

# *Chapter One*

*What makes your art political?*

# Notes taken during a discussion on 'What makes your Art Political?'

BASICALLY THEY DON'T WANT TO LOOK AT IT / MAKING A VERY DIRECT  
POLITICAL STATEMENT / TAKING MONEY OFF THE STATE TO GET OFF THE  
DOLE / IF THEY HAVEN'T SEEN THE SIGNS / WHAT'S GOING ON NOW / A BIT  
OF SOCIAL WORK / SIMILAR TO HYPER-REALISM / THE MOST ADMISED  
INDIVIDUAL / A DESIRE FOR AUTHENTICITY / IN TERMS OF PUBLIC  
FUNDING / THOSE ARE THE GLOSSY NICE THINGS / I KNOW WHAT YOUR  
GETTING AT / THAT'S BY THE BY / IT'S REALLY SIMPLE / WE'RE  
ALL IN A LONG LINE / WORK WITH YOUNG OFFENDERS / A  
SPECTACLE OF PROTEST / TAKING MORE / AFTER HIS CAPTURE /  
ITS ALL FINE AND DANDY / PROBABLY YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH  
THIS / THIS IS GOING ON RIGHT NOW / THE CONTRACT FINISHES  
TODAY / OPENING IT OUT / AN INTERNATIONAL BIENNALE IN  
BUCHAREST / I AM VERY INTERESTED IN / A STRATEGIC MOVE /  
A BIT OF SOCIAL WORK / THE POLICE OUTSIDE / CO-OPTED  
INTO ART PRACTICE / JUST A THOUGHT / AWARENESS OF STRUCTURES /  
THE POINT OF DELIVERY / IT COMES FROM THE AUSTRIAN TAX-PAYERS /  
BIG QUESTIONS BUT SORRY / IF CHANGE IS WHAT WE'RE TALKING  
ABOUT / THE ONLY MUSLIM THEATRE COMPANY IN BRITAIN / GOOD ON  
THEM / THAT'S A GIVEN / WE WORKED FOR SIX MONTHS / AS WE  
KNOW FROM ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM / THE TERMINOLOGY HAS  
CHANGED / ON A LONG TERM BASIS / THE WORK OF THE MINERS /  
IF I CAN LEAP IN / PROVIDING A PLATFORM / A MEANS TO AN  
END / THE REDUCTION OF EXTREMISM FUND / THERE IS A  
CERTAIN AMOUNT OF OVERLAP / THEY WE'RE BASICALLY THIS  
BUNCH OF ARTISTS / AGENTS OF THIS PROCESS / STRANGE  
HYBRID SITUATION / OF BEING TOGETHER AGAIN / IT'S A  
GREAT POSSIBILITY / IS IT POSSIBLE? / BASICALLY THEY  
DON'T WANT TO LOOK AT IT / IT'S NOT ACTIVE / I SPOKE  
TO ONE OF THE MINERS / SORRY I'M MISSING THE WORDS /  
AFTER THE WAR NOTHING WAS CHANGED / I NEED TO SPEAK  
LOUDLY /





## Part 1. Offences. Encouragement etc. of Terrorism

### Encouragement of Terrorism

(1) This section applies to a statement that is likely to be understood by some or all the members of the public to whom it is published as a direct or indirect encouragement or other inducement to them to the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of Terrorism or Convention offences.

**schleuser.net**

- the Federal Association for Smuggling People

Farida Heuck, Ralf Homann, Manuela Unverdorben

The primary focus of our collaborative work is to explore undocumented transfers and new methods used in the field of invisibility. As an artistic enterprise, of course, our subject matter is as well based on images and symbols and the intentional or unintentional underlying concepts, especially referring to the depictions of migration and border transgression. The declared objective of **schleuser.net** is not only to serve as a lobby organisation for undocumented passenger transportation. It is, too, to follow up how administrative structures – registration, licenses or restrictions - directly interfere in concrete life situations and how these structures can be adaptable depending on the dominant political situation. So that invisibility becomes the only possibility to be mobile, not only in a spatial sense, but also as a metaphor for using public or electronic space.



#### CHAPTER ONE: What makes your art political?

Our art is political, because we focus one of the major changes of society and one of the major fights for human rights: migration as a (new) social movement. In context of migration we take a tough stance in thinking on representation and the problems of representation of migration, especially as part of the mainstream or on the bride side of live. We also organize a space which could used to re-think and re-visit political debates and political or cultural attitudes dealing with migration. Especially we work as a lobby group for the right of each person to travel and settle and to get rid of public organized PR against migrants and government's raids against the freedom of movement and the unrestricted mobility.

#### CHAPTER TWO: What are the political and economic implications of 'cultural exchange' in Europe?

In our view, there are three implications:

First: It will be urgent to organize an understanding of culture which is beyond race, gender, nation, religion or any local heritage; Second: Regularly you have the same cultural ideas and the same way of live like a (unknown) person thousands of miles away, than your very near neighbour, because the latter is fighting against the freedom of... (which you like) Third: We need economical conditions to exchange our ideas over a long distance and to get the capability for collaborations in a situation of political and cultural diaspora.

#### CHAPTER THREE: Clash of the comrades: What does 'socialism' or 'anarchy' mean to you and how are they relevant to your practice?

Anarchy or Socialism are besides others relevant for our practice because the Libertarians could imagine our ideas of the Freedom of Movement, of Mobility and of Trade and also to get rid of borders – the socialists sometimes, e.g. some trade unions, fight for new borders to organize a closed national shop of labor, well, in Germany unions collaborates with the police to catch workers and send them into prison.



Michal Šiml (CZ) Slogans, 12 photographs, 2006

My political place in the world inspired my practice. If it's the case with all artists, would we have the world constantly changing, questioning its ways and improving its structure? Isn't that the world we believe we already have? If it is so, why do we need artists? Are they part of the challenges that economists, politicians and sociologists are imposing onto the world? If so, then the artists need to voice the opinion creatively or enlarge, dislocate, change the perspective of the view we and them hold, so in this distorted or closer look we can see ourselves and our actions in a different light. And so find solutions for the world we all inhabit. Art is a communication process, not the message itself.

This is a quick reflection on the social and political potential of artistic practise.

This year, Kabakov presented two works at the Venice Biennale: The Ship of Tolerance and The City of Utopia.

In recent years, the artist has been the drawing power of events aiming to anticipate the development of the civil society. Which tends, however, to ignore them.

As in the past years, in the fifties, Constant produced his New Babylon, the gipsy city between past and future, and Joseph Beuys his ecologist interventions. In less fishy times, Öyvind Fahlström focused his seventies works on wars for oil.

Today, perhaps more than ever, the artist is politically set in his time – a time, maybe referring in particular to western countries, that is more politically conscious.

Politics means acting together, going out in the sunlight with other people to try to find solutions for common problems. It means having a collective thought, that crosses the boundaries of the art world.

The artist promotes events, as in The Ship of Tolerance, which involved kids and teenagers and is at the same time the flag and auspice of a way of being and thinking.

The artist weaves, he composes utopias, as in Kabakov's city, where he cross-references other cities and utopias, from the Enlightenment to more contemporary examples. Utopia, a dream that sinks its roots in the past but is spasmodically projected into the future.

Art is consequently just the first step to reach a bigger dimension, beyond galleries and traditional exhibition spaces; one of a social and political matrix.

Constant had been influenced by Debord's situationist theories, and created New Babylon, a nomadic camp of planetary-scale.

The political role of the artist should so be on a planetary scale, crossing every single nationalistic boundary and avoiding globalization at the same time.

Artists from countries such as China and India, which are less individualistic than western countries, look more for interventions of real utility.

Kabakov's Ship opens the debate and goes beyond the simple Biennale event. It starts a reflection on the concept of tolerance in a world still ground down by war, then transports it to one place after another. The artist is here an initiator, the first driving force for an operation which will continue on its way.

Angela Madesani





Is it the same to be an Artist or Politician? Do you stop being one to become the other?

I don't think that I stopped being an artist when I was in charge of developing London's cultural strategy. I don't recall having to abandon my habitual ('creative') modes of operating at any point while I was Co/Vice Chair of Mayor Ken Livingstone's Cultural Strategy Group (City Hall 2000-4). I do know I argued for the cultural strategy document to be 'made' as a cultural artefact and for its publication to be seen as artistic process. The creation of a bespoke, limited edition 'book' and accompanying 'launch programme' taking over City Hall for two days were however the least of it - all be it the most 'visible' aspect of the process.

I regard my whole experience as the Mayor's 'cultural commissar' to have been the continuation of being an artist by 'other means', to paraphrase Von Clausewitz. Although I would suggest I personally do not think I was resorting to other means - just that this might appear to be so to others with a different take on what it is to be an artist. I felt an outsider at City Hall but wouldn't know this establishes anything.

Thoughts which occur to me in response to 3 questions posed by 'The Almanac of Political Art':

1) Art and Politics are both 'engaged' practises. I couldn't make the distinction in my or anybody else's work between that art which is political and that which isn't.

2) Perhaps theoreticians or academics might find it relevant to discern what 'the political and economic implications of 'cultural exchange' in Europe are'. For everybody else cultural exchange isn't confined to the exchange and intermingling of intellectual freight across the frontiers of juridically defined geographical territories. Cultural exchange occurs regardless.

3) I am not aware that 'Socialism' or 'Anarchy' speak much to my processes lately.

I don't recognise the Almanac's chapters as being distinct from each other so I see my contribution as 'fitting in' to all 3.



Answer the following questions.  
You may take as long as necessary.  
You may request more paper if necessary.

- 1a) By what criteria might we judge an artwork to be political?
- 1b) By what criteria might we judge a political artwork?

VISIBLE ECONOMY  
GNP

LABOUR CONTRACT

INVISIBLE  
ECONOMY  
NOT IN  
GNP

NO LABOUR  
CONTRACT

Capital  
Wage labour

Homeworkers/  
Informal Sector  
Child Labour

Subsistence Peasants' Work  
Housework - Women

Colonies (external & internal)  
The South, Eastern Europe, etc.

Nature



Y N K B

Outer Norrebro Cultural Bureau, Copenhagen

[www.ynkb.dk](http://www.ynkb.dk)



## Gackland Paints And Writes...

### THEM & US: The Alliteratively-Christened Cartoon Character's Unpleasant Dream Of The Future.

Most of the guilt that plagues my little life actually emanates from situations not of my own making. It was never my choice to live in the affluent half of a world so sharply unequal. I merely find myself riding on the crest of a wave. I have never sent a troop to war in my life. All of this is done for me. That, too, is part of the guilt. Mine is a guilt of the ineffectual. But what of those who do wield power? Their relationship towards guilt is surely one of the key elements of the current world stage. As is their need not to be seen to acknowledge guilt when it smiles on them. Surely they don't actually feel the Divine Right that protected rulers from self-doubts in the Age Of Kings. When a politician becomes a "Recruiting Sergeant" for his deadliest enemy by his own heavy-handed actions, has he become a victim of a lack of foresight? Or merely of his commitment to do the right thing (and hang the consequences)? Strange games of chess played in deserts may seem like distant pastimes where ideology can submit to strategy and gain, but the ideological vacuum soon swallows the heart. Eventually, pawns will seek to fill vacuums. Charlemagne never had to worry much about accountability. Or terrorism. But these are different times, mainly as a result of technologies. Hark! Hear my call to the ineffectual everywhere. Rally your brethren and sucklings. Begin the chant, "I think I can, I think I can" and fill your lord and enemy's shoes. It's better to regret something you did than something you didn't do.

"Damn you all to Hell!"  
 - Charlton Heston, 1968.





To President Bush !





The concept of public space, beloved of lonely myopic law-abiding right-on gushing morons, can only imagine the public as a mass of bodies.

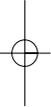
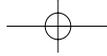
The concept of the public realm, preferred by shifty piss-guzzling half-witted busy-body nerve-wracked self-serving technocrats, can only imagine the public as a mass to be administered.

The concept of the public sphere, in the radical tradition of Critical Theory, imagines the public producing itself through politicized acts of cultural exchange.

FREEE

[www.freee.org.uk](http://www.freee.org.uk)

Freee is the art collective of Dave Beech, Andy Hewitt and Mel Jordan

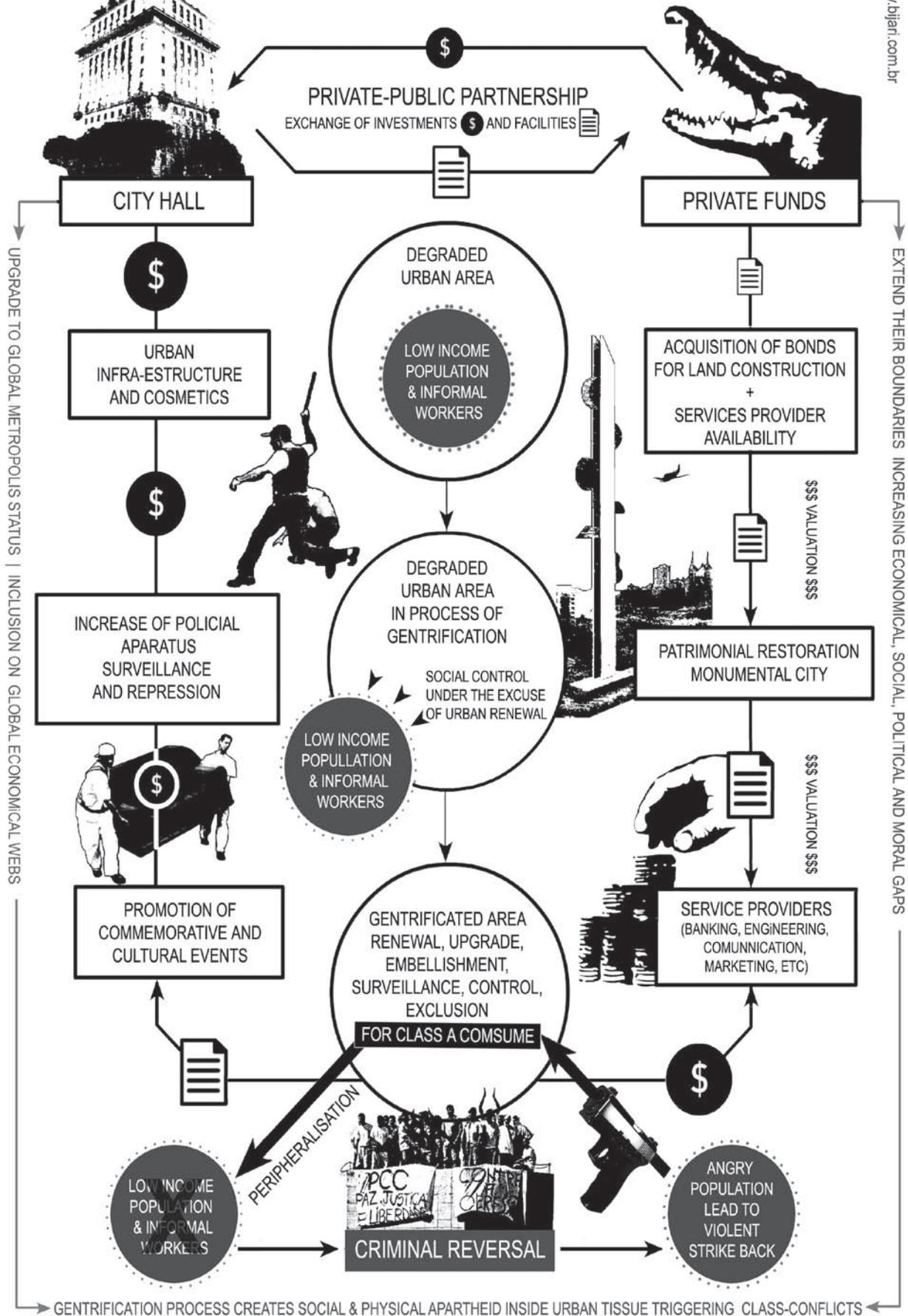




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 Mountain Berry™  
 Mountain Snow®  
 Mulled Wine Fragrance  
 Musk  
 Mystery Garden™  
 Mystical Forest  
 Natural Stone  
 Nectar Blossoms™  
 Neutra Air®  
 Neutralizer  
 New Car  
 New Car Scent  
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 Outdoor Scent  
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 Papaya  
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 Passion Fruit  
 Peach Blossom  
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 Peach Sensations™  
 Peach Sensation™  
 Peachy Peach  
 Peony Rose  
 Peppermint  
 Perfect Harmony®  
 Pet Odour Eliminator™  
 Pine  
 Pineapple Nutmeg  
 Pink Petals™ & Wild Violets™  
 Plumeria & Wild Rose™  
 Potpourri  
 Powder Fresh®  
 Pumpkin Pie  
 Pure Freshness®  
 Pure Innocence™  
 Rain Garden  
 Rain Garden®  
 Rain Garden™  
 Rainbow Rush  
 Rainflower Mist and Paradise Breeze  
 Rainflower Mist™  
 Rainshower®  
 Raspberry  
 Refreshing Mist™

‘The visual content of the work e.g. the views of Penzance were not very important, nor even was the process of the journey itself. Both were only a backdrop to the human drama which took place in the encounters between the ‘art-visitor’ and the taxi drivers....Like a form of mobile speed dating, the work was a highly choreographed quartet of facilitated social exchanges, in which the boundary between art and life, ‘audience’ and performer was dissolved’.

Rupert White - **Tract highlights x 6** <http://art-cornwall.rupertwhite.co.uk/exhibition%20tract%20highlight.htm>  
and [www.tract-liveart.co.uk](http://www.tract-liveart.co.uk)

‘As part of PAIR 01 in Lahti, Finland in November 2006, Fran Cottell extended her earlier work which had used her house as an installation into a performance event in a lift. ....There is a quietly subversive rearrangement of power relations in this work and the earlier pieces to which it refers: all rearranging the house/home into an installation.....

This is not the conviviality of Nicolas Bourriaud’s relational aesthetics since there is not the presumption that dialogue in and of itself is inclusive, egalitarian and democratic. Instead the work is closer in intent to Claire Bishops’ discussion of democracy in Ernst Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s terms making visible the naturalized exclusions of democracy and recognizing the necessity of a partial identification and questioning required in these exchanges between viewer, artist and work to address both sexual, cultural and aesthetic politics. These observations are as much about expectations as how we draw distinctions in our own lives as well as other peoples about what they value and what they do not.’

Katy Deepwell - **Social Feminism and the Question of Difference, Fran Cottell:** n.paradoxa international feminist art journal, Indifference vol. 19 2007

‘Fran began her talk by citing an article in the magazine ‘N.paradoxa’ in which she is discussed in terms of being a ‘social feminist’: a term which she saw first used by Kate Millet the feminist author. Fran went on to explain that this term implies an attitude that is governed by a woman’s approach to solving problems in the world. ‘Social feminism’ is a space of post-feminist empathy with the other that we have arrived at through a critical awareness of the white middle-class domination of the debate of difference, of the distance of feminism as a paradigm from the daily experience of women and from the body.

Fran went on to describe how the lack of a unified front to feminism, following the necessary fracturing of the movement to allow for the diversity of human experience, has led to a perception of feminism as no longer relevant. This assertion is now being challenged as women’s groups spring up in colleges around the country and the debate about the importance of feminism is rejuvenated in a climate where women are aware of difference but also of the need to come together.’

From a response by Rebecca Weeks to a talk I recently gave for art surgery’s BAIT seminar in Hayle (Salt Gallery) on [www.artcornwall.org/features](http://www.artcornwall.org/features)

# HACKNEY CIVIL DEFENCE INSTRUCTION SHEET NO.7: PUBLIC ART POLITICAL PAINTING

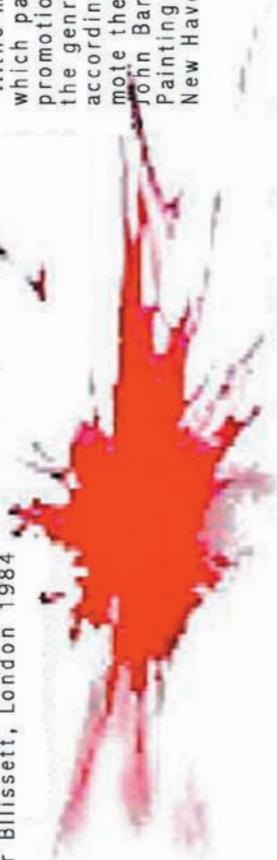


"With the sentence 'Everyone is an artist' you are only saying that every human being is a creative being, that can produce as a creator and do that very many-foldly"  
Joseph Beuys, Frankfurt 1969



"Painting is and has always been, the best genre of art!"  
Luther Blissett, London 1984

"...the most dignified function to which painting could aspire was the promotion of the public virtues; and the genres of painting were ranked according to their tendency to promote them."  
John Barrel. The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt. New Haven and London, 1986



1. You need a fresh egg, a pointy tool to pick holes into the eggshell, some water based paint, sticky tape and a bit of time.
2. Take the egg and pick a hole on both sides.
3. Place your mouth around one punctured end of the egg and blow all the insides into a cup.
3. Take an inch of sticky tape and use it to cover the smaller of the two holes.
5. With the pointy tool widen the other hole.
6. Fill the hollow egg half with paint.
7. Take another bit of sticky tape to close the remaining hole and ready is your paint egg!  
All you need to make a political painting!

Paint eggs are a colourful expression of horizontally shared genius.  
Use them to put your mark on your city. Choose big shops, town halls, detention centres, olympic facilities, correctional facilities, psychiatric day-care centres, churches, public transport, airports, galleries and museums, in fact any governmental buildings and temples to senseless and boring consumerism.  
Paint eggs are easily carried in a cardboard box, are easily hidden from authoritarian killjoys. Paint eggs have a tremendous shelf-life and will give you a lot of fun. Using paint eggs is seen by some as the righteous person's holy duty. Let throwing those eggs be your clandestine secret and join the



## Szuper Gallery : The Extras, Two Extracts

1975

The extras have all arrived in the red room. It is 1975. The Committee of the Workers' Party has also arrived. They have not yet taken their places. They are instructed to wait for the moment; the podium hasn't been cleaned yet. The ashtrays are full; a red felt cloth is spread over the long table. The spotlights are arranged. A man is sitting at the long table. The podium is too tall; the architect decides that everything has to be redone. The extras wait, drinking beer. A girl pulls on the beard of one of the functionaries. He kicks her roughly in the shin: "Stop it, damn it." We wait some more; now everyone is sitting aligned in the long rows of chairs; the functionaries and union representatives have taken their places. Meanwhile, thick cigarette smoke is rising from the podium. The annual meeting of the representatives of the Central Committee has begun. The extras are given quiet instructions from behind. From the badly arranged rows of chairs they are trying to get a halfway decent view of the podium. Points are made; decisions are made; salaries are discussed. "It isn't right that a fireman should earn less than a police officer." The atmosphere is tense, and the scene has to be repeated five times. "Listen to what they're saying up there!" In the second-to-last row a man bends over the woman sitting in front of him. He slowly raises her dark blouse, pushes his hand under her shirt, touches her breast. Those of us in the back row struggle not to be noticed. Nevertheless we try to capture the screen quickly with the camera we have hidden in a file folder until now.

1932

The extras assemble behind a projection. The instruction is to move back and forth quietly. The projection of the wall is just large enough for bodies to hide behind it with heads hanging out to the side. The walls are brick red, layered, held from a distance by a steel-tube structure. Behind it are empty Styrofoam cups with leftover coffee and cigarette butts. The extras have to duck. Behind the projection lies Petra von Kant with her female lover on a rustic bed. Wait. More. Repeat. The extras are supposed to remain in position. Her lover says: "We must try to stop the war, if only I knew how. For the Americans it's all about oil. We are governed by an oil lobby. I tried to participate in all the demonstrations in the city, but I don't have the time anymore. I feel so weak to start something myself, to organize something, here and now." Meanwhile Petra von Kant is braiding her lover's pigtail, as the production manager had instructed her. The production manager deletes the images from the digital camera again; let's use the cine film. We film directly from the monitor. The extras have to persevere in the corner. Meanwhile Petra von Kant pushes herself slowly out of bed. We try to capture the brief, uncontrolled smile that darts across her face.

Szuper Gallery

extract from 'The Extras', a collection of short texts.

[www.szuper.org](http://www.szuper.org)

## HOLY DAMN IT

Project demonstration on the topic “What is political art today”

HOLY DAMN IT demonstrates how political art operates directly within the process of global communication networks and political agendas. The project takes art out of traditional spaces of representation and focuses on linking it with the contents on site.

HOLY DAMN IT has to be seen as an artistic intervention in the process of a political debate about social alternatives in the international protest and resistance movements against the G-8 summit in Heiligendamm near Rostock in 2007.

Ten international artists and artist collectives from four continents created one poster each, which was spread in public space as well as in different institutions throughout Europe.

Participating Artists:

bankleer (D) / open circle (India) / Mansour Ciss/ Laboratoire Déberlinisation (Senegal) / Markus Dorfmueller (D) / Petra Gerschner (D) / Marina Gržinić (Slovenia) / Ibrahim Mozain/Artists Without Walls (Israel/Palestine) / Oliver Ressler (A) / Walter Seidl (A) / Allan Sekula (USA)

The artistic contributions deal with the hegemonic conditions and current issues about social movements against capitalist globalization: privatization, exploitation of human beings and resources, war, torture, escalating military mobilization from within and to the outside as a permanent state of exception, sexist violence and patriarchal as well as racist models of dominance. Moreover, the project deals with the power of global image (re-)production within capitalism and the development of ideas about of an emancipative and solidarity-oriented culture and society.

Each poster of the ten artists and artist groups was printed 5.000 times in A 2 format and distributed free of charge. The posters are not restricted to special sites of presentation and have been shown in institutions which operate strongly in-between art and politics as well as at the meetings to mobilize against the G-8 summit. They have appeared in approx. 20 European cities in order to use public space as a place for action and reflection. The project has been published in Camera Austria # 98/2007. Allan Sekula also produced a large outdoor panel of his motif for documenta 12 and commented on the project in the exhibition catalogue.

HOLY DAMN IT can be seen as the start for a long-term project of communication and exchange of ideas between artistic production and intervention as well as between the various perspectives on political views of the world.

For more information about the project see: [www.holy-damn-it.org](http://www.holy-damn-it.org)

## What makes my art political?

George Osodi's *Oil Rich Niger Delta, 2004-2007* comprises some 200 digital photographs that depict the miserable lives of Nigerian oil workers. The work is presented as a digitalized screen show with one shot appearing after another, creating a sense of monotonous reinforcement of their abject lives. Although the work stands up on its own as a critique of "big oil", the artist's biography is illuminating to our understanding of the work. George Osodi, is a former banker, who has chosen art as the medium for communicating the plight of Nigerian oil workers to the world. He could have chosen other methods, for example writing or journalism, he could have become a documentary filmmaker, joined an NGO or the government. Why did he choose art as his medium? Is there something intrinsically powerful about the visual image when it is an artwork, rather than being just a visual image per se? Does its institutional context, namely being presented at documenta 12, give it a special gravitas? Hans Haacke has also explored the dealings of oil companies in Africa, and the relationship between big business and art sponsorship in *MetroMobiltan, 1985*. Mobil Oil Company sponsored cultural activities, including a show of ancient Nigerian art with a view, in its own words "of improving and ensuring the business climate". Both Osodi and Haacke are concerned with the related issues of power and exploitation. Osodi uses visuality, the power of images, a narrative in pictures and he employs a business medium: the screen show, relying on our ability to absorb literally hundreds of images, none of which we view for more than 30 seconds. Hans Haacke, producing works 20 years earlier, chooses posters and billboards. His images are static and text and image have equal importance. Employing irony, the tone in the text is the language of the institution, but its content is subversive.

David Goldblatt's *The Transported of KwaNdebele, 1983*, depicts a series of black and white photographs, narrating in documentary-style, the harrowing story of black commuters prior to the repeal of the pass laws in 1986. *The Transported of KwaNdebele*, was part of a project in which Goldblatt was asked to record a photographic essay on homeland transport for the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa. Goldblatt's photographs show a strange netherworld in which black workers spent up to eight hours at night traveling to and from workplaces. One image is captioned; "Going home: 8:45 pm, Marabastad-Waterval bus; some of these passengers will reach home at 10pm and start the next day at 2am." Re-contextualizing the work by exhibiting it in a museum context - it shown in *David Goldblatt: Fifty-one Years at Modern Art Oxford, 2003* - transforms it from photographic evidence into art. Anti-apartheid issues were also the subject of Hans Haacke's work: *A Breed Apart, 1978*, which targeted British Leyland's involvement in the apartheid regime in South Africa. Their corporate slogan: "Leyland Vehicles: Nothing can stop us now", was picked up by Haacke and turned on its axis into an instrument of critique. The difference between the artwork and an image in the press or in a government report is its sustainability and longevity (not to mention its aura). Long after the press photographs have been archived and the government reports forgotten, a work of art can live again. David Goldblatt's photographs are showcased in documenta this summer and recently Hans Haacke's works formed part of a major retrospective in Hamburg and Berlin: *Hans Haacke: For Real - Works 1959 – 2006*.

Victoria Preston  
Director, Wings Projects Art Space

June 26, 2007

## Relating to politics

If political art means a kind of anticapitalism or a left-winger attitude, then in Hungary as in a former excommunist/socialist



The three activist „guru” Jose Bove, Chiko Whitaker and Wolfgang Sachs discussion about climate change at the GlobFest Budapest, 2006. Behind them a HINTS banner with a globe map turned upside down.

country it can be regarded practically as an absurd trial. People had experienced, that there is - unfortunately or not - no alternative of capitalism at the moment, and the system can be only sophisticated.

Besides the public opinion, the expression-kit of the artists and the one-chanelled hierarchy of the art scene can be also blamed for not involving the cultural life into the discussion of social problems in Hungary.

So HINTS Institute aims to have a socio-cultural presence, as the potential wider public can be only frightened off with political expressions. We focus on issues that are not in the centre of the actual political life and official social discourse, but all of us on this planet -disregarding age,

color, subculture- are affected by them, like: the situation of women, nutrition, recycling and sustainability.

If we really want to communicate these kind of ideas, then we have to talk the language of everyday, we have to embed the elements of art and these social expressions into the usual everyday routine. Besides our own projects, we have started to collaborate with Hungarian non-governmental and activist organisations. We propose visual solutions for their communication interface, from typography to the use of different materials. This is design and art task at the same time.

[hints.hu](http://hints.hu)

*'Work grounded in protest – against fascism, moral hypocrisy, the Vietnam War, and so on – is the closest thing we have to an art that zeroes in on a crisis of public conscience and attempts to provoke viewers to think about their own relationship to a social upheaval close at hand.'*<sup>1</sup>

Certain contemporary art expresses a resistance through various media: whether it be social or political resistance against oppression, or resistance to any type of 'conformity' which may, in effect, restrict the potential found in diversity and hybridity.

This brief piece refers to three artists who resist: the British graffiti artist known as Banksy; the New York installation artist Spencer Tunick; and the New York-based multi-media artist Anna Lascari.

In August 2005, BANKSY succumbed to the temptation to paint on the 8 to 10-metre high and 451-mile-long dehumanizing concrete wall of Israel, which cuts through the West Bank, severing the water resources, agriculture, and infrastructure of 6.5 million Palestinian refugees.<sup>2</sup> See images.<sup>3</sup> On 9 July 2004, the International Court of Justice issued its decision on the Israeli wall. The Court's ruling expressed the following. 'The wall is illegal. Israel must dismantle it, and pay compensation to Palestinians who have suffered financial or property losses as a result of its construction. No state should recognize the barrier as legitimate. The UN should act to implement the Court's decision'.

Since 1992, SPENCER TUNICK has been arrested five times by the authorities for endorsing ethical matters to do with exhibiting nudity in public spaces. He fought as long battle with former mayor of New York, Rudy Giuliani, for the right to photograph naked people on the streets. The Supreme Court ruled that his work was protected by the first amendment.<sup>4</sup> In July 2005, Tunick gathered 1,700 naked people, who went on to 'march', as in a protest, between the Tyne and Millennium bridges on the Newcastle quayside.<sup>5</sup>

ANNA LASCARI'S computer-based interactive installation, Random Identity Forum (RIF), appears in the form of an entertaining video game, almost: 'design your own flag; create a new European Union'. An interactive forum, RIF is a place where one can cast a visual vote based on one's political and inter/national beliefs. The participant has the option to compose a new flag based on the 25 existing EU member countries. By choosing however high a percentage of whichever flag one chooses to preserve, the interactive voter creates a new flag, which can then be distributed to other fellow voters, or printed as a document.<sup>6</sup>

In a world of opportunistic leaders who, for the sake of financial advantage and regional supremacy have no reservations about manufacturing a myth to do with weapons of mass destruction, costing hundreds of thousands lives of Iraqis while wreaking havoc in their country, one of the few tools that empowers us is *resistance*, and art is a means to make it visible.

Maria Petrides

Writer and PhD candidate (UCL)

**(Footnotes)**

1 Dan Cameron, 'Inconsolable' in *Doris Salcedo*, p.9 (Dan Cameron is senior curator of the New Museum of Contemporary Art, and contributor to the magazine Art Forum).

2 Land Research Centre & Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem.

3 <http://arts.guardian.co.uk/gallery/0,8542,1543331,00.html>

4 *The Guardian*, National News (18 July 2005).

5 [http://www.i-20.com/artist.php?artist\\_id=19](http://www.i-20.com/artist.php?artist_id=19)

6 See website: [www.annalascari.net/RIF](http://www.annalascari.net/RIF). For the Username enter *rif*; For the Password enter *random*.

'just what is it that makes my art so political, so democratic?'

## Definition of Political : Showing 1-10 of 5,796,000

political (*adj.*) involving or characteristic of politics or parties or politicians : *"calling a meeting is a political act in itself"* - Daniel Goleman

political (*adj.*) of or relating to your views about social relationships involving authority or power : *"political opinions"*

political (*adj.*) of or relating to the profession of governing : *"political career"*

## Definition of Art : Showing 1-10 of 7,269,000

art (*n.*) the products of human creativity : *works of art collectively*

art (*n.*) the creation of beautiful or significant things : *"art does not need to be innovative to be good"*

art (*n.*) a superior skill that you can learn by study and practice and observation : *"the art of conversation"*

political + art + <b>social</b>	80,200,000	13.51%
political + art + <b>views</b>	68,800,000	11.59%
political + art + <b>human</b>	57,700,000	9.72%
political + art + <b>politics</b>	55,700,000	9.38%
political + art + <b>power</b>	48,200,000	8.12%
political + art + <b>study</b>	45,100,000	7.59%
political + art + <b>parties</b>	37,200,000	6.26%
political + art + <b>profession</b>	29,100,000	4.90%
political + art + <b>relationships</b>	28,000,000	4.72%
political + art + <b>practice</b>	25,300,000	4.26%
political + art + <b>things</b>	23,100,000	3.89%
political + art + <b>act</b>	21,100,000	3.55%
political + art + <b>products</b>	19,400,000	3.27%
political + art + <b>meeting</b>	14,800,000	2.49%
political + art + <b>skill</b>	9,590,000	1.61%
political + art + <b>significant</b>	9,430,000	1.59%
political + art + <b>creation</b>	8,180,000	1.38%
political + art + <b>authority</b>	4,440,000	0.75%
political + art + <b>beautiful</b>	2,020,000	0.34%
political + art + <b>politicians</b>	1,410,000	0.24%
political + art + <b>creativity</b>	1,380,000	0.23%
political + art + <b>superior</b>	1,310,000	0.22%
political + art + <b>observation</b>	1,230,000	0.21%
political + art + <b>governing</b>	1,150,000	0.19%

rona bierrum

CHAPTER ONE:  
What makes your art political?

I am very sensitive to the fact that art can make a king become a beggar. Art can equally make a beggar become a king. All these usages of arts are for instrumental purposes. Hence I am using my art to positively change and transform the society.

With particular reference to the Re-union of European countries to form the modern European Union, I am very much impressed to make the following contributions in the upcoming Re-union Almanac. I must thank the people who initiated this noble idea and carried to a logical conclusion.

I was compelled to contribute by the inferences I drew from the Divine dialogue at the time of creation when God said: "Come let us make man." In so doing God was establishing the Group Mind as an attribute that is transcendental and fundamental to human existence. The Divine dialogue at creation and its aftermath reflects the regenerative and absolutely creative frontiers of the Group Mind phenomenon.

The multifarious advantages associated with this European Union outweigh any disadvantage that may arise there from, if we embrace the following cardinal points by establishing the integrals of love for one another, trust, understanding, confidence, inclusion of the interests of others in defining our own, and moderation of our individual propensities, as essential ingredients for the manifestation and substance of principles of Group Mind. These variables are some of the defining properties of meaningful co-existence between individuals or among and within groups such as communities, nations, countries and also a cosmopolitan order.

Therefore, coming together of different nations, to form the European Union, calls for sincere and genuine patriotism. It demands an embodiment of good of citizenship as well as a wholesome disposition to nation building that, in the final analysis, translates as the evolvment of a better world order.

Hence, we all need one another for peaceful co-existence and good neighborliness. We cannot continue to live in fears of one another. You cannot live with someone you have separated from or you have threatened his life and environment. Rather, we have to work together.

Finally, to be candid with you, I must stress that there will never be a time in this world of diversity when all human beings will hold the same religious or political, etc, opinion or ideologies. But you have to trade off some of yours to be able to co-exist. Also, in this world of dialogue, please don't bargain for impossibilities. Consider your fellow human beings. Remember that they also have right to life.

All these are some of my approaches in creating Political Arts.

By  
Sir Mbonu Christopher Emerem  
*Nigerian Professional Artist*



life?



**Bernadette Huber**  
[www.bernadettehuber.at](http://www.bernadettehuber.at)  
[office@bernadettehuber.at](mailto:office@bernadettehuber.at)

The alternating *male—female* roles that the sexes assume and which I insert in my artistic works symbolize from the very start and with explosive effect, unequal distribution of power in the political scene. Further content often emerges from the background of the current but constantly-changing state of affairs, and is added to the basic political attitude.



“Austriaplatz” in Czernowitz about 1880. The statue had been missing since 1918.

### “bridge:ing”

#### The “Czernowitz Austria” – symbols and identities in a new Europe An international art and culture project.

What means “to belong” and “identity”? Can identity be decreed by symbol? How is identity constructed? Which symbols do have future?

These questions – highly charged in light of the debates surrounding “European identity” – are the core concern of the international art and cultural project.

The replica of the 2003 rediscovered “Czernowitz Austria” sculpture is the basis and starting point for an artistically and scientific examination about political symbols and European identities. The project started in January 2005 and runs with international exhibitions and events till 2008 in major cities in the five actively engaged countries (Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, and Ukraine): Vienna, Budapest, Bratislava, Krakow, Lviv, Chernivtsi, Kiev).

The whole project is organized by the "Institute for culture-resistant Goods" in Vienna (Barbara Zeidler, Abbé Libansky) and is curated by Lucas Gehrman, Maria Anna Potocka, Boris Ondrejicka and Jiri Sevcik.

Bernadette Huber’s work “Czernowitzer Austria” - A Video Intervention and Interaction with “Austria” uses this allegorical female figure as a projection surface (4 projections). One projection shows men's heads personifying power, replacing the monument's missing head.

An Interaction (kneeling in front of the statue) should involve the viewing public in the pregnant symbolism of the happening: within a red and white police barrier-grid a small Austria-efigy on wheels moves in a circular path to the melody of the Danube Waltz..... A surveillance camera simultaneously views the whole situation.

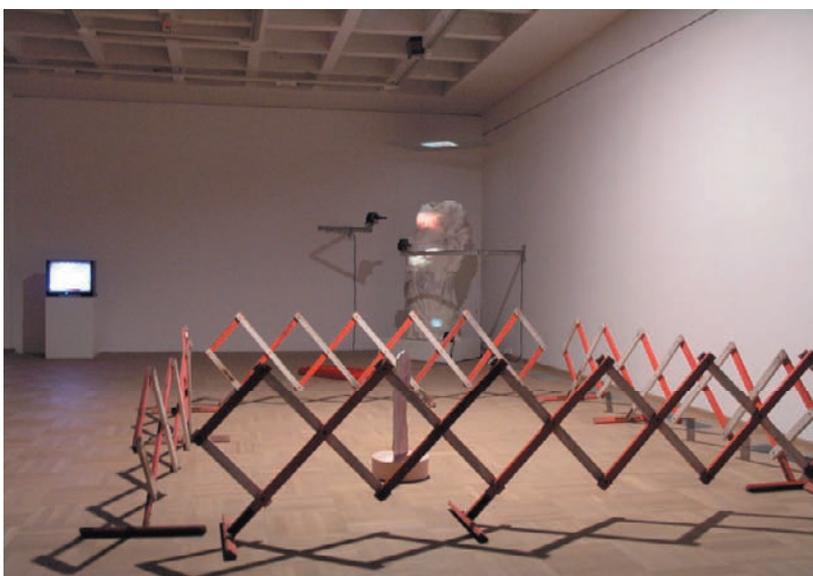
#### Links:

[www.bernadettehuber.at](http://www.bernadettehuber.at)

[www.kulturremanent.net](http://www.kulturremanent.net)

[www.volkskundemuseum.at/ausstellung/frame\\_archiv.htm](http://www.volkskundemuseum.at/ausstellung/frame_archiv.htm)

[www.bunkier.com.pl/index.php?section=szukaj&toFind=bridge%3Aing&where=wszedzie&x=3&y=2](http://www.bunkier.com.pl/index.php?section=szukaj&toFind=bridge%3Aing&where=wszedzie&x=3&y=2)



Bernadette Huber, “Czernowitzer Austria”, Gallery of Contemporary Art BUNKIER SZTUKI, Krakow



I have never wanted to make political art but to make beautiful political acts.  
I have never wanted to show how bad things are but to make things better.  
I have never wanted to make art or do activism but both at the same time.  
I have never wanted to represent the world but to transform it.

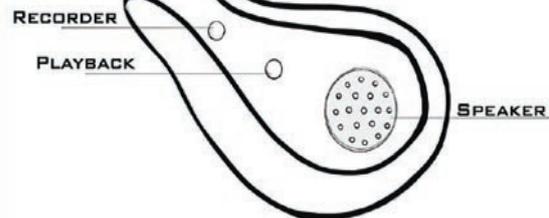


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# RIOT POLICE PROTECTS ART OF PROTEST



Riot police was called in when protesters attempted to seek refuge into the Tate Britain.

*London, 29th June 2007*

It must have seemed like a sensible move for the 84 protesters who in defiance of the 2006 Serious Organised Crime and Police Act had spontaneously gathered outside the Tate. After troubles started to flare and a stand-off with the authorities appeared inevitable, most of them tried to take shelter inside the Museum on a busy Sunday afternoon, standing in between Mark Wallinger's 'State Britain', a painstaking replica of Brian Haw's protest placards removed last year as a result of the new legislation. But the museum directors and staff, worried about the safety of the work of Turner Prizewinner Mark Wallinger above all, found themselves on the side of the authorities today, and mindful of the protester's intention, immediately blocked the entrance doors of the museum leaving the protester's outside, at mercy of the riot police batons.

Only a few protesters managed to enter the premises before the door closed, and whilst chased by staff members did their best to attempt to destroy 'State Britain', enraged by the museum management decision not to offer asylum to their group. After his capture John Byrne, one of the protesters who vandalised Wallinger's work, said: *'It's all fine and dandy for artwork to shout about this awful law in the Tate, but when we tried to escape the Police, there was no space for us here.'*

The Tate Britain Press Officer, asked to comment replied: *'State Britain is a work of art by Mark Wallinger which makes a clear point about this law, but its action is symbolic and it is our duty to protect from vandalism the work we show at Tate, whatever their subject matter might be...I see no conflict between our position as an art institution and the events of this afternoon at Tate Britain.'*

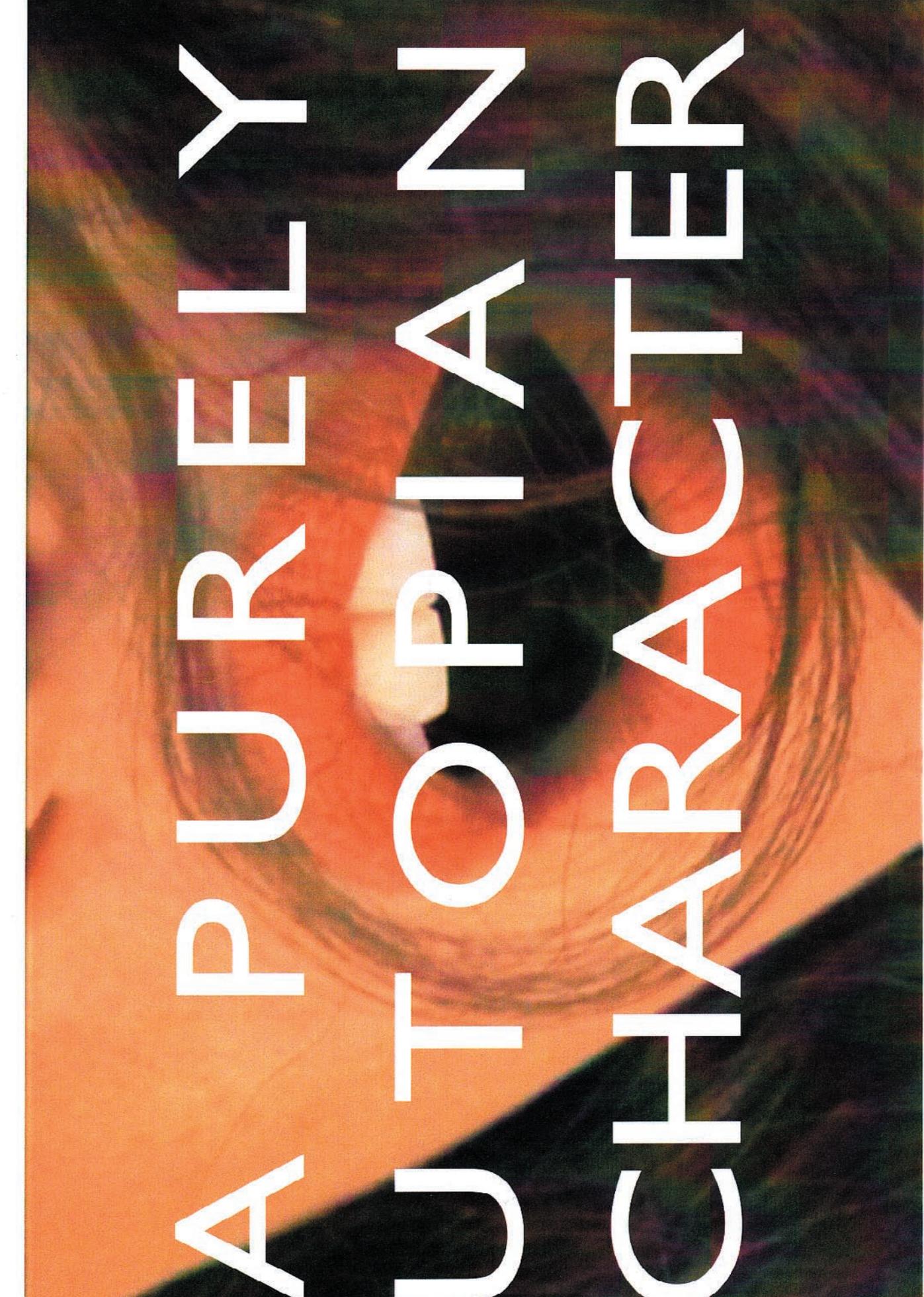
“Art is always political, not because it speaks of  
politics • • •

# Political art is

one that acts within a certain micro-social world and makes changes in ways of behaving, perception and understanding art.”... and the world.

Branka Ćurčić for New Media Center\_kuda.org, Novi Sad, <http://kuda.org>

*Quoted from the book “Omitted History”, publication within the project “The Continuous Art Class”, editor and production: New Media Center\_kuda.org, publisher: Revolver, Frankfurt, 2006.*



# A PURPLELY ATTROPICAN CHARACTER

allsopp&weir  
[www.allsoppandweir.com](http://www.allsoppandweir.com)  
[info@allsoppandweir.com](mailto:info@allsoppandweir.com)

**Indefinite Articles 1: The Communist Manifesto (2006)**

Approx. 10 minute performance, sung by Veronica Stalberg

All of the singular indefinite articles (+ designated nouns) from *The Communist Manifesto* (Marx & Engels, 1848) sung to the vocal part of Arnold Schoenberg's *Erwartung* (op.17, 1909).



An agrarian revolution An appendage of the machine An armed and self governing association An association A banner A bare existence A bourgeoisie A capitalist A change A class A class A class A class A class of labourers A collective product A commodity A Communistic revolution A complicated arrangement A constantly expanding market A cosmopolitan character A critical element A critical position A decade A distinctive feature An end An end An end An epidemic An example An existence A few hands A few hands A fight A foreign language A general reconstruction A great part A hidden, higher, Socialistic interpretation A holy alliance An independent section An inverse relation An ideological standpoint An immediately following proletarian revolution An impulse A labourer A literary battle A literature A manifold gradation A man's own labour A mass A matter A means A meaning A mere figure of speech A mere money relation A most revolutionary part A much more developed proletariat A national struggle A new one A new supply An openly legalised community An oppressed class A perfect hierarchy A philosophical standpoint A public A purely literary aspect A purely utopian character A rapid development A reactionary interest A relic A religious standpoint A revolution A revolution A revolutionary character A revolutionary proletariat A revolutionary reconstitution A revolutionary way A second A separate party A serious political contest A single instant A similar movement A social power A socialist tinge A spectre A state of momentary barbarism A sweet finish A time A time A vast association A very undeveloped state A weapon A welcome A whole A word A workman A world A world literature







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As part of Architecture Week in Nottingham, *Flotsam and Jetsam* was curated by Julian Hughes.

**Participants are valuable contributors rather than lacking individuals in need of help.**

We walk as a group of ten to the Island, a 'brownfield' site currently lying fallow, facing the imminent intervention of developers. Because of its central location the land is used as a thoroughfare by dog walkers and city dwellers and for refuge by cider drinkers.

**The 'Littoral' work operates at liminal, in-between spaces, is not necessarily reliant on institutional support, and incorporates interdisciplinary influences and strata of people.**

We are met by local botanist Dave Woods and spend a while roaming the site, exploring the range of habitats and collecting flora and fauna. Woods has a subtle and apt leadership style, allowing for input from other experts as well as non-professional, more anecdotal comments and questions; he does not seem to have any set agenda but rather lets the topic of conversation be interest-led. This dialogical, interdisciplinary arrangement creates a sense that by working in this flexible way, the group can gain a fuller picture.

**Democracy, criticality and flexibility are inherent to dialogue. Participants speak and listen: power is disseminated equally.**

Participants amble around, instinctually tending to touch and even taste the plant life, exploring and discovering as they go. There is something anarchistic in the determination with which one lady manoeuvres her five week old baby's buggy up and over the mounds of concrete scrubland.

**The work facilitates ideas, and then presents a space in which participants can explore these.**

On the Island Site and other 'brownfield' sites, the wild flowers and grasses, not to mention the wildlife, that will be destroyed as part of the gentrification process is symptomatic of the slowly gathering reaches of control and homogenization of our urban spaces. The White Storm drinkers that will inevitably relocate as a result of the gentrification will serve to create an appearance that Nottingham's delinquent problem has been solved.

After the walk, Julian gives away tiny Oak trees which I picture being planted as symbolic reminders of the participants having taken time to consider an easily ignored urban space.

**The work is anti-spin, anti-spectacular and the artist is not to be revered as genius.**

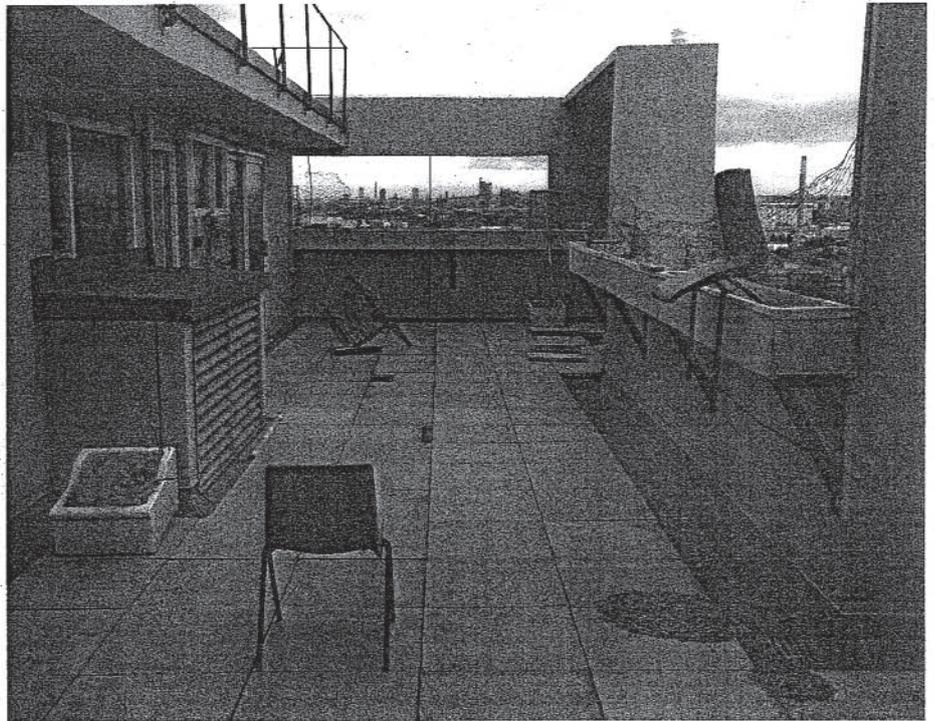
<http://www.flotsamjetsamsneinton.blogspot.com/>

**WE SHATTER THE MYTH OF APOLITICAL ART TO PIECES!**  
**MAYAKOVSKY**

FROM: LUCY CATHERINE PARKER  
the.verything85@yahoo.co.uk

DEAR SOPHIE,

WARMINGTON TOWER, GOLDSMITHS COLLEGE, NEW CROSS, LONDON, JUNE 2006



"WHAT MAKES YOUR ART POLITICAL." MY THOUGHTS ON THIS WILL NOT BE LIKE A HYPOTHESIS BY WHICH TO "TEST" ALL THE WORK BY, BUT SIMPLY A KIND OF QUESTIONING TO HANDLE THE WORK LIGHTLY IN DIFFERENT WAYS. RECOGNISING A TENSION IN THE WORK, WHICH MOTIVATES ITS PRODUCTION, WILL BE VALUABLE TO THIS "CULTURAL EXCHANGE" WE ARE HAVING, AND HOPEFULLY OPEN UP NEW POTENTIAL TO DRAW (IN ALL SENSES) UPON.

ACTIVE LOOKING - WHICH IS THE BEST TERM I CAN COME UP WITH RIGHT NOW - IS A SORT OF HYPERSENSITIVITY AROUND THAT WHICH WE SEE. I THINK DRAWING IS A REFLEXIVE ACTIVITY CONCERNED WITH THE NATURE OF ACTIVE LOOKING - A VEHICLE FOR ACTIVE LOOKING.

AN INVESTMENT IN ACTIVE LOOKING SEEMS, IN PART, A POLITICALLY MOTIVATED ENDEAVOUR. INDEED, WHENEVER A VIEWER IS "ACTIVE" IN THE WAY THEY LOOK AT ART, A "CULTURAL EXCHANGE" WILL NECESSARILY BE TAKING PLACE IN THAT EVENT.

MY PRACTICE HAS INVOLVED SOME ACTIVITIES OF COVERT INTERVENTION, FREQUENTLY INTO NON-STUDIO, NON-GALLERY SITUATIONS (IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE TO INTERVENE INTO A GALLERY SITUATION).

THESE PIECES OFTEN INVOLVE THE CHOREOGRAPHY OF THE VIEWER TO ARRIVE AT A CERTAIN SITE/SIGHT, IN ORDER TO SEE THE WORK. I SEE AN EQUIVALENCE BETWEEN THIS KIND OF ACTIVITY AND OTHERS THAT ONLY OCCUR-ON-PAPER (SUCH AS FROTTAGE, EMAIL PRINT-OUTS, MAPS):

THE NEGOTIATION AROUND ARRIVAL AT A VIEWPOINT, IS FOUNDED IN A CONCERN FOR ACTIVE LOOKING.

P.S. PLEASE ALSO SEE DAVE BEECH'S ARTICLE IN ART MONTHLY, MAY 2007 - "THE POLITICS OF BEAUTY" - I THINK I IDENTIFY WITH THE TENSION HE DISCUSSES: "MODERN SOCIAL RELATIONS BRING ABOUT TWO CONTRADICTORY CONCEPTIONS OF BEAUTY: ONE IS THE CONVICTION THAT IT IS A PURELY PRIVATE, SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE; AND THE OTHER IS THAT BEAUTY, LIKE ALL SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCES, IS SOCIALLY INSCRIBED. EACH, IN EFFECT REPRESENTS ONE SIDE OF THE TENSION BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY THAT STRUCTURES MODERN CAPITALISM." WHY THIS IS BEING WRITTEN NOW IS INTRIGUING.

Dear Nada,

Feel free to send a more developed proposal though I wouldn't advise spending a lot of time on it..





# UNWETTER

<http://un-wetter.net/>

International day for action of La Via Campesina, the international network for small scale farmers, landless, indigenous, and women's organizations: April 17, 2007.

In Berlin: 2:30 pm subway stop Mohrenstraße: meeting for the demonstration with giant puppets to the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection and to the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

4:30 Potsdamer Platz: symbolic land grab with Vokü and Discursive Picnic, for everybody to contribute to, films and infos.





Vicky WRIGHT 07

<strong>Peace</strong>