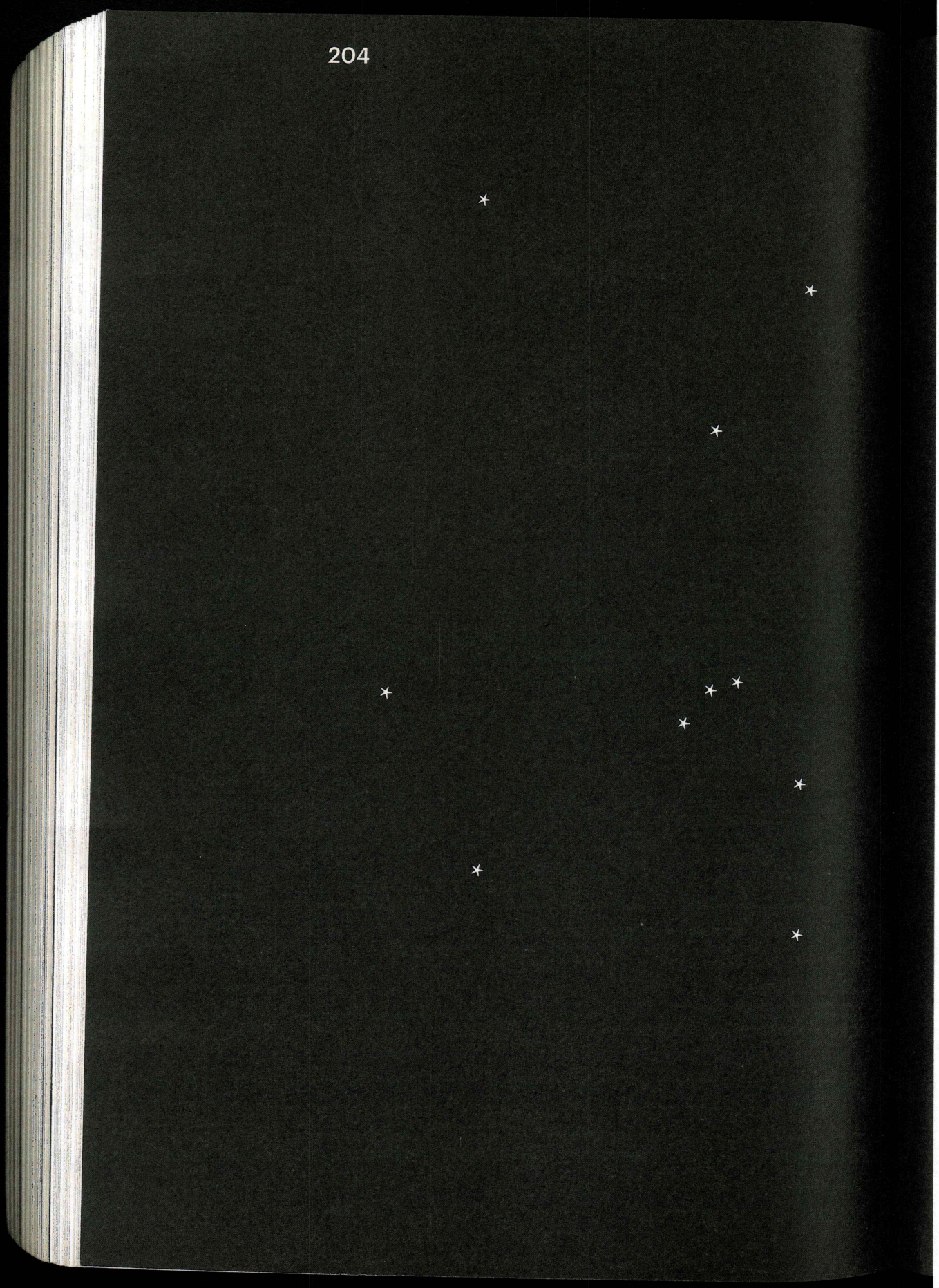

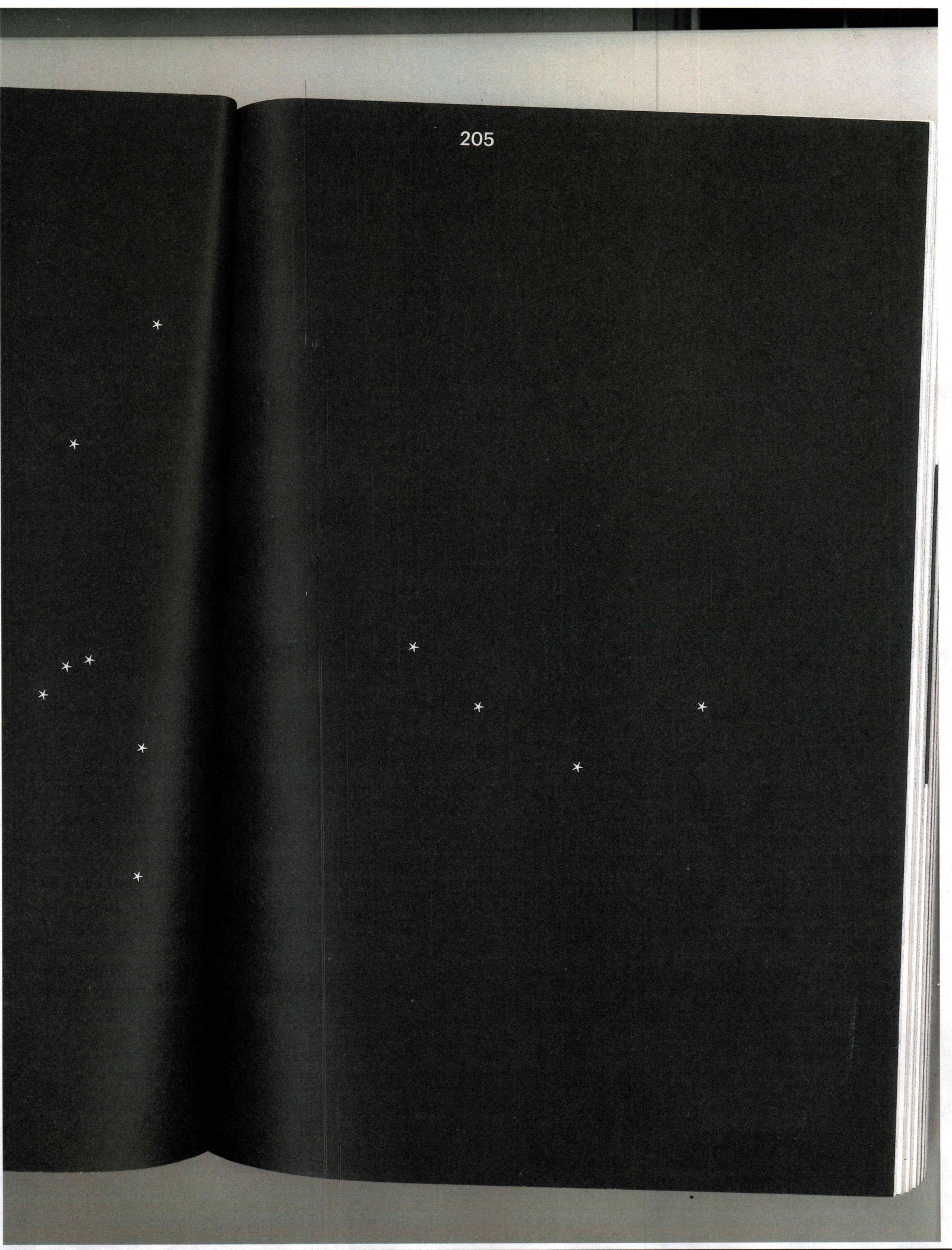

BOOKSWAPPING & SERIOSITY DUMMIES *from*

FRAGMENTS: LIFE AND OPINIONS OF A REAL EXISTING ARTIST

Michalis Pichler

ES *from*

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NS

G

Michalis Pichler

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BOOKSWAPPING

Please note: a friendly book swap is always one on one.
That is, a swap between publishers, artists, or authors where one book is exchanged for another.
Ideally, both parties have a choice, and are swapping their own books.
Exchanging one big book for three small books is "paying in books" (not a friendly book swap).
Friendly book swaps typically take place at the end of book fairs, when exhibitors don't want to carry home the books they brought with them, while having spotted books they would rather carry home.
Book swapping is a great way to both distribute one's production and of building up a collection.
It is also a binding ritual and an expression of mutual sympathy.

I have done friendly book swaps with AA Bronson, Alex Alberro, Todd Alden, Mark Amerika, Michael Baers, Luke Batten, Derek Beaulieu, Erick Beltrán, Jérémie Bennequin, Anita di Bianco, Doro Boehme, Carol Bove, Riccardo Boglione, Sylvie Boulanger, Amir Brito Cadôr, Eleanor Vonne Brown, Sabeth Buchmann, Susanne Bürner, Bernhard Cella, Banu Cennetoğlu, Steve Clay, Albert Coers, Lin Charlston, Julie Cook, Natalie Czech, Adam Davis, Sonia Dermience, Arnaud Desjardin, Sue Doggett, Brad Downey, Martin Ebner, Sammy Engramer, Yusuf Etiman, Jacob Fabricius, Edie Fake, Marc Fisher, Robert Fitterman, Jean-Pascal Flavien, Jan Freuchen, Anne-Valérie Gasc, Peter Gente, Annette Gilbert, Mark Gisbourne, Kate Glicksberg, Patrick Greaney, Dejan Habicht, Sebastian Hackenschmidt, Ben Lee Ritchie Handler, Bill Hayden, John Holten, David Horvitz, Arthur Karfas, Christoph Keller (the one), Christoph Keller (the other), Brian Kennon, Gandha Key, Hubert Kretschmer, Tom Lamberty, Tanja Lažetić, Gareth Long, Helena Louro, Sara MacKillop, Michael Maranda, Scott McCarney, Dan Mitchell, Lasse Krog Møller, Jonathan Monk, Simon Morris, Audun Mortensen, Ariane Müller, Olaf Nicolai, Aurélie Noury, Edgar Orlaineta, Peter Osborne, Dan Perjovschi, Stavros Petsopoulos, Claudio Pfeiffer, Vanessa Place, Tadej Pogačar, Susan Porteous, Nick Relph, Cia Rinne, Stefan Römer, Jeremy Sanders, Martin Schmitz, Roman Schramm, Stefan Schuster, Yann Sérandour, Travis Shaffer, Izet Sheshivari, Willoughby Sharp, Seth Siegelaub, Tom Sowden, Erik Steinbrecher, Marcus Steinweg, Mladen Stilinović, Branka Stipančić, Vassiliea Stylianidou, Derek Sullivan, Temporary Services, Aimée Terburg, Gerhard Theewen, Carolyn Thompson, Nick Thurston, V. Vale, Eva Weinmayr, Jan Wenzel, Roger Willems, Dale Wittig, Eric Zboya, Hermann Zschiegner, and many more.

I do flatrate-swapping with Céline Duval, Jesper Fabricius, John Stezaker, and Eric Doeringer.

The emergence of print on demand (POD) has radically diminished this phenomenon as the authors of POD books have not already paid for bulk printing and hence do not have stock they want to get out there, or get rid of.

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01/08/15 13:05

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michalis pichler
www.buypichler.com/
"Shame on the egoist who only thinks of himself!" — Max Stirner **Michalis Pichler's** appropriation/erasure of Max Stirner's 1844 manifesto of individual anarchism,.

Books | michalis pichler
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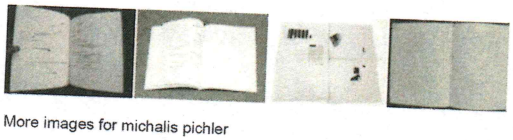
SIX HANDS AND A CHEESE SANDWICH. Ruscha der Fischotter aka: Printed Matter And Other Visible Things On Paper Not Necessarily Meant To Be Viewed ...

Images for michalis pichler Report images



More images for michalis pichler

PM Appropriation By Michalis Pichler - Printed Matter
https://printedmatter.org/tables/130
We cannot precisely say what is not appropriation. Impossible to draw a categorical line. Appropriation is practiced everywhere and all the time, also by people ...

Slide Shows - Michalis Pichler on Vimeo

vimeo.com › Fillip › Videos
Sep 12, 2012
Michalis Pichler is a Berlin-based poet, conceptual artist and publisher. http:// www.buypichler.com http://www.

"greatest hits", Berlin
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Michalis Pichler, Artist, Berlin. ... 5 – 31, 2012 versammelt mit Craig Dworkin, Kenneth Goldsmith, Jonathan Monk und **Michalis Pichler** einige dieser Positionen.

Michalis Pichler (Contemporary Art Daily)
www.contemporaryartdaily.com/tag/michalis-pichler/
Feb 23, 2013 - Artists: John Baldessari, Erica Baum, Barbara Bloom, Jonathan Callan, Clegg & Guttmann, Eli Cortiñas, Natalie Czech, Kajsa Dahlberg, Diango ...

Michalis Pichler | LinkedIn
https://www.linkedin.com/pub/michalis-pichler/6/823/7a2
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View **Michalis Pichler's** professional profile on LinkedIn. LinkedIn is the world's largest business network, helping professionals like **Michalis Pichler** discover ...

Michalis Pichler - YouTube

www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkG_qAk7zxQ
Nov 10, 2009 - Uploaded by arthurkarfas
UN COUP DE DÉS JAMAIS NABOLIRA LE HASARD (MUSIQUE)
Michalis Pichler, 2009 all the text of ...

Michalis Pichler - Forever & Today, Inc.
www.foreverandtoday.org/Michalis_Pichler.html
Michalis Pichler: Der Einzige und sein Eigentum (The Ego and Its Own). Off-Site Publication Launch, Program, and Performance: Goethe-Institut New York ...

Searches related to michalis pichler

michalis pichler **art**

michalis pichler **contact**

Michalis Pichler

Born: 1980, Berlin, Germany

Books: SOME MORE SONNET(S), New York garbage flag profile, "War" diary, Twentysix Gasoline Stations

People also search for

Marcel Broodthaers

Max Stirner

Edward Ruscha

Stéphane Mallarmé

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Fig. 1. Google Search "michalis pichler," accessed August 1, 2015, screen shot.

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Ruscha

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SERIOSITY DUMMIES

> Here you had a medium that was cheap, that allowed for direct contact with the public, that gave artists a greater autonomy from critics, that would promote social responsibility among creators, that would enlarge infinitely the number of possible consumers, and so much more. This view was obviously based on total ignorance on the part of the artists of the traditional book world that, in its 500-year history (I'm talking here about printed books), has developed with market mechanisms and a celebrity syndrome similar to those that typically oppress the art world.
> **Ulises Carrión**

(sighs) True, true.

Striving for success almost always goes along with striving for seriosity.
Peter Sloterdijk calls this "serio-ism" and "gravity of normalization."

This means that in the arts, just as in any other field, a career is built by accumulating seriosity-dummies for a good-looking CV and by name-dropping (cf. p. 207). But it's not only in the realm of CV files, it also affects the very materialization of books.

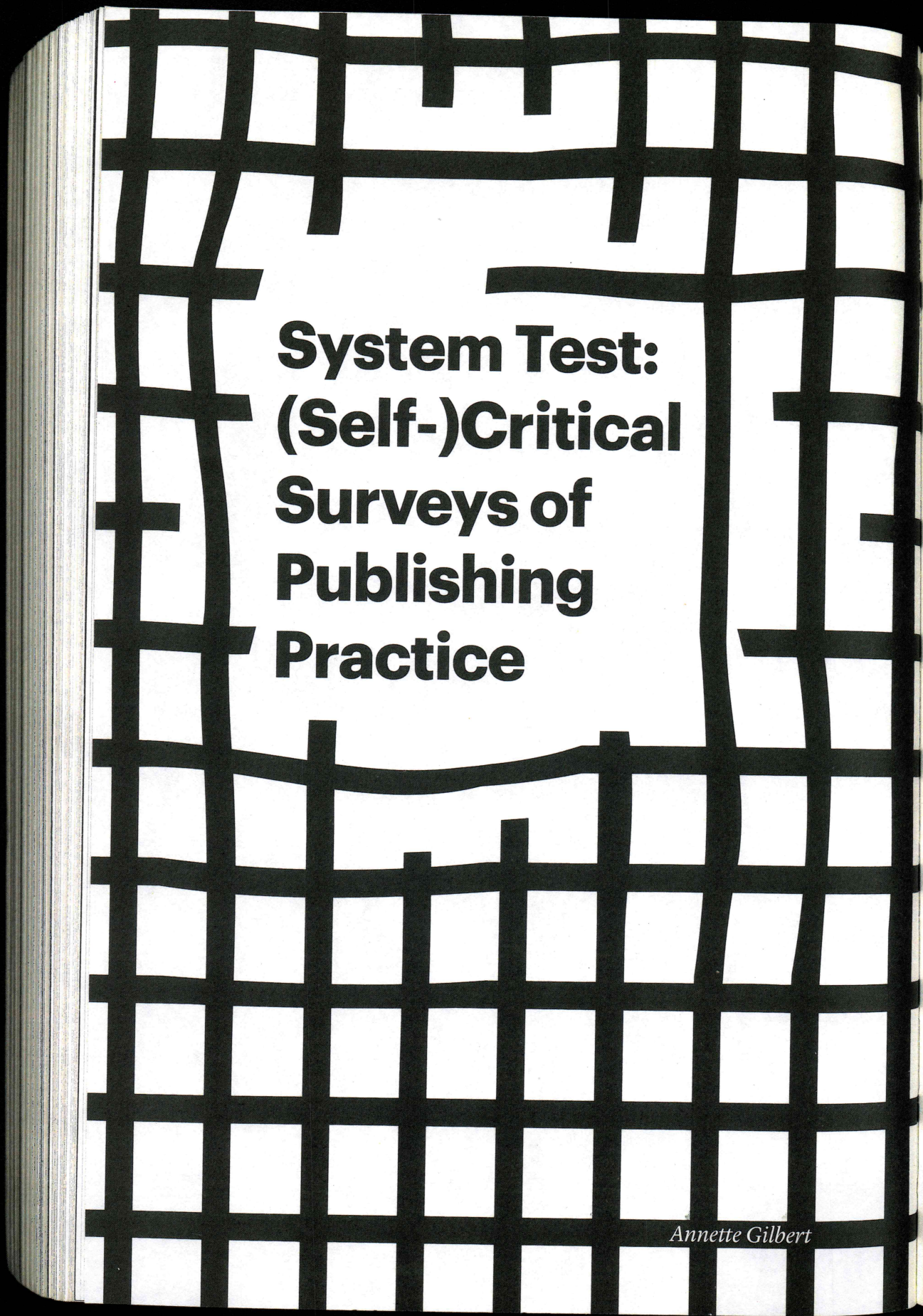
A book with a spine is more serious than a stapled one.
A big publisher is more serious than a small publisher.
Big names as contributors are more serious than small names.
Thomas Kapielski, when he was still self-publishing, self-ironically called his imprint EVS (Eigenverlag stinkt): self-publishing stinks.
Hardcover is more serious than softcover.
Offset is more serious than POD, and forget about Xerox.

That's why Phaidon, Hatje Cantz, and others usually go for a too-high grammature and, often, a hardcover.
That's why the front and back covers of many books are too far apart.

That's why I don't like Richard Prince's books with Gagosian.
They're not too big. They're too big for the wrong reason.

As if the supremacy of wall pieces and "gallery art" over "book art" was more than a misunderstanding.
Is it really the ultimate success to be represented by the biggest commercial galleries and to be bought by the wealthiest collectors?

"Yes, but it's only a book," I often hear.
Not sure about this. What does that mean, "only" a book?
"But it's not only not-a-book, yes," I'd rather say.



System Test: (Self-)Critical Surveys of Publishing Practice

Annette Gilbert

Horizons of the Publishable

Is it right to say that the German artist Fritz Balthaus, who is well-known for his institution-critiquing interventions, *published* his edition *In der weißen Zeile* (In the White Line, 2007)?[1] As a matter of fact, the book that Balthaus's edition was based on was already printed and published by the Berlin publishing house Merve Verlag in 1996, namely, the German translation of Brian O'Doherty's influential works on the white cube. First appearing in *Artforum* in 1976, they have become a reference point for all critical engagement with the institutional context in which art is experienced. The facets of institutional critique in O'Doherty's deliberations are drawn out even more clearly in the German translation of the term "white cube" as "weiße Zelle"[2] ("white cell"). This dramatization may be seen as justified since images of cells and cages were frequently used in reference to the art world's institutions at that time. Even Brian O'Doherty speaks of a "ghetto space"[3] and Robert Smithson of a "cultural prison": "Museums, like asylums and jails, have wards and cells—in other words, neutral rooms called 'galleries.'"[4]

Basing his edition on this translation of O'Doherty's works, Fritz Balthaus allows himself a minimal and yet significant intervention on the book spine and cover: With a single brushstroke, the "l" in the title becomes an "i," that is, "die weiße Zelle" is transformed into "die weiße Zeile" [fig. 1]. Consequently, a new playing field is opened up such that Balthaus transfers O'Doherty's critical insights to the white space of the book. The white page is then taken as an equivalent to the white gallery walls: It is the site where a work is materialized, formed, and presented to the public. This suggests however that the work framed in the white space of a book is exposed to institutional constraints in the same way that a picture hanging on a gallery wall is. This would imply that there are still further systemic constraints manifested in a book's white pages that bear a resemblance to those of an exhibition space's walls, the very walls O'Doherty exposed as being ideologically permeated: "The white wall's apparent neutrality is an illusion. It stands for a community with common ideas and assumptions."[5] He states further that: "The spotless gallery wall, though a fragile evolutionary product of a highly specialized nature, is impure. It subsumes commerce and esthetics, artist and audience, ethics and expediency."[6]

According to Fritz Balthaus's implicit summation, the analogy to the white cube makes it necessary to critically investigate books and publishing practices, since it is self-evident that books have also always been imbedded in major institutional, social, economic, cultural, and (culturally) technological contexts that have the tendency to limit the autonomy of the work and author.[7] This exhortation has recently become more urgent—just as in the 1960s and 70s when the artist's book was "invented"—since publishing and bookmaking has once again been enthusiastically celebrated as a welcome alternative to the compromised art system. But, like in the 1960s and 70s, this enthusiasm about the sheer unlimited possibilities of artistic self-realization

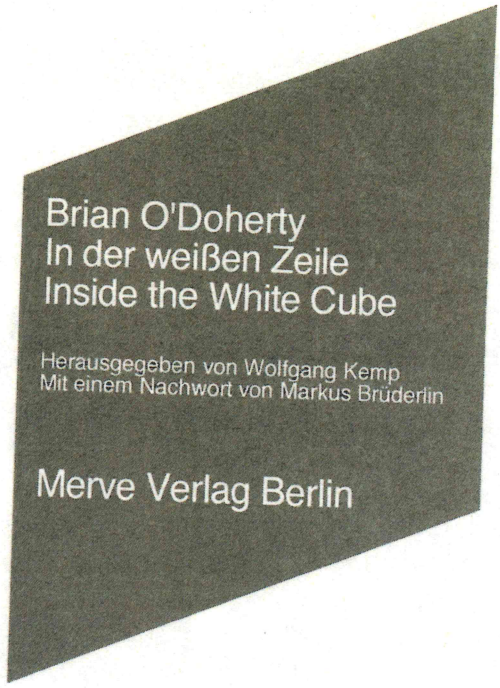


Fig. 1. Fritz Balthaus, *In der weißen Zeile*, 2007, cover. Acrylic on cardboard, signed and numbered, Edition Stella A. © Fritz Balthaus, 2015.

in independent, self- and digital publishing overlooks the fact that the publishing system is itself influenced by innumerable unavoidable preconditions that are "both a boundary or limit and the conditions of a possibility."[8] Publishing is a highly complicated modus operandi that Rachel Malik defines as

> "a set of historical processes and practices—composition, editing, design and illustration, production, marketing and promotion, and distribution—and a set of relations with various other institutions—commercial, legal, educational, political, cultural, and, perhaps, above all, other media."[9]

Malik has characterized the frame that determines every act of publishing as the "horizons of the publishable, which govern what it is thinkable to publish within a particular historical moment."[10] Thus, books and publishing are neither more "neutral" nor "impure" as the exhibition space, exhibiting or curating. Books are also guided by a "transforming force"[11] that stems from their concrete substantiation, that is, the bringing-into-form of the work in a publication, but also from the process of its socialization[12] initiated by the act of publishing and the institutional framework in which the work is presented. We cannot simply ignore these external aspects or renounce them from the published work. They necessarily shape what is inside:

> "Publication is always 'publication as': As a first edition, as paperback, as journal essay, published at the expense of the author, on laid paper,

> as the production of a certain publisher, as employing a certain typeface, as an anonymous publication, as carrying a certain dedication, as unauthorized publication, or as a part of a collected edition, associated with the name of a certain editor, etc."[13]

The cover of the O'Doherty translation is an excellent example for studying this since it clearly demonstrates that "[t]he book is [...] a site where various publishing processes—writing, editing, design, marketing, production—intersect and conflict."[14] The publisher of O'Doherty's essays is the currently very trendy Merve Verlag, a small publishing house in Berlin that specializes in theory and that, to this day, cultivates the memory of its formation from pirate editions and alternative culture that arose during the student movement when publishing and political practice went hand in hand. Their identification of belonging to the subculture can be witnessed in the printing quality and features of the books themselves: they are programmatically "badly made books." We can only provisionally attribute their use of typewriters or lead typesets that are hard on the eyes, cheap bindings, and an unspeakable quality of images to financial concerns. They should rather be understood as belonging to the cultivation of Merve's image. In using these elements, it is as if war has been declared on the fetishization of the book's object and commodity status. But it also propagandizes a distinct "deviationist reading practice": "if need be, one can just buy two, make annotations, take it to the toilet or on holiday, give it away, let it collect dust, throw it away, and use it for every possible thing."[15] By emphasizing a book's use value, Merve Verlag has become an icon of the intellectual scene. To the point that one can even speak of a Merve culture or a Merve sound. This proves that "even the bohemians have their institutions, and that they shouldn't be underestimated."[16]

This image, which naturally rubs off on the texts published by Merve, is primarily transported by the design of the books. In its combination of a pant pocket format, rhombus and font, the cover is of particular importance and has become the house's trademark. The designer Jochen Stankowski is convinced

> "that my design has created a public image for the theories and texts that Merve publishes. You could say it is a brand transported through its design, if nothing else. As such, it gives a cohesion that otherwise wouldn't be there. Presumably, without this visual frame the authors of Merve books would have been perceived as being rather dispersed and not as a way of thinking that is somehow unified or at least related."[17]

O'Doherty's institutional critique is then also at the mercy of this kind of "framing" that imposes a certain community, context, and image on the published texts through their mutual place of publication and uniform packaging, even if precisely this form of foreign domination in the art world is denounced by O'Doherty. Balthaus's intervention thus validates the major realization of the early years of institutional critique, which held that "the artist [...] can hardly comment on an institutional frame without becoming part of it."[18] Consequently, the critique of the white cube as well as the white space of the book can most likely be formulated as being:

"less in keeping with the model of a *judgement structure* (roughly speaking, in other words, a subject that *positions* itself *vis-à-vis* the criticized conditions), but rather with the model of a *practice* (meaning a subject that *is involved* and *involves itself* in a specific way *in* the criticized conditions)."[19]

From Containers to Frames: Institutional Objects

Elisabeth Tonnard's *The Invisible Book* (Leerdam: self-published, 2012) is one of numerous artistic works that has pursued this model of involvement in recent years. She has managed in a fascinating way to inscribe her work into the system at the same time as removing it: *The Invisible Book* is not tangible, it was never written or printed; it never materialized. Nevertheless, the author indicates that the work was "produced" and "published"[20]; or rather, it has appeared (both in the sense of being published and of being visible). The book can be purchased and it has been treated by critics, presented in exhibitions, sold on eBay, acquired by libraries and undergone two print runs of a hundred copies each. The work's existence can be solely attributed to a post on the artist's homepage on April 27, 2012, an act which is equivalent to publishing, and to its related paratextual framing (since it too gives title, date and place of publication, print run, features, and a detailed description of the work). This is supported by an electronic invoice that every "buyer" receives for each copy purchased.

Thus, the practice of publishing as instituting practice is made manifest in *The Invisible Book* in a remarkable fashion. Given the lack of visible or readable objects, i.e. contents, in *The Invisible Book*, it reveals all of the "externalities" of the publication process that normally remain invisible, even though they are always responsible for the operative conditions and associated circumstances for its existence. In this sense, *The Invisible Book* shifts our perspective: Instead of showing itself, it shows "that which allows it to exist,"[21] it makes the intrinsic dependency of the framed on the framing discernable, something which, in the realm of philosophy, was analyzed by Derrida with his theory of parergon.[22] *The Invisible Book* thereby makes a substantial argument for a publication not being understood only in terms of its contents and design but rather also as "an *institutional object*," whose "existence is dependent upon the existence of a *practice*,"[23] which is, for its part, embedded in historical, social, discursive, technological, economical and mediated contexts—or rather, within the "horizons of the publishable." Tonnard suggests this herself when she says: "it only makes sense to publish an invisible book if all the other ones are visible."[24]

However, what she couldn't predict was that the German artist Joachim Schmid took this game very seriously: by buying up the entire first print run, he thus created a monopoly and has sold individual copies on eBay—effectively undermining the artist's rather idealistic approach when she set the price

at €0. Not only does this demonstrate that it is entirely feasible to bring an invisible work into economic circulation so long as it has been institutionally "accredited," but it also demonstrates that works of institutional critique are not immune from being reclaimed by the very thing they critically reflect upon.

Heterotopic Alternatives

Another study of contemporary publishing practice that is committed to the above mentioned mode of highest possible involvement is Antoine Lefebvre's publishing house project *La Bibliothèque Fantastique* (LBF, 2009–2013). Following in the tradition of artistic enterprises,[25] the project attempts to create an economically, legally, and organizationally functioning publishing house that is also, according to Lefebvre, an artwork: "LBF is an *artwork* based on the works of other authors by an artist publisher, whose artistic practice is to publish books."[26] The particular allure of such artistic enterprises—which rarely ever work in publishing—consists in the disorienting simultaneity of the art world and the real world. Positioned in both, they can be understood as heterotopias containing a utopian element since their goal is not to escape reality but to understand and even to change it.[27] For this purpose, it is of great value that they act "outside of [the art world's] conventional systems of representation," meaning that they present their work "as an equivalent to the real, developing in reality without passing through the filter of representation."[28]

Lefebvre has generated the concept of a "minimalist publisher" as a special "experimental procedure":

> "La Bibliothèque Fantastique is a minimalist publisher in the sense that all the superfluous has been removed. Indeed, the books of LBF have no predetermined physical existence, they exist in a state of potentiality on the web, awaiting to become. They cost nothing, you can get them without spending a penny. They have no ISBN either, because they are works of art. They have no color, so that they can be printed in any printer. That's what LBF books don't have, which is almost more important than what they do, because our approach is conceived as a negative of that which is habitually proposed by the market spectacle society. The idea is to show various poetic singularities as opposed to the flashy commodities which our society feeds us."[29]

As an alternative to the prevailing consumer and spectacle culture, this conception implicitly promises an answer regarding the inescapable core of publishing: What is the minimalistic set of activities, practices and conditions that must be provided for one to still be able to speak of publishing?

According to Lefebvre, two particular aspects of publishing (that are still bound to the mechanisms of the market and power) have proven to be indispensable. He sees branding as being essential for the success of the project: "the logo plays a particular role in artistic enterprises, it affirms the brand

image of the enterprise. This *branding* is a *sine qua non* condition for an entity that wants to be identified as an artistic enterprise." It would be an oversimplification to attribute the necessity of branding to the economic reality that a company is subjected to. As Lefebvre states, branding is just as important for constituting a work in the art world: "In order to support the idea that this publishing house structure is an (art)work it has been found to be as equally essential to give it a brand identity or branding."[30] Both strands of branding intertwine and this demonstrates the degree to which the real world's general economy and the art world's limited economy overlap, which is why the art world is not really in the position to create an opposition to the "market spectacle society." Similarly, Lefebvre's enterprise reveals that the publishing world functions much like the art world even though the latter tends to think that the world of books couldn't be further from economic thinking.[31]

Just as indispensable for the success of the publishing house project is the role of the artist publisher as a "meta-author," which Lefebvre identifies as an "author who expresses himself through the authors." The visible expression of this prominent authorial position is a clear "editorial agenda, a catalog."[32] This is necessary for the development of the project's visibility in both the art and economic realms. Incidentally, this rationale can already be found in the image that traditional publishers have of themselves. The publisher's catalog is increasingly being spoken of as a kind of "work" that the publisher does even in the realms of book studies and philology. However, in grappling with the figure of the "meta-author," we are still concerned with established, hardly balanced power structures. To be fair, Lefebvre has affirmed the consent of the authors: "The authors that I have published have trusted me and have assented to being used."[33] Yet, this formulation ("to being used," "work made by the works of other authors," "express[ing] ... through the authors") clearly demonstrates the ethically explosive nature of this constellation.

With this in mind, we have a more sophisticated perspective on Lefebvre's claim to pursue a decidedly *alternative* artistic practice with his publishing project. Clearly, this otherness is primarily guided by a search for alternative spaces for art and not by the development of a truly alternative publishing model:

> "This practice is alternative, or other, insofar as it represents an alternative to the usual mode of operation dominating the art world: it is both an alternative space for art; a new place for it to develop differently; but also an alternative to the art market as it develops in the book market."[34]

Lefebvre's publishing project may have been initiated as a result of institutional critique but this critique is only concerned with the art world and art market and not with the book market and the practice of publishing, whose structures, institutions and practices are not being challenged in the tumultuous embraces they are currently receiving from the art world—rather, they are being reinforced.

Ethic-Pretty

A pointed critique of the *book* market from the perspective of literature (which, per definition, has a very different relationship to publishing) was launched in 2013 by VanessaPlace Inc.—an artistic enterprise, whose Chief Executive Officer, the poet Vanessa Place, explicitly wishes to dispel some of the myths surrounding the literary world. The enterprise was founded because Place experienced:

> "[f]atigue with hearing that poetry has no capital; is incapable of capitalization; is market-pure and therefore ethic-pretty; etc. Not only is this untrue, but it allows the conceit of wielding capital, including but, not limited to, cultural capital, in a predictably sanitized manner."[35]

To refute the misconceptions regarding poetry's autonomy and ethical harmlessness, VannessaPlace Inc. aims to demonstrate poetry's real worth, i.e. its function. That even poetry has a market value is revealed precisely in its relation to the art market: "Poetry needs to understand its market cache. Go to an art show and see how many pieces are called 'poetic,' and how that translates as pure capital. [...] Poetry costs. It might as well cash in."[36] The enterprise's first publication *$20* (2013) lives up to the corporate slogan ("Poetry is a Kind of Money") and corporate strategy ("turn cultural capital into capitalized culture"[37]). Consisting of twenty one-dollar bills that were sold for fifty dollars, the publication was, according to the homepage,[38] sold out within an hour.

Strictly speaking, VanessaPlace Inc. doesn't sell poetry. Rather, it sells accumulated cultural capital that primarily profits from Place's high reputation in the poetry scene as well as from her social media competence. It is not by chance that the company bears her name. As such, it takes into account the current "age of semio-capitalism": "As a working hypothesis, let's say we are all of us small corporations, trading our identities in the semiotic market in exchange for remuneration in kind."[39]

In a further work, *Book It*, VanessaPlace Inc. strives to subvert the system based on the ISBN, which, in a nutshell, embodies the commodity status of a book as an instrument of the book trade. However, Place ultimately banks on the functionality of the system, otherwise she wouldn't be able to advertise that the ISBNs purchased by VanessaPlace Inc. that can be placed on arbitrary objects transfigure them into "book[s] of poetry. Or art," "published by VanessaPlace Inc."[40] Regardless of which object is furnished with an ISBN: "it will circulate, or can circulate, as a book able to be bought, sold, *traced* as a book."[41] In this demonstration of the efficiency of the ISBN system, Place is handsomely remunerated: the ISBNs are sold for $50, a price that is clearly higher than what the "publishing house" paid for them.

"Clash of Cultures"

Fiona Banner's publishing house Vanity Press also affixes ISBNs to objects that shouldn't actually be understood as publications. But, what is more, she intricately mixes the practices, standards, and values of the art world and the publishing world by giving each copy of her print editions, such as *Book 1/1* (2009), a unique ISBN:

> "Each print in this edition, Book 1/1, is the same and yet each is unique. Each one has its own ISBN number and is registered under its own individual title. Each one of the edition is therefore an official publication and each is an edition in, and only of, itself. An edition of one ... a book reduced to a reference, purely an imagined space."[42]

The clash of cultures between the art and publishing worlds couldn't be more explicit. The title of the edition *Book 1/1* already alludes to the art system being based on an original, or unique, object. With this in mind, we see that even multiples, editions, prints, and a number of artists' books are committed to this approach and search for ways of generating uniqueness in limited print runs, signing the books and numbering them (i.e. "the same and yet unique"). By contrast, this foreign thought is ignored in the publishing world (excepting the bibliophile) since the goal there is to create as many copies as possible that are, per definition, identical and that, consequently, possess the same value.

In conflating these two worlds, Banner misappropriates the ISBN. Instead of emphasizing that which unifies every copy belonging to the same print run, the ISBN here serves as its own title, individualizing every identical copy of a print run. Consequently, the art world's standards enter through the back door. The copy that is transformed by the ISBN into a unique object, thoroughly corrupts the highly acclaimed democratic nature of the book as a medium—the very same aspect that the artists' book scene and artist publishers constantly invoke and that is also used by Multiple Stores in advertising Banner's works on their website.[43]

Survival Strategy

It is interesting to note that this misappropriation of ISBNs was "avenged" by the British Library and not by the ISBN agency. The British Library is responsible for the legal deposit in the United Kingdom, which stipulates that British publishers are obliged to submit a copy of every publication created in the country. This is done to preserve as much of the cultural and intellectual heritage of the nation as possible. And although this stipulation is not limited only to publications with an ISBN, those publications that lack an ISBN, such as vanity press and self-published titles, generally go unnoticed by institutions, which is why they shouldn't be afraid of the institution's legal requirements. It is also the reason why, should a self-publisher want his/her publications to

be institutionally valorized and preserved as part of the cultural production of the nation, s/he would have to become active in the process. In the case of Banner, it can be presumed that the British Library's machinery was activated by the notification of her "publications"[44] by the ISBN agency, and this beautifully demonstrates the intertwining of two institutional practices. That being said, it is remarkable that the focal point of the artistic critique so far has only been on the ISBN, something which must be purchased from a private company but which has no legal stipulations as to its usage. Equipped with legal force and a juridical, ethical reasoning, the legal deposit, in contrast, has received inadequate attention.[45]

In any case, Fiona Banner finally succeeded in getting rid of the dilemma by creating a catalog of all the ISBN works, including the entire correspondence with the British Library as well as the applications for each ISBN as a symbol of distancing herself from the system (*ISBN 978-1-907118-99-9* (The Vanity Press, 2010)). Submitted to the legal deposit, this book is at once a testament to itself as well as to all of Vanity Press's unique ISBN "publications" and it thereby registers them in the institutions and the cultural heritage administered by them.

As a result, these books evade the fate of so-called grey literature, those books that are scarcely ever registered in libraries or archives and which, consequently, are often fated to become invisible or lost. It is noticeable how often one speaks of invisible books in this context.[46] But what is meant by invisibility is very different than what is meant in Tonnard's *Invisible Book*: It is of an institutional nature and not of a material one. This has far reaching implications since whatever cannot be verified by the gatekeeper principle of the established system and cannot be recorded by its institutions (as, for instance, self-publishing houses[47]) is not authorized—it effectively doesn't count or exist.[48] It remains uncertain whether alternative institutionalized forms of legitimization and validation of these modes of cultural production which continue to fly under the radar will emerge, which is why it is true of Fiona Banner what Kenneth Goldsmith once observed in regards to the importance of the academic world in recognizing avant-garde works: "you have the institution as survival strategy."[49]

You Might Like to Know...

In recent years there has been a noticeable proliferation of publications in the branches of self-publishing and POD that run counter to this and forgo such benefits, since they purposefully remain under the radar of the established institutions.[50] Although the sound of freedom and democracy is often associated with POD, we shouldn't forget that artists and writers are also treading here on predetermined paths and that these are of an institutional, creative and economic nature. It is therefore important that these lofty expectations be calibrated with reality.[51]

Thus, for instance, Jean Keller criticizes in his *Black Book* (2010) the equally opaque and contradictory pricing structures of PODs that the author has very little influence over—just as in traditional structures. The basic rates are reportedly determined by the material and production costs that are incurred. Yet, it seems that one of the most expensive raw materials, ink, for instance, doesn't play any role in the calculation:

> "For example, a Blurb book of blank pages costs an artist as much to produce as a book filled with text or large photographs. Furthermore, as the number of pages increases, the price of each page decreases. A book containing the maximum number of pages printed entirely in black ink therefore results in the lowest cost and maximum value for the artist. Combining these two features, buyers of *The Black Book* can do so with the guarantee that they are getting the best possible value for their money."[52]

The sophistication of this maneuver, which tries to squeeze every last drop of value out for the author and buyer, cannot hide the fact that it is impossible in the POD system to form, for instance, an autonomous policy regarding the publisher's catalog, price, and turnover that is not determined solely by economic considerations or factor in the publisher's financial offsetting of profitable and unprofitable publications.

With the companion piece *Blank Book* (2011) Jean Keller reacts to being at the mercy of the widely divergent quality standards of POD providers, a fact that was impressively demonstrated by James Goggin's highly acclaimed student project *Dear Lulu,* (2008–).[53] Whereas Silvio Lorusso praises these circumstances since a recognizable "distinctive physicality"[54] of POD products emerges, Keller's *Blank Book*, consisting of 80 blank pages, (humorously) expresses capitulation:

> "Print on demand is great, you can make all those books you always dreamt of. That's the theory. Between your book and the theory there's Blurb. Sometimes they get it right, sometimes they don't. You can get a book with too many pages, you can get a book with missing pages. You can get a book with wrong colours, you can get a book that isn't cropped correctly. You can get a book with text or photos not at the position where they are supposed to be. There are unlimited possibilities to get it wrong. Not so with *Blank*. It doesn't really matter if the book isn't cropped correctly. Colour is not an issue, nor are text and photos. A few missing pages are not a problem and too many pages are not a problem either. The book is blank. You can do with it what you want. So can Blurb. If you don't like their logo, simply tear out the last page."[55]

This, however, doesn't really help. The logo is but a clearly visible indication that the POD providers—who perceive themselves as being something between a service provider and a publisher—have subtly and yet inevitably contributed to every publication:[56] their significance is greater than being simply a (bad) printer and binder. The empty white book is permeated by contending interests whether the logo is there or not. And like the white cube, a book is "a far-from-neutral zone," it is "a participant in, rather than a passive support for the art."[57]

This point is also demonstrated by Silvio Lorusso and Giulia Ciliberto's POD project *Blank on Demand* (2011), which makes itself fully dependent on the technical and formal constraints of the providers and thereby depicts the authors' limitations in designing books. The project consists of two empty books (with the exception of an ISBN) that comply with the highest and lowest available settings for each parameter—such as format, length, binding and price. The resulting projects are a 10.8 × 17.5 cm paperback whose length is 40 pages and carries the price tag of €5.44 and a 15.2 × 22.99 cm hardcover whose length is 740 pages and a price tag of €999,999.99. The sum of the contingencies that are set out by POD platforms for publishing are demonstrated in this combination. Nevertheless, it is possible to heartily laugh about the absurdities of this powerful machinery: "We were particularly fascinated by the idea of paper sheets going through all the complex print machinery without any purpose."[58]

A similar concept has been explored in the series *Variable Format* by AND Publishing and Åbäke (London 2012), but they play with the extreme settings of even more formats and parameters (ranging from the newspaper to fat page-turners). Seeing as individual copies were produced on seven different platforms (including Lulu and Espresso Book Machine), the series creates a substantial overview of the most important players in the market.[59] The detailed imprint is of note since it lists not only the author and publisher, as in the (mainstream) book business, but also the participants whenever applicable. As such, it indicates the particular context and conditions in which the publication was conceived, designed, financed, printed, published and brought into circulation. Introduced by the fitting formulation (that should actually have been in the imperative) "You might like to know..." a detailed portrayal of the context that the book emerged from as well as the artistic concept, an exhaustive list of its features and the producers of the twelve different editions of each book can be discovered:

> "Variable Format
> Published by AND
> Designed by åbäke with Pierre Pautler
> ~~© AND Publishing and åbäke, 2012~~
> Distribution www.andpublishing.org
> the name of our publishing activity is AND
> Supported by the SEED Fund / University of the Arts London
> Printed by [xy]"[60]

This demonstrates that the practice of publishing, even that of self-publishing, is essentially a collaboration,[61] even though many of the protagonists are too often subsequently removed from the creative process so that the final product can be staged as belonging solely to the production of the author.[62] *Variable Format,* in contrast, indexes the breadth of "publishing activities" of AND Publishing and thereby makes them transparent as a "set of historical processes and practices—composition, editing, design and illustration, production, marketing and promotion, and distribution—and a set of relations with various other institutions—commercial, legal, educational,

political, cultural."[63] Keeping this highly complex and currently transforming ecosystem in mind, *Variable Format* also makes clear that to date we've only scratched the surface of all the sets of processes, practices, infrastructures, and relations, that we call publishing. Or, as Lorusso suggests, "sent through the regular postal system, the physical book, is [only] the tip of the iceberg."[64]

Translated by Shane Anderson

1 Fritz Balthaus, *In der weißen Zeile*, 2007. Manipulated Merve volume no. 190, 20 copies/originals + 8 artists' proofs, Edition Stella A.

2 Brian O'Doherty, *In der weißen Zelle. Inside the white cube*, trans. Wolfgang Kemp (Berlin: Merve, 1996).

3 Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube. The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999), 80.

4 Robert Smithson, "Cultural Confinement" (1972), in *Institutional Critique. An Anthology of Artists' Writings*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 140–142, 140.

5 O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*, 79.

6 Ibid., 79f.

7 Similarly, Nick Thurston states: "I think we need to recognise publishing as a specific field of practice and theory [...]. It's similar to the challenge that has faced curating and exhibitions history since the 1990s: how to develop a sophisticated meta-consciousness about a field of action that many assume to be secondary or to overlap with already established disciplines of knowledge, like art history." Louise O'Hare, "Artists at Work: Nick Thurston" (22.8.2012), http://www.afterall.org/online/7239.

8 Rachel Malik, "Horizons of the Publishable: Publishing in/as Literary Studies," *ELH* 75 (2008): 707–735, 721.

9 Ibid., 709.

10 Ibid.

11 O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*, 45.

12 On the socialization of texts see Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

13 Michael Cahn, "*Opera Omnia*: The Production of Cultural Authority," in *History of Science, History of Text*, ed. Karine Chemla (Boston: Kluwer Academic, 2004), 81–94, 84.

14 Malik, "Horizons of the Publishable," 710.

15 All quotations from Heidi Paris, "Wider das Kostbare," www.heidi-paris.de/verlag/wider-das-kostbare [unless otherwise noted all translations S.A.].

16 Georg Stanitzek, *Essay – BRD* (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 2011), 326.

17 Jochen Stankowski and Christof Windgätter, "Der Rauten-Macher – Gespräch über den Merve Verlag," *Verpackungen des Wissens* 2 (2012): 57–70, 67.

18 According to Jennifer Allen in relation to Balthaus's own works, *Artforum International* (April 2006).

19 Stefan Nowotny, "Anti-Canonization. The Differential Knowledge of Institutional Critique," in *Art and Contemporary Critical Practice: Reinventing Institutional Critique*, ed. Gerald Raunig and Gene Ray (London: mayflybooks, 2009), 21–28, 26.

20 Elisabeth Tonnard, *The Invisible Book*, http://elisabethtonnard.com/works/the-invisible-book.

21 Daniel Buren, "Terminologie," in *Les Écrits. 1965–2012. Vol. I: 1965–1995* (Paris: Flammarion, 2012), 1239–1249, 1246.

22 See Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987).

23 Stein Haugom Olsen, "Defining A Literary Work," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 35, no. 2 (Winter 1976), 133–142, 134.

24 Liz Sales, "Interview," originally published on *Conveyor Magazine Blog* (6.12.2013), https://tonnard.files.wordpress.com/2008/03/interview_liz_sales.pdf.

25 For an overview, see Yann Toma and Rose Marie Barrientos, eds., *Les entreprises critiques = Critical Companies. La critique artiste à l'ère de l'économie globalisée: Artistic Critique in the Era of Globalized Economy* (Saint-Etienne: Cité du design, 2008).

26 Antoine Lefebvre, *WILF*, http://www.rouen.fr/wilf (emphasis mine). See also Antoine Lefebvre's contribution to this volume.

27 "While Foucault refers to heterotopia as a 'local utopia,' artistic enterprises tend to realize these utopias. We can clearly see here that their kind of being different, or other, is not a denial of reality but rather

a manifestation of the artistic will to improve reality." Antoine Lefebvre, "Portrait de l'artiste en éditeur – L'edition comme pratique artistique alternative" (PhD diss., Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2014), 245f. Online http://labibliothequefantas.free.fr/index.php?/thesis.

28 Ibid., 239 and 256.

29 Antoine Lefebvre, "What? / Quoi?" http://www.labibliothequefantastique.net.

30 Lefebvre, "Portrait de l'artiste en éditeur," 226 and 213.

31 See, for instance, Michael Bhaskar's severe conclusion: "For publishers, the obvious model is the business model. From the earliest times printers and publishers were proto-capitalists, working in a capital-intensive, risk-laden environment to shift stock as quickly as possible." Michael Bhaskar, *The Content Machine. Towards a Theory of Publishing from the Printing Press to the Digital Network* (London, New York, Delhi: Anthem, 2013), 97.

32 Lefebvre, "Portrait de l'artiste en éditeur," 277 and 276.

33 Ibid., 278.

34 Ibid., 269. See also 291f.

35 Vanessa Place and Quinn Latimer, "The Frictionless Witness or Us, Keeping Us Real," *Mousse* 40 (2013): 246–249, 248.

36 "Authors on Artists: Vanessa Place Talks with Ben Fama about VanessaPlace Inc," *bright stupid confetti* (17.7.2013), http://brightstupidconfetti.blogspot.de/2013/07/authors-on-artists-vanessa-place-talks.html.

37 "About," http://vanessaplace.biz/about.

38 No information is present about the print run.

39 Place and Latimer, "The Frictionless Witness," 248.

40 "Authors on Artists." – Klaus Scherübel achieves the same with his photo series *On Location*, where he documented the appearance of his book object *Mallarmé. The Book*, which consists solely of a cover and a Styrofoam block that has been furnished with an ISBN, in bookstores and libraries. We should also mention Badlands Unlimited, which published the short story *Holiday* in 2012 as an e-book and a sculpted stone, each with an ISBN.

41 Ibid.

42 Accompanying text to Fiona Banner, *Book 1/1* (The Vanity Press and The Multiple Store, 2009), 65 copies, block print on mirror card, 45 × 64 cm, stamped and signed, http://fionabanner.com/vanitypress/book11/index.htm.

43 "Fiona Banner questions the currency of the multiple or limited edition [...] using the democratic medium of print." Multiple Stores, "About the Edition," http://themultiplestore.org/shop/editions/fiona-banner-book-1-1.

44 The ISBN is "an important tool" not only for the classic book trade but also for libraries since it "plays an important role in the acquisition and cataloging of books." Agentur für Buchmarktstandards, "Die ISBN," http://www.german-isbn.de/isbn_start_text.html/10011.

45 The Federal Constitutional Court acknowledged in a judgment that the (non-remunerated) legal deposit is a legitimate concern for the general public and outweighs any possible (economic) disadvantage that a publisher may accrue.

46 See Margaret J. M. Ezell, "Invisible Books," in *Producing the Eighteenth-Century Book. Writers and Publishers in England, 1650–1800*, ed. Laura L. Runge and Pat Rogers (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2009), 53–69; Peter Brantley, "The New Missing Books," *Publishing Research Quarterly* 28 (2012): 172–175.

47 The name of Banner's publishing house, Vanity Press, invokes the common stigma that self-publishers have to fight against: It is routinely suggested that their motives are purely egotistical or narcissistic and that they are of questionable aesthetic caliber. Because of the generality of this accusation it is unfounded.

48 In specifically addressing self-publishers, the German ISBN agency can thus sell its service as a guarantee for the "perceptibility" of a title "in the entire German book world." Agentur für Buchmarktstandards, "Beantragung," http://www.german-isbn.de/isbn_start_text.html/10012.

49 "There is so little interest in the avant-garde in the general population that if not for the academy, this work would be nearly invisible. [...] In fact, [...] if this work is not received in the academy, it's not received at all. I, for example, owe my career to academies and institutions; if my work is not being taught or written about, it doesn't exist." Kenneth Goldsmith, "My Career in Poetry or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Institution," *Umělec* 1 (2012).

50 This phenomenon becomes comprehensible in, for instance, Bernhard Cella's *NO-ISBN* project. See the interview with Cella but also the essay from Lucas W. Melkane in the present volume.

51 Hannes Bajohr calls the type of publishing that takes as its topic the structural, socioeconomic, and material conditions of its production "factography," see his contribution in the present volume.

52 Accompanying text to Jean Keller, *Black Book* (self-published, 2010), http://www.blurb.com/b/1768873-the-black-book. 2013 also appeared on Lulu with a higher number of pages.

53 James Goggin et al., *Dear Lulu, Please try and print these line, colour, pattern, format, texture and typography tests for us.* (self-published, 2008), also available on Blurb and MagCloud.

54 "I can easily spot books printed with Lulu. To me, their peculiar identity became appealing as much as cheap xeroxed zines." Silvio Lorusso, "Print-on-Demand—The Radical Potential of Networked Standardisation," in *Code—X. Paper, Ink, Pixel and Screen*, ed. Danny Aldred and Emmanuelle Waeckerlé (Farnham: bookRoom, 2015), 03:47–03:58, 03:48.

55 Accompanying text to Jean Keller, *Blank Book* (self-published, 2011), http://www.blurb.de/bookstore/detail/2592736-blank.

56 See "A parergon comes against, beside, and in addition to the ergon, [...] it touches and cooperates within the operation, from a certain outside." Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, 54.

57 O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*, 27f.

58 Lorusso, "Print-on-Demand," 03:51.

59 In passing, this series also demonstrates how the diverse formats and features structure our expectations and our dealings with the publications before we read them. As such, they also contribute to the contents of the books themselves.

60 AND Publishing, ed., *Variable Format* (London, 2012), last page of each version.

61 Eva Weinmayr, co-founder of AND Publishing, has declared this as an axiom of her artistic practice, see "One Publishes to Find Comrades," in *The Visual Event, an Education in Appearances*, ed. Oliver Klimpel (Leipzig: Spector Books, 2014), 50–59.

62 The attempt to do justice to this kind of publishing by cataloging all of the bibliographical details of this series is thus inevitably doomed to failure. The crossed out copyright line in the imprint indicates that AND Publishing doesn't assign copyright to anyone (in regards to both content and design).

63 Malik, "Horizons of the Publishable," 709.

64 Lorusso, "Print-on-Demand," 03:48.

The Social Sense of Print

Alessandro Ludovico

Newspaper as (Fake) Political Imaginary

The form of the newspaper is still one of the most recognizable. What we can consider as the modern form of newspapers has only changed slightly since the nineteenth century (except for the inclusion of pictures and colors) becoming a daily medium for quite a few generations, establishing itself as an aesthetic standard, and a defined cultural object with its specific interface. That's why artists and activists have often used newspapers as an identifiable information environment and a daily object at the same time. From Andy Warhol's *Headlines* series,[1] with huge reproductions of particularly dramatic front pages as frozen in time, to *Modern History* series by Sarah Charlesworth,[2] tracking the use of the same picture on different front page layouts. But a specific conceptual manipulation of newspapers (and the conventional ecosystem surrounding them) has been employed by artists and activists to foster specific ideas. The "fake" newspaper, which accurately reproduces a real newspaper arbitrarily changing its content, has always been able to question the instinctive trust we have in this medium (reinforced by its unchangeability on print and the editorial work behind it). If making fake copies and freely distributing them in order to attract public attention (but then revealing them as something else, such as mere advertising flyers) is a remarkably old practice, dating back to the end of the nineteenth century,[3] the conscious use of those fakes as a political medium is more recent. The "Faux Soir" was an emblematic fake issue of the well known Belgian newspaper *Le Soir*, published during the Second World War in 1943 by the resistance organization Front de l'Indépendance [fig. 1]. Beyond its outstanding political value, it was incorporating the "zwanze," a characteristic form of Brussels humor.[4] There are a few further effective examples, in this respect, especially emerging in the 1970s. "Il Male"[5] stemmed during the rise of leftist political movements in Italy, and especially the "Creative Autonomism" student movement in 1977. It conducted a few campaigns through fake journalistic "scoops" (all being simultaneously plausible and surrealistic) rendered in major Italian newspapers' layouts and attached next to newsstands, sometimes generating quite harsh reactions and a lot of discussions in the streets. In the same years two other actions (officially anonymous) were accomplished. In 1979 in Poland, a fake issue of the major propaganda newspaper *Trybuna Ludu* was distributed when Pope John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła) visited his homeland, sporting the banner headline "Government Resigns, Wojtyla Crowned King."[6] And in France, in 1977, a fake *Le Monde Diplomatique* was anonymously distributed to a certain number of subscribers, featuring very satirical comments on the Rote Armee Fraktion's Stammheim Prison bloodbath.[7] Almost thirty years later, on November 12, 2008, an impressive fake newspaper

1 Molly Donovan et al., *Warhol: Headlines* (New York: Prestel, 2011).
2 Sarah Charlesworth, *Modern History* (Edinburgh: New 57 Gallery, 1979).
3 "The Most Common Fake Historic Newspaper," accessed August 11, 2015, http://www.historicpages.com/lincfake.htm.
4 "Faux Soir," accessed August 11, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faux_Soir.
5 See Vincenzo Sparagna, *Falsi da ridere: Dal Male a Frigidaire, dalla Pravda a Stella Rossa, dal Corriere all'Unità, da Repubblica al Lunedì della Repubblica* (Roma: Malatempora, 2000).
6 Ibid.
7 See Pasquale Alferj and Giacomo Mazzone, *I Fiori di Gutenberg* (Roma: Arcana, 1979).

andro Ludovico

Douleurs terribles dans les membres.

LE SOIR

Hôtel des Ventes Bruxellois 48 CHAUSSÉE D'ANVERS 48 BRUXELLES-NORD

RICHE VENTE PUBLIQUE SPÉCIALE

Mardi 9 novembre 1943

60 Cent

17 HEURES

EN PLEINE ACTION

La Conférence de Berlin

« Capitulation sans conditions »

Stratégie Efficace

Berlin admet que la situation est des plus sérieuses.

Communiqué allemand

ANNIVERSAIRE

UN DOCUMENT

NOUS SOMMES EN PREMIERE LIGNE

Du décrochage à la victoire défensive

UN FAIT entre 1000

Fig. 1. "Le Faux Soir," fake issue of the Belgian newspaper *Le Soir*, published during the Second World War in 1943 by the resistance organization Front de l'Indépendance.

distributed in several thousand copies invaded the streets in New York City: The *New York Times Special Edition* by the Yes Men in collaboration with Steve Lambert and the Anti-Advertising Agency, and anonymously sponsored.[8] It was set in the near future (July 4, 2009), featuring only positive news, briefly plausible after Barack Obama's election as U.S. President. The *New York Times*'s layout, fonts and graphic design were painstakingly reproduced (including the usual advertisements, satirically changed as well), so the majority of the public was easily fooled. A large network of volunteers distributed it for free in the city, even in front of the *New York Times* headquarters, without any legal repercussion. What was embodied here was the public imaginary, the articulated hope this historical event generated, historicized then altogether in a stable and recognizable format, without the daily compromises of major media. The group produced another few fakes, one of them in the form of the *International Herald Tribune*. Relating somehow to "Il Male" actions, Italian artist Paolo Cirio, made a project composed by a web application, a workshop, and an action in 2011, called *inVeritas*. It was centered on Italian newspapers, inviting people to invent their own breaking news story that could be composed as a headline sheet with the newspaper logo of choice, through the project's website. Then fairly easily it was printed out and placed (during the night) near local newsstands.[9] But the use of fake newspapers in political campaigns has proven not to be a thing of the past. The classic strategy of purchasing a full front page ad, designed to look just like the real front page has been often adopted with alternating results. The Liberal Party

8 "New York Times Special Edition," accessed August 11, 2015, http://theyesmen.org/hijinks/newyorktimes.

9 "inVeritas," accessed August 11, 2015, http://www.paolocirio.net/work/inveritas/inveritas.php.

Hôtel des Ventes Bruxelloises
48 CHAUSSÉE D'ANVERS 48
BRUXELLES-NORD
RICHE VENTE PUBLIQUE SPÉCIALE
gie Efficace
la situation est des plus sérieuses.
Communiqué allemand
UN FAIT entre 1000
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ed during
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in British Columbia did it in 2013, disguising the ad as "official" information, and so generating a whole national media case with polarized reactions about the Party ethics and the high risk of misleading the readers.[10] Furthermore, in 2011 there was a more direct political newspaper scam, where police identified a network of infringers who had been illegally producing and distributing fake copies of *Ziarul de Garda* and *Timpul*, two of Moldova's leading newspapers, trying to manipulate the public opinion ahead of elections by publishing negative articles about the pro-Western ruling coalition.[11]

Plagiarism (from Print to Digital and Vice-Versa)

Newspaper fakes incorporate some forms of "plagiarism," mostly related to misusing a "standardized" visual form. This has been technically feasible due to the mechanical reproduction of print, especially with the lightning-fast speed and accuracy of digital (re)production. But the plagiarism of content is much older, and the very concept of plagiarism dates back to the Roman Empire. It was used for the first time by Roman poet Martial, who in complaining that another poet was "kidnapping" his verses, called him "plagiarius," which literally means "kidnapper." These were the verses he used to express his feelings:

> "Fama refert nostros te, Fidentine, libellos
> non aliter populo quam recitare tuos.
> si mea vis dici, gratis tibi carmina mittam:
> si dici tua vis, hoc eme, ne mea sint."
>
> (Fame has it that you, Fidentinus,
> recite my books to the crowd as if none other than your own.
> If you're willing that they be called mine, I'll send you the poems for free.
> If you want them to be called yours, buy this one, so that they won't be mine.)[12]

There are plenty of more or less famous cases of literary plagiarism in history, but only some of them were publicly admitted (like the script of the TV series *Roots*, admittedly plagiarized by his author in some passages from the novel *The African*, published nine years before). In contemporaneity, plagiarism seems easier than ever, especially taking advantage from "big data" sophisticated sources like Wikipedia, and so a few critical artworks have been developed consequently. Belgian artist Stéphanie Vilayphiou investigates how free software can deeply question the fixity of the printed page once it's digitized, and how the defensive copyright practices, historically consolidated can be challenged. In particular she writes various transformative software to create controversial versions of literature classics. Specifically, in her net art piece

10 "Liberals buy front-page newspaper ad touting debate win," accessed August 11, 2015, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2013/05/01/bc-liberals-newspaper-ad.html.

11 "'Fake newspapers' network dismantled in Moldova," accessed August 11, 2015, http://www.b92.net/eng/news/world.php?yyyy=2011&mm=05&dd=17&nav_id=74384.

12 Jack Lynch, "The Perfectly Acceptable Practice of Literary Theft: Plagiarism, Copyright, and the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation* 24, no. 4 (winter 2002–3): 51–54.

La carte ou le territoire (*The Map or the Territory*)[13] she selected a controversial book, Michel Houellebecq's *The Map and the Territory*, which became renown and discussed in France for its evident quotes from Wikipedia, never acknowledged by the author nor by the publisher. She retrieved the book's digitized text and then wrote a software filter which parses it into sentences (or part of it) looking for them in the millions of digitized texts contained in Google Books, eventually finding the same sequence of words in other books. The results are rendered then in their original typefaces, and the parts matching Houellebecq's book are highlighted in yellow [fig. 2]. Visually the book is entirely transformed into a sequential digital collage of quotations (whose original authoritative printed context is still maintained in the background), definitively losing even the last bit of originality. Vilayphiou ultimately questions originality and authorship through software automatisms, turning them into trackable and technically demonstrable collective thinking. Another example of artistic practice deliberately using other people's writings in a specific context is Traumawien's *Ghostwriter* series.[14] The Viennese group performed a virtual "action" with their own software robots compiling and uploading hundreds of e-books on Amazon.com with text directly stolen from YouTube videos' comments, as if they were abstract dialogues. They have defined it an "auto-cannibalistic" model, and these e-books sport a very

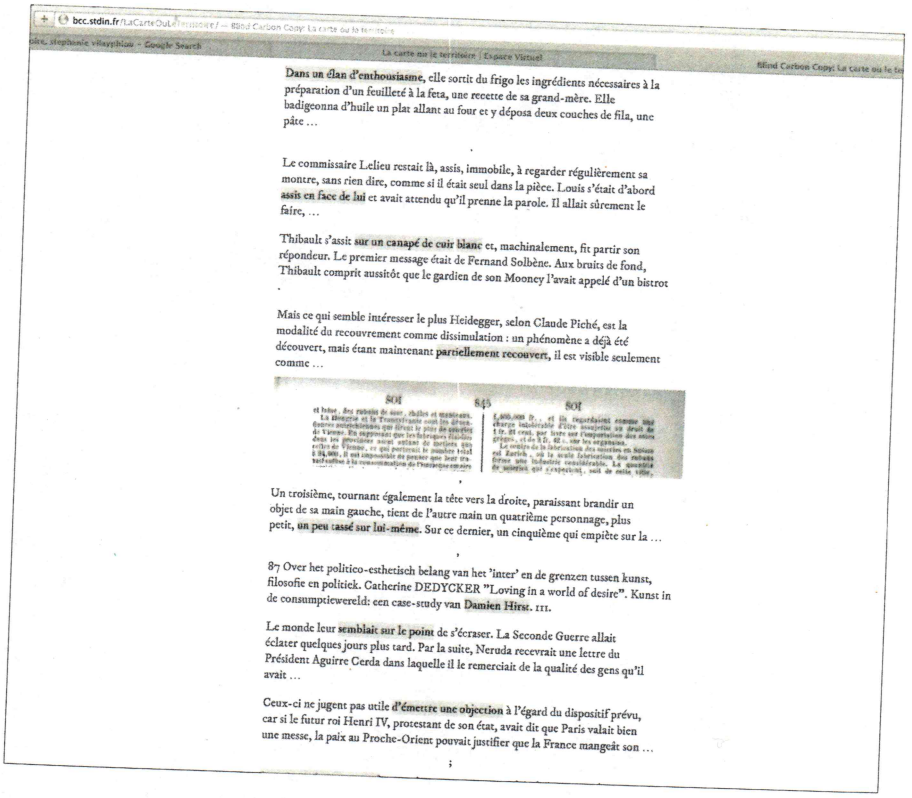

Fig. 2. Stéphanie Vilayphiou, *La carte ou le territoire*, 2013, accessed November 20, 2015, http://bcc.stdin.fr/LaCarteOuLeTerritoire, screen shot.

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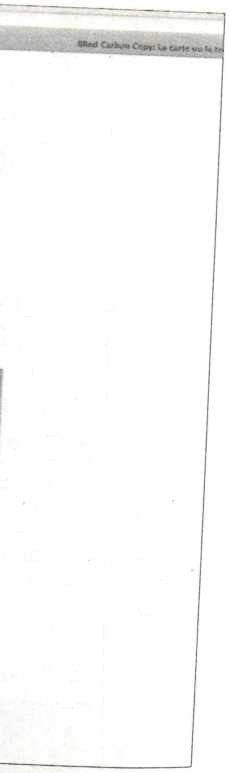

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classic paperback layout as spontaneous instant books, redirecting the endless flow of comments in a specific form and freezing them in time. This action is obviously re-contextualizing the original meanings, setting them in a new scenario and in a new literary form: from personal notes not necessarily relating each other, into a single continuous and sometimes surreal dialogue. What happens in the passage from one medium to another, is that the original spontaneousness and sometimes naïveté of the text once rendered as a book assumes the formal character of the adopted layout. The paradigm of access to "big data" is embedded in practices like the aforementioned, and the software programer's vision is the only limit to what kind of results and new (digital and printed) forms can be consequently created.

Printing as a Risky Strategy

Fakes and plagiarized works create the uneasy situation of controversial content statically reproduced and distributed in many copies. This is reinforcing the "validating" role of print, nowadays coupled with the instant and potentially extreme dissemination of information. Since the year 2000 there have been a few famous and dramatic cases of sensitive information leaks: Wikileaks and its small galaxy of information-wants-to-be-free "heroes" (Julian Assange, Bradley Manning, Edward Snowden) publishing secret or classified information from anonymous sources, and Aaron Swartz and his brave act of freeing the copyrighted academic knowledge of JSTOR[15] (Swartz committed suicide in 2013). The leaks' transmission and acquisition has been totally digital, but then traditional media has been deeply involved to make this information "public" (and implicitly to somehow certify the scale of the action with their innate "authority"), including printed ones, mainly newspapers. At a smaller scale, there are other cases using print as a tool for liberating secret information. Carl Malamud, for example, an activist dealing with the fact that vital parts of US law are secret and that you are allowed to read them only by paying quite a high amount of money, has founded Public.Resource.Org organization,[16] which digitizes, and eventually re-publishes public domain materials. He has scanned, OCRed and re-published in print, codes like the *Public safety codes of California* or the *District of Columbia Official Code* including in the print a statement that says "being law, any claim about their copyright by the authorities is 'null and void.'" Answering the question "why print copies?" Malamud says that the print edition limits distribution with none of the "side effect of infinite copy" that scares standard and legal people, thus making his efforts somehow acceptable. In this case, print is turned into a legally strategic medium of distribution, because of its slow duplication standards, as newspapers have been equally strategic for Wikileaks, being part of a clever

13 Stéphanie Vilayphiou, "La carte ou le territoire," accessed August 11, 2015, http://espacevirtuel.jeudepaume.org/la-carte-ou-le-territoire-1834.

14 "Ghostwriters," accessed August 11, 2015, http://traumawien.at/prints/ghostwriters.

15 Valerie J. Nelson, "Aaron Swartz dies at 26; Internet folk hero founded Reddit," *Los Angeles Times*, January 12, 2013.

16 "Public.Resource.org," accessed August 11, 2015, https://public.resource.org.

tactic that considers the different role and weight of the respective medium, in order to seamlessly accomplish an effective distribution of the content.

Screen Touch vs. Printing Tactility

The relationship between the printed and the digitized dimension of the content can be functional, legal, aesthetic, but it's also gloriously perceptual. How many things do we physically "touch," establishing an enriched relationship with them? Not too many—but screens and printed materials are surely among them. More generally, materiality has its own space of information, which is very different from the immaterial one. The three-dimensional space of materiality is essential in locating, estimating, and recognizing cultural objects. There is a recurring comparison in the media between the convenience of using printed content in digital form versus its traditional paper format. A published work in a computer file format has a series of promoted qualities: lightness and hence portability, speed in accessing it, its (near) instant ability to be searched, quantified, linked, cross-referenced, and "calculated" in general, which makes it a terrifically tool-enforced version of the original work. But there is a constantly underestimated aspect: its "user experience," especially from a perceptual perspective, which, paradoxically, turns out to be quite "deprived" compared to the classic printed publication. Digital content uses primarily one sense: sight. Excluding taste, of course, to start there is an absence of any specific smell. Hearing may or may not be involved, and when it is, it usually appears in two different ways: print experience simulation (typically a sound sample of turning pages), and alert sounds, which are unspecific, so not contextualized to the reading experience. In fact, they belong to the more general digital interface, generally only used to attract attention about some impeding fault or give a warning about something about to happen. Sight, instead, is very involved, although the text always appears in the very same way thanks to the retro-illuminated characteristic, which is meant to ensure readability anytime, anywhere. In comparison, classic printed publications use a much richer sensorial environment, providing inputs for multiple sensory modalities. Again excluding taste, smell is quite directly involved in the composition and age of both paper and ink, indirectly giving specific information about the text because it varies a lot, even within the same olfactory domain (the scent of books spans through different degrees of dust and mold, depending on their exposure to light, specific preserving environments, composition of paper and inks, etc.). Hearing is mainly about the physical manipulation of the book, which implies the sound of bending and closing the, usually thicker, cover, which is quite different from flipping or turning the pages. Very importantly, each time we turn a page, the resulting sound is slightly different, and not really quite the same as it is in simulated digital environments. Sight, eventually, also varies extensively, print being front-illuminated and therefore depending on very different

(natural or artificial) lighting conditions, with all their degrees, technologies, and filters involved. And finally touch, and thus tactility, is just reinforcing this comparison. In the digital realm we merely have a functional and decontextualized touch: if we still use mouse or trackpad "prosthetics," our fingers are functionally used for clicking, swiping, or tapping in the very same way for all the different types of content, but in a standardized universal modality, which, again, cannot be conceptually unplugged from the inescapable design of digital interfaces. In the digital realm our fingertips are simply annihilated, even if they possess the highest concentration of touch receptors and thermoreceptors of all the areas of the human skin, aside from our genital parts.[17] From being extremely sensitive and "broadband" input sources for our body they become neutral machine-oriented prosthetics. In traditional print tactility gives information on different levels, and the process of paper selection is, in fact, still an important part of quality publishers' work. It gives information about color (sight), texture (touch), and odor (smell) that is, possibly, consistent with the whole of the work. If we are already familiar with a book, the texture of its cover unconsciously gives us information about its content (confirming what we are about to read) even before we open it, and eventually we would be able to recognize certain books while being blindfolded. Every added element (lamination of any type, hollow punches, special inks) is not just an additional piece of information, but a further experience that is perceived by both sight and touch. Our senses are constructed to have a "very large bandwidth," and "sense" is derived from the Latin word "sensus" that, in this respect, means "faculty of feeling," which is all but mechanical. Tactility, as any other sense, is about perceiving differences, and the more differences we are trained to perceive, the more we learn and the more we are able to perceive, in a virtuous endless circle. On the other side, even state of the art digital publications are still a "simulation" of the printed ones (like the classic PDF standard), in a quite ambiguous trajectory. They mimic the structure and conventions of print, adapting them to the needed digital parameters, but they probably fail in re-creating a similar experience, and trying to appeal to sight as much as possible, including, for example, the visually compelling fast zooming (in and out) abilities. The screen has uniquely flexible qualities, but it can't effectively render three-dimensional space if not through a simulation which our senses, in any case, know is flattened. It is how French researcher Émeline Brulé defines the digital simulation of print: "mimetism."

So since the senses are deeply involved, we often make an emotional investment in cultural objects and we don't want to lose this investment in the enormous size of the digital space, experienced through a small bi-dimensional screen. Digital publications, being prone to the screen, would have to cope with this aspect of their own nature, but, in turn, they would also exploit their unique ability of hosting infinitely reprogrammable and infinitely transmittable content. Instead of simulating the (unsurpassed) print "interface," which has been gloriously established and refined since more than five centuries, they would build on the

17 "Finger," accessed August 11, 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finger.

ability to instantly create, combine, and calculate content, trying to accomplish an intimacy between writer and reader similar to the one that McLuhan attributes to printed materials. And, if properly handled, tactility could play a fundamental role in this process, even if there is no simple equation to fill the gap between the machine and our fingertips. In robotics, for example, the still primitive "tactile sensors"[18] are devices measuring information derived from physical interaction with their environment, but they are generally modeled after the biological sense of cutaneous touch, and they are definitely uncertain, for example, when it comes to sensing "pain." In digital publications tactility would be enhanced in a proper way, avoiding clumsy simulations, and appealing instead to our nerve endings in a direct way, maybe through interconnected new artificial materials. They would provide new information to the screen reader, being eventually able to materially assume a decent number of textures or "states" that were unperceived before, appropriately reflecting their possibly direct and instinctual relationship with the content. Then, the two different worlds would begin to be comparable, and even a hypothetical hybrid between them could begin to be conceived. It would be in direct relationship with our senses, but simultaneously be able to reflect both the stability of the printed page and the perennial dance of information in our digital world.

The Library, Ultimate Cultural Center vs. Big Data Repository

> [Libraries] are nerve centres of intellectual energy. [...] knowledge is power [...] and that power should be disseminated and not centralised.
> **Robert Darnton, Harvard University library director**[19]

The physical library and its virtual counter model are the crucial spaces where the discourse about the new relationships between traditional and digital publishing is taking place. On one side the "global virtual library" is closer than ever, with Google investments worth millions of dollars, to digitizing millions of books in Google Books, and with plenty of other similar efforts at different scales, including some remarkably vast, independent, and shared. On the other end, the physical library's historical value as meeting and research space for citizens is simultaneously reclaimed and challenged. Funding cuts and innuendos about its obsolescence in the digital era, are dramatically permeating both common sense and institutional policies. Some libraries are reinforcing their role through digital initiatives, like the Toronto Public Library, which launched a Fahrenheit 451-themed alternate reality game, where people where invited to play it in the city through telephone calls with the motto "Join the literary resistance."[20] And the push on libraries to "reinvent themselves" can effectively be rethought taking the exchange of physical books as

18 "Tactile Sensor," accessed August 11, 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tactile_sensor.

19 "Google and the world brain," accessed August 11, 2015, http://www.worldbrainthefilm.com, http://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/movie_script.php?movie=google-and-the-world-brain.

20 "Take Your Seashells Out of Your Ears! No Media Kings," accessed August 11, 2015, http://nomediakings.org/games/take-your-seashells-out-of-your-ears.html.

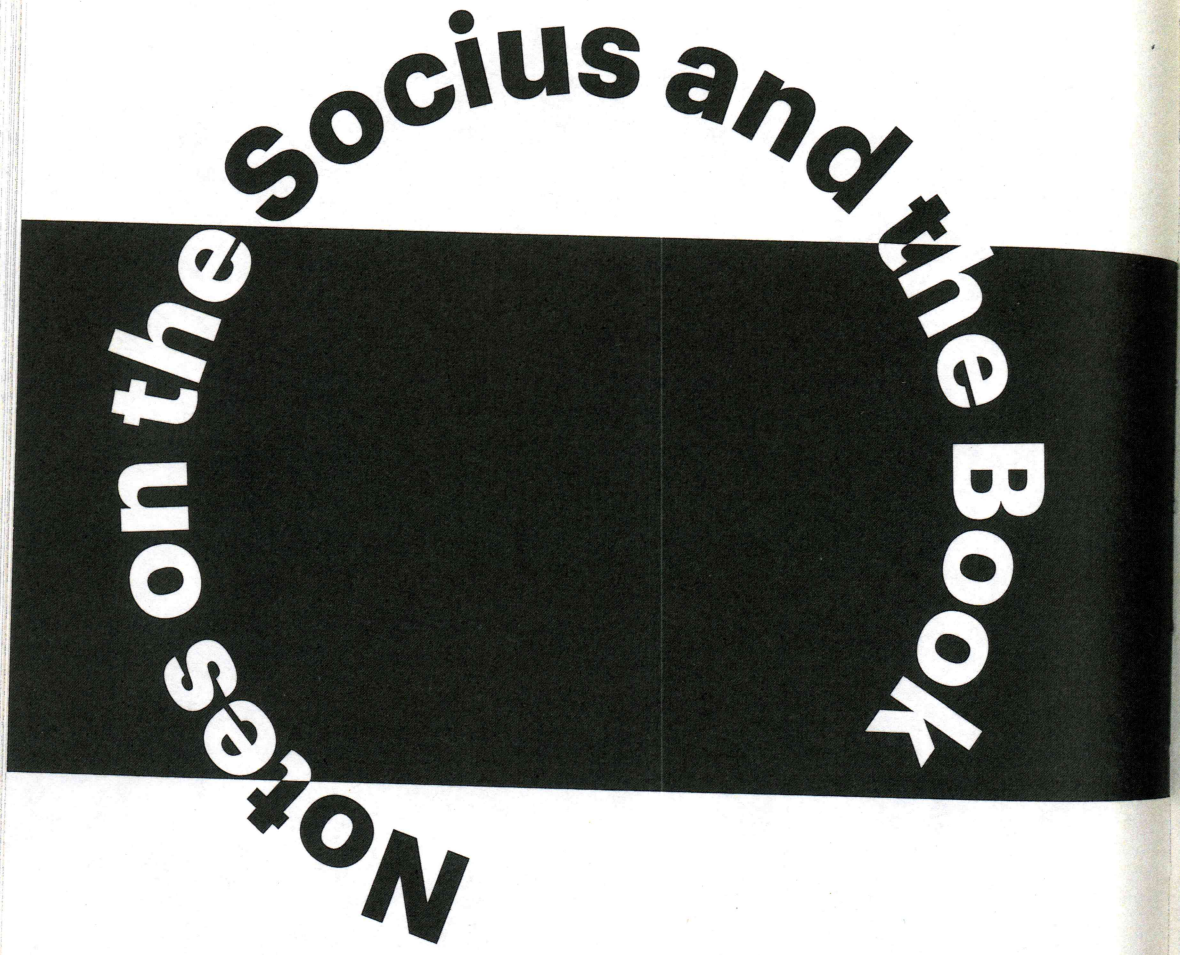
a starting point to expand the knowledge in new directions, creating less conventional models for that. So beyond platforms like BookCrossing,[21] using a web-based platform and a simple social mechanism to share books in public places, the main question seems to be about which social role the exchange of knowledge can implement. For example there are different efforts to build what could be defined as a "spontaneous citizen library." There are attempts on a small scale like the Little Free Libraries,[22] a few thousands wood boxes scattered around the world where people can take or leave books, or Ourshelves,[23] a San Francisco lending library open to everyone, with almost 300 members and 3,000 volumes, built around its community, with plans to replicate its model around the city.[24] And if we take into account that Wikipedia has specific templates to add information to its pages regarding the availability of related content in local libraries,[25] spontaneous social mechanisms connected to a self-managed physical exchange can be easily enabled. These kind of initiatives can question the library as a centralized facility, reconfiguring it as the outcome of a community, opening new possibilities. Teaching how to digitize books, for example, could dramatically expand access, especially to forgotten titles which Google Books won't include or give access to for different reasons. People involved should then assume responsibility in scanning and sharing, on a personal and independent level, to build their own cultural history, preserving (physically) and sharing (digitally) all the knowledge that they think is valuable, as it has been done with music since the early 2000s.

Conclusions

The historical importance of the printed page as a medium still has a great influence on cultural dynamics, and still maintains a different role from the digital. Its critical tradition continues to be fostered by artists and activists, sometimes virtuously combined with "big data" and the infinite programmability of the digital, maximizing the potential of the respective qualities of those two mediums. The most effective radical efforts has been historically supported by an innovative use of media and technologies, which has grounded the vision of new social and cultural models. The re-appropriation of the public imaginary through printed fakes, the plagiarized use of online content in print, the awareness of the sense of involvement in the respective media environments, the ability to create social libraries, and the enormous sharing of digitalized content, can structurally redefine the printed medium, largely increasing its weight and potential across the media landscape, and redefining it as a crucial opportunity to rethink our relationship with knowledge, from both a contemporary and historical perspective.

21 "Welcome to BookCrossing," accessed August 11, 2015, http://www.bookcrossing.com.
22 "Little Free Library," accessed August 11, 2015, http://www.littlefreelibrary.org.
23 "Ourshelves," http://ourshelves.org. Sequel Project is the latest iteration of Ourshelves, see http://www.sequelproject.org/ourshelves-our-history/, accessed October 30, 2015.
24 "Citizen Libraries Are The New Home For The Printed Word," accessed August 11, 2015, http://www.fastcoexist.com/1681736/citizen-libraries-are-the-new-home-for-the-printed-word?utm_medium=referral&utm_source=pulsenews.
25 "Template: Library resources box," accessed August 11, 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Template:Library_resources_box.

Bad Workers:



K. Antranik Cassem, Matt Longabucco, and Rachel Valinsky

The authors of these texts are friends and co-founders of a library and reading room in Brooklyn called Wendy's Subway. Stemming from a collective inquiry into the sociality of books, each text sets a different scene, pitched to the tune of each writer's voice, yet conceived of together in dialogue, over the course of many conversations. Several key texts formed the crux of our collective reflections, including those by Condorelli and Rancière, cited below. They helped to gather our thoughts around different forms of labor, theories of friendship, and social spaces of gathering (both physical and intellectual), often taking the publication as a site for such manifestations. Our library—its collection's focus on art, poetry, and theory—is the nexus of our styles, our affects. These texts take the invitation to "publish together" as an invitation to consider publishing's sociality as a form of artistic practice.

> One of my favourite examples is Jacques Rancière's 'bad' workers—all those militant poets, artists, and workers in the 1830s and 40s who formed these little friendship circles, hanging out together and trying to figure out how to lead a life in which they didn't have to be a worker. *La nuit des prolétaires: Archives du rêve ouvrier* is my favourite book of Rancière's. It is a very beautifully researched and written book and it is also very mischievous. Rather than finding one's freedom or liberation in the degraded terms in which you are oppressed, these workers rejected the whole workerist ideology that dominated political thinking then (and still does to a large extent). They said: 'we want to paint, to write poetry, to philosophise, to wander around thinking about the world, about beauty, about ...'
>
> **Avery F. Gordon, in *The Company She Keeps***

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The space of the bad worker, the instigator, and the survivor is both a Borgesian library and a living room floor. Timelessly, the three of them write, talk, seek beauty, and face death in a life outside work that eventually amalgamates into a congruency about ... hope? Within this space is a contrast between a lived life and a working life; or, a conscious existence and a mechanical labor of economy—an undead life. The bad worker embodies hope for an immaterial life—or one fulfilled by conscious action undetermined by state, social, or cultural normativities—in a transformative space, where alteration and reclamation become indistinguishable as history profligates and leaves unanswered questions behind. Who remembers the workers, the revolutionaries behind the name, the meetings, councils, soldiers, corpse washers, wanderers, poets, insurgents, derelict stock traders,

Rachel Valinsky

The problem with two writers writing at once, is of course similar to the problem of a writer sitting in an armchair. As the artist Moyra Davey describes it, in reading, quickly the armchair becomes the seat of the most incongruous, illogical, and uncomfortable contortions intended to accommodate the body of the multifarious, note-taking subject: at once reader, writer, and sitter.[13] We need this discomfort, the body reaching outside of itself through a new, ungraceful, or unexpected physical subject position, for the contiguous experience of one writer with another to emerge. It is to read and write *with*, rather than *alongside* or *in the margins of.* Pouring into Louise Bourgeois's 2008 Guggenheim Museum exhibition catalog, Davey and Bourgeois work together, that is, they interrupt each other—"I took notes from the book, and at some point my own diary notes began to filter in."[14] These interruptions are productive instigators. Our agitators.

Matt Longabucco

About ... transience? Geoffrey O'Brien's beautiful essay, "The Secret Life of Objects,"[32] explores French director Olivier Assayas's 2008 film *Summer Hours* (*L'Heure d'été*). Describing the film, O'Brien is alert to the way it conveys a subtle but persistent sense of life moving too quickly to be grasped by any of the characters, a French family disposing of an inherited country house and the art objects (made and collected by their uncle) it contains. This "relentless forward motion"[33] of events is in some respect banal, and we must be struck by the fact that the characters are "astonished, as people generally are, that the inevitable in fact comes to pass."[34] At the same time, we suffer with them a thousand little shocks as when, for example, we watch one sibling back down to the others' wishes and thereby allow the storied, irreplaceable house to be sold. Deaths, farewells, and childhoods pass without closure or completion. Meanwhile, the objects of the family's legacy, which include artists' notebooks, valuable furniture, a pair of Corot paintings, and a Degas sculpture, travel piecemeal to their own far-flung destinies. Does

faceless migrants and detainees, or librarians; who remembers us? Lest we forget that "every name in history is I."[1] To hold back the undead, to "fight the anonymity with which the war enemy is killed even by precision bombing, the soldier has to receive, from their state of being already dead, the calls of the unknown persons who will soon be murdered by him."[2] Such is the space for the undead, unknown, unwilling, unfortunates.

Young Jawad sketches his father's face with great detail as he works in a *mghaysil,* a wash house. The protagonist of Sinan Antoon's *The Corpse Washer* (2013), Jawad works on his craft as he learns the art of washing the dead before they are buried. His relentless sketching and desire for more cause him to leave a position held by generations of his family to attend Art School: he is a bad worker. Alas as history presents itself, he is forced back

As in John Cage's famous proclamation in a conversation with Morton Feldman on the problem of the radio in the environment—a constant intrusion to his experience—disruption proves to be productive: "Well, you know how I adjusted to that problem of the radio in the environment. [...] I simply made a piece using radios. Now, whenever I hear radios, even a single one, not just twelve at a time, I think well, they're just playing my piece [...] and I listen to it with pleasure. By pleasure, I mean, I notice what happens—I can attend to it, and become interested in the ... well, what it actually is that you're interested in, is what superimposed what, what happens at the same time, together with what happens before and what happens after."[15] I read out loud to him, and he interrupts me to write something down—one thought and then another. Reading together is also writing together. This is the problem with two writers writing at once.

O'Brien articulate, as his title promises, these objects' "secret life"? It involves, he says, their power to transmit history, to be that much more real than all those half-articulated feelings and relations among the people who intersect or even create them. "In this process of objects moving from hand to hand and generation to generation," O'Brien writes, "the living people can be seen in a certain light as mere accessories. When art becomes for once not the background or clue or symptom but the central focus of a story, it turns into something eerie and incomprehensible."[35] They are "signposts, these artifacts, to places no longer there, just as the film itself is a map of disappearances and transmutations. Everything is always dissolving."[36]

That same relentlessness is at work, in its quietly implicit way, in my favorite Assayas film, *Late August, Early September* (*Fin août, début septembre,* 2008). The film centers on a group of friends and lovers in Paris, and more closely on the relationship between Gabriel (Mathieu Amalric) and Adrien (François Cluzet), the latter a novelist diagnosed, at age 40, with an

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to the washhouse after years of training, finding love and community. Despite individual accomplishment, the throes of dictatorship leave his and many other lives up to the course of war. The bad worker is the one who languishes under what could have been to survive in what is. As history pushes forward, Jawad witnesses those who once frequented cafes and libraries depart for lands of an unknown tongue. Who will remember Jawad or the real booksellers killed on al-Mutanabbi Street?[3] Or the books destroyed by ISIS in Mosul? Or mark the many great libraries burned in the greatest sins of humanity, Sarajevo, Baghdad, Hunan, Phnom Penh, among so many more? What is the weight of paper once it has burned or "the weight of light"?[4] "And now—now all I can do is light a cigarette and go home. My god, I just remembered that we die. But—but me too?! Don't forget that for now it's strawberry season. Yes."[5]

Rachel Valinsky

We are coming to language, with the notion that language necessarily denotes a coming together through the sociality of language itself. Here language creates the conditions of possibility for sociality, for a commons built around texts, publications, libraries, bookstores, readings, and performances: those spaces of gathering that hold bodies in a room. Mexico City-based performer and choreographer Juan Francisco Maldonado describes the library through the choreography of bodies, where space itself becomes a body that performs the principle of organizing movement and the dynamics of other bodies which inhabit it and which themselves contain systems, multitudes, capable of further organizing information (books, sentences, words).[16] This organizing principle, at the heart of the book's activity, is its sociality: it is the system we build together and apart, the codes we decode and unravel, embrace and disavow, move and think between:

Matt Longabucco

unnamed terminal illness that fells him two-thirds of the way through the story. Gabriel looks up to Adrien, and tries to help him in his career, even as we see him several times wounded by the older man's reticence. Ailing Adrien is forthcoming, however, about his fear that his limited success comes from an inability to truly connect to readers. He worries he never broke through, never went far enough to make his novels lasting works of art. After Adrien's death, Gabriel hears some colleagues discussing Adrien's posthumously published final novel with glowing admiration. He finds himself echoing Adrien, arguing to the younger men that the book is less than great. And yet Gabriel, in the film's final scene, tells an editor he is finally writing a novel of his own. When she asks about its progress, he tells her, and himself, that he doesn't know yet: "We'll see if I make it to the end." Even this circumspect hope is unexpected for Gabriel, portrayed throughout by Amalric with darting eyes and a body always twisting toward the door, perpetually unsettled. As in *Summer Hours*, Assayas shows us in both grand and offhand

In Clarice Lispector's novel *The Hour of the Star* (1971), the reader follows a woman as she loves and thinks and attempts to find a life for herself between her working and waking life. Her name is emboldened in history beyond work in seeking something different and unique. A pursuit enshrined by a commenting narrator hoping for the best and fascinated by her wanderings outside of what was deemed normal. Her account rises forward from the very onset of the universe, "All the world began with a yes. One molecule said yes to another and life was born."[6] From this, we are reminded that life is a luxury and that "overturning the world begins at an hour when ordinary workers ought to be enjoying the peaceful slumber of those whose trade calls for no thought whatever."[7] Beyond which lies individual disillusionment and some bitterness about wage labor, social dysfunction, debt, death,

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"If the book is traditionally seen as the preferred medium for private consumption and research, and the gallery is understood as the space for public exhibition and performance, the library—as the public place of reading—is thus a hybrid site for performing the book."[17] This performance is undeniably plural, invariably social.

Location: Ulises Carrión's bookstore in Amsterdam, Other Books and So (it's 1975). Almost forty years later, artist Kristen Mueller names her publishing imprint after it: & So (it's 2014). In proportion to the shrinking of the location's name, the possibilities for what precedes the last two words grow. From bookstore for artists' books, to artist book publisher, to a simple syntax of relationality. We could arrive at So and So, a mirroring structure that suggests the very relation of the structure's constituent parts: reader and reader, reader and publication, publication and social space of

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strokes how (almost) everything remains, seemingly by chance, unsaid and undone. Leaving a gathering just after Adrien's death, Gabriel offers a ride to his former girlfriend, who still loves him. Emotions are raw: the scene is set for a meaningful encounter. But another friend pulls up—he's driving across Paris in her direction, can he give her a lift? Gabriel shrugs, the moment gone before it materializes, never to be revisited.

Bad workers? In Assayas's films, the characters hustle, scrape, and compromise. Gabriel takes a job working on an encyclopedia, then gets defensive when Adrien refuses a commission that would impose on his writing time. In *Summer Hours*, one brother, trying to get ahead at his firm, has agreed to move his family to China. Their sister trots the globe, freelancing. A house in the French countryside means more for its promise to finance these siblings' next moves than it ever could for its heritage or continuity. Adrien waxes bitterly about the lack of money that constricted his hopes. He tells Gabriel the story of spending the royalties from his first novel on

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decay, and a bare need to subsist. Every day spent on the material life for cash as the worker. The worker must sleep early and rise to labor. Workers undergo the rigor of dysfunction as an act of humiliation. Solace must then come from the bad worker within the space of the commons, ducking away from servitude and dysfunction. Yet, as the label *worker* fades, the bad worker finds herself in the good and bad company of nameless persons who together transfigure into immaterial survival. Aptly put by Appius Claudius Caecus, "Every person is the artifex of their destiny."[8] Places of gathering become moments of personal insurrection and define nuances in intellectual and personal development. Material spaces move in flux as libraries, bookstores, and cafes in the public realm carry into homes and workplaces where gatherings continue.

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its distribution, reader and social space. What cannot be done without is the coordinating conjunction, the fundamental "and" which is the organizing principle of the book, and the embodiment of its call to sociality: a precondition.

Try to write a history of sociality that reaches back around, turns, that is effectively trans-chronological, that is a history of friendship, affinity, solidarity, and community emerging from the "social life of the book."[18] It would have to be a history that refuses diachronic teleologies, that doesn't hold people together in place immovably, as if words were set in stone. For Jacques Derrida, language arrives at its destination when the message has been carried across, delivered: when it reaches its recipient.[19] But there is always the possibility of a confusion of recipients, of messages being crossed and sometimes lost, of the double-sided postcard addressed to two

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a Joseph Beuys drawing, and of the exhilaration such freedom brought him. After his death the drawing, according to his wishes, and against the cautions of some of his survivors, finds its way into the hands of the sixteen-year-old girl he loved. Assayas has elsewhere romanticized art and radical politics, telling the story of his coming to filmmaking in the crucible of '68. But these mature films aren't so sure: the precarity of art and artist alike are real, in them. Did Adrien compromise too much? What about that final novel, the one he wrote in the shadow of his own looming death sentence? Will it last? Will it transmit?

And Adrien even *looks* like Roberto Bolaño (the wire-framed glasses, the modest mane), who goes leagues farther than Assayas in noticing/notching those moments of accelerated departure and forever-to-remain-unfinished business. *The Savage Detectives*' peripatetic exiles diffidently part ways, again and again, to the deadpan refrain, "After that I never saw him again." The young poet who narrates the first and third parts of the

Alas, a varying decay arises between the destruction of home and the wandering abyss of wage labor. A treading line of resurrection as stable as Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker* takes the misbegotten through "the zone." As necessities of survival are not as simple as staying up late twist into a non-linear need. History and cultural memory accompany the wanderings of fleeing workers from colony to metropole. As the Lebanese poet and visual artist Etel Adnan writes in *Paris, When It's Naked:*

> "A lot of immigrants work in factories and create a major problem: how to make them work without having them breathe our air, live in our cities, or look at our wives and husbands? This equation has not been solved. They go on with their menial jobs, genuinely happy to make a living. They love rain, asphalt, warm bread, goat cheese, industrial oils, long grocery hours.

different locations (who will receive it?). So instead, try to write a history of sociality that is incidental, tentative, what Madeline Gins and Shūsaku Arakawa would call a *landing site,* on which we rest briefly if only to drift again, when the next line is drawn or the next word is written.[20] Like Aby Warburg's library, a historical framework that is based on the law of the good neighbor, on sympathetic resonances, shifting understandings: a cataloging system that forgets, invents, makes unlikely connections, doesn't hold still. It is to say that the book organizes bodies transculturally and transgenerationally, that the book is the very object of our closeness.

Our closeness is also our delay. Moyra Davey does this best: "Mary Wollstonecraft, born in 1759, ten years after Goethe and two hundred years before my sister Claire, was Wet and Dry."[21] Claire is as unlikely a candidate as any to share the same breath as Wollstonecraft, or Goethe, for that

novel claims to have written an entire book. But toward the end of the novel's long middle section, which travels twenty years into the future through the odd-angled accounts of scores of characters, a scholar reports that he's never heard of either the young poet or his work. Somehow the group of poets to which he belonged, while remembered, could not ferry him along into a future no one, it turns out, managed to anticipate and prepare for, though what could be more inevitable than time and loss? Bolaño's stories ooze with the "eerie and incomprehensible" aura of the art object made central, the poem that is as often simply erased as it is hurled with desperate ambition into the future. As he writes,

> "For a while, Criticism travels side by side with the Work, then Criticism vanishes and it's the Readers who keep pace. The journey may be long or short. Then the Readers die one by one and the Work continues on alone, although a new Criticism and new Readers gradually fall into step with it along its path. Then Criticism dies again and the Readers die again and

> They see work as energy and life. People think it's incongruous that they smile in traffic jams."[9]

Such "vindictive" smiling hides a deeper well of memories etched into the walls, as being a bad worker is what it takes to survive. What comes contains a consistent dismantling of self and personhood at the expense of history and present. Language, literature, art, colloquialisms, and theory digest through prior convictions that in the "statehood" home would always be preserved. As home dies, the migrant becomes displaced and then assimilated. Ceaselessly beholden to other ways of living, the bad worker contains meaning beyond economy and in the social, becomes the bad citizen, the bad child, the bad person. A reckoning that occurs through work, deeds, and conversation. One, codified in the bond of word,

matter. I'm asking, what does it mean to write everyone (anyone) into the same sentence? Our intimacy is this tracing of historical constellations, our asynchronic lives rendered synchronic through the echolocated word. As Mary's life, family, and friends grow around her like so many specks on a blank screen, so does Davey's story. Soon the pamphlet is a room replete with bodies; our ghosts are also in our sentences.

In her striking book of conversations on friendship—which we are all reading together—Céline Condorelli takes up Hannah Arendt quoting Cicero (the multiplication of quotation as the proliferating recesses of intimacy): "the company that one chooses to keep, in the present as well as in the past," as a powerful reformulation of the conditions for producing culture.[22] For Condorelli, reimagining culture as that which is constituted through the choices we make about "which books to read and refer to,

> the Work passes over a trail of bones on its journey toward solitude. To come near the work, to sail in her wake, is a sign of certain death, but new Criticism and new Readers approach her tirelessly and relentlessly and are devoured by time and speed. Finally the Work journeys irremediably alone in the Great Vastness. And one day the Work dies, as all things must die and come to an end: the Sun and the Earth and the Solar System and the Galaxy and the farthest reaches of man's memory. Everything that begins as comedy ends as tragedy."[37]

I write a poem. It is imbued, for me, with the feeling it enshrines and the miracle (as easy to say: the commonplace accidents) of its composition. Quickly and repeatedly it becomes clear that these qualities of the poem are not present to others as such. And yet, they sometimes leave a mysterious trace that registers, however garbled, in transmission. Every response—appreciation and dismissal alike—has this quality of misprision. And, too, the poem may have been written in some special, perhaps secret, relation

place, and friendship through frustration and peace; or outwardly as Etel again writes,

> "Dear Parents, why did you lie to me? You told me the sky was blue while we watched it together, in Beirut, by the sea, and the sunset was a flame. You fooled a whole generation, then you destroyed it, the city is destroyed. The sky is not high either, as you taught me, it is so low, low, below my ceiling. I wonder if the rain will come in and spoil my books as it does my bones. I feel them, tonight, these bones you gave me."[10]

And so it is in Baghdad. So it is in many places where the weight of light can be measured. Where being a bad worker is as necessary as smiling in traffic. Finding ways to preserve language and memory. Coming together to

or whom to work and think with"[23] provides a framework for the socius' movement within a sociocultural complex built on friendship and structures of productive or nonproductive intimacy. These structures expand beyond culture-producing choices and alliances, to further take root in the "material labour and intimate affections"[24] that accompany social life. The publication is none other than the site of such allegiances, binding them together in one open volume. There is no distinction to be made between the book and the formation of a common field. The book is this landing site for bodies and intellects.

In keeping each other company, we are also bad workers, necessarily so. Evenings on end pass and our work does not describe productive labor. We do not publish, sometimes we do not even write. Our books—unwritten—sit gathering dust like Giacometti's disappearing figures. We

to another. This other may have received it upon completion, or just as likely years after the fact. Such an exchange might precipitate a communication—this week, next year, in five years. But relations surprise us (they shouldn't) by changing: the likeliest outcome is that the communication will never occur at all. The graph of its likelihood describes a sickening plummet into an abyss beyond the chart's fathoms, into the darkness where we lost that good-looking pair of dice. The poem is, all the while, on its own heedless journey. This was the price of its completion.

Debt piles up, exponentially faster than the stack of completed poems. CAN MY FRIENDS HELP? CAN I HELP THEM? We don't know if we are doing the right work. We can no longer identify the status of our "community"—and anyway its parameters and personnel keep shifting. Curators seem to post readings we'd swear we already attended a year ago, two years ago, longer. It's hard to say if the work being attended to will last, or if a given book, hot off the press, will prove a treasure or drift into neglect.

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navigate "the zone" and, in overlapping cultures, to deny labor distinctly, either by pain of anguish or right of refusal.

An experiment in meaning-creation. Small conversations, games of chance on sidewalks late at night, pushing against a consistent humiliation to make life just bearable and in doing so providing sustenance.

> "Fundamentally, it was anguish at the daily theft of their time as they worked wood or stone, sewed clothing or stitched shoes; and all for nothing but the indefinite maintenance of forces both of servitude and of domination. It was the humiliating absurdity of having to beg day after day for work which frittered their lives away."[11]

This cornerstone of being a good worker to meet the demand of survival seemingly preserves undead life. However, with a persistent need

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throw out or sell or give away our books because we cannot write with the writings of others around us.[25] Or worse, we gather at night in our libraries surrounded by the books we have not given away or sold or thrown out, and still we do not write. These are the nights of the immaterial, the nights of propagation. "Love is exchanged only for love, which makes the exchange only by giving itself without reckoning: an overflowing current, a whirlwind, a giddiness; a community of excess beyond the disappointments of contract and gratitude,"[26] writes Jacques Rancière on the formation of small, alternative groups of French proletarians gathering outside of wage-earning hours in the 1830s and 40s. He continues: it is the "complicity of friendship, the resonance of like to like, the openness to the universal conspiration of harmonies" that the workers seek, with abandon, outside of the institutions of religion, matrimony, and work. So that in the late hours

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Who is going to carry whom forward? What partnership, what circle is capable of producing and championing, explicating and influencing, translating and archiving all this ephemeral labor? The questions are banal—of course these relationships will change and end, since all relationships change and end. And yet these same questions occupy me, and us, endlessly, and of course the ordinary and inevitable astonishes us. I saw a young poet—an apparent magus—read in a room full of a hundred people who hung on his every word, and everyone expected, I think, that the performance would be repeated, if not topped. I understand it now to have marked the end of something, and don't yet understand what else, at the same time, might have begun, there or elsewhere, to end still elsewhere, parallel to other beginnings. A friend used to ask, having spent a hundred nights drinking till dawn with poets, *if we'd ever get around to having a real conversation about poetry*. The promise of it seemed to fuel each night, but the imagined conversation always seemed to wait on the next cigarette, the next bar, the

to live and breathe, the good worker may be dissuaded to be in bed by 10 pm only to work one more morning, and in so doing, reclaim life. Alternatively, the unemployed who live without the structure of institutions or wages may sit in the library or bookstore, saving money, before continuing on to friends and comrades where discussion ensues; or so simply commiserate over all that is without. All this simply to breathe in spaces away from the rigor of the world that perpetually compresses until life is spent or taken.

Such spaces have a capacity that, though they cannot disrupt oppressive economy or society, engage in a spiritual act from molecule agreeing with molecule to specific instances that draw people away from the iron cage of existence. Here, time is sequestered outside of work to create and do, without ever needing an ability to truly leave capital at all. In this sense of their leisurely respite, rather than solicit other workers to proselytize to for the cause, three friends set out "incomplete in causality, rich in memories, happy with the future ... taking joy in one and the same thought but plunged into solitude."[27]

Our three friends sit in the library ("unitive threeness"),[28] falling off the same dingy benches that have needed mending more than once in their brief lifespan. They sit together, read apart, or, plunged as they are in their individual practices, emerge from time to time, to read a line out loud, to write frantically on a scrap of paper. Theirs is the formation of a burning "demon of learning"[29] (we could also call it a furious form of "study" with the help of Fred Moten and Stefano Harney).[30] They are bad workers and bad debtors, because they are running away from work so that you can't come running after them with credit; because when they're next bed, the arrival of the new book, the tracking down of the obscure volume, the fast-escaping ether of a reading, a future of low rent and paid debts, achieved work and sober reflection.

Bad worker: doesn't know the value of what she's making. THUNK. Two friends: a pair of dice racing across the table. THUNK. Incomprehensible object: it faces away from us no matter where we stand. THUNK. True conviction: never quite formulated, let alone expressed. THUNK. In the other room, makeshift walls and ill-fitting door, Kristen is binding books with a periodic THUNK. Tequila on the table, Mac and Kevin, music. Adjua comes in, she's just seen the new documentary on the Black Panthers, Cornel West and Harry Belafonte were at the screening. West, she reports, ascribes the electricity in the eyes of everyone involved in the movement to the fact that all were inculcated with an "undying love of community"—the only power, he says, with which to undo the fear that imprisons every subject from the bottom to the top of the hierarchies we live by. Is our love for one

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a commons is an unideological premise; it is a survivalist notion, for what beings endowed with consciousness aspire simply to be workers? As one holds back against becoming undead, it is in friendships, wanderings, and moments outside of a punch clock that hope is embraced in such a simple practice, "hanging out together and trying to figure out how to lead a life in which [we don't] have to be a worker."[12] In which despite everything, in the bonds of friendship we may begin again and create anew.

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there they are not workers—they are studying and that is a bad habit that cannot be shaken off, especially after hours. They will come here and study because "they are building something in there, something down there, a different kind of speculation, a speculation called 'study,' a debt speculation, a speculative mutuality. Mutual debt, unpayable debt, unbounded debt, unconsolidated debt, debt to each other in a study group, to others in a nurses' room, to others in barbershops, to others in a squat, a dump, the woods, a bed, an embrace."[31]

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another, perhaps, an object in its own right? We'll all fail and fall away—nothing could be more certain—but could we, in or above our activity, make a love to transcend and outlive us, send it high enough and bright enough to be visible from another horizon, off in some other direction, whichever way the future wandered off while we were so busy trying to map the bewildering present—you might just as well try to catalog the fog ...

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1 Jalal Toufic, *Forthcoming* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014), 16.
2 Ibid.
3 The intellectual center of Baghdad, which is historically full of cafes and bookstores and was partially destroyed in a devastating suicide bombing in March, 2007.
4 Clarice Lispector, *The Hour of the Star*, trans. Giovanni Pontiero (New York: New Directions, 1992), 77.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid, 1.
7 Jacques Rancière, "Preface to *Proletarian Nights* [1981]," trans. Noel Parker, in *The Everyday Life Reader*, ed. Ben Highmore (London: Routledge, 2002), 247.
8 Appius Claudius Caecus, *Sententiæ*. Originally: "Every Man is the artifex of his destiny." Altered by the author to be made gender neutral.
9 Etel Adnan, *Paris, When It's Naked* (Sausalito: The Post-Apollo Press, 1993). Quoted in Ammiel Alcalay, "Our Memory Has No Future: On Etel Adnan," in *Memories of Our Future: Selected Essays 1982–1999* (San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 1999), 143.
10 Ibid.
11 Rancière, "Preface to *Proletarian Nights*," 247.
12 Avery F. Gordon, "The Company We Keep, part one," in *The Company She Keeps* (London: Book Works/Chisenhale Gallery; Eindhoven: Van Abbenmuseum, 2014), 38.
13 Moyra Davey, "LB, MP, MD," in *Interiors*, ed. Johanna Burton, Lynne Cooke, and Josiah McElheny (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY: Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College; Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), 265.
14 Ibid.
15 John Cage, "John Cage and Morton Feldman in Conversation," Radio Happening recorded at WBAI, New York City, 1966–1967.
16 Performance over Skype by Juan Francisco Maldonado, Saturday, June 27, 2015 at Wendy's Subway in Brooklyn, New York.
17 Anna-Sophie Springer, "Melancholies of the Paginated Mind: The Library as Curatorial Space," in *Fantasies of the Library*, ed. Anna-Sophie Springer and Etienne Turpin (Berlin: K. Verlag Press, 2015), 7.
18 The phrase is borrowed from Paris-based castillo/corrales, whose imprint, Paraguay Press, publishes a series of commissioned texts as short, saddle-stitched, uniformly designed pamphlets under the collection title: *The Social Life of the Book*. castillo/corrales's program and mission have been particularly influential for us.
19 See Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).
20 See Shūsaku Arakawa and Madeline Gins, *The Mechanism of Meaning* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988).
21 Moyra Davey, *The Wet and the Dry*, ed. castillo/corrales (Paris: Paraguay Press, 2011), 19.
22 Céline Condorelli, "Too Close to See: Notes on Friendship. A Conversation with Johan Frederik Hartle," in *The Company She Keeps* (London: Book Works/Chisenhale Gallery; Eindhoven: Van Abbenmuseum, 2014), 16.
23 Johan Frederik Hartle, "Too Close to See," 16.
24 Ibid.
25 Jean Genet, quoted in *The Selected Writings of Jean Genet*, ed. Edmund White (Hopewell, NJ: Ecco Press, 1993), 215. Cited in Moyra Davey, *Burn the Diaries* (Philadelphia: ICA, University of Pennsylvania; New York: Dancing Foxes Press; Vienna: Museum Moderner Kunst, 2014), 14–15.
26 Jacques Rancières, *The Nights of Labor: The Workers' Dream in Nineteenth-Century France*, trans. John Drury (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 114.
27 Ibid, 115.
28 Ibid, 114–115.
29 Ibid, 141.
30 See Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, "Debt and Study," *e-flux journal* 14 (March 2010), accessed September 10, 2015, http://www.e-flux.com/journal/debt-and-study.
31 Ibid.
32 Geoffrey O'Brien, "The Secret Life of Objects," in *Stolen Glimpses, Captive Shadows: Writing on Film, 2002–2012* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2013), 263–270.
33 Ibid, 263.
34 Ibid, 264.
35 Ibid, 269.
36 Ibid, 270.
37 Roberto Bolaño, *The Savage Detectives*, trans. Natasha Wimmer (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 529.