

**CAN THE DOMINANT ART WORLD ENGAGE
IN 'SOCIAL SCULPTING' AS A
CRITICAL METHODOLOGY FOR ITS INTEGRATION IN THE
SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT?**

Extracting effective strategies from artists Cornford & Cross and David Cross' work

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Introduction

This essay investigates parts of the relationship between the dominant art world¹ and the sustainability movement. My practice engages in researching the consequences of the oil industry, by posing questions related to how much of my work comes from an artistic aptitude or an activist desire to make the world a better place.

This paper follows a chronological framework as much as possible, to convey the growing intensity and complexity of the affairs being discussed.

I – Globalisation, Oil and Art: what kind of future?

The three contextual timelines that are at the core of this critical discussion include globalisation, the oil industry and art specifically in the UK since 1945. This part illustrates that it has become increasingly difficult to avoid the neo-liberal capitalist system, and that there is a need to do so because of its self-destructive nature. Due to the fossil fuel industry and globalization being fundamental parts of neo-liberalism, it is unavoidable to discuss other countries involvement in the power dynamics at stake.

II - Subversion of bureaucracy and activism: how public art is key to the education of criticism.

This part weaves some of the consequences of the power dynamics discussed in *part I* with ideas underlying public art, and the role of decision-making and activism in strengthening the shift proposed. It analyses the work of Cornford & Cross and particularly how Cross’ current subversion of bureaucracy is key to the understanding and development of an eco-centric mentality, while presenting a web of evidence that the dominant art world is not complying with such a necessary revolution.

Conclusion

The discussions in part I and II are merely exemplary of an extremely complex and embedded problem in our current society. While I advocate the practice of public art as a way of disseminating politicised art as in the search for utopia, there are many other strategies that can also be as effective. The conclusion draws on the value of the work of Beuys, Cross and the APG sustaining that the dominant art world is irresponsibly not integrating in the wider issue of sustainability.

I – Globalisation, Oil and Art: what kind of future?

The premise that ‘art’s function is not to answer questions but to raise them’, has been stated directly to me by David Cross, but a significant problem arises with this statement “What question should I ask first, since everything is so intricately interconnected?”^x

1945 was a year of tremendous decisive global strategy: the end of the Second World War marked the advent of an explosion in productivity as the world was able to resume business, with an added acute thirst for living life. The devastation and segregation war caused, led to an antidote in the form of aggressive modernisation.

The creation of global influential organizations that now see most countries engaged in at large today, at a political and financial level, also started in 1945 with the United Nations, the GATT² (today the World Trade Organisation), the IMF and the EU being founded.

They contributed vastly to the pronounced polar power dynamics. Graeber explains:

“Globalization” had almost nothing to do with the effacement of borders and the free movement of people, products, and ideas. It was really about trapping increasingly large parts of the world’s population behind highly militarized national borders within which social protections could be systematically withdrawn, creating a pool of labourers so desperate that they would be willing to work for almost nothing.”³

This working-ruler class power dynamic was heavily aided by the oil industry, which because of high demand for modernisation started the off-shore venture with deregulation at its foundation. Griff Lee, an offshore oil pioneer, set the standards: ‘there were no rules, no regulations, just go out there and do the best you can and hope it works’⁴. A break through was made with the ‘Mohole Project’ in 1961: able to drill 183m into the crust, with an astonishing 3,600m of depth of water, this technological advance married public money via the National Science Foundation and the oil industry, and was crucial to obtain a ‘social license to operate’⁵.

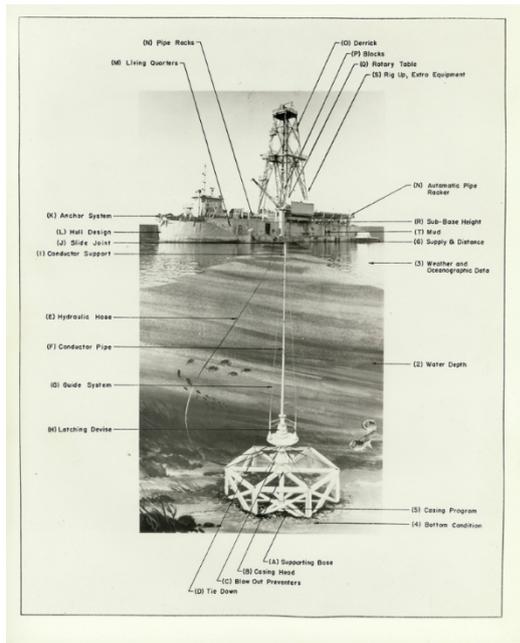


Figure 1.1 and 1.2 – Artist’s impression of the drilling procedure on the left and men at work during the Mohole drilling, on the right.

It was also in 1945 that the Arts Council of Great Britain⁶ was founded, and nine years later the Anglo-Persian Oil Company became BP.

Although the Human Rights, the Feminist and Environmental movements were gaining visibility, accompanied by artists and intellectuals namely the Situationists (‘The Society of the Spectacle’ was a seminal anti-capitalist semiotic manifesto), the 1960’s was a decade of societal uproar. During this period through the back door more alliances of power than could ever be listed in this essay were being formed. Of relevance, the OPEC⁷ was founded in 1965 and MoMa had its board of trustees including three members of the Rockefeller family (Standard Oil).

The Artist Placement Group was formed in 1966, by Barbara Steveni and John Latham with the purpose of ‘facilitating artists’ activity in non-art environments such as industry and government departments.’⁸ Arte Povera, emerged in Italy combining aesthetics, performance and a predilection for found materials, in an ecological attempt to subvert the commercialisation of Art. (50 years later, it has found its way into the White

Cube.⁹) A major civil unrest in Paris took place by the end of the decade against ‘capitalism, consumerism and traditional institutions, values and order’.⁹



Figures 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6 – Posters by ‘Atelier Populaire’ for the Paris May 68 Revolution. From left to right they read: ‘No to bureaucracy’, ‘Capital’, ‘Return to normal’, ‘We intoxicate you: sheep, television, radio, sheep, television, radio’.

In 1972 the APG saw their funding stopped by the Arts Council. The following year the world convolutedly falls in a political manoeuvre due to a dispute over geographical oil territories between Israel and Syria and Egypt. This was a very complex set of economic cascades, which ended up benefiting the US’ hegemony in the finance sector.¹¹

During the early 1970’s, Stockholm’s UN Conference on Human Environment and the EU’s Environmental and Consumer Protection Directorate were formed, but western culture was developing symptoms of a consumer driven culture, ‘for instance, (...) 1970 [was] when the increase in the number of scientific papers published in the world—a figure that had been doubling every fifteen years (..) —began levelling off.’¹² Advertising¹³ started using the *self-criticism package*: if a product foretells you about all its pros and cons, there is no room left for criticism because the product itself includes its own criticism. Consequently, this perpetuates *reflexive impotence* (Fisher)¹⁴ and automatism (Berardi)¹⁵. These symptoms have been felt in the art world where criticism is losing ‘publics, which increasingly prefer consumption above critical judgment’¹⁶, and politicised art is being assimilated as trendy or being censored.

The Trans-Amazonian highway opened in 1972, giving way to deforestation and oil exploration escalating into the point that by 2012 nearly 11% of its area was destroyed¹⁷. Deforestation displaces native peoples as the forest is their habitat, incapacitating them

‘to pass on cultural practices from one generation to another, a process intrinsically tied to the land and regionally specific histories’¹⁸.

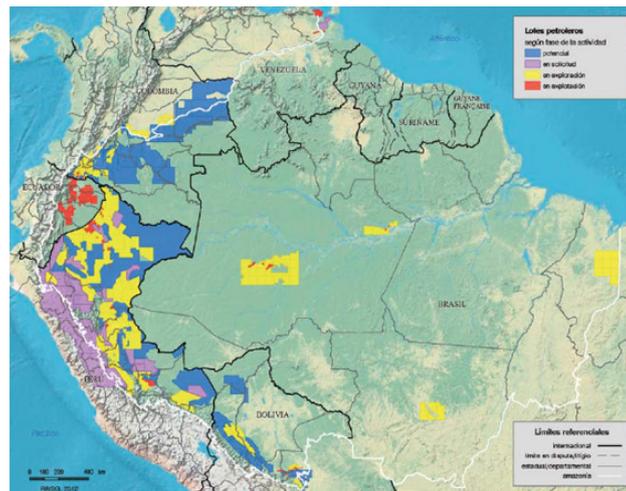


Figure 1.7 – The areas of the Amazon (delineated in white) being explored by the oil industry: blue is the area surveyed; purple area licensed; yellow and red area explored and extracted respectively.

Between 1976 and 79, major oil spills each year occurred in Europe and Central America and the realization that crude is a harmful substance of graveness, which has been causing the crisis of the eco-system:

‘Since 1854 almost two-thirds of industrial carbon pollution emitted into the earth’s atmosphere can be traced to fossil fuel companies and extractive industries’¹⁹.

Consequently, we started seeing the darker side of the future (such as crude oil). Berardi explains:

‘Future is not a natural dimension of the mind, rather it is a modality of perception and imagination, a feature of expectation and attention, and its modalities and features change with the changing of cultures.’²⁰

He argues that because since the late 1970's the future is no longer believed to be brighter than the present, because we reversed utopia into dystopia. I would rectify, saying that we are already living in a dystopia to a certain extent, and that all we have left is utopia.²¹ The continuous and growing numbers of activist movements justify this.

Ideas pervasive in youth's education that material gain is key to fulfilment, perpetuate the principle of consumerism (and according to Harvey of Imperialism²²). They are inherently self-destructive as the finite nature of consumerism is opposed to any notion of sustainability. So dystopian is the case of our youth that Fisher states that it's not an understatement to say that being a teenager in a capitalist reality is to have a (mental) sickness.²³ The youth is the future, but the youth is sick. So the future is sick.²⁴

Both Berardi and Fisher comment exhaustively on the state of depression and other mental disorders. They hold that the speed of capitalism has brought it onto us. Moreover, it concerns the Environment too:

'Environmental catastrophe is one (...) Real (...) underlining the reality that capitalism presents to us.'²⁵

Other oppressing factors contributing to poor mental health could include fracking, which has been shown to bring 'depression, annoyance and feelings of disenfranchisement',²⁶ not to mention stress and anxiety.

According to Graeber²⁷, the death of imagination has been brought by the bureaucratic mind; according to Berardi the future requires a 'modality of the imagination', so, how to re-educate our youth on bureaucracy?

In *Utopia by Design*²⁸ the idea was to introduce artworks that contributed to 'making the world a better place and our cities more liveable'²⁹. This implies that living in a city nowadays is a struggle. I would hold that more than a struggle for those who live in them, is a struggle for the Environment: we suffer the consequences of the Environment's struggle. The understanding of utopia the Biennale offers us is a problem as to the reasons why we are dreaming of utopia: "the first utopia was the city itself which represented

man's technological triumph over nature'³⁰. Although positive (the outcomes of this exhibition), its core is anthropocentric.

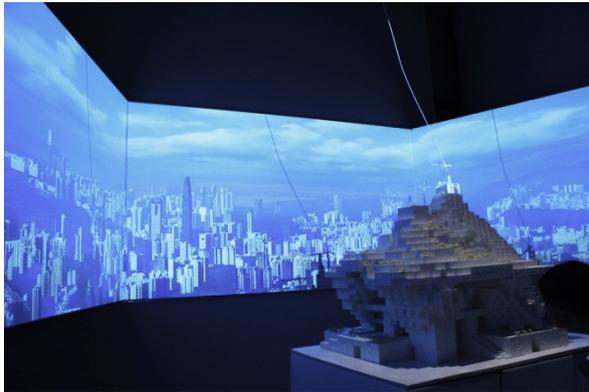


Figure 1.8 and 1.9 – Installations at the London Design Biennale: left, design Team *Urbanus* presents a mega-city model for Shenzhen in China which grew from 300 00 inhabitants to 15 million in 15 years; right: United Arab Emirates presents a recuperation of the manmade channels – the al falaj - that brought water from the Gulf's mountains to cities.

In my view, dystopia is analogous to anthropocentrism (our current geological age) in which if we continue to influence the environment and climate as we are 'the foundations of our societies, including food security, infrastructure, ecosystem integrity and human health, would be in jeopardy'³¹. The questions needing to be asked relate to the acknowledgment of eco-centrism as our reality for survival, meaning that we have to adapt to the Environment, whereas what we are currently doing is asking questions about managing the Environment so it can adapt to us.

II - Subversion of bureaucracy and activism: how public art is key to the education of criticism.

Art did not start off by being ‘anything the art world says is art is art’.¹ During the 18th century the maxim that art ‘was not to serve any master but itself’² corroborates ‘the notion of artistic freedom. This was (...) an integral value to an artistic practice; it was contrasted (...) with the *unfreedom* of institutions, the state or the bourgeoisie’³.

With neo-liberal practices being implemented by Thatcher in England between 1979 and 1990, the arts suffered increasingly corporatization and privatization, which led to seeing the arts as a business, with a heftier load of bureaucratization mounting.

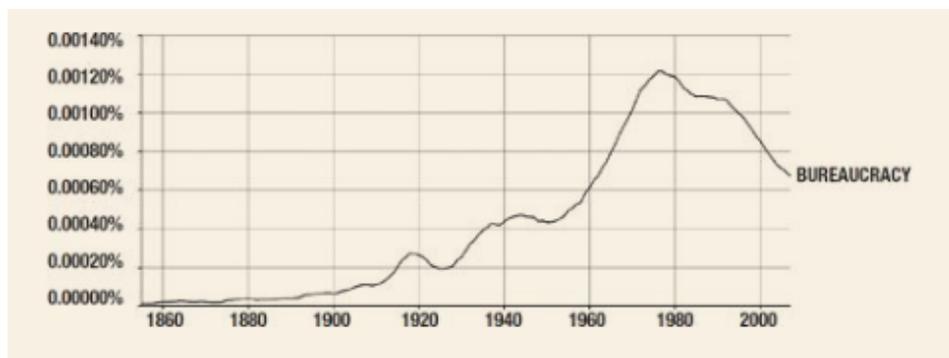


Figure 2.1 – Graph showing the usage of the word ‘bureaucracy’.

Nowadays bureaucracy is so assimilated in every aspect of our lives that isn’t not spoken about. Nonetheless, Graeber argues that

“in practice, bureaucratic procedure invariably means ignoring all the subtleties of real social existence and reducing everything to preconceived mechanical or statistical formulae.”⁴

In addition, bureaucracy influences our lives because we need to engage with it. It provides conceptual short-cutting, which the Arts Council started suffering from, which Latham points out on the ruling of withdrawal of funding for the APG⁵. A ‘pure-art’ ideology was being fostered, and censorship started to emerge in the art world even by means of destroying works.⁶



Figure 2.2 – The APG in Germany with Joseph Beuys, 1978 © Stadtarchiv Bonn, Fotografische Sammlung – Bestand Franz Fischer



Figure 2.3 – Latham’s article on Art Monthly elaborating on why the Arts Council withdrew funding

Of paramount importance to this discussion, is that ‘the APG shifted the function of art towards ‘decision-making’⁷. Concurrently, in Germany, Joseph Beuys was talking about ‘social sculptures’ and co-founded the German Green Party (in between other parties). It comes as no surprise that the APG became involved with the government in Germany, and later Austria, Netherlands and France.

Meanwhile, in the UK, public art proliferated during the 1980’s.

Politicised art is concerned with a critic or an engagement with the social aspects of life. The origin of the word politics comes from the Greek *polites* which means citizens; the origin of the word public is in the Latin meaning *of the people*. I suggest that the best outlet

for an art of the citizens, of the people, is by means of commons: there is an essential connection between the realms of art which deal with ‘social sculptures’ and the public sphere, furthermore, the site-specificness of an artwork can function as a channel of criticism.⁸

In the context of site-specificness, public and criticism, Cornford & Cross worked together between 1987 and 2008, of which *oeuvre* around half had implications outside of the ‘pure’ gallery space, specialising in site-specific. Equally, around half of their work didn’t materialise because of lack of funding. They then played with this notion of public and private by exhibiting in a private gallery the works which had been rejected by public funding⁹.

In the 1990’s under John Major’s governance the *Public* and *Private* were blurring at a steady pace. In *Utopia* (1999) Cornford & Cross show responsiveness. In an attempt to pronounce the symbols that the benevolent patriarchy Bourneville stood for, at a time where the corporatization of Cadbury’s was about to happen, the art gesture was of (coincidental) anticipated criticism: dyeing the water with the brand’s purple, turned it into a deep dark water, akin of a nightmarish vision – that of which the globalised forces of the liberal market are rumoured to have pressured the newly incorporated company into association with child labour.¹⁰



Figure 2.4 – *Utopia* (1999) Cornford & Cross © Cornford and Cross

It was in 1990 that Tate had signed its 26 year-long sponsorship with BP because after a decade of

‘Thatcher’s (...) ideological shaping of the position of the arts (...), the government (...) have been active in cornering arts organisations into taking an economic and political role that upholds neoliberal values. Arts organisations (...) [were] under significant political pressure to accept any source of private funding and corporate sponsorship’.¹¹

Cross currently finds his criticism engaged in the educational system and the fossil fuel network from where the financing of UAL comes from.

‘We’ve managed to get them, [UAL], to divest 3.9 million pounds, it’s a start, but we’ve been looking at the annual report accounts and saying: they’ve got 262 million’¹², Cross lets out.



Figure 2.5 – UAL students in protest at CSM, part of the project *Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign*. Photograph by Georgia Brown.

An artist and academic who is dealing with a significant amount of bureaucracy, with an activist take, who considers this to be his artistic practice. How much can bureaucracy be a work of art?

Alike in his practice with Cornford, where their technique is conceptual, it’s in the ingenious skill involved in thinking meaningfully, that gives rise to true questions. Context

is the value created in the work of art, something that the Arts Council and Tate weren't prepared to vouch for Latham. It's a value that the dominant art world does not recognise. Even if it did, it can only send mixed messages to the detriment of critical thinking¹³. Cross describes artwork as destabilizing:

'is more like *complexifying* things (...) but equally dissolving it back into the normal economy of everyday life and its exchanges; it excites me, because it then destabilises the category of art, (...) it doesn't have to be designated as art by the art discourse, (...) destabilising that boundary, kind of leads art back into the world, and it sort of says that anything you do could be art'.¹⁴

There is an emphasis on *doing* to be art: the action, rather than the product. Cornford & Cross' work is politicized and in *The Abolition of Work* (2007), (a one-pence-coin-floor, a lushness of copper iridescence and reflection) this is strongly and astutely achieved in the symbolism of stepping on the money. Implacably political, it poses all sorts of questions about our attitude towards art and money simultaneously. 'Can I, am I allowed, is the artist inviting me to step on an artwork? Should I exercise this derogatory walk on a daily need?' would have the audience questioned when faced with the work, I imagine.



Fig. 2.6 – *The Abolition of Work* (2007) by Cornford & Cross © Cornford & Cross

I find this to be one of the most destabilizing and successful aspects of their work: they invite people to be part of something they would have never thought of doing so, or of being faced with and are given the freedom to actually act upon or not, but in a somewhat skirmishing way. In *Childhood's End* (2000), a military pilot flying an aircraft to draw the anarchist A onto the clear blue sky. The antagonism in this pilot's situation is the cunning plot: obeying the commission or not drawing the anarchic A onto the sky?



Figure 2.7 and 2.8 – *Childhood's End* (2000) left: pilot; right: trace of the anarchic A © Cornford & Cross

Considering that in both the above works either the participants or the audience had or could choose to take action, most importantly critical action due to the nature of the questions implicated, it is coherent to agree to their activist character.

Cross' current preoccupations lay in the 'formation of subjectivity and commonality'¹⁵. Echoing Latham's Incidental Person, who would be a "representer of the non-visible' within the structure of democracy (...) with the capacity to unify a fractured civilization'¹⁶, Cross' take on bureaucracy is precisely the opposite of 'ignoring all the subtleties of real social existence' (Graeber). Instead, it is to prioritize the value of the intricacies of the artist over the production of art. This subversion is crucial to my understanding in recognising that art is in the implementation of ideas that challenge: it could take shape in the form of bureaucracy, since this subversion is manifesting as a 'social sculpture'. Furthermore, it encompasses measures needed for the shift to an eco-centric era. The fossil fuel industry has intensified the fractured civilization, and Berardi comments:

‘The prospect of a double disruption - Environmental and social - of the very foundations of modern civilisation is more and more possible, but the leading class is reaffirming the strategy which generated the present situation, based on dogmas of competition profit and growth’. He adds ‘There is an unwillingness, or inability, to face up to the scale of the crisis’¹⁷.

Berardi is right: The Paris Summit agreement seems to be meant to have a simulacrum effect¹⁸ and more licenses to frack in the UK and European countries¹⁹ are emerging, and Ecuador has started oil exploration this September in the most bio-diverse hotspot on the planet. Even the states that are ratifying the agreement seem to be waiting for the upcoming US presidential election to be sure if they will be able to keep their word.²⁰

An identical effect happens in the dominant art world, namely Tate during its BP sponsorship years, when censorship happened and sponsor influence took away genuine dialogues of criticism and created potentially offensive situations:

‘It seems unlikely that a co-founder of the German Green party would’ve been comfortable for his art to be exhibited in association with BP. For audiences, situating Beuys’ work in a gallery that is sponsored by BP creates an uncomfortable contradiction’²¹.

Conflicts of interest that can result in censorship. Tate is only one of the institutions exemplifying that the neo-liberal context is not so liberal in the end: more of a stringent capitalist one.²² Artists suffer directly from it:

‘At the University of Wyoming Art Museum, British artist Chris Drury’s sculpture *Carbon Sink: what goes around comes around* was taken apart and removed after fossil fuel industry executives complained that the artwork was too critical of the coal industry’.²³

‘Curator and critic Carolee Thea proposes that the curator’s intention to open political dialogue is often subdued into a reiteration of existing power structures’²⁴.

This goes to show that when criticism takes place, it gets muted. Galleries still do exhibit political work, but without engaging in a political discussion: they are merely serving the capitalist master, the one that depoliticises content in order to provide consumerism. A quasi-hypocritical art, in a hypocritical art world, untrue to the values of freedom.

Conclusion - Can the dominant art world engage in 'social sculpting' as a critical methodology for its integration in the sustainable movement?

An increasingly entangled web of political and financial relationships that generate complex and globalized power dynamics between corporations and governments are a chief influence on our current system. The extreme industrialization and the race for the fossil fuel industry at a global scale has deteriorated our Environment in a devastating way.

There is a solution to the ecological problem we are facing and that is adopting sustainable practices – as the science behind the Earth Statement recommends. Artists such as Joseph Beuys and David Cross were/are involved in the shaping of a society that shifts to a more eco-centric mentality. The APG's integration within the government both in the UK and Europe show that artists can engage in decision-making processes and engage in conscientious 'social sculpting'.

My research shows that currently, criticism is in crisis at various levels. Our youth lacks it, our institutions lack implication in it, the system has assimilated criticism selling it as a product and society buys it as a scapegoat for engagement. The bureaucratic mind is pandemic and its purpose is to provide short-cuts. Criticism cannot be achieved with short-cuts, on the contrary, criticism is thorough.

A methodology against the neo-liberal capitalist system include tackling the mediating mentality of bureaucracy with activism. However, the right questions must be asked. Not just questions for the sake of questions – the production principle of consumerism. A little like art for art's sake is unnecessary to the much needed shift to an eco-centric mentality.

The contextual nature of Cornford & Cross' work illustrates effective responsiveness to the world we live in. The fossil fuel industry is intimately linked to the problems at hand and Cross is sculpting a conscientious society, contributing to global shift. Whatever the artistic outcome or media a 'social sculpture' may encompass, its placement in the public arena provides (education of) criticality: politicized artwork has a significant role in the commons.

Global means the whole world; I conclude that the dominant art world is in voluntary denial of its significant role in influencing an ecological revolution that is struggling to take off. This is due to embedded prejudicial mentalities to artistic freedom brought by long-term relationships with corporate and governmental powers, which don't allow for effective criticism to take place.

In direct answering to my question, as a principle, hence artists are part of the art world and they show effective capacities to provide for the integration in the sustainable movement, the art world could succeed in doing so. However, at the moment, as my conclusion above shows it's not the case.

In closing, I would like to subscribe to Cross' activism: 'It seems to me that the production of artists now is the crucial thing to defend, more than the production of art by existing artists'.¹

3765 words

NOTES

Introduction

1. By dominant art world from here on I mean mainstream commercial galleries, for example, the White Cube, Pace, Mary Goodman, Gallerie Tadeus Ropac, Carroll/Fletcher, Non Departmental Public Bodies in the Arts, (institutions such as Tate, National Portrait Gallery), the auctioneers Sotheby's and Christie's along with all the multi-millionaire private art collectors who sustain the prices at of art at sky-rocketing values. The Arts Council is included too, as they have the upper hand in censoring and fund distribution.

I – Globalisation, Oil and Art: what kind of future?

1. Anonymous quoted in Cartiere, C., Willis, S., eds, (2008 p. 219)

2. General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

3. Graeber (2015, iBooks)

This is also backed by recent reports on the role of the British Government in Africa: 'In only a minority of mining operations do African governments have a shareholding in projects, and even if they do this tends to be small at 5-20%. (...) An African country could benefit from mining operations in two other ways. First, it could insist that companies employ a large percentage of their staff from the country and buy a large proportion of the goods and services they procure from the country. However, World Trade Organisation rules prevent African countries from putting such policies in place. (...) [Secondly,] the term 'export earnings' is a misnomer. Governments only benefit from exports when there is an export tax. There are almost none in Africa. (...) These priorities [and policies] remain in evidence today and explain British policy in Africa far more than the idea that Britain is helping the continent develop through its large aid programme. (...) Some \$192 billion is taken out, mainly in profits made by foreign companies, tax dodging and the costs of adapting to climate change. The result is that Africa suffers a net loss of \$58 billion a year.' (Curtis, M., (2016)

4. Documentary Lab, (2014)

5. 'Social license to operate' is a phrase widely used by Evans (2015). In the context she employs the terms, it means that oil companies use likeable culture and art enterprises to seek approval from the wider public of their more neglecting activities by means of association with something positive to society. Colloquially – and the title of her book – this means art wash. The context I use it in is 'science wash' or even 'technology wash'. Oil companies associated themselves with science and technology so no one would question the outcomes of their feats, because in the name of science and technology they could only be on a good mission.

6. The Arts Council of Great Britain was founded with the purpose 'to increase the accessibility of the fine arts to the public throughout Our Realm' (Cartiere, C., Willis, S., eds, (2008 p.233)), it being 'a separate body from the state with the purpose of distributing state funds. Its mission was to support the arts across the UK according to the arm's-length principle: the idea that the arts would flourish better without direct meddling from government.' (Evans (2015 p. 42))

7. In 1960 Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries was founded having five country-members: Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela. As of today it has fourteen country-members. In addition to the founders: Algeria, Indonesia, Angola, Ecuador, Gabon, Qatar, Nigeria, Libya, United Arab Emirates. (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (2016))

8. Cartiere, C., Willis, S., eds, (2008 p.234)

9. Jannis Kounellis has an exhibition, 23 September – 29 October 2016 at the White Cube Mason's Yard. Jelinek speaks of the assimilation of politicised art by the system: 'There is a false openness in lifelike art practice and the false distance from commerce because, despite the fact that the lifelike tradition holds the values of anti-hierarchy, inclusivity and anti-commodification, in reality it operates to police its boundaries and create value just as the artlike arts tradition does.' (Jelinek (2013, p. 106))

I would argue that this does happen, but in retrospective and at the perverse accountability of the dominant art world. Nevertheless, it does impact the viewer and consequently sends mixed messages, creating confusion in the reading process.

10. Wikipedia (2016)

11. 'The US then sought to construct a different kind of system, that rested upon a mix of new international and financial institutional arrangements to counter economic threats from Germany and Japan and to re-center economic power as finance capital operating out of Wall Street. The collusion between the Nixon administration and the Saudis to push oil prices sky-high in 1973 did far more damage to the European and Japanese economies than it did to the US, which at that time was little dependent upon Middle Eastern supplies.³⁰ US banks gained the privilege of re-cycling the petrodollars into the world economy. Threatened in the realm of production, the US countered by asserting its hegemony through finance.'

³⁰ - Gowan, *Global Gamble*, pp. 21-2, cites the evidence for collusion between Nixon and the Saudis.' (Harvey (2004 p.15))

12. Graeber (2015 p. 220)

13. 'We should pay our respects to this amazing admission and professional cynicism. It is widely shared, as the following slogan for Poste Télécom testifies: 'Money has no sex, but it will reproduce'. (...) Even those who condemned Le Lay's shocking statement were fascinated by its insolence. Doesn't this shameless flippancy manifest a greater freedom than the stonewalling of critical contestation? But this is the question: how could truth be lifted by an "arrogant" discourse that gets the upper-hand by short-circuiting any critique? Technocratic cynicism is not scandalous per se, but by the way it breaks a fundamental rule of our social and political game: corruption for some and protesting Evil for others. If the corrupt have no respect for this protocol and show their hand without sparing us their hypocrisy, then the ritual mechanism of denunciation goes haywire.' (Baudrillard (2010, p. 38))

This lack of differentiation between corruption and protest via a process of assimilation by the advertising system, transforms our 'collusion in oppression' in a non-voluntary collusion. We were supposed to be using this collusion as an alternative self-harming mechanism, a sort of blaming game that made us at least a player in our own lives. For example, artists know that they play a role in gentrification, yet, it's inherent in the artists' nature and especially if an emerging artist, to occupy, transform, make it

appealing, cultural to some extent. Artists have the option of living in blank small spaces, and not participate in the growth and inflation of central areas by keeping central areas central. In simple terms, the expansion of the centre of cities (and consequent inflation, which consequently puts artists out of pocket) into more peripheral areas is due to the very nature of being an artist. The collusion in oppression lays in that this cycle leads to eviction, therefore oppression, but is a testimony of the fact that artists still play a role in it.

14. 'By contrast with their forebears in the 1960s and 1970s, British students today appear to be politically disengaged. While French students can still be found on the streets protesting against neoliberalism, British students, whose situation is incomparably worse, seem resigned to their fate. But this, I want to argue, is a matter not of apathy, nor of cynicism, but of *reflexive impotence*. They know things are bad, but more than that, they know they can't do anything about it. But that 'knowledge', that reflexivity, is not a passive observation of an already existing state of affairs. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy.' (Fisher (2009 p. 27))

15. On talking about society's acceptance of neo-liberalism: 'No law forced them to put up with duties and dependence. Obligations became internalised and social control was exercised through a voluntary albeit inevitable subjugation to chains of automatisms.' (Berardi (2011 p.26)) He further adds that 'dystopia: [is] the disappearance of the human, or perhaps the submission of the human to the chain of techno-linguistic automatisms.' (Berardi (2011 p.41), which supports and links Graeber's thoughts on bureaucracy that I will address at a later stage.

16. Lijster (2013, p. 39)

17. Buthler, R., (2016)

18. Evans (2005 p.127)

19. Evans (2015 p.11)

20. Berardi (2011 p. 17)

21. By utopia I mean: 'an imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect.'
By dystopia I mean: 'an imagined place or state in which everything is unpleasant or bad,
typically a totalitarian or environmentally degraded one.' Via Oxford English Dictionary

22. 'But I also want to argue that the inability to accumulate through expanded
reproduction on a sustained basis has been paralleled by a rise in attempts to accumulate
by [geographical] dispossession. This, I then conclude, is the hallmark of what some like to
call 'the new imperialism' is about.' (Harvey (2004 p.64))

23. 'Many of the teenagers I worked with had mental health problems or learning
difficulties. Depression is endemic. It is the condition most dealt with by the National
Health Service, and is afflicting people at increasingly younger ages. The number of
students who have some variant of dyslexia is astonishing. It is not an exaggeration to say
that being a teenager in late capitalist Britain is now close to being reclassified as a
sickness. This pathologization already forecloses any possibility of politicization. By
privatizing these problems - treating them as if they were caused only by chemical
imbalances in the individual's neurology and/or by their family background – any question
of social systemic causation is ruled out.' (Fisher (2009 p.21))

24. This is a valid Aristotelean syllogism.

25. Fisher (2009 p.24)

26. Hayhurst (2016) quoting Szolucha (2015)

27. 'All (...) rebellions first and foremost against bureaucratic authority (...) saw
bureaucratic authority as fundamentally stifling of the human spirit, of creativity,
conviviality, imagination. The famous slogan "All power to the imagination" painted on
the walls of the Sorbonne (...) seems to embody something fundamental, not just to the
spirit of sixties rebellion, but to the very essence of what we have come to call "the Left."
(Graeber (2015)) He continues on to explain how this assumption – how we see the Left - is
actually a delusion.

28. *Utopia by Design* was the title of the first edition of the London Design Biennale, Somerset House, in September 2016. It was part of a year long programme that celebrated Thomas More's publishing of *Utopia*.

29. Turner (2016 p.14)

30. *ibid*

31. Global Challenges Foundation (2016)

II - Subversion of bureaucracy and activism: how public art is key to the education of criticism.

1. Jelinek (2013, p. 54)

2. Gamboni (1997, p. 121)

3. Jelinek (2013, p. 67)

4. Graeber (2015, p.146)

5. Funding was discontinued on the basis that the 'APG is more concerned with Social Engineering than with pure art'. (Steveni (2004))

6. On censorship of APG's work the article reads:

'If, unlike Atkinson and Rickaby, one's work isn't an object but a concept embodied in the process, and with a body of experience as to how it is properly expressed, then one is open to 'The treatment.' (Latham, J., 'Censoring a concept' in *Art Monthly*, September 1979, in Ligatus/UAL (2016))

On destruction of art works:

Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* was an example of this in the USA, by the NEA, having his piece removed because the 'manifesto' of the NEA shifted the emphasis of public art to 'viewer-friendly' public art. (Gamboni, (1999 p. 162)) The commission was executed in 1979 and after legal disputes started in 1985, a jury on trial voted for its removal in 1989.

7. Steveni (2004)

Barbara Steveni negotiated in 1972 with the Civil Service Department for artist placements be carried out, and Roger Coward with Gavin Brown, Roland Lewis, Evadne Stevens, Frances Viner worked at the Department of the Environment in 1975; Ian Breakwell was placed in the Department of Health and Social Security in 1976; Nick Alderton, Ian Breakwell, Hugh Davies, Bill Furlong, Mick Kemp, Rowan Matthews, Carmel Sammons and David Toop were placed in the Department of Health and Social Security between 1978–1979. (Kunstraum Kreuzberg (2016))

8. In strengthening my view, in a small survey I started running in June 2016, out of 46 people when asked about issue based art, 48% said ‘more art should be more meaningful in everyone’s lives not just for artists’, 33% said ‘should be seen in public areas to reach out for the most amount of people possible’ and 30% said ‘should be everywhere indoors and outdoors’. These were the highest 3 answers out of a choice of 10 answers. (Ferreira (2016 ongoing))

9. ‘Unrealised 1997-2002’ exhibition at Nylon Gallery. The exhibition also hosted a forum which included discussion on the implications of critical public dialogue be hosted in a commercial gallery. These juxtapositions are typical of their work and Roberts describes this in his essay: ‘It’s a way of making what is done in the name of public art generate something *more* than its good name. It’s a way of returning art to its possible extra-institutional identity as a kind of social irritant, that – in fact – rejects the very idea of public art’s good name.’ (Roberts (2009, p. 16)).

10. The BBC launched an investigation on child labour and the chocolate industry:

‘Panorama also found that there is no guarantee, despite safeguards, even with chocolate marketed as Fairtrade, that child labour - as defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) - has not been involved in the supply chain.’

Cadbury is mentioned many times throughout the article, and lots of coincidental evidence is presented, however, it is necessary to mention that the author was reluctant in pinpointing specifically if Cadbury had been involved in child labour: ‘The end buyer of Kenyon's child labour beans was one of the world's biggest exporters who in turn sells it on to several well known High Street names.’ (BBC (2010))

11. Evans (2015 pp. 48, 49)

12. Cross, Personal interview, 30th June 2016

13. Exhibitions like 'Neoliberal Lulz' at Carroll/Fletcher trivialize criticism to the system, making it in yet another trend, voiding the seriousness of the 'anti' discourse. In particular, the work of collaborative duo Émilie Brout & Maxime Marion, *Untitled SAS* (2015) which consisted of the certificate of the incorporation of their company, which 10 000 shares are available on the stock market. Following Carroll/Fletcher's press release, 'the value of a work of art resides in its cultural capital, and in the ability of invested parties to manipulate it to their will.' (Carroll/Fletcher (2016)). The lines between cultural capital and financial capital are joined and blurred to the advantage of the capitalist system and this is prejudicial to both criticism and reading.

14. Cross, Personal interview, 30th June 2016

15. Cross, Personal interview, 30th June 2016

16. Ligatus/UAL (2016)

17. Berardi (2011 p.54)

18. One of Baudrillard's theories relates to illusion and reality (Baudrillard (2005 pp. 31-38)) Berardi elaborates on it (Berardi (2011 pp. 105-106)), and what I mean by simulacrum is a convergence of both thinkers' thought: reality is of no metaphysical nature but when we consider utopia, we consider aspects that are more abstract, we reason upon our reality as if looking at it from the outside: *meta physic*. Simulacrum is like a meta-reality, but based on the absence of truth. It came to be this way due to the hyper-complexity that our reality entails. We no longer know what's true, so we have images portrayed to represent the truth, and those are the simulacrum, a meta-reality in which there is a lack of belief from our part.

In visual terms it has some parallels with Magritte's *C'est ci ne pas un pipe*. It's a picture of a picture of a picture (and so on) of an object: we end up not remembering what the physical

features of that object was, how heavy it was, what it smelled of; it's so obfuscated but we cannot deny that we can see the object.

In the context of the Paris Agreement, the simulacrum effect, in my view, takes place in the sense that there is a lack of belief that it actually is going to be enforced. The fossil fuel industry's power is the reality. The meta-reality is the scientific proof for climate change, being the representation of it the Paris Agreement – however, we are being given this as our reality: the simulacrum effect. At this point we are already distanced from the fossil fuel industry and no longer grasping its power as governments want us to believe they are taking measures.

19. UK licences for fracking open for application increased from 27 in August 2015 to 159 due to be finalized on the 26th October (Crown, (2016))

Portuguese licenses increased from 1 in 2010 to 14 in 2015, of which the public only learned about in May 2016 (Algarve Surf and Marine Activities Association, (2016))

Even though Chevron abandoned fracking in Romania, I visited the Danube's Delta in August 2016, and I personally met a BP worker who said BP is drilling in the same region – Tulcea - that caused the successful protests in 2011. He did not give into politics, he kept saying that he was happy to get 1 000€ per month. It looked like he was ashamed of working there. I have tried to research this further but I haven't been able to gather any written evidence of BP's current drilling.

The UK, Portugal, Romania are contrary examples to what Nelsen (2016b) writes about, being the overall European trend to refrain from fracking.

20. 'One spectre haunting the summit though was the prospect of a victory for the climate-sceptic Republican candidate, Donald Trump, in US elections later this year.

EU sources say that the bloc would aim to stick to its climate commitments if that happened. One told the Guardian: "It can't be indefinite but our initial reaction would be to try to lead others in anticipation that this was a temporary aberration in US politics and that common sense would prevail, whether in four years time or sooner." (Nelsen (2016))

This is interpretative, but 'would aim' and 'try to lead' don't sound certain.

21 – Evans (2015 p. III)

22. Evans (2015) extensively documents occasions of censorship at all sorts of levels affecting all kinds of relationships at Tate (pp.103-122) and of when institutions weren't able to respond to criticism, avoiding a political dialogue. I have witnessed this myself, for instance, at Copperfield Gallery, during the occasion of Marco Goddoy's exhibition *Europe* which PR statement had: 'The exhibition is certainly critical of the EU project, but as Godoy stresses 'you have to be in it to change it' (Copperfield Gallery (2006)), but when I confronted the gallery assistant about the gallery's support of Goddoy's stance, she deviated the conversation. When pressured once again she said 'it's just an exhibition'.

23. Evans (2015 p. 116)

24. Evans (2015 p. 120)

Conclusion

I - Cross, Personal interview, 30th June 2016

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