

GROUP-WORK 2.8 [Removed from Publication]

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“A SINGLE PRODUCT”: SOME PASSAGES”

NORMAN L. RICE, *100 YEARS 100 ARTISTS*, 1979

In the end, an art school has a single product—its students.

JORDAN KANTOR, “BACK TO SCHOOL,” *ARTFORUM*, MARCH 2007

...Although art schools inevitably come with their own administrative baggage, the built-in criticality of context and the curricular nimbleness that an educational situation provides seems both well adapted to a burgeoning generation of artists and exciting for those interested in helping facilitate the newest art. As sites where creation, argumentation, production, and, increasingly, even display all come together, art schools provide conditions for risk-taking and research that museums, catering to ever-broader constituencies, have difficulty matching... As [Okwui] Enwezor gushed, even if tongue in cheek, “If there is such a thing as utopia, education may well be the last utopia.”

Of course, only time will tell if this “utopia” is sustainable and if those going there will find what they seek. Surely art schools are susceptible to most of the same pressures that have transformed museum culture. Indeed, many art schools are already migrating toward a model in which they have to demonstrate tangible benefits for spiraling tuition costs...

DIEDERICH DIEDERICHSEN, *ON (SURPLUS) VALUE IN ART*, 2009

In the United States and other neoliberal areas of the world, financing this general component of labor that is socially necessary for the production of art had become the responsibility of artists themselves, who take out loans to pay their way through school and, as it were, invest the income they will only receive later into their prior education. In this sense, artists are entrepreneurs who pursue their own material interest and later that of others.

[...]

[Artists create surplus value] to the extent that, as self-employed cultural workers, they are able to take unpaid extra time and often informal extra knowledge away from other daily activities—some of which are economic and essential for survival—and invest them in the conception, development, and production of artworks. The more of this extra time is invested the better... The more they develop a type of artwork that calls for them to be present as continuously as possible, often in a performance capacity, the larger amount of [surplus value] they create—even if that value cannot always be automatically realized in the form of a corresponding price. A model like this may elicit the objection that the two kinds of capital involved are merely components of a single person, so that the exploiter and exploited are one and the same...

JASPER BERNES, “GLOSSARY,” *WE HAVE AS MUCH TIME AS IT TAKES*, 2010

EXHIBITION: It has to do with lighting, or clearing, or conductive materials. Between the remainders and the places, an arrangement of excitations and inhibitions, roadblocks and accelerators, checkpoints and exceptions. You get people to see stuff by quieting everything else. In this sense, it might be more fitting to call each exhibition an inhibition—of dailiness, of need, of the mercenary relationship to matter and memory and friendship. We often like it when the background overruns the foreground.

[...]

SCHOOL: Learning can take place anywhere, but school is sort of special. School is a righteous geometry of chairs, bodies, hallways. School is a serialization; a dispersal of the crowd into first, second, third. It's mostly involuntary, this knowledge, habit, instinct, above which the philosophical imaginary makes little clicking noises that turn out to be a problem with your bones like having to go to work forever. You eat what you are.

ART & LANGUAGE, *HOSTAGES XXIV & XXV*, 1989

There might be a picture of a place where a certain confusion is systematically suppressed; a place where a minor pragmatic violence is sustained by a trivial mechanism of fear. It is a place where Humpty Dumpty has the power of small adjustments in his métier. It is a place of contrivance and factitiousness, an unimportant enemy of public safety. For some reason it is an important place of celebration and display. It is also a place where inundation is ruled out by protocol.

There might be a scripture of a space in which a certain contusion is symptomatically compressed; a face where a minute prophylactic valance is ordained by a tribal mercantilism of fear. It is a place where Humpty Dumpty has the flower of small adjournments in his entrée. It is a grace of connivance and facetiousness, an omnipotent enemy of polemic safety. For some season it is an impotent face of acceleration and dismay. It is also a chase where commendation is ruled out by parasol.

RESEARCH AND DESTROY, "COMMUNIQUÉ FROM AN ABSENT FUTURE," PAMPHLET, 2009

We [students] work and borrow in order to work and to borrow. And the jobs we work toward are the jobs we already have. Close to three-quarters of students work while in school, many full-time; for most, the level of employment we obtain as students is the same that awaits after graduation. Meanwhile what we acquire isn't education; it's debt. We work to make money we've already spent, and our future labor has been sold on the worst market around. [Average student loan debt rose 20 percent in the first five years of the twenty-first century—80 to 100 percent for students of color. Student loan volume—a figure inversely proportional to state funding for education—rose by nearly 800 percent from 1977 to 2003.] What our borrowed tuition buys is the privilege of making monthly payments for the rest of our lives. What we learn is the choreography of credit: you can't walk to class without being offered another piece of plastic charging 20 percent interest...

[...]

Education is a commodity like everything else we want without caring for. It is a thing and it makes its purchasers into things. One's future position in the system, one's relation to others, is purchased first with money and then with the demonstration of obedience. First we pay, then we "work hard." And there is the split: one is both the commander and the commanded, consumer and the consumed.

ART & LANGUAGE, "PENNY CAPITALISTS," 1976

The careless purveyors of high culture are presented with clear alternatives. One of them is finally to be fixed as the harmless class, the dangerous harmless class, the social and historical scum; for the most part the bribed flunkey (tool) of reactionary intrigue, the worst of all possible allies, absolutely venal and absolutely cunning, a wholly indefinite disintegrated mass thrown here and there, rich and poor, offal, organ-grinders, rag-pickers, mountebanks... the helpless dregs who turn circles between suicide and a tedious madness, incapable of the uncritical violence which is their true heritage; a plague zone that can't be cleansed by the plague.

Or they can realize they are incapable of 'governing' themselves, struggle to reach, and to restore to themselves a social and historical base, recognize that they can seldom find their way around the countryside, recognize that they are a non-working, not-working class—penny capitalists—and ask themselves what this means: become people in process.

DANA DEGIULIO, SYLLABUS FOR "SOPHOMORE SEMINAR: WHAT IS CALLED THINKING?"
SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, SPRING 2012

Stupid pupil, it has to take everything in.

You have enrolled in this seminar. Heidegger abandoned philosophy for thinking, for *methodos* (the path), he makes a distinction between "the one-sided view, which nowhere pays attention any longer to the essence of things, (that) has puffed itself up into an all-sidedness which is in turn masked so as to look harmless and natural," and affective examined demanding strategies for inquiry (:an examined life governed by an apparatus of testing, of exuberance, of joy). By this latter mechanism, we will examine our historical moment, and our circumstances as artists, as participants in the institution. We will ask questions about expression, about the gift and the demand, about political and metaphysical will. We will examine the joke to try and figure out why we are laughing. We will retain our intellectual flexibility. We acknowledge fundamentally that the body is an intelligent apparatus. We're talking *Dasein* here, plus coping strategy: the task of painting and its attendant discourses as preoccupied with this, as in, "siege laid again to the impregnable without. Eye and hand fevering after the unself. By the hand it unceasingly changes the eye unceasingly changed. Back and forth the gaze beating against unseeable and unmakeable. Truce for a space and the marks of what it is to be and be in face of" (Beckett). The point of understanding what's happening is so that you are not complicit in your own subjugation without understanding the terms. We will talk about language and gesture and how to give what you want. I will use all resources at my disposal—intellectual, psychological, emotional, etc.—to get us somewhere, and I expect you to do the same. This class is about what you need, what we think you need. All done in the spirit of inquiry.

BRIAN HOLMES, RESPONSE TO ANARCHISTNEWS.ORG'S "COMMUNIQUÉ FROM AN
ABSENT FUTURE: FURTHER DISCUSSION," 2009

To address students as revolutionaries is to address them as equals, right now not later.