

*Unfolding  
the margins*

A SUBJECTIVE  
EXPLORATION OF  
AN ARTISTIC FIELD

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## TABLE OF CONTENT

### Introduction

8

#### I

### INTERRELATIONS BETWEEN ART AND ECONOMY

13

#### II

### CRITIQUE OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY AND CONTEXTUAL FORMS OF SUBJECTIVATION

25

#### III

### EXPLORATION OF ALTERNATIVE ARTISTIC STRUCTURES

43

#### IV

### BECOMING MARGINS

55

### Acknowledgements

63

### Bibliography

64



7

**“The only mistake  
would be to take  
our opinions for the  
truth. Admittedly,  
this happens all  
the time.”<sup>1</sup>**

The main purpose of this work is to explore the context in which freelance artists are working today while addressing the growing importance of the economic aspect within the artistic field, the imperative for freelance artists to become self-entrepreneurs and the mechanisms of their subjectivation. Furthermore, this text tries to investigate the possibility of alternatives and the different forms of ambivalence resulting from it.

The work will tackle these topics by trying to realise a subjective exploration of the artistic field of the present time. The goal of this exploration is to elaborate specific forms of discourses by finding the possible connections between theory and the own experience as a freelance artist. The methodology applied to this exploration borrows from different positions in the field of philosophy and

tries to interpret those on a subjective level. The choice of literature made to underpin my exploration comes mostly from the critical perspective and thus certainly orientates this work in a specific direction. This text by no means wishes to present a complete and definitive exploration of current artistic fields, but more so attempts to raise some questions and to eventually offer some leads for further reflections.

With this in mind, this work tries to raise the following questions: *Firstly*, what is the context in which freelance artists have to evolve nowadays? *Secondly*, how creative economy hails the artists to become self-entrepreneurs and what are the mechanisms of this subjectivation within the artistic field? *Thirdly* and finally, what are the possible roles of the alternative artistic structures that are trying to develop other forms of subjectivities?

Moreover, the exploration looks for an (im-)possible confrontation between the figures of the artist and that of the philosopher. While artists are mostly following their own instinctive strategies, the scientists or philosophers have to apply more or less rigorous methodologies. The present work tries to find a position between the artistic and the scientific one, thus seeking to acknowledge a state of permanent transformation and general instability. Although I tried to refer to a selection of literature to support my argumentation, most of the assertions made in this text are based on my own experience as a freelance artist, hence the subjective dimension of this exploration. A potential task of philosophy might be on the one hand to create

concepts, and on the other hand to critically analyse the world we are living in, that is to say, to realise an ontology of our present time. Similarly, the role of the artist could be to reflect and to react to the tumult and the complexity of his/her actuality. By developing affects and percepts as potentialities, the responsibility of the artist could be to experiment with the possibilities of resistance. The artist and the philosopher might therefore be two complementary figures concerned by the action of critique and resistance and by the poetical dimensions resulting from it. By trying to understand the present time, an artist as a thinking subject is supposed to be informed by a variety of topics often outreaching his/her own discipline. Encouraging an openness and a natural curiosity for knowledge to be discovered in that *terra incognita* seems to be an adequate position to adopt for the artistic subject. Moreover, the realities of our present time, the permanent unpredictability, the ecological issues and global geopolitical tensions as well as the social struggles and strong inequities, make it fundamental to analyse and question the academic institutions as much as the cultural and political systems, thus encouraging different practices of (self) critique. In his lecture from 1978 at the French Society for Philosophy, Michel Foucault suggests this possible definition of the critique:

“The art of not being governed quite so much”<sup>2</sup> and further “To not want to be governed is of course not accepting as true [...] what an authority tells you is true, or at least not accepting it because

an authority tells you that it is true, but rather accepting it only if one considers valid the reasons for doing so.”<sup>3</sup>

This definition offers a notion of a critical position and could therefore situate the perspective of the present work.

Beyond the critique, a perspective looking for relations between different disciplines is important for this exploration. Academic education has spent a great amount of energy to separate and structure the different fields of knowledge into categories, thus encouraging the figure of the specialised expert. Organising the transmission of knowledge into separated disciplines through categorisation is a central aspect of the educational system, therefore creating a variety of qualified experts and professionals cultivating a protective (and often restrictive) attitude around their fields of specialisation. The figure of the expert has indeed a long tradition and is to be found in all the fields of modern society. There is apparently a tendency in the academic world to adopt a sceptical position towards individuals exploring different disciplines or, to put it differently, it has been notoriously difficult to develop a position as a specialist of nothing. Nowadays, the universities mostly produce subjects having a high level of knowledge in a very specific field.

The very concept of transdisciplinarity has been subjected to many interpretations, making it rather

2 Michel Foucault, “What is Critique?” in *The Politics of Truth*, eds. Sylvère Lotringer, Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 1997, pp. 41-81, p. 45.

3 Ibid., p. 46.



confusing to find one common definition, but mostly allowing different approaches and strategies. It is apparently coherent to interpret transdisciplinarity as a holistic position going beyond disciplines and looking for what happens between them. My own understanding of that concept proposes to concretise a shift beyond my own discipline as a sound artist (or *terra cognita*) towards the field of philosophy and critical theory (*terra incognita*) thus trying to gain new forms of knowledge, with the aim of eventually coming back to my own discipline with a different perspective. By confronting my intuitive knowledge as a freelance artist with some specific philosophical discourses, I will try to hereby realise a transdisciplinary gesture.

The present text is structured into the following parts: In the first chapter, I will focus on the interrelations between art and economy. In the second chapter, I will try to analyse the context of the creative economy and the mechanisms behind the imperative of becoming an entrepreneur for the freelance artist. In the third chapter, I will try to address some realities of alternative artistic structures and try to demonstrate how they propose an essential, albeit fragile role in today's artistic field before drawing my conclusions in the fourth chapter.

# I INTERRELATIONS BETWEEN ART AND ECONOMY

“Every day, to earn my daily bread I go to the market where lies are bought. Hopefully I take up my place among the sellers.”<sup>4</sup>

- Art and economy have a long tradition of dealing with each other. From the middle-age artistic patronage to the speculative strategies of the international art fairs and galleries over the profit generated by the mainstream music industry, creativity and money have often been evolving hand in hand. In recent years however, the importance of marketing strategies for the art have utterly transformed the reality of the artistic scenes by progressively implementing a *modus operandi* responding to the imperatives of management. Helped by the investment and funding of the public and private sectors into the artistic world, art has become a manifold economy that is always changing and adapting to the reality of the creative industries while promoting cultural individualisation and self-employment. According to Angela McRobbie,

“cultural individualisation brings three elements: the individual, creativity (now extended to mean 'having ideas') and freedom. The aim is to cultivate self-sufficient individuals whose efforts will not be hindered by the administrations of the state.”<sup>5</sup>

This aspect has not only had drastic repercussions on the artists themselves but also on the artworks, as McRobbie further notices:

“[...] cultural individualisation is inseparable from a business ethos which, as it pervades the cultural world, imposes its own brand of 'fast capitalism'. While creativity has traditionally been nurtured in interiorised, slow and quiet mental and physical spaces, in the new cultural economy it is encouraged to be increasingly populist, noisy, easy, thin: in the words of Scott Lash, 'flattened out'. Where there is little or no time for thinking, the art-work itself can hardly be thoughtful [...] Artists increasingly create works that are merely extensions of what is all around them in popular culture, in the tabloids and talk shows.”<sup>6</sup>

The reproduction of cultural individualisation in the artistic context partly influences the produc-

5 McRobbie, Angela: “Everyone is creative”: *artists as new economy pioneers*, 2001.

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/node/652>

[Accessed on the 19.04.2017]

6 Ibid.

tion of artworks and might indeed give certain aesthetical directions to the global artistic production. Moreover, professional artists have to become self-entrepreneurs and to structure their careers in discipline specific fields focussing on gaining success as professionals. Like within academic research, managerial and fund raising skills are also expected from professional subjects working in the art world, either in the context of an institution or as independents. Furthermore, the financial pressure to always start new projects (or releasing publications) have often consequences to deliver a 'quick & dirty' ethos while not having the time to go deeper into research and to develop qualitative outputs over the long term. These circumstances have consequences on the quality of the works produced in different artistic fields.

Seen through the prism of the creative economy, it seems that today a big part of the mainstream art world has become subjected to the rules of the market. By turning art into a merchandise, experts and tastemakers impose a specific aesthetic whose qualitative value is deeply connected with its quantitative one. Art today is often being consumed in a similar way that one consumes online series or industrially produced organic food in some corporate restaurant in a gentrified neighbourhood of a metropolis. The success of the creative economy can be put in relation with the development of the creative cities where the paradigm of artistic values and fashionable aesthetics is being used as yet another strategy to present the act of consuming as glamorous and attractive while developing further

the ever expanding contexts of creative and digital labour. These transformations are the consequences of political and non-political actions to transform the art market into a trendsetting industry. The dynamics and mechanisms at stake within the art field initiated a progressive shift over the past decades as Angela McRobbie further writes:

“In the past, the arts and culture were in a sense overlooked by government and of relatively little interest to big business. They were consequently under-funded but still possessed degrees of autonomy. In the post-war years these realms came to be increasingly associated with social and political critique. But nowadays culture is of the utmost concern to commercial organisations, and art seemingly no longer 'questions the social'.”<sup>7</sup>

These transformations to be found within the artistic fields might be connected with the mutation of liberalism into neoliberalism that took place in the 1980's. From this time on, under the impulses of governments like the ones of Ronald Reagan in the United States, Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom or François Mitterand in France, a major change occurred in the global economy and in geopolitical situations, as states became progressively privatised. The importance of private companies (banks, pharmaceutical industries, energy concerns, insurance companies, telecommunication

firms and other multinationals) kept growing in the following years and their positions became increasingly important on the international globalised political agendas. These transformations turning liberalism into neoliberalism came not only from right wing liberal traditions but also from the re-shaping of the left into so called social democratic movements that happened to be mostly subjected to an economical ethos, thus blurring the distinction between right and left political orientations. As stated by Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval in *La Nouvelle Raison du Monde*,

“Neoliberalism could be described as the ensemble of discourses, practices and dispositives that determine a new mode of government of the people through the universal principle of competition.”<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, the mutation of liberalism into neoliberalism in the 1980's is characterised by progressively imposing in the global economy the specific practices of privatisation, fiscal austerity, deregulation and free trade. These features played an indubitable role in the transformation of the art market, as artistic fields are progressively considered as commercial sectors where profit has to be made and where the qualitative value is often connected to its commercial one. The articulation of art and economy has indeed a long and ambivalent history but in recent years this aspect has reached new heights and results in significant consequences on the whole cultural sector.

On a different level, many professional artists who would prefer not to follow the commercial imperative seem to develop other forms of discourses and *modi operandi*. The refusal to compromise and the wish to disobey to the imperative of the mainstream market makes necessary for some artistic subjects to operate in the margins. Operating in or from the margins has made it possible to develop other qualities in the production of artworks and subjectivities. The artistic production happening in the multiple and varied underground and alternative scenes, both nowadays and throughout history, offered fruitful existential territories where alternative forms of subjectivity could be produced and experimented with. Indeed, when freed from its marketing imperative, the artwork or the artistic gesture can (re)appropriate its bare and raw quality. Some of the artistic avant-garde movements of the 20th century, such as Dada, Surrealism and Fluxus, happened in the margins before being cornered by institutions. The Dada movement for instance, whose main artistic and political viewpoints were anti-art, anti-war, anti-bourgeois and anti-nationalist, has nowadays been politely put in the clean and vast topos of museum halls and most of its subversive content seems to have been domesticated.

In recent years, the creative economies transformed the aesthetics of the artistic fields and tended to remove from the mainstream and many academic artistic scenes some of their radical and challenging qualities. It happens for instance by turning artwork into commodities and luxury objects, there



to underline the social status of the one possessing them or, in the case of the music world, by producing normative and solely entertaining sound productions for the masses. Many artists have chosen to adapt themselves to this art market though, and their strategies often imply becoming as successful as possible while being subjected to those rules. Angela McRobbie further notices:

“[...] Artists are now, it seems, able to reinvent themselves for the increasingly global market. They can be successful, sell their work; they no longer have any reason to be angry social critics.”<sup>9</sup>

A possible line of flight, enabling a reterritorialization of the art, might indeed lead towards the margins, where hidden figures work outside of the art market, often having chosen a deprofessionalisation of their artistic activities in order to rediscover new forms of potentiality in their own artistic practices. Some realities at stake in both the mainstream and in the fringe of the margins, that is to say in the non-commercial underground and alternative scenes, will be analysed and deconstructed further down in the text. As we will see, the distinction between 'mainstream' and 'underground' might have become problematic and blurry, making the assertions made in this text so far probably less polarised than they may seem. When analysing all the actors involved in the art, it seems interesting to take into

9 McRobbie, Angela: “Everyone is creative”: *artists as new economy pioneers*, 2001.  
<https://www.opendemocracy.net/node/652>  
[Accessed on the 19.04.2017]

consideration Pierre Bourdieu's field theory<sup>10</sup>: In his book *The Rules of Art*, Bourdieu demonstrates that all the active artistic subjects interact in structured and hierarchised fields, each with their own rules and resources, thus defining the social relations inside a specific area. He further shows that the art field is not anymore articulated through autonomy but through heteronomy: According to Bourdieu, the autonomy within artistic or literary fields came from a certain tradition developed by singularities like Flaubert, Baudelaire or Manet who made possible an autonomous position in their practice, a kind of internal dynamic having its own evaluation criteria in the 19th century. In the 20th century however, and in the context of *The Rules of Art*, this autonomy has been progressively replaced by heteronomy, a convergence of the artistic field with aspects of business, economy and industry, more specifically within the field of media, where journalists and art critics worked as opinion makers. This leads to the development of new categories of artists and intellectuals being recognised through their capacities to interact with the inner circles of economic and political power. Bourdieu therefore attempts to categorise two sorts of artistic production, the 'pure' one (*l'art pour l'art*) and the commercial one:

“Even if they are totally opposed in their principles, the two modes of cultural production, 'pure' art and 'commercial'

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Bourdieu, Pierre: *The rules of art*, translated by Susan Emanuel, Stanford: University Press, 1995.

art, are linked by their very opposition, which acts both objectively, in the form of a space of antagonistic positions, and within minds, in the form of schemas of perception and appreciation which organise all perception in the space of producers and products.”<sup>11</sup>

This interpenetration of art and economy which leads to a heteronomy within the art field has been a central thesis in Bourdieu's *The Rules of Art* and his attempt to interrogate the transformation of the roles and positions of the artistic or intellectual subjects. Bourdieu's social theory has been characterised by the analysis of power relations and by the 'dominated/dominating' articulation. By denouncing specific forms of social or economic domination, Bourdieu's position has also been criticised by Jacques Rancière<sup>12</sup>, as enabling the reproduction of those power relations, especially by considering the 'dominated' as merely an object of study and somehow not as a recognised subject, thus enforcing the separation between the legitimated sociologist and the possible forms of emancipation whose mechanism maybe is understood only by a small intellectual elite. Rancière has been critical towards the figure of the recognised intellectual and underlined further the problematic opposition or articulation of science and ideology, thus also making him adopt a critical distance towards his former teacher Louis Althusser.

11 Ibid., p. 166.

12 Rancière, Jacques: *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Stanford: University Press, 1991.

When seeking to address and analyse an artistic field through different forms of theoretical discourses, one enters into a complex rhetorical and multi-dimensional matrix that is often underlining paradoxical and contradictory positions, according to where or from which perspective one looks at a given situation. By trying to be aware of those possible ambivalences, it is nevertheless worth attempting to look closer at the mechanisms of subjectivation happening within present artistic systems. But before addressing this problematic, it seems relevant to try to describe in which context the artistic subjects have to operate and manoeuvre nowadays.



## II CRITIQUE OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY AND CONTEXTUAL FORMS OF SUBJECTIVATION

**“More recently the terms creativity and innovation have been [...] assimilated to technological, commercial, managerial practices, in self-inflating and commodified ways which make them virtually unusable.”<sup>13</sup>**

13

Hall, Stuart, as quoted by Wuggenig, Ulf: Kreativitätsbegriffe: Von der Kritik zu Assimilation, Vergiftung, Ausschlag. Vorwort zur Neuauflage von *Kritik der Kreativität*, Wien: Transversal, 2016, p. 11.

II In our present age, the creative economy has become increasingly more present. Once capitalism realised that “human creativity is the ultimate economic resource”<sup>14</sup>, the dominant discourses could be shifted into new directions reshaping the industries of the 21st century. According to Adorno and Horkheimer<sup>15</sup> the culture industry can be understood as mass-produced cultural goods like radio, films, pop music and so on, developed to entertain and drive subjects into passivity through the pleasure of consumption. Although the creative economy might nowadays be a part of the culture

14 Florida, Richard: *The Rise of the Creative Class. And how it's transforming Work, Leisure and Everyday Life*. New York: Basis Books, 2002, p. XIII.

15 Adorno, Theodor W. /Horkheimer, Max: *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Stanford: University Press, 2002

industry, it seems important to differentiate the two terms since they have been invented at two different moments of modern history. As a matter of fact, from the end of the second world war until our present time in the digital age, the culture industry has been subjected to drastic transformations. Adorno and Horkheimer made the following assumptions that seem still very actual nowadays:

“culture today is infecting everything with sameness [...] All mass culture under monopoly is identical [...] The truth that they [films and radio] are nothing but business is made into an ideology in order to justify the rubbish they deliberately produce [...] Interested parties explain the culture industry in technological terms.”<sup>16</sup>

These quite radical statements might explain that the normative dimensions of taste and aesthetics in the mainstream, the strong marketisation of culture and finally the hegemonic dimension of digital technology have a strong background in the culture industry of the post-war era.

Creative economy however, is a seemingly recent concept made popular by John Hawkins<sup>17</sup>, with the goal to transform imagination into value oriented economic goods and services while promoting the concept of creative innovation. The crea-

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>17</sup> Hawkins, John, *The Creative Economy: How People Make Money from Ideas*, London: Penguin Book, 2002. According to Ulf Wuggenig, it seems that Harrison C. White has addressed this concept beforehand more specifically in his work *Canevases & Careers*, published in 1965.



tive economy is multi-faceted and includes music, advertising, fashion, architecture, design, cinema or the video game industry. Creativity is indeed often coupled with innovation but also with flexibility, efficiency, branding, competitiveness and other terminologies that stem directly from the discourse of management<sup>18</sup>. One could say that the pair made of creative innovation and management is nowadays at the core of the dominant economic discourse. The actual dispositive of the creative economy is given a new imagery that mitigates the rigorous representation anchored in 19th century industrialisation. The new economy managed to turn immaterial, cognitive and creative labours into new forms of production of digital labour in the 21st century. Creativity perhaps also became a part of the worrisome problematic of big data that gave to Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple and Microsoft the central positions that those companies possess in today's global digital economy. A further element of analysis is the articulation of creative economy with immaterial labour. By mentioning immaterial labour, one steps into a concept that Maurizio Lazzarato, in his essay bearing the very same name, addressed in 1997 already<sup>19</sup>. Lazzarato analysed that the shift that occurred in the 1970's, as manual labour in the factory got progressively replaced by 'intellectuality' in the new

18 For an extended analysis of the discourse of management: Boltanski, Luc/Chiapello Eve: *Le Nouvel Esprit du Capitalisme*, Paris: Gallimard, 1999 et 2011.

19 Lazzarato, Maurizio: "Immaterial Labour" in *Radical Thoughts in Italy*, Minnesota University Press, 1996.

forms of work production, involved ever more digital machines or new communication technologies and therefore needed forms of intellectual skills to operate them. He remarks:

“Immaterial labor produces first and foremost a social relationship (a relationship of innovation, production and consumption). [...] If Fordism integrated consumption into the cycle of reproduction of capital, post-Fordism integrates communication into it [...] The fact that immaterial labor produces subjectivity and economic value at the same time demonstrates how capitalist production has invaded our lives and has broken down all the oppositions among economy, knowledge and power. The process of social communication (and its principal content, the production of subjectivity) becomes here directly productive because in a certain way it 'produces' production. The process by which the 'social' (and what is even more social, that is, language, communication, and so forth) becomes 'economic' has not yet been sufficiently studied.”<sup>20</sup>

Lazzarato raises some central questions about the transformation of labour production and thus permits to genealogically situate the progressive transformation of capitalist production from post-

Fordism to the new ethos of creative economy. Hence, immaterial labour has been a central aspect of this transformation which leads to today's creative economy. In his essay *Marx in California: third capitalism and the old political economy*, Yann Moulier-Boutang describes a form of a new economy responding to the concept of cognitive capitalism<sup>21</sup>. Cognitive capitalism seems to be an accurate development of Lazzarato's thesis of immaterial labour describing a permanent transformation of the production of labour in the 21st century. Moulier-Boutang points out a couple of characteristics of this new economy as an accumulation system. Those characteristics are here (partly) summarised:

II

- The virtualisation of the economy (role of the immaterial and the services).
- The fundamental role of the collection of information, its numerical storage in the production of knowledge and in the whole production.
- The importance for the growth of 'collecting innovation' of cognitive inter active processes of social cooperation in using tacit knowledge as much within the company as within global and public markets.
- A technical process based around a

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Moulier-Boutang, Yann: "Marx in Kalifornien: Der Dritte Kapitalismus und die alte politische Oekonomie" in *Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B 52-53 / 2001. (Translated from German to English by AC).

socio-technical system which is characterised by information and communication technologies.

- The plurality of inputs and the dissolution of the traditional separation between Capital, qualified work and non-qualified work.
- The development rise of 'netware' and the internet as a component of social and productive cooperation.
- The rise of 'cooperation between brains' and the dissolution of the classical pattern of goods production.
- The dominant role of the 'economy of learning' in the phenomenon of market differentiation and the inter-capitalistic concurrence.
- The development of a productive force of the human brain.<sup>22</sup>

When trying to address the questions of creative economy, one could therefore possibly draw a line from Adorno and Horkheimer 'Dialektik der Aufklärung' to Lazzarato's concept of 'immaterial labour' in order to eventually understand the transformations of the culture industry from the post-war era after 1945, further over to post-Fordism and the transformation of labour in the 1970's, eventually leading to cognitive capitalism and possibly becoming the creative economy in the digital age of the beginning of the 21st century. It should

be added, that although these transformations show a clear tendency towards a more immaterial labour, the material labour has of course not disappeared but is still to be found extensively: In the 'West', 'dirty' manual work is often delocalised to poorer countries to benefit from cheaper workforces.

The transformation of capitalism implied to turn the material labour into immaterial labour and furthermore managed to appropriate itself the grail of the artistic world that is creativity (and thus the potential for poetic imagination) as well as social communication, transforming them into productivity and an economy of services. In other words, the main transformation described above consists at its core of turning the social into the economical. This seems to be the context nowadays within which an  
II artist has to develop his or her work.

It would be interesting to try to understand how the figure of the artist has to be integrated into this new economic context. In his book from 2007, *Das unternehmerische Selbst* Ulrich Bröckling<sup>23</sup> analysed the mechanism of 'acting like an entrepreneur' as an imperative of the present time. As Bröckling remarks, "there is only entrepreneurs where there is a market"<sup>24</sup>. Following this logic, we transfer this remark to the artistic field, *there is an artist-entrepreneur as soon as there is an art market*. The figure of the entrepreneur is indeed clearly going beyond the professional fields of economy and the

23 Bröckling, Ulrich: *Das Unternehmerische Selbst*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2007.

24 Ibid., p. 76..

subjection to 'acting' like one concerns all subjects living in the age of *absolute capitalism*<sup>25</sup>, to use a terminology by Jacques Rancière, to describe the present time. Bröckling furthermore demonstrates that this mechanism forces the individual subject to permanent self-evaluation and self-optimisation, resulting in the management of a 'me-incorporated' (Ich-AG). This permanent working on self-improvement expected from the fellow subject certainly creates a consequent amount of symbolic violence, a state of permanent pressure as well as a specific perception of the own career based around an individual self-centred perception:

“Die Individuen sollen ihre Macht über sich selbst, ihr Selbstwertgefühl und Selbstbewusstsein und ihre Gesundheit ebenso maximieren wie ihre Arbeitsleistung und ihren Wohlstand; sie sollen das umso besser können, je aktiver und selbstverantwortlicher sie ihr Leben in die Hand nehmen; und sie sollen professionelle Hilfe suchen, wenn sie mit all dem überfordert sind.”<sup>26</sup>

The articulation of the self-entrepreneurial dimension with the creative imperative results in a regime of the self where the individual has the responsibility to discipline him or herself to permanent improvement within all levels of existence.

25 Convafreux, Jacques/ Rancière, Jacques: *La Transformation d'une jeunesse en deuil en jeunesse en lutte*, Transversal, 2016.

<http://transversal.at/blog/Die-Verwandlung-einer-trauernden-Jugend> [Accessed on 27.04.17]

26 Bröckling, Ulrich: *Das Unternehmerische Selbst*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2007, p. 61.

By addressing self-governance one steps into a field which has been accurately described by Michel Foucault in his late lectures at Collège de France, as he developed the concepts of governmentality and bio-politics to analyse the power-relation in a neoliberal context.<sup>27</sup>

What seems to appear from all these thoughts, is a situation where the *self-entrepreneur* has become a model on which the whole aspect of life and society is based, a model which has imposed itself as a *regime of truth*, to use another foucaultian notion. Seen through the eyes of the economy, the market becomes the final instance that represents the one and only 'truth', a truth to which every human being is subjected. The mechanism of subjectivation as the 'imperative to act as an entrepreneur' can be interpreted as althusserian *interpellation* while the neoliberal economy could be seen as an *ideological (and repressive) state apparatus* 'hailing' its subjects to act as entrepreneurs. As Althusser remarks:

“there is no ideology except by the subject and for subjects. Meaning, there is no ideology except for concrete subjects, and this destination for ideology is only made possible by the subject: meaning, by the category of the subject and its functioning.”<sup>28</sup>

27 Foucault, Michel: *Naissance de la Biopolitique, Cours au Collège de France, 1978–1979*, Paris: Gallimard, 2004. Foucault, Michel: *Sécurité, Territoire et Population, Cours au Collège de France, 1978–1979*, Paris: Gallimard, 2004.

28 Althusser, Louis: “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” in *Lenin and Philosophy and other essays*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971. Translated from the French by Ben Brewster, p. 170.

The questions of the subject and of the production of subjectivity seem absolutely central when dealing with the problematic of ideology in the present time. According to Judith Butler, one sees that the construction of the subject is also linked to the psyche, thus adding ambivalent mechanisms to subjection as the subject is not determined by power as an externality but desires its own *assujettissement*:

“To desire the conditions of one's own subordination is thus required to persist as oneself.”<sup>29</sup>

The subjection takes place through the complicity of a subject with the instance of the subordination, thus making the subject somehow to a prisoner of its own narcissism.

When addressing the questions of subjectivation, the figure of the artist does not escape that mechanism. The freelance artist must (or want) indeed answer to the imperative of the market, his/her artwork becomes a product that he/she has to sell in order to survive in a reality where competition is harsh and where 'losers' have no place. In addition, the freelance artist is also condemned to permanent self-improvement and his/her success often follows the rules of meritocracy measured by his/her recognition and his/her capacity to sell material products or immaterial services in order to survive. Furthermore, the ability to apply for public and private funding have nowadays become an imperative of the possibility to exist as a freelance artist.



However, and if following Butler's theory of subjection, the action of becoming a self-entrepreneur as an artistic subject is part of a complex psychological mechanism of constructing its own social identity, be it by managing to become a successful artist-entrepreneur or by avoiding recognition at all prices and staying in the margins. The mechanisms taking place are thenceforth not only coming from power as an exteriority but happening within the complicity of the artistic subject's psyche with the power itself.

The context of the subjection of professional artists appears strongly connected to the possibility of professionalisation which might have been encouraged by the apparition of art schools as institutions. Possibly in 1563 in Florence when Cosima I de' Medici created the Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze, the path of the professional artist has become institutionalised. Throughout the 20th century, work commissions for artists came from various private and public sources and it is still the case, with the major difference that the 'value' of an artist is evaluated by a network of specialists and experts and according to the capacity of the artistic subject to belong to specific cultural circles and niches.

Furthermore, the professionalisation of the artistic subject is nowadays often characterised by self-employment which might lead to new forms of precarisation. The consequences of the (economical) precarisation also being a possible new form of regulation and, maybe just like self-governance, a way to isolate and control. Creativity and self-entrepreneurship become the method of performa-

tively and affectively defining the self in a permanently unstable and fragile position, thus triggering new forms of fears and insecurities. In the 1990's for instance, many artists wanted to live an independent life and would prefer not to have a fixed job. This was made possible by having the option to live relatively cheaply in some European cities as well as having a decent amount of freelance jobs available within the art fields, and hence a possibility to more or less be able to make a living out of his/her artistic works. Nowadays, more and more freelancers wish to return to institutional work thus escaping the permanent *state of insecurity* that is the reality of many precarious creative workers. In her book from 2015 (first published in German in 2012) 'Government of the precarious', Isabell Lorey<sup>30</sup> delivers a sharp analysis of these new realities of precarisation happening more and more worldwide as a consequences of neoliberal policies. For her, precarisation is

“more than insecure jobs, more than the lack of security given by waged employment. By way of insecurity and danger it embraces the whole of existence, the body, modes of subjectivation.”<sup>31</sup>

“Precarization is not an exception, it is rather the rule. It is spreading even in those areas that were long considered secure. It has become an instrument of gov-

30 Lorey, Isabell: *State of Insecurity: Government of the precarious*, London: Verso, 2015.

31 Ibid., p. 1.

erning and, at the same time, a basis for capitalist accumulation that serves social regulation and control.”<sup>32</sup>

The mechanisms of precarisation are to be found more and more within professional artistic circles and are a reality for many artistic subjects living in the age of the creative economy. These realities have a direct influence on the existence of the freelance artistic subject but also on his/her relationship with his/her artistic production. The artist is forced to become a self-entrepreneur and is therefore subjected to the competitive imperative of the economy.

This context might have the following consequences on the artistic subjects but also on the objects, the artworks themselves: *Firstly*, the global way of thinking and acting in the art world is increasingly self-centred and individual: since the rules of the games are hard and competitive, the energy is spent mostly on saving his/her own career, and collective dimensions are often reduced to a trickle. *Secondly*, the artistic aspects that are indirectly commercial but addressing poetical or social dimensions often become secondary when opposed to profit-oriented strategies. *Thirdly*, one of the dangers of the over-commercialisation of art is to remove from it its critical content.

The role of the avant-garde in the 20th century was to propose radical positions within artistic fields and, even if there still are many exceptions

nowadays, one can see that the avant-garde has tendentially been museified. Within the mainstream, iconic figures such as Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst represent very well successful *entrepreneur-artists*, with their productions considered as luxury products, mostly removed from critical positions but having the aim to sell as much and as expensively as possible. It should be noted that it is not my aim to criticise Hirst and Koons personally, as they have somehow managed to use the art market to their own advantage. It seems more apropos to interrogate a system that allows the emergence, success and 'glorification' of such artistic singularities. One could maybe see these types of artists as prototypes of the creative industries, as 'winners' of the artistic scene, or as Guy Debord would have it, as representative subjects of *the society of the spectacle*<sup>33</sup>. Debord has been a ferocious observer of the transformation of capitalism in the second half of the 20th century and some of his writings seem still to be very actual when addressing the fusion of the politics of the spectacular, consumerism, entertainment and mass-media, that produce specific types of discourses and interpretations of reality which he would describe as following:

“In a world which really is upside-down, the true is a moment of the false.”<sup>34</sup>

In his lecture from 1934 entitled 'Author as Producer'

33 Debord, Guy: “La Société du Spectacle” in *Oeuvres*, Paris: Gallimard, 1992, 2006.

34 Ibid., p. 768. (Translated from French by AC).

Walter Benjamin<sup>35</sup> critically addresses a certain tradition of bourgeois leftist intellectuals from the literary scene to use the political situation only as a way to entertain audiences. He underlines the importance for the author to address the question of production relations in his/her work:

“Before I ask: what is a work's position vis-à-vis the production relations of its time, I should like to ask: what is its position within them?”<sup>36</sup>

Benjamin furthermore mentions the works of Bertolt Brecht and Hanns Eisler as relevant examples of authors who thought the link between the artwork and the proletariat. If political aspects of art are of utmost importance to many artistic movements throughout the 20th century (such as Dada, Surrealism, Fluxus, the Situationists, Viennese Actionism, Cobra, Schimpfluch-Gruppe and many other marginal groups) another central role of the artistic gesture is to implement radical and critical perspectives in the artistic practice and experience, underlining the fact that very often the poetical paradigm is strongly connected to the political one. By political paradigm one could hereby understand an inclination to critically interrogate the context in which one is living and working. In his lecture at the Collège de France titled 'The Birth of Biopolitics', Foucault frontally tackled the transformation of liberalism

35 Benjamin, Walter: "The Author as Producer" (Address delivered at the Institute for the Study of Fascism, Paris, on 27 April 1934) in *Understanding Brecht*, London, New York: Verso, 1998. Translated by Anna Bostock.

36 Ibid., p. 86.

into neoliberalism and stressed very accurately the problematic of what he calls a regime of truth:

“In the things I am presently concerned with, the moment when that which does not exist is inscribed in reality, and when that which does not exist comes under a legitimate regime of the true and false, marks the birth of this dissymmetrical bipolarity of politics and the economy. Politics and the economy are not things that exist, or errors, or illusions, or ideologies. They are things that do not exist and yet which are inscribed in reality and fall under a regime of truth dividing the true and the false.”<sup>37</sup>

Even if this analysis was made in 1978, it still seems quite an accurate description of the paradigm we have been living in: A logical continuation of the dynamics happening in the 1970's and 1980's, leading progressively to the *Grand Shift* towards the digitalisation of existence, which has become central in our actuality, maybe contributing to the blurring of the complex articulation of the true and the false. These dimensions have drastic consequences on human existence and therefore also melt with the interconnections of realities at stake within the artistic fields.



### III EXPLORATION OF ALTERNATIVE ARTISTIC STRUCTURES

**“Possibility is not a  
luxury; it is as crucial  
as bread.”<sup>38</sup>**



- III To find the raw qualities of art, it seems that one would have to escape from the mainstream and look into the margins where radical and non-commercial perspectives are nowadays sometimes still to be found. Categories are often obsolete, and using words such as *alternative*, *non-mainstream*, *marginal*, *non-commercial*, *underground* or *experimental* in trying to define varied and multiple artistic practices can certainly be reductive, problematic or ambivalent. In the coming chapter these categories are used nevertheless, addressed and dealt with, for lack of better words. The separation of 'mainstream' and 'underground' became problematic as the borders between these two qualities are often blurrier than they may seem, resulting in a multitude of hybrid formats and many cultural structures oscillating nowadays between these poles.

In the 1980's and 1990's in Switzerland but also worldwide, the so-called *off-scene*<sup>39</sup> was well developed and many cities had very active and diverse alternative scenes. Historically, an 'off' venue can take the shape of infrastructures ranging from squatted buildings to youth social centres, artists' workshops, alternative clubs, transformed warehouses or home concerts. The heterogeneity of these spaces offers collective dynamics and the possibility to present non-commercial art in private, public or semi-private settings. The spectrum of practices presented in such spaces is vast and can range from music to cinema, visual arts, dance, performance art, literature, theatre and so on. Institutionalised cultural structures and alternative or non-commercial ones complemented each other and offered a variety of aspects and contexts for cultural activities: Many artists benefited from the possibility of being able to oscillate between official venues and their professional infrastructures on the one hand, and the spontaneous quality that the off-spaces offered on the other hand, where things could be tested in a live setting, like in a laboratory, but also where essential social aspects such as exchanges, talks and discussions could take place on a collective level. This tradition of squats and off-spaces was possible because of the many available empty buildings, sometimes at the very

39

For an extended research about the 'off' and alternative scene in Switzerland since the 1980's, one should mention the project "Off OffOff Of" initiated by Rachel Mader at the Kunst Hochschule in Luzern.

centre of cities, as well as special deals with the buildings' owners, allowing such practices to exist. Most of the artistic activities presented in alternative spaces offer a multitude of aesthetics having in common a variety of practices happening outside of the mainstream. Venues hosting such practices offer a platform for activities that are marginal and sometimes without commercial compromise. Very often, alternative scenes are not subjected to the commercial imperative since they develop other forms of relations between audience, cultural organisers and artists, where profit and audience rates are not central for their existences. Furthermore, these spaces collectively create a network where artists can tour and present their works, outside of official mainstream venues.

- III Off-venues offer an alternative to mainstream culture and are essential in order to allow other forms of artistic practices than the ones happening within professional, commercial and academic structures. In the last two decades however, the reality of non-commercial, experimental or marginal artistic spaces has changed in Switzerland but also all around Europe. One of the possible reasons to explain this fact could be the amount of empty spaces available in cities on the one hand and, on the other, an augmentation of rental costs for any types of ateliers, apartments and artistic rooms, that so became non-affordable for non-profit oriented structures. On top of that, an upgrading of the legal imperative to sanify buildings (installing emergency exits or expensive architectural transformations and so on), the cost

of licences and increased regulations to host public events might have been fatal to many alternative venues. The restructuring and the transformation of cities are therefore certainly central reasons for the progressive change of paradigm for the non-commercial artistic spaces. Nowadays, apart from a few hidden niches still functioning in the old school way, the few structures that survived this shift are the ones who managed to professionalise their spaces most of the time by getting funding and thus entering into a hybrid status in-between categorisation.

The professionalisation of cultural spaces might have excluded many non-commercial venues from the centres of cities and results in a new structuration of urbanism as a 'creative city'. In his book *Die Erfindung der Kreativität*, Andreas Reckwitz addresses the problematic of the transformation of cities and underlines the processes of culturalisation and aestheticisation taking place within the so-called 'creative city':

“Auf den Kritischen Urbanismus, [...] folgt seit den 1970er Jahren ein mehrdimensionaler Prozess der Kulturalisierung des Stadtraums, dessen wichtigste Bestandteile die Ästhetisierung des Innenstadtwohnviertel, die ökonomischen creative clusters, die postmodernen Konsumräume und der Trend zur Musealisierung sind. Es kristallisiert sich eine politisch geförderte ‘kulturorientierte Gouvernementalität’ des Urbanen heraus, die seit der Jahrtausendwende versucht, die creative city als Ort

der permanenten Produktion des ästhetisch Neuen auf Dauer zu stellen.”<sup>40</sup>

This new organisation of cities might also be a direct consequence of gentrification resulting in fertile environments for cultural entrepreneurs but excluding cultural spaces that are not directly responding to specific criteria (often economical ones).

III However, within the cultural structures that had to professionalise their *modus operandi*, some are still driven by the wish to present non-commercial or challenging artistic practices, but have to apply for private or public funding to cover their minimal functioning costs. Professionalising the structure became the condition *sine qua non* for many non-mainstream cultural spaces in order to keep on existing. This hybrid quality seems to have become a common reality within non-mainstream cultural venues, for the reason that the spaces that did not want to adapt to this imperative of self-management mostly had to cease existing. But even when succeeding in getting public or private financial support to cover infrastructure costs, most non-mainstream venues are working in fragile conditions without long-term security or any guarantee of a possible future. Volunteering and/or precarious working conditions are dominating such structures even if they do receive subventions. The imperative of self-entrepreneurship and management addressed in previous chapters therefore

also concerns artistic spaces to a certain extent. Many cultural venues defending non-commercial aesthetics have to professionalise themselves, thus underlining a paradoxical position by being dependent on public or private funding.

A good example that illustrates this mechanism is the history of Cave 12 in Geneva. The Cave 12 is an important and established venue existing well over thirty years presenting adventurous and non-commercial music. Originally located in the basement of *Rhino*, a legendary squat situated on the *Boulevard des Philosophes* in Downtown Geneva, created in 1988 and hosting a community of seventy people, the Cave 12 brought to Geneva a wide selection of international underground music, as one of the only structures in Switzerland presenting these types of practices in the early 90's. In 2007, under the order of the then Geneva procurator Daniel Zappelli, the *Rhino* got evicted by the police, with the consequence of all its seventy inhabitants being homeless and the Cave 12 destroyed. Marion Innocenzi and Fernando Sixto, the two people behind the Cave 12, following in the footsteps of Marie Jeanson and Dennis Rollet who initiated the project in 1989, saw their activities forced to a stop as they lost their home and their working place within a couple of hours. Following this eviction, the city of Geneva received a huge amount of international reactions from artists and cultural personalities from all over the world, stating their anger and incomprehension about the destruction of one of the most established international islands for adventurous and non-commercial music worldwide. Rather

than giving up and probably encouraged by the significant amount of local and international support, Sixto and Innocenzi got organised: living in the band dormitory (sleep-in) of L'Usine, another renown alternative venue of Geneva, they kept promoting and organising concerts (sometimes up to three or four events a week), hosted by most of the still operational music venues in Geneva: the AMR jazz club, l'îlot 13, L'Usine and so on, all showing solidarity with the Cave 12. The nomadic Cave 12 was born and was about to exist for seven years, without having a specific place of their own but being invited by different local structures that helped keep their activities going. In 2011, and somehow underlining a paradox after the eviction of Rhino, the city of Geneva offered a cultural prize to the association Cave 12 as a sign of recognition for the unique quality and engagement of their work. Furthermore, a credit of one million Swiss Francs got spoken for, for the creation of a brand new Cave 12, located near the Railway station in a renovated bicycle parking garage. Since 2013, finally having a new space of their own, Marion Innocenzi and Fernando Sixto can keep on developing their activities. The infrastructure of the new Cave 12 got 'professionalised': including access to warm water, a brand new PA, central heating and all legal authorisations required to sell alcohol and host live music in good conditions many times a week. Coming from the squatter scene and continuously promoting a fiercely radical and non-commercial artistic ethic, the Cave 12 is a good example of a structure that reached an 'hybrid' format, blurring

the borders between 'alternative', 'marginal', 'established' and 'professionalised'. It should here be noted that even now, having their own space (a fundamental factor for any cultural organisation wishing to present non-mainstream culture) and receiving public and private financial support from different institutions and foundations (covering up to 55% of the yearly budget), the work of Fernando Sixto and Marion Innocenzi still remains in fragile and precarious economic conditions. As a matter of fact, both of them work for symbolic salaries, have nearly no days off and achieve a daily amount of organisational and structural work that should ideally be done by at least four full-time jobs<sup>41</sup>. Cave 12 illustrates very well the ambivalence of the status of a specific so called 'non-commercial' structure nowadays: Its position as a hybrid format implies having to apply for funding annually, on top of self-managing the organisation of the whole structure while having to face precarious working conditions and an immense amount of daily work. Even when managing to keep the radical aesthetic presented in their program until now, the Cave 12 came a long way before being accepted by local political institutions, and its existence still means that far from ideal economical working situations have to be accepted in order to achieve their work. Nowadays, the so called artistic *off-scene* seems to have to respond to the economic imperative in order

41

See interview with Marion Innocenzi in the issue number zero of *Multiple*, a self-published magazine by Antoine Chessex, 2016, p. 21 and 23.



to adapt to the model of the creative city. The imperative of management happening to cultural spaces existing within the creative cities have somehow blurred the line between practices that were labelled mainstream and institutional as opposed to alternative and underground ones. One can often see today an oscillation between all these different qualities at stake, a multidirectional back and forth occurring on many levels and maybe underlining a situation of permanent paradoxes. Nevertheless, it does not mean that solely institutional artistic venues or purely underground spaces ceased to exist. Both are still to be found with the many specificities that demand that these polarised qualities face up to different realities: An official institution, that is to say, a cultural structure paying employees, advertising within official channels as well as having high operational costs, has to face a certain financial reality, thus often making it difficult to exist without a good sense of compromise, pragmatism, structural duties as well as developing a local, national and/or international network according to the size of the structure. These realities are certainly drastically different when addressing the situation of a small alternative space with a low budget ethos (or even without any budget). On yet another level, some of the 'old school' squats wanted to propose radical alternatives but also sometimes acted close-minded, ensuing an attitude of exclusion towards the ones not meeting their ideas, thus resulting in a reproduction of similar patterns of thought to the ones they were criticising. However, many other alternative venues worldwide managed

(and still do) to realise an important work presenting essential social and artistic dynamics that serve as fundamental platforms for the expression of different forms of subjectivities. There is still in the present time an international network of underground spaces that function solely outside of the commercial ethos and that propose radical and challenging artistic aesthetics, thus offering a complementary dynamic to academic institutions. But even when not suiting the hybrid and professionalised format described above, those structures have mostly to stay hidden in the underground in order to maintain their autonomy. Furthermore, they are directly affected by the transformation of urbanism and are progressively becoming isolated exceptions in permanent danger of extinction.



## IV BECOMING MARGINS

**“Fuir, ce n’est pas du tout  
renoncer aux actions,  
rien de plus actif qu’une  
fuite.”<sup>42</sup>**

- ≥ I shall now come to a conclusion of this work. In this text, I have tried to explore certain aspects of the artistic field, substantiated by a selection of discourses and positions coming from critical theory and philosophy. The perspective offered by critical theory helped me to look at a given situation from a specific angle, but has certainly also oriented the direction of this work in a characteristic way. It might have been interesting to have contradictory literature to vary perspectives and to attempt to raise counterarguments. Nevertheless, the approaches offered by the authors chosen to support my argumentation have certainly helped me to better understand the context in which freelance artists are working today.
- Culture industries have seen a progressive shift since the end of the second world war, resulting

in permanent transformations and adaptations that lead to the actual creative economy within which artists have to operate in present times. This model has been developed as an integral part of the neo-liberal dispositive and has helped to bring competition (as well as competitiveness), commercialisation, individualisation and new forms of productivity into the artistic field. Furthermore, the creative economy attempts to 'humanise' capitalism by implementing attractive discourses based around the production of creative works and services (and their marketisation) while encouraging the artistic subjects to work as self-entrepreneurs. The reality of self-management might be attractive to many, but often results in a high level of pressure and permanent self-improvement, thus triggering different forms of fear and precarisation. In Switzerland for instance, one could think that the important resources of private and public funding for cultural activities could encourage freelance artistic practices, but it concretely results in limited possibilities of survival for the artistic subject, especially without complementary financial activities that secure his or her artistic practice. With the amount of students coming out of art schools onto the work market each semester, it would be interesting to analyse how many of them will concretely be able to live solely from their artistic practices over the long term. For those being able to make their living as freelance artists though, a large number might have to face insecurity and precarity, making the path as a professional artist an uncertain journey, especially when defending marginal, radi-

cal and challenging aesthetics, or when refusing to compromise on the commercial level.

If most of the liberal theory might historically be based on the writings of Adam Smith, Adam Fergusson, John Locke or Jeremy Bentham, the 1980's have seen a transformation from the discourses of those authors mentioned above into a new paradigm that concretely implements a neo-liberal ideology characterised by governmentality, (self-)management and control. This model today is at the core of the creative economy, with many forms of immaterial production that are so central to creative labour in the digital age. Furthermore, this actual systemic paradigm is characterised by extreme flexibility and can adapt very quickly, accepting or using critiques and even absorbing them in order to orientate its permanent transformation. On yet another level, art and culture could be thought of as an 'exteriority' to the economic system, but in our present world it became an integral part of the commercialisation of existence, often even inspiring new models of subjectivation by implementing strategies coming from artistic practices and translating them into everyday life. The new model of the creative cities being a good example where the artistic paradigm often serves as an inspiration to develop 'innovative' ways of living and consuming and resulting in urban areas from where precariously positioned people are excluded. As Reckwitz remarks:

“Die creative city ist im Planungsdiskurs damit ein mehrdeutiger und suggestiver Begriff. Aus der soziologischen Beobach-

terperspektive kann man hier den historisch bemerkenswerten Versuch erkennen, ein politisches Steuerungs- und Planungsregime zu institutionalisieren, das im Kern auf die umfassende Dynamisierung von Kultur ausgerichtet ist, und zwar letztlich auf den drei genannten Ebenen von Semi-otisierung, reflexiver Historisierung und Ästhetisierung im engeren Sinne.”<sup>43</sup>

It might be apropos to ask what the 'outside' of the creative economy is today? What place is left to produce different forms of subjectivities? Is it possible to propose an alternative to the present context? Is there a way to conceptualise other models of existence that are not subjected to the economy but are based on social exchanges? These vast questions will stay unanswered within the present text but will hopefully lead to further explorations, as it seems that many dimensions of artistic fields might still propose a relevant topic of analysis, while maybe even offering a fertile terrain for developing and experimenting with constructive possibilities. By looking closer at the margins, we have seen that a shift occurred in the so-called alternative scene in the last decades, that resulted in many off-venues having to professionalise their activities in order to keep on existing further, thus leading to hybrid structures and resulting in ambivalent realities, often by oscillating between the promotion of a non-commercial ethos and the reality of man-



agement and funding necessary in order to keep a space functioning. However, and beyond these hybrid formats, many hidden underground dynamics escaping the imperative of commerciality are still active in the present time. The radical aesthetics to be found within those 'off' cultural scenes are essential in contributing to offer an alternative to mainstream culture. Indeed, most of the tradition of the historical avant-garde has been possible thanks to the potential of such spaces and to the dedicated social forces existing outside of academic or mainstream circles, and therefore complementing them admirably.

≥ Nowadays, challenging art is to be found within the international underground's hidden niches, thus still making possible different forms of experimentation with the poetics of existence through social and artistic practices. These dynamics are fragile and permanently menaced by extinction, therefore they often have to stay hidden in order to retain their independence. Moreover, the working methods taking place in such circles are often characterised by deprofessionalisation, that is to say, by re-appropriating creativity into the social field through volunteering and dedication, thus altering the financial component of the artistic activity and resulting in non-profit dynamics. The deprofessionalisation of the artistic practice could be understood as an attempt to 'exit' the imperative of the economy and as a way to reterritorialise artistic practices away from the commercialisation of existence into different forms of living and working. This could be understood as an interpretation

of the Deuleuzian line of flight or as an Exodus, as Paulo Virno mentioned:

“Nothing is less passive than the act of fleeing, of exiting [...] In short, exit consists of unrestrained invention which alters the rules of the game [...]”<sup>44</sup>

The responsibility of the artists today might be to keep on imagining and concretising potentialities to oppose the unenchanted iron cage of the present age. The artistic experience could therefore become a collective and dissonant exploration of the outside, and an attempt to unfold the margins.



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