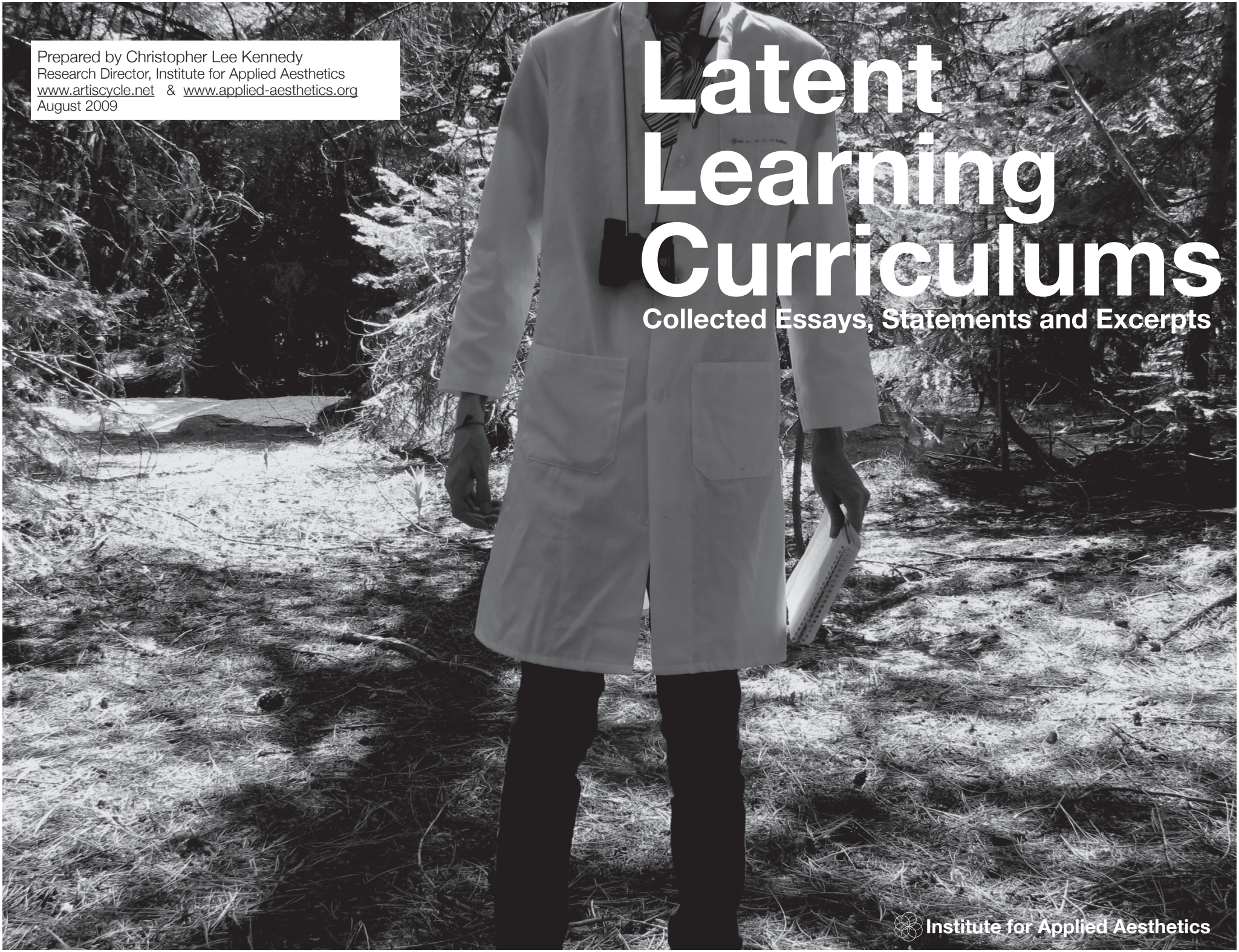

Prepared by Christopher Lee Kennedy
Research Director, Institute for Applied Aesthetics
www.artiscycle.net & www.applied-aesthetics.org
August 2009

Latent Learning Curriculums

Collected Essays, Statements and Excerpts

Institute for Applied Aesthetics

Latent Learning Curriculums

Collected Essays, Statements and Excerpts

Institute for Applied Aesthetics

Learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived world.[1]

Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation (Learning in Doing: Social, Cognitive and Computational Perspectives) by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (Paperback - Sep 27, 1991)

Introduction

Christopher Lee Kennedy
www.artiscycle.net

Latent Learning Curriculums is a collection of texts, excerpts and statements found while conducting research on a project called *Artiscycle*. The project is an ongoing research platform exploring the working models of art groups, spaces and projects. *Artiscycle* frames the applied art practices[1] used by these groups and spaces as a kind of situated learning process in which a new model for problem solving, community formation and engagement unfolds.

The selections here explore the changing meanings of learning and community, providing a critical discourse on the hidden learning processes embedded within interdisciplinary art and social practices. In many ways the ongoing research *Artiscycle* is generating, seeks to re-frame the concept of learning as inseparable and inherently tied to actional contexts within social practices.

In viewing the practices of artists and cultural creatives, as a learning process, we can better understand opportunities for using art as a tool for building community and addressing emergent social challenges. In so doing, *Artiscycle* rejects the conventional notion of "curriculum", instead positing the idea that applied aesthetic practices comprise a new kind of "learning curriculum", art as a transformative social process in which legitimate participation is offered to a community.

I posit here, that if we begin to consider how art practices can indeed be framed as a kind of learning process – it may help practitioners and artists alike understand the value their practices have in forming community and transforming social conditions. Not only, this but it allows for a new conversation about how to re-imagine the metrics in which we assess the value of these emerging practices, to be more dynamic, situated and inclusive of different kinds of data and outcomes. Art has been a transformative force within situated communities in the past, and may hold the key to a new kind of strategy to assist these communities in dealing with new economic, ecological and social realities. The need to understand how this can be absorbed, reproduced and implemented is of utmost importance.

This research here follows three main statements:

1. Applied art practices comprise a "learning curriculum" in their intent and process
2. Applied art practices foster the development of communities of practice and interest
3. Applied art practices provide a new context in which to consider problem solving, offering interdisciplinary and participatory frameworks in which to work within

1. Applied aesthetics such as public art, interventions, relational art and psychogeography, refer to creative practices that address sit issues.

Applied Aesthetics

A working defintion

Note: “Applied aesthetics” is not a new genre classification - but indeed the exact opposite; a term serving as a combinative grouping to absorb many genres that fall into an interdisciplinary category of art practice. Applied aesthetics as a term is used here to help simplify the conversation about art practices that engage the social sphere and provide a unifying framework for inclusive consideration.

In this sense, applied aesthetics such as public art, interventions, relational art and psychogeography, refer to creative practices that address sociocultural issues. They serve as an essential tool for cultivating authentic community and facilitating situated learning.

Artists, designers and citizens typically use applied aesthetics outside of the gallery, outside of the museum and instead in the everyday realms of situated communities. Through collaborative, participatory and politically-motivated practices many artists and collectives have harnessed aesthetic practice as a means to visualize, interpret and motivate different ways of living in the world that are often-times more equitable or holistic.

Some characteristics:

1. Art as dynamic situations and spaces for dialogue.

2. Strategies for harnessing the ideas and energies of people who feel excluded from the art community

3. An open practice to engage social, ecological and cultural processes that integrate art, environmentalism, and communities.

4. A platform for discussing how social practices may intersect and be collaborative

5. A tool and means to create participatory and playful works, which reflect on contemporary sociocultural issues

6. Using the creative arts to explore polarized social and ecological themes and issues

7. A positive catalyst of individual, socio-cultural and environmental well-being

8. A Platform that works across disciplines for social and ecological justice.

Statements

Future Farmers.....5
WochenKlausur.....6
Learning Group.....7
Temporary Services.....8
Superfront.....9

Institute for Applied Aesthetics

Future Farmers

Through collaboration, we explore the relationship of concept and creative process between interdisciplinary artists.

WHAT DO YOU EACH FIND MOST INTERESTING OR SATISFYING ABOUT WORKING AS PART OF THIS COLLECTIVE?

Nis Rømer: Apart from being able to share resources, being a part of a community allows you to test your ideas, which is useful when working in the social sphere.

Amy Franceschini: I like to think of Free Soil as a mother ship: a free-floating and opensource system of activities and resources that lands on occasion. We all have an interest in sharing our resources and collectively questioning the social and political landscape that surrounds us. At this point, we try to stay as open as possible.

Myriel Milicevic: Looking simultaneously at the same issues from remote places is quite interesting—we can compare patterns and behaviors between different locations, and often their conditions are linked to one another.

ARE THERE OTHER ARTISTS OR THINKERS WHO HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY INFLUENTIAL FOR YOU, INDIVIDUALLY OR COLLECTIVELY?

AF: A ceramics teacher, Joe Hawley, in undergraduate studies told me, "Art is a verb!" I have always held this close to my heart. Paolo Soleri and Miguel de Cervantes's Quixote share the same umbrella in terms of perseverance and fantasy. Recently I have been charmed by Tim Hunkin's Secret Life of Machines series. Others: Hans Haacke, Jacob Moreno, Rudolph Steiner, Stephen Willats.

NR: People working close to me have always been very important, from a distance a few would be: curator Mary Jane Jacob, artists Group Material, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Öyvind Fahlström, and Bas Jan Ader, and the film Safe by Todd Haynes.

MM: Flatland by Edwin Abbott keeps reminding me that we can always zoom out into dimensions we didn't imagine possible and can have tremendous fun with that. Shigeru Miyamoto for creating these cunning worlds that people enjoy exploring. My childhood hero Heinz Sielmann, an old German fossil who made animal documentaries. Also the Interaction Design Institute Iyrea: in the last couple of years people decided to move from all over the world to a little town in the north of Italy, carrying along with them all kinds of personal skills and histories, all of them ready to experiment with this amorphous field "Interaction Design" in their own and joint ways.

HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR WORK FITTING INTO THE CURRENT STATE OF GLOBAL ART PRACTICE?

AF/NR: Maybe we can rephrase the question to ask why we choose to work under the umbrella of art rather than activism. We all agree that art remains more open than activism. We have found that much activism is bound by prescribed thoughts, dogma, and manifestoes. Art does not have to have one aim and that helps us avoid clichéd activist positions. This openness possibly allows for more mobility without constraints of "right" and "wrong." We share a common, growing concern about a world that is on the verge of an environmental, military, and economic crisis. We are compelled to engage with this reality.

MM: Recently we have observed that an interest in environmental awareness and sustainability has gained relevance not only in many art projects but also within business strategies, technology industries, and politics. This development is as exciting as it is curious. At the same time, I feel there is a danger in words like "sustainable" becoming popular buzzwords—they inevitably will lose their meaning as people grow tired of them. Artists' intentions may be doubted when they address such topics. It will be an interesting challenge to keep people on their toes. [...]

From: Beyond Green: Toward a Sustainable Art, Stephanie Smith, 2005 Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago and Independent Curators International

WochenKlausur

There are problems everywhere that cannot be solved using conventional approaches and are thus suitable subjects for artistic projects.

What does this have to do with art?
Art is always what people want it to be. It is not a question of consensus; everyone does not have to share a single view on art. It is more that people who use the same definition for art find themselves in groups. They find themselves united on the basis of their common conception of art, as they do on the basis of their views on religion, morality or tulip cultivation. If under the heading art a group understands the academic conception of the nineteenth century, in other words the mastery of craftsmanship, a universal ideal of beauty, and the material art object, then it will get into disagreements with others who see art as the process instead of the tangible artwork. If a group wants diversions, spectacles, events and thrills to fatten up its free time, then it is in disagreement with another group that approaches art with respect, devotion and contemplation. Yet another understanding of art is the following: enough consumption and enough genuflection. This is a conception of art that feels responsible for the social, political and economic conditions under which we live.

Words change their meaning according to who is using them. Take the word common, which has acquired an additional pejorative meaning over the years. Originally associated with community, it has a social meaning. Various associations with the ordinary and average - in other words with that which people have in common, with that which is not unusual - have added a meaning to this adjective which implies coarse, asocial and even underhanded.

Changes of meaning don't necessarily have to occur unintentionally. The word tree has been understood to mean the same thing for a long time. But if a poet were to jokingly describe a telephone pole as a tree, the description would be accepted. If the readers were amused by this description and used it themselves wherever they found the opportunity, and if eventually Webster's added a corresponding entry ("slang for telephone pole"), then the tree would no longer be just what it once was.

The understanding of a word like art can be influenced. It is permanently being influenced and constantly being "negotiated" anew. With every change in the word's meaning, the functions of art also change. In view of the American philosopher Richard Rorty's claim that concepts are continually being implemented as means of achieving certain purposes, all that remains in the end is the question: What is the word art used for? Who achieves what with it?

If the word art is used to indicate something extraordinary, an exalted entity created by humans, then the stipulation is likely to be included that art should not have anything to do with everyday mundane situations, that it must remain untouched by reality, just as it leaves real circumstances untouched. By contrast, there have been efforts since the beginning of the twentieth century to develop another understanding of art. Since then actions, ideas or processes that involve themselves in the circumstances under which we live have also been considered art.

Just as traditional artworks, material objects, whether paintings or bottle drying racks, cannot initially be art per se, but rather are awarded this appellation through special sanctioning, perfectly normal actions or sociopolitical interventions can be given this appellation. Following their presentation within the context of art and after the acceptance of their petition to be recognized as art, these actions mutate and suddenly are art. When something like medical care for the homeless is made available, or when conditions in a deportation detention facility can be improved, then these are interventions that in no way differentiate themselves from similar activist measures taken outside of the realm of art. They first become art when this is demanded by the activists and confirmed by a community.

There of course instantly arises the question of who in society determines what is to be recognized as art and which criteria are used thereby. Is it the majority? Is it an elite group or a "mafia of experts" who make all decisions within a closed circle of insiders? Marcel Duchamp always pointed out that other paintings could just as well hang in the Louvre. Still there must be some determining forces at work, because although everything can be art, in the end everything is not really art after all. Clearly there are notions and criteria in the background, whose functioning is responsible for what is given recognition.

Learning Group

A focus on the local conditions in which art practice is located.

[POSTER DWELLING; LAND, MARKET AND ECONOMY]

My grandfather was born on a farm in England in 1883. As a child he used a plough exactly like the one in this picture. The design hadn't changed much in the previous 10,000 years. At 19 my grandfather moved from the farm to the city. Back then there were about a billion people on the earth, and nine out of ten of us lived in villages. Over my grandfathers 97 years, technology expanded at a n enormous rate. He got to see the development of cars, radios, televisions and airplanes. I was seven years old, when he died. In that year the world's population was about three billion. I am now forty-four, and there are now about six billion of us. Half of us now live in a city. How we think about land and the environment that sustains us has changed. In turn, how we think about ourselves has changed. Increasingly, our economic and political systems demand that we think of ourselves, and of land, solely in terms of markets. Complexity must be stripped out. Vital components must be abstracted and purified and set into a simple mechanism.

ENCLOSURES

Enclosure meant the taking 'common land', land that was once used freely by anybody who needed it into private ownership. In other words, making a open, public asset into an exclusive and tradable private property. It's the process we now call 'privatisation'. Before enclosure large areas England were open to grazing. From the 1450s
onwards, land over which many poor people had rights to graze animals began] to be 'closed' off by wealthy farmers for their own use. By the 18th century, half the common fields in England had been turned into private property. Stripped of their historic rights to the land, many poor people starved, and many areas of the country suffered from depopulation. Later on, more 'common' or 'waste' land – land that had never been owned, such as open heaths, moorlands and highlands – were enclosed. In the final phase, between the 17th and 19th centuries, very large-scale enclosures of all types of land were enabled by act of parliament. Until that time, Enclosures had not had the force of government behind them, but the crown, parliament and the church had lacked the power, or will, to stop them. In the final phase, Enclosure was encouraged by the government and backed by the force of law. The idea of stripping people of their rights and giving the land they occupied to a private owner therefore required conceptual justification.

The key concept developed in the early 19th century to enable the movement from public to private control was called 'the tragedy of the commons'. The concept helped to clarify the modern idea of property and its role in contemporary political economy. Rationalising the work of sickle, scythe and flail. The machine became popular during the 20th century and has been part of the green revolution. A revolution that had the intention to spread agriculture technologies. There were three basic elements in the method of the Green Revolution: (1) Continued expansion of farming areas; (2) Double-cropping existing farmland; (3) Using seeds with improved genetics.

COMMODITY LOGIC

The commodity logic creates a view of land as 'fungible'. That is it renders land as an object that is as easily exchangeable in a marketplace. Yet, land and people exist in value systems that exist outside of the marketplace. To treat land as a commodity it must be forcibly stripped of those complex socio-cultural and environmental characteristics. Treating land that way has allowed our economic system to do some very strange things, as we shall see.

The advocates of parliamentary Enclosures argued that if common land was bought under private ownership, the new owners would have an 'incen tive' not to overgraze the land. Why would they willingly destroy their own property? Indeed, it was argued that, if the land was owned as private property, there would be an additional incentive for the new owner to 'invest' in the land in order to 'improve' its productivity. If the land was left as a commons, it was argued, the people who used it had no 'incentive' to limit their overgrazing. Nor was there any 'incentive' for an individual to invest in the land in order to improve it.

From

Why would an individual do that, the advocates argued? If they did so, they would not receive the full benefit of their personal investment. Rather the benefits of their personal investment would be spread amongst all the people who had access to commons (what modern economists call the 'free rider' problem). The individual would loose out. Therefore no rational individual would invest in the land. Thus it was that, in the name of improving the land, and making it more productive, in order to 'feed more people', hundreds of thousands of people were moved off their land and vast tracks of common land were privatised.

TRAGEDY OF THE COMMONS

If any of the common land had in fact been used as the 'Tragedy' narrative suggested, overgrazing would have already exhausted the land by the time the parliamentary acts came into force. In fact, common land was subject to rights of access, or 'usufructs'. Customary laws and cultural practices ordered the general use of such land. There is no evidence that, in traditional systems, peasant farmers acted like the selfish, rational, purely profit seeking individuals of the theory. To presume so, presupposes that the rural communities treated common land not as a resource critical to their own, and their families and neighbour's survival, but as 'free property' to do with what they personally wanted. But a right to 'access' is categorically not the same thing as the right to 'exclude' and the right to 'dispose' at ones own will – those are the rights that define private property, not common land. Every farmer knows not to overgraze their fields, whether or not they own those fields as private property is immaterial. Static rural communities are embedded in local environmental knowledge, which as many anthropologists acknowledge, is the seedbed from which cultural traditions develop. It is exactly within such cultural traditions that knowledge about overgrazing and respect for ones neighbours in transmitted. The 'tragedy of the commons' was then a convenient fiction. [...]

From www.learningsite.info
Bhu Swaraj, Vandana Shiva, Learning Group
[Poster Dwelling; Land, Market and Economy]
Delhi, 2008

Temporary Services

Socially dynamic situations and spaces for dialogue

AGAINST COMPETITION

Much of the art world is structured to favor competition. Grants are competitive. Students compete for funding. Hundreds compete for a single teaching position. Artists compete with artists - stealing ideas instead of sharing them, or using copyright laws to prohibit thoughtful re-use. Artists compete for shows in a limited number of exhibition spaces instead of finding their own ways to exhibit outside of these venues. Artists conceal opportunities from their friends as a way of getting an edge up in this speculative capital-driven frenzy. Gallerists compete with other gallerists and curators compete with curators. Artists who sell their work compete for the attention of a limited number of collectors. Collectors compete with other collectors to acquire the work of artists.

Temporary Services seeks to create and participate in ethical relationships that are not competitive and are mutually beneficial. We develop strategies for harnessing the ideas and energies of people who may have never participated in an art project before, or who may feel excluded from the art community. We mobilize the generosity of many people to produce projects on a scale that none of us could achieve in isolation. We strive towards aesthetic experiences built upon trust and unlimited experimentation.

From www.temporaryservices.org

Superfront

..support, promote, and produce radically contemporary architecture, while fostering creative interdisciplinary exchange

We, the architect and the choreographer, started out on a hunch. We started with the idea that there's something funny about loss, and the hope that the performance of loss might transform it in a way that contemplation could not. In true classical fashion, there would be three acts: Act One began with a private song and dance unwittingly gone public; Act Two was a study in falling, paused and played with the spoken words "go" and "no;" Act Three was a solo in which a dancer plays the world's tiniest violin. We wanted high camp and honesty in the same breath; we wanted to lie without being deceptive. We developed our ideas with notions of soft walls, of movable, shimmering walls, and the temptation to shift bodies and hide things became irresistible.

The architect brought up Vito Acconci, a poet turned video and performance artist who now makes buildings, and he seemed an apt godfather for the work we wanted to make. In "Seedbed" (1972), Acconci lay on a gallery floor, his body hidden from view by a ramp. The artist whispered his fantasies of people walking above him into a microphone that projected his voice into the public space while he masturbated below. The piece was designed in such a way that everyone who set foot on the floor stepped into the artist's fantasy. We liked the idea of making Superfront an interactive dream, a fertile field where we could splice memories with narrative, wigs, and hopefully some glitter. Something between a group-process variety show and a prayer, where the shifting landscape played with the spectator's perspective.

We started to think of our hunch as a premonition when I, the choreographer, fell through a trapdoor. I lost a bit of my finger, tore some ligaments in my knee, and for quite a while after my sense of my body was dominated by what had been taken away. Our sense of humor about the project was always a little tongue in cheek, and we were good sports, so we started to think about how we would make a dance without dancing. I made list I could send to my friends, and they would each make movement phrases from those instructions.

What is it they say about the best-laid plans? Things change, is the point. Ping, the architect, wanted us to make a piece about what really happened. I, the choreographer, wanted to drop out of the Project. I never sent out my movement list, and I was having trouble visualizing the outcomes of my directions, without being able to try them on my own body.

As it turns out, the best way for me to deal with loss, when I couldn't perform it because it was still happening, was to just be with it. I tried to be still, and while the world outside my bedroom door was hoping and changing the Age of Obama into existence, I listened. I couldn't get up and be in it, but I could feel it. It made me want to make an audio track, to make a record of the moment. I started recording conversations I had with my parents and older family members, asking them about the election and the changes in the air, and also giving false accounts of what happened in my accident. Meanwhile, Ping made some tight animations with shiny moving walls and lyrics from "Total Eclipse of the Heart," and offered to help me arrange my audio tracks.

I was reading The Invisible Man again, and I decided to read Ellison's introduction, for the first time. His examinations of seeing and being seen, and of artifice and survival in writing the novel seemed uniquely relevant to our weird and wonderful process. He relates his experience that ... despite the bland assertion of sociologists, "high visibility" actually rendered one un-visible ... I asked myself, what else was there to sustain our will to persevere but laughter?... It was a startling idea, yet ... was so persuasive with echoes of blues-toned laughter[...]

From Archeography Project
On the making of 'A void'
by Kate Johnson

www.superfront.org

Excerpts & Essays

Art Leisure Instead of Art Work....11
Andrea Fraser on Orchard 47....13
Common Security Clubs....15
Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias....16
Community Arts Singapore....19
Service Aesthetics....22
Social Aesthetics....24
Some Thoughts on Art and Education....25
To Move a Wine Bar in Brooklyn....27
Tools of Engagement....28
A Critique of Situated Cognition 30
The Value of Visual Exploration....31
Assessing the Practice and Potential of Situated Learning....32
Bridging Classroom, Culture, and Community....33
Situated Cognition, Dynamic Systems, and Art....34
Selected Reading....36

Institute for Applied Aesthetics

Art Leisure Instead of Art Work

Intheconversation's Sal Randolph talks with Randall Szott about collections, cooking, the "art of living," and infra-institutional activity.

http://intheconversation.blogs.com

[...] Sal Randolph: In your writing you've been an advocate for the "art of living" as distinct from the art of "art." You went to art school, but remain very skeptical about the value of the art context. What's your relationship to art and the art context now, and how do you see that going forward?

Randall Szott: Well, I should probably preface things by saying that I'm aware that these art/life distinctions can be fluid, problematic, reifying, etc.

Having said that, I should backtrack just a bit and explain my past relationship to working in an art context. I went to three private art schools as an undergraduate, but eventually abandoned art and pursued an inter-disciplinary degree at a university. I did that for several reasons. First, undergraduate art education seemed overly concerned with 'how to make' and 'what to make' sorts of questions. I believed that the more important questions were why make and how does making fit within a context larger than the history of art. Second, when those questions were addressed, it was in that cursory "math for artists" sort of way - a real dumbing down of ideas. Third, it served me better to become unaffiliated academically and allow my questions to determine coursework rather than the other way around. Finally, I really felt like people in art school had no real foundation of knowledge for making art, they had no perspective to draw from, other than art itself which seemed to me to be an incredibly insular and unsatisfying point of departure.

I found philosophy/cultural studies to be best suited to my needs and supplemented that with anthropology, art history, folklore, and women's studies. The funny thing is, that there is an inverse logic at play within most of those disciplines. At the undergrad level, the "big questions" are in play, but once you enter graduate school you generally have to become hyper-specialized in your research agenda. And even as an undergrad, the maddening thing was that EVERY idea had to be pursued discursively, in the form of the academic essay. That was, and is, what has always drawn me back to art - the incredible diversity of acceptable research methodologies and approaches. So despite many of my reservations about the way the art context ends up being a distraction, mostly by generating conversations that require an art critical/historical contextualization to activities that have an ancillary relationship to those discourses, I went ahead and got two grad degrees in art because of the flexibility of the discipline.

So, to finally get to your question, I'm not exactly skeptical of the art context itself, as much as I'm skeptical of the legions of people I find working within it that would be better suited in another context. For instance, I'm a collector. I have collections of things that make perfect sense within the history of artist collections and that could be displayed consistently within the conventions of art exhibitions. The problem is, I have no interest in either of those. I have tried to find strategies of public display that circumvent art contextualization altogether - by renting display cases in antique malls, utilizing public library vitrines, entering them in state fair competitions, offering them for sale at flea markets, using web based collection sites, etc. The problem, of course, is that my collections often have a critical dimension to them, a conscious relationship to the history of material culture and any number of other intellectual conversations. Displaying them in these "marginal" ways tends to impede those sorts of conversations.

I think this is a dilemma for many people who want to think about and through culture in complicated ways - Do I show them in an art context, however imperfectly it addresses my concerns and burdens me with a history I'm not particularly interested in? Or do I explore them elsewhere and suffer from the lack of critical, promotional, and organizational infrastructure that the art context provides? For obvious reasons, many people choose the former, while I have tended to choose the latter. I also think there are many who choose to do both which is probably the most sensible and where I see myself operating now and in the future. Although, I really only care to operate in the art context in a curatorial/critical mode rather than the artist mode, but those distinctions are fluid themselves obviously.

I am highly skeptical of the value of much contemporary art practice however as I'm not entirely convinced that people have really given full consideration to the range of tactics available for exploring ideas. I worry that the siren call of an "anything is possible" art world distracts people from the hard work of building other, more appropriate, contexts. Given what I know about the current state of art education, higher education, and institutional logics generally, the production and support of these other contexts seems very far away. Despite this, in my possibly pathetic and overly romantic vision of the considered life, I am quite hopeful about the ability of (art and non-art) people to improve their own experience and others' in both grand and mundane ways. And that belief keeps the seduction of cynicism in check for me.

SR: You raise an interesting point about the implications of the word "work," and I'd like to zigzag back a bit from contexts and explore it further. One thing that strikes me is that we don't have a very deep vocabulary to talk about the kind of activities you're describing. I think words like "work," project," and "practice," have been an attempt by artists (and others) to broaden the discourse (the way "experiment" was for an earlier generation), but it's true that they are used so commonly in an art context that they do evoke ideas of professionalism. You've used the words "dilettante" and "leisure" in a suggestive way - how does your theory of leisure relate to the way we can talk and think about the kinds of activities you're interested in?

RS: The naming of LeisureArts has a simple back story. Most newspapers have an Arts and Leisure section or a variation like Living Arts. As an aside, the USA Today's version is the Life section which begs the question, what do the other sections cover? I found that the material covered in those sections, especially in smaller markets like Mobile, AL or Galveston, TX (for the most part, as the newspaper increases in circulation, the coverage tends to homogenize around less diverse, less locally driven forms of culture.), was precisely the sort of stuff I found most interesting - profiles of local artists or amateur historians, fishing reports, restaurant/movie reviews, civic association coverage, comic book club listings, etc. I thought it might be nice to operate under a title that might evoke some of that sensibility while also resonating with some deeper connections in my thinking.

I don't really have a theory of leisure per se, but I have been researching it for the past few years. I've found that leisure studies (believe it or not there is such a thing, although apparently in decline or at least transitioning to a more "practical" orientation within the academy like Parks and Recreation Studies) does offer a "deep vocabulary" for talking about these things. The notion of leisure itself has been fairly richly theorized and as you note, I have come to utilize it as a way out of professional forms of meaning-making and creative activity. I have been thinking about the implications of conceptualizing art leisure instead of art work and about how to think differently about the entire culture of work itself (the political dimensions of that are a whole other story, especially with regard to the rise of "immaterial labor" as a theoretically fashionable discussion).

I am deeply committed to promoting "everyday" people who are finding ways to make their lives more meaningful - devoted amateurs to a variety of intellectual pursuits, hobbyists, collectors, autodidacts, bloggers, karaoke singers, crafters, etc. This can come across as being against professionals or professionalism, but I, like most other amateurs, am indebted to their achievements. Where I get really testy though is when professionalism is privileged over amateurism as inherently superior. I've been around the "capital A" art world long enough to see an incredible sense of superiority with regard to "Sunday painters." In fact, the term itself is used as an insult. An obvious exception, and useful bridge between the fields of leisure studies and "high" art discourse is Greg Sholette's writing around "dark matter" in which he notes the interdependency between the hobbyist and professional art worlds. I view myself as someone who straddles those worlds and I try to be an advocate for a rich, inclusive understanding of human meaning-making.

"Culture" is not something I want left solely in the hands of the professional class, the experts. I have found, unfortunately, that I often have to out-snob the snobs, those who share a deeply intellectual/theoretical fundamentalist bias against vernacular cultures, and who believe that specialized and highly refined forms of discourse/activity are the most valuable. Despite the rhetoric around the collapse of distinctions between high/low culture, it's clear to me that there really isn't a level playing field. In the art world it's fine to draw on low culture, to "elevate" it into the high art arena, but show me where in the pages of ArtForum anyone is writing about sidewalk art fairs rather than the global art market fairs. I wish there was a little more honesty around all of this - pop/vernacular culture is only legitimate if it is dressed up in the jargon or ironic posturing of the professional/academic art world[...]

Andrea Fraser on Orchard47

Andrea Fraser answers questions about Orchard for Neue Review

www.orchard47.org/

1. CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT THE MAIN PROGRAMMATIC ASPECTS OF ORCHARD GALLERY ARE?

Orchard is a three-year project founded as a limited liability corporation in April, 2005 by Rhea Anastas, Moyra Davey, Andrea Fraser, Nicolás Guagnini, Gareth James, Christian Philipp Muller, Jeff Preiss, R. H. Quaytman, Karin Schneider, Jason Simon, Bennett Simpson, and John Yancy, Jr.. Orchard does not have a "program" as defined by a specific, articulated concept or set of criteria that determines what we do and show. Orchard is "programmatic" in the sense that all of our activities intend to make an argument and articulate, enact or support a position. What that position is, however, is not singular or fixed but the subject of on-going debate and dialog among the partners of the LLC. This is not the case because of any political or philosophical adherence to a principle of dialogism or heterotopia, etc., but because the cohort is composed of individuals with different backgrounds, interests, projects, programs, politics and philosophies. Those differences, however, as well as some commonality amongst us, do serve as a basis for what has emerged as our "program." While that program is largely driven by the initiative of individual partners, our group-process seeks to involve as many members as possible in each initiative. This process has produced a program that is rooted in our diverse engagements with the legacies of minimalism, conceptualism, neo-concretism, performance and experimental film; our diverse backgrounds in the United States, Europe, and Latin America; trans-generational networks in which we are involved; and a sense of alienation from the dominance of the market in the contemporary art world and conservative politics in American society. Other principles of general consensus include a commitment to historically-based artistic criteria (as opposed to market criteria) in our programming and a preference for conceptually, politically or thematically driven group exhibitions or projects (as opposed to solo exhibitions). Finally, Orchard has undertaken a number of reconstructions and re-presentations of ephemeral or unrealized historical works.

2. HOW IS ORCHARD DIFFERENT FROM OTHER ALTERNATIVE-SPACES? HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER COMMERCIAL GALLERIES?

Orchard was established as a for-profit limited liability corporation. Most alternative spaces in the United States are not-for-profit corporations, a legal status that allows them to raise and receive tax-deductible donations. The reasons Orchard opted for a for-profit rather than not-for profit status are various. These include a desire to mount a critique of the commercial art market from within its structures; to critically engage the economic relations and conditions of value in the art market and attempt to construct functional alternatives; to avoid the marginality within a market-dominated art world that not-for-profit status often implies; and to develop a structure of financial support for positions, works and practices that are not being supported by the art market. This last rationale is one that Orchard may share with some other for-profit galleries that are sometimes called "alternative-spaces," particularly galleries run by and for young artists. Orchard differs from many of these other for-profit "alternative" galleries in that its partners do not only include artists, but also curators, critics, filmmakers, and an art historian. Perhaps more importantly, Orchard partners do not fall into "young" or "early-career" categories, but can mostly be considered mid-career. Some of the participating artists work with other galleries in New York. So while Orchard is oriented toward developing a platform and means of financial support for positions, works and practices not supported in the art market, Orchard does not aim to serve as a launch-pad into the mainstream market. Orchard does not seek to engage in "career development" with solo shows and does not "represent" artists--partners or not.

In this regard, Orchard also differs from most commercial art galleries. The primary difference between Orchard and most other commercial art galleries today may be Orchard's commitment to historically-based artistic criteria and rejection of market-based criteria in its programming. Orchard also differs from other commercial galleries in its financial structure. Each of Orchard's partners are also investors in the LLC, investments which mostly take the form of monthly contributions.

Commissions on sales are divided so as to repay major investments while also providing percentages for all partners involved in a sale in any way, as well as a percentage for Orchard's publication project, Preemptive Press.

3. Compromise appears on various occasions (e.g. in the decision-making of the design of the gallery, as well as in the gallery's structure itself: being commercial and also using alternative models, for instance, each member pays a monthly fee as well as paying the artist more percentage than the general rate is and giving him/her more co-determination in the presentation of his/her work), can you tell me a bit about the role (and affects) of compromise in the project?

While compromise may be a necessary element of any non-authoritarian group structure, compromise has never been articulated as a principle of Orchard. On the contrary, Orchard's group process aims to allow each initiative or position to be realized with as much autonomy and as little compromise as possible. With regard to the design of the gallery, the financial constrains we faced during renovation were not viewed as resulting in compromise but rather as generating great ideas that were generally embraced with enthusiastic unanimity. Our thinking about commercial versus "alternative" status and our commission structure is discussed above.[...]

Common Security Clubs:
Finding Support in Hard Economic Times

By Chuck Collins

This is an excerpt of an article that originally appeared in Sojourners magazine, February 2009.

[...] Part study circle, part mutual aid association and part social action group, Social Security Clubs are popping up in communities where people are looking for ways to support each other and take action. In a recent post for OnTheCommons, Chuck Collins discusses this new concept:

The common security club model was born out of work done in the last few years by people struggling with overwhelming indebtedness. Participants spend some time discussing the root causes of the economic crisis, drawing on readings and materials provided by the network. But they mostly focus on what they can do together to increase their economic security and press for policy changes.

"What becomes clear to participants is we are facing some major economic and ecological changes," said Andree Zaleska from the Boston office of Institute for Policy Studies, who is coordinating clubs in the Northeast. "We are not going back to some golden age of economic growth based on empire, unfettered capitalism, and cheap energy—nor do we want to! We have to prepare ourselves and our communities for transformation."

As theologian Walter Brueggemann writes we need to shift from "autonomy to covenantal existence, from anxiety to divine abundance, and from acquisitive greed to neighborly generosity." Common security club participants are experimenting with ways to make the practical, political, and spiritual changes this entails.

The three main functions of the clubs are:

1) Learn and reflect
Through popular education tools, videos, Bible study, and shared readings, participants increase their understanding of the larger economic forces on our lives. Why is the economy in distress? How did these changes happen? What are the historical factors? How does this connect to the global economy? What are the ecological factors contributing to the changes? What is our vision for a healthy, sustainable economy? What are the sources of real security in my life?

2) Mutual aid and local action
Through stories, examples, Web-based resources, a workbook, and mutual support, participants reflect on what makes them secure. What can we do together to increase our economic security at the local level? What would it mean to respond to my economic challenges in community? How can I reduce my economic vulnerability in conjunction with others? How can I get out of debt? How can I help my neighbor facing foreclosure or economic insecurity? Can I downscale and reduce my consumption and ecological footprint and save money?

3) Social action
The economic crisis is in part the result of an unengaged citizenry and government. What can we do together to build an economy based on building healthy communities rather than shoring up the casino economy? What public policies would make our communities more secure? Through discussion and education, participants might find ways to engage in a larger program of change around the financial system, economic development, tax policy, and other elements of our shared economic life.

Clubs can be autonomous or affiliated with an existing institution, secular or religious. The ideal size is 10 to 20 adults who make a commitment to an initial five meetings with a facilitator. Clubs then decide whether to continue meeting and self-manage. Starter sessions have been developed and include "The Roots of the Economic Crisis," "Personal Responses to Economic and Ecological Change," "Things We Can Do Together," and "Actions to Transform the Economy." [...]

Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias

Michel Foucault

This text, entitled "Des Espace Autres," and published by the French journal Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité in October, 1984, was the basis of a lecture given by Michel Foucault in March 1967

The great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history: with its themes of development and of suspension, of crisis, and cycle, themes of the ever-accumulating past, with its great preponderance of dead men and the menacing glaciation of the world. The nineteenth century found its essential mythological resources in the second principle of thermaldynamics- The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment. I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein. One could perhaps say that certain ideological conflicts animating present-day polemics oppose the pious descendents of time and the determined inhabitants of space. Structuralism, or at least which is grouped under this slightly too general name, is the effort to establish, between elements that could have been connected on a temporal axis, an ensemble of relations that makes them appear as juxtaposed, set off against one another, implicated by each other-that makes them appear, in short, as a sort of configuration. Actually, structuralism does not entail denial of time; it does involve a certain manner of dealing with what we call time and what we call history.

Yet it is necessary to notice that the space which today appears to form the horizon of our concerns, our theory, our systems, is not an innovation; space itself has a history in Western experience, and it is not possible to disregard the fatal intersection of time with space. One could say, by way of retracing this history of space very roughly, that in the Middle Ages there was a hierarchic ensemble of places: sacred places and profane plates: protected places and open, exposed places: urban places and rural places (all these concern the real life of men). In cosmological theory, there were the supercelestial places as opposed to the celestial, and the celestial place was in its turn opposed to the terrestrial place. There were places where things had been put because they had been violently displaced, and then on the contrary places where things found their natural ground and stability. It was this complete hierarchy, this opposition, this intersection of places that constituted what could very roughly be called medieval space: the space of emplacement.

....In any case I believe that the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space, no doubt a great deal more than with time. Time probably appears to us only as one of the various distributive operations that are possible for the elements that are spread out in space,

Now, despite all the techniques for appropriating space, despite the whole network of knowledge that enables us to delimit or to formalize it, contemporary space is perhaps still not entirely desanctified (apparently unlike time, it would seem, which was detached from the sacred in the nineteenth century). To be sure a certain theoretical desanctification of space (the one signaled by Galileo's work) has occurred, but we may still not have reached the point of a practical desanctification of space. And perhaps our life is still governed by a certain number of oppositions that remain inviolable, that our institutions and practices have not yet dared to break down. These are oppositions that we regard as simple givens: for example between private space and public space, between family space and social space, between cultural space and useful space, between the space of leisure and that of work. All these are still nurtured by the hidden presence of the sacred.[...]

HETEROTOPIAS

First there are the utopias. Utopias are sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces.

There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places - places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society - which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias. I believe that between utopias and these quite other sites, these heterotopias, there might be a sort of mixed, joint experience, which would be the mirror. The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there.

As for the heterotopias as such, how can they be described? What meaning do they have? We might imagine a sort of systematic description - I do not say a science because the term is too galvanized now -that would, in a given society, take as its object the study, analysis, description, and 'reading' (as some like to say nowadays) of these different spaces, of these other places. As a sort of simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space in which we live, this description could be called heterotopology.

Its first principle is that there is probably not a single culture in the world that fails to constitute heterotopias. That is a constant of every human group. But the heterotopias obviously take quite varied forms, and perhaps no one absolutely universal form of heterotopia would be found. We can however class them in two main categories.

The second principle of this description of heterotopias is that a society, as its history unfolds, can make an existing heterotopia function in a very different fashion; for each heterotopia has a precise and determined function within a society and the same heterotopia can, according to the synchrony of the culture in which it occurs, have one function or another.

Third principle. The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible. Thus it is that the theater brings onto the rectangle of the stage, one after the other, a whole series of places that are foreign to one another; thus it is that the cinema is a very odd rectangular room, at the end of which, on a two-dimensional screen, one sees the projection of a three-dimensional space, but perhaps the oldest example of these heterotopias that take the form of contradictory sites is the garden. We must not forget that in the Orient the garden, an astonishing creation that is now a thousand years old, had very deep and seemingly superimposed meanings. The traditional garden of the Persians was a sacred space that was supposed to bring together inside its rectangle four parts representing the four parts of the world, with a space still more sacred than the others that were like an umbilicus, the navel of the world at its center (the basin and water fountain were there); and all the vegetation of the garden was supposed to come together in this space, in this sort of microcosm. As for carpets, they were originally reproductions of gardens (the garden is a rug onto which the whole world comes to enact its symbolic perfection, and the rug is a sort of garden that can move across space). The garden is the smallest parcel of the world and then it is the totality of the world. The garden has been a sort of happy, universalizing heterotopia since the beginnings of antiquity (our modern zoological gardens spring from that source).

Fourth principle. Heterotopias are most often linked to slices in time - which is to say that they open onto what might be termed, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronies. The heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time. This situation shows us that the cemetery is indeed a highly heterotopic place since, for the individual, the cemetery begins with this strange heterochrony, the loss of life, and with this quasi-eternity in which her permanent lot is dissolution and disappearance.

Fifth principle. Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable. In general, the heterotopic site is not freely accessible like a public place. Either the entry is compulsory, as in the case of entering a barracks or a prison, or else the individual has to submit to rites and purifications. To get in one must have a certain permission and make certain gestures. Moreover, there are even heterotopias that are entirely consecrated to these activities of purification -purification that is partly religious and partly hygienic, such as the hammin of the Moslems, or else purification that appears to be purely hygienic, as in Scandinavian saunas.

Sixth principle. The last trait of heterotopias is that they have a function in relation to all the space that remains. This function unfolds between two extreme poles. Either their role is to create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory (perhaps that is the role that was played by those famous brothels of which we are now deprived). Or else, on the contrary, their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled. This latter type would be the heterotopia, not of illusion, but of compensation, and I wonder if certain colonies have not functioned somewhat in this manner. In certain cases, they have played, on the level of the general organization of terrestrial space, the role of heterotopias. I am thinking, for example, of the first wave of colonization in the seventeenth century, of the Puritan societies that the English had founded in America and that were absolutely perfect other places. I am also thinking of those extraordinary Jesuit colonies that were founded in South America: marvelous, absolutely regulated colonies in which human perfection was effectively achieved. The Jesuits of Paraguay established colonies in which existence was regulated at every turn. The village was laid out according to a rigorous plan around a rectangular place at the foot of which was the church; on one side, there was the school; on the other, the cemetery-, and then, in front of the church, an avenue set out that another crossed at fight angles; each family had its little cabin along these two axes and thus the sign of Christ was exactly reproduced. Christianity marked the space and geography of the American world with its fundamental sign.

The daily life of individuals was regulated, not by the whistle, but by the bell. Everyone was awakened at the same time, everyone began work at the same time; meals were at noon and five o'clock-, then came bedtime, and at midnight came what was called the marital wake-up, that is, at the chime of the churchbell, each person carried out her/his duty.

Brothels and colonies are two extreme types of heterotopia, and if we think, after all, that the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea and that, from port to port, from tack to tack, from brothel to brothel, it goes as far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their gardens, you will understand why the boat has not only been for our civilization, from the sixteenth century until the present, the great instrument of economic development (I have not been speaking of that today), but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination. The ship is the heterotopia par excellence. In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates.

Community Arts Singapore:
Framework for a Community Indicator System

Prof. Dr. Victor YU

Adapted from The Journal of International Social Research | Volume 2/6 Winter 2009

As Singapore moves forward into the new year, the next phase of its development will be based on the creative capacity of its people, both local as well as foreign talents. The National Arts Council together with its partners from the five districts of Singapore, the Community Development Councils, creates various platforms for community engagement by integrating arts and culture into the lives of its residents.

Arts and culture have often been neglected in efforts to assess quality of life in Singapore. It is essential to integrate arts and culture-related measures into a Community Indicator System. This system should comprise of periodically collected measures that monitor quality of life at the community level. A framework for a Community Indicator System can be developed. The framework is based on the assumption that inclusion of arts, culture and creativity in quality of life measures is more meaningful when it relies on the collaborative efforts of the government and the community.

Inclusive communities are productive communities. This is the basic principle of a democratic country. Every person and neighbourhood deserves the opportunity to participate in government decision-making, to contribute to economic development through individual and cooperative initiative, and to share in the fruits of prosperity. The Singapore government encourages its citizens to organize effectively through various community and grassroots organisations, to solve their own problems, improve their environment and to contribute to the overall productivity of their community.

Community arts education programmes can play a number of important roles, especially for the youth. These include:
1. Contributing significantly to improved critical thinking, problem solving and decision making. It provides an experience for participants to learn technical and interpersonal skills important for collective organizing.
2. Involving the communication, interpretation and understanding of complex symbols
3. Fostering higher-order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation and judgement.
4. Improving individual health. Engaging in creative activity or attending arts
events appears to improve physical health (Angus 1999; Baklien 200; Ball and Keating 2002; Bygren, Konlan and Johansson 1996). The reason could be that arts have the ability to relieve stress.

The arts reach young people in many ways, appealing to the diverse strengths, interests and ways of social engagement (McKay, Reid, Tremblay & Pelletier, 1996). Arts can break down barriers and create trust, particularly in situations where historically there has been a lack of trust. Finally, the arts and performance serve to bring the residents together, creating forums in which other issues can be discussed and neighbours can become acquainted. This is especially important as many heartlanders do not have much opportunities to interact with their neighbours due to the hectic lifestyle of many Singaporeans.

Many studies have been done to show how arts increase social capital and community cohesion (Costello 1998; Dolan, 1995; Dreeszen, 1992; Fritschner and Hoffman, 1984; Krieger, 2001; Landry et. Al 1996; Matarasso 1997; Matzke 2000; Murphy 1995; Ogilvie 2000; Preston 1983). Community arts programs involve community members in a creative activity leading to a public performance or exhibit. It provides a way for communities to express themselves and enables artists to engage in creative activities with communities.

The information for this study has been gathered in several ways: The most basic approach is simply to analyse the data collected by statistical agencies. The research approach also includes exploring the literature on the subject, by conducting visits to community events, arts and arts-related institutions, and by conducting telephone, face-to-face interviews and survey questionnaires.

Telephone and face-to-face interviews and survey questionnaires were carried out with a total of 50 individuals, companies and local authorities who are involved in the arts. These included policy makers, artists and staff from arts companies who have a particular focus on delivering the arts to the communities. Surveyed arts organisation are involved in multiple art forms; dance (25%), theatre (25%), music (20%), visual arts (20%) and literary arts (10%). The research interviews were designed and conducted in a manner that encouraged linguistic discourse and not in a way that sought a response (answer) to a specified stimulus (question). Questions asked were of an open nature and designed more to empower and enable respondents to tell their story rather than to elicit a specific response. Respondents were encouraged to elaborate on their responses. Additional questions were used to probe where clarifications or contextual understanding was required. These varied from one interview to another depending upon the respondent's story. The value which individuals attach to the arts will also impact on their responses. This in-lack of standardization of the interviews was necessary to ensure the validity of the data to gain a thorough understanding of the knowledge and views of the respondents.

The site visits were designed to provide a qualitative understanding of how individual arts organizations approach the task of building arts participation. Topics that have been discussed include how organizations defined its participation goals; how these goals related to its broader mission; how it designed and implemented its participation strategies; what techniques it used; how it interacted with its broader communities; how it defined and measured progress towards its goals; and what it viewed as major challenges to its participation-building programs.

The four guiding principles below help the researcher in formulating a framework for a neighbourhood indicator system:

1) Definition of arts, culture and creativity depends on the values, preferences and realities of the residents and stakeholders in a given community.

2) The concept of participation in which the residents and stakeholders engage in arts, culture and creativity

3) Arts, culture and creative expressions are infused with multiple meanings simultaneously

4) Opportunities for participation often rely on arts-specific and other resources.

The proposed framework consists of these principles plus four parameters that serve both as domains of inquiry and as dimensions of measurement. The four parameters are:

a) Presence – of creative expressions in a given community. Artists should be recognised for their value of their art first.

b) Participation – by people in these creative expressions. Studies have shown that certain groups are under-represented in participation in arts and cultural activities. These are low socio-economic groups and ethnic minority groups. The barriers to their participation may include lack of diversity in representation of the arts and lack of their own culture portrayed, language barriers, fear of racism and social constraints. The central goals of community development rely on residents having the opportunity to express their values, be self-reliant, and have greater participation and accountability in their community. This is accomplished by education, residents' participation, consensus building and access to information. Community development empowers communities to position local issues within a larger political context.

c) Impacts – of these creative expressions and participation in them to community-building outcomes. Participation in arts and cultural activities has been shown to result in the gaining of new skills, improve informal and formal learning, increase self-esteem and feeling of self-worth, promote social cohesion and community empowerment. For ethnic minority groups such as Indians and Sikhs, participation in cultural activities relating to their own cultures can result in enhanced sense of pride within the ethnic community.

d) Support – in the form of financial, organisation, infrastructure, human resources and education to bring opportunities for participation in these creative expressions. Research has shown that there is a link between cultural participation and increased literacy and that participation in music and visual arts is linked to being above average in reading, maths and behaviour. Participation in arts education can lead not only the development of arts and knowledge skills, but also the development of communication and social skills.

Proposed Framework for Arts Research and Measurement
The study also found out that while many arts organisations are aware of the importance of engaging audience in socially inclusive activities, they have not done so. The respondents have cited constraints in time, human and financial resources as the main reasons. The survey found that 75% of the respondents agreed that arts can play a key role in fostering community bonding. At the same time, 76% of the respondents felt that the government can do more to help individual artists develop their talents and business.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:
a. Values, Preferences, Beliefs, Realities of different ethnic groups
b . Involvement of community
c. Creativity Presence
d. Opportunities for Creative Expressions

DOMAINS OF INQUIRY AND MEASUREMENT
a. Creativity Presence and Sustainability
b. Community Participation (engagement, expression, dialogue)
c. Social Impact (sense of belonging, and respect between residents, arts community, business and government
d. Government Support (Financial / Cultural Infrastructure / Human Resource / Education)

Engaging the local community can increase audience attendance at theatres, art galleries, and arts-related events. The social impact, in turn, promotes the creation of a cultural sector in Singapore, enhancing the image of the nation and promoting Singapore as the international stage with events such as the Singapore Arts Festival. 70% of the respondents agreed that arts activities successfully help to bring in visitors and tourists to Singapore. A majority of them also felt more positive about the place where the festivals took place, and felt that they have become more interested in the arts as a result. Arts and culture are development tools that can contribute to building networks and trust in the community, and help create a sense of belonging.

A strong sense of belonging to one's community can be important for social engagement and cohesiveness. The study shows that 68% of the participants have a stronger sense of belonging to their community An interesting finding from the survey showed that 68% of the respondents felt that the government does not consider public opinion seriously before implementing certain arts policies. This could mean that the respondents felt there could be more consultation of public views before certain policies are made. The common criticism is that the government has already made up its mind to introduce certain policies, and seek public opinion afterwards.

One of the key recommendations from this study is that further research should be encouraged to carry out long-term impact assessment studies in personal and educational development of young people's participation in museum activities. Museums should be proactive in responding to community needs. At present, many see museums as mere buildings which house artefacts. The contribution of museums to cultural inclusion could be further studied. [...]

Service Aesthetics

Steven Henry Madoff

Artforum

THE ATTITUDES AND TECHNIQUES of artists have clearly buckled and changed many times over the past century, as industrialism became postindustrialism and first-world enterprise shifted from goods to services while manual production was shunted to outlying zones of cheap labor. The significance of these shifts is a central focus of Helen Molesworth's 2003 essay "Work Ethic," in which she describes how artists—in their working ethos, methods, and social legitimacy in relation to other workers—are strapped to the twin engines of the economy and the technologies that drive it. Art historian Benjamin H. D. Buchloh explored related issues when he formulated the notion of an "aesthetic of administration" in a piece in October in 1990, arguing that the postwar period's concentration of power in the hands of managers "administering labor and production (rather than producing)" became a working model for Conceptual artists in the 1960s and after.

How have more recent artists modified their practices in view of our own epoch's social and economic tumult and transformations? During the '90s, critic and curator Nicolas Bourriaud famously looked at one strand of recent art that he characterized using the term relational aesthetics. His unique formulation of a kind of socially based art took shape just as the separation of art and life, author and audience, manual workers and knowledge workers, and the art market and artists' resistance to it all reached what seemed a historical point of tension, if not outright implosion. The art that Bourriaud focused on—by Liam Gillick, Dominique Gonzalez Foerster, Philippe Parreno, and Rirkrit Tiravanija, among others—mapped and reflected this moment. In the "culture of use," as Bourriaud aptly phrased it, artists were attempting to make socially relevant art outside the constraints of the market, pitting commodified objects against the slipperiness of a post-Duchampian Conceptualism that broke the logic between labor and exchange value, production and worth, use and uselessness, author and audience, centralized power and autonomous agency.

The artists of relational aesthetics critiqued the power of the State and of capital by emphasizing the power of the crowd that participates in and completes their artworks. Yet it is becoming ever more clear today that there is another category of art that offers a different way to define artistic work in relation to social praxis and the issue of identity: an art that focuses not so much on the social relations of the artist and audience but on the atomized power of individual relationships within the social whole; an art focused not only on the artist's autonomy but also on the contested idea of the self in our post-Fordist era.

... AS A FORM OF ART, service aesthetics can be traced to the social activism of the '60s, but while it often shares a critical stance toward issues ranging from the environment to labor, and from capitalism itself to the familiar status of art-as-commodity, what sets it apart from the activism of the '60s as well as from relational art is that the practitioners of service art are not drawn primarily to collective experience. The models they use typically replicate the transactional sites that fill the landscape of the service economy: doctor's offices, clinics, hair salons, and shops. The audience is not seen as an ad hoc participatory community for social disquisition, but each viewer is instead implicated as an individual participant—implicated not in the general sense as an audience member but specifically as a client to be served. These service acts do not necessarily imply, as Joseph Beuys posited in his idea of social sculpture, that every person harbors an inner creativity. Instead, the works simply reflect the most common aspect of service economies in developed nations: Everyone is an individual holder of legislative rights and a consumer of commercial services. Within service economies there are entrenched infrastructures that provide services of every kind, which consumer-clients depend on as entitlements of social good (particularly in countries where they are distributed fairly) and as staples of private well-being. Precedents for contemporary works of service art have continuously appeared over the past few decades. [...]

The commodification of experience that is intrinsic to the service economy (so easily captured in those commercial terms customization and personalization) has always been the subject of service aesthetics, which attempts to rescue the service act from anonymity, standardization, and indifference through personal attention and its implicit claims for the sovereignty of personal agency, individuality, and difference. And while the settings of service pieces may have been updated with the times, the establishment of an ethical transactional gesture remains at the core of this art, which also recognizes that reciprocity between individuals is at the heart of every service act, though often buried under the mechanisms of capital.

For Barbara T. Smith's 1973 performance Feed Me at San Francisco's now-defunct Museum of Conceptual Art, the artist made herself the raw material of service—available to anyone who came into a closed room to do anything they wanted with her that was representative of "feeding," including physically interacting with her. In 1979, artist Robin Winters, one of the most important precursors of today's service-oriented art, joined with Peter Fend, Coleen Fitzgibbon, Jenny Holzer, Peter Nadin, and Richard Prince to open an office on lower Broadway, where they provided "practical aesthetic services" including curatorial feedback for artists. In 1989, Winters posted a sign in the window of Willoughby Sharp's gallery in New York that announced FREE CONSULTATIONS and gave advice to walk-in clients for a month. More recently, Michael Bramwell performed Building Sweeps, 1995–96, in which he swept the halls of 64 West 128th Street in Harlem for a year, and in 1998, Lee Mingwei's Dining Project—a piece in which Lee cooked private dinners after-hours in the staff kitchen, hosting a single guest at a time—took place at the Whitney Museum. (Other food-related works may spring to mind, such as Gordon Matta-Clark's restaurant Food in '70s SoHo or Tiravanija's many cooking pieces, but what distinguishes those works is that the author is dissolved into the group and the enunciation is collective, while in service art proper the author remains very much at the center of the work's transaction with its single benefactor and collaborator.)

SERVICE ART IS MOST OFTEN, though not exclusively, presented under the aegis of art institutions and galleries. Just as the Duchampian readymade slipped out of the real world into the space designated for art, sowing irony and criticality, these works can also be read as ironic through their placement. A schism is established between the conventions of the art space and the insertion of a site plucked from a wholly other realm (therapist's office, catered dinner, etc.). But this familiar conceptual inflection is only one détournement undertaken by service aesthetics, and there is a crucial distinction from the work of Duchamp. While the setting may still be ironic, the execution of such work is generally intended to frame a sincere transaction, with the priority of rendering an actual service—giving something of real use to the client in an act of functional benevolence. [...]

Social Aesthetics

Lars Bang Larsen

AFTERALL, London, #1, 1999.

What I choose to call 'social aesthetics' is an artistic attitude focusing on the world of acts, and which experiments with the transgressions of various economies. The term is coined as a common denominator, as the one that simply lends itself with the least resistance from the internal and external dynamics of some recent and historic artistic and art-related examples. One could probably say that the examples below describe a recent tradition of art as activism; yet perhaps closer to a discussion of the uses of art-institutional space than is commonly seen in art activism. The term "ephemeral" art is also often used in this discussion. Common to the understanding of the eleven examples is that the dynamic between artistic activity and the realms that are, by tradition, relegated to the fabric of the social hardly describes a dialectic. Social and aesthetic understanding are integrated into each other. Here, some forms of social aesthetic activity have deliberately been launched within the art circuit as art projects; others qualify, or qualify for, artistic discussion after their actualisation in other contexts.

What I choose to call 'social aesthetics' is an artistic attitude focusing on the world of acts, and which experiments with the transgressions of various economies. The term is coined as a common denominator, as the one that simply lends itself with the least resistance from the internal and external dynamics of some recent and historic artistic and art-related examples. One could probably say that the examples below describe a recent tradition of art as activism; yet perhaps closer to a discussion of the uses of art-institutional space than is commonly seen in art activism. The term "ephemeral" art is also often used in this discussion. Common to the understanding of the eleven examples is that the dynamic between artistic activity and the realms that are, by tradition, relegated to the fabric of the social hardly describes a dialectic. Social and aesthetic understanding are integrated into each other. The same thing goes for the dichotomy of institutional/non-institutional space.

The present examples all share the fact that art and the art institution as resource become frames for activity that is real, because social interaction and the observation of its effects without conceptual rigidity is allowed.

The social aesthetic artwork involves a utilitarian or practical aspect that gives a sense of purpose and direct involvement; in the construction of the subject's interaction with culture it could be said that social aesthetics discusses a notion of the lasting phenomenon which substantiates a critical cultural analysis, a reason for one's existence. It is a way of involving the metaphorical value of artistic concepts and projects on other professional spheres, such as architecture, design, financial structures etc., either as an understanding integrated in an artistic project, or as process of decoding and actualising art-related activity in its location in culture. In this way artistic work assumes a general focus on performance in a social perspective, either by means of its own nature as a forth-running project without closure or by the real activity it occasions. This often involves collective organisation and an employment of art's capacities for going against professional specialisation.

Nonetheless it would be wrong to say that the opposite of social aesthetics is a painting or a sculpture, or any other traditional form of artistic expression. Social aesthetics can't be observed alone, in this sense the term is double bound: it says that the social probably can't operate in a meaningful way without the aesthetic and vice versa, hence both the social and the sphere of art and aesthetics inform it. [...]

Some Thoughts on Art and Education

Harrell Fletcher

2007

Collective Learning
I teach at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon, and I have a class currently where we started by having all of the students tell their life stories to everyone else. It took three classes to get through them all, but they revealed many interesting things that wouldn't come out in more cursory introductions. Based on connections the students had we organized a series of field trips to places like a Veterans hospital, an alternative kindergarten, a campus fraternity, a high school geometry class, a Native American community center, a radio station, etc. From those experiences the students broke off into groups to develop projects like a radio show about grandmothers, and a lecture series in the frat house living room. Some of the field trips didn't develop into projects, but were still valued as experiences. I like to think of this method as a way to lessen my role as the authority in the classroom and instead we share that role and all become collective learners.

Project Research
The way that I work is that I'm often asked to go somewhere to do a project, an art center or a university gallery or something like that. Generally it's a place that I would never have gone to had it not been for the offer to do something there. Examples include Eastern Kentucky; Croatia; Vietnam; Hartford, Connecticut; Houston, Texas, etc. I use these travel opportunities to learn about the place that I go to. This happens in a few different ways. I might read some books and or watch some documentary films about that place and try to figure out a project from that information. Or I might just go there and wander around and talk to some people that I run across. Sometimes I wind up working with the people I meet on a project and am taken deep into their lives. I think of that as primary learning experiences, or first hand learning experiences. The book and film research is secondary learning. I like both forms. The part that is really interesting to me is that on my own I wouldn't have learned about the things I learn about at all-I allow the direction of my research to be out of my hands at the start. I still determine specifically what I'm drawn to and want to spend more time working with and only choose things that seem interesting to me. Once I've done the raw research I sometimes turn aspects of it into projects for the public to experience. I want to share what I find interesting. It's sort of like referring people to a restaurant that you like or a movie, but in my case it might wind up being a video made at a gas station based on James Joyce's Ulysses or an exhibition about the Vietnam War based on a war museum in Vietnam.

Experiential Education
When I was in college as an undergraduate at Humboldt State University, which is in a very small hippy town in northern California, I took a class from a teacher named Bill Duvall, he had co-written an important environmental book called Deep Ecology. The class I took was called Experiential Education. On the first day of class Bill Duval asked each of the students to pick an outdoor physical activity to do during class periods for the rest of the semester. Some people chose surfing, some bike riding, and some kayaking. I decided to walk on railroad tracks. I got really good at it, by the end I could walk on the tracks for miles at a time without falling off, I could also run on them, jump from one track to the other, spin around on them, and walk on them with my eyes closed. The class didn't meet for the rest of the semester until the last weekend when we all meet up on a camping trip to talk about our personal experiences of doing our activities. Somehow I think about that class often, where as most of the other classes I took in college and all of the tests and papers and discussions that were a part of them are long forgotten.

Open Source Approaches
In the art world there is so much emphasis on originality. Artists buy right into that, and even though they are always influenced by other people they try pretending that they are not. The galleries promote this idea and encourage "signature styles", rarification and the star/celebrity system. I can see why the galleries would like that way of doing business because it allows them to inflate prices and make demand, but for artists there is no real benefit. It just suppresses the true way that people develop their work through adapting and hybridizing and creates an environment where artists feel like they have to protect and make secret their process rather than sharing it freely and feeling good about doing that, which I think would be much more healthy both for individuals and as a system.

Social Practice as Opposed to Studio Practice
Let me define "art" as anything that anyone calls "art". That can be a maker or viewer. By calling something "art" it doesn't make it art forever just during the time that it is being appreciated as art. Similarly, I don't think, as Beuys said, that everyone is an artist, I just think that everyone has the potential to be an artist. If anyone wants to be an artist they can be one as far as I'm concerned and that is regardless of their credentials. You definitely don't need an academic degree to be an artist. Most of my favorite artists don't have academic degrees.

I think an artist is someone who gets to do whatever they want (within whatever limits might be containing them-financial, legal, ethical, psychological.) Other professions or practices don't have this level of freedom, dentists need to do dental work, dog trainers train dogs, etc. Those could be fun or not so fun professions to have, but regardless that is what those people need to do until they decide that they want to do something else. Artists can do a project about dentistry or dogs or anything else they are interested in at any time and then can do something else right after or even during, and still remain an artist.

Social Practice in regards to art can be looked at as anything that isn't studio practice. By studio practice I mean the dominate way of making art-spending time in a studio working out personal interests into the form of paintings, or objects, or photos, or videos, or some other pretty easily commodifiable form. The often unspoken intention for this studio work is that it will go off to a desirable commercial gallery, be reproduced in art magazines, and eventually wind up in museum collections, while making the artist into a celebrity of sorts, and paying all of the bills. That is the carrot on the stick that keeps this dominate approach alive and kicking, even though very few of these studio practice artists ever get their work shown at all, and most just give up and find some other way to pay off their student loans.

I've just started up a Social Practice MFA program at Portland State University. There are currently eight students enrolled. They don't get studios like the other MFA students and instead have a shared office and a shared classroom space. Currently we are looking for a more public version of these spaces possibly in the form of an off-grid alternative energy portable building that might locate itself in different parts of the city in vacant lots and at grade schools, etc. The students take some classes with the other studio MFA students but they also spend time on projects in various collaborative groups working with the city of Portland, various non-profits, and applying for public art projects in other places, as well as doing their own individual social practice work. I'm trying to show that artists can actually have sustained and supported careers within the public in ways that aren't possible when the commercial gallery is the primary system that artists are trying to respond to. So far it is going very well.

Learning Environments
I like to read about alternative education for kids from the 60's and 70's. There is one writer I'm particularly fond of named John Holt. He wrote a great book called How Children Learn, and then about twenty years later he revised the book by adding comments on his own writing in the margins of the book. He thought that a lot of the text he'd written twenty years earlier didn't make any sense. One of the things he did agree with is that traditional classrooms are not set up as learning environments because the kids are divided up in terms of age, and because they are forced to sit in desks and not move or talk unless they raise their hand and are called on and then only to regurgitate what the teacher has already told them. He says that instead a learning environment would be one that has a mix of ages and experiences in one place so that people can learn from each other, and that learning happens through doing activities and talking with other people, so those things shouldn't be suppressed. In later books he suggests that typical schools are really more like prisons for kids rather than places of learning. I tend to agree.

Making Work That is Accessible to Both Art and Non-Art Publics
When I was younger it seemed like it was good to make art that was very obscure, so obscure that even I had no idea what it was about. If anyone asked I would just say that I wanted the viewer to have their own interpretation of what the work was about, but really I now think that was just a way of avoiding having to know what I was doing or why I was doing it. Then it occurred to me that it might be nice if not only I understood what I was doing, but that even non-art trained publics would be able to find the work accessible. Even though I'd never been taught to think in that way it turned out to not be very hard to do. One of my favorite approaches is to do work with a local person or group of people that I met around the place where I am going to have a show. That way they feel invested in the show and invite their friends and family to see it. Working with these people made me avoid doing anything obscure and instead I found ways of making engaging projects in pretty straightforward ways [...]

To Move a Wine Bar in Brooklyn,
a Tiny Parade (Mermaid Included)

Cara Buckley

NY Times | March 29, 2009

It took circus people, metalworkers, pirates and one very cold mermaid to raise a bar in Red Hook, Brooklyn, on Sunday.

The event was the moving of the Tini Wine Bar — formerly of 414 Van Brunt Street and indeed rather wee — to a new space five blocks north on the same street, the waterfront neighborhood's main vein. Tini's owners, Monica Byrne and Leisah Swenson, decided to relocate a few months ago to their home décor shop, Home/Made, after a dispute over their lease.

They resolved to make the move with plenty of bombast and the help of customers and friends. Ms. Byrne, inspired by Amish barn raisings, christened it a "bar raising" and asked locals to show up early Sunday to dismantle, pack and move the contents, via a procession up Van Brunt.

About five dozen locals materialized despite Sunday morning's gray sky and drizzle, many bleary-eyed after toasting Tini's final night on Saturday with plenty of wine and cheer. Costumes were encouraged but not required, and among the people who showed up were a stilt-walker, a few pirates, a man wearing a blue plushy bathrobe and a orange and pink feathered headdress ("I made the hat for Burning Man," he explained) and Carolina Salguero, who was strapped into a fully rigged miniaturized wooden ship outfit.

"I'm a traffic schooner," said Ms. Salguero. "Every move needs a traffic schooner."

Beatrice Giovanniello, the owner of Atlantis, a furniture and upholstery shop up the street, arrived in a skintight, blue-sequined mermaid dress — so snug it shortened her walk to mincing steps — a tiara, a golden tail and a plastic white sash that read "Ms. Red Hook."

Around 11:20 a.m., she draped herself across the top of Tini's wooden and metal bar, which by that time was resting on an open trailer across the street, and stayed there, even though goose bumps dotted her bare shoulders and arms. Derek Dominy, a jeweler who co-owns Metal and Thread up the street, had dismantled the bar with a portable band saw, and planned to weld it back together when it reached its new home.

Almost everything came out of Tini — light fixtures, shelves, the air-conditioner above the front door and the bar's signature white couch, "essential to the social life of Red Hook," Ms. Salguero said — even the bathroom sink. Ms. Swenson supervised the packing while Ms. Byrne prepared a thank-you feast of roast chicken and potatoes, kielbasa, artisanal breads and cheeses and many bottles of wine, served at Home/Made, at 293 Van Brunt. Ms. Swenson and Ms. Byrne had rented the space two years ago, using its kitchen to cater events. They plan to open it as a restaurant in mid-April under the Home/Made name, and will also sell furniture made by Ms. Swenson.

Neighbors and regulars had mixed feelings about Tini's move; they were sad to see it go but relieved that it would not be lost. Together with LeNell's, a cherished and recently shuttered liquor store next door, Tini had helped anchor a microneighborhood within Red Hook. (The bar owners' departure was fractious: Ms. Swenson and Ms. Byrne had a sublease, and their landlord, Liz Larie, said in a phone interview that they owed the leaseholder around $18,000 for improvements the leaseholder had previously made, a claim Ms. Swenson and Ms. Byrne denied).

By 11:37 a.m., Tini was cleaned out and the processional was ready to go. A local musician, Steve Smithie, known as Smitty, strummed his resonator guitar, the stilt walker walked, the man in the blue bathrobe juggled three bowling pins, and Ms. Giovanniello waved and preened, unfazed by the helium balloons that were snagged on her tail.

Eight minutes later, the merry procession arrived at Tini's new home. Revelers filled Home/Made and began eating cheese and pouring wine. Ms. Giovanniello thawed out and took off her tail.

"Have you ever seen anything as cool?" asked Ms. Byrne, ebullient and red-faced after a morning over the stove. "We asked a few people in the neighborhood to help, and suddenly the world is here." [...]

Tools of Engagement:
The New Practice of User-Centered Design

Robert Fabricant

www.core77.com

This is a time to ask questions. Not small questions but big, fundamental questions. What role did Design play in contributing to our current global crisis? And what role should/will Designers play in leading us out of this mess? The gloves have come off over the last few months with a raft of posts by influential design thinkers questioning the impact of Innovation and Design Thinking, two of the most fashionable elements of contemporary design practice, on business practices.
We have been operating under the assumption that the primary challenge is to convince businesses to focus on fulfilling user needs with higher quality products, with more meaningful experiences? But what if the 'users' themselves are the problem?

I have already written about the drive for more direct social engagement among designers, particularly young designers, as reflected in programs like TU/e and design firms like Project H. By embracing a more active form of engagement and influence, these designers are asking perhaps the most fundamental question of all: do we need to shift the conventional notion of User-Centered Design (UCD) and rethink the very foundation of contemporary design practice?

This may sound like blasphemy, particularly at times like these. With people struggling in so many areas of society it would seem to be more important than ever to focus our efforts as designers on addressing specific, observed human needs. And I am not advocating that we abandon the methods of UCD wholesale. But is UCD sufficient? Is it the right compass to guide us toward the larger scale social changes that we need?

Over and over, I have seen how a UCD process will tend to emphasize certain benefits of an experience like 'convenience' over other, more meaningful sources of social value. In the hypercompetitive global marketplace, our clients often encourage us to identify unmet needs and desires that can help them differentiate their products and accelerate the familiar cycle of consumption and disposal. Yet, these desires are not purely manufactured. They often connect with deeply-felt needs for self-expression and personal fulfillment on the parts of our 'users'. This is particularly true as more and more devices become connected.

We have been operating under the assumption that the primary challenge is to convince businesses to focus on fulfilling user needs with higher quality products, with more meaningful experiences. But what if the 'users' themselves are the problem? What if users represent not a coherent set of needs but a messy mix of desires and influences? What, ultimately, is the role of the designer in sorting through these desires to determine which should drive our design decisions? And what frameworks, other than intuition, should we use to make these judgments?

Our design decisions are just one influence among many, not categorically different, and often not the most effective in motivating the user to achieve their desired aims.

What we are beginning to appreciate is the degree to which user behavior is ALWAYS subject to influence. We should not assume that our role is to somehow remove those influences so that the user can act in a free and unconstrained manner to achieve their own needs, as that is impossible. The user is not a self-contained actor in the system, but one who is largely and continually open to influences, the most important of which he/she is generally not conscious of. Our design decisions are just one influence among many, not categorically different, and often not the most effective in motivating the user to achieve their desired aims.

From the Individual to the Cooperative

As the notion of the 'end user' becomes more and more fuzzy, the center shifts. We are faced with tough decisions regarding the different forms of influence that we choose to embrace in our work. As we look for a compass relative to these decisions, perhaps the focus will shift from the individual to the community, from personal needs to social exchanges. As Jess McMullin correctly observes: "Groups and individuals are the yin and yang of influence. To convince a group often means convincing individuals. And convincing individuals often means convincing a group. Knowing who to focus on, and in what setting is the key question we have to answer when we want to affect a decision." If we want to impact these ecosystems on a large scale we must increasingly design for social systems, not individual needs.

This is particularly true in areas like energy and healthcare that are of increasing interest to the design community (particularly to designers who want to have a meaningful social impact). If we want to impact these ecosystems on a large scale we must increasingly design for social systems, not individual needs, for it is within cooperative systems that personal fulfillment has the best chance of intersecting with broader social values. And personal decision-making can achieve larger 'scale effects.' Folks like John Thackara have been calling our attention to this for some time: "It's about groups, communities, neighborhoods in which you have the capacity for a community to investigate and invest in solutions rather than individuals."

But engaging with communities is fundamentally different. We are not merely substituting one center (the user) for another (the group). With communities, the means of engagement and influence exist across the participants not within a single person. Value is created and shared dynamically through cooperative activities that are not often apparent from the outside. They emerge from within.

As Dan Arielly explains Predictably Irrational, market exchanges are fundamentally different than social exchanges: "So we live in two worlds: one characterized by social exchanges and the other characterized by market exchanges. And we apply different norms to these two kinds of relationships". And applying the rules of one to the other usually backfires. As much as we can look at the external symbols of communities (such as status and reputation) we cannot appreciate the nuance of social behavior without participating. Certainly not to the degree that is needed to support effective design solutions. We need to prototype from within. To participate. What forms of design practice are emerging in this new context?

What does this mean for your practice? I often cringe these days when I hear designers gravitate towards 'platform' as solutions. All too often, this as an excuse to avoid direct engagement IMHO--and the tough choices that we are hired to make as designers. Platform strategies only become meaningful in practice, when combined with a participatory approach and long term engagement, often within a single industry or community. We need to look at platforms not as an excuse to remain at a distance, but a call to engage. A call that I hope more designers will answer--to great effect. [...]

A Critique of Situated Cognition

Cf. Anderson, Reder, and Simon, "Situated Learning and Education," Educational Researcher, May 1996, pp. 5-11.

[...] Anderson, et al, have listed what they see as the four central claims of a situated learning perspective and have argued each is flawed:

Action is grounded in the concrete situation in which it occurs. Objection: It is true that Brazilian street sellers, who correctly calculate the cost of items which they sell in the streets, are unable to answer similar questions at school. But this is a demonstration that skills practiced outside of schools do not generalize to schools, not that arithmetic procedures taught in the classroom cannot be used by shop keepers. Indeed, skills like reading clearly transfer from one context to another.

Knowledge does not transfer between tasks. Objection: The psychological literature contains both success and failures to achieve transfer. Transfer between tasks depends on the amount of practice in the initial domain and the degree of shared cognitive elements. For example, subjects who learned one text editor learned subsequent editors more rapidly, with the number of procedural elements shared by two text editors predicting the amount of transfer.

Training in abstraction is of little use. Objection: This, Anderson, et al, say has been extended into an advocacy for apprenticeship training by those taking a situated perspective. In contrast, Anderson, et al, advocate a combination of abstract instruction and concrete examples. When they introduced real-world-like problems to situate high school algebra, they felt much class time was wasted on such clerical tasks as tabling and graphing, while relatively little time was spent relating algebraic expressions to the real-world situations. [Koedinger, et al, "Intelligent tutoring goes to school in the big city," in Proceedings of the 7th World Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Education, AACE, 1995, pp. 421-428.] We wonder whether their observation was due to the kinds of problems used or the teaching.

Instruction must be done in complex, social environments. Objection: Research in psychology shows training is often more effective when nearly independent parts are practiced first, before combining them. In team sports and orchestras, more time is spent on individual practice than group practice, although both are necessary. (Shouldn't the kind of knowledge, whether procedural or conceptual, matter? Learning how to factor and understanding the nature and uses of functions seem quite different.) Anderson, et al, also question the efficacy of cooperative learning when applied without requisite structuring or scripting. [...]

The Value of Visual Exploration:
Understanding Cultural Activities with Young People.

Roz Hall

The gallery education sector is operating within a climate in which the assessment of learning through provision of satisfactory evidence is becoming increasingly important. The Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), through the development of its 'Inspiring Learning for All' framework and advocacy of the five 'Generic Learning Outcomes' as the preferred methodology for measuring learning, has drawn attention to the need for museums to demonstrate the nature of learning outcomes. The priority for cultural organisations, according to the MLA, is to provide evidence-based accounts of the impact of learning on individuals and groups, thereby demonstrating how museums (and galleries) can contribute to a learning society. Undeniably, the approaches identified by the MLA provide a method for measuring learning outcomes, but arguably, there is as great a need for cultural organisations to develop methods for interrogating the specific learning processes occurring within their education projects, in order to gain a greater understanding of what and how learning occurs. It is this latter approach that is explored in The Value of Visual Exploration: Understanding Cultural Activities with Young People. The methodology outlined in this text takes as its starting point the processes of participatory art projects in order to develop 'an informed, process-generated approach
to evaluation.'

This timely book is based on a five-year action research project undertaken by Roz Hall between 1997 and 2002, which provided opportunities for young people to make images using photography and new media in informal contexts, such as Birmingham's Bull Ring markets. The overall tone of the text is established in the introduction where the cyclical, dynamic nature of action research is emphasised. The introduction also stresses that the book is exploring outcomes and issues that have emerged in a process that is ongoing, rather than a completed project. Subsequent chapters focus on the details of two projects: The Bull Ring Project and the Young, Queer and Safe? project, and include 'traces' of the process (i.e. images made during the projects and dialogue and diary entries), in order to map the process. The final chapter draws the major concepts together and provides arguments for implementing this methodology in the future. In this way, the text exists both as a documentation of the projects – evidenced through description and critical reflection by the author and the project participants – and an exposition of a particular form of evaluation.

The symbiotic relationship between documentation and evaluation is integral to the approach taken in the book. Central to these projects was the maintenance of a research diary, which was originally written by Roz Hall, but added to and amended on an ongoing basis by collaborators and commissioners. As Nick Stanley observes in the foreword, this diary accomplishes many different objectives, becoming both a process, a product and 'a venue where different agendas meet and are negotiated.' The open and collaborative nature of the diary is key, since, apart from documenting the development of the project, writing the diary entries encouraged the project leader and the participants to critically reflect on their practice as it progressed. This process of analysis and reflection informed the subsequent development of the project and ensured that the work progressed according to the participants' wishes and ambitions. In this way, the diary entries made explicit the expectations that all those involved had of the project and were used as benchmarks against which the progression and achievements of the project could be assessed, hence their value in terms of ongoing evaluation. [...]

Assessing the practice and potential of situated learning in the work of building sustainable communities

University of the West of England
Dr Ian Smith

We live in a complex world with complex problems that cross geographic, organisational and social boundaries in ways that cannot be always known in advance. In order to tackle such problems, professionals working towards the construction of sustainable communities have to both learn to learn over their working lives and to convert what they learn into collective action in the places where they work.

Learning can be thought of either as an activity done by individuals who might learn in formal settings (such as the classroom), in non-formal settings (such as work-based seminars) or in informal settings (in work).

Most learning is done in informal situations and may not be explicitly recognised by those who are doing the learning. Equally not all learning is done by the individual.

Collective or social learning is a process that structures individual learning in the workplace. Collective learning assumes some notion of learning together, although as with any social process, not all stakeholders will have an equal influence over what is learned since different stakeholders will have differing claims to expertise and knowledge. Collective learning implies advantages for organisations over individual learning since it involves building organisational capacity that can survive the inevitable turnover of key staff.

The problem is to assess the relative importance of these different forms of learning, acknowledging in advance that collective learning in project-based multidisciplinary working is problematic and relatively uncommon. However, it is also likely that both informal and social learning go on but are unrecognised by both the individuals and organisations doing the learning.

Beyond assessing current learning practice the research will explore the opportunities and constraints on both learning and implementing learning in work around building sustainable communities. It will investigate the nature of learning in work settings principally by working with professionals who are working in different ways to build sustainable communities.

Individual participants will be interviewed in order to explore their perceptions to learning and transformation, before we carry out inquiry groups where we bring together people representing different organisations and professionals to identify the practice of learning and transformation collectively.

This will be accompanied by key respondent interviews with line managers and the analysis of formal professional and organisational development strategies in key agencies.

In order to get a range of experiences we will be looking at three case study scenarios that touch on neighbourhood renewal ('urban' scenario), the regeneration of small towns ('rural' scenario) and the elaboration of a sustainable communities plan for a mid-sized settlement (such as Salisbury or Chippenham).

Each of these scenarios implies a need for agencies working around the theme of building sustainable communities to do something different, such as working with the resident community. The range of settlements will cover both the need to promote regeneration and the need to manage growth. Each of these scenarios will take place within the context of project-based (hence time-limited) multidisciplinary teams and so offer up the issue of where collective learning is to be lodged once a project is complete and the project team disbanded.

The final element of this research project is to convert what we learn and what we know already into learning material that can help professionals working on the 'sustainable communities' agenda to identify, recognise and encourage an environment for learning. This is work we will shape in partnership with the Regional Centre of Excellence and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). [...]

Bridging Classroom, Culture, and Community: Implications for Situated Learning

Kim Kennedy White
University of Colorado at Denver

What is Situated Learning?

Although inquiry and research on situated cognition and learning are largely areas of study in the last two decades, Dewey (1938) discussed situation and context in Logic and argued that "situations" are not isolated objects or events, but are connected within "a contextual whole" (p. 66). For Dewey, thinking is not a separate activity but part of interactive experiences within particular contexts.

Scholars often credit Vygotsky with providing the foundations for situated cognition when he argued that knowing, understanding, and thinking happen in socio-cultural contexts (Abdal-Haqq, 1998; Hendricks, 2001; Hung & Der-Thaq, 2001; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Learners develop cultural tools, such as material artifacts and language, in order to participate in social groups. Socio-cultural theory expanded situated cognition by analyzing the teaching and learning that takes place in non-school settings (Cole, 1995; Kirshner & Whitson, 1998).

Cross-cultural psychology research of the 1970s also recognized that learning takes place in real world settings (Rogoff & Chavajay, 1995). Researchers observed that people who are poor cognitive performers in classroom settings often "think impressively in their everyday lives" (p. 859). Educational scholars began to question how and why people learned differently in multiple settings and disagreed about terminology and units of analysis (Cole, 1995). Defining and understanding the concepts surrounding situated cognition and learning--situation, context, and activity--differ depending on perspective.

Brown, Collins, and Duguid (1989) point out that in situated cognition, "the activity in which knowledge is developed and deployed. . .is not separable from or ancillary to learning and cognition. Nor is it neutral. Rather, it is an integral part of what is learned" (par. 2). Situations occur in contexts, which are the integrated elements of the environment: the participants, activities, texts, tasks, or objects of particular situations. Within any situation, contexts weave together the contents of a place and time. Situated cognition involves activity, or the process of doing, participating, and completing tasks (Bredo, 1994; Cole, 1995).

Situated activities in school settings can add authenticity to typical classroom simulations. Certainly, simulations are a step toward situated cognition; but in addition to imitating skills that learners will later transfer to real settings, authentic activities are embedded in actual situations of their use and creation (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Wilson, 1993). Learners engage directly in activities that reflect events in everyday life; activities in which they can connect previous knowledge and integrate their own experiences, culturally or socially.

Lave and Wenger (1991) offered one of the most important contributions to situated learning theory. They positioned learning as "an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice" (p. 31), and argued that a situated perspective means that, essentially, every activity is situated. In this framework, learning is "fundamentally situated" and occurs as everyday events in which the context is an integral part of the process, exchanges are interactive and social in nature, and the use of tools is necessary (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989). In other words, rather than existing in isolation, situated learning occurs with other people, takes place within particular authentic activities, and is structured through the use of shared tools (Wilson, 1993; Choi & Hannafin, 1995).

Situated learning depends on interaction among people (Lave, 1988) within socially and culturally constructed settings (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wilson, 1993). Certainly, all learning, and arguably all human interaction, involves situations, contexts, and activities. However, Wilson (1993) argued that gaining skills and knowledge and constructing meaning within situated learning arenas require cognitive processes in "real world" contexts as opposed to the artificial simulations that are often found in classroom settings. [...]

Situated Cognition, Dynamic Systems, and Art:
On Artistic Creativity and Aesthetic Experience

Ingar Brinck
Lund University

The production and consumption of works of art are distinct processes, and as such rarely are considered together. Usually, art production is dealt with by theories of creativity or portraits of the individual artist, while the viewer's encounter with art is considered in analyses of aesthetic experience or explained by reference to empirical data about the mind/brain. This ap¬proach makes it seem as if artist and viewer relate to art in radically different ways. It may appear reasonable, inasmuch as the viewer's relationship to art in comparison to that of the artist is predominantly passive. Yet, seen from a cognitive point of view, artist and viewer have more in common than what distinguishes them.

Situated Cognition and Dynamic Processes
TSC stands for a bottom-up approach to cognition that has its basis in the claim that the evolution and development of cognition from simple to more complex processes are continuous (cf. Johnson & Rohrer 2006). The theory looks for support in the theory of biological evolution, data from developmental psychology, and analyses of the significance of the body for abstract thought by philosophers such as Dewey and Merleau-Ponty.

Indenpendently of each other, Dewey (1916) and Merleau-Ponty (1945) argued that rational operations grow out of embodied, biological activities in local environments, and that an account of abstract thinking must begin with the sensory-motor system. In line with this, TSC disagrees with theories that model cognition on conscious reasoning, as reflecting the ways thought processes are conceptu¬alised in language. Instead, TSC states that cognition is 'active' in the sense that cognitive processes emerge in concrete situations of physical action and socio-cultural practices. In integrating conation and affect, cognition is driven by, on the one hand, the agent's current needs and motivation and, on the other, the contingent, contextual elements that support immediate action. Judgments made on-line that do not properly distinguish emotionally laden evaluations from factual belief provide the motives for action. Both emotional and factual information are essential for initiating and achieving action (cf. Damasio 1994), and cannot be separated in the individual case. According to TSC, explicit conceptual reasoning plays a limited role for on-line cognition. For the most part, it is used either in retrospect to make sense of the past or anticipation of one's own or other's expected behavior in future situations.

Lave (1988) emphasizes that the social context of human beings is historical. Humans offload cognition onto the environment during on-going action and for future purposes. Knowledge, skills, techniques, and technology are shared and transmitted by being embodied in tools and artifacts as well as in behavior patterns, procedures, rituals, and habits. The physical and functional properties of the means are conditioning the ways in which the information may be articulated. Therefore, factors such as economy and access to raw materials play an important role in determining the level of cognitive complexity of a society. According to Lave (1988: 1), cognition is distributed, i.e., "stretched over, not divided among—mind, body, activity, and culturally organized settings (which include other actors)." It involves the components over which it is distributed essentially—whether natural and organic or artefactual, they are constitutive of the cognitive activities for which they have been recruited.

[...]According to the present account of artistic practice and aesthetic experience, the fundamental ways in which artist and viewer perceptually engage with art are similar. The relationship between artwork and agent (whether artist or viewer) is experientially grounded in the agent's encoun¬ter with the work of art in the context of action. The interaction between artwork and agent is determined by, on the one hand, the affordances of the artwork and, on the other, the affectivities of the agent. The affordances and affectivities that have significance for the quality of artistic practice and aesthetic experience relate to bodily and perceptually based skills in the arts and related areas. However, which resources in fact are available in the global socio-cultural context of the agent will have a strong influence on the character of his or her skills. [...]

The case of readymades and found objects illustrates that affordances associated with art have different consequences for action than those of the ordinary context of use. Consider the case of Tracy Emin's My bed exhibited at the Tate Gallery in 1999. Emin's bed was unmade and stained, surrounded by dirty underwear and litter. It stirred up a lot of anger. As viewers, we are supposed to regard the bed as a work of art, yet a woman was reported to have come to the exhibition with cleaning materials to tidy it up. Readymades confuse our intuitions and make affordances clash.

Approaching aesthetic experience from the perspective of TSC cum DST uncovers what is common to artist and viewer. The present approach brings out a fundamental fact about aesthetics, specifically, that it is broadly cognitive, and as such, that any human being has the capacity for aesthetic experience. This fact sometimes appears to be neglected by theories that focus on complex and radical forms of art to the detriment of the aesthetic experi¬ences in daily life. The conclusion of the preceding discussion is unequivocal. Successful works of art are such that couple with the viewer—and coupling may equally consist in 'passive' contemplation as in 'active' making.

Selected Reading

Experience And Education by John Dewey (Paperback - Jul 1, 1997)

Aesthetics Of Environment Pb by Arnold Berleant (Paperback - Jan 24, 1995)

Revelry and Risk: Approaches to Social Practice, or Something Like That by Ted Purves and Sara Thacher (Paperback - Jul 23, 2007)

Beyond Green: Toward a Sustainable Art by Stephanie Smith and Victor Margolin (Paperback - Feb 1, 2006)

Participation (Documents of Contemporary Art) by Claire Bishop (Paperback - Nov 1, 2006)

One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity by Miwon Kwon (Paperback - April 1, 2004)]

Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation (Learning in Doing: Social, Cognitive and Computational Perspectives) by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (Paperback - Sep 27, 1991)

The Interventionists: Users' Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life by Joseph Thompson, Nato Thompson, and Gregory Sholette (Hardcover - Sep 1, 2006)

The Good Life: New Public Spaces for Recreation by Zoe Ryan (Paperback - Sep 28, 2006)

Collectivism after Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination after 1945 by Blake Stimson and Gregory Sholette (Hardcover - Feb 20, 2007)

The Citizen Artist: 20 Years of Art in the Public Arena : by Linda Frye Burnham and Steven Durland (Paperback - Feb 1998)

Cultivating Communities of Practice by Etienne Wenger, Richard McDermott, and William M. Snyder (Hardcover - Mar 15, 2002)

The Journal of Aesthetics & Protest Vol 6. by Marc & Robby Herbst and Christina Ulke (Paperback - 2008)

Liberated Voices. Robert Schuster

Taking the Matter into Common Hands: On Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices by Johanna Billing, Maria Lind, and Lars Nilsson (Paperback - Aug 2007)

Did Someone Say Participate?: An Atlas of Spatial Practice by Markus Miessen, Shumon Basar, and Hans-Ulrich Obrist (Hardcover - Sep 1, 2006)

What Does Public Mean? Art as a Participant in the Public Arena. Edite by Tone Hansen. 2006. Torpedo Press

Alternative Approaches to Education by Fiona Carnie (Kindle Edition - Mar 16, 2007)

But Is It Art?: The Spirit of Art As Activism by Nina Felshin (Paperback - Nov 1994)

Making Art Together: How Collaborative Art-Making Can Transform Kids, Classrooms, and Communities by Mark Cooper (Paperback - Aug 15, 2007)

Phenomenology of Perception (Routledge Classics) by Merleau-Ponty (Paperback - May 3, 2002)

Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perceptions, Attitudes, and Values by Yi-Fu Tuan (Paperback - Oct 30, 1990)

Reenchantment of Art by Suzi Gablik (Paperback - Sep 1, 1995)

The Craftsman by Richard Sennett (Hardcover - Mar 27, 2008)

Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience by Yi-Fu Tuan and Steven Hoelscher (Paperback - Feb 8, 2001)

Cognition in Practice: Mind, Mathematics and Culture in Everyday Life (Learning in Doing) by Jean Lave (Paperback - Jul 29, 1988)

Places of Learning: Media, Architecture, Pedagogy by elizabeth ellsworth (Paperback - Oct 15, 2004)

Design and Art (Documents of Contemporary Art) by Alex Coles (Paperback - May 31, 2007)

Art in the Public Interest (Studies in the Fine Arts : Criticism, No 32) by Arlene Raven (Paperback - Mar 1991)

Relational Aesthetics by Nicolas Bourriaud (Paperback - Jan 1, 1998)