

Maaïke Lauwaert &
Francien van Westrenen (eds.)

Facing Value

Radical
perspectives
from the arts

Valiz

1. Be unproductive

2. Hesitate and question

3. Share

4. Improvise

5. Invite and participate

6. Embrace the void

7. Play!

8. Support

9. Unite

Contents



Yto Barrada, *Briques (Bricks) (Backsteine)*, 2003/2011

On value 8

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|---|
| 33 | WHAT IS LIVING AND
WHAT IS DEAD IN SOCIAL
DEMOCRACY? (2010)
Tony Judt | 57 | ART AS TECHNIQUE (1917)
Viktor Shklovsky |
| 38 | A LIQUID REVOLUTION: FOR
A COMMUNITY WITHOUT
MONEY, MANAGEMENT, AND
POLITICAL REPRESENTATION,
A WE-CAN-DO-IT-OURSELVES
ECONOMY, A FOR-FREE
ECONOMY (2016)
Jan Ritsema | 64 | VALUES BEYOND VALUE?
IS ANYTHING BEYOND THE
LOGIC OF CAPITAL? (2013)
Beverley Skeggs |

Rules of value creation 78

1. Be unproductive 80

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|---|
| 93 | 'MAKING DO':
USES AND TACTICS (1984)
Michel de Certeau | 107 | ON LAZINESS AND LESS
WORK (2015)
Bojana Kunst |
| 104 | BOREDOM (1924)
Siegfried Kracauer | 119 | HOW TO HEAL A DEPRESSION?
Franco 'Bifo' Berardi |

2. Hesitate and question 130

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|---|
| 143 | EXHAUSTION AND
EXUBERANCE: WAYS TO
DEFY THE PRESSURE
TO PERFORM (2008)
Jan Verwoert | 164 | OF OTHER SPACES:
UTOPIAS AND
HETEROTOPIAS (1984)
Michel Foucault |
|-----|---|-----|---|

3. Share 174

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|---|
| 185 | THE EXCHANGE OF GIFTS
AND THE OBLIGATION
TO RECIPROCATE
(POLYNESIA) (1950)
Marcel Mauss | 197 | TIME/BANK:
A CONVERSATION WITH
JULIETA ARANDA AND
ANTON VIDOKLE (2012)
Julieta Aranda & Anton Vidokle |
|-----|---|-----|---|

4. Improvise 204

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|--|
| 233 | THE SPIRIT OF ADHOCISM
(1972)
Charles Jencks & Nathan Silver | 254 | A CANDID CONVERSATION
WITH THE VISIONARY
ARCHITECT/INVENTOR/
PHILOSOPHER R. BUCKMINSTER
FULLER (1972)
Barry Farrell/Playboy |
| 242 | DO-IT-YOURSELF MURDER:
THE SOCIAL AND MORAL
RESPONSIBILITIES OF
THE DESIGNER (1971)
Victor Papanek | 285 | MAKING IT: PICK UP A SPOT
WELDER AND JOIN THE
REVOLUTION (2014)
Evgeny Morozov |

5. Invite and participate 296

- 313 DEFINE AND LET GO:
AN INTERVIEW WITH
JOHN HABRAKEN (2011)
Klaske Havik & Hans Teerds

6. Embrace the void 322

7. Play! 338

- 353 SIMULATION AND VERTIGO (1958)
Roger Caillois

8. Support 368

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|-------------------------------------|
| 381 | MANIFESTO! MAINTENANCE
ART: PROPOSAL FOR AN
EXHIBITION 'CARE' (1969)
Mierle Laderman Ukeles | 397 | EXERGUE (2009)
Céline Condorelli |
|-----|--|-----|-------------------------------------|

9. Unite 404

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|---|
| 419 | THE BIGGEST LIVING ROOM
IN THE NETHERLANDS:
FRANK VAN KLINGEREN'S
KARREGAT IN EINDHOVEN,
1970-1973 (2001)
Marina van den Bergen
& Piet Vollaard | 426 | MONTAIGNE'S CAT (2012)
Richard Sennett |
|-----|---|-----|---|

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|-----------------------|
| 41 | Artist's contribution:
NEW TRIBAL LABYRINTH
Atelier Van Lieshout | 436 | Afterword |
| 217 | Artist's contribution:
FABRIC ISLAND
Reto Pulfer | 439 | Acknowledgements |
| 385 | Artist's contribution:
GLAZE-TOWN
Navid Nuur | 440 | Index |
| | | 443 | Credits of the images |
| | | 444 | Colophon |

S h

a r

3.

e



Atelier Van Lieshout, *Freestate of AVL-Ville*, Rotterdam, 2001

Staying in the realm of work, efficiency and productivity, there is also a complex of alternative compensation schemes that involve giving, trading and self-sufficiency that take place outside of the dominant economical system. This so-called informal economy includes all forms of work and economic activity that are not registered and that are beyond the control of authorities.

Worldwide, the informal economy is large and constitutes up to 90% of the economy in certain countries (especially Sub-Saharan Africa). Informal economies are often born out of necessity: a corrupt state, extreme inflation, or a bureaucracy that is so dense that one cannot get things done through official channels. But there are also voluntary, or politically motivated informal exchanges that function as an antidote to capitalism or resistance to repressive regimes. And of course, sometimes it is just easier or more logical to do something through informal channels. When thinking of informal economies, most often people will think of smuggling or the black market. Even though these phenomena are usually connected to oppression and exploitation of the smuggled (women, workers, illegal immigrants, animals), for some people they can also be the sole rescue, the only way to eat, work, get money or uncensored information.¹

The art world has been interested in informal economies as a topic and strategy since at least the sixties. Both Situationism and Relational Aesthetics are heavily influenced by *The Gift* (1924) by the French sociologist Marcel Mauss.² Mauss analyses a culture of giving of different tribes and primitive societies and rids us of the

naive idea that there is such a thing as selfless giving or exchanging.³ Mauss describes how giving always and often implicitly involves the expectation of a return gift, that it is motivated by the hope that people will think better of us, that it is a way to improve our status, to show that we are rich or that it simply is a means to fall into God's good graces. Despite this unmasking of the selfless gift, Mauss believed that giving, exchanging and sharing constituted the social fabric of societies, as they were organizing principles that also maintained order.

The selfless gift is exactly what is at stake when Neil Cummings writes on Generosity:

Give. Give again. Keep giving. Don't stop. Don't expect something in return, don't calculate. Don't calculate a return. Don't financialize. Don't compete. Don't worry if it's too much, or not enough. Give what you can. Maybe a bit more than you can. Keep giving. Give. Give again. Don't stop. This is to give generously. Thank you, thanks. To receive a gift, whatever it is, with grace, with thanks, without need, fear of debt or obligation. This is to receive with generosity.⁴

look this up!
Jan Ritsema in *Is there a way out of self-exploitation?* makes a similar plea for an end to sharing based on reciprocity:

No, no compensation scheme. That belongs to the old world, the one we are currently living in. Just share. It does not matter. No calculations, no negotiations: only unmitigated sharing.⁵

The share economy is also at the heart of journalist Paul Mason's description of the rise of what he calls the post capitalist era of which the currency is 'free time, networked activity and free stuff'.⁶ What Ritsema and many with him reacts to, is the monetization of private time, private spaces, bodies, friendships and our homes. What else will we find to quantify after we have rented out couches, rooms or spare rooms, body parts or clothes, our work capacities and, as Franco 'Bifo' Berardi argues, even our very souls?⁷ Capitalism has turned us, as Stengers writes, into 'little entrepreneurs of Self'.⁸ Entrepreneurs that are forever in debt and forever encouraged to exploit ourselves, our human capital.⁹

According to writer Dougal Hine we live in a social ice age where 'the fluidity of human sociability has been frozen up' and in which we have lost the ability to live and do things together without being paid for them or being told to do them by a powerful state.¹⁰ We measure and price everything, from working relationships to friendships. But he is also hopeful: 'I think it is quite possible that we are living at the end of this social ice age.' Hine finds 'pockets' that have survived modernism where people still know how to live beyond measurability and financial compensation.

In the rich anthology *Commerce by Artists*, edited by the artist Luis Jacob, a range of artists' projects is documented in which the artists enter the realm of economics but do so with projects that are counter-capitalist, where 'the artistic project itself takes the form of a transaction of some kind', a transaction that does not involve

money per se.¹¹ Commerce occurs, writes Jacob, every time there is a 'flow or transfer of something from one place to another'.¹²

Importantly, commerce occurs if the identity of this thing changes within the process of flowing or transferring: 'entities relate, interact, press upon and transform one another', Jacob writes.¹³

Mauss regretted that capitalism had partly destroyed the culture of giving. The close-knit system of direct giving, exchanges from hand to hand and doing something in return is replaced, in capitalism, by a system of production and consumption in which makers and buyers no longer meet. Traces of a culture of giving and reciprocity are still to be found, wrote Mauss, in the arts, for example, or in the social security system of his day and age. He argued that in these domains we again find the joy of public giving, the joy of generous gifts to the arts and of hospitality.

Artists have mainly embraced the idea of the potlatch (with Rirkrit Tiravanija as the most obvious example) which Mauss extensively discussed, but artists did so in a much more positive manner than Mauss. Artists focused on the potlatch as a uniting and generous ritual where rival tribes ate together and gave each other gifts (women and slaves, for example). But in reality the potlatch was also a very competitive and often brutal happening, including slaughter and murder.

Barter or exchange is another component of the informal economy that is often used by artists: a work of art in exchange for an article in a catalogue for example. Or one artwork swapped for another between artist friends. Besides being practical, barter is sometimes also

Handwritten note: *Handwritten definition!*

Handwritten note: *How does this relate to work of art image of mechanical reproduction?*

Handwritten note: *Are these antithetical or binaries?*

FACING VALUE

3 SHARE

the explicit aim of a project or a way to collect artistic material.¹⁴

Atelier Van Lieshout (AVL) founded his own state: AVL-Ville in 2001. The community was self-sufficient, had its own constitution, a flag and there was even local money in the making. AVL-Ville was a utopian village, as the artist states,

where people could live and work in an ecological, autarkic way. Besides a large workshop where art works are made, the Pioneer Set, a mobile farm, would provide food. Alcohol and medicines were produced in a special workshop. Through creating their own energy resource power-plant and water purification system the free state was independent from other resources.¹⁵

This large-scale project is considered a high point in the work of AVL, the culmination of the often mobile works produced by AVL up to that time. As with many of the works AVL produced before and since, this project was not just art to look at but to be lived with and in, to use and build a world with. After nine months, the municipality of Rotterdam called a halt to the project. AVL-Ville was self-sufficient, self-sustaining and arranged its affairs outside of state or other formal structures.

Self-sufficiency and reducing dependency on a shaky economic system can also be achieved through alternative or complementary currencies. The digital currency bitcoin is probably the most famous example but there are many more underground time banks and barter systems.

pp. 41-56

pp. 176, 184

The attention for such alternatives increases as the prevailing monetary system is coming under growing pressure. People introducing their own currencies is not new. During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) there would have been apparently more than 7000 different currencies in circulation: from the hairdresser and bakery to businesses and governments, everyone had their own value system in the absence of a reliable national currency.

The e-flux Time/Bank is probably one of the best-known recent attempts by the art world aimed at establishing an alternative system for work, payment and compensation. On their website, founders Julieta Aranda and Anton Vidokle state that they hope to create through Time/Bank

an immaterial currency and a parallel micro-economy for the cultural community, one that is not geographically bound, and that will create a sense of worth for many of the exchanges that already take place ... but often escape the structures that validate only certain forms of exchange as significant or profitable.⁶

The e-flux Time/Bank is meant to be a support structure that helps people perform, just like banks used to be.¹⁷

With the e-flux Time/Bank, and many other systems like it, one issue remains unresolved: how to deal with creative labour where, as Jan Verwoert wrote,

A good paragraph may come together in two minutes. Then the next sentence might

pp. 197-200

p. 203 (b)

take two hours So what to charge people for? The two minutes of productivity? Or the two hours of fruitless fussing about what followed?¹⁸

That is why the so-called lump sum payment is such an easy way out in the art world. Hourly wages would be impossible to track, pay or otherwise validate. Time banks, in their various manifestations, are an attempt to outsmart this conundrum through the introduction of a system in which every hour of every person counts equally, whether it is an hour spent painting walls, giving tango lessons, hesitating or actually getting some writing done.

- 1 Maaïke Lauwaert, 'Informeel economie—een beknopt overzicht', *Metropolis M* 2011, no. 4.
- 2 Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (London: Routledge 2002).
- 3 In a certain sense Mauss differs in his analysis of the gift from Karl Marx, who believed that in a communist world everyone would give what they could and get (take) what they needed. Wealth, private property and the accumulation of goods were therefore not possible in a communist world. Yet Mauss and Marx are frequently quoted in one breath because both reacted against capitalism. David Graeber extensively analysed the work of Mauss and relates it to Karl Marx, arguing that although they stand for two extremes, they are actually complementary. In *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams* (New York and Houndsmill: Palgrave, 2001), Graeber brings together economic, political, and cultural theories of value and sets out to reflect on the relation between disciplines such as anthropology and politics.
- 4 Neil Cummings, 'Generosity', in *Truth is Concrete: A Handbook for Artistic Strategies in Real Politics*, ed. Florian Malzacher (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014).
- 5 Jan Ritsema, 'Is There a Way Out of Self-Exploitation?', *Spike Magazine* 43 (Spring 2015).
- 6 Paul Mason, 'The End of Capitalism Has Begun', *The Guardian*, 17 July 2015, www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jul/17/postcapitalism-end-of-capitalism-begun and *Postcapitalism: A Guide to our Future* (London: Allen Lane, 2015).
- 7 Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009).
- 8 'The Care of the Possible: Isabelle Stengers interviewed by Erik Bordeleau', *Scapegoat* 1 (2011), pp. 12-17, p. 16.
- 9 On the debt-culture, see Maurizio Lazzarato, *The Making of the Indebted Man: An Essay on the Neoliberal Condition* (Amsterdam: Semiotext(e) 2011).
- 10 <https://vimeo.com/44683057#>.
- 11 Luis Jacob, 'Introduction: Commerce by Artists', in *Commerce by Artists*, ed. Luis Jacob (Toronto: Art Metropole, 2011), p. 2.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid., p. 3.
- 14 Matthijs de Bruijne and José Antonio Vega Macotela, for example, both gathered personal stories, objects and works of art in exchange for objects and services. See www.bruijne.org/exchange/intro.html and http://universes-in-universe.org/eng/nafas/articles/2013/agoraphobia/photos/18_jose_antonio_vega_macotela
- 15 www.ateliervanlieshout.com/works/avlman.htm.
- 16 <http://e-flux.com/timebank/about>.
- 17 Former Dutch banker Kilian Wawoe, at the Time/Bank symposium at Stroom Den Haag on 12 May 2011, stated that banks should once again be 'simple places, support structures that help people perform'.
- 18 Jan Verwoert, 'Onderbrekingen zullen er altijd zijn', *Metropolis M* Summer 2015, no. 4, p. 64.