world as cities became concentrations, real and symbolic, of state and corporate administration.

The theoretical underpinning for a renovated cityscape came primarily from the earlier, utopian "millennial" and interwar designs of forward-

Haussman's urban plan for Paris, visible here from the Maine-Montparnasse tower, facilitated circulation throughout the city but also centralized power. Photo by Benh Lieu Song.

looking, albeit totalizing, plans for remaking the built environment. It was not lost on the city poor that so-called urban renewal projects targeted their neighborhoods and the cultural connections and traditions that enlivened them. Cities were being remade for the benefit of the middle and upper classes, and the destruction of the older neighborhoods—whether in the interest of commercial, civic, or other forces, such as enhanced mobility for trucks and private cars—extirpated the haunts of those beyond the reach of law and bourgeois proclivities, adversely affecting the lives and culture of the poorer residents.

One may trace the grounding of the mid-century European group the Situationist International in a recognition of the growing role of the visual—and its relation to spatiality—in modern capitalism, and thus the complicit role of art in systems of exploitation. The core French group of Situationists—Lefebvre's sometime students (and, some might say, collaborators and certainly occasional adversaries)—attacked, as Lefebvre had done, the radiant-city visions of Le Corbusier (and by implication other utopian modernists) for designing a carceral city in which the poor are locked up and thrust into a strangely narrow utopia of light and space, but removed from a free social life in the streets. (Le Corbusier's housing projects called "Unités d'Habitation," the most famous of which is in Marseille, were elevated above their garden surrounds on pilotis. The floors were called *rues*, or streets, and one such "street" was to be devoted to shops; kindergartens and—at least in the Unité I visited, in Firminy, near St. Etienne—a low-powered radio station were also located within the building, together suggesting the conditions of a walled city.)

One of the Situationists opined:

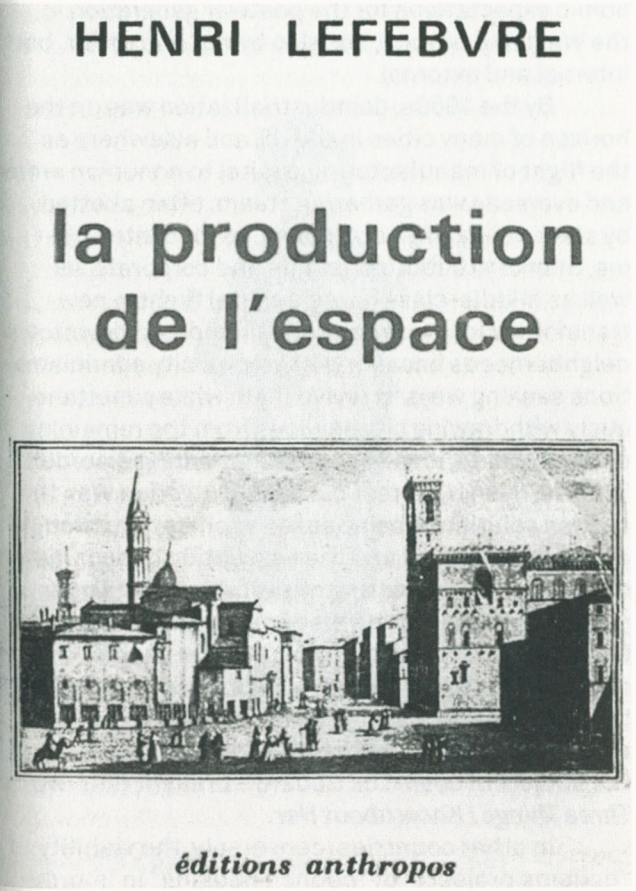
> We will leave Monsieur Le Corbusier's style to him, a style suitable for factories and hospitals, and no doubt eventually for prisons. (Doesn't he already build churches?) Some sort of psychological repression dominates this individual—whose face is as ugly as his conceptions of the world—such that he wants to squash people under ignoble masses of reinforced concrete, a noble material that should rather be used to enable an aerial articulation of space that could surpass the flamboyant Gothic style. His cretinizing influence is immense. A Le Corbusier model is the only image that arouses in me the idea of immediate suicide. He is destroying the last remnants of joy. And of love, passion, freedom.[9]

Perhaps it is the primacy of the spatial register, with its emphasis on visuality, but also its turn to virtuality, to representation, that also accounts for architecture's return to prominence in the imaginary of the arts, displacing not only music but architecture's spectral double, the cinema. This change in the conduct of everyday life, and the centrality of the city to such changes, were apparent to the Situationists, and Debord's concept of what he termed "the society of the spectacle" is larger than any particular instances of architecture or real estate, and certainly larger than questions of cinema or television. Debord's "spectacle" denotes the all-encompassing, controlling nature of modern industrial and "postindustrial" culture. Thus, Debord defines the spectacle not in terms of representation alone but also in terms of the social relations of capitalism and its ability to subsume all into representation: "The spectacle is not a collection

of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images."[10] Elements of culture were in the forefront, but the focus was quite properly on the dominant mode of production.

The Situationists' engagement with city life included a practice they called the *dérive*. The *dérive*, an exploration of urban neighborhoods, a version of the nineteenth-century tradition of the *flâneur*, and an inversion of the bourgeois promenade of the boulevards (concerned as the latter was with visibility to others, while the flâneur's was directed toward his own experience), hinged on the relatively free flow of organic life in the neighborhoods, a freedom from bureaucratic control, that dynamic element of life also powerfully detailed by Lefebvre and Jane Jacobs. Both Baudelaire and Benjamin gave the flâneur prominence, and by the end of the twentieth century the flâneur was adopted as a favored, if minor, figure for architects wishing to add pedestrian cachet to projects such as shopping malls that mimic public plazas—thus closing the book on the unadministered spaces that the Situationists, at least, were concerned with defending.

The Western art world has periodically rediscovered the Situationists, who presently occupy what a friend has described as a quasi-religious position, embodying every aspiring artist/revolutionary's deepest wish—to be in both the political and the artistic vanguards simultaneously. The ghostly presence of the Situationists, including Debord, Asger Jorn, Raoul Vaneigem, and Constant, predictably took up residence at the moment the very idea of the artistic vanguard disappeared. The cautionary dilemma they pose is how to combat the power of "spectacle culture" under advanced capitalism without following their imperative to abandon the terrain



Cover of the 1976 edition of Henri Lefebrvre's book *The Production of Space*.

of art (as Duchamp had done earlier). To address this question, context and history are required. Let us continue with the events of the 1960s, in the Situationists' moment—characterized by rising economic expectations for the postwar generation in the West and beyond, but also by riot and revolt, both internal and external.

By the 1960s, deindustrialization was on the horizon of many cities in the US and elsewhere as the flight of manufacturing capital to nonunion areas and overseas was gathering steam, often abetted by state policy. In an era of decline for central cities, thanks to suburbanization and corporate, as well as middle-class (largely white) flight, a new transformation was required. Dilapidated downtown neighborhoods became the focus of city administrations seeking ways to revive them while simultaneously withdrawing city services from the remaining poor residents, ideally without fomenting disorder. In Paris, riven by unrest during the Algerian War, the chosen solution encompassed pacification through police mobilization and the evacuation of poor residents to a new, outer ring of suburbs, or *banlieues*, yoking the utopian high-rise scheme to the postwar banishment of the urban poor and the dangerous classes.[11] By 1967, the lack of economic viability of these *banlieues*, and the particular stress that put on housewives, was widely recognized, becoming the subject of Jean-Luc Godard's brilliant film *Two or Three Things I Know about Her*.

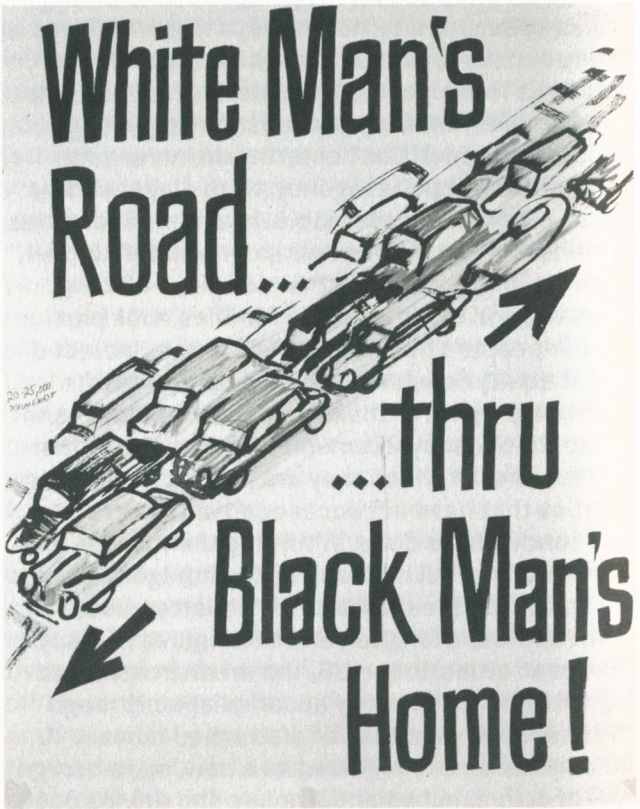
In other countries, conversely, the viability of "housing projects" or "council housing" in improving the lives of the urban poor has been increasingly challenged, and it is an article of neoliberal faith that such projects cannot succeed—a prophecy fulfilled by the covert racial policies underlying the siting of these projects and the selection of

Paul Gavarni (Sulpice Guillaume Chevalier), *Le Flâneur*, 1842.

residents, followed, in cities that wish to tear them down, by consistent underfunding of maintenance and services. In Britain the Thatcherist solution was to sell the flats to the residents, with the rationale of making the poor into stakeholders, with results yet to be determined (although the pitfalls seem obvious). With the failure of many state-initiated postwar housing schemes for the poor supplying a key exhibit in neoliberal urban doctrine, postmodern architecture showed itself willing to jettison humanism in the wake of the ruin of the grand claims of utopian modernism. In the US, commentator Charles Jencks famously identified as "the moment of postmodernism" the phased implosion in 1972—in a bemusing choreography often replayed today—of the Pruitt-Igoe housing project, a thirty-three-building modernist complex in St. Louis, Missouri. Pruitt-Igoe, commissioned in 1950 during an era of postwar optimism, had been built to house those who had moved to the city for war work—primarily proletarianized African Americans from the rural South.

The abandonment of the widely held twentieth-century paradigm of state- and municipality-sponsored housing thus properly joined the other retreats from utopianism that constituted the narratives of postmodernism. Either blowing up or selling off housing projects has subsequently been adopted enthusiastically by many US cities, such as Newark, New Jersey, which happily supplied a mediatized spectacle of eviction and displacement—but so far has not reached my home city, New York, primarily because, as a matter of policy, New York's housing projects have never occupied the center of town. In post-Katrina New Orleans, however, the moment of Schumpeterian creative destruction allowed for the closure *tout court* of many housing projects, most prominently the largely undamaged, 1,200-home Lafitte Public Housing Development in the Lower Ninth Ward. (The project was demolished without fanfare or fireworks in 2008.)

Throughout the 1960s, as former metropolitan empires schemed, struggled, and strong-armed to secure alternative ways to maintain cheap access to productive resources and raw materials in the postcolonial world, the Western democracies, because of unrest among young people and minorities centering on increasing demands for political agency, were diagnosed by policy elites as ungovernable. In a number of cities, as middle-class adults, and some young "hippies," were leaving, groups of other people, including students and working-class families, took part in poor people's housing initiatives that included sweat equity (in which the municipality grants ownership rights to those who form collectives to rehabilitate decayed tenement properties, generally the ones in which they are living) or squatting. In cities that have not succeeded, as New York and London have done, in turning themselves into centers of capital concentration through finance, insurance, and real estate, the squatter movement has had a long tail and still figures in many European cities. In the US, the urban homesteading movement, primarily accomplished through the individual purchase of distressed homes, quickly became recognized as a new, more benign way of colonizing neighborhoods and driving out the poor. Such new middle-class residents were often referred to by real-estate interests and their newspaper flacks—not to mention an enthusiastic Mayor Ed Koch in the 1980s—as "urban pioneers," as though the old neighborhoods could be understood according to the model of the Wild West.



Sammie Abbott, *Washington, D.C.*, late 1960s. Hand-painted poster.

These developments surely seemed organic to the individuals moving in; as threatened communities began to resist, however, the process of change quickly enough gained a name: gentrification.

In some major cities, some of the colonizers were artists, writers, actors, dancers, and poets. Many lived in old tenements; but artists did not so much want apartments as places to work and live, and the ideal spaces were disused factories or manufacturing lofts. In New York, while poets, actors, dancers, and writers were moving to such old working-class residential areas as the Lower East Side, many artists took up residence in nearby manufacturing-loft neighborhoods. Artists had been living in lofts since at least the 1950s, and while the city winked at such residents, it still considered their situation to be both temporary and illegal. But loft-dwelling artists continued agitating for city recognition and protection, which appeared increasingly likely to be granted as the 1960s advanced.

A canny observer of this process was New York City-based urban sociologist Sharon Zukin. In her book *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change*, published in 1982, Zukin writes about the role of artists in making "loft living" comprehensible, even desirable. She focuses on the transformation, beginning in the mid-1960s, of New York's cast-iron district into an "artist district" that was eventually dubbed SoHo, for South of Houston Street. In this remarkable book, Zukin lays out a theory of urban change in which artists and the entire visual-art sector—especially commercial galleries, artist-run spaces, and museums—are a main engine for the repurposing of the postindustrial city and the renegotiation of real estate for the benefit of elites. She writes:

> Looking at loft living in terms of *terrain* and *markets* rather than "lifestyle" links changes in the built environment with the collective appropriation of public goods. [...] Studying the formation of markets [...] directs attention to *investors rather than consumers as the source of change*.[12]

Zukin demonstrates how this policy change was carried forward by city officials, art supporters, and well-placed art patrons serving on land-use commissions and occupying other seats of power.

> The creation of constituencies for historic preservation and the arts carried over a fascination with old buildings and artists' studios into a collective appropriation of these spaces for modern residential and commercial use. In the grand scheme of things, loft living gave the coup de grâce to the old manufacturing base of cities like New York and brought on the final stage of their transformation into service-sector capitals.[13]

Reminding us that "by the 1970s, art suggested a new platform to politicians who were tired of dealing with urban poverty," Zukin quotes an artist looking back ruefully at the creation of SoHo as a district by a process that addressed the needs of artists rather than those of poor people:

> At the final hearing where the Board of Estimate voted to approve SoHo as an artists' district, there were lots of other groups giving testimony on other matters. Poor people from the South Bronx and Bed-Stuy complaining about rats, rent control, and things like that. The board just shelved those matters and moved right along. They didn't know how to proceed. Then they came to us. All the press secretaries were there, and the journalists. The klieg lights went on, and the cameras started to roll. And all these guys started making speeches about the importance of art to New York City.[14]

One of Zukin's many exhibits is this published remark by Dick Netzer, a prominent member of New York's Municipal Assistance Corporation, the rescue agency set up during New York City's fiscal near-default:

> The arts may be small in economic terms even in this region, but the arts "industry" is one of our few growth industries. [...] The concentration of the arts in New York is one of the attributes that makes it distinctive, and distinctive in a positive sense: the arts in New York are a magnet for the rest of the world.[15]

Many cities, especially those lacking significant cultural sectors, established other revitalization strategies. Efforts to attract desirable corporations to postindustrial cities soon provoked the realization that the human capital in the persons of the managerial elites were the ones whose needs and desires should be addressed. The provision of so-called quality-of-life enhancements to attract these high earners became urban doctrine, a formula consisting of providing delights for the male managers in the form of convention centers and sports stadia, and for the wives, museums, dance, and the symphony. An early, high-profile example of the edifice complex as proposed urban enhancement is provided by the John Portman–designed Detroit Renaissance Center of 1977—a seven-skyscraper

riverfront complex owned by General Motors and housing its world headquarters, and including the tallest building in Michigan—meant as a revitalizing engine in the car city that has more recently been cast as the poster child for deindustrialization. But eventually, despite all the bond-funded tax breaks paradoxically given to these edifices, and all the money devoted to support of the arts, cities were failing to build an adequate corporate tax base, even after the trend toward flight from city living had long been reversed. This strategy has continued to be instituted despite its failures, but a better way had to be found. The search for more and better revitalization, and more and better magnets for high earners and tourists, eventually took a cultural turn, building on the success of artists' districts in postindustrial economies.

During the turbulent 1960s, the rising middle-class members of the postwar baby boom constituted a huge cohort of young people. Whereas the older generation lived lives that seemed primarily to revolve around family and work, the upcoming generation seemed to center theirs primarily on other, more personal and consumerist sources, including the counterculture: music, newspapers, cheap fashion, and the like, coupled with rejection of the corporate "rat race," majoritarian rule, repressive behavioral codes, and "death culture," or militarism (nuclear war and Vietnam)—and often rejection of urbanism itself. This highly visible group was closely watched for its tastes. Advertising and marketing, already at what seemed like saturation levels, could segment the market, aiming one set of messages at traditionalist consumers and the other at young people, and "culture" was transformed into an assemblage of purchases. The youth theme was "revolution"—political revolution, whether real,

Demonstrators gather at the Washington Monument on November 15, 1969, for the second Moratorium march and rally against the war in Vietnam. Attendance was estimated at over five hundred thousand, possibly the largest antiwar gathering in US history. Photo by Associated Press.

imaginary, or, as it gradually became, one centered on consumerism.

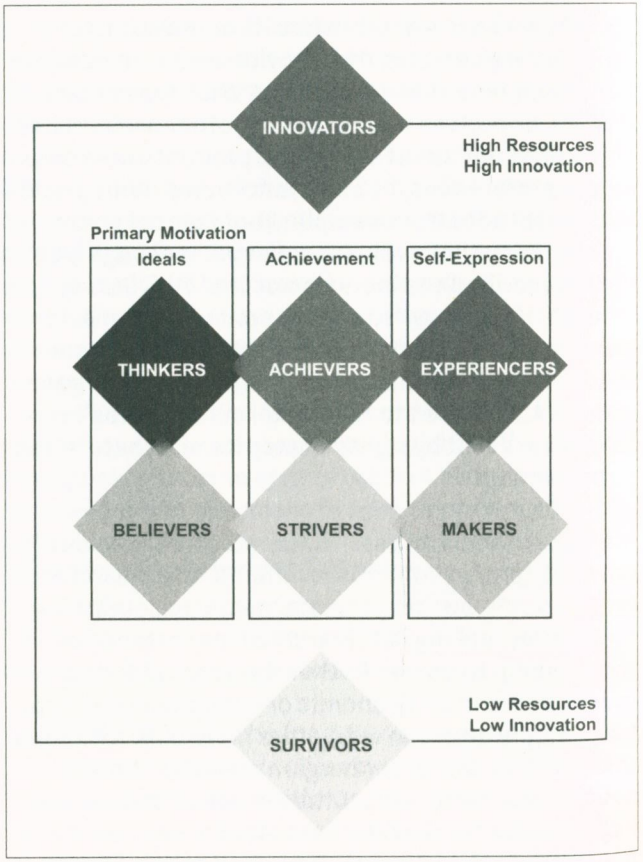
Constellations of consumer choice were studied by research institutes such as the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) based at Stanford, an elite private university in Northern California. Founded by Stanford trustees in 1946 to support economic development in the region, SRI was forced off the university campus into stand-alone status in 1970 by students protesting against its military research. SRI International, as it is now officially known, has become a for-profit enterprise, and its former consulting arm, Strategic Business Insights, has now shifted its focus to consumer research. It describes its mission as "discovery and the application of science and technology for knowledge, commerce, prosperity, and peace."

"Lifestyle," an index to the changes in the terrain of consumerism, was a neologism of the 1960s that quickly became comfortable in everyone's mouth. In 1978, SRI announced a lifestyle metric, Values and Lifestyles (VALS™) "psychographic segmentation," dubbed by *Advertising Age* as "one of the ten top market research breakthroughs of the 1980s."[16] A senior SBI consultant working with VALS responded to queries as follows:

> Since 1990, VALS no longer segments adult consumers on the basis of (social) values or lifestyles but rather measures thirty-four attitudes and four key demographics validated to most closely correspond to consumer behavior. VALS uses a proprietary survey and algorithm to place consumers into groups depending on their primary motivation (ideals, achievement, and self-expression) and level of an expanded definition of resources such as leadership, novelty seeking, and information seeking. The resulting eight groups are Innovators, Thinkers, Achievers, Experiencers, Believers, Strivers, Makers, and Survivors.[17]

The VALS website establishes its connection to other survey vehicles that provide in-depth information about how each of the eight VALS types uses, invests, and saves money, among other preferences, and to find out about a person's product ownership, media preferences, hobbies, additional demographics, or attitudes (for example, about global warming). Echoing their website, an email message from VALS described the inclusion of the VALS Survey in large US surveys "to collect consumer-behavior data [that] help marketers [...] determine how to tailor their communications."[18] A picture emerges in which VALS is used to help determine pitches even for matters that by rights are topics of debate in the public square.

Thus, the concept of taste, one of the key markers of social class—understood here as determined by one's economic relation to the means of production—became transformed into something apparently lacking in hierarchical importance or relationship to power. Rather than representing membership in an economic or even a social group, taste aligns a person with other consumer affinities. In the 1960s, the Greenbergian paradigm based in a Kantian schema of faculties in which taste is the key operator for people of sensibility, also fell. While it would be absurd to conflate the Kantian faculty of taste with consumer taste, there remains a case to be made that the ideas energizing vanguard art shift along with shifts in the social worldview. In a pre-postmodern moment, so to speak, when artists were exhibiting a certain panic over the relentlessly



The Values and Lifestyles chart developed by Strategic Business Insights, an offshoot of the Northern California-based SRI International.

ascending tide of consumerism and mass culture, and Pop art was bidding for a mass audience, the terms of culture shifted.[19]

A great deal has been asked of artists, in every modern age. In previous eras artists were asked to edify society by showing forth the good, the true, and the beautiful. But such expectations have increasingly come to seem quaint as art has lost its firm connections to the powers of church and state. Especially since the Romantics, artists have routinely harbored messianic desires, the longing to take a high position in social matters, to play a transformative role in political affairs; this may be finally understood as a necessary—though perhaps only imaginary—corrective to their roles, both uncomfortable and insecure, as handmaidens to wealth and power. Artists working under patronage conditions had produced according to command, which left them to express their personal dimension primarily through the formal elements of their chosen themes. By the nineteenth century, artists, now no longer supported by patronage, were free to devise and follow many different approaches both to form and to content, including realism and direct social commentary.[20] Still, the new middle-class customers, as well as the state, had their own preferences and demands, even if a certain degree of transgression was both anticipated and accepted, however provisionally (the Salon des Refusés was, after all, established by Napoléon III). The fin de siècle refuge in formalist arguments, in aestheticism, or "art for art's sake," has been called by such scholars as John Fekete a defensive maneuver on the part of the era's advanced artists, establishing a professional distance from the social and honoring the preferences of their high-bourgeois market at the end of

a century marked by European revolutions and in the midst of industrial-labor militancy.[21] In the US, the lionization of art by social and political elites in the new century's first fifty years had been effective in the acculturation of immigrants, and of the native working class to some degree. Especially in the postwar period, the ramping up of advanced, formalist art provided a secular approach to the transcendent. The mid-twentieth-century rhetorics of artistic autonomy, in the US at least, reassured the knowing public that formalism, and, all the more so, abstraction, would constitute a bulwark against totalitarian leanings. This tacit understanding had been especially persuasive in keeping prudent artists away from political engagement during the Cold War in the 1950s. Under those conditions, only autonomous art could claim to be an art of critique, but advanced, let alone abstract, art could hardly expect to address large numbers of people. Thus, the "professionalization" of art also doomed it to be a highly restricted discourse.[22]

Let us look at taste not as a decision reflecting the well-formedness or virtue of an artistic utterance but through the wider popular meaning of the exercise of choice among a range of goods, tangible and intangible (but mostly the former)—that is, as an expression of "lifestyle." Taste has expressed class membership and social status in every modern industrial society. In 1983, the American cultural historian and English professor Paul Fussell, author of the acclaimed book on the First World War, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975), published a slim, acerbically acute book called *Class: A Guide through the American Status System*.[23] There were earlier treatises on ruling elites, such as American sociologist C. Wright Mills's *Power Elite* or British linguist Alan Ross's 1954 article on distinctions between U and non-U speech patterns, in which U refers to the "upper class" (a discussion that caused an Anglo-American stir when picked up by Nancy Mitford) and Arthur Marwick's *Class: Image and Reality* (1980), cited by Fussell.[24] Fussell meant his book as a popular exposé that taste is not a personal attribute so much as an expression of a definable "socioeconomic" grouping, and in his preface he gleefully describes the horrified, even explosive reactions middle-class people displayed to the mere mention of class. His scathing descriptions of the missteps of the non-elite are well situated in economic class categories; it is only when he arrives at a class of taste he calls Category X—of which he considers himself a member—that he loses his bearings, besotted by this motley group of self-actualizing people who are mostly university based and float free of the demands of social codes of dress and behavior, pleasing only themselves. We should recognize in this group not just the expression of the counterculture, now grown up and college educated, but also of the gold mine that had just begun to be intensively lobbied by niche marketers, the "creative class"—a social formation and process that seems to have escaped Fussell's notice.

A couple of decades later in 2000, the conservative ideologue and US media figure David Brooks, in his best-selling book, *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There*, quipped that "counter-cultural values have infused the business world—the one sphere of US life where people still talk about fomenting 'revolution' and are taken seriously."[25] His thesis is that in this new information age, members of the highly educated elite "have one foot in the bohemian world of creativity and another foot in the bourgeois realm

of ambition and worldly success."[26] Brooks's barbed witticisms claim the triumph of capital over any possible other political world that young people different from him, in the Western democracies and particularly the US, had hoped to create:

> We're by now all familiar with modern-day executives who have moved from SDS to CEO, from LSD to IPO. Indeed, sometimes you get the impression the Free Speech movement produced more corporate executives than Harvard Business School.[27]

To decode a bit: "SDS" denotes the emblematic 1960s radical group Students for a Democratic Society; "IPO" stands for a corporation's initial public offering; and the Free Speech movement was the student movement at the elite (though public) University of California, Berkeley, that agitated on several fronts, sparking the worldwide student movements of the 1960s.

The French intelligentsia have derisively extracted Brooks's neologism "Bobos" from his celebratory analysis, and the book is worth dwelling on here only because of its concentration on taste classes and their relationship to power and influence, and, less centrally, their relevance to literature and criticism.[28] Brooks traces his own intellectual forebears to "the world and ideas of the mid-1950s," remarking regressively:

> While the fever and froth of the 1960s have largely burned away, the ideas of these 1950s intellectuals [William Whyte, Jane Jacobs, J. K. Galbraith, Vance Packard, E. Digby Baltzell] continue to resonate.[29]

Lowering expectations of rigor, Brooks refers to his work as "comic sociology." He compliments his readers on their quirky tastes while ignoring those who do not fit his consumer taste class. The "conspicuous consumption" pattern first described by Thorstein Veblen in *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, published in 1899 during the robber-baron era, seemingly does not fit the preferences of the Bobos, who unlike the gilded-age business (but not, it should be noted, technical) class, prefer to spend lots of money on things that appear to be useful and "virtuous"—an adjective often employed ironically in *Bobos*.

A decade later, the laid-back, tolerant wisdom of the benign "Bobo" class-in-ascendancy now appears ephemeral, since in the interim the ostentatious rich have led us into crushingly expensive wars, destroyed the financial markets, restored nepotism, and mobilized the old working class and rural dwellers using a dangerous breed of hater-malarkey to grab and keep political control, all the while becoming vastly richer. Reviewing Brooks, Russell Mokhiber writes:

> Most people in the United States (let alone the world) do not share [the Bobos'] expanding wealth and may have markedly different views on important issues, including concepts of "deservedness," fairness, government regulation, and equitable distribution of wealth. For this majority of the population, more confrontation, not less, could be just what is in order.[30]

Turn-of-the-century changes in the composition of the productive classes in the United States and Western Europe as a result of "globalization"—in which mass industrial work shifted overseas, to the

East and South, and white-collar technical labor in the developed industries rose to ascendancy during the dot-com boom—led to further speculation on the nature of these workers, but seemingly these were more solidly empirical efforts than Brooks's mischievous rendition. Enter Richard Florida, professor at postindustrial Pittsburgh's Carnegie Mellon University, with theories catering to the continuing desire of municipalities such as Pittsburgh to attract those middle-class high-wage earners.

1
See, for example, Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), passim. See also Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1971). Lukács, interpreting Marx on the development of abstract labor under capitalism, writes that "time sheds its qualitative, variable, flowing nature; it freezes into an exactly delimited, quantifiable continuum filled with quantifiable 'things'... in short, it becomes space" (ibid., 90).

2
A more substantial discussion would need to take account of how the space-time continuum privileges one or the other dimension and how the primacy of each changes with economic regimes.

3
Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, trans. Robert Bononno (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 1.

4
Neil Smith, foreword to the preceding, vii.

5
Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 18.

6
Consider such basic matters as the management of violent crime, prostitution, sanitation, and disease.

7
"The present urban population (3.2 billion) is larger than the total population of the world in 1960. The global countryside, meanwhile, has reached its maximum population (3.2 billion) and will begin to shrink after 2020. As a result, cities will account for *all* future world population growth, which is expected to peak at about 10 billion in 2050." Mike Davis, "Planet of Slums," *New Left Review* 26 (March–April 2004): 6. (See also Davis's subsequent book, *Planet of Slums* [London: Verso, 2006] for further data crunching.) Concomitantly, urban poverty is also increasing faster than rural poverty.

8
I leave out of consideration here the reconstruction of cities and countrysides that served—primarily or secondarily—military and police functions, whether local ones on the order of Baron Haussmann's mid-nineteenth-century reconfiguring of Paris, among other things securing it against insurrections, or more ambitious national ones such as the construction, under President Eisenhower, of the US's Cold War–oriented interstate highway system.

9
Ivan Chtcheglov, "Formulary for a New Urbanism," trans. Ken Knabb, http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/presitu/formulary.html; first appeared in *Internationale Situationniste*, no. 1 (October 1953).

10
Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1994), 12.

11
Today, a few generations on, the dystopian effects of the relegation of the poor and the immigrant to these high-rise ghettos are there for all to see, if not understood by French xenophobes, in the regular eruptions of fire and revolt among unemployed young men with no future. (Today, however, the young of France and elsewhere recognize in this only a more extreme version of their own condition of economic "precarity.")

12
Sharon Zukin, *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 190–91.

13
Ibid., 190.

14
Ibid., 117–18.

15
"The Arts: New York's Best Export Industry," *New York Affairs* 5, no. 2 (1978): 51. Quoted in Zukin, *Loft Living*, 112.

16
See "About VALS," http://www.strategicbusinessinsights.com/vals/about.shtml.

17
See "About the VALS Survey," http://www.strategicbusinessinsights.com/vals/presurvey.shtml.

18
E-mail communication. The writer further explains that the survey on the website is for US and Canada only and that other surveys are tailored to national needs, in "Japan, the UK, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Nigeria, and China."

19
See Alvin Gouldner, *The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology: The Origins, Grammar, and Future of Ideology* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976).

20
See Caroline A. Jones's interesting study, *Eyesight Alone: Clement Greenberg's Modernism and the Bureaucratization of the Senses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

21
John Fekete, *The Critical Twilight: Explorations in the Ideology of Anglo-American Literary Theory from Eliot to McLuhan* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977).

22
See Pierre Bourdieu's analyses in many works, including *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984); and "The Market of Symbolic Goods," in *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); as well as, following him, Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity, An Incomplete Project," in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1983).

23
Paul Fussell, *Class* (New York: Ballantine, 1983). The cover of the first paperback edition says "Class: A Painfully Accurate Guide through the American Status System."

24
Alan S. C. Ross, "Linguistic Class-Indicators in Present-Day English," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 55 (1954): 113–49; Nancy Mitford, ed., *Noblesse Oblige* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1956); and Arthur Marwick, *Class: Image and Reality in Britain, France and the U.S.A. since 1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

25
David Brooks, *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000). The quotation is taken from a review by Russell Mokhiber, *YES! magazine*, October 27, 2000, http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/a-new-culture-emerges/review-bobos-in-paradise-by-david-brooks.

26
Brooks, *Bobos in Paradise*, 11.

27
Ibid., 39.

28
...and art. In the section "How to Be an Intellectual Giant," Brooks points out that rather than writing, say, *War and Peace*, it is better to seek success by presenting "a catchy new idea in a lively format and casting light on what it all means," a formula dominating art reviewing and infesting art production, the arts section of periodicals, and much else.

29
"Books like *The Organization Man*, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, *The Affluent Society*, *The Status Seekers*, and *The Protestant Establishment* were the first expressions of the new educated class ethos, and while the fever and froth of the 1960s have largely burned away, the ideas of these 1950s intellectuals continue to resonate." Brooks, introduction to *Bobos in Paradise*, 11–12. Brooks is selective in those whom he cites; several reviews have suggested his indebtedness to the work of César Graña, a professor at UC San Diego, especially *Bohemian vs. Bourgeois* (New York: Basic Books, 1964); Graña, who had studied sociology, anthropology, and urban planning, published several other works centering on bohemianism and authenticity but died in a car accident in 1986.

30
Russell Mokhiber, book review in *YES! magazine.*

Culture Class, Part II: Creativity and Its Discontents

> Culture is the commodity that sells all the others.
> —Situationist slogan

Soon after the collapse of the millennial New Economy that was supposed to raise all boats, Richard Florida, in his best-selling book *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002), instituted a way of talking about the "creative class"—the same class put center stage by Sharon Zukin, David Brooks, and Paul Fussell—in a way that framed it as a target group and a living blueprint for urban planners.[1]

Florida may see this class, and its needs and choices, as the savior of cities, but he harbors no apparent interest in its potential for human liberation. When Robert Bruininks, the president of the University of Minnesota, asked him in an onstage interview, "What do you see as the political role of the creative class—will they help lead society in a better, fairer direction?" Florida was, according to faculty member Ann Markusen, completely at a loss for a reply.[2] Some who frame the notion of a powerful class of creative people—a class dubbed the "cultural creatives" by Paul H. Ray and Sherry Ruth Anderson in their book of that name published in 2000—see this group as progressive, socially engaged, and spiritual (if generally without religious affiliation), and thus as active in movements for political and social change. In general, however, most observers of "creatives" concentrate on taste classes and lifestyle matters, and are evasive with respect to the creatives' relation to social organization and control.

Richard Lloyd, in *Neo-Bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City*, in contrast to Ray and Anderson, finds not only that artists and hipsters[3] are complicit with capital in the realm of

consumption but, further, that in their role as casual labor ("useful labor," in Lloyd's terms), whether as service workers or as freelance designers, they also serve capital quite well.[4] The Situationists, of course, were insistent on tying cultural regimes to urban change and the organization and regulation of labor. Sharon Zukin, in *Loft Living*, provided a sociological analysis of the role of artists in urban settings, their customary habitat.[5] But urban affairs, sociological and cultural analysis, and the frameworks of judgment have changed and expanded since Zukin's work of 1982. In his book *The Expediency of Culture* (2001), George Yúdice leads us to consider the broad issue of the "culturalization" of politics and the uses and counter-uses of culture.[6] Concentrating especially on the United States and Latin America, Yúdice's concern is with explicating how culture has been transformed into a resource, available both to governmental entities and to population groups.

Alliance for the Arts graphic.

He cites Fredric Jameson's work on "the cultural turn" from the early 1990s, which claims that the cultural has exploded "throughout the social realm, to the point at which everything in our social life—from economic value and state power to social and political practices and the very structure of the psyche itself—can be said to have become 'cultural.'"[7] Yúdice invokes Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality—namely, the management of populations, or "the conduct of conduct"—as the matrix for the shift of services under neoliberalism from state to cultural sectors. Foucault's theories of internalization of authority (as well as those of Lefebvre and Freud) are surely useful in discussing the apparent passivity of knowledge workers and the educated classes in general. Yúdice privileges theories of performativity, particularly those of Judith Butler and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, over the Situationists' "society of the spectacle," describing how identities, including identities of "difference," are performed on the stage set by various mediating institutions.[8] Indeed, he positions the postwar marketing model—the engineering of consent, in Edward Bernays's potent, widely quoted phrase—at the heart of contemporary politics and invokes the aestheticization of politics (shades of Walter Benjamin!) that has been fully apparent in the US since the Reagan administration.[9] As I have suggested, this channels much political contestation in advanced societies to consumer realms, from buying appropriate items from firms that advance political activism and send money to NGOs,[10] to the corporate tactic of appealing to identity-based markets, such as gay, female, or Latino publics; but also to the corporate need to foster such identities in hiring practices in the name of social responsibility.

In considering the role of culture in contemporary societies, it may be helpful to look at the lineage and derivation of the creative-class concept, beginning with observations about the growing economic and social importance of information production and manipulation. The importance of the group of workers variously known as knowledge workers, symbolic analysts, or, latterly, creatives, was recognized by the late 1950s or early 1960s. Peter Drucker, the much-lionized management "guru," is credited with coining the term "knowledge worker" in 1959, while the later term "symbolic analysts" comes from economist Robert Reich.[11]

***

Clark Kerr, a former labor economist, became president of the University of California in 1958. This state university system, whose "California Master Plan for Higher Education" outlined an aggressive growth strategy stretching to the turn of the twenty-first century and beyond, was the flagship of US public universities and established the benchmarks for public educational institutions in the US and elsewhere; it was intended as the incubator of the rank-and-file middle class and the elites of a modern superpower among nations in a politically divided world. Kerr's transformative educational vision was based on the production of knowledge workers. Kerr—the man against whom was directed much of the energy of Berkeley's Free Speech Movement, derisively invoked by David Brooks—coined the term "multiversity" in a series of lectures he gave at Harvard in 1963.[12] It was Kerr's belief that the university was a "prime instrument of national purpose." In his influential book *The Uses of the University*, Kerr wrote:

> What the railroads did for the second half of the last century and the automobile for the first half of this century may be done for the second half of this century by the knowledge industry.[13]

Sociologist Daniel Bell, in *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973) and *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1976), set the terms of the discourse on the organization of productive labor (although the visionary educational reformer Ivan Illich apparently referred to "postindustrialism" earlier); Richard Florida claims Bell as a powerful influence.[14] The term "post-Fordism," which primarily describes changes in command and control in the organization of the production process, is a preferred term of art for the present organization of labor in advanced economies, retaining the sense of continuity with earlier phases of capitalist organization rather than suggesting a radical break resulting from the rise of information economies and changes in the mode of conducting and managing the labor process.[15]

Theories of post-Fordism fall into different schools, which I cannot explore here, but they generally include an emphasis on the rise of knowledge industries on the one hand, and service industries on the other; on consumption and consumers as well as on productive workers; on the fragmentation of mass production and the mass market into production aimed at more specialized consumer groups, especially those with higher-level demands; and on a decline in the role of the state and the rise of global corporations and markets. Work performed under post-Fordist conditions in the so-called knowledge industries and creative fields has been characterized as "immaterial labor," a (somewhat contested) term put forward by Italian autonomist

philosopher Maurizio Lazzarato. Within or overlapping with the broad category of immaterial labor are types of labor deemed "affective labor" (Hardt and Negri); these include not only advertising and public relations—and, many artists would argue, art—but all levels of labor in which the worker faces the public, which include many service industries, and eventually permeate society at large.[16] In "Strategies of the Political Entrepreneur," Lazzarato writes:

> If the factory can no longer be seen, this is not because it has disappeared but because it has been socialized, and in this sense it has become immaterial: an immateriality that nevertheless continues to produce social relations, values, and profits.[17]

These categories look very different from Florida's. Andrew Ross writes that the creative-class concept derives from Prime Minister Paul Keating's Australia in the early 1990s, under the rubric "cultural industries."[18] Tony Blair's New Labour government used the term "creative industries" in 1997 in the rebranding of the UK as Cool Britannia. The Department of National Heritage was renamed the Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) and promoted technological optimism, a youth cult, and, in Ross's words, "self-directed innovation in the arts and knowledge sectors." Both Ross and the social psychologist Alan Blum refer to the centrality of the idea of constant reinvention—of the firm and of the person—as a hallmark of the ideal conditions of the creative class. Ross points to the allure of the creative-industries idea for a wide array of nations, large and small, of which he names Canada, the US, and Russia and China—we should add the Netherlands to this list—long before Florida's particular configuration shifted emphasis away from the industries and to the very person of their denizens, and to biopolitics.

In describing the creative class, Florida credits Paul Fussell and gives David Brooks a brief nod.[19] Despite building on writers like David Harvey and perhaps other, unnamed theorists on the Left, Florida offers the prospect of a category of "human resources" who will, all unbidden, and at virtually no cost to anyone but themselves, remake your city quite to your liking. Rather than portraying the right to the city, as Harvey and Lefebvre had termed it, as the outcome of struggle, Florida's path to action is predicated on the inevitability of social change, in which the working class and the poor have already lost. I say more about that a bit further on, but first, I consider the creative class itself.

What Florida has called the rise of the creative class, Sharon Zukin called, in *Loft Living*, the artistic mode of production.[20] Zukin, who never quite explains her use of the phrase, describes the production of value and of space itself, interpretable in Lefebvre's terms. Whereas Zukin traced the entire process from its inception to its present outcome, teasing out the structural elements necessary to bring about urban change and demonstrating how such change affects residents and interested classes, in Florida's account the process disappears in a welter of statistical number crunching and empirical markers by which to index the success of the creative class. Crucial to Zukin's analysis is the eventual displacement of artists, a development not addressed by Florida, whose creative class encompasses high earners in industries extending far beyond artists, the vast number of whom do not command big incomes.

Zukin had already shown that integral to the artistic mode of production is the gradual expansion of the "artistic class," suggesting how the definition of "artist" expanded and how the epistemology of art changed to fit the sensibilities of the rising middle class. Zukin—writing in 1982—asserts:

> The new view of art as "a way of doing" rather than a distinctive "way of seeing" also affects the way art is taught. On the one hand, the "tremendous production emphasis" that [modernist critic] Harold Rosenberg decries gave rise to a generation of practitioners rather than visionaries, of imitators instead of innovators. As professional artists became facile in pulling out visual techniques from their aesthetic and social context, they glibly defended themselves with talk of concepts and methodology. On the other hand, the teaching of art as "doing" made art seem less elitist. [...] Anyone, anywhere can legitimately expect to be an artist [...] making art both more "professionalized" and more "democratized." [...]This opened art as a career.[21]

Zukin offers a sour observation made in 1979 by Ronald Berman, former chairman of the US National Endowment for the Humanities:

> Art is anything with creative intentions, where the word "creative" has [...] been removed from the realm of achievement and applied to another realm entirely. What it means now is an attitude toward the self; and it belongs not to aesthetics but to pop psychology.[22]

I cannot address the changes in the understanding of art here, or the way its models of teaching have changed through the postwar period—a subject of perpetual scrutiny and contestation both within the academy and outside it. A central point, however, is that the numbers of people calling themselves artists has vastly increased since the 1960s as the parameters of this identity have changed.

Florida enters at a pivotal point in this process, where what is essential for cities is no longer art, or the people who make it, but the appearance of its being made somewhere nearby. As a policy academic, Florida repeatedly pays lip service to the economic, not lifestyle, grounding of class groupings, as he must, since his definition of "creative class" is based on modes of economically productive activity. Economic data, however, turn out not to be particularly integral to his analyses, while the use to which he puts this category depends heavily on lifestyle and consumer choices, and Florida includes in the creative class the subcategory of gay people as well as categories of difference, which are both racial/ethnic and include other identity-related groupings independent of employment or economic activity. This does not contradict the fact that we are talking about class and income. Although the tolerance of difference that figures in Florida's scenario must certainly include people of color working in low-level service categories who appear in significant concentrations in urban locales (even if they go home to some other locale), the creative class are not low-wage, low-level service-sector employees, and artists, certainly, are still disproportionately white.

Florida's schema is influenced by basic American economic and sociological texts—including Erik Olin Wright's powerful description of the new professional-managerial class (sometimes called the new petite bourgeoisie to differentiate

it from the old petite bourgeoisie, a class of small shopkeepers and the like whose declining fortunes and traditionalist worldview have left them disaffected or enraged).[23] But Florida's categories are more directly derived from the US government's Standard Occupational Classification, or SOC, codes. His creative-class grouping includes "a broad group of creative professionals in business and finance, law, health care and related fields," who "engage in complex problem solving that involves a great deal of independent judgment and requires high levels of education or human capital."[24] Within it is a "super-creative core [of] people in science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music, and entertainment [... whose] job is to create new ideas, new technology and/or new creative content."

Doug Henwood, in a critique from the left, notes that Florida's creative class constitutes about 30 percent of the workforce, and the "super creative core" about 12 percent. Examining one category of super-creatives, "those in all computer and mathematical occupations," Henwood remarks that some of these jobs "can only be tendentiously classed as super creative."[25] SOC categories put both call-center tech-support workers and computer programmers in the information-technology, or IT, category, but call-center workers would surely not experience their jobs as creative but "more likely as monotonous and even deskilled." What is striking in Florida's picture is, first, not just the insistence on winners and losers, on the creatives and the uncreatives—recalling the social divisions within Aldous Huxley's dystopian novel *Brave New World*—but on the implicit conviction that job categories finally do provide the only source of real agency regardless of their content. Second, the value of the noncreatives is that they are nature to the creatives' culture,

female to their male, operating as backdrop and raw material, and finally as necessary support, as service workers. Stressing the utility of random conversations in the street, à la Jane Jacobs, Florida treats the little people of the streets as a potent source of ideas, a touchingly modern(ist) point of view.

In an online consideration of Florida's thesis, Harvard economist Edward Glaeser, a right-leaning mainstream critic, expresses admiration for Florida's book as an engagingly written popularization of the generally accepted urbanist maxim that human capital drives growth, but he fails to find any value added from looking at creative capital as a separate category. Glaeser writes:

> The presence of skills in the metropolitan area may increase new idea production and the growth rate of city-specific productivity levels, but if Florida wants to argue that there is an [effect] of bohemian, creative types, over and above the effect of human capital, then presumably that should show up in the data.[26]

Glaeser ran statistical regressions on the population-growth data on four measures: (1) the share of local workers in the "super creative core"; (2) patents per capita in 1990; (3) the Gay Index, or the number of coupled gay people in the area relative to the total population; and (4) the Bohemian Index—the number of artistic types relative to the overall population.

Glaeser concludes that in all the regressions the primary effects on city growth result from education level rather than any of Florida's measures and that in fact in all but two cities, "the gay population has a negative impact." He concludes:

> I would certainly not interpret this as suggesting that gays are bad for growth, but I would be awfully suspicious of suggesting to mayors that the right way to fuel economic development is to attract a larger gay population. There are many good reasons to be tolerant, without spinning an unfounded story about how Bohemianism helps urban development.[27]

Further:

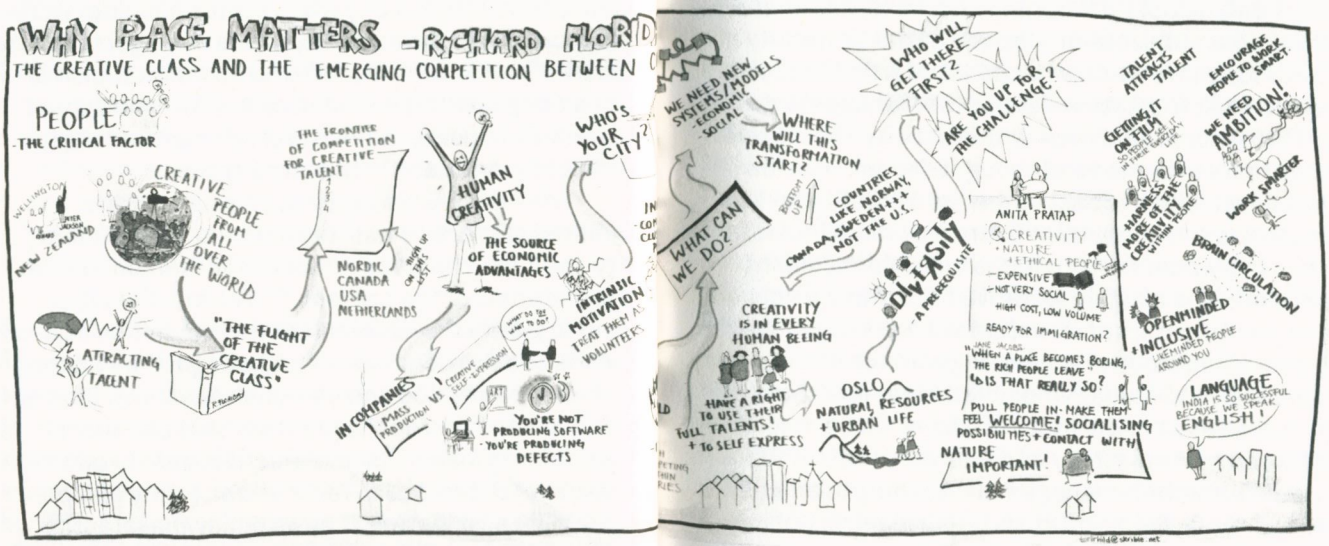
> There is no evidence to suggest that there is anything to this diversity or Bohemianism, once you control for human capital. As such, mayors are better served by focusing on the basic commodities desired by those with skills, than by thinking that there is a quick fix involved in creating a funky, hip, Bohemian downtown.[28]

Max Nathan, an English urbanist at the Centre for Cities, an independent research institute in London, observes that "there's not much evidence for a single creative class in the US or the UK. And although knowledge, creativity, and human capital are becoming more important in today's economy, more than 20 years of endogenous growth theory already tells us this." He concludes, "Diversity, creativity and cool are the icing, not the cake."[29]

American sociologist Ann Markusen, left-leaning but agreeing with Glaeser, further cautions that "human creativity cannot be conflated with years of schooling."[30] Some of the occupations included in Florida's sample do not call upon creative thinking, while many manual tasks do just that; furthermore, it hardly needs to be noted that human qualities and attributes are not themselves merely produced by schooling.

Florida's use of the US government's SOC categories, lumping together artists and bohemians with all kinds of IT workers and others not remotely interested in art or bohemia, has been identified by many other observers—perhaps especially those involved in the art world—as a glaring fault. Florida fails to note the divergent interests of employees and managers, or younger and older workers, in choices about where to live: it seems, for example, that the young move into the city while somewhat older workers move out to the suburbs, where managers tend to cluster. But Florida's book found its ready audience not among political economists but in some subset of municipal policy makers and rainmakers for government grants, and in business groups.

As Alan Blum suggests, Florida's work is directed at "second tier" cities pursuing "an 'identity' (as if merchandise) that is to be fashioned from the materials of the present."[31] Second-tier cities tend to glorify the accumulation of amenities as a means of salvation from an undistinguished history, a chance to develop and establish flexibility. Blum's critique emphasizes the platitudinous banality of Florida's city vision, its undialectical quality and its erasure of difference in favor of tranquility and predictability as it instantiates as policy the infantile dream of perpetually creating oneself anew. In my estimation, Scandinavian societies seem to have faced the postwar world by effacing history and representing themselves as factories of design; visiting Copenhagen's design museum, I was amazed that a large wall inscription in the exhibition of the great designer Arne Jacobsen emphasized both his complete lack of "interest in Utopia" and his fondness for white tennis flannels. One can think of many cities, regions, and nations that would prefer to transcend an earlier mode of economic organization, whether



Sketch of Richard Florida's creative class by illustrator Torhild Eide Torgersen.

agricultural or Fordist, in favor of a bright new picture of postindustrial viability. The collective failure of imagination can be extended to entire peoples, through the selective re-creation, or frank erasure, of historical memory. The entire cast of the creative-class thesis is centered on the implicit management of populations, through internalized controls: in essence, Foucault's governmentality.

Florida was teaching at Carnegie Mellon in the Rust Belt city of Pittsburgh when he formulated his thesis but subsequently moved to the University of Toronto, where he now heads the Martin Prosperity Institute at the Rotman School of Management and is Professor of Business and Creativity. His website tags him as "author and thought-leader." Florida has developed a robust career as a pundit and as a management consultant to entities more inclusive than individual firms or industries. Management consulting is a highly lucrative field that centers on the identification of structures of work organization and methods of organizing workers in a manner persuasive to management. Management theory, however, even in the industrializing 1920s, has often claimed that creativity and interpersonal relations would transform management, leading to an end to top-down hierarchies and a harmonizing of interests of workers and management.

Speaking personally, in the early 1970s I worked at a small, Peter Drucker–advised publishing company in Southern California to which Drucker, the management idol then riding the crest of his fame, made regular visits. We were schooled to regard the management tool called Group Y, widely used by Japanese companies, as the new gospel of employee-management relations. As a concept, Group Y is traceable to Douglas McGregor, a professor at MIT's School of Management. Influenced by

the social psychologist Abraham Maslow's then widely popular theories of human self-actualization, McGregor promoted the idea of employees and workers as human resources. In *The Human Side of Enterprise* (1960), McGregor developed his highly influential paradigm of employee management and motivation in which management is characterized by one of two opposed models, Theory X and Theory Y.[32] In Theory X, people are seen as work-averse and risk-averse, uninterested in organizational goals, and requiring strong leadership and monetary incentives. Theory Y, in contrast, sees work as enjoyable and people as naturally creative and self-directed if committed to work objectives. (McGregor, unrealistically, hoped his book would be used as a self-diagnostic tool for managers rather than as a rigid prescription.) Building on McGregor's theory, and long after I left my bliss-seeking editorial shop, William G. Ouchi invoked Theory Z to call attention to Japanese management style.[33]

Starting in the early 1960s, Japanese management made extensive use of "quality circles," which were inspired by the postwar lectures of American statisticians W. Edwards Deming and J.M. Juran, who recommended inverting the US proportion of responsibility for quality control given to line managers and engineers, which stood at 85 percent for managers and 15 percent for workers.[34] As the *Encyclopedia of Business* explains, Japanese quality circles meet weekly, often on the workers' own time and often led by foremen. "Quality circles provide a means for workers to participate in company affairs and for management to benefit from worker suggestions. [...] Employee suggestions reportedly create billions of dollars' worth of benefits for companies."[35] Now, however, according to the *New York Times*, Japanese business organization is fast

approaching the norms and practices prevailing in the US.[36]

Management is always looking for a new edge; after all, managers' advancement and compensation depend on the appearance of innovation. A few years ago, in an amusing "exposé" in the *Atlantic* magazine, Matthew Stewart, a former partner in a consulting firm, characterized management theory as a jumped-up and highly profitable philosophy of human society rather than an informed scientific view of the social relations of productive activities, which is how it advertises itself.[37] Stewart compares the dominant theory of production known as Taylorism with that of Elton Mayo.[38] Taylorism, named for the turn-of-the-twentieth-century engineer and consultant Frederick Taylor, was a method (that of motion study, which was soon married to the marginally more humanistic time study of Frank and Lillian Gilbreth) for analyzing the labor process so as to get more work out of workers.[39] Mayo's management theory, formulated somewhat later, is based on fostering workers' cooperation. Characterizing the first as the rationalist and the second as the humanist strain of management philosophy, Stewart claims that today's theories simply continue in these two age-old camps. Anthropologist David Graeber writes that fields like politics, religion, and art depend not on externally derived values and data but upon group consensus.[40] Like many bold ideas in economics and politics, empirical inadequacy and faulty predictive power are no barriers to success. A new narrative is always a powerful means of stirring things up; as the twentieth-century Austrian psychologist Hans Vaihinger described it in his book *Die Philosophie des Als Ob* (*The Philosophy of 'As If'*), a person needs a ruling story, regardless of its relationship to reality,

and so, it seems, does any other entity or organization, especially when it requires persuasive power to obtain resources from others.[41] Since the advent of neoliberalism in the 1980s, for example, those newly hired corporate heads who immediately fire about 20 percent of the workforce have been shown to do best for themselves regardless of outcome, despite the fact that this strategy has long been proven to damage a distressed company's profitability, since it destroys corporate knowledge and working culture, if nothing else. Psychological studies are constantly being adduced to prove that many consumers are uninterested in the disproof of claims, whether for miracle cures, better material goods, political nostrums, and so on; sociologists from Merton to Adorno long ago commented in some frustration about people's belief in luck (as in the lottery) or astrology in the face of reason. Ideology offers a powerful sieve through which to strain truth claims.

What matters, then, is not whether Florida's Bohemian Index is good or bad for urban growth but that the gospel of creativity offers something for mayors and urban planners to hang onto—a new episteme, if you will. But Florida's thesis also finds enthusiastic support in management sectors in the art world that seek support from municipal and foundation sources while pretending that the creative class refers to the arts.

European art critics and theorists, however, were far more likely to be reading Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello's *New Spirit of Capitalism*, which provides an exhaustive analysis of the new knowledge-based classes (or class fractions) and the way in which the language of liberation, as well as the new insistence on less authoritarian and hierarchical working conditions, has been repurposed.[42] Here is a précis, by Chantal Mouffe,

addressing an American art audience in the pages of *Artforum*:

> As Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello persuasively demonstrated in *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (1999/2005), the managerial class successfully co-opted the various demands for autonomy of social movements that arose in the 1960s, harnessing them only to secure the conditions required by the new, postindustrial mode of capitalist regulation. Capital was able, they showed, to neutralize the subversive potential of the aesthetic strategies and ethos of the counterculture—the search for authenticity, the ideal of self-management, and the antihierarchical imperative—transforming them from instruments of liberation into new forms of control that would ultimately replace the disciplinary framework of the Fordist period.[43]

This brings us to the question of authenticity and the creative class.

In the words of the American vaudevillian turned radio personality and actor, George Burns, "The secret of acting is sincerity. If you can fake that, you've got it made."

In *Loft Living*, Sharon Zukin had already put her finger on an unanswerable paradox: namely, the simulacral effect of neatening everything up, of the desired pacification of the city, which, as I have explained, will conveniently replace difficult, unruly populations with artists, who can generally (though not uniformly) be counted on to be relatively docile. Zukin writes:

> Seeking inspiration in loft living, the new strategy of urban revitalization aims for a less problematic sort of integration than cities have recently known. It aspires to a synthesis of art and industry, or culture and capital, in which diversity is acknowledged, controlled, and even harnessed. [But] first, the apparent reconquest of the urban core for the middle class actually reconquers it for upper-class users. Second, the downtowns become simulacra, through gussied up preservation venues. [...] Third, the revitalization projects that claim distinctiveness—because of specific historic or aesthetic traits—become a parody of the unique.[44]

The search among artists, creatives, and so forth, for a way of life that does not pave over older neighborhoods but infiltrates them with coffee shops, hipster bars, and clothing shops catering to their tastes is a sad echo of the tourist paradigm centering on the indigenous authenticity of the place they have colonized. The authenticity of these urban neighborhoods, with their largely working-class populations, is characterized not by bars and bodegas so much as by what the press calls grit, signifying the lack of bourgeois polish, and a kind of remainder of incommensurable nature in the midst of the city's unnatural state. The arrival in numbers of artists, hipsters, and those who follow—no surprise here—brings about the eradication of this initial appeal. And, as detailed in *Loft Living*, the artists and hipsters are in due course driven out by wealthier folk, who move into the luxury conversions of abundant vacant lofts or new high-end construction in the evacuated manufacturing zones. Unfortunately, many artists who see themselves evicted in this process fail to see, or persist in ignoring, the role that artists have played in occupying these formerly alien precincts.

Zukin's recent book, *The Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* (2010), is aimed squarely at the lifestyle arguments typified by Florida's work. It traces the trajectory of the idea and content of urban cool, with their repeated emphasis on those two terms, authenticity and grit.[45] As she has done throughout her career, Zukin addresses the efforts of the powers-that-be to hang onto working-class cachet while simultaneously benefiting from its erasure. Zukin's book focuses on three New York neighborhoods—the Lower East Side, or East Village, Harlem, and Brooklyn's Williamsburg, the present epicenter of cool—walking us painfully through regional history and transformation.

Zukin also considers Manhattan's venerable Union Square, which—with its history of parades, marches, soap-box oratory, and expressions of urban unrest and decay—has been the focus of twenty years of municipal efforts to tame it. Zukin quotes the promotional slogan of the Union Square Partnership, a "public-private partnership": Eat. Shop. Visit. Union Square.[46]

The square is part of the "archipelago of enclaves" described by Dutch urbanists Maarten Hajer and Arnold Reijndorp as typical of new public spaces,[47] providing, in Zukin's words:

> Special events in pleasant surroundings [...] re-creating urban life as a civilized ideal [... with] both explicit and subtle strategies to encourage docility of a public that by now is used to paying for a quality experience.[48]

Furthermore:

> These places break with the past not just by passively relying on city dwellers' civic inattention when they calmly ignore the stranger sitting on the next bench, but by actively enabling them to avoid strangers whom they think of as "aliens": the homeless, psychologically disoriented, borderline criminal, and merely loud and annoying.[49]

I note in passing that Zukin persistently faults Jane Jacobs, otherwise treated in the field as the Mother Teresa of the Neighborhood, for her own inattention to the needs and preferences of people outside the middle classes.

The disenfranchisement of those outside the groups who benefit from life in the newly renovated city is replicated in the split between the developed and less developed world; just as the paradigm of urbanism has subsumed all others, so has the globalized knowledge economy, and those who are not part of it are nevertheless forced to take a position in relation to it.

The postindustrial shift in Western economies from a welfare-state model to a neoliberal one has resulted in the erosion of the classical working-class base that had provided a political counterpoint during the so-called golden age of capital (1945–70). The resulting "cultural turn," in which conflicting claims are played out in the cultural arena—mediated through institutions that include the state, the media, and the market—represents a relocation of political antagonism to the only realm that remains mutually recognizable. In less developed economies, the global reach of aggressive consumer capitalism and the internationalization of (neo-imperialist) corporate control have provided significant challenges to the efforts of grassroots movements to secure first-world rights through political contestation. George Yúdice describes local organizing efforts of poor youth, such as Rio Funk,

begun in Brazil in the '90s, and others; but he cites Brazilian commentator Muniz Sodré and Argentine-born theorist Néstor García Canclini in noting that reliance on grassroots self-empowerment movements to bring about change absolves the states of responsibility and puts the burdens on the subordinated themselves.[50]

In considering the social presence of creative-class members in general and artists in particular, I have focused on the tendency toward passivity and complicity in questions of the differential power of others. But a significant number of artists do not fit in this categorization. There is a divide, perhaps, between those whose practices are well recognized by the art world and those whose efforts are treated as beyond the pale. I want to focus my attention here on the former group. Yúdice, concerned with the power/wealth divide, assembles an array of critical arguments, drawing on Grant Kester's critique of the artist as service provider, always positioned from a higher to a lower cultural level, as well as Hal Foster's 1990s critique of the artist as ethnographer.[51] The problems of artists working in poor urban neighborhoods lie partly in the possibility, however undesired, of exploitation, and partly in a divergence in the art-world audience's understanding of the project and that of the local community, as a result of the different life worlds each inhabits. A number of artists he quotes insist that they are not "social workers" but rather seek to expand the frame of art. This suggests that intended readings must occur at least partly in terms of an aesthetic and symbolic dimension. This sits well with commentators such as Claire Bishop, who in a much-noted article winds up favoring the rather vicious projects of Santiago Sierra and those of Thomas Hirschhorn above more benign and perhaps socially useful "service" efforts.[52] Suspicious of the possible use and meaning of socially invested works, Bishop seems to regard positively the fact that the lack of social effect in Sierra's heavily symbolic works and the appeal to philosophical and other models in Hirschhorn's make them legible primarily to their "proper" art-world observers. As relational aesthetics seems to be carried out on the terrain of service, it is worth noting that these works remove judgment from universal categories or the individually located faculty of taste to the uncertain and presumably unrepeatable reception by a particular audience or group (shades of Allan Kaprow!).

Yúdice joins other commentators in pointing out that art-as-service is the end of the avant-garde, removing as it does the artist's actions from the realm of critique to melioration. In a section that has garnered some comment, Yúdice outlines how artists, even those who have looked beyond institutions and markets, have been placed in a position to perform as agents of the state. This reinterpretation of the vanguardist desire for "blurring of the boundaries of art and everyday life," for "reality" over critique, exposes the conversion of art into a funnel or regulator for governmentalized "managed diversity." Worse, an imperative to *effectiveness* has derived from arts administrators. A 1997 report for the US National Endowment for the Arts titled *American Canvas* insists that for the arts to survive (presumably, after the assaults of the then newly instigated, now newly revived, right-wing-driven assault on US art and culture known as the culture wars) they must take a new pragmatic approach, "translating the value of the arts into more general civic, social, and educational terms" that would be convincing to the public and elected officials alike:

A young woman gives out samples of Breathe Right nasal strips at Union Square, New York City. The product's slogan, "Exercise Your Right to Breathe Right," plays upon Union Square's long-standing tradition of political rallying. Photo by Martha Rosler, 2010.

> ... suffused throughout the civic structure—finding a home in a variety of community service and economic development activities—from youth programs and crime prevention to job training and race relations—far afield from the traditional aesthetic functions of the arts. This extended role for culture can also be seen in the many new partners that arts organizations have taken on in recent years, with school districts, parks and recreation departments, convention and visitor bureaus, chambers of commerce, and a host of social welfare agencies all serving to highlight the utilitarian aspects of the arts in contemporary society.[53]

Combine this with the aim of funding museums specifically to end elitism. In the 1990s, the National Endowment for the Arts increased its commitment to "diversity" while museums, pressed by such powerful funders as the Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Ford foundations and the Reader's Digest Fund, tried to achieve wider public "access."[54] The operative term was "community": art was to serve the interests of "communities"—by which we must understand poor, excluded, and non-elite, non-creative-class communities—rather than promote the universalist values of modernist doctrine, which many thought simply supported the elite-driven status quo. This leaves artists with an interest in audiences beyond the gallery with something of a dilemma: serve instrumental needs of states and governments or eschew art-world visibility entirely.

To close this section of "Culture Class," let me put into play two further quotations. From the introduction to *American Canvas*:

> The closing years of the 20th century present an opportunity [...] for speculation on the formation

> of a new support system [of the nonprofit arts]: *one based less on traditional charitable practices and more on the exchange of goods and services*. American artists and arts organizations can make valuable contributions—from addressing social issues to enhancing education to providing "content" for the new information superhighway—to American society.[55]

And from Ann Markusen:

> Artists may enjoy limited and direct patronage from elites, but as a group, they are far more progressive than most other occupational groups Florida labels as creative. While elites tend to be conservative politically, artists are the polar opposite. Artists vote in high numbers and heavily for left and Democratic candidates. They are often active in political campaigns, using their visual, performance, and writing talents to carry the banner. Many sociologists and social theorists argue that artists serve as the conscience of the society, the most likely source of merciless critique and support for unpopular issues like peace, the environment, tolerance and freedom of expression.[56]

1
Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

2
Markusen had in fact been asked to frame political questions by the university president himself. Markusen's paper is centered on a critique of Florida's creative-class thesis; see Ann Markusen, "Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class: Evidence from the Study of Artists," *Environment and Planning A* 38, no. 10 (2006): 1921–40, http://www.hhh.umn.edu/projects/prie/pdf/266_creativity_class_politics.pdf.

3
I use this term here to signify ironic posers and lifestyle, particularly sartorial, devotees.

4
Richard Lloyd, *Neo-Bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City* (New York: Routledge, 2006). Lloyd's estimation of the work role of the creatives is counter to the generally benign role accorded them not only by Ray and Anderson but also by such varied commentators as Markusen and all the centrist and right-wing observers.

5
Sharon Zukin, *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1982).

6
George Yúdice, *The Expediency of Culture: Uses of Culture in the Global Era* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

7
Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 48.

8
Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

9
Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), 217–52.

10
I am thinking of US-based companies such as the phone company CREDO, which has increasingly positioned itself as a left-wing, "social justice"–oriented advocacy group that happens to sell you phone services, but also of the Fair Trade Coffee "movement" and even mainstream groups such as AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) and the nonprofit magazine *Consumer Reports*, which sell services but also run advocacy

and lobbying organizations. And then there is the religious sector, which maintains tax exemption while deeply implicated in politics.

11
Peter Drucker, *Landmarks of Tomorrow: A Report on the New "Post-Modern" World* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1959); Robert Reich, *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st Century Capitalism* (New York: Vintage, 1991).

12
The Free Speech Movement recognized the blueprint for the new technocratic, pragmatic, and politically disciplined and hegemonic nation for what it was and erupted accordingly.

13
Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 66; the book is based on his Harvard lectures.

14
Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1976).

15
This note is simply to acknowledge that—no surprise here—not all labor theorists accept the term post-Fordism and its periodization of capitalist production processes, or the notion of "immaterial labor," explored below, although they are much favored in the European art world.

16
Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 103–15.

17
Maurizio Lazzarato, "Strategies of the Political Entrepreneur," *SubStance* 36, no. 1 (2007): 89–90.

18
Andrew Ross, "Nice Work if You Can Get It: The Mercurial Career of Creative Industries Policy," in *My Creativity Reader*, eds. Geert Lovink and Ned Rossiter (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2007), 19, http://www.networkcultures.org/_uploads/32.pdf.

19
Paul Fussell, *Class: A Guide through the American Status System* (New York: Ballantine, 1983); David Brooks, *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000). On his website, http://creativeclass.com, Florida engages in excoriations of Brooks and presents himself as the good observer while Brooks is the bad one.

20
To my knowledge, the concept of the artistic mode of production was first articulated by Fredric Jameson in *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, published in 1981, which develops the thesis of the historical grounding of narrative frameworks.

21
Zukin, *Loft Living*, 98.

22
Ibid., citing Ronald Berman, "Art vs. the Arts," *Commentary*, November 1979, 48.

23
See, for example, Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts: Comparative Studies in Class Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

24
Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, 8.

25
Doug Henwood, *After the New Economy* (New York: The New Press, 2003).

26
Edward Glaeser, "Review of Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class*," http://www.creativeclass.com/rfcgdb/articles/GlaeserReview.pdf.

27
Ibid.

28
Ibid.

29
Max Nathan, "The Wrong Stuff? Creative Class Theory and Economic Performance in UK Cities," http://cjrs-rcsr.org/archives/30-3/NATHAN.pdf.

30
Markusen, "Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class." See note 2, above.

31
Alan Blum, "The Imaginary of Self-Satisfaction: Reflections on the Platitude of the 'Creative City,'" in *Circulation and the City: Essays on Urban Culture*, eds. Alexandra Boutros and Will Straw (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010).

32
Douglas McGregor, *The Human Side of Enterprise* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960).

33
William G. Ouchi, *Theory Z* (New York: Avon Books, 1982).

34
W. Edwards Deming and J. M. Juran, *Quality Control Handbook* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1951).

35
Encyclopedia of Business, s.v. "Japanese management techniques."

36
Hiroko Tabuchi, "Japanese Playing a New Video Game: Catch-Up," *New York Times*, September 20, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/20/technology/20game.html?pagewanted=all.

37
Matthew Stewart, "The Management Myth," *Atlantic*, June 2006, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2006/06/the-management-myth/4883/.

38
Elton Mayo, *The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933).

39
Frederick Taylor, *Principles of Scientific Management* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1911); Frank Gilbreth, *Motion Study* (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1911). These studies of productivity mark the beginning of the efficiency movement.

40
David Graeber, *Possibilities: Essays on Hierarchy, Rebellion and Desire* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2007).

41
Hans Vaihinger, *The Philosophy of 'As If': A System of the Theoretical, Practical and Religious Fictions of Mankind* (London: Routledge, 1924).

42
Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2005 [2006]). This book is handy for laying out and following statistically what should be readily apparent to observers.

43
Chantal Mouffe, "The Museum Revisited," *Artforum* 48, no. 10 (Summer 2010): 326–30.

44
Zukin, *Loft Living*, 190.

45
Sharon Zukin, *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

46
Ibid., 142.

47
Maarten Hajer and Arnold Reijndorp, *In Search of New Public Domain* (Rotterdam: NAi, 2001).

48
Zukin, *Naked City*, 142.

49
Ibid., 142–43.

50
Yúdice, *The Expediency of Culture*; Muniz Sodré, *O social irradiado: Violência urbana, neogrotesco e mídia* (São Paolo: Cortez Editora, 1992); Néstor García Canclini, *Consumers and Citizens: Globalization and Multicultural Conflicts* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

51
Grant Kester, "Aesthetic Evangelists: Conversion and Empowerment in Contemporary Art," *Afterimage* 22, no. 6 (January 1995): 5–11; Hal Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer?," in *The Return of the Real* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995). See http://www.corner-college.com/udb/cpro2ZgGK-fArtist_As_Ethnographer.pdf.

52
Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October* 110 (Fall 2004): 51–79. See also her *Artificial Hells* (New York: Verso, 2012), published after the present article was written.

53
Jane Alexander and Gary O. Larson, "Seeking New Solutions," in *American Canvas: An Arts Legacy for Our Communities* (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, 1997), 127. How easily the term "utilitarian" slides into discussions of a dimension that during the Cold War was always explicitly denied. The entire report is archived at http://www.nea.gov/pub/AmCan/AmericanCanvas.pdf.

54
Yúdice, *The Expediency of Culture*, 245.

55
Alexander and Larson, "Improving the Climate for Culture" in *American Canvas*, 12. Emphasis in the original.

56
Markusen, "Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class," 22–23. Markusen remarks that artists are "sometimes caught up in gentrification," but she sees their role in most cities as no different from of other middle- and working-class people migrating into working-class neighborhoods, and on this account criticizes both Zukin, with whom she otherwise generally agrees, and Rosalyn Deutsche.

Culture Class, Part III: In the Service of Experience(s)

John Sloan, *Sun and Wind on the Roof*, 1915. Oil on canvas.

1. Jungle into Garden

In the not-so-distant New York past, tenement roofs, and even those of lower-middle-class apartment buildings—ones without doormen, say—were where women went with their washing and their children, in good or just tolerable weather, to hang the damp laundry on the line, thus joining a larger community of women in performing the necessary and normal, good and useful, labor of reproduction and maintenance of family life. (The clothes themselves, and the hanging of the laundry, were signals easily interpretable by other women as to wealth, status, moral character, and even marital harmony.) For men, many an apartment roof held the lofts of racing pigeons, the raising of which is an intergenerational hobby. Before air conditioning, you went to the roof for solitude, and for some prized "fresh air," and if you were lucky you could catch sight of the nearest body of water. The roofs of loft buildings, of course, served no familial functions. Roofs with gardens were pleasant idylls for luxury penthouse spaces, absent the gloss of use value attached to urban farming or green roofs.

The new, and newly relaxed, attitude to the (apparently) natural world in New York is reflected in the resurrection of the city's High Line, a disused elevated industrial rail line in lower Manhattan's far-west former industrial zone.[1] Its salvage and conversion into a Chelsea park, with its (re)importation of wild(er)ness into the city, began as a quixotic effort by a couple of architects but soon became a patrician project, and then a municipal one.[2] It marks a further step in the long transformation of urban waterfronts, formerly the filthy and perilous haunts of poor, often transient and foreign-born workers servicing the ports into recreational and residential zones beckoning the mostly young and decidedly upper middle class. The water's edge, which once figured as the dangerous divide between this-world and underworld, between safety and the unknown, now promises pleasurable adventures in travel or beach-going.

In another register, the city has now decided to embrace neighborhood community gardens, especially in places where the working class has been effectively priced out, a contrast to the 1990s when hard-line suburbanite mayor Rudy Giuliani tried to destroy many of these vacant-lot oases (which he considered "socialistic"), often painstakingly reclaimed from trash-strewn wastelands that had fallen off the city's tax rolls and into public receivership, by selling off the plots to developers at bargain rates. The city now also permits the formerly banned keeping of chickens (but never roosters) and bees anywhere in the city.[3] In my neighborhood, the still-slightly-gritty-but-on-the-way-to-becoming-hipsterland Greenpoint, in Brooklyn, some enterprising young women have started a well-publicized commercial rooftop "farm."[4] Other incipient hipster neighborhoods are poised to copy. Please try not to think of Marie Antoinette's Petite Hameau, her little farm on the grounds of Versailles, for creatives are not aristocrats, and poor people too are finally allowed to keep such animals and grow cash mini-crops.

Though they may not be aristocrats, accustomed to hereditary rank and privilege, this group of creatives belongs to the first generation to have grown up within an almost entirely suburbanized America.[5] US political scientist J. Eric Oliver, in *Democracy in Suburbia*, spells out the links between the suburban retreat to "private life" and the removal of conflict and competition over resources among urban groups:

> When municipal zoning authority and other advantages of smaller size are used to create pockets of economic homogeneity and affluence, the civic benefits of smaller size are undermined. The racial bifurcation of cities and suburbs also has civic costs, partly through concentrating the problems of urban areas in racially mixed settings. By taking much of the competition for resources and much of the political conflict that naturally exists among members of an interdependent metropolitan community and separating them with municipal boundaries, suburbanization also eliminates many of the incentives that draw citizens into the public realm.[6]

Thus we should read the "becoming creative" of the postindustrial urban core as the formation of a homogenous space drained of the incentives for political engagement. Philosopher and political scientist Seyla Benhabib has criticized Hannah Arendt for limitations in considering the public in terms of agonistic and associational spheres. The former, Benhabib maintains, is out of step with the "sociological reality of modernity, as well as with modern political struggles for justice," through its preference for theatricality, for politics as action undertaken at least partially for its own sake and distinct from considerations of instrumental reason. Even without taking sides, it is possible to read the decline of both models of politics, of association and agonism, in the new "creative sphere" of the upper-middle-class urban elite. The public stage of civic action is increasingly coterminous with the preferences of a specific class, preventing both association and agonism—at least to the extent that either of those would be worthy of the term "politics." It is in this sense that we must consider

the newfound municipal enthusiasm for parks and park-like experiences, and the sanctioning of neo-hippie chicken keeping and urban and rooftop farming, along with many of the examples to follow, as bound up with the shift in the class composition of the urban fabric.

The greenmarkets sited around New York City, the bicycle lanes, and the outdoor patios built in the middle of busy streets, express the conviction that the city is no longer a concrete jungle but a cultivated garden enclosing a well-managed zoo or kindergarten, in which everyone and his or her neighbor is placed on display, in the act of self-creation, whether you choose to look or not. The gardens, urban and rooftop farms, water slides, and climbable sculptures that have replaced the modernist model of public artworks (which had itself displaced the state-sanctioned monumentalism of previous eras) must be understood as of a piece with the increasingly suburban character of creative-class politics.

If we consider the issue in terms of the role of art sited in public spaces, it would seem indisputable that the public art (or "art in public") sector in the US has turned to a service/experience model. The modernist model of public art, which relied heavily on what we might call abstractionist inspirationalism or on architectural or social critique, had elicited increasing incomprehension and annoyance from the wider public; its ship finally foundered with the removal in 1989 of Richard Serra's abstract, minimalist, site-specific *Tilted Arc* (1981), describable perhaps as an artful but rusty wall of COR-TEN steel, from its position in front of a lower Manhattan federal courthouse.[7] In contrast, *The Gates*, Christo and Jean Claude's 2005 project for New York's Central Park, underlined the role of public art as a frame for narcissistic self-appreciation on the part

of bourgeois park-goers and city fathers, who may see themselves perambulating through a proud and cohesive body politic. Further, watching others pace through *The Gates* permitted a grandiose self-recognition, in which participants see each other and acknowledge the (rightful) presence of each on the grand stage with the figure of Nature hovering o'er.[8] This role of forming and framing the New York *polis* was already played by public gardens, like Brooklyn's Prospect Park and Manhattan's Central Park, in the nineteenth century; the modern history of the walk through a scenic landscape begins much earlier, in the eighteenth century in Western Europe at least, but the process now relies more prominently on presenting the civic world as remade, however ephemerally, by art, and *as* art—but with that Kodak smile. Creative adulthood means reimagining ourselves as children looking to have fun in our free time; the city no longer embodies the formal relations of the adult *polis* but is viewed by many as a series of overlapping fantasies of safety and adventure, as Sharon Zukin has suggested.[9]

The appeal to Nature, to that which appears as an "outside" to a society organized so that there is no outside, is part of the simulacral effect that attests to the loss of distinction between public and private spheres, and to the atomization of publics into individuals in Brownian motion, often conveniently invisible to one another, or, more properly, no more consequent than street furniture (which is why Christo and Jean Claude's project was seized upon as municipally appropriate in allowing, temporarily and symbolically, the polity to come into view, pacing in orderly ranks through the crown-jewel park).[10] This is a step beyond the anonymity long remarked on as a simultaneously liberatory and alienating effect of city life, theorized by Georg Simmel in "The Metropolis and Mental Life," an article of 1903 whose acceptance came only much later.[11] A further sign of a breakdown in urban codes and of urban/suburban boundary policing is represented by the casualization, even infantilization, of middle-class dress within city limits that has gone hand in hand with the computer-creative nerds' habit, starting in the IT shops and cultivated by management, of dressing as though they were at the gym, at summer camp, or on a hike.[12] If the world of Nature is fetishized, you can be sure a version of the Übermensch is lurking somewhere in the bushes.

As Giorgio Agamben reminds us:

> Arendt had already analyzed the process that brings *homo laborans*—and with it, biological life as such—gradually to occupy the very center of the political scene of modernity. [...] Arendt attributes the transformation and decadence of the political realm in modern societies to this very primacy of natural life over political action.[13]

We see this substitution at work in the highly evolved politics of contemporary consumer consciousness. The selection of consumer products increasingly demands to be taken seriously as a political act, asking us to produce a political self-portrait as we feed, clothe, and clean ourselves.

There is also something fundamental about the relation between gardening and this emerging biopolitics, between gardening and metaphors of rootedness and the uncomfortable displacements of modernity, the tearing away of deep, even unconscious connections to community and place. The urban-farming movement, a corner of the artisanal fever that periodically grips artists'

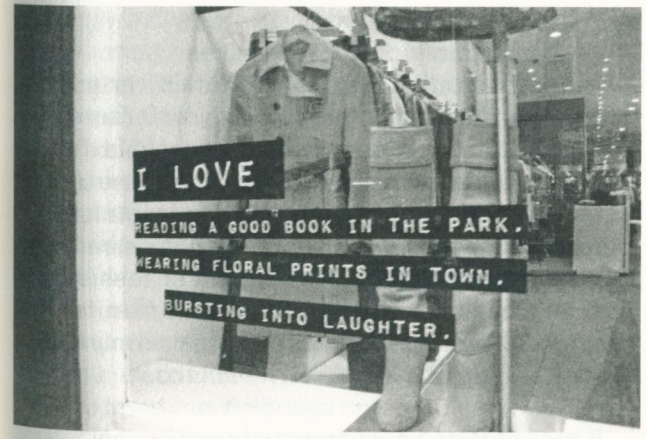
communities, potently expresses a desire to return to a mythic, prelapsarian Eden of community and stability, of preindustrial, premediatic life, without the grit of urban disconnection but with the authenticity of *Gemeinschaft* restored. This appealing dream is expressed in the immortal refrain of Joni Mitchell's song "Woodstock" of 1969, written about a historic event that career demands had prevented her from attending:

> We are stardust.
> We are golden.
> And we've got to get ourselves back to the garden.

Here the garden is the part of the post-suburban imaginary that governed the transition of the urban economy from industrial manufacturing to a high-end residential and commercial base. If we can imagine each of the distinctive urban spaces—industrial, residential, commercial—as manifesting a certain politics, we can understand not only the cultural trends that have followed in their wake but also the wider characterization of neoliberal consumer capitalism as an "experience economy."

As the vibrancy of interclass contention has been quelled by the damping off of working-class politics, a sanitized version of an industrial urban experience (or some image of one) can be marketed to the incoming middle class, who have the means and the willingness to pay for what was formerly a set of indigenous strategies of survival, of a *way of life*. The rooftop evacuated by the laundry lines and the pigeon loft becomes an urban farm, trailing clouds of glory.

The new imaginary of New York City, like so many other cities, is no longer a concrete jungle but a cultivated garden, a place in which a gardener



Comptoir des Cotonniers storefront, New York City.
Photo by Martha Rosler, 2010.

controls the noxious weeds and plants and directs growth in marvelous and pious ways. Lest I be taken for a romantic crank—or just an old bohemian like Samuel Delany memorializing the days when Times Square was simply The Deuce—I want to remind the reader that, if nothing else, as a female city-dweller I appreciate the newfound feeling of probable safety in the streets, especially after dark; but it is important to discern (as Delany would wish us to) the terms of this exchange.

2. In the Service of Experiences

George Yúdice cites Jeremy Rifkin's article from 2000, "The Age of Access: The New Culture of Hypercapitalism Where All of Life Is a Paid-For Experience," describing the "selling and buying of human experiences" in "themed cities, common-interest developments, entertainment destination centers, shopping malls, global tourism, fashion, cuisine, professional sports and games, film, television, virtual world and [other] simulated experiences."[14] Rifkin observes:

> If the industrial era nourished our physical being, the Age of Access feeds our mental, emotional, and spiritual being. While controlling the exchange of goods characterized the age just passing, controlling the exchange of concepts characterizes the new age coming. In the twenty-first century, institutions increasingly trade in ideas, and people, in turn, increasingly buy access to those ideas and the physical embodiments in which they are contained.[15]

One effect of this search for meaningful—or authentic—experience is the highlighting of authenticity as nothing more nor less than the currency of the experience economy. We should not be surprised to find a business/motivational book entitled *Authenticity*, with the subtitle "What Consumers Really Want." Written by Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, consultants living in the small city of Aurora, Ohio, the book is the successor to their previous book, *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre & Every Business a Stage*, of 1999.[16] These and similar books are guides not just to the creation of spectacles but for rethinking all business activity as gerundive, providing those fantastic, perhaps transformative, experiences we all supposedly seek, on the Disneyland model. Urbanism itself becomes fertile ground for precisely these transformations. (Zukin's *Naked City* illustrates this thesis through a consideration of three signal New York neighborhoods.)[17]

The fraying of traditional ties evident in the preferences and behaviors of the creative class also points to the tendency to form identifications based on consumerist, often ephemeral, choices. Taste in lifestyle choices with no political commitment has hollowed out the meaningfulness of taste—in art, music, furniture, clothing, food, schools, neighborhoods, vacation spots, leisure activities, friends—as a clear-cut indicator of the individual's moral worth (of the individual's "cultivation," to use an old-fashioned construct, drawn from gardening).[18] Taste now seems to be a sign of group membership with little resonance as a personal choice beyond selecting which token of the requisite type to acquire; perhaps that is why David Brooks (ever a keen observer of telling details while remaining completely incapable of seeing the big picture), recognized that for the creative class, choices must be understood as *virtuous*. (That individual choices are made on the basis of preferences

already exhibited by a group is not completely new, since members of every group and tribe are instantly identifiable from the top of the head to the bottom of the feet, but the present context seems different, centering more on consumer acuity than on quality.) But virtue is not to be exhibited as virtuousness but rather as dictated by some external force other than religion, such as ecological awareness or putative health effects. Public institutions, and even royalty, have tried to become one with the people, exhibiting the same sentimentality through the public display of grief, joy, and family pride. Websites follow the example of Facebook, with portrait photos of even distinguished professors and public officials; smaller art institutions show us their staff members (mostly the women) proudly hugging their offspring or (mostly the men) their dogs.

In general, art institutions, particularly those smaller ones that used to form part of the alternative movement, have furthermore married the provision of experiences to the culture of celebration by turning up their noses at seriousness and critique, as reviewers, if not critics, have as well.[19] We can see the rhetoric, often vividly expressed, of service on the one hand, and fun experiences on the other, among smaller art institutions and initiatives. I offer a few excerpted examples, mostly from e-mail announcements. They span the spectrum of contemporary exhibition venues from small, artist-run spaces to larger, more established organizations to the self-branding of cities. There are several core concepts that provide the rhetorical touchstones in these self-descriptions. On the fun side, these range from cross-fertilization in disparate "creative" user-friendly fields to an array of anti-puritanical hooks that touch on energetic pleasure in love, dancing, or whatever, and, on the service side, to bringing culture to the lower classes, helping heal the traumas of deindustrialization, and covering over the catastrophes of war.

My first example is an outlier: a public-relations and events-management company for "cultural projects" in New York and Milan, called Contaminate NYC, announcing a solo cartoon and manga show at a place called ContestaRockHair, described as:

> A brand created in 1996 by a group of hairstylists who shared the passion for fashion characterized by a rock soul that links music and art with the creation of hair styles, fostering innovation and experimentation. Today ContestaRockHair counts 11 salons in Rome, Florence, New York, Miami, and Shanghai.[20]

One venerable New York artist-run institution, now positioning itself as a discursive space as well as an exhibition venue, has "partnered" with a boutique hotel in strange ways and touts the "Peace, Love & Room Service Package," from which it receives a small percentage. Another 1970s New York nonprofit (listing a hotel and six other public and private funders), expresses its "passionate belief in the power of art to create inspiring personal experiences as well as foster social progress." In the economically depressed 1970s, its earliest programs "invigorated vacant storefronts." This strategy, in which property developers rely on artists to render the empty less so, has today become formulaic and ubiquitous in the US and beyond, making the connection between art's appearance on the scene and the revaluing of real estate embarrassingly obvious.

Two further representatives of this trend strike a more sober note. The first is also from New York: this relatively new group's "core mission is to revitalize [...] areas [...] by bringing thoughtful, high-caliber art installations [...] to the public." A recent show in the formerly industrial zone, now the "artists' district," of Dumbo uses construction materials crafted into "visual oxymorons that shift function and meaning in highly poetic ways."

The second, a dockside location in southern Europe, listing a dozen corporate and municipal partners and sponsors, "targets the need to rehabilitate and revitalize urban spaces, without losing their identity or altering their nature." By "taking into consideration the location of the project" in the docks, the art space

> aims to expand art into non-traditional spaces and promote the use of places that previously lacked museum-like characteristics. [...] Without culture, societies cannot have a true civic consciousness.

Berlin is experienced in the framing discourses of creative-industry gentrification, especially after a 2007 report in *Der Spiegel* rated it as Germany's top "creative class city," based on Richard Florida's "3T" indices: Talent, Technology, and Tolerance.[21] So far, Berlin has been slow to embrace becoming "the hippest down-to-earth booming urban spot for the creative industries," as described by the Berlin-based MEA Brand Building, advertising itself as "dedicated to luxury, fashion, art, cosmetics and *accessoires*." A *Wall Street Journal* article of 2010 mocks artists' and bohemians' unhappiness over the arrival of Soho House, one of a string of "ultra-hip private social clubs," because many Berliners, "proud and protective of their anarchic, gritty brand of cool," are "stubbornly wary of gentrification symbols." Berlin's Soho House is housed in a former Jewish-owned department store turned Hitler Youth headquarters turned East German Communist Party building, a history that fuels people's indignation over the arrival in town of a members-only club.[22]

As it once did in the repurposing of German real estate contaminated by recent world history, the transformation of cities newer to the conquest of urban space can raise the eyebrows of those to whom such things may matter. The *New York Times*, writing of the Podgorze district in Krakow, Poland, an infamous Jewish ghetto under the Nazis that was subsequently commercially orphaned in the postwar years, gushes about new restaurants springing up alongside "an ambitious history museum in the renovated [Oskar] Schindler Factory" and other promised museums nearby. "The award for prettiest real estate goes to Galeria Starmach, one of the most celebrated contemporary art galleries in Poland [...] an airy white space in a red brick former synagogue."[23]

But keep smiling! Mourning is consigned to new art-like spaces, such as complex architect- or artist-designed sculptural memorials and other secular pilgrimage shrines, such as museums of remembrance. In other words, those who wish to engage in mourning are directed there rather than to actual religious structures or to more general-purpose museums. Meanwhile, *those* established museums wish to make themselves seem less like mausoleums and grand palaces and more like parks and gardens, going beyond the typical decor of the past of vast floral lobby vases and discreet landscaping, toward pavilions and bamboo structures produced by a host of artists or journeyman

On the site of the former fifty-seven-acre Pruitt-Igoe housing project in St. Louis, demolished 1972–76. Photo by Martha Rosler, 1992.

architects in museum backyards and on their roofs. This happy-face effort is but a short step beyond their efforts to justify their right to funds from skeptical municipalities and donors by attracting, through various programs administered by newly invigorated education departments, visitors from outside their normal ambit, thereby assuming not only the role of service provider but also that of a pedagogical institution (often one pitched to lower grade levels).[24] No longer permitted to take the old-fashioned view and to see themselves as a locus of individualized contemplation of worthy aesthetic objects, museums have increasingly taken responsibility for the entirety of visitors' experiences, shepherding them from the shop to the artworks, with their enfolding printed and recorded and virtual texts, to the café, while also beckoning to those formerly excluded population groups and informing them about the manifold rewards that museum-going might offer them.

3. Detroit: I Do Mind Dying

Detroit is a city imagined by some as an urban wasteland reverting back to prairie. Over the past twenty-plus years, many projects have tried to engage with Detroit's long slide from an iconic metropolitan vanguard city to a severely distressed relic. As the fastest-shrinking metropolis in the US (it is at its lowest point in 100 years, having dropped from the fourth largest in 1950 to the eleventh in 2009 and losing a quarter of its population in the process) and long past hoping for salvation from its Renaissance Center, postindustrial Detroit is presently trying to school its residents on how to grow small gracefully.[25] The city has been shrinking for a long time, as suburban, mostly white flight took hold from the 1950s onward and as the auto industry

ceased to be the mighty backbone of the US economy, dispersing its production to low-wage locales in the US and elsewhere and greatly reducing its employee ranks.[26] Detroit's history as the quintessentially Fordist industrial city (Ford is the carmaker that pioneered the moving assembly line) is worth considering. Not only is its history of worker organizing and union struggles long and distinguished, the city government also had a number of socialists for a good amount of time, until their support base disappeared and city government was beset by corrupt politicians. The infamous Detroit riot (some would say uprising) of 1967, while rooted in the inequalities of race, nevertheless included some racial solidarity.[27]

Detroit has a long and distinguished cultural history as well, most prominently in music—jazz, classical music performance, R&B, and more recently, the Motown sound, hip-hop, and Detroit techno.[28] But the elite, publicly supported mainstream institutions, including the venerable Detroit Institute of the Arts, the Detroit Opera House (home of the Michigan Opera Theatre), and the world-famous Detroit Symphony, are struggling for audiences and support; this year, the symphony's musicians, after a contentious six-month strike and the cancellation of 75 percent of the season, accepted a 23 percent pay cut, and the opera house now holds a megachurch service every Sunday.

As the locale of a new television cop show, Detroit is the very image of post-Fordist urban abjection.[29] Written off the register of civilized America, suffering from dreadful crime statistics, inadequate policing, and municipal corruption, the city has recently called forth unbidden an extravaganza of projects attempting to establish the authentic street cred of both parachuting artists and local activists.

As in the case of New Orleans, some cool people are presently moving in—people who fit under the rubric "creative class." Some of the renewed interest in Detroit stems from an analysis of the city as both the model failure of (urban) capitalism and a fertile ground for the seeds of the future. Some other observers seem to revel in the opportunity to pick over the ruins in a kind of extended rubbernecking, but with the sometimes-unspecified hope that the outcome takes place in the vicinity of the art world.[30] Others still seem interested in pedagogical opportunities, whether for themselves or others. As is the case everywhere, many new arrivals are looking for cheap rent, for places to live and work comfortably, as Richard Florida has noticed; as Florida also tells us, where hipsters go, restaurants are sure to follow. The *New York Times* asks of Detroit, "How much good can a restaurant do?" and reassures us:

> In this city, a much-heralded emblem of industrial-age decline, and home to a cripplingly bad economy, a troubled school system, racial segregation and sometimes unheeded crime, there is one place where most everyone—black, white, poor, rich, urban, not—will invariably recommend you eat: Slows Bar B Q.[31]

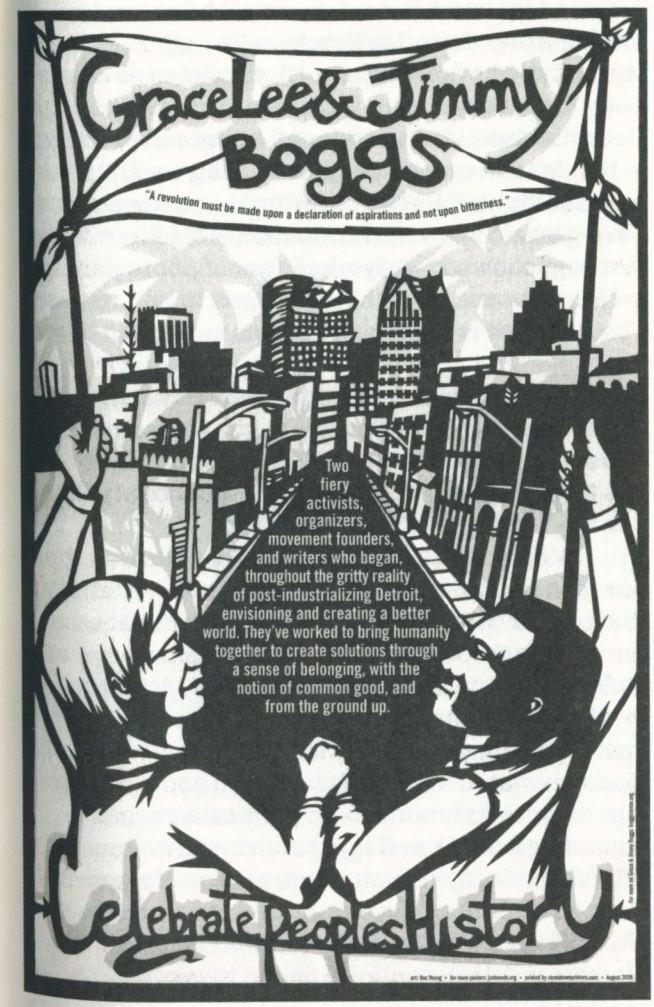
Opened in 2005, the restaurant has, according to its owner, artist and real-estate scion Phillip Coller, "validated the idea that people will come into the city." The reporter comments, "Anywhere but Detroit, the notion that people will show up and pay money for barbecue and beer would not be seen as revolutionary."[32]

Detroit is home to many worthwhile public and community projects off the art-world radar, such as the long-standing urban farming movement

partly spearheaded by beloved radical activist Grace Lee Boggs, now ninety-six years old.[33] Boggs works with established communities of various income groups, using the collective growing, planting, and harvesting of crops and flowers as a basis for unity and civic mobilization, and as a way to draw in children; planting and harvesting remain a potent metaphor for self-application, communal effort, and the likelihood of a future. In a city like Detroit, neighborhood groups proliferate.

People have been making art about Detroit's troubles for a long time, especially through the media of photography and film: see for example, Newsreel's *Finally Got the News* (1970) and Michael Moore's *Roger and Me* (1989).[34] Camilo José Vergara, sociologist, photographer, and cogent chronicler of the ills of US cities from the 1980s on, photographed and wrote about Detroit.[35] In the 1980s, the local group Urban Center for Photography outraged officials and city boosters by turning a grant they had received into a public project called *Demolished by Neglect*, which included posting enlarged photos of burned-out homes and decrepit theaters and other grand spaces on outdoor sites.[36]

Detroit is the site of artist-NGO do-gooder projects in the sphere of urban relations, some worthy, some hardly so. In the past few months I have met artists from around the world who have made the sad precincts of Detroit and environs their subject. Some of the projects rest comfortably within the tradition of salvage anthropology, such as the Canadian artist Monika Berenyi's project archiving the poetry of 1960s and 1970s Detroit through the *Detroit City Poetry Project: An Oral History*.[37] Several Detroit projects have taken place in New York or have been instituted by New York–based artists. In 2009 a small nonprofit on New York's Lower



Poster titled *Celebrate People's History, Grace Lee & Jimmy Boggs* by Bec Young for the Justseeds Artists' Cooperative.

East Side held a show called "Art of the Crash: Art Created from the Detritus of Detroit."[38] Another project, *Ice House Detroit*, by an architect and a photographer based in Brooklyn (though the photographer was born in Detroit), consisted of laboriously (and expensively, it turns out) spraying one of Detroit's countless abandoned houses with water in the dead of winter to make it visible and undeniably aesthetic.[39] Back in New York, a young artist having a solo show at the Museum of Modern Art last year showed her symbolic set of photo panels entitled *Detroit*. "The thing you have to understand about Detroit is that ruin is pervasive. It's not like it's relegated to one part of town... It's everywhere." The artist (who has also visited New Orleans) "internalized all that decay, but she also uncovered hopeful signs of reinvention, like a group of artists turning an abandoned auto plant into studio spaces," writes the *New York Times*.

Alejandra Salinas and Aeron Bergman, artists based in Oslo, have been doing projects in Detroit (Bergman's hometown) for a decade in collaboration with institutions in Detroit and Oslo. They run an "artist/poet/scholar" residency, INCA: Institute for Neo-Connotative Action, out of a center-city apartment they own. Salinas and Bergman have made animated-text films based on audio recordings of local community and political activists (including Grace Lee Boggs) and on the history of DRUM, the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (formed in 1968 and eventually joined with other "RUMS" in the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in 1969), centered on the Newsreel film *Finally Got the News*.[40]

The Netherlands also sends art students to Detroit, but in much larger numbers and through regularized institutional channels, under the auspices of the Dutch Art Institute, in collaboration with the University of Michigan, a top-tier public university.[41] The university has set up a Detroit center, accessible only to Ann Arbor–based students with swipe cards. Back in Ann Arbor, about an hour's drive from Detroit, artist Danielle Abrams teaches a course called "Why Does Everyone in Ann Arbor Want to Make Work in Detroit?" During the 2010 Open Engagement conference sponsored by the Art and Social Practice program at Portland State University in Oregon, Abrams's students explained that they didn't go to Detroit to "fix it" but rather "to get to know the community: its history, its people, and movements": "The city will teach you what you need to know."[42] Abrams's students did not produce art projects but rather "research and community engagement."

A pair of young Australian artists received funding from an Australia Council residency in Chicago to do a month-long project in Gary, Indiana, an industrial satellite of Detroit and similarly in ruins. In conjunction with the neighborhood activist group Central District Organizing Project they planted a community garden and repainted an all-but-abandoned house with an absentee owner. They also recorded local interviews for a planned film interspersing the interviews with clips from the 1978 Hollywood movie *The Wiz*.[43]

The imperative toward a manifestation of social concern and respect, if not engagement, pervades most of the projects I have learned about. If some of this sounds like missionary social work in a third-world city that is part of a first-world nation—much like the Ninth Ward in post-Katrina New Orleans—other projects are, like the MoMA artist's, framed in romantic, and sometimes futuristic terms (and what is futurism if not predicated on loss?). Let me invoke the motif of melancholy.

Only through the act of mourning something as having been lost can the melancholic possess that which he or she may never have had; the contours of absence provide a kind of echo or relief of what is imagined lost, allowing it to be held. In this respect, most art-world projects centering on decaying places like Detroit are melancholic monuments to capital, in the sense of depicting both the devastation left in its absence but also the politics it provoked. Detroit was home not only to one of the great triumphs of capitalist manufacturing but also to one of the great compromises between capital and labor. To be upper middle class and melancholic about Detroit is to firmly fix one's political responsibilities to a now absent past; mourning Detroit is a gesture that simultaneously evidences one's social conscience and testifies to its absolute impotence. (Looking at Detroit also helpfully eases the vexed question of one's effect on one's own neighborhood in another city somewhere else.)

Such melancholia has nourished a post-apocalyptic futurism. "Teach Me to Disappear" is the name of a recent exhibition, by London-based artist Paul Elliman and Detroit-born filmmaker Nicole Macdonald, held at Casco, an interdisciplinary "office for art, design and theory" in Utrecht, The Netherlands.[44] The press release tells us that the work seeks "to imagine a post-capitalist city," focusing on Detroit's abandoned zoo, "not simply to witness the failure of a civilization in its state of ruin, but to encounter an abundant eco-system of flora and fauna that has since evolved there."[45] An associated lecture by a Scottish-born, Detroit-based professor of urban studies argued that Detroit is a place "where a model of open spaces or, to use a term that comes up a lot here in Detroit, the urban prairie, starts to come into play." (The architect of the *Ice House* project had similarly told *Dwell* magazine that "Detroit is a place with a lot of potential at the moment, and there are a lot of individuals there working on innovative projects, such as the re-prairieization of inner city Detroit, urban farming, materials reuse and redistribution, densification of certain areas, and widespread architectural reuse."[46])

The decidedly local Heidelberg Project, Tyree Guyton's twenty-five-year effort of decorating house exteriors in an impoverished neighborhood centering on Detroit's Heidelberg Street, fits the "outsider art" category. Unlike, say, the initiative of artist-mayor Edi Rama of Tirana to paint the downtown buildings of that destitute city in bright colors, captured by the Albanian-born artist Anri Sala in *Dammi i colori* (2003), Guyton's project hasn't gained a high level of art-world or municipal traction.[47] A group of Detroit-based artists going by the name Object Orange, however, achieved a brief moment of attention in 2006/07 when they painted abandoned buildings in Disney's "Tiggerific Orange" paint, hoping, they finally decided, to have the city tear them down to reduce the blight and danger they posed.[48]

I mention these projects on Detroit not to praise or to criticize them in particular but because they represent a movement within art, and architecture, to institute projects in the larger community, in the built environment or in reference to it, surely as part of the "go social," community-oriented imperative. Is it troublesome that such works stand in contradistinction, implicit or explicit, to "political art," to work directly concerned with access to power? Here it is helpful to invoke New York urban theorist Marshall Berman's phrase, the "collision between abstract capitalist space and concrete human place." Community groups, and community artists, are tied to a concrete locale and thus cannot

Detroit skyline, view south along Park Avenue.
Photo by Camilo José Vergara, 1991.

stand up to those in command of capital, which is defined by its mobility. But even more, community groups are composed of members tied to each other, whereas itinerant artists remain always on the outside, functioning as participant observers, anthropology style. Some, like Harrell Fletcher (or, earlier, filmmakers Nettie Wild and Beni Matias), have found, in different cities, communities where they expected only to do a project and leave, but have instead moved in.[49]

In other cities, such as Barcelona, generally presented as a model of humanistic redevelopment, driven by the relentless push of municipal "renewal," but also notable for its "push back" of local housing initiatives, young activist students work on resistance and reformation campaigns within working-class communities under pressure of gentrification, adding some visibility and perhaps organizational strength to local neighborhood groups. Detroit has no such worries.

4. Public Practice, Social Practice

I do not know whether to be more pleased or apprehensive about art-world artists engaging in, as the sign on the door says, "social practice." Certainly these essays into the world beyond the art world, which can include any of a spate of pedagogical projects in ordinary communities, feed the instincts of a sector of artists, a sector constantly reborn, to do something "real." It is worth noting, following Mierle Laderman Ukeles, the replacement of the term "public art" by social practice. The emphasis on personal qualities and social networks will most likely give rise to projects that center on the affective. I have rehearsed some of the difficulties of these efforts. I have also alluded, throughout this essay, to the relatively easy co-optation of artists

as an urban group in cities that simply allow us to live and work in ways we find conducive to our concerns—a pacification made easier by the expansion of the definition of the artist and the advancing professionalization of the field. Baby steps in the formation of community initiatives are treated as deserving of the moral (and professional) equivalent of merit badges, for a generation raised on images and virtual communication and lacking a sufficient grasp of the sustained commitment required for community immersion. These projects can capture the attention of journalists and municipal authorities, all speaking the same language and operating against a backdrop of shared class understandings.[50] But it renders invisible the patient organizing and agitating, often decades long, by members of the local communities (a process I have witnessed firsthand in Greenpoint).

My concerns start here but extend a bit further, to the desire of young artists, now quite apparent in the US, to "succeed." Success is measured not especially in terms of the assessments of the communities "served," though that may be integral to the works, but through the effects within the professional art world to which these projects are reported. Success, to those whom I've asked, seems to mean both fame and fortune in the professional ambit. I am not alone in my disquiet over the fact that this particular rabbit seems to be sliding inside the boa, as "public practice" is increasingly smiled upon by the art world, particularly in those demonstration extravaganzas called biennials, which appear to reside in cities but whose globalized projects can in fact be easily disclaimed as one-off experiments.[51]

One problem with my critique of Richard Florida's thesis stems from the insufficiency of simply pointing out the obfuscatory conflation of the category "artist" with the larger economic group he has called "the creative class," for artists increasingly have come to adopt the latter's entrepreneurial strategies. Witness only the increasingly common tactic of raising project money through social media and related sites such as Kickstarter or PitchEngine, in which the appeal to an audience beyond the professional is often couched in the language of promotion. Like resume writing, now strongly infused with a public-relations mentality, the offerings are larded with inflated claims and the heavy use of superlatives.[52] One should refer here to the manifold and repeated discussions of the artist as flexible personality in the post-Fordist world, forced to "sell" oneself in numerous protean discourses; a literature that encompasses such writers as Brian Holmes and Paolo Virno (I have briefly cited this literature in an earlier essay, in relation to the questions of the political and critical art).[53] Virno writes:

> The pianist and the dancer stand precariously balanced on a watershed that divides two antithetical destinies: on the one hand, they may become examples of "wage-labour that is not at the same time productive labour"; on the other, they have a quality that is suggestive of political action. Their nature is essentially amphibian. So far, however, each of the potential developments inherent in the figure of the performing artist—poiesis or praxis, Work or Action—seems to exclude its opposite.[54]

The alienation this creates is so all pervasive that although the alienation of labor was a much-studied topic in the mid-twentieth century, the condition has settled like a miasma over all of us and has

disappeared as a topic. At the same time, while some artists are once again occupied with the nature of labor and the role of artists in social transformation, continental theorists have for most of the past century looked at social transformation through the prism of art and culture. The focus on culture itself as a means of critiquing and perhaps superseding class rule has a long lineage. Perry Anderson has pointed out that Marxism on the whole was inhibited from dealing with economic and political problems from the 1920s on, and when questions concerning the surmounting of capitalism turned to superstructural matters, theorists did not, as might be expected, concentrate on questions of the state or on law, but on culture.[55]

While public practices are entered into the roster of practices legible within the art world, they are entered as well into the creative-class thesis, in which they will, along with the much larger group of knowledge-industry workers, transform cities, not by entering into transformative political struggle but rather to serve as unwitting assistants to upper-class rule.

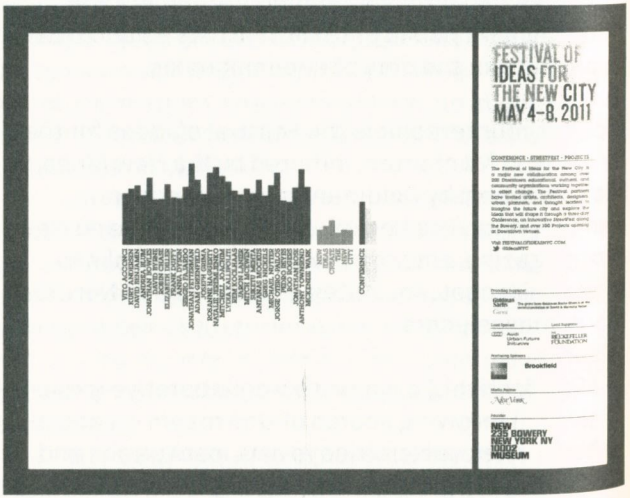
Two near-simultaneous New York City initiatives, occurring as I write (spring 2011), provide insight on the way this plays out, the first from the artists' vantage point, the second from the point of view of the powers-that-be. An ambitious conference, at a not-for-profit Brooklyn gallery describing itself as "committed to organizing shows that are critically, socially, and aesthetically aware," is announced as follows: "In recent years many artists have begun to work in non-art contexts, pushing the limits of their creative practice to help solve social problems." Offerings range from presentations on "artists embedded in the government, industries, and electoral politics" to those operating beyond the cash economy. The announcement further elucidates:

> We hope to further the possibilities for artists to participate in the development of social policy. Artists, art historians, museum professionals, academics, policy experts and government officials will consider how the art-making process can contribute to social change as well as encourage elected officials, community leaders and the general public to think of artists as potential partners in a variety of circumstances.

In direct counterpoint is the Festival of Ideas for the New City, in Manhattan, initiated by the New Museum and sponsored by Goldman Sachs, American Express, Audi, The Rockefeller Foundation, and *New York* magazine, among others, and with thanks to local businesses, socialites, and a clutch of New York City commissioners:

> [This festival,] a major new collaborative initiative [...] involving scores of Downtown organizations, from universities to arts institutions and community groups, working together to effect change [...] will harness the power of the creative community to imagine the future city. [...] The Festival will serve as a platform for artists, writers, architects, engineers, designers, urban farmers, planners, and thought leaders to exchange ideas, propose solutions, and invite the public to participate.

It comprises a conference, the inevitable street festival, and "over one hundred independent projects and public events."[56] The conference proper is described (in the inflated vocabulary that we



Subway poster for the Festival of Ideas for the New City, New York City, 2011.

have seen some smaller institutions also adopt) as including:

> Visionaries and leaders—including exemplary mayors, forecasters, architects, artists, economists, and technology experts—addressing the Festival themes: The Heterogeneous City; The Networked City; The Reconfigured City; and The Sustainable City.

These two events suggest the two registers of public projects, of the creatives remaking the urban world, which only appear to be following the same script. While artists look for the messianic or the merely helpful moment, aiming for "social change," the institutional production is centered on various trendy formulas for the "future city." (Yet the institutional event has secured the participation of most of lower Manhattan and Brooklyn's project and nonprofit spaces—including some of those whose press releases figured in the present essay—no doubt thinking that they can hardly afford to take a pass.)

This may be a good place to mention that although the present essays have centered on the creative-class thesis and therefore heavily on the position of the labor force—the producers, that is, the artists, even when they are also welcomed as local consumers—a fuller treatment would scrutinize the role of museums in driving and anchoring gentrification. New York's New Museum itself has drawn attention for playing this role in its last two locations, but many other examples could be adduced, including the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), and higher profile edifices, such as the Guggenheim outpost in Bilbao. Today this role is generally celebrated, not criticized. Also deserving of more attention is the role of commercial

galleries, which are critical in driving neighborhood turnover and rent rises but which I have similarly neglected here.

For the business and urban-planning communities, culture is not a social good but an instrumentalized "strategic cultural asset." Consultant and former UK professor of urban policy Colin Mercer writes of the "strategic significance of intellectual property-based cultural and creative (content) industries in urban business communities" that can "work in partnership and synergy with existing/traditional businesses to enhance footfall, offer branding and opportunity for consumption and diversity of experience."[57] Mercer notes that the characteristics of urban life that formerly drove people to the suburbs—such as diversity and density, on the one hand, and, on the other, vacant old factories and warehouses considered "negative location factors in the old economy"—are "potentially positive factors in the new economy because they are attractive to those [the "knowledge-based workers of the new economy"] who bring with them the potential for economic growth."[58]

Mercer's paper is, of course, a reading of Florida's thesis. He writes:

> This is not an "arts advocate" making the argument. It is an urban and regional economist from Carnegie Mellon University whose work has become very influential for urban and regional policy and planning in North America, Europe and Asia [...] because he has recognised something distinctive about the contemporary makeup of successful, innovative and creative cities which [...] take account of [...] what he calls the "creative class."[59]

Indeed. Florida's paradigm is useful for cities—especially "second tier" cities, if Alan Blum is correct—looking to create a brand and publicity for the purposes of attracting both capital and labor (the right kind of labor, for service workers will come of their own accord). As I suggested in an earlier installment, it is of little importance whether the theory pans out empirically, since it serves as a ticket of entry to renewed discourses of urban transformation. If and when it has outlived its use, another promotional package, complete with facts and figures, will succeed it, much as Florida's urban conversation has largely replaced the more ominous "zero tolerance" and "broken windows" theories used to tackle the problematics of urban governance—a replacement that has been necessitated by lower crime statistics and perhaps as a response to the success of evacuating or depoliticizing poor and working-class residents. I am more concerned with the point of view of the broadly defined creative classes, especially of artists and other "cultural workers," although I remind myself that immaterial and flexible labor link the creatives and those implicitly deemed uncreatives, a development that in the US seems to have led to a wholesale standing down from organization and militancy except on the part of the lowest-paid, often nonunionized workers.

But, from a policy point of view, as UK urbanist Max Nathan remarks:

> Everywhere, culture and creativity improve the quality of life; iconic buildings and good public spaces can help places reposition and rebrand. But most cities—large and small—would be better off starting elsewhere: growing the economic base; sharpening skills, connectivity and access to markets; ensuring local people can

> access new opportunities, and improving key public services.[60]

Let me, briefly, take this discussion back to Henri Lefebvre. Lefebvre, as I noted at the start of this essay, in Part One, had posited that the urban represented a qualitatively new stage in the evolution of society, from agrarian to industrial to urban. Thus, he reasoned, future mobilizations against capitalism would have an urban character. This troubled Manuel Castells, who, writing as a structuralist following Althusser, preferred to focus on the *ideological* function of the city—its role in securing the reproduction of relations of production—rather than approaching the city as an essentially new space, one, moreover, that might be construed as endowed with quasi-metaphysical features for the production of both alienation and emancipation. As urban theorist Andy Merrifield writes:

> While the city, in Lefebvre's dialectic, functioned for capitalism, it actually threatened capitalism more; now, in Castells's dialectic, while the city threatened capitalism, it somehow had become more functional for capitalism. Indeed, the city, Castells writes, had become the "spatial specificity of the processes of reproduction of labor-power and of the processes of reproduction of the means of production."[61]

The relative clarity of European class politics could allow Castells to write that Gaullist attempts at urban renewal were

> aimed at left-wing and in particular Communist sectors of the electorate. [...] Changing this population means changing the political tendency of the sector. [...] Urban renewal is strong where the electoral tradition of the parliamentary "majority" is weak.[62]

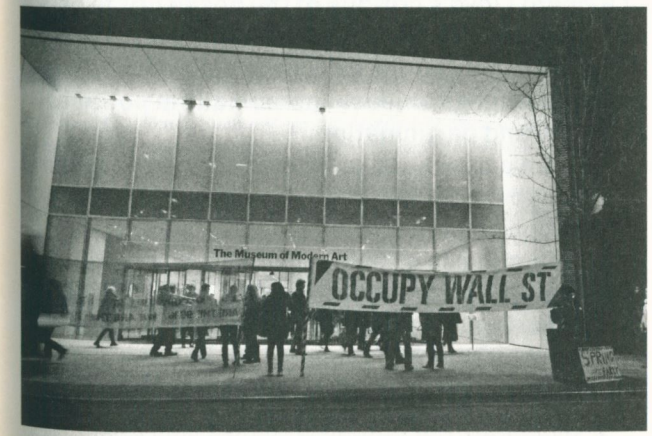
Zukin's interpretation of urban events is similar but tailored to American conditions. The weak and often antagonistic relation of the US student movement, through the 1960s and '70s, to working-class life and culture helped produce a politics of cultural resistance in the newly developing creative class that was cut off, culturally, physically, and existentially, from traditional forms of urban working-class organization. Although artists, flexible service workers, and "creatives" more generally may not be the source of capital accumulation, it is inarguable that the rising value of the built environment depends on their pacification of the city, while the severing of relations to class history—even of one's own family in many instances—has produced at best a blindness, and at worst an objectively antagonistic relation, to the actual character of urban traditions of life and of struggle. What often remains is a nostalgic and romanticized version of city life in which labor is misperceived as little more than a covert service function—for the production of "artisanal" goods, for example—and the creation of spaces of production and consumption alike (manufacturing lofts, workshops, bars, taverns, greasy spoons, barbershops) obscured by a nostalgic haze.

5. Artists Seeking Inspiration—or Consolation

Anthropologist David Graeber writes with some bemusement on a conference of several central figures in Italian "post-workerist" theory—Maurizio Lazzarato, Antonio Negri, Franco Berardi Bifo, and Judith Revel—held at Tate Modern in

London in January 2008. Graeber professes to be astonished that neither the speakers nor the organizers have any relation to art, or even much to say about it (except for a few historical references), although the event was sponsored by a museum and the hall was packed. He calls his review "The Sadness of Post-Workerism, or 'Art and Immaterial Labour' Conference," because of what he describes as a general feeling of gloom on the part of speakers, traceable primarily to Bifo, who at that moment had decided that "all was lost."[63] Graeber seems to find a certain congruence with the perpetual crisis of the art world and the difficulties of post-Fordist theorizing, especially since he considers Lazzarato's concept of immaterial labor to be risible. He decides that the artists present have invited the speakers to perform as prophets, to tell them where they are in this undoubted historical rupture—which Graeber thinks is the perpetual state of the art world. However, he diagnoses the speakers as having, for that moment at least, decided that they too have lost the future.

I am far from prepared to take this to mean that artists have lost the future. It is not of minor consequence that this sort of conference is a staple of the art world (Graeber surely knows this too). Philosophy fills in for previous sources of inspiration, from theology and patrons' preferences to the varieties of scientific theorization or political revolution. A recent Swedish conference asks, "Is the artist a role-model for the contemporary, 'post-Fordian' worker—flexible, creative, adaptable and cheap—a creative entrepreneur? Or the other way around—a professionalized function within an advanced service economy?"[64] A question perhaps worth asking, and which many, particularly European, critics and theorists, along with some



Members of Occupy Museums, an offshoot of the Occupy Wall Street movement, demonstrating at the Museum of Modern Art, New York City, in support of Sotheby's art handlers locked out over a contract dispute. Photo by Samantha Grace Lewis, 2011.

artists, are inclined to ask. Here is something to consider: the cultural sphere, despite relentless co-optation by marketing, is a perpetual site of re sistance and critique. Bohemian/romantic rejectionism, withdrawal into exile, utopianism, and ideals of reform are endemic to middle-class students, forming the basis of anti-bourgeois commitments—and not everyone grows out of it. Sociologist Ann Markusen, in a kind of balance of Richard Lloyd's critique of the docile utility of bohemians as workers, reminds us that artists are overwhelmingly on the left of the political spectrum and engage at least sporadically in political agitation and participation.[65]

I am not inclined to follow Debord or Duchamp and give up the terrain of art and culture. Certainly, celebration and lifestyle mania forestall critique; a primary emphasis on enjoyment, fun, or experience precludes the formation of a robust, exigent public discourse. But even ruckuses have their place as disruptive intervention; some may see them as being less self-interested than social projects but as fully collective, while fun remains a term that refers to private experience. There is no good prescription for how, and in what register, to engage with the present conditions of servitude and freedom.

Brian Holmes has likened the dance between institutions and artists to a game of Liar's Poker.[66] If the art world thinks the artist might be holding aces, they let him or her in, but if she turns out actually to have them—that is, to have living political content in the work—the artist is ejected. Although Chantal Mouffe exhorts artists (rightly, I suppose) not to abandon the museum—which I take to mean the art world proper—there is nothing to suggest we should not simultaneously occupy the terrain of the urban.

1
Advanced societies in the twentieth century saw the apparent conquest of diseases associated with dirt and soil through improved sanitation and germ-fighting technologies. Fresh-air movements against disease were important elements of urban reform, opening the way for renewed efforts to enlarge the playground already provided to the middle class and extended to the working class in the early part of the century.

2
Paris already had such a repurposed industrial rail line, the Promenade Plantée, whose transformation into a park began in the late 1980s. Finland has too much countryside for their liking, it appears. See "Contemporary Art at Center and Periphery," below, for a fuller discussion of this project.

3
Poultry keeping was banned in New York City in an effort to extirpate the remnants of the farms and farm-like practices that survived in far-flung corners of the city, such as Gravesend, Brooklyn, or Staten Island. New York City, like virtually every municipality, has detailed laws on the keeping of animals, whether classed as pets, companions, or livestock, including those held for slaughter. Pets were a matter of contention, banned from middle- and working-class apartment buildings until the 1960s. Animals classified as wild are banned—the category "wild animals" defines the uncivilized zoosphere; ergo, people who keep them are not "virtuous" but decadent or "sick." New Yorkers may recall the incident a decade ago in which Mayor Giuliani, a suburbanite longing to join the ranks of the cosmopolitan, hurled personal insults (prominently and repeatedly, mentioning "an excessive concern with little weasels") at a caller to his weekly radio program who wanted ferrets to be legalized as household pets. The call, from David Guthartz of the New York Ferrets' Rights Advocacy, prompted a famous three-minute tirade in which Giuliani opined, "There's something deranged about you. The excessive concern that you have for ferrets is something you should examine with a therapist, not with me." See Hillary Nelson, "From Giuliani Comes a Revealing Rant," *Concord Monitor*, February 25, 2007, http://www.concordmonitor.com/article/from-giuliani-comes-revealing-rant; and "Giuliani's Ferret Meltdown," YouTube video, 2:54, posted by "Diddley Squat," June 11, 2007, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqmbbPRDyXY&feature=related.

4
See http://rooftopfarms.org/.

5
Here one is tempted to offer a footnote to Lefebvre's mid-century observations on the urban frame (see Part One of this essay in this volume), to take account of the blowback onto the urban paradigm of the neoliberal attributes of exurbia that we have classed under the rubric of suburbanization. As neoliberalism takes hold, even long-standing democratic processes of public decision making, such as town meetings, succumb. As to the question of aristocracy, the figure of the aristocrat—especially the one in ratty old furs and drafty mansions—has haunted discussions of the art world, for artists are still disproportionally influential for the

culture at large, while some reap handsome financial gain from this excursion and others simply stand around.

6

J. Eric Oliver, *Democracy in Suburbia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001). Rather than town meetings, one more typically finds the retreat to the backyard and the country club.

7

The work was installed in 1981, having been commissioned by the Art-in-Architecture Percent for Art Program, under the auspices of the federal General Services Administration, which also oversaw its removal. The event is interesting because it called upon a probably manufactured split between "the ordinary public" (the victims of the art) and the pitiless elite sectors of the art world—manufactured because the campaign for the removal of the work was in fact spurred by an aggrieved judge, Edward Re, of the arcane United States Customs Court based in the building. The following literature on *Tilted Arc* may be useful: Janet Zweig, "Notes and Comments" column, *New Yorker*, March 27, 1989; Harriet F. Senie, *"Tilted Arc" Controversy: Dangerous Precedent?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001); Gregg M. Horowitz, "Public Art/Public Space: The Spectacle of the *Tilted Arc* Controversy," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 54, no. 1 (Winter 1996) ("an early version of the strategy of censorship-as-liberation used by regressive political forces in other antidemocratic projects," 8); and, by Serra's wife, *The Destruction of "Tilted Arc": Documents*, eds. Martha Buskirk and Clara Weyergraf-Serra (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990). For an immediate, partisan view, see the film *The Trial of "Tilted Arc"* (1986), centering on the hearings relating to the removal of the sculpture.

8

"The Gates is the largest artwork since the Sphinx," begins a promo site's appreciative article; see http://wirednewyork.com/parks/central_park/christo_gates/. Mayor Bloomberg, a man known to tout the arts for their economic potential, inaugurated the work by dropping the first curtain. The artists call the fabric color "saffron," a colorful and exotic food spice but not the orange of the work. A lovely article on children's responses to the work—upper middle class, upper class, and working class—includes the following: "Subsequent visits have somewhat altered her view. 'I don't like the look of them but I like the way everybody is at the park and happy,' she said, making her the ideal experiencer of the work"; see Julie Salomon, "Young Critics See 'The Gates' and Offer Their Reviews: Mixed," *New York Times*, February 17, 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/17/arts/design/17kids.html.

9

See Sharon Zukin, *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), discussed in Part Two of this essay.

10

A further consideration of this project and its municipally sanctioned follow-up, Olafur Eliasson's *Waterfalls* (2008), would have to point to the insistence of these projects on the power of the artist, and his grant-getting, fund-raising, and bureaucracy-besting prowess, with urbanized nature as the ground. In other words, the intellectual labor of the artist is disclosed to cognoscenti but the spectacle suffices for the masses. This problem was partly addressed by Eliasson in a radio interview describing the scaffolding of the *Waterfalls* as an homage to (manual) labor, a theme not otherwise much noted in his work.

11

Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, ed. and trans. Kurt Wolff (Glencoe, Il: Free Press of Glencoe, 1950). Originally published as *Die Großstadt und das Geistesleben* (Dresden: Petermann, 1903).

12

Here consider the relationship between street fashion, working-class attire, and middle-class envy. And before youth-culture demands in the 1960s loosened dress codes (prompting outraged businesses to post notices announcing "No Shoes, No Shirt, No Service"), it was illegal to wear "short shorts" and other forms of skimpy dress on New York City streets.

13

Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 3–4.

14

Quoted in Yúdice, *The Expediency of Culture: Uses of Culture in the Global Era* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 196. (See Part Two of this essay.) Rifkin subsequently published a book with the same title as his article; see Jeremy Rifkin, *The Age of Access: The New Culture of Hypercapitalism Where All of Life Is a Paid-For Experience* (New York: Tarcher, 2000).

15

Rifkin, *The Age of Access*, 54–55.

16

Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2007) and *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre & Every Business a Stage* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999). Aurora is a tiny town of about 13,000 residents, in northeastern Ohio, near Akron. Do visit Pine and Gilmore's fun-loving website, http://www.strategichorizons.com/index.html. Rifkin cites their first book: "Management consultants B. Joseph Pine and James Gilmore advise their corporate clients that 'in the emerging Experience Economy, companies must realize they make *memories*, not goods.'" *Age of Access*, 145.

17

See Part Two of the present essay.

18
This is one more reason why it is impossible to base a serious contemporary aesthetics on those of Kant, for whom the faculty of taste could not be more clearly separated from the "possessive individualism" that marks contemporary consumer choices. Kant, you may recall, in *The Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*, developed a tripartite system in which taste is clearly demarcated from both reason and the urge to possess, or the "pornographic."

19
Two reviews, by two women reviewers, from one day's *New York Times* arts section make this point. They sharply contrast the old, "culture is serious business" mode and the new, "culture ought to be fun" mode. A senior, front-page reviewer in "Cuddling with Little Girls, Dogs and Music," writes skeptically about crowd-pleaser Yoshitomo Nara's show, at the formerly staid Asia Society, that it "adds new wrinkles to the continuing attempts by today's museums to attract wider, younger audiences, and the growing emphasis on viewer participation." A few pages on, in "A Raucous Reflection on Identity: Jewish and Feminine," a junior reviewer writes, "Don't be put off by the yawn-inducing title of the Jewish Museum's 'Shifting the Gaze: Painting and Feminism.' The show is a puckish, punchy look at the women's art movement [that draws] inspiration from Marcia Tucker's 'Bad Girls' survey of 1994." There is nothing particularly raucous in the works she describes. See http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/10/arts/design/10nara.html; and http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/10/arts/design/10shifting.html. The art journalist Jerry Saltz, based at a local publication, earlier demonstrated his lack of recognition of the atmosphere of exclusivity, high seriousness, and sobriety typically projected by high-art institutions (definitively analyzed by Pierre Bourdieu) by wondering in print why people do not visit galleries even though they do not charge admission. The need to abrogate this forbidding atmosphere is not what is at issue here, but the emphasis upon "the museum experience," or experiences, represents a new management imperative.

20
See http://www.contaminatenyc.com/?tag=contesta-rockhair.

21
"Economic Prospects Report: Berlin Tops Germany for 'Creative Class,'" *Spiegel Online*, October 10, 2007, http://www.spiegel.de/international/business/0,1518,510609,00.html.

22
Vanessa Fuhrmans, "Berlin Broods over a Glitz Invasion," *Wall Street Journal*, August 20, 2010, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703467304575383312394581850.html.

23
Rachel B. Doyle, "Krakow: Add Art, Stir in Cachet," *New York Times*, August 29, 2010, http://bit.ly/18PZaZZ.

24
See Part Two of the present essay.

25
Or not very gracefully. In February of 2011, the state of Michigan ordered the Detroit school superintendent to close half of Detroit's schools, swelling class size to sixty in some cases. See Jennifer Chambers, "Michigan Orders DPS to Make Huge Cuts," *Detroit News*, February 21, 2011. The library system may also be forced to close almost all its branches; see Christine MacDonald and RoNeisha Mullen, "Detroit Library Could Close Most of Its Branches," *Detroit News*, April 15, 2011. As this book goes to press, in mid 2013, Detroit is being led into the process of bankruptcy by a city manager appointed by a hostile Republican governor, and there are moves afoot to auction part of the Detroit Institute of the Arts' distinguished collection to satisfy creditors.

26
The auto industry began siting some of its factories in the suburbs and small towns surrounding Detroit, and auto workers followed them there. B lack auto workers complained they were kept in Detroit at the dirtiest, least desirable jobs, with the union complicit with industry.

27
See Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying; A Study in Urban Revolution* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1975; Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1998; Chicago: Haymarket, 2012).

28
Berry Gordy's Motown Records itself is long gone; the Belleville Three left in the 1990s, although the Detroit Electronic Music Festival continues.

29
Detroit 1-8-7 was a police procedural that aired on the ABC network in the US from September 2010 to March 2011.

30
Fascination with ruins is a long-standing and deeply romantic facet of mourning and melancholy; current manifestations include well established tourist pilgrimages to sites like New York's World Trade Center but also an interest, no longer disavowed, in images of accidents, death, and destruction, and sometimes up-close, well-supervised, and preferably well-funded short-term visits to the safer edges of war zones.

31
Melena Ryzik, "Detroit's Renewal, Slow-Cooked," *New York Times*, October 19, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/20/dining/20Detroit.html. The article opens, "How much good can a restaurant do?" and later comments, "To make sure the positive change takes hold, Mr. Cooley has parlayed the good will of his barbecue joint into a restless pursuit of community-building."

32
Ibid.

33
Boggs's most recent book, written with Scott Kurashige, is *The Next*

American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011). Among her other books are *Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century* (1976) and *Living for Change: An Autobiography* (1998). In 1992, she cofounded the Detroit Summer youth program; having moved with her husband James to Detroit, where she expected the working class to "rise up and reconstruct the city," she adapted instead to a city in a very different phase. "I think it's very difficult for someone who doesn't live in Detroit to say you can look at a vacant lot and, instead of seeing devastation, see hope, see the opportunity to grow your own food, see an opportunity to give young people a sense of process [...] that the vacant lot represents the possibilities for a cultural revolution. [...] I think filmmakers and writers are coming to the city and trying to spread the word." See "Roundtable: Assessing Obama's Budget Plan & State of U.S. Economy with Author Thomas Frank, Rev. Jim Wallis, and Activist/Philosopher Grace Lee Boggs," *Democracy Now!*, April 14, 2011, http://www.democracynow.org/2011/4/14/roundtable_assessing_obamas_budget_plan_state.

See also Andrew Herscher, *The Unreal Estate Guide to Detroit* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012).

34

Moore is from Flint, Michigan, the site of the historic sit-down strike of 1936–37 that led to the empowerment of the United Auto Workers as the sole bargaining representative of General Motors workers; the Roger of the title was Roger Smith, the head of GM at the time the film was made and the executive responsible for huge worker layoffs that led to the near-total devastation of Flint. Credits for the film *Finally Got the News* read "A film by Stewart Bird, Rene Lichtman, and Peter Gessner, produced in association with the League of Revolutionary Black Workers."

35

See Camilo José Vergara, *The New American Ghetto* (Newark, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995).

36

Parts of this project were included in the exhibition "Home Front," the first exhibition of the cycle *If You Lived Here...* that I organized at the Dia Art Foundation in New York in 1989, with the participation of Keith Piaseczny, Bob McKeown, and other members of the Urban Center for Photography. For the specification of the conditions that are deemed to constitute "demolished by neglect," see the Detroit Historic District Commission, http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us/historic/ordinance2.htm, Sec. 25-2-2,"Definitions."

37

This project, two years in the making (2008–10), will continue through the auspices of Wayne State University with some further collaboration with Berenyi and with Eastern Michigan University. See http://monikaberenyi.wordpress.com/2010/12/06/detroit-city-poetry-oral-history-project-2010-2011/.

38

See http://www.fusionartsmuseum.org/ex_crash.htm.

39

See Donna Terek, "Detroit Ice House Is Really All About Art," *Detroit News*, February 7, 2010, http://detnews.com/article/20100207/OPINION03/2070309/Detroit-Ice-House-is-really-all-about-art; the website includes a video of the project. Funding was sought via Kickstarter. The creators describe the project as "An Architectural Installation and Social Change Project" on their blog, http://icehousedetroit.blogspot.com/ (now seemingly inactive), detailing their Detroit activities, a forthcoming film and photo book, and the many media sites that have featured their project.

40

Personal communications. Bergman supplied this link: http://www.ubu.com/film/aa_wildflowers.html. See also http://www.alejandra-aeron.com/wildflowers.html.

41

According to its website, http://detroitunrealestateagency.blogspot.com/2009/12/speaking-for-detroit.html, "the Detroit Unreal Estate Agency [...] is aimed at new types of urban practices (architecturally, artistically, institutionally, everyday life, and so forth) that came into existence, creating a new value system in Detroit. The project is an initiative by architects Andrew Herscher and Mireille Roddier, curator Femke Lutgerink, and Partizan Publik's Christian Ernsten and Joost Janmaat (see also note 34). In collaboration with the Dutch Art Institute and the University of Michigan, generously funded by the Mondriaan Foundation and Fonds BKVB." I note that, by chance, Andrew Herscher is the architect who provided a very workable partnership on plans for the building my students and collaborators and I developed at *Utopia Station* at the Venice Biennale of 2003. Another Dutch residency in pilot phase is the Utrecht-based Expodium International Artists Residency Program: European Partnership, with Detroit. "The goal [...] is to enter into a long-term collaboration with Detroit by creating an expanding network [...] to exchange knowledge about urban models, shrinkage and social, political and artistic developments in urban transition areas. Detroit-based cultural initiatives respond creatively to the city's current situation and set to play a vital role in the redevelopment of Detroit. It is this condition that has our special interest. Information gained through this platform provides vital input for the Expodium program here in the Netherlands." See http://www.newstrategiesdmc.blogspot.com.

Recently, fifteen students from the Netherlands participated in the Detroit City Poetry Project presentation at the Detroit Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCAD). Why does the Netherlands send its art, architecture, and students to study cities, towns, and neighborhoods—including Dutch ones—considered to pose intractable problems? One may surmise that the Dutch, who seem fully engaged with the creative-class-rescue hypothesis, are hoping that artists and architects will assist in urban research and melioration and further help them found a new consultative industry: a Dutch urban advisory corps (this last solution—urban consultation—was proposed to me as an answer to my question "Why?" by Salomon Frausto, Head of Architectural Broadcasting at the Berlage Institute in Rotterdam).

42
See http:// historyofartandsocialpractice.tumblr.com/post/633884270/shotgun-review-the-role-of-the-art-institution-in.

43
The Wiz is a version of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), journalist L. Frank Baum's important and putatively allegorical children's book about rural farm-dwellers translocating to up-to-date metropolises and of a still-fascinating mid-century musical film *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), based on the Oz tales; this later version of 1978 has a largely African American cast and features Gary-born Michael Jackson.

44
See http://www.cascoprojects.org/?entryid=376. The scope of Elliman and Macdonald's project is too great to explore here. Elliman, in an e-mail exchange, writes that he had previously spent some time living in Detroit as a teenager in the 1970s with his father, "a migrant auto-industry worker from Liverpool," which led to an emotional attachment to Detroit. He writes that he is planning another work centered on that city.

45
See also Casco's press release, http://www.cascoprojects.org/?entryid=376.

46
See http://www.dwell.com/articles/ice-house-detroit.html. While vacillating between claiming it as an "architectural installation" and as a social change endeavor, the project's authors suggest that the house will be, virtuously, disassembled and the land donated perhaps to a community garden.

47
Guyton has had some degree of success as a local, grassroots artist and was included in the 2008 Venice Architecture Biennale as well as garnering other attention. For Sala's project, see http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/sala-dammi-i-colori-t11813. Rama's project, as part of his mayoral endeavors, has had a different trajectory. According to the UK's Architecture Foundation, Rama's actions constituted "an aesthetic and political act, which prompted social transformation, and much debate, through its visualization of signs of change." During the 2003 edition of the Tirana Biennial, Sala and Hans Ulrich Obrist invited Olafur Eliasson, Liam Gillick, and Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, among other artists, to "turn residential blocks into unique works of art"; see http://vimeo.com/8254763. The project continued, and in the 2009 iteration included façade contributions from Tala Madani, Adrian Paci, Tomma Abts, and others. However, the Tirana Biennial 2009 website notes that the exhibition would critically address the city's moment of development "through 'wild' urbanization, fast capital investments and within the horizon of a neoliberal context, [expanding] into the domain of architecture and processes of urbanization." See http://www.tica-albania.org/TICAB/.

48
Although the mayor derided the group as vandals, a number of the buildings *were* subsequently torn down. See Celeste Headlee, "Detroit Artists Paint Town Orange to Force Change," *National Public Radio* broadcast, December 7, 2006. *Good* magazine uploaded a video of the project to YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wQwKkK1bggY. One of the group comments: "This didn't start out as this social crusade; it started as an artistic endeavor." (That's what they all say, if they have any art-world sense; see Part Two of the present article.)

49
For Fletcher's testimony, see *Between Artists: Harrell Fletcher and Michael Rakowitz* (New York: A.R.T. Press, 2008).

50
This is precisely the situation Sharon Zukin described in *Loft Living*, which, we recall, is a case study, using Manhattan's SoHo neighborhood, of the transformation of undervalued urban space into highly valuable real estate, a condition revisited in her more recent *Naked City*, in order to address the process at a far more advanced stage along that course.

51
I attempted to draw attention to both this trend's promises and its perils with the work entitled *Proposed Helsinki Garden in Singapore* at the latter city's biennial in early 2011. The project attempted simultaneously to articulate a commitment to public practice and a serious, not to say critical, examination of it. Too often, in discussing art, one finds the equation of criticism with refusal, allowing the absence of one to indict the reality of the other. See the final essay in this volume, "Contemporary Art at Center and Periphery."

52
Facebook itself takes the form in which shouting into the wind small self-promotional messages to an appreciative imaginary public is encouraged, and in which the occasional openings for the genuine exchange of ideas seem to snap shut in an instant. At the other pole from the language of promotion are the grant-writing discourses, Orwellian in their Byzantine inapplicability to most artists or projects you might know, but whose categorical imperatives have only escalated over the years. In the UK, the categories for art institutions and academic departments are mind-boggling, but everywhere this instrumentalized language framing instrumentalized projects is infecting the terms in which art exhibitions are laid out.

53
See "Take the Money and Run?" in this volume.

54
Paolo Virno, "Virtuosity and Revolution: The Political Theory of Exodus," trans. Ed Emory, in *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, eds. Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 188–209.

55
Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism* (London: Verso, 1979), 75.

56
See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVRHAWiJieY; and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMjaGVCQS70&NR=1.

57
Colin Mercer, "Cultural Planning for Urban Development and Creative Cities" (2006), 2–3, http://www.culturalplanning-oresund.net/PDF_activities/maj06/Shanghai_cultural_planning_paper.pdf.

58
Here, Mercer is quoting a 2004 report put out by Partners for Livable Communities, which advises many Business Improvement Districts, or BIDs, with cultural elements. (A BID is a public-private partnership, a step along the path to privatization of urban public amenities and spaces. In New York they saw their genesis during the fiscal crisis of the 1970s.) Mercer also points out that "knowledge-based workers" make up half the work force of the European Union.

59
Ibid., 2. Mercer's enthusiasm presumably factored into his decision to leave academia for consulting work.

60
Max Nathan, "The Wrong Stuff? Creative Class Theory and Economic Performance in UK Cities," http://cjrs-rcsr.org/archives/30-3/NATHAN.pdf.

61
Andy Merrifield, *Metromarxism: A Marxist Tale of the City* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 125.

62
Manuel Castells, *The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1979), 317.

63
David Graeber, "The Sadness of Post-Workerism, or 'Art And Immaterial Labour' Conference; A Sort of Review" (Tate Britain, Saturday 19 January 2008), http://libcom.org/files/graeber_sadness.pdf.

64
See http://www.konstnarsnamnden.se/default.aspx?id=13909.

65
Ann Markusen, "Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class: Evidence from the Study of Artists," *Environment and Planning A* 38, no. 10 (2006): 1921–40; Richard Lloyd, *Neo-Bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City* (New York: Routledge, 2006). See Part Two of the present essay for a further discussion of these authors' works.

66
Brian Holmes, "Liar's Poker," in *Unleashing the Collective Phantoms: Essays in Reverse Imagineering* (Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 2008).

The Artistic Mode of Revolution: From Gentrification to Occupation

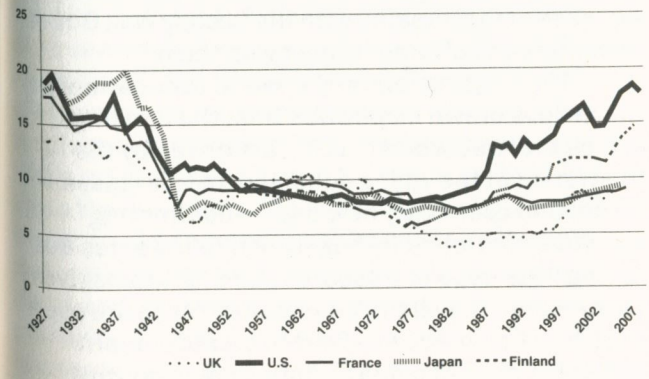
A discussion of the struggles, exoduses, and re-appropriations of cognitive labor, especially in the field of visual art, and especially when taken as the leading edge of the "creative class," while critically important, is trumped by the widespread, even worldwide, public demonstrations and occupations of the past year, this year, and maybe the next. I would like to revisit the creative-class thesis I have explored here in a recent series of essays in order to frame my remarks in light of these occupations, and to make a few observations about the relationship between artists, the positioning of the creative class, and the Occupy movement.[1]

Even before "the multitude" became a common touchstone for dreams of revolution, there was, famously, Seattle 1999, when anticorporate protests brought environmentalists and community activists together with organized labor to block a meeting of the World Trade Organization, a scenario repeated at multiple locations in several countries in the years since.[2] It is not news that the processes that go under the name of globalization, which center on the flows of capital, goods, and labor, create a unity that does not always serve the interests of capital or the capitalists.

Nouriel Roubini, channeling Marx, wrote in "The Instability of Inequality" that "unregulated capitalism can lead to regular bouts of over-capacity, under-consumption, and the recurrence of destructive financial crises, fueled by credit bubbles and asset-price booms and busts."[3]

Roubini is saying that capitalism tends toward catastrophic collapses—no news here. But the point is that neoliberalism and its rampant financialization have created a capitalism that eats its young. Roubini goes on to remind his readers that even before the Great Depression, the enlightened bourgeoisie realized that worker protections and a redistributive system providing "public goods—education, health care, and a social safety net" were necessary to prevent revolution.[4]

Roubini remarks further that the modern welfare state grew out of a post-Depression need for macroeconomic stabilization, which required "the maintenance of a large middle class, widening the provision of public goods through progressive taxation, and fostering economic opportunity for all"; but all this went under during the massive Reagan-Thatcher deregulation, which Roubini—no Marxist after all—traces in part to "the flaws in Europe's social-welfare model [...] reflected in yawning fiscal deficits, regulatory overkill, and a lack of economic dynamism."[5]



The share of US total income held by the top 1 percent is the highest since the Gilded Age. From Facundo Alvaredo, et al., "The World Top Incomes Database," Paris School of Economics.

Roubini, unlike most, goes on to proclaim the failure of this "Anglo-American economic model" of embracing economic policies that increase inequality and create a gap between incomes and aspirations, accompanied by the liberalization of consumer credit and thus rising consumer debt, as well as public debt because of decreased tax revenues, all of which is then followed by counterproductive austerity measures. This is precisely the financial model that seized the imagination and drove the policies of former Eastern bloc governing elites, many of whom, in implementing the prescribed austerity measures, are destroying their present and future middle classes (see Latvia),[6] as is neo-Thatcherite Great Britain.[7]

In the United States, Citibank, which required two US government rescues after the financial crisis of 2008, posted record quarterly profits of $3.8 billion dollars in the fall of 2011, a 74 percent increase over the previous quarter, while its CEO, Vikram Pandit, expressed his sympathy with the Occupy Wall Street protesters and offered to meet with them.[8]

The ongoing round-the-world occupations, which have drawn inspiration from the uprisings across the Arab world in 2011, are driven by the frustration of the young educated middle classes—in the Arab case fairly new ones—confronting societies controlled by hugely rich ruling elites but having little hope of a secure future for themselves, despite their university educations. These are societies that had made no effort to create modern welfare or even neoliberal states, nor to control corruption, bureaucratic indifference, and flagrant nepotism, nor to institute more than the appearance of democratic governance. Protesters in the developed world are aware of sharing conditions that are functionally quite similar.[9]

Such protests—as in France in 2006, which saw widespread mobilization against "precarization" (alternatively, precaritization), as well as the subsequent uprisings in the Paris *banlieues* or in England in August 2011—also reflect the anger of working-class youths, especially their rage against racist police violence. In the English case, these young people were out there smashing and looting together with young members of the middle class. Some of the latter group had mobilized months earlier—as young Chileans are doing still—thanks in no small part to crushing increases in school fees driven by the Tory/Liberal Democrat governing coalition. The protests of these groups, these classes, have been fired by the recognition that there are likely no secure jobs for them, or perhaps any employment at all.

But precarization is not a necessary consequence of any particular form of labor. Precarization now joins mechanization (the replacement of workers with machines), delocalization (capital's worldwide search for the weakest labor and environmental regulations), and financialization (the maintenance of excess value in the stock market as opposed to surplus value extracted from manufacturing) as one of the great strategies used to restore profitability since the late 1960s. These strategies supplement the more widely noted assaults on the welfare state and workers' rights.[10] Many of the protesting students and young postgraduates, for their part, were preparing for jobs in what we have come to call the knowledge industries, or, more recently, the creative industries, a branch of the former.

1. University as Engine, Lifeways into Lifestyle

Let me step back a bit, to the consolidation of this sector in the newly dawning information

age of the early 1960s. Clark Kerr, labor economist, first chancellor of the University of California's elite Berkeley campus, and then president of the entire UC system, saw the university as a site for the production of knowledge workers. In 1960 he oversaw the creation of an expansive master plan for growth into the twenty-first century that harmonized the state's higher education institutions and organized them into three tiers: research universities, state colleges, and two-year "junior colleges" (renamed "community colleges"). This "benchmark" plan acknowledged a need to unify the training and administration of the entire knowledge sector, from the elites to the working classes, in a politically divided world. Kerr called the university a "prime instrument of national purpose," and he envisioned the "knowledge industry" (his term) as eventually supplanting the industries surrounding new modes of transportation—railroads in the nineteenth century and automobiles in the twentieth—in unifying the nation, acting as its economic masthead, and serving as the motor of US world dominance.[11]

The foundational student protest movement of the 1960s, Berkeley's Free Speech Movement, was triggered in part by Kerr's educational and managerial policies and goals. It was a movement of a leading sector of the middle class who were destined to become the elite workers of the new knowledge industries, if not their leaders. Ironically, today the UC system is almost broke, confirming the exemplary use of college campuses by Apple's dictionary, in defining "bellwether," that "college campuses are often the bellwether of change."[12]

In contrast, the 1970s British punk subculture was arguably a working-class response to a diminished future, despite its partial traceability to

Symbolic book tents at the steps of Sproul Hall at UC Berkeley after the student encampment there was cleared. Photo by Alfredo de la Rosa, 2011.

art school, which in any case was a newly experimental repository for working-class misfits. As Dick Hebdige described it:

> Despite the confident assurances of both labor and conservative politicians [...] that "we never had it so good," class refused to disappear. The ways in which class was *lived*, however, the forms in which the experience of class found expression in culture, did change dramatically. The advent of the mass media, changes in the constitution of the family, in the organization of school and work, shifts in the relative status of work and leisure, all served to fragment and polarize the working-class community, producing a series of marginal discourses within the broad confines of class experience.[13]

Punk was anticommodity and anticorporate, and followed a tactic of uglification and self-mutilation, a *fuck you!* response to bourgeois culture; the fact that it was quickly commodified and heavily promoted in the music industry is beside the point ... until, at least, it became the point. For the post-1970s generations, lifestyle politics became almost indistinguishable from either politics or daily life, and that frame of reference has now spread around the world.

Indeed, lifestyle has been intensively developed as a major marketing point for consumer goods. In a prime nugget of lifestyle marketing analysis offered in 1984 (when the thinking was new), Theodore Levitt, Harvard professor of business administration and marketing, commented on the failure of the Hoover corporation to sell washing machines in Europe: "It asked people what features they wanted in a washing machine rather than what they wanted out of life."[14] Levitt, editor of the *Harvard Business Review,* is credited with popularizing the term "globalization." In *The Marketing Imagination*, his bestseller of 1983, Levitt pointed out that as a result of media expansion worldwide, the United States was in a unique position to market its goods everywhere, making its so-called high-touch goods—jeans and Coca-Cola—right up there alongside high-tech ones (and integrally, along with them, Americanism and the English language) into the world's most desirable possessions.

> A powerful force drives the world toward a converging commonality, and that force is technology. [...] Almost everyone everywhere wants all the things they have heard about, seen, or experienced via the new technologies.[15]

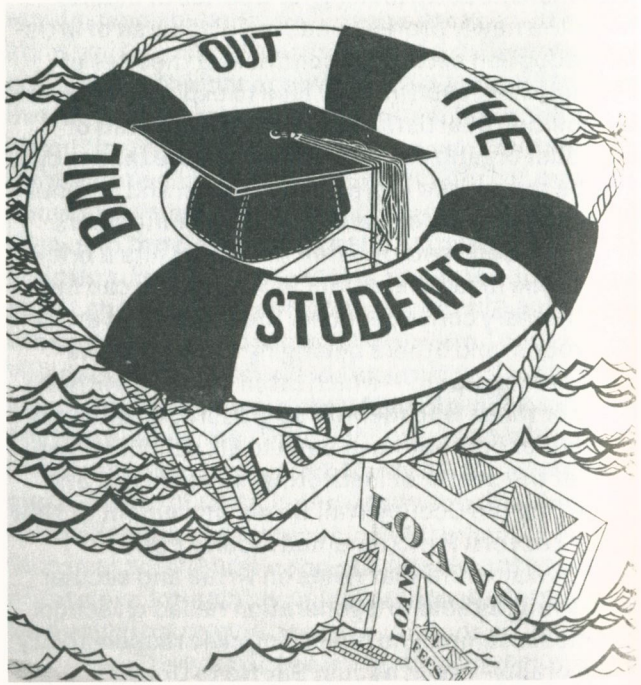
In short, without naming it but simply placing it under the rule of the "imagination," Levitt defines the new key to marketing dominance as a wholesale subordination of rational product claims to universalized Bernaysian psychological modeling, which is the basis of lifestyle marketing. Levitt refers to homogenization as both the means and the result of globalization.[16] He differentiates multinationals from the more forward-thinking global corporations, which, he says,

> sell standardized products in the same way everywhere—autos, steel, chemicals, petroleum, cement, agricultural commodities and equipment, industrial and commercial construction, banking and insurance services, computers, semiconductors, transport, electronic instruments, pharmaceuticals, and telecommunications, to mention some of the obvious.[17]

Thirty years on, we have placed many of these categories in Levitt's rather jumbled array under the rubric of the knowledge industries, including the management of Fordist industrial production (of "autos, steel, chemicals, petroleum, cement, agricultural commodities and equipment [...] computers, semiconductors [...] electronic instruments, pharmaceuticals"). Thirty years on, lifestyle *politics*, as both a unifier and a differentiator, help determine how we live or are supposed to live. People form alliances based on taste, above all via the tribalism of appearance-as-identity. Commodified lifestyle clusters include not merely possessions but persons, achievements, and children, and they tend to be costly to acquire and maintain. Punk is now another lifestyle choice, albeit an urban-romantic one. Along with goth and other ways of life associated with New York's East Village, punk also provides the preferred uniform of suburban and small-town mall-dwelling malcontents, while the "Bronxish" hip-hop style, which is popular worldwide, does the same for working-class people of color. In this taxonomy, hipsterism is the lifestyle of arty types—the triumph of surface over substance—and is a direct consequence of the easy availability of cultural goods through technological means.

But there are times when the professionalization of art training in colleges and universities, combined with the capture and branding of artist-led, artist-run initiatives—the ones that used to reside outside the purview of art institutions—can broaden the social network and the vocabulary of action. It is a commonplace that in a postindustrial economy virtually all work falls in some sense under the reign of language and symbolic behavior. Certainly, all cultural products are flattened into "information," mashing together writing, research, entertainment, and, of course, art. The popular reception of art and its greatly expanded audience have allowed, in the present moment, a mutual visibility between artists and other underemployed groups, both educated and undereducated. Or perhaps more directly, looking for a series of master texts, the newly professionalized discourse of artistic production settled on continental theories of aestheticized capital. How else to explain the peculiar position of artists at or near the vanguard of capitalist organization? Thus, even if the tendency may be toward the professionalization and embourgeoisement of artists, along with other members of the symbolic sector, when the future hits a brick wall, those ideas and alliances *in potentia* can have revolutionary consequences. The artists and artist-run groups, and others belonging to the creative-class demographic—which often overlaps with the group of those who identify as grassroots activists, whether or not they have been to art school—have been at the center of instituting, strategizing, and energizing the Occupy Wall Street movement at New York's Zuccotti Park (renamed Liberty Park).[18]

A way of life that relies on virtue and secular good living, as sold to a generation raised on school and media campaigns promoting civic responsibility and morality—such as Just Say No to Drugs,[19] Smoking Kills, and Save the Earth—is no doubt more likely to be adopted by urban art-school grads than any other demographic group. These are young urban professionals, perhaps, but not the "yuppies" of the past (though I am interested to see that the term has resurfaced). The latter were high-earning lawyers, ad-agency honchos, and magazine editors, while these new young urban professionals are low-level workers and wannabes in their field. City



Poster agitating against excessive student debt by Chelsea Pell, Roger Peet, and Katherine Ball for the Justseeds Artists' Cooperative.

life appeals to members of these industries, which themselves are made up of networks of small shops that benefit from face-to-face relations and the excitements of the urban environment.

2. The New Creative City

This wave of renewed preference for the city can be traced to the postwar economic boom in Western industrial democracies—I am looking at the United States—which led to the rising affluence of the middle class. Immediately after the war, many city dwellers, having gained some measure of financial security, migrated to small towns and freshly built suburbs, causing urban shrinkage.[20] One effect of this depopulation was the evacuation of many city business centers and the failure of many urban industries. But the direction of migration began to be reversed as bored children of the suburban middle class (along with corporate managers and the newly defined yuppies) were drawn to the organized pleasures of city life, not least the museums and theaters, as well as the dizzying mixture of anonymity, community, diversity, and possibility that fills the urban imaginary.[21] To point out the obvious, the stultifying, homogeneous experience of life in the suburbs, with its identical malls and fast-food joints, doesn't offer the would-be creative much in the way of identity formation; and insofar as the local exists today, it is found either in the city or in rural small towns, not in fenced-in suburbia.

This repopulation and transformation of cities—from spaces bereft of shops and manufacturing, starved of resources, and inhabited by poor and working-class people or squatters living in ill-maintained housing stock, into spaces of middle-class desire, high-end shopping, and entertainment—took at least a generation. It also required

the concerted effort of city leaders. New York's SoHo and East Village had proved, by the late 1970s, that the transformation of old warehouses and decaying tenement districts into valuable real estate could be accomplished by allowing artists to live and work in them—if nothing else, city government recognized or identified with such people and understood their needs. Those elected officials who might, in an earlier era, have supported organized labor found that such constituencies were fading away. Artists, in addition, were not going to organize and make life difficult for city governments. In the following decades, the SoHo model became paradigmatic for cities around the world. (Another popular tactic was to attract small new industrial shops, mostly high-tech ones.) But no matter how much the arts (whether the performing arts or the institutionalized visual arts in museums) have been regarded in some cities as an economic motor, that remedy is not applicable everywhere, and not every city has proved to be a magnet for the arts. A new urban theory was required.

The civic usefulness of educated but often economically marginal young people was first popularized by a young professor of urban planning at Carnegie-Mellon University in postindustrial Pittsburgh. What Professor Richard Florida saw around him in that declining city were neighborhoods made cozy and attractive by the efforts of recent grads, who were setting up coffee shops and other small businesses in low-rent locations. The customer-friendly environment—friendly to middle-class customers—emphasized shared tastes passed down since the mid-1960s via schools, music, movies, and magazines, tastes that define a particular niche among the educated, professional middle class. Elements of what might ironically be seen as suburban virtue, from recycling to gardening to arts and crafts (perhaps rescued from the lore of small-town Edens by nostalgic lifestyle magazines), were now being brought back to decaying city neighborhoods.

Professor Florida developed a new theory based on selling these congeries of young, generally underemployed people—as well as such subcultural categories as gays, who also tended to congregate in what used to be called bohemian neighborhoods—to urban planners as a surefire remedy for urban desuetude. (Or *apparently* selling them, for there is a bait-and-switch tactic at work here.) His book *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life* offered a crafty new turn in business evangelism, creating a catchy new way of thinking about city marketing as lifestyle marketing—much as Theodore Levitt had done for brand marketing—and throwing a lifeline to often desperate city managers.[22] With his apparently systematic analyses, Florida parlayed his popular book into a new job and a consulting career. He is now the head of the Martin Prosperity Institute at the University of Toronto, and he is a consultant to cities, corporations, museums, and nonprofits around the world. Prosperity, like the lovely name Florida, is a keyword. His website says:

> The Creative Class Group is a boutique advisory services firm comprised of leading researchers, communication specialists, and business advisors. CCG combines a pioneering approach of global thought leadership and proven strategies offering clients worldwide the market intelligence critical for competitiveness and greater economic prosperity.[23]

I have addressed Florida's "creative class" thesis in earlier articles; here I offer an abbreviated digest, to flesh out the argument.[24] There is a certain irony to revisiting this matter now, as the long-term financial downturn has cast some doubt on the appeal of creative-class theorizing, but the thesis has had a decade to catch hold, and catch hold it has.[25] Florida's analyses have struck a chord with city managers by appearing to promote diversity in ways that often replicate what is already in place. Many who have scrutinized his data have demonstrated the insufficiency of his analyses and thus his conclusions.[26] Critics point out that in relying on standard census categories, he sweeps into the creative class all knowledge-industry workers, from those in call centers to professional data analysts, scientists, and mathematicians—hardly artists.[27] A consensus on his conclusions is that they amount to the well-established "human capital" thesis of urban development placed within new linguistic frames, and most importantly with the "creative" moniker generously washing over everyone in the knowledge industries. A small, relatively poor group of urban dwellers, the ones offering consumer friendliness and local color, becomes the face of the other, larger, richer but basically invisible members of Florida's "supercreative core" grouping.[28] In his shell game, creatives are defined under one shell as people whose mental engagement is at the heart of their work and under another as people who know how to live nicely, decoratively, and cheaply, and under yet another as primarily a high-earning, tax-paying economic grouping. As policy follows prescriptions, inconvenient, poorly accoutered working-class people are marginalized, pushed further out to the edges of the city or to the suburbs, while in the newly reclaimed city precincts, bourgeois

Members of the Arts & Labor affinity group carrying their Art Strike banner at the combined labor, immigrant, and Occupy Wall Street May Day march, New York City. Photo by Martha Rosler, 2012.

predilections—of ego-centered, commodified, and mediated rituals—enfold every milestone in life, from birth to premarital stag and hen parties, weddings, baby showers, births, communions, and maybe even deaths.

3. The Limits of Creativity, and of Liberalism

Many critics naively fail to realize that Florida, like Clark Kerr, is a social liberal. Like most neoliberals, he is out there on the rhetorical barricades arguing for tolerance, subsidies, and the right of the creative class to perform the work of the patrician class for little or no compensation. In a strange way, then, he can be taken as the collective projection of a certain branch of the liberal elite. Liberals are happy to celebrate artists, or even better, creatives —that amorphous group of brewers, bakers, urban farmers, and baristas—as long as their festivals and celebrations can be sponsored by banks, corporations, and foundations, and their efforts civically branded. Architectural institutes hold meetings and publish newsletters touting "livable" cities. Arts institutions benefit from the attention of governmental agencies and foundations, but the costs are also worth considering.

Artists, already complicit (wittingly or unwittingly) in the renegotiation of urban meaning for elites, have long been called upon to enter into social management. Real-estate concessions have long been extended to artists and small nonprofits in the hopes of improving the attractiveness of "up and coming" neighborhoods and bringing them back onto the high-end rent rolls. The prominence of art and "artiness" allows museums and architecture groups, as well as artists' groups, artists, and arts administrators of small nonprofits, to insert themselves into the conversation on civic trendiness.

Artists are hardly unaware of their positioning by urban elites, from the municipal and real-estate interests to the high-end collectors and museum trustees. Ironically, perhaps, this is also the moment in which social engagement on the part of artists is an increasingly viable modality within the art world, and young curators specialize in social practice projects. Many artists have gone to school in the hopes of gaining marketability and often thereby incurring a heavy debt burden. Schools have gradually become the managers and shapers of artistic development; on the one hand, they prepare artists to enter the art market and, on the other, through departments of public practice and social practice, they mold the disciplinary restrictions of an art that might be regarded as a minor government apparatus. These programs are secular seminaries of "new forms of activism, community-based practice, alternative organization, and participatory leadership in the arts" that explore "the myriad links between art and society to examine the ways in which artists [...] engage with civic issues, articulate their voice in the public realm."[29]

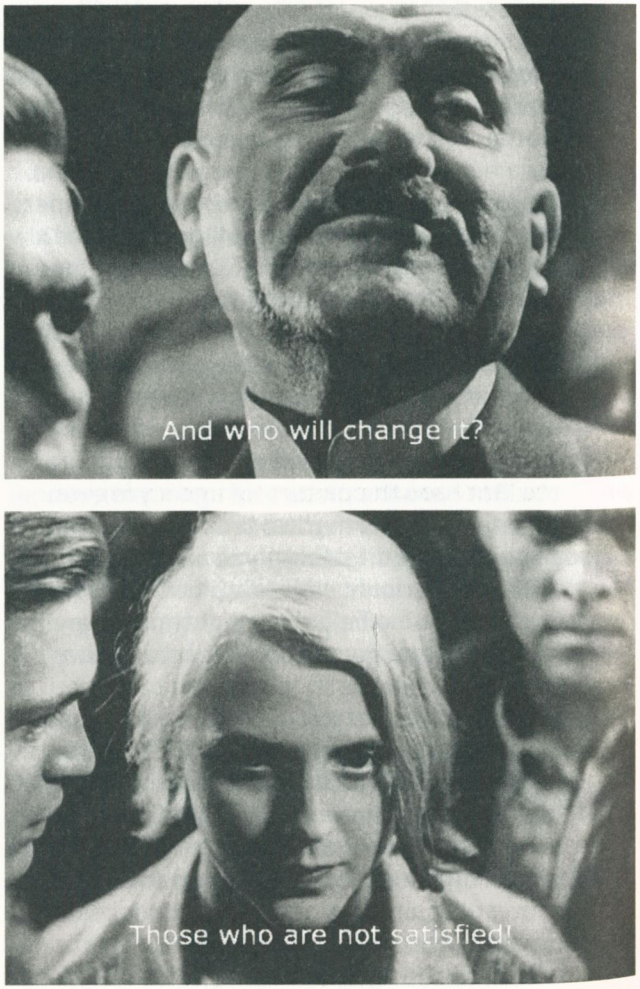
To look again at the United States—but not only there—arts and architecture institutions are quite pleased to be swept along by the creative-class urban-planning tide. The distinctly old-economy, luxury-vehicle maker BMW has joined with the Guggenheim Museum to create "a mobile laboratory traveling around the world to inspire innovative ideas for urban life," with the names of some high-profile artists and architects attached.[30] The "Lab" firmly ties the corporation, the museum, architecture, art, and entertainment to the embourgeoisement of cities. Urban citizenship has replaced other forms of halo polishing for so-called corporate citizens. By the way, they all

like bikes. As does Urban Omnibus—which also likes "Art as urban activator."

The Urban Omnibus is an online project of New York's venerable Architectural League and is funded by foundations, New York City, and the federal government.[31] Its recent feature, "Civic Action: A Vision for Long Island City," describes a new venture, developed by two local contemporary art museums, that "invites artist-led teams to propose visions for the future of Long Island City," a neighborhood in the borough of Queens, New York, that is a postindustrial ruin with new high-end waterfront residential development. Another feature, "Making Room," is "a research, design, and advocacy project to shape New York's housing stock to address the changing needs of how we live now."[32] As I write, in March 2012, there is a feature on the site in which a freelance writer describes an open house at the newly renovated jail, the Brooklyn House of Detention, an event designed to placate the neighborhood gentrifiers.[33] I am here using the Lab and Urban Omnibus to represent the myriad efforts of city agencies and elite institutions—and some freestanding ones or those attached to public universities that still follow a noncorporatized path, to adopt the now virtually naturalized creativity and hipster-friendly memes posed in terms of imagination, design, and advocacy, just as in some respects I am using the name Florida to represent the creative-class thesis that his work has helped turn into dominant urban-policy lingo.

The Florida version of the SoHo urban transformation model, as I have argued, fails to capture the agency of the actors in his transformational scenarios. Just as science has been seen in the capitalist mind as a necessary stepping-stone to technology (a business term), creativity is regarded as the necessary ingredient of "innovation." The creative classes as constructed by Florida operate strictly within the worldview pictured by the capitalist imaginary; even those who are not simply employees in high-tech firms are seen to be instituting small businesses and learning to deliver retro boutique services that bear echoes of prewar American neighborhood shops and delicatessens or even nineteenth-century "purveyors" (next up, the milk wagon and the seltzer deliveryman!) or idealized French or Italian shops in cities and villages. They have no agency outside the application of their imaginative abilities to the benefit of the gentrifiers and the well-to-do. They have no agency in respect to large-scale political and social transformation. It is true that the Florida model is not strictly invested in those whom the present readership recognize as artists. But here the picture of agency is even worse in respect to the market artists whose potential social worth is quite directly to serve the interests of the international clientele inhabiting the most rarefied income heights, a highly paid service role to which several generations of artists have been trained to aspire.

But this is not the picture of ourselves that most of us artists, curators, critics wish to recognize. Like other participants in the movements taking place around the world, and like participants in earlier ones, artists tend to want to lend themselves and their energy and abilities to social betterment and utopian dreaming, but not necessarily as participants within sanctioned institutionalized frames. The artistic imagination continues to dream of historical agency. In a protracted economic downturn such as we are experiencing now, while the creative-class thesis is showing its limits in respect to saving cities, it becomes clearer that artists and



Film stills from the climactic scene, written and directed by Bertolt Brecht, in Slatan Dudow and Brecht's feature film, *Kuhle Wampe, oder: Wem gehört die Welt?*, 1932.

other members of the art community belong to the pan- or non-national class whose composition is forged across boundaries and whose members are inclined, as the cliché demands, to think globally and act locally.

Political movements are perpetually dogged by accusations of 1960s nostalgia and even Luddism, a result of the antimodernism of much '60s counterculture. People on the Left are routinely derided by the Right as dirty fucking hippies, and once the occupations began, the Right was not slow to use this picture to discredit the occupiers. But the constellations of dissent have largely changed since the 1960s. If people are aiming to secede from modernity, they do so with a different range of continental theorists to draw upon, and without the three-worlds model of political contestation, in which the land-bound peasant figured strongly as an ideal, or the tribal nomad for those not inclined to socialist revolution. Revolution now looks more anarcho-syndicalist, or perhaps council communist, than Marxist-Leninist. The city is not simply the terrain to be evacuated, nor is it the site of guerrilla warfare; it is a conceptual puzzle as well as a battleground in which the stakes are slow-motion class war, and farming is brought to the city not by dreamers in homespun clothing but by those who might adopt the garb of the professional landscape architect or beekeeper. "Creatives" may bring not only a training in design and branding, and often a knowledge of historical agitprop and street performance, but also the ability to work with technological tools in researching, strategizing, and implementing actions in virtual as well as physical spaces. Actually or functionally middle class, they are at ease with the discourses and modes of intellectual endeavor required in higher education, or in college prep.

Craft and skill are enfolded in a framework that differs significantly from their earlier understanding; but the hegemonic role of the knowledge industries and the "devices" of electronic production and communication render that framework near ubiquitous.[34] The often flexible schedules of artists and other members of the precarious sectors of Florida's creative/bohemian classes also permit a freedom to come and go at encampments and meetings, an ability to shift time and work commitments that is not available to all.

We can see the occupation activists as staking a claim, creating a presence, setting up a new public sphere, demanding the reinstatement of politics by refusing to simply present demands to representative governments and instead enacting democracy themselves. (Democracy has long been part of the American particular brand, albeit usually combined with double-barreled neoliberalism—or neoimperialism.) While welcoming the new, I can't resist pointing back to the old; not to the eighteenth-century demands for self-governance led by a group of bourgeois colonial rebels in the American colonies but to the American Civil Rights Movement and one of its children, the Free Speech-inspired, antiwar, worldwide student movement of the 1960s, for which democracy—direct democracy, without representation—was a foundational idea, at least as the degree zero of the movement in the early years.[35] In this current iteration, the contributions of celebrity artists such as Shepard Fairey (made famous by his Obama/Hope campaign poster of 2008) have been politely greeted but are beside the point, as it is not hard to see the occupations themselves as grand public works of process art with a cast of several thousand.[36] The vast majority of artists—forming the core of the underpaid, unpaid urban army whose activities Florida acolytes wish to harness—live in a state of precarity that may lead them to seek social solutions in new and unexpected ways. This is where the so-called artistic mode of production comes in.

Urban sociologist Sharon Zukin, writing in 1982, identifies this precariousness of bohemian life as one of the five major ways in which this artistic mode of production affects the urban environment. The others include the "manipulation of urban forms [and] the transfer of urban space from the old world of industry to the 'new' world of finance, or from the realm of productive economic activity to that of nonproductive economic activity"; diminishing expectations about the provision of housing resulting from the substitution of "bohemian" living arrangements for contemporary housing; and, finally, the ideological function:

> While blue-collar labor recedes from the heart of the financial city, an image is created that the city's economy has arrived at a post-industrial plateau. At the very least, this displaces the issues of industrial labor relations to another terrain.[37]

If the creative-class thesis can be seen as something of a hymn to the perceived harmony between the "creatives" and the financiers, together with city leaders and real-estate interests, guiding the city into the postindustrial condition, perhaps the current grassroots occupations can be seen as the eruption of a new set of issues related to a new set of social relations of production. The mode of production, we remember, includes the forces of production but also their relations, and when these two come into conflict, a crisis is born. It is interesting, in this respect, that the battle cry has been "Occupy" (which

echoes Florida's similar injunction to gentrify); that is, to occupy space, to occupy the social and political imagination, in a way analogous to the way previous movements radicalized *freedom* into *emancipation*, *republic* into *democracy*, and *equality* into *justice*. Florida says gentrify, we say Occupy.

That leads us to the next step, now under way. What the occupations have done is to make members of disparate groups—neighborhood advocacy groups, immigrant-rights groups, and working-class labor groups, both organized and not, visible to each other—and in Occupy's first phase put them into temporary alliances. It is these alliances that form the nuclei of the occupation of the present and future.

1
See "Culture Class" Parts One–Three in this volume.

2
The movement generally pegged as antiglobalization is more properly referred to by its members and supporters as the "alt-globalization" movement or some variant of that term, and is anticorporate more than antiglobalization—although globalization is a term derived from its enthusiasts; see the discussion of Theodore Levitt below.

3
See Nouriel Roubini, "The Instability of Inequality," *EconoMonitor*, October 14, 2011, http://www.economonitor.com/nouriel/2011/10/14/from-project-syndicate-the-instability-of-inequality/; and "Full Analysis: The Instability of Inequality," *EconoMonitor*, October 17, 2011, http://www.economonitor.com/nouriel/2011/10/17/full-analysis-the-instability-of-inequality/. Roubini begins the blog post of October 14, 2011, by alluding to "social and political turmoil and instability throughout the world, with masses of people in the real and virtual streets": "The Arab Spring; riots in London; Israel's middle-class protests against high housing prices and an inflationary squeeze on living standards; protesting Chilean students; the destruction in Germany of the expensive cars of 'fat cats'; India's movement against corruption; mounting unhappiness with corruption and inequality in China; and now the 'Occupy Wall Street' movement in New York and across the United States."

4
I addressed this issue in an essay of 1981 ("in, around, and afterthoughts: on documentary photography," first published in *Martha Rosler: 3 Works* [Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design, 1981]). I was pointing out that ideological images were employed in the United States, during the Great Depression, to mobilize support for the very poor under the Roosevelt administration, with the understanding that alleviating suffering would forestall revolt.

5
Roubini, "The Instability of Equality." I am using Roubini here as a convenient figure, since one might quote from quite a few other economists, particularly Joseph Stiglitz, Dean Baker, and Paul Krugman of the *New York Times*, or Simon Johnson, former chief economist of the IMF, to outline the fears of the left-liberal wing of Western economists.

6
Latvia, a tiny Baltic country that (like the other two Baltic states, Estonia and Lithuania) broke free of the collapsing Soviet Union in the early 1990s, is so far the sharpest example of this syndrome; one might also cite Ireland and possibly Greece, Spain, and Portugal in the coming year—all of which stand in contrast to the course of Iceland (the tiniest economy of all of these, but, as luck would have it, not a member of the eurozone), which was prompt to reject any terms imposed by international financial agencies, instead defaulting on its debt and pursuing its top bankers for criminal fraud. In the early 2000s, Latvia's center-right

government instituted aggressive neoliberal measures in large part to join the euro and escape the dominance of Russia. After the financial crisis of 2008, Latvia experienced the most precipitous financial decline of any nation, losing about a quarter of its GDP in two years. Its government then applied stringent fiscal austerity, including slashing pensions and wages. The budding middle class, in a familiar story, had been induced to buy homes on cheap credit, but this mortgage debt (owed largely to Swedish and German banks) cannot be repaid, while property values have also plunged. The austerity measures have failed to improve Latvia's balance sheets but have sent the middle class, not to mention the poor, into subsistence mode—or emigration. Tens of thousands of Latvians have left, and unemployment stands at or above 20 percent. A reference from 2010 is http://www.counterpunch.org/2010/02/15/latvia-s-road-to-serfdom/; and from 2011, http://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/07/18/lats-of-luck/. Yet, like Ireland, Latvia is bizarrely hailed as a successful example of austerity budgeting. (Krugman writes: "A few more successes like this and Latvia will be back in the Stone Age.")

7

The European Commission in 2011 voted in "the six pack," a group of measures that overrides member states' abilities to control their budgets, reinstituting the Maastricht Treaty's limit of 3 percent on deficits and 60 percent of GDP on debts, beyond which large fines will be levied, among other penalties. According to economist Susan George, the EC is also engineering a shift in worker protection leading to longer work weeks, lower pay, and later retirement. See Susan George, "A Coup in the European Union?," *CounterPunch*, Oct. 14, 2011, http://www.counterpunch.org/2011/10/14/a-coup-in-the-european-union/. The still-developing situation in regard to Greece (which will have EC monitors in place enforcing austerity measures) shows the antilabor direction, a hallmark of neoliberalism, of the European financial governors.

8

See http://www.businessweek.com/news/2011-10-12/pandit-says-he-d-be-happy-to-talk-with-wall-street-protesters.html; http://money.cnn.com/video/news/2011/10/12/n_vikram_pandit_protesters.fortune/; and for JPMorgan Chase's CEO Jamie Dimon, making essentially the same point, see http://video.foxbusiness.com/v/1450365871001/dimon-policies-made-recovery-slower-and-worse/?playlist_id=87247.

9

Although Western European protests in response to the prospectless future, such as the *indignados* or *encampados* in Spain and the many demonstrations in Greece's Syntagma Square, were critical examples, and the uprising in Tunisia was ultimately at least a partially successful one, the sheer scale and unlikely success (similarly only partial) of the occupation in Cairo's Tahrir Square made it the touchstone for the movement, and it remains so regardless of its as-yet unfulfilled aims. In recognition of its role, veteran occupiers of Tahrir Square sent a message to Occupy Wall Street: "The current crisis in America and western Europe has begun to bring this reality home to you as well: that as things stand we will all work ourselves raw, our backs broken by personal debt and public austerity. Not content with carving out the remnants of the public sphere and the welfare state, capitalism and the austerity state now even attack the private realm and people's right to decent dwelling as thousands of foreclosed-upon homeowners find themselves both homeless and indebted to the banks who have forced them on to the streets. So we stand with you not just in your attempts to bring down the old but to experiment with the new. We are not protesting. Who is there to protest to? What could we ask them for that they could grant? We are occupying. We are reclaiming those same spaces of public practice that have been commodified, privatized and locked into the hands of faceless bureaucracy, real estate portfolios and police 'protection'. Hold on to these spaces, nurture them and let the boundaries of your occupations grow. After all, who built these parks, these plazas, these buildings? Whose labor made them real and livable? Why should it seem so natural that they should be withheld from us, policed and disciplined? Reclaiming these spaces and managing them justly and collectively is proof enough of our legitimacy." See http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/oct/25/occupy-movement-tahrir-square-cairo.

As we go to press in mid-2013, the Egyptian revolution is in the process of complete collapse, heading back toward military control; revolutionary processes are inherently unstable.

10

See Christian Marazzi, *The Violence of Financial Capitalism*, trans. Kristina Lebedeva and James Francis McGimsey (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011).

11

For further discussion and context, see Culture Class, Part Two, pages 110–11, in the present volume.

12

The New Oxford American Dictionary has since 2005 come installed on Apple computers using the operating system version OS X.

13

Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen, 1979), 78.

14

Levitt writes, in distinguishing what he considers a multinational mind-set from a global one, "The Hoover case illustrates how the perverse practice of the marketing concept and the absence of any kind of marketing imagination let multinational attitudes survive when customers actually want the benefits of global standardization. The whole project got off on the wrong foot. It asked people what features they wanted in a washing machine rather than what they wanted out of life. Selling a line of products individually tailored to each nation is thoughtless. Managers who took pride in practising the marketing concept to the fullest did not, in fact, practise it at all. Hoover asked the wrong questions, then applied neither thought nor imagination to the answers." Theodore Levitt, "The Globalization of Markets," *The McKinsey Quarterly* (Summer 1984): 13.

15
Theodore Levitt, "The Globalization of Markets," 2.

16
In the homogenizing world market, certain goods, such as pizza, tacos, and bagels, become near-universal signifiers of difference.

17
Levitt, 4.

18
The Wall Street occupation was set in motion by a number of events, which I can only partly sketch out here. The occupation had been foreshadowed a couple of months earlier by Bloombergville, a three-week encampment of labor leaders and grassroots activists held at City Hall Park against draconian budget cuts and named after the mayor of New York. (Another important precedent: the weeks-long occupation of the Wisconsin State House in Madison, supported by unions, including police unions). An article speculating on the possibility of emulating Tahrir Square by anarchist and anthropologist David Graeber was published by *Adbusters*, a Situationist-inspired, high-gloss Canadian magazine. *Adbusters* subsequently put out a general call for a Wall Street occupation to be held on September 17. Discussions about the possibility of building a movement had been held over the summer at 16Beaver, an artist-run discursive space in the Wall Street area. An ad hoc meeting at 16Beaver, after a "Debt/Commons" seminar heavy with activists and academics at which Graeber discussed his work on debt (*Debt: The First 5,000 Years*, Melville House, 2011), was the final impetus toward the occupation centering on a General Assembly. The Bloombergville group put together the September 17 occupation, but Graeber, together with Japanese anarchist activist Sabu Kohso and anarchist artist and activist Georgia Sagri, whom he had encountered at the 16Beaver seminar, then organized the General Assembly along anarchist lines.

In October 2011, *Adbusters* offered some further tactical advice that was more art-world than old-school activist, but still familiar since the anti-WTO protests in Seattle, if not since the days of Yippie in the late 1960s or even the prewar Dada performances: "It's now time to amp up the edgy theatrics [...] deviant pranks, subversive performances, and playful détournements of all kinds. Open your insurrectionary imagination. Anything, from a bottom-up transformation of the global economy to changing the way we eat, the way we get around, the way we live, love and communicate. [...] Be the spark that sustains a global revolution of everyday life!" The performance-studies department of New York University soon after began hosting a weekly series of lectures and workshops focusing on social change through "creative tactics and strategies."

19
Drugs, that is, not considered part of the approved Big Pharma formulary. This is important because among other things it allowed adolescents to make distinctions between good and bad drugs, but often based on criteria other than legality.

20
I am minimizing the all important role of capital flight and runaway shops here.

Since racism was an important motivator, the resulting urban shrinkage is often attributed in no small part to "white flight." Small towns often became dormitory towns for city workers. The small town has remained the preferred location of US residents for most of its history and was idealized during the high point of American sociology that spanned the Second World War. Several other essays in the present volume, including Culture Class, Part One, develop this theme in somewhat more detail.

21
Although the demonization of working-class and poor residents in areas ripe for real-estate harvesting is a tactic of long standing, the incoming "good people" have only recently been granted a profile of their own; previously, class privilege was taken for granted as a deserved entitlement.

22
Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2003). Florida did not come up with the idea of the creative class, but he did populate it with statistical categories. According to his thesis, the creative class makes up about 30 percent of US workers, but as we shall see, the groupings he uses are problematic.

23
See http://www.creativeclass.com/.

24
See "Culture Class" parts One–Three in this volume.

25
Toronto, Florida's base, is currently afflicted by a mayor with a take-no-prisoners, right-wing populist style, complete with racist and anti-gay pronouncements and actions. In repudiating the previous government's agenda, Ford has cut funding for *bike* lanes and light rail. Asked about Florida's response, Torontonians with whom I spoke said that he has been largely quiet but had complained that the city was cutting all the things that made Toronto "his city."

26
Florida has again come under criticism for sloppy interpretation and aggregation of polling data and economic statistics in his article "Why America Keeps Getting More Conservative," published in the venerable magazine *The Atlantic* (these days politically center-right), where he is one of nineteen editors. See http://www.theatlanticcities.com/politics/2012/02/why-america-keeps-getting-more-conservative/1162/. Many other commentators read the data quite the opposite way and claim that the US electorate is, on the contrary, growing increasingly liberal in its beliefs while US politics, thanks to the radicalization of the Republican Party, have moved to the right. See, for example, http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2012/02/ta021612.html; and http://www.

alternet.org/election2012/154182/why_right-wingers_(and_media_hacks)_are_totally_wrong_about_what_americans_believe_--_we›re_becoming_less,_not_more,_conservative_/?page=entire.

27
Florida ingeniously includes in his mix a statistically small bohemian group, which includes gay people, but as Harvard economist Edward Glaeser has reluctantly noted, his data regressions suggest that in only two cities—in, yes, the state of Florida—does the gay population help the economy.

28
"To harness creativity for economic ends, you need to harness creativity in all its forms. You can't just generate a tech economy or information economy or knowledge economy; you have to harness the multidimensional aspects of creativity. [...] There are three types of creativity: technological creativity, [...] economic creativity [...] turning those things into new businesses and new industries; and cultural and artistic creativity [...] new ways of thinking about things, new art forms, new designs, new photos, new concepts. Those three things have to come together to spur economic growth.
"The creative class is composed of two dimensions. There is the supercreative core [...] scientists, engineers, tech people, artists, entertainers, musicians—so-called bohemians that are about 12 percent of the workforce. [...] The supercreative core is really the driving force in economic growth. In addition to the supercreative core, I include creative professionals and managers, lawyers, financial people, healthcare people, technicians, who also use their ideas and knowledge and creativity in their work. I don't include people in service or manufacturing industries who use creativity in their work." Richard Florida, interview by Christopher Dreher, *Salon*, June 7, 2002, http://www.salon.com/2002/06/06/florida_22/.

29
These quotations are from a job announcement put out by a department at a major university that offers "a Master's Degree in Arts Politics which treats, in an activist key, the nexus between the politics that art makes and the politics that make art." Despite my skepticism, I don't want to dismiss the potential of such training and network formation; the problem lies in the short life span that such initiatives can have before the institution render them zombies. See Parts Two and Three of the "Culture Class" essay in this volume for a discussion of the culturalization argument of Fredric Jameson and its adoption by George Yúdice to argue that art that can be framed as social practice may put the artists in the position of unwittingly serving the aims of the state and, by focusing on melioration, of abandoning the possibility of critique. See also note 4, above.

30
See http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org/. There was an unsuccessful effort by artists to occupy the Lab during a day of artists' actions.

31
See http://urbanomnibus.net/. Urban Omnibus is funded by the Rockefeller Foundation's New York City Cultural Innovation Fund, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and the New York City Council. The Architectural League was founded in 1881 by Cass Gilbert and has long sought to promote the importance of the arts in relation to architecture.

32
The phrase "how we live now" evidences a predictable set of assumptions about who constitutes the "we."

33
See http://urbanomnibus.net/2012/02/field-trip-brooklyn-detention-complex-housewarming/.

34
The most prominent sign of technological sophistication is the frequent visual reference to Anonymous, an amorphous group of hackers, or hacktivists (of which one small international groupuscule, LulzSec, was arrested in February 2012), in the form of the Guy Fawkes masks from the *V for Vendetta* franchise (worn by protesters and occupiers and used on signage). Anonymous apparently has carried out denial-of-service attacks against the websites of the governments of Tunisia, Egypt, and Bahrain during the attempted revolutions there, and it has expressed or enacted support for Occupy. See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6jdkpQjueo.
I do not have the space here to dissect further the possible role of this pointedly anarchic, often playful, assemblage of hackers. But in more workaday fashion, a range of technological ease is suggested by the facility with which the Occupy movement has made use not only of the widely known popular media sites such as Facebook and Twitter but also of less well-known ones, sites such as Vibe, the older IRC, the now indispensable Livestream, or Reddit, according to *PC* magazine, as well as Tumblr and Google docs. See, for example, http://mappingthemovement.tumblr.com/.
An early assessment: "'We set up shared Google docs so we could communicate. [...] And we set up Google Voice numbers for everyone.' One Tumblr page, 'We Are The 99 Percent' [...] reveals the plight of people, who see themselves as far outside the top 1 percent of Americans." http://news.discovery.com/tech/occupy-wall-street-tumblr-111006.html.

35
Here I am looking not only to the town meetings of the early days of the American colonies but explicitly to the model of nonviolent participatory democracy propounded by one of the groups central to the Civil Rights Movement, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, or SNCC. Many of the young student activists had joined SNCC's Freedom Rider campaign to disrupt racial segregation in the American South, which influenced the principles outlined shortly after in the Port Huron Statement, a foundational document of the student/antiwar movement. Naturally enough, the history, origins, and influences of these movements are more complex than I can sketch out here. The widely noted, galvanizing speech of Berkeley student leader Mario Savio, delivered in the Berkeley campus quadrangle on December 2, 1964, during a standoff with university police, includes the following in its preamble: "I ask you to consider—if this is a firm, and if the Board of Regents are the Board of Directors, and if President Kerr in fact is the manager, then I tell you something—the faculty are a bunch of

employees and we're the raw material! But we're a bunch of raw materials that don't mean to be—[to] have any process upon us. Don't mean to be made into any product! [...] Don't mean to end up being bought by some clients of the university, be they the government, be they industry, be they organized labor, be they anyone! We're human beings!"

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Artists' groups are increasingly making this point, for good or ill; see, for example, http://newamericanpaintings.wordpress.com/2011/11/09/the-art-of-occupation; and http://www.villagevoice.com/2011-10-19/art/what-does-occupy-wall-street-mean-for-art.

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Sharon Zukin, *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989).

Contemporary Art at Center and Periphery

Delegates at the Asian-African Conference in Bandung, West Java, April 1955.

The art world has become international, a conversation shared or overheard at more and more points in the world system. This extension of international reach has occurred repeatedly, following the flows of commerce and international trade. The highest claims of biennials, triennials, or other recursive exhibition forms is that they de-territorialize the global art scene, allowing artists from the center and the periphery an equal shot at appearing in varied and far-flung locales and before new and diverse audiences. I discuss this claim later on. I also attempt to situate my own project through three moments of personal history. Before I get to the personal, however, I would like to trace some currents of postwar and mostly Euro-American cultural history to set the stage for the discussion of the biennial moment.

Internationalism has long been on the world agenda, for reasons both negative and positive. The fight for political, economic, and cultural hegemony has been an ongoing one since the mid-twentieth century when, facing and contesting the apparent split of the globe into the spheres of influence of two great superpowers, the largely Asian and African Non-Aligned Movement was set in motion by twenty-nine nations, many of them recently freed from colonial rule and representing about one and a half billion people. This movement received its great push at Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955.[1] In the same period, many artists around the world saw themselves as another non-aligned, though as-yet unorganized, force—a counterforce to nationalism. While Western powers supported exhibitions of favored types, such as "advanced" abstraction in the form of Abstract Expressionism, Western corporations were marketing their branded goods around the world, with marketing that included such ecstatic paeans

to the global as Pepsi-Cola's support for the photographic exhibition "The Family of Man," organized by Edward Steichen at New York's Museum of Modern Art (and analyzed long ago by Roland Barthes).[2] This grand exhibition of the work of scores of photojournalists showed heartfelt universal-humanist intentions but was infused with a Western sensibility centered on its quasi-anthropological themes. The postwar art market, for its part, was trying to reap the profits of high-profile European and American production, while artists—admittedly regionalized but not globalized—had their own circuits of interest, sporadically supported by mostly noncommercial galleries and museums.

After the catastrophe of two world wars and a long series of political upheavals, aesthetic doctrines and aestheticism held a renewed appeal for artists. Nineteenth-century European Romanticism had developed the doctrine of art as another way of knowing, offering the promise of a human space apart from political struggles and predatory social practices, while in the US the New England Transcendental poets, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, drew inspiration from Hinduism and Buddhism. In the mid-twentieth century, the philosophical position of withdrawal from worldly engagement drew upon a range of theories, from Hegel and Kant to Adorno, Marcuse, and other philosophers who felt that political commitment constrained art from effectively posing an alternative to the machinery of individual exploitation and mass death. But it is important to note that even the most political of European philosophers—including Sartre, Benjamin, Adorno, Lucien Goldmann, Galvano della Volpe, Gramsci, and even Althusser—appeared, perhaps by default, to have nominated the arts as central mediators and facilitators of human progress. The apparent turn to a cultural view of salvation may be what informed the British physicist, government figure, and novelist C. P. Snow in his lecture at Cambridge University in 1959, "The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution," in which he argued that the split in the West between the sciences and the humanities was preventing an effective approach to solving global problems, not least the growing gap in wealth between rich and poor nations and rich and poor populations, which he thought could be addressed only by scientists activating forward-looking solutions.[3] Snow felt that scientific illiteracy was the more harmful of the two blind spots—at least in Britain, which was far less likely than the US and Germany to inculcate scientific understanding in its students. But he is supposed to have cautioned, "Technology is a queer thing; it brings you great gifts with one hand, and it stabs you in the back with the other."[4] Philosopher Simon Critchley, in his book *Continental Philosophy: A Very Short History*, characterized Snow's Two Cultures thesis as a reiteration of the long-standing philosophical division among English intellectual elites, going back at least as far as John Stuart Mills's division between the Benthamites, or utilitarians, and the Coleridgeans, or those favoring the poetic imagination.

At the start of the 1960s, Snow's thesis seemed a fair-enough account of the worldview of some in the Euro-American orbit. For artists in particular, as I have suggested, the depoliticized aesthetic imagination was seen as the pinnacle of future-think, despite Snow's explicit devaluation of "traditional" culture as "wishing the future did not exist." Fifty years along, however, it is hard to see the world as Snow did, as a separation of the scientific and technical outlook from the so-called human sciences in which the latter, the humanities,

are ascendant and cloud our ability to develop rational solutions to global problems. What we are experiencing instead is a moment of increased dependency on technological invention—both at the pragmatic level of everyday life and as the last remaining indicator of something like progress—and an increased quantification of the measures of life and commerce—all the while attempting to harness the power of the imagination. We seem to be experiencing a repoliticization of art and culture, in some rather broadly divergent circles.

Let us further consider the moment of postwar depoliticization of the upper echelons of the Euro-American art world. We might recognize this embrace of aestheticism, of an ennobling formalism, not as a forward-looking formula for world progress but as a reaction: a response to the aggressively anticommunist "witch hunts" of Anglo-American society that, in the US, went under the name of McCarthyism and that manifested a blunt suspicion of art, artists, and abstraction. While the US government was sponsoring world tours of high-art abstraction in painting and sculpture as the concentrated symbol of universal human freedom, the Western art world's most advanced sectors—the avant-garde, the group under suspicion of political disloyalty by McCarthyites—embraced a sort of withdrawal, a quietism ostensibly drawing upon Eastern religions, especially Zen Buddhism, an influence promulgated by such figures as John Cage and Alan Watts. That art world was still largely bohemian, its ideology focused more on artistic than financial goals and suspicious of worldly success. Despite the stance of disengagement—and mindful of the philosophical support for the aesthetic route to liberation—those artistic goals were often perceived as in solidarity, however nebulously, with progressive social movements, with Enlightenment goals, or with some version of each, an attitude bound to arouse the suspicions of jingoistic patriots. By the 1960s, the movements in question would have included postcolonial political movements as well as those internal to the Western democracies, particularly the cultural movements born late in that decade. The utopianism of early modernism had trained its eye on liberation from tyranny, on the becoming-human of humanity, and this was still important to many artists, despite the empty formalism that threatened to overtake high modernism. Despite the complications of recognized cultural prejudices and misperceptions, with their embedded hierarchies of value, the universalist outlook produced a certain international, or pan-national, perspective. It is not a surprise, then, that artists were attempting to express, and if necessary smuggle, such attitudes into international exhibitions. But the circulation of work beyond the channels capitalized by states and commercial interests, in those down-market subcultural spaces of art I have mentioned—namely, video, and further down the chain, mail art—the *work* circulated, but generally not the artists, since there were few museums or galleries willing to pay for transportation and accommodations, except for distinguished elder figures.

In the early 1970s, although quite a young artist, I was invited to participate in a series of international video exhibitions. One of the notable appeals of video was its ability to create international "networked" flows of information, images, and art, outside of institutional frameworks. Even forty years ago, video—enfolded as it was in clouds of information-systems theory, accompanied by the "wow" factor of advanced image technology, and suffering a seemingly boundless euphoria—saw

itself as embodying a new forward-looking spirit of internationalism that can be summed up under the McLuhanist moniker of the "global village." Even so, video was preceded, but with far less fanfare, by mail art, which had similar boundary-busting aspirations and which included artists who had no high-art ambitions. Mail, after all, is a low-tech form whose networks of transmission were in place by the nineteenth century. I happened also to be included in the mail-art network, since I had mailed out a series of postcard novels in the early 1970s that had found a widely scattered audience. These early invitations, it is important to underline, were requests for my practically weightless, theoretically unlimited, and easily transmissible works, not for my presence.

A second moment of personal history represents a contrary development: in the early 1980s, I was invited to participate, this time in person, in a different, newly developing network. The new formations were constituted by feminist artists and curators in the international feminist movement, which had arisen out of one of the signal social movements of the 1960s. I had already been invited to appear at a number of museum shows and lectures in the US. But this was something else. I remember sitting with a group of women artists when one mentioned a letter of invitation she'd received to a women's show in Germany; several of us had also received such a letter, and phone messages. We asked a well-known feminist critic sitting among us what to do. Laughing, she told us to ignore it. I felt a bit disquieted, but ignore it I did. Not that I was culturally incurious; rather, I had a job to go to and a son to raise, and it seemed somehow inappropriate to be gallivanting around. If nothing else, the prospect of transoceanic travel and the problem

I started as an unwrapper at one of the 200,000 McTower's hamburger stands. I wore a yellow teeny-jumper with blue suspenders and large white rick-rack trim over a white blouse and a perky little yellow paper cap with imitation rick-rack. And an apron. I made $1.25 an hour.

My job was to unwrap the frozen patties in the morning and let them thaw just enough to be pulled apart. When the white crystals had melted and the flecks of pink, beige, and white could be told apart, it was time to separate them. I used to imagine I was peeling stories off a skyscraper. Or sometimes I was peeling the heel layers off stack-heel shoes. Or layers of skin off a dinosaur scab. Sometimes I imagined a country where the money was made of food and I was the person whose job it was to peel the coins apart. It was funny to think about.

Martha Rosler, Postcard #1 from *McTowersMaid*, 1974. Serial postcard novel in fifteen parts.

of language deterred me. Since most of my work at that time was text heavy, the language problem continued to be an impediment for another decade and a half, until the rapid spread of global English. But I underline that, although I did not accept it, the invitation was in this case for me to circulate as an artist along with my work, for feminists wanted to meet and support each other.

I have touched on this history to point to the moment of inscription of a diverse range of practices onto the newly developing global scene. We recognize the 1980s as the moment in which the push toward worldwide circuits of information, commerce, and marketing was accelerated to a new dimension of globalization. This period was also marked by a new, market-induced discipline in the art world, reining in the artists' activities of the '60s and '70s against dealer dominance and commercialism, state sanctions, and elite status. Correspondences here with initiatives by feminist and video artists and curators did not mean, of course, that those initiatives were driving what we have called the globalization of the art world; these sectors could only demand to have a representation, a voice, within the circuits created by largely commercial concerns. But so-called new media—or intermedia, as they were likely to be called at that period—and art-world feminism were important in opening the possibility of a successful non-formalist approach to "postmodernism," or to a long wave of repoliticization of art, if we choose to look at it that way.

A third moment of personal history relates, at last, to the genesis of my garden project for the 2011 Singapore Biennale, *Proposed Helsinki Garden*. In 2003, while I was participating in the Venice Biennale, I was relayed an invitation by a freelance French curator working, with the support of a state grant from France, with the Helsinki Business Campus, or HBC, the premier economics research university and school of business administration in Finland. The invitation was to propose a project that in my view might be interpreted as school branding. The university had two full-fledged main units, one teaching in Finnish and the other in Swedish.[5] The university had recently acquired several smaller units, including a culinary high school. Some faculty members were persuaded that the school needed a new collective identity, which would facilitate making the school more visible as a business resource freely available to Helsinki residents, such as small-business owners. But equally, the group was concerned that their social-democratic heritage and sense of collective social mission were not being passed along to the younger generation of business and economic students, who seemed excessively focused on individual profit. The group felt that an art project could make its points in an undidactic fashion. After a number of visits and meetings with faculty, administrators, and students, I focused on the freestanding bird sculpture in front of the main Finnish-language building, an architectural landmark with sculptural façade elements recalling Finland's national labor heritage. The bird sculpture of 1954, by the famous sculptor Aimo Tukiainen (1917–96), who was also responsible for the triumphant man-on-a-horse sculpture of the national hero General Mannerheim, was entitled *Liikevoitto / Profit*, a title that several faculty members said was likely ironic.

This work was a patinated bronze depicting two gulls and a fish. One gull had the fish in its mouth, while the other was apparently trying to snatch it away. I proposed an animation of the three characters with a range of possible roles of

cooperation and exchange among them. But I further proposed siting the animation not just on the multiple screens in the various HBC buildings but in a pavilion to be constructed on a large nearby patch of ground covering the city block between two of the main buildings. In fact, I proposed creating a new park on this piece of land that had been hastily configured into a park when the mayor, glancing out the window during a meeting with the school's rector, had seen the neglected site. A new, rather compact skateboard park within it had so deeply disturbed the tranquility of the residents of the surrounding housing blocks that it was leveled, while a modest children's playground remained, as well as benches and extensive but orderly ranked planted areas. I proposed a pavilion with large screens to show the animation intermittently, along with local or guest video works. Balancing this structure, I suggested including a café or other facility, all within a fully refurbished park site with new paths and plantings. This plan put me in many meetings, during quite a few visits to Helsinki, with submayors responsible for parks, playgrounds, and public fixtures, environmental issues, and art objects in public spaces. And, of course, there were meetings with the local residents of the surrounding residential blocks in the Töölö neighborhood, some of whom were unaccountably leery of bringing strangers to a park in this very public neighborhood, situated on Runeberginkatu, a main boulevard of the city, and only a block from the famous Temppeliaukio Stone Church with its half-million yearly visitors. Working with local advisers, I made an extensive study of native plants, since Helsinki is a very unforgiving horticultural environment. My plan mentioned including native plants, which I assumed was uncontroversial. The answer came back: We have enough native plants in this

Aimo Tukiainen's sculpture *Liikevoitto / Profit* (1954) in front of the Aalto University School of Business (then the Helsinki Business Campus), Helsinki. Photo by Annukka Jyrämä, 2013.

country—we don't need them in Helsinki! They imagined, I suppose, I would be scouring the woods for weedy plants that were an offense to civility. I cannot confess that I had sneaky ideas of importing such items into the proposed garden, because I did not; I was simply looking for plants that would survive and thrive. The space, although of a good size, was not large enough for woodland fantasies, divided as it was into playground, pavilion, and seating areas, and plenty of large trees. But the obvious desire of city fathers to see their cities as *landscaping*, not as nature, was instructive. Gardens, yes, we like gardens, but we prefer them tame, manicured, formal. Like a proper city.

Every city, in this respect, is a garden city. But not every country can—as Singapore famously does—project itself as a garden, carefully planted and watered.[6] My own highly polluted working-class neighborhood of Greenpoint is a riverfront spot that in the eighteenth century was a green bit of land projecting into the East River. But by the nineteenth century it had become a prime industrial neighborhood of New York, harboring the "black arts," including oil refining, glassmaking, ironworking, and other industries. Eventually in the last half of the twentieth century it discovered an old underground spill of millions of gallons of oil, which was polluting the ground water—and yet it retained its mid-twentieth-century motto "Greenpoint: Garden Spot of the World" ... which was an act of willful blindness. In the past decade, as the region has rapidly gentrified, a newly arrived middle-class cohort has shined a spotlight on the embedded pollution and decay; but many postindustrial cities and areas remain too polluted and without the wherewithal to attract a willing and wealthy population to ever earn the name Garden City. ... But I digress.

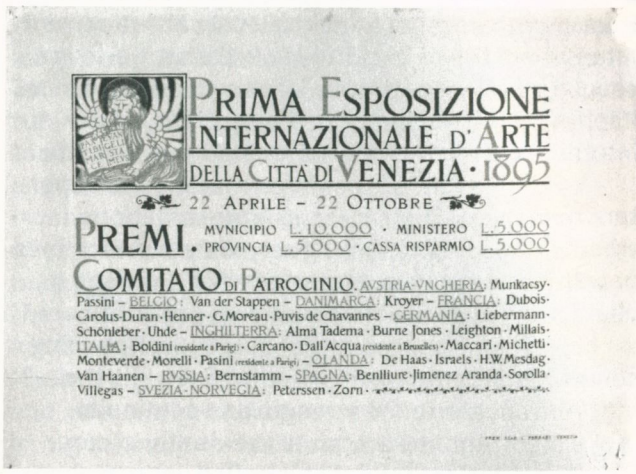
The Finnish authorities were worried about the translocation of wildness into a city set proudly apart from the semi-arctic backwoods; in Finland, as elsewhere, the city/country cultural divide is great. The desired diversity in gardens is of plants already vetted for their good behavior in city spaces and their hardiness in the face of brutal weather. I offer a reminder that a garden—no matter where it is situated—is a model of the harmonization of difference. A gardener recognizes that gardens are prospectively eternal, but never the same twice; that nature cannot be closely controlled, and in every season or year the natural world makes its own trajectories known. This makes gardening a process of unfolding, of accepting the cognitive struggle to encompass the successes and failures of one's decisions, of accepting or rejecting the plant volunteers who show up, carried in by multiple vectors, from the wind to dogs to birds to humans. All of this makes gardening, as opposed to horticultural landscaping, a meditative and speculative gamble. A garden, even one safely tucked into the recesses of a well-policed corporate atrium, is a field perpetually at the edge of disorder.

The theme of the 2011 Singapore Biennale was "Open House," referring, according to the letter of invitation, to "a South-East Asian festive tradition of hospitality and exchange." The letter went on to mention the "intersections of private and public space, hidden or overlooked histories, alternative futures and changing architectures." Finally, "a key aspect of the exhibition will be to invite some artists to spend time working with sites and/or people in Singapore in the development of their work [...] building deeper interactions and access for local audiences."

This invitation led my thinking in several directions. The first seemed obvious: the door

has been opened to me, an artist from Brooklyn. Further, reciprocity suggests I open the project, and the site, to participation by local people—particularly to women. As a Singapore-born friend told me, women often have small chance to become visible in the public sphere, especially if the matter under consideration is identified with domesticity, including gardening, and they fit within the brief of "intersections of private and public space."[7] We might observe that all biennials are an expression of an open-house philosophy or strategy. The biennial exhibition was a concept identified for many years with Venice, where the first Biennale was instituted in 1895 as a royal anniversary celebration but evolved into an international convocation of national offerings. The São Paulo Biennale was founded in 1951 by a businessman and art patron associated with the financier and politician David Rockefeller and was focused on showcasing Latin American art, also an interest of Rockefeller and his banker brother David. The Whitney Biennial was instituted by the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1933 and was, in the words of the museum's first director, Juliana Force, "designed to show, in its broadest aspect, the most recent accomplishment of living American artists," during a period of European artistic dominance even at home in New York. The number of biennials began to grow dramatically in the 1990s, with the present number estimated as lying somewhere between 80 and 100, as part of the internationalization of the art world but more so of international trade. Most pertinently, the increase has taken place in what is normally denominated the periphery of the art world, as in the so-called "world system."

Biennials are part of a three-pronged approach to world visibility on the part of localities,



Poster for the first Venice Biennale, 1895.

from Guangzhou to Gwangju, from Havana to Istanbul, from São Paulo to Singapore. These "prongs" are biennials, art fairs, and museums. Two of these are transient but recurring events, and the third is an edifice—an attractive container for contemporary art, designed by an internationally prominent architect, preferably one whose office is located in a faraway country. For the biennials—which in part are educative structures—to be effective, the important audience must arrive from elsewhere; educating the locals about current international style imperatives in the art world is a secondary effect to the elevation of the local venue itself. All three remind us of the centrality of the international air-transport system to world status.

But this flow of passengers is no more important than the flow of symbolic representations, whether those representing corporate product lines or political messages. As part of what has been characterized as the "transnational public sphere," art has become central to global culture. Speaking somewhat broadly, we might note that while the museum speaks to the strength and continuity of the state, and the art fair to the vitality of commerce, it is the biennial that is called upon to channel the multifaceted energies and interests grouped under the increasingly central category of "culture." Such diverse theorists as Fredric Jameson, George Yúdice, and Arjun Appadurai have noted the growing importance of the cultural sphere in modern society. Jameson, followed by Yúdice, has theorized a "cultural turn" in which the cultural has so permeated our social life that every part of it, in Jameson's phrase, from "economic value and state power to social and political practices and the very structure of the psyche itself," has been "culturalized," in some as-yet untheorized form.[8]

Appadurai, a theorist of cultural globalization and an anthropologist based in New York, only belatedly added artscapes to his highly influential 1996 typology of the "dimensions" of global cultural flow.[9] Appadurai's five initial landscapes of globalization describe the pathways people follow on the way to negotiating the international art world: *ethnoscapes*, *mediascapes*, *technoscapes*, *financescapes*, and *ideoscapes*. Ethnoscapes, Appadurai writes, are "landscape[s] of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live; tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guestworkers and other moving groups and persons [...] constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of (and between) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree." Mediascapes involve, on the one hand, "the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information," and, on the other, "the images of the world created by these media." Technoscapes are the "global configuration [...] of technology." (Technology, both high and low, both mechanical and informational, Appadurai further notes, moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries.) The content of financescapes seems obvious, while ideoscapes, encompassing cultural and political ideologies, "are often directly political and frequently have to do with the ideologies of states and the counter-ideologies of movements explicitly oriented to capturing state power or a piece of it."[10] Appadurai writes:

> The image, the imagined, the imaginary—these are all terms that direct us to something critical and new in global cultural processes: *the imagination as a social practice*. No longer mere fantasy (opium for the masses whose real work

> is somewhere else), no longer simple escape (from a world defined principally by more concrete purposes and structures), no longer elite pastime (thus not relevant to the lives of ordinary people), and no longer mere contemplation (irrelevant for new forms of desire and subjectivity), the imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (in the sense of both labor and culturally organized practice), and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility. The imagination is now central to all forms of agency, is itself a social fact, and is the key component of the new global order.[11]

Appadurai here sketches the trajectory by which the imagination and its products—the imagined, the imaginary—moved from relegation to what we might at best call the realm of utopian poetry to its pinnacle as "the key component of the new global order"—from consolation and distraction, from useless immateriality as a decadent plaything of the idle rich or the eidolons of masturbatory speculation, to its new status as *work*, an organized field of activity "central to all forms of agency." With a growing consensus on the centrality of the type of symbolic activity that Guy Debord characterized in the late 1960s as "the society of the spectacle," it is no wonder that municipalities, states, and corporations are willing to lend support to national and international cultural activities—this despite the ever-present fear, already clearly enunciated in Plato, of the unruly, unpredictable, and possibly subversive character of art. Looking at those three types of international art attractions I mentioned earlier, the biennial centers on a circulating cohort of producers and audiences; the museum showcases municipal magnanimity, civilized taste, and high-end tourism; and the art fair is about ready cash and luxury pursuits. Both biennial and museum testify to the status of the governing entity, whether state or city, and its willingness to stand up for art and in effect to guarantee an audience. Because the art fair requires a likely clientele and luxury venues, there are fewer art fairs than biennials—high-end buyers are not always willing to venture to far-flung locales.

If these art fairs, following the logic of capital unmediated by *cultural* capital, are glamorous showroom events for luxury travelers with associated parties and celebrations; if high-profile museums need not either highlight their exhibitions or even have art in them to attract tourists—the two signal examples being Frank Gehry's Guggenheim in Bilbao and Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin—biennials attract audiences by virtue of being *festivals*. Biennials *celebrate* art, perhaps artists, and perhaps the artistic mode of production. In the usual scenario, biennial art, arriving by air or sea, comes to rest in clean spaces, often not just in museum buildings but in "alternative" sites that used to be a stable, a hangar, or a brewery. The exhibition space is both a pedestal for the work and a launching pad for its departure. The art sits in a magically charged no-space and no-time, regardless of the nature of the actual work. The works in a biennial need and deserve to be taken seriously, but the star of the show *is* the show, the grand symphonic ensemble, in which the artists are the instrumentalists and the curators are the conductors.

The biennial model provides not only a physical circuit but also a regime of production and normalization. Although the artists and curators are theoretically drawn from anywhere, in fact the various biennials, like most international exhibitions,

draw on a surprisingly small roster of artists and curators relative to their respective world stocks. At each venue, as I suggested above, the work of local artists is showcased in the company of that circulating roster of known, credentialed "signature" artists. The art historian Chin-Tao Wu has produced graphic data showing that far from accomplishing the de-territorialization of the art world that I mentioned at the outset, in the biennial model the invited artists are still overwhelmingly drawn from the metropolitan precincts of Euro-America. In "peripheral" venues it is not untypical for artists chosen to represent the local culture to have first moved to such cities as London, New York, Berlin, and Paris before returning to their countries of origin to be "discovered." The airplane allows a continued relationship with the homeland; expatriation can be punctuated by time back home. This condition defines migrant and itinerant labor of all varieties under current conditions, as it follows the flow of capital. The artscape and the ethnoscape intermingle.

Set against the twentieth-century history of imperial conquest and colonial administration, it is also possible to see the modern biennial rehearsing, challenging, and perhaps abetting the flow of objects and ideas from center to periphery. Hence the short, forgettable lives and impoverished existences of the New York and Paris biennials—uninteresting because beside the point. This colonial specter becomes increasingly menacing when we consider two ideas that have their origins at the center, the first indigenous to the art world and the second somewhat peripheral, or rather parallel, to it.

The first of these is the increasingly visible set of works falling under the heading of "social practice." Here we find artists mimicking the historical roles of activists, organizers, community representatives, and so forth. With public spaces and services withering under the sustained assault of international neoliberal revisionism, artists try to fill the void—out of identification, sympathy, or guilt, as well as to draw attention to what has been lost.

The second, related, and parallel idea is the concept of the creative class put forward by the urbanist Richard Florida, an idea that has provided a concise and flamboyant organizing principle for municipal powers-that-be wishing to bring success and prominence to their city. According to this thesis, in the postindustrial era, artists are to be permitted, even encouraged, by city planners to transform blighted neighborhoods into safe and attractive places for the consuming classes and thus promote municipal growth. Florida's account—which ironically is not actually interested in artists but in what has been called "knowledge workers" and those in so-called creative industries like graphic design and tech start-ups—is still managing to lead cities and countries not previously interested in sponsoring or promoting art to decide that it is in their interest to do so.

As the Canadian philosopher Alan Blum has noted, it is second- and third-tier cities that most yearn to put themselves on the world map by advertising their links to culture and the creative class. Blum diagnoses the creative-class thesis as a kind of platitude in the creation of the city itself as an object of desire, as a place that will automatically elevate the fortunes of those who move there. Blum writes:

> The city always reinstates a vision of movement itself as creative, as the decisive seat of a difference to be made in life, a vision registered

not only in surface views of urban transformations and social change but in the lure of urbanity and its peculiar kind of life as a means of liberation. [...]

The prosaic sense of circulation makes reference to the constant and never-ending expectation of change that invests any present with significance on the basis of that capacity to imagine such a moment as a means toward a future of consequence and so, in the imaginary sense, as eternal. The city is conceived as the site that offers to free us from whatever impedes such progress.[12]

Thus, on the one hand, we have artists acting once again as an alternative conduit to the construction and betterment of humanity (though this time through social work, not through the construction of utopias), and on the other, we have so-called creatives—who may or may not include actual artists—reconstructing cities through their housing choices and patterns of consumption. Not exactly opposed, but not exactly congruent either, these two narratives of social practices and the creative class nevertheless cast cultural practice in a role quite opposite to the one described by Plato: far from being the destroyer of urban order, art and its attendants have become its genesis, its sustainer, and even, perhaps, its redeemer.

For our purposes it is enough to point out that the ideas of both social practice, in which artists devise ways to boost local community needs, and the creative class, in which artists or knowledge workers enliven and revivify the fortunes of a city itself, figure as further steps in the privileging of art and culture in the transition to a postindustrial economy and its corresponding celebration of a small network of global cities. My goal, then—perhaps hope is a better word—for the *Proposed Helsinki Garden* in Singapore is not simply to draw attention to the dissemination and implementation of these two visions of the role of art in an international frame but also to shift the conversation somewhat.

Blum writes, "The city always reinstates a vision of movement itself as creative." Let us rescue this observation from its entanglement in the critique of the creative-class idea. Uniting themes of circulation together with the very fixed notion of a garden—that is, a plot of land—I responded to the invitation for Singapore's "Open House" biennial by proposing to plant a garden at the fabulous Changi, the highly promoted airport-as-city. I proposed this garden as being dreamed and instituted together with local women, perhaps including those who clean the airport facilities, or other migrants-in-place, thus multiplying my own themes of translocation, transiency, and circulation, in a city itself composed of people who might be likened to "volunteer" plants who have taken root. That is something with which we Americans, residents of a nation overwhelmingly composed of immigrants, are certainly familiar. Moreover, as myself one of those circulating artists I've mentioned—a more fortunate class of migrant worker—I imagined bringing the *Proposed Helsinki Garden* to a locale so radically different that nothing could remain the same but the *idea* of a local garden.

All well and good, said the curators, but we can't let you mess with Changi. However, the old Kallang Airport, more recently an office site for the People's Association[13] but now in transition to possibly becoming a luxury hotel or set of residences, is one of the venues for this exhibition. And there is a wonderful plot of land right in front for you to fool around with.

An airport, and a disused one at that—perfect!—its actual function muted in favor of the symbolic ghosts of movements past, of modernity as utopic movement through time and space. Let's clear that space for the proposed northern garden plan to touch down, but thoroughly transmuted. With the help of the curators and their local contacts, I invited the collaboration and participation of women artists and educators, community groups, and groups composed of or representing migrants.

As I've suggested, I was looking for something for the Singapore Biennale that would provide a collaborative and welcoming project with women in mind, a project by and for women, in a public space, but a project that bore the marks of the domestic, creating a space that could be claimed as a welcoming place. Singapore, however, has other populations that are barely represented in public, namely those migrants I mentioned a bit earlier, but of both genders, as well as others in precarious categories; I wanted the garden to represent them and symbolize their publicly mute condition as well.[14]

Unlike the Helsinki garden, however, I wanted this project to be planned and created by local people. This immediately opened the biennial problem as a visible wound. Trying to preserve the local against the relentless tide of global corporate and functionally neo-imperialist culture, a panoply of antimodernist attitudes have taken hold among many. In this account, what biennials and other cultural visitations and collaborations bring is a continued suppression of the local in the face of performance of the global. From that standpoint, certainly, my project is not exempt.

Inscribed within this attitude, however, seems to be a certain acceptance of the status quo as permanent, as inflexible, and as impermeable

Nature Society participants Shawn Lum and Yap Von Bing in the author's *Proposed Helsinki Garden at the Singapore Biennale*, Singapore. Photo by Lucy Davis, 2011.

to potential vectors for change, despite the post-war promptings of such pronouncements as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the reiterated declarations of the universal rights of women, not to mention the claims for autonomy from hegemonic powers put forth by the non-aligned nations. Although the practical fact has been that the Singaporean community of artists and scholars was extremely open and willing to collaborate on the garden project, it may be that we have quite a way to go before artists and organizers from center and periphery can stand as equals in pursuit of a common goal. In this context, a garden planned and built in collaboration with local members of the community may seem very little, almost nothing. Not every seedling nor every plant survives, but that is why it remains necessary to plant as many seeds as possible.

1
The Non-Aligned Movement took shape only in 1961; at present its 120 members and seventeen observer nations comprise more than half the world's population and constitute nearly two thirds of the United Nations.

2
See Roland Barthes, "The Great Family of Man," in *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (London: Granada, 1982). Book originally published in 1957.

3
Snow's lecture was published in book form as *The Two Cultures* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2001 [1959]).

4
C. P. Snow, quoted in Anthony Lewis's column "Dear Scoop Jackson," *New York Times*, March 15, 1971.

5
Language is a stress point in Finland, relating to the territory's long history under the control of Sweden, which entailed not only dominance by a local Swedish elite but the suppression of the Finnish language, which is completely unrelated to the Scandinavian languages. I was working primarily with members of the Finnish-speaking unit, which had proffered the invitation and which itself caused some friction.

6
Singapore's development into a modern nation was spearheaded by Lee Kuan Yew, its first and long-serving prime minister, who likened Singapore to a garden, thus leading admirers to call him the Master Gardener. The analogies have provoked negative as well as positive reactions, but their wide acknowledgment meant that virtually all those whom I invited to participate in the garden project understood that they could pitch their contributions at whatever level of literalness or metaphor they desired. The Nature Society, for example, working with the artist and professor Lucy Davis and her students on the Migrant Ecologies Project, centered their attention on the native flora that keeps returning to Singapore despite its banishment. Although they meant this quite literally, it has escaped no one's attention that Singapore routinely banishes foreign-born residents who fall afoul of the republic's cultural censorship and other controls.

7
I did wind up working to some degree with AWARE, the robust and relatively long-standing women's association formed by strong and determined women, who had even managed a few years earlier to fend off an effort, mounted by evangelical Christians under US tutelage, to take over the organization.

8
I have written about culturalization at greater length elsewhere in this volume. See also Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 48.

9
Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

10
Ibid., 33–36.

11
Ibid., 31.

12
Alan Blum, "Reflections on the Platitude of the Creative City," in *Circulation & the City: Essays in Urban Culture*, eds. Alexandra Boutros and Will Straw (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 68–69.

13
The association, established by the ruling People's Action Party in 1961, was set up as a statutory board whose mission was to promote "racial harmony and social cohesion" in a nation made up of highly disparate primary population groups: the dominant Chinese, Malay (from both Indonesia and Malaysia), and (Southern) Indian, all with diverse languages, customs, and religions.

14
In Singapore, whose state adheres fully to the neoliberal model of governance, a great deal of state business is conducted by contract firms and almost all labor considered menial is performed by migrants, primarily very young people from a number of the more impoverished countries of the Global South, among them Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, and India. These migrants have no residency rights and no work protections or health safeguards of any kind. (The skyscrapers, whose density has made Singapore's cityscape famous, have been and continue to be built by Chinese firms with relatively skilled short-term Chinese crews, kept largely segregated in compounds at or near the building sites.) Under the auspices of the Singapore Biennale and Singapore Parks Department, I hired a landscaping contract firm whose employees, teenage boys from Bangladesh, did the heavy work involved in producing the project.

This stands in some degree of ironic counterpoint to the participation in the Singapore garden project itself, by young women migrants working as domestic servants.

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