NETWORKED
Rethinking Oppositions in Art, Hacktivism and Business

Exhibition catalogue

Škuc Gallery, Ljubljana
11 March–3 April 2015

MMSU – Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rijeka
23 April–14 May 2015
Tatiana Bazzichelli

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This research reflects on the status of activist, hacker and artistic practices in the new generation of social media, analysing the interferences between networking participation and disruptive business innovation. The main objective is to rethink the meaning of critical practices in art, hacktivism and social networking, analysing them through business instead of in opposition to it. The increasing commercialisation of sharing and networking contexts and the key innovatory role of the open source community in the development of centrally controlled client-server web applications have changed the scenario of participatory culture and brought hacktivist and artistic strategies into question within the framework of net culture. In the context underground artistic movements and that of digital culture, the concept of networking has been used to describe collective practices based on the principles of exchange and equal one-to-one collaboration. Participation, interaction and collaboration have been the conceptual starting points for much art of the 20th century, from Dadaism to Fluxus, from mail art to hacker art. However, since the emergence of Web 2.0, networking has become not only an everyday practice, but also a pervasive business strategy.

The economical framework of the Internet bubble 2.0 has been generating new contradictions and paradoxes, in which, on the one hand, we find the development of a critical vocabulary and practices highlighting the exploitation of networking and the cooptation of peer2peer culture from post-Web 2.0 companies; while on the other, we face incremental opportunities for sharing and for social contacts between a large number of Internet users, who are producing a huge mass of Internet content without necessarily being technology experts. Many technology start-ups have adopted business strategies for generating revenues, formulating a rhetoric of flexibility, decentralisation, openness, sociability and do-it-yourself. Internet entrepreneurs have adopted in different contexts, and for other purposes, similar values to those which characterised the emergence of hacker culture and net culture over the past decades. Alongside this phenomenon, many hackers and developers who contributed to the rise of the hacker culture and open source movement in the 1980s and 1990s have been employed...
by communication technology corporations, especially in the US, and more particularly, in the Bay Area. The opposition to a communications monopoly and capitalist mindset expressed by many members of the underground digital culture over the past years has reached a state of paradox whereby those involved in opposition are also those being opposed. Such *coincidentia oppositorum* (or unity of oppositions) also mirrors the crisis of encompassing political ideologies and confrontational activist strategies in Western countries. Since, as the Greek philosopher Heraclitus stated, “the road up and the road down are the same thing” (Hippolytus, Refutations 9.10.3), this begs the question as to whether the dualistic conflict between capitalism and anti-capitalism should be considered a path to provoke social change.

The departure point for this research is the assumption that, on the one hand, networking grassroots communities of hackers and artists have served to accelerate capitalism since the emergence of digital culture and cyber-utopias; on the other hand, they have also served to strengthen antagonism against it, by generating critical artistic practices and hacktivist interventions based on technologies and methodologies of sharing and networking. Such mutual disruption and coexisting oppositions between art, business and networking show how hackers and artists have been both active agents of business innovation as well as those undermining it. By identifying the emerging contradictions within the current economical and political framework of informational capitalism, the hypothesis of this research is a reformulation of the concept of criticism in art, hacktivism and in the business of social networking. The purpose of this investigation is to analyse hacker and artistic practices *through business*, therefore suggesting a coexistence of layers rather than a process of oppositional negations1.

The aim is not to create a historical or philosophical analysis of social and artistic practices, but to reflect on different modalities of

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1 Such an idea of “layering” rather than cooptation, was proposed by Fred Turner in the lecture “The Bohemian Factory: Burning Man, Google and the Countercultural Ethos of New Media Manufacturing”, University of California, Irvine, School of Humanities, 23 April 2009, while discussing his opinions on the social phenomenon of Burning Man and its contribution in sustaining new media industries.
generating criticism, shedding light on contradictions and ambiguities both in capitalistic logic and in art and hacktivist strategies, while rethinking oppositional practices in the context of social networking. The notion of disruptive business becomes a means for describing immanent practices of hackers, artists, networkers and entrepreneurs, which are analysed through specific case studies in the book *Networked Disruption* (Bazzichelli, 2013). Such case studies shed light on two different but related critical scenes: that of Californian tech culture and that of European net culture – with a specific focus on their multiple approaches towards business and political antagonism. Within the framework of this analysis, “business” is not analysed from a business school perspective, but as a means towards working consciously on artistic, political and technological practices. The model of analysis as proposed here could be visualised as follows: hackers, activists and artists focus on social networking with a critical dimension, creating an intertwined feedback loop between art, business entrepreneurship and methodologies of disruption, as can be seen in the picture below:

The phenomenon whereby the development of business proceeds alongside a reformulation of radical practices is nothing new: the rise of cyberculture and hacker culture during the 1960s in California is a clear example of this, as has been described by Fred Turner in his research. A new coexistence of oppositions influencing each other is coming to the force again within the framework of post-Web 2.0. Artists and hackers use disruptive techniques of networking in the framework of social media and web-based services to generate new modalities for using technology, which, in some cases, are unpredictable and critical; business enterprises apply disruption as a form of innovation to
create new markets and network values, which are also often unpredictable. Disruption therefore becomes a two-way strategy in networking contexts: a practice for generating criticism and a methodology for creating business innovation. The history of cyberculture and of the post-Web 2.0 era demonstrates that opposites co-substantiate one another and often become a symbiotic necessity for each other’s continued existence: in many cases, hackers, activists and business entrepreneurs are part of the same unity. Is it still meaningful to consider hacktivism as a radical criticism of a system, when hackers have contributed to its creation and its strengthening? And, if capitalism and what was once called “counterculture” share similar rhetoric and strategies, is it possible to imagine alternatives to the current state of capitalism?

My intention is to propose an additional layer to this analysis: to investigate artistic and hacker interventions that create business disruption as an art practice. Since contradictions and dichotomies are nowadays inherent in business logic, the challenge lies in the exploration of symbolic dissolutions of power, where hackers and artists directly perform such contradictions and provoke unexpected consequences as an art form. The Art of Disrupting Business is a possible path towards investigating the deconstruction of power structures through experiencing them from within, exposing the contradictions of business logic and appropriating it both critically and ironically. Rather than trying to resolve the overall contradictions in the economical and political framework of the networked economy, the artists and hackers at the core of my analysis empathise with them, their field of experimentation being the mutual disruption between hacking, business and distributed methodologies of networking. The concept of disrupting business in social media sheds light on the practices of artists, activists and hackers who are rethinking critical interventions in the field of art and technology, accepting that they must act inside the market scenario, while also deconstructing it. Challenging the market does not mean refuting it, but transforming it into a “playground”, both to appropriate it and expose its incongruities.

How is disruption in this perspective different from classical methodologies of conflict and antagonism? Starting from the
assumption that to understand capitalism today is equivalent to being conscious of it as a concrete unity of opposed determinations (for example, hacktivism and business), the goal is not to frontally oppose the adversaries, but to trick them by “becoming them”, embodying disruptive and ironic camouflages. Bypassing the classic power/counter-power strategy, which often results in aggressive interventions that replicate competitiveness and the violence of capitalism itself, to apply disruption as an art form means to imagine alternative routes based on the art of staging paradoxes and juxtapositions. Disruption becomes a means for a new form of criticism. Beyond the concept of coexistence of oppositions as dualistic tension between two forces, and the idea that one of the opposed conditions will prevail over the other, my analysis focuses on the mutual interference of multiple layers. Instead of dualistic tension, the challenge is to analyse holes in the system in which one-to-one oppositions are loosened up into distributed infiltrations. This does not mean that oppositions disappear completely, but that they become multiple, mutual, viral and distributed — as the many nodes of a network.

The departure point for my research is the following question: what happens when the coexistence of oppositions, in art, hacktivism and the business of social networking, becomes a layer of mutual interferences? The analysis of the mutual feedback loop between hackers, artists and business in the nodes of social networks, implies rethinking cooptation as a process so as to understand social change as well. Analysing artistic practices in the framework of social media implies an acknowledgement of the fascinations of consumerist goods and the consequent strategies of being constructive and destructive at the same time, to innovate business by criticising it. To investigate the progressive commercialisation of sharing and networking platforms, it is necessary to understand business culture from within. Artists become viruses, working empathically with the subject of intervention. They disrupt the machine by performing it.

Drawing on Walter Benjamin’s notion of the dialectical image, I propose to adopt a vision of dialectics in which the oppositions remain open, without generating encompassing synthesis, but are transformed
into heterogeneous and distributed practices. The aim is to generate a polyphonic dialectic in which pluralities of approaches coexist. My hypothesis is that the concept of dialectics has to be reframed in the context of disruption, where disruption does not mean rupture, but acting in ways that the market does not expect, generating innovations from within the confines of business logic. The dialectical tension between business and opposition to it therefore shifts in a synergetic opposition where one is part of the other, and they mutually contribute to shaping each other. This does not mean dismissing dialectics altogether, but framing them in a perspective which instead of emphasising the symmetric tension “Either/Or”, shows the contradictory paradoxes of “Both/And” (as Marshall Berman suggests in his 1982 book *All That Is Solid Melts into Air*). Furthermore, adopting a perspective of “Both/And” means opening up to possible heterogeneous and distributed interventions, all of which together contribute to a shaping, or at least to an imagining of social change.

The dialectical perspective of Walter Benjamin, which he described as ‘dialectics at a standstill’ (*The Arcade Project*, p. 463, N3, 1) proposes a construction of history where the past and present interlock (as exemplified by Benjamin’s figure of the *Angelus Novus*), and where the signs of modernity emerge from a crystallisation of progress which dissipates the illusion of continuity in history. This view of history as an interruption of time, where past, present and future coexist forming a dialectical image, calls for an understating of the present condition as a phase of crystallisation. The concept of dialectical image is used in the present research to imagine processes of de-crystallisation of singularities in a phase of crisis. As a metaphor for a phase of *impasse* in which the opposites coincide to create a frozen blockade, the de-crystallisation comes from inside, by performing the system’s contradictions and understanding its logic.

In this stage of crystallisation, normalisation tends to embrace disruption and make it a form of stasis, as pointed out by Franco Berardi describing the present era of informational capitalism, where critical ideas are subsumed by repetition, automatism and hyper-velocity, and by Claudia Mongini, describing the precarious crystallisation of critical and
creative forces in contemporary society. As Claudia Mongini points out, trapped in a vortex of acceleration, the collective brain reaches a point of stasis, where the opposites of zero- and hypervelocity meet, preventing the creative formation of any critical idea. Inspired by the analysis of morphogenesis in the book *Run: forma, vita, ricombinazione* (2008) by Franco Berardi and Alessandro Sarti, where social morphogenesis is seen as a process of de-crystallisation of the financial state of the world, I propose the hypothesis of disruption as an immanent tension that emerges from within the crystallised systems. In my analysis, art intertwines with disruption beyond symmetric oppositions or radical ruptures, leading to a discovery of a subliminal and distributed strategy, which grows from within the capitalistic structure.

A possible path is to adopt business logic to “experience” them, by generating new forms of criticism. The challenge is to create disruption by creating innovation; to create paradoxes, pranks and tricks, and to discover decentralised holes in the system. Morphogenesis is born within the system and by recombining its rules, acting as chameleons which absorb the logic of the system and recombine them by finding the weaknesses within that logic. The suggestion of this thesis is to exit from the scheme of power/contra power, implying that one of the pairs of opposites is stronger or better than the other. Rather, a possible vision implies a process of contamination and interference, where business is performed from within. Drawing on Walter Benjamin’s approach of *flânerie* — from his writings on Baudelaire — the direct experience of the fascination of goods becomes a method of understanding the consumerist culture from within, and thus of critically performing it.

My research *Networked Disruption* (DARC, Aarhus University, 2013) develops through the analysis of different conceptual nodes of a network, connecting together disruptive practices of networked art and hacking in the framework of a network economy. These practices of artists, hackers and activists have been discovered through personal acts of networking; therefore my analysis contains both an internal perspective (since I myself have been part of the network of net and hacker culture since the end of the 1990s) and a meta-reflection on the
research subject itself. This method, which I define as ethnography of networks, takes inspiration from a critique of ethnography, and aims to actualise — and to question — the notion of “fieldwork” itself. My methodology proposes to create a montage of transnational practices, a networkscape, adopting the suffix “-scape”, which Arjun Appadurai used in 1996 to describe transnational technological, financial, media, social and political configurations. In this research, art and hacker practices cross space and time, linked by the scope of investigating the mutual tensions between hacktivism, art and business in the context of social networking. Hackers, activists and artists in California (especially in the Bay Area) are intertwined with European ones, offering different perspectives on the subjects of hacktivism, business and social networking. The method is based on the reformulation of a research approach that works within the subject of research, rather than on the subject of research.

Drawing on Walter Benjamin’s montage method, the anthropologist Massimo Canevacci suggests a polyphonic and experimental mixed-media research approach, underlining that form and contents are strictly intertwined, and that there is a strict correlation between text and fieldwork. Similarly, in the context of this research, by describing the practices of hackers and artists who work within business, I propose to approach the research subject by working within it. While conducting research on distributed networks, I trace a network of actors who directly engage with hacktivism, art and social networking. Inspired by the reflections of Massimo Canevacci on the correspondence between Walter Benjamin and Theodor W. Adorno (dated November–December 1938), and in particular by the concept of astonished facticity, I reflect on the role of the researcher who abandons the use of theoretical “mediation” to approach the research subjects by engaging directly with them. The lack of theoretical “mediation”, and “the wide-eyed presentation of mere facts”, was the strong criticism made by Adorno to Benjamin after reading his essay on Baudelaire, which he planned to publish in the Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung. However, as Massimo Canevacci points out, the “astonished dialectic”, and the concept of empathy (Einfühlung) with
the commodities as proposed by Walter Benjamin, rather than the negative dialectic used by Adorno, constitute the basis for a deep methodological change. In the analysis of the modern metropolis — and today of the networked info-sphere — the focus shifts from alienation to empathy, and from production to consumption. The central role of the social factory and the mechanisms of production are substituted by the role of consumerist culture and its simulacra of fascination. And in this context, the concept of “mediation” — and I would add, of cooptation — must be rethought.

My method of research comes from the idea of “montage”, inspired from Benjamin’s writing style of *Denkbilder* (thought-images), and from its constellation of fragments and archival sources assembled in the *Arcades Project*. If a social and cultural critique has to be carried out both theoretically and practically, the analysis of cultural and social practices implies the involvement of the researcher in the practice of research itself. Therefore, the research method has to fill the gap between theory and practice. Drawing on the perspectives of the anthropologists James Clifford and George E. Marcus in *Writing Culture* (1986) and on much of the experimental ethnographic tradition, it becomes necessary to formulate a research methodology that reflects on techniques and methods of visualisation and narration. Therefore, as Canevacci argues, it is not only necessary to address decentralised and polyphonic viewpoints towards innovative areas of writing, but to extend the lines of research to the mixed-media of visual communication.

Following on from this suggestion, my research proposes a non-linear approach, both in its content and form. The process of investigation led me to link multiple perspectives and practices, crossing national boundaries and disciplines. At the same time, the convergence of business, art and hacktivism became key to unleashing a contradictory phenomenon such as that of social networking. The network of relations behind my research analysis was crucial for developing the research itself. Decentralised and plural viewpoints become both part of the theory and practice, connecting hackers, activists and business entrepreneurs involved in Californian digital culture (especially in the Bay Area) and hackers and artists active in the European network.
culture. The choice of projects and artworks did not follow classical sociological methodologies, but was based on the development of a method, *the art of networking*, which I had already tested in my previous research on the hacktivist and underground art scene in Italy (which I published in the book: *Networking: The Net as Artwork*, Costa & Nolan, 2006). Some of the people I approached had already collaborated with me in the course of the previous research, and other members involved in the hacker and net culture scene suggested to me new contacts according to my research objectives. During my visiting scholarship at Stanford University in 2009, I collected a body of audio material by interviewing hackers, artists and free thinkers based around San Francisco and the Silicon Valley. The transcription of the interviews amounted to over a hundred pages and it has been crucial for gaining an understanding of the overall research subject. The result was to experiment with a methodological practice in which the theoretical point of view of the researcher was closely linked with the act of performing the research subject itself, involving the actors directly in the development of the analysis.

To sort out the different effects of networking art and hacking in the business of social media, I examined their development and influence on a cross-national scale, creating a constellation of examples combining different attitudes and models of disruption between USA and Europe. In California, a libertarian attitude towards technology does not necessarily clash with business strategies, while the approach of European network culture is usually related to media criticism and political antagonism. However, such a dichotomy is a theoretical simplification. The presence of radical anarchic and libertarian traditions in the American counterculture deeply influenced some of the European underground media and off-media experimental subcultures. The critique of the idea of hegemony has proven a common ground for these practices, and this hypothesis also explains why counterculture and liberal economy in the US have often been intertwined. However, the fact that many Californian hackers and activists refute “the political” does not necessarily imply a lack of political awareness and criticism towards the establishment.
Many underground artistic and hacker communities and networks in California have worked towards the creation of independent contexts for sharing and exchange, both in the artistic and in the technological field of intervention: the role of the Community Memory Project, the Suicide Club, the Cacophony Society, the Church of the SubGenius and of the early Burning Man festival are clear examples of this. In this respect, the concept of social networking is nothing new. Social networks have existed since the 1960s both in the US and in Europe, both as underground movements and as decentralised artistic practices, but also in the realm of cyberculture. However, many interesting contradictions arise. As Fred Turner points out in his book *From Counterculture to Cyberculture* (2006), since the rise of cyberculture (and even before that, within the framework of cybernetics), the idea of creating decentralised systems of interaction and mutual feedback, plus the image of an ideal anti-authoritarian society, has been central in the development of information technology and computing in industrial and business laboratories. In California corporations like Google are among the main sources of employment for hackers and geeks; Google and Microsoft sponsor newborn hackerspaces, and the renowned Burning Man festival has become a strategic platform to feed new media industries and, nowadays, post-Web 2.0 media production.

Running in parallel to this, the current meaning of openness, and the rhetoric of decentralisation, freedom and exchange in social media, cannot be fully understood without tracing back the practice of networking in the hacker and underground artistic contexts over the past decades. Here, I analyse the roots of social networking based on both analogue and digital networked art, showing that the current artistic challenge of the post-Web 2.0 platforms lies in the invention of new courses of action, new content and new technologies developed by grassroots communities. The objective is to investigate how networking practices in grassroots communities are able to change the model of production for Internet content and artistic creations, connecting the development of hacker ethics with the creation of social media and Web 2.0. With a conscious use of technology, it is possible to activate
an open process of creation, producing new models of technological and cultural intervention. It is central to investigate the meaning of social networking over the past decades so as to be able to understand the phenomenon today. In my analysis, social networking is seen as a practice of community creation, towards the imagination of common spaces of intervention — and identity identification — where symbols, myths and memes are shared. To analyse social networking as a practice of collectively developing shared symbols and mythologies, I describe the genesis and the creation of a number of grassroots artistic networks between the 1980s and the 1990s, across both Europe and the US. A common thread connects the network of mail art, Neoism, Luther Blissett, the Church of the SubGenius and in the post-Web 2.0 era, the Anna Adamolo experience and the Anonymous entity.

Drawing on the concept of moral order in recursive publics formulated in the book *Two Bits: The Cultural Significance of Free Software* (2008) by Christopher M. Kelty, I analyse the consequences of disruptive dynamics both in so-called underground artistic networks and in the business context of the digital economy. Inverting the notion proposed by Kelty of moral order in a grassroots community as a cohesive social imaginary, to that of a/moral dis/order, my intention is to highlight how the vulnerability and amorality of networking dynamics in collaborative networks becomes an opportunity for a critical understanding of contemporary info-capitalism. The challenge once again becomes to imagine possible routes for political and artistic intervention which are not based on radical clashes of opposite forces, but on the subliminal, ironic and multi-angled art of disruption. Artists and hackers adopt viral and flexible strategies, as does contemporary networking business, and by provoking contradictions, paradoxes and incongruities, business logic is détourned. Instead of the risk of being trapped in the classic dichotomy of two opposite fronts, which as I claim often feed off each other, artists and hackers generate tonal responses to the ubiquity of capitalism.

In the book *Networked Disruption* I select specific examples which work on the concept of disruption rather than opposition. In the anti-hierarchical one-to-one collaboration network of mail art, in the
speculation and multiple-perspective of the Neoist network, in Luther Blissett’s multiple use of a single name, in the “conspiracy religion” of the Church of the SubGenius, disruption becomes a challenge for the re-invention of symbolic and expressive codes. The “openness” of social networking in these cases means to share a practical underground philosophy, which works towards assembling multiple contradicting definitions of itself, operating collaborative pranks, paradoxes, plagiarism and fakes, questioning social and cultural categorisation and bureaucratic systems. I argue that such practices of disruption have been “social networks out of the box”, therefore generating viral practices, strategies of networking and “radical play”, both online and offline.

A similar disruptive attitude can be applied in the business of social networking or in the framework of Web 2.0. The case of the Anna Adamolo fictional identity demonstrates how to conceive of strategies of political and artistic criticism to apply during demonstrations and strikes that are able to represent a heterogeneous multitude of individuals, or better said, of singularities. The fictional identity, built up by a network of people with diverse backgrounds and competences, calls for a reflection on political methodology during conflicts, integrating online and offline practices. Personal and individual experiences are transferred into a collective path, reflecting on the evolution of a multiple-use name as a political practice to use in the context of strikes and demonstrations. Instead of being represented by an organisational structure, Anna Adamolo managed to become a self-representing Italian Minister of Education, University and Research in the context of the students’ and teachers’ struggles operated by the “Onda Anomala” national movement. From the end of 2008 and during 2009, Anna Adamolo served as a collective name for an unrepresentable movement, which could be adopted in the squares and in the streets by anyone who chose to do so. The use of Facebook as a strategic medium for viral communication and networking was crucial, demonstrating that social media can be manipulated in unpredictable ways by a conscious analysis of their mechanisms and technological architecture. They can be reworked from within, making them functional to political and social criticism.
We find the same idea of the un-representability of unidentified individuals, even if in a different context and through different methods, in the Anonymous entity, which I see as a strategy to generate disruption through the Internet. Building on the analysis of non-hegemonic practices and the logic of affinity by Richard J. F. Day in the book *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements* (2005), I propose an analysis of projects that challenge the notion of power and hegemony, and the battle for dominance, generating distributed, decentralised and fluid networking practices. Drawing on Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s notion of “immanence”\(^2\) and the description of the metalsmiths, Richard Day analyses libertarian and itinerant practices of activists and radical social movements which create *holey spaces of intervention*. To formulate such a concept, he refers to the scene of the silent film *Strike* (1925) by Sergei M. Eisenstein, previously used as a metaphor by Deleuze and Guattari, where people rise from holes in the ground. Similarly, I apply the concept of the holey spaces to describe art and hacker interventions, which act from within the economical system, discovering its bugs and holes. They emerge from inside the capitalistic machine, acting through its cracks and interstices.

The “smiths” of the contemporary networked society must therefore be discovered among a distributed network of actors who work towards emphasising the contradictions and paradoxes in the capitalistic economy. These contradictions are embedded in the libertarian tradition of American counterculture, and emerge from the analysis of the intersection between business and an anti-hegemonic critique of the establishment. This perspective calls for a reformulation of the idea of an encapsulation of radical values by business, highlighting the mutual disruption of the hacker principles of openness and collaboration and the business logic of social networking. Exploring the business strategy of creating a large network of engaged users to produce revenue, in

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\(^2\) Deleuze and Guattari use the image of the metalworkers, or the smiths, to link the concepts of “striated spaces”, which are those controlled by society and organisation, and “smooth spaces”, those of the monads without restrictions and directives. The smiths’ lifestyle is somewhere between sedentary and nomad, as hybrid subjectivities.
my book *Networked Disruption* I draw on the analysis of the aesthetics of the masses realised by Siegfried Kracauer and of the art in the age of mechanical reproduction by Walter Benjamin. I argue that in the era of social media, we are facing a progressive aesthetisation of networking practices leading to a progressive commercialisation of web-based contexts of sharing and social relationships. Such a process is emphasised by an analysis of crowdsourcing as a networked strategy of revenue, and by the description of the Burning Man festival as a platform designed to legitimate and shape business strategies based on exchange and participation. Inspired by Fred Turner’s paper “Burning Man at Google” (2009), I propose to consider Burning Man as a metaphor of a social network in which all the participants contribute for free in the creation of a shared common, but in which the owner receives the final revenues.

I propose the notion of *The Art of Business Disruption*, suggesting possible strategies for artistic intervention, where incongruities and paradoxes can be experimented with. The challenge is to frame contradictions without resolving them through an encompassing synthesis, describing artistic and hacker projects in which disruption is expressed through the interference with business. It is possible to trace such networked disruption back to the Avant-gardes, in particular analysing the activities of the Surrealist-founded phenomenon of Mass Observation, a social research organisation founded in 1937 in Britain. Here Surrealism inspired the creation of a systematic database containing a wide range of everyday life practices, collected by a mass of observers, documenting human behaviour and social tendencies in Britain from the 1930s to the mid-1960s. Mass Observation exemplified the tension between wanting to disrupt the system from the inside, but at the same time, managing to serve the system by providing a huge quantity of personal and public data.

Referring to the analysis of the Avant-gardes undertaken by Stevphen Shukaitis in the book *Imaginal Machines* (2009) and by Franco

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3 This concept is a result of research investigation I have been conducting since 2008 within a research group of the Digital Aesthetics Research Centre of Aarhus University.
Berardi in *After the Future* (2011), I claim that the rise of practices of radical thinking and social change in the experimental art context has been a source of innovation for capitalism, and at the same time, a way of disrupting it. According to Stevphen Shukaitis, it is not possible to discuss subversion as an entity external from that of capital, and for Franco Berardi, the myth of energy (and action) during the past century has provoked a constant accumulation of goods and the acceleration of capitalism. Being aware of these conceptual tensions inherent in business logic, my suggestion is once again to play with this logic, to expose its contradictions and limits. Two case studies follow this perspective: the Facebook interventions *Seppukoo* by Les Liens Invisibles (2009) and *Face to Facebook* by Paolo Cirio and Alessandro Ludovico (2011). Both these projects, even while adopting different strategies, are a reflection on the tension between the open and closed nature of social media, stressing the limits of Facebook’s platform, and working on unpredictable consequences generated by a disruptive use of it. Simulating the functionality of the platform itself, and applying its logic to different contexts of networking and interaction, they demonstrate the vulnerability of post-Web 2.0 technologies — and the consequent enclosure provided by their infrastructures, behind an apparent facade of inclusiveness.

In conclusion, what were once marginal practices of networking in underground hacker and artistic contexts have in recent years become a core business for many post-Web 2.0 companies. The increasing commercialisation of sharing and networking contexts is transforming the meaning of art and that of business. If business is adopting hacker and artistic strategies of disruption, what is the answer given by artists and hackers working on a critical dimension of networking? The proposal of an alternative to capitalism by working within capitalistic logic is suggested by the notion of Venture Communism developed by Dmytri Kleiner and the Telekommunisten collective. In the *Telekommunist Manifesto* (2010), Dmytri Kleiner envisions the creation of a network of enterprises where people produce for the sake of social values and share the results on an equal basis, and in which the collective formulation of a commons remains a goal. To achieve this, decentralised techniques
of networking are developed through a process of self-organisation, based on peer production and the distribution of productive assets. This document, which is also an adaptation of the Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels into a Manifesto for a networked society, transforms power-oriented modalities of conflict and political thinking into distributed, autonomous and decentralised networking strategies.

In 1984, at the first Hackers’ Conference in Marin County, California, Stewart Brand said: “Information wants to be free. Information also wants to be expensive. Information wants to be free because it has become so cheap to distribute, copy, and recombine − too cheap to meter. It wants to be expensive because it can be immeasurably valuable to the recipient. That tension will not go away”\(^4\). This research proposes both to expose and to dissipate this tension through a network of multiple, distributed, playful and disruptive practices. The challenge facing the art of disruptive business becomes to rethink oppositional hacktivist and artistic strategies within the framework of social networking.


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NETWORKED

Rethinking Oppositions in Art, Hacktivism and Business
DISRUPTION

The Exhibition
The exhibition *Networked Disruption* brings together artistic and hacker interventions that apply the strategy of “disruption” to generate criticism. Based on Bazzichelli’s book *Networked Disruption: Rethinking Oppositions in Art, Hacktivism and the Business of Social Networking*\(^1\), the exhibition focuses on the mutual interferences between business and disruption, by simultaneously shedding light on the heterogeneous practices of hackers, artists, networkers, whistleblowers, activists and entrepreneurs who engage deeply with network activity. Drawing from the reflections on disruption developed in Bazzichelli’s book, in this exhibition, we adopt from business the concept of disruption and we assemble works that have emerged from within the systems. They play with the power logics of a particular system, generating virality, anonymity, semantic confusions, multiple truths and disruption.

In the business world, disruption means to introduce an innovation into the market that the market does not expect: an innovation that comes from within the market itself. Transferred into the art and activist field, disruption means to generate practices and interventions that are unexpected and play within the systems under scrutiny. Bazzichelli proposes the concept of the *Art of Disrupting Business* as a form of artistic practice within the business field of information technology. Art, hacktivism and business are often intertwined, generating a feedback loop of revolutions and cooptations that is functional to the development of capitalism. Similarly, systems of power need our fights and oppositions, because they are functional to the increase of security and forms of control.

In Bazzichelli’s analysis, art intertwines with disruption beyond dialectical oppositions, leading to a discovery of subliminal and distributed strategies, which emerge *from within* the capitalistic systems, or act *within it*. In both the exhibition and its accompanying seminar, she involves actors who directly engage with hacktivism, art, civil liberties and social networking to expose the contradictions of capitalistic logics

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1 DARC Press, The Digital Aesthetics Research Centre of Aarhus University, 2013.
and power systems: Anna Adamolo, Anonymous, Billboard Liberation Front, Burning Man Festival, the Cacophony Society, Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša, Julian Oliver, Laura Poitras, Les Liens Invisibles, Luther Blissett, Mail Art, Neoism, Peng! Collective, the Suicide Club, Telekommunisten and Trevor Paglen.

The artworks and collective projects are conceptually and visually interlinked throughout the exhibition spaces thus constituting a network of networks. Among the groups and within the groups themselves, diverse points of view are combined. By applying the strategy of “working from within”, some sections of the show have been conceptualised in collaboration with the core people involved in these networks: Vittore Baroni (Mail Art), Florian Cramer (Neoism), Gabriella Coleman (Anonymous), John Law (Suicide Club and Cacophony Society), Andrea Natella (Luther Blissett Project) and members of the Anna Adamolo network.

The choice to keep such connections open without reaching a curatorial synthesis, reflects the perspective that a new methodology of curating a research should open a metaphorical (and physical) space to encourage and provoke feedback loops among theory and practice as well as among subjects and objects of analysis. The result is a constellation of networking practices that aims to actualise — and to question — the notion of “direct participation” itself. For this reason, the following captions should be linked theoretically by the readers, to generate a personal cut-up of the show as they create their own path in the line of disruption.

Disruption is networked. Enjoy it before it gets spoiled.
Telekommunisten

OCTO P7C-ES, 2013–2015

Installation (detail), various materials
Telemunikisten is a Berlin-based collective whose work investigates the political economy of communications technology. Core themes include the incompatibility of capitalism with free networks and free culture; the increasing centralisation and enclosure that results; and the potential for distributed producers employing a collective stock of productive assets to provide an alternative economic basis for a free society.

On the occasion of *Networked Disruption*, Telekommunisten is presenting to potential investors and partners a brand new product of OCTO, the leader in pneumatic physical packet communication systems. What OCTO is developing for global users is now available for your company or institution. OCTO’s new Enterprise Security (ES) System is the most effective way to maintain security and efficiency in your company’s physical Intranet. The OCTO P7C-ES features revolutionary CAPS-LOCK® technology, a fully-integrated system which allows complete tracking and capsule contents control (3CT) for every transmission, and ensures that only authorised users are able to use your OCTO P7C-ES. CAPS-LOCK® also provides unprecedented insights into and control over the behaviour of your employees, allowing you to manage workloads and task assignments better than ever before. With CAPS-LOCK®, OCTO P7C-ES is the comprehensive enterprise solution for physical packet security and reliability.
Telekommunisten
OCTO P7C-ES, 2013–2015
Installation (detail, end station)
Telekommunisten
OCTO P7C-ES, 2013–2015
Installation (detail, end station)
2. NEOISM

Monty Cantsin is a name chosen/invented by Monty Cantsin to refer to an international star who can be anyone. The name is fixed; the people using it aren’t. What is usually an egoistical role (star) becomes abstracted by its disassociation from a particular person. When someone thinks/feels that the star context/advantage might be useful, they can “wear” the Monty Cantsin identity.

Monty Cantsin, A Neoist Research Project

According to Monty Cantsin, Neoism is a name invented by Monty Cantsin to refer to an international movement of multiple origins. The name is fixed; the use isn’t. The purpose of many different uses of the same name is to experiment with a situation for which no one in particular is responsible.

In this exhibition, we do not want to reconstruct the history of Neoism. Neoism started as an idea without a clear definition, an empty concept to be appropriated. In the course of the 1980s, it developed into an international subcultural network of people who collectively used the Monty Cantsin identity. This network spread from North America to Europe (among others, the UK, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Yugoslavia, and Hungary), and later to Australia and Asian countries. The first public manifestations of Neoism were a number of apartment festivals, disruptive interventions in art spaces and other open situations, organised at that time by a young crowd of experimenters and subcultural activists. Activities included setting steam irons on fire, wearing dead fish as hats, blood campaigns, free haircuts, telepathic communication through clothes hangers, making the collective-anonymous zine SMILE and spreading paradoxes, pranks, plagiarisms and fakes.
Installation with mixed-media (photos, videos, audio recordings) from Monty Cantsin’s Neoist archive.
A Neoist chair is nothing other than any chair with the sign NEOISM. The sign is nailed to a rod, and the rod is fixed to the chair. Any chair or anything that can be used to sit on can be turned into a Neoist chair. The sign makes the difference.

The Neoist Chair Action has become part of the regular demonstrations of Neoist daily rituals, mostly used as a propaganda vehicle to question the origin and purpose of the noncepts of Neoism and Monty Cantsin.

You can become a Neoist and Monty Cantsin simply by sitting on a Neoist chair.
Neoism is what you make of it. Nothing in this room is an artwork. Feel free to use all media just like in a public reading room and workspace. If you find pictures you like, just hang them on the wall and unhang others. The video and audio players are for you to use and watch/listen to some historical Neoist materials. This is just a collection of stuff that people have done in the name of Neoism in the past. Today we are doing something else, and tomorrow we will be entirely different. It would be better if you did something yourself in the name of Neoism. In your place, we would never accept a reactionary situation like this one here.

Monty Cantsin, March 2015
Photograph of Seatbelt Violation Public Works Promotion by TENTATIVELY, a CONVENIENCE and Eugenie Vincent at Public Works Festival, Toronto, Canada, October 1981.

"Eugenie Vincent & I were tied to the roof of a rented car to attract attention to us while we drove around the city with signs advertising the festival [...]. After 20 minutes or so, we were stopped by a cop, who was eventually joined by 2 others. The cops tried to figure out what they could charge us with & eventually decided on 'seatbelt violation' — much to the general amusement." — TENTATIVELY, a CONVENIENCE
Anonymous is everyone and is no one (Anonymous, 2007).

Anonymous is shrouded in some degree of deliberate mystery. It purports to have no leaders, no hierarchical structure, nor any geographical epicentre. While there are forms of organization and cultural logics that undeniably shape its multiple expressions, it is a name that any individual or group can take on as their own (Coleman, 2011).

Anonymous is constantly changing and in motion. Information about Anonymous is contradictory, not only because these activists are adept at generating pranks, jokes and even deceit, but also because each member can act independently. Moreover, Anonymous has no shared universal political mandate or ideology, aside from a loose commitment to the ideal of concealment captured in its namesake. Given these dynamics of opacity, deceit and play, sociological questions about its members are less interesting than the questions of fantasy and the range of disparate tactics they deploy. Indeed, Anonymous’s double-sided approach of spreading pranks for the *lulz* (a derivation of *lol* – laugh out loud), beyond moral conformism and political correctness, as well as fighting for freedom and social rights, facing corporations, oppression and corruption, is at the core of the project. The fun of trolling and political activism is bound together. Here are videos and pictures from the early trolling experiences in 2007–2008, to the most recent political protests in Spain and Ferguson that had a large impact on public opinion and civil society.
Anonymous pictures retrieved from the Internet showing Anonymous Operations and the Guy Fawkes mask spreading in the world. Slide show.
The #antisec zine is a plain text zine of around 1 MB of documents released by the Antisec group, a joint effort involving Antisec and Anonymous activists. This zine included information about Jeremy Hammond’s hack of the intelligence firm Stratfor. Hammond wanted to expose Stratfor’s bugs in data security, confidential intelligence services to large corporations and possible engagement in intrusive surveillance activities.

For hacking the Stratfor website and releasing the information through WikiLeaks, Jeremy Hammond was convicted and sentenced in November 2013 to 10 years in US federal prison. Barrett Brown, the journalist working with Anonymous and Antisec to procure the emails, was also arrested. He had originally faced 17 charges, most controversially for sharing a link to the stolen data. Eventually he was convicted of only three crimes: making threats against an FBI agent, obstruction of a search warrant and assisting the Anonymous hackers who infiltrated Stratfor. In January 2015 Brown was sentenced to 63 months of incarceration within the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Even though the charge for linking was dropped, the judge nevertheless agreed with the prosecution’s arguments during the sentencing hearing that linking to the stolen data had aided the hackers, which lengthened the time of the prison sentence.

By republishing the front and the index page of the #antisec zine, and Barrett Brown’s comments on the Stratfor Operation, we want to highlight the vulnerability journalists face as they cover contemporary hacktivism as well as the problematic (often arbitrary) boundaries between legality/illegality as activists and journalists expose misconduct in organisations and corporations.

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1 INTRO .................. LINE 133
2 STRATFOR.COM .......... LINE 243
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5 PRIV8 GOVMENT DOXXX .. LINE 15899
6 SPECIALFORCES.COM ... LINE 16063
7 OUTRO .................. LINE 22156

THE ANISEC EMBASSY:
http://ihbg35kdvnb7jww.onion

CHECK US OUT ON TP8:
thepiratebay.org/user/AntiSecurity

GREETZ TO ALL ALLIED HACKER CREWS, KEEP PULLING THAT TRIGGER! ACId81ch3Z, -EL8, DlKLINE, HON0, GOD, ZFO, RevoluSec, PHC, HACKBLOC, C48IN CR3W, WIKILEAKS AND ALL OTHERS KNOWN AND UNKNOWN, THANKS FOR THE SUPPORT ... WE HAD SOME GOOD TIMES OWNING SHIT, AND MANY MORE LULZ ARE TO BE HAD ALL THROUGH 2012! LET IT FLOW...

SOLIDARITY WITH ALL THOSE IMPRISONED BY THE FASCIST PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX WE WILL CONTINUE 2 OWN IN UR GREAT HONOR FREE BRADLEY MANNING, TOPIARY, COMMANDER X. THE ANONYMOUS OPPAYBACK DEFENDANTS AND SPECIAL GREETZ TO BIG PIMPIN: THE UNIX TERRORIST FRESH OUT THE JOINT !!!

/*******************************************************************************/

BREAK BREAD MOTHAFUCKA!!!

[*] STRATFOR.COM
1. Over 75,000 credit cards with name, address, company, and cvv information.
2. Over 860,000 names and addresses to all Stratfor's past and present "private client list"
3. 25,000 tickets for their it.stratfor.com support system
4. Mail Spools (were handed over to professionals: coming soon!)

[*] NYCHIEFS.ORG
1. Mail spools for 10 NY Police Chiefs
2. Over 300 usernames and md5-hashed passwords for all NY Chiefs
3. Several "Law Enforcement Sensitive" and "For Official Use Only" documents

[*] CSLEA.COM
1. Mail spools for 3 CSLEA employees including the webmaster
2. Credit card information for over a hundred agents and supporters
3. 2500 cleartext, user-supplied passwords of all CSLEA members
4. Various stolen database files for internal forums and other portals

[*] SPECIALFORCES.COM
1. Usernames, passwords, emails, addresses, & phone numbers for 14k customers.
2. Credit card information for 8,000 customers.

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ANTISEC DISMANTLES STRATFOR, A MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR INTELLIGENCE CORPORATION
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On Stratfor

By Barrett Brown

On Stratfor, 26 December 2011

1. In the wake of the recent operation by which Stratfor's servers were compromised, much of the media has focused on the fact that some participants in the attack chose to use obtained customer credit card numbers to make donations to charitable causes. Although this aspect of the operation is interesting, it is, like all things, should be scrutinized and criticized as necessary, the original purpose and ultimate consequence of the operation has been largely ignored.

2. Stratfor was not breached in order to obtain customer credit card numbers, which the hackers in question could not have expected to be as easily obtainable as they were. Rather, the operation was pursued in order to obtain the 2.7 million e-mails that exist on the firm's servers. This wealth of data includes correspondence with untold thousands of contacts who have spoken to Stratfor's employees off the record over more than a decade. Many of those contacts were for major corporations within the intelligence and military contracting sectors, government agencies, and other institutions for which anonymous and associated parties have developed an interest since February of 2011, when another hack against the intelligence contractor/contractor firms' ATM revealed, among other things, a widespread conspiracy by the Justice Department, Bank of America, and other parties to attack and disrupt WikiLeaks and other activist groups. Since that time, many of us in the movement have dedicated our lives to investigating this state-corporate alliance against the free information movement. For this and other reasons, operations have been conducted against Bank of America, JPMorgan, the US military, and other institutions of power, and the results of what we've uncovered thus far may be reviewed at a site maintained by my group Project PM, which can be found at

3. Although Stratfor's is not necessarily among the parties at fault is the larger movement against transparency and individual liberty. It has long been a "subject of interest" in our necessary investigations. The e-mails obtained before Christmas may well vastly improve our ability to continue that investigation and thereby bring to light other instances of corruption, crime, and deception on the part of certain powerful actors based in the U.S. and elsewhere. Unlike the various agents of the U.S. government, the hacking team that obtained this information did not break down the doors of the larger, more powerful, and more difficult to access networks. It's not surprising that in the last two years, many of those companies that have sought to use their power in a world that has long been governed according to the dictates of a powerful few have been subjected to hacking attacks that is given to those governments which are largely ignored. As a result of the tactics of those companies, the hacking team has been able to uncover some of the practices that have come to characterize its behavior.

4. Incidentally, many of us are more than happy to proceed according to the same dictates. If we find it to be necessary. And, increasingly, we have found it to be so.

5. Barrett Brown

6. Project PM

7. ieci.project-pm.org

Barrett Brown

On Stratfor, 26 December 2011

left:

Anonymous

#antisec

December 2011

Zine (index page)
“The real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the workings of institutions that appear to be both neutral and independent, to criticize and attack them in such a manner that the political violence that has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight against them.”

-- Michel Foucault
Ron Johnson of Missouri State Highway Patrol speaks to a protester wearing a Guy Fawkes mask while he walks through a demonstration in Ferguson. Courtesy: Reuters
Anonymous/Anónimo
Es la hora, February 2013, Spain
Video
A collective mail art project conceived and coordinated by Vittore Baroni.
Vittore Baroni is an Italian artist, music critic and explorer of countercultures. In 1977 he discovered mail art, became heavily addicted to it and has since participated in numerous international projects and shows. He published 100 issues of the magazine ARTE POSTALE! (1979–2009) and various books on radical music and art, amongst them, the mail art guidebook, Arte Postale (AAA editions, 1997). He is active in the fields of visual poetry, sound art, street art and comics.

The international circuit of mail art, which since the mid-1960s has attracted thousands of participants on a global scale, has always been a grassroots alternative to the “official art system”, “disrupting” in many ways the traditional art practices and established rules of the art market. The objects of mail art (postcards, envelopes, artists’ stamps, etc.) are created to be exchanged as gifts among the authors and are generally not for sale. Mail art is open to all. There are no distinctions between amateurs, beginners or professional artists. In a mail art project there is no selection of works, no jury, no fee to be paid and no rejection – everything is exhibited. In the mail art community, the process is more important than the physical product.

Mail art circuits have been a fertile breeding ground for disruptive sub-networks such as Neoism and the Luther Blissett Project. This section helps to put into a historical perspective the more recent collective projects documented in the exhibition. A selection of mail art works from the E.O.N. archive (Viareggio, Italy) with a more or less explicit disruptive character is presented in the form of colour photocopies arranged in a continuous collage with a series of pertinent quotes, juxtaposed with new original postal works on the theme of “Mail Art Disruption” mailed to Ljubljana by international mail artists after the circulation of an open call. The mail art section also features a collective interactive project (The Table of the Little Iconoclast, 2000, with rubberstamps on shoe heels by various authors that the visitors can use to create their own Iconoclast compositions).

Vittore Baroni, March 2015
Mail Art Disruption, 2015
Installation (detail)
Mixed-media (installations, photos, photocopies, prints, stamps, postcards, publications, handmade postal objects) assembled by mail artist Vittore Baroni with the participation of the international circuit of mail artists.
Mail Art Disruption, 2015
Installation (detail)
A selection of historical mail art works (above the red stripe) and original mail art works and publications sent by various authors to the Skuc Gallery in Ljubljana (below the red stripe).
Mail Art Disruption, 2015
Installation (detail)
A selection of "disruptive" historical mail art works and publications (ca. 1977−2000) from the E.O.N. Archive, Viareggio, Italy.
Mail Art Disruption, 2015
Installation (detail)
Original contributions mailed to Skuc Gallery by 145 authors from 25 countries.
MAIL ART DISRUPTION – PARTICIPANTS


175 international authors > selected works from the E.O.N. Archive, Italy.
original mail art works and scans > 145 authors from 25 countries
> project coordinated by Vittore Baroni, via C. Battisti 339, 55049 Viareggio, Italy.
The San Francisco Suicide Club (1977–1983) was a secret society, which originated as an outgrowth of the San Francisco State Communiversity (1969), a student group within the Free University Movement of the late 1960s–1970s. The aim of the Suicide Club was to create radical contexts for public social experimentation, outlandish street theatre, intense interpersonal analysis and urban exploration. The club’s motto was to live each day as though it was your last.

Emerging from the ashes of the Suicide Club, the Cacophony Society (founded in 1986 by ex-Suicide Club members) was an informal, unclassifiable group of pseudonymous people who spent their time exploring the boundaries of a conformist society, and occasionally crashing them, by disrupting propaganda, mocking respected symbols (like in their infamous Santarchy, an invasion of rebellious Santas), exploring forbidden urban space (from sewers to bridges), rebuilding freedom through mayhem, confusion, dangerous operations and sometimes just outright madness.

The Billboard Liberation Front (BLF) started in San Francisco in 1977. The BLF practiced culture jamming by altering and improving billboards, parodying corporate messages and mocking consumer society. A direct influence on Shepard Fairey and Ron English, the BLF was operational for 33 years.

John Law was an original member of the Suicide Club and the Cacophony Society, co-founder of the Billboard Liberation Front and co-founder and first operations manager of the Burning Man Festival.

This room brings together into an interlinked space the activities of the San Francisco Suicide Club, the Cacophony Society, the early Burning Man Festival and the Billboard Liberation Front. Linked to the idea of living everyday life as an art form, these groups have deep roots in experimental art practices, promoting and organising collective pranks, interventions, games and group performances. The well-known Burning Man Festival, the open-air festival held every year since 1990 in the Black Rock Desert (Northern Nevada, California), began as a Cacophony Society “event” and would never have been possible without the previous existence of the San Francisco Suicide Club.
Cacophony Society and PeopleHater
Car Hunt, Blue Wing Playa Nevada, October 1995
Video
Filmed by Weird TV

Cacophony Society
2nd Annual SantaCon, San Francisco 1995
Video
Filmed by Chuck Cirino [Weird TV]
Olivier Bonin
*The Tales of the San Francisco Cacophony Society*, 2013
Video
Filmed by Chuck Cirino (Weird TV), Doug Wellman, Scott Beale (Laughing Squid), Jon Alloway, Richard Darigo.

Cacophony Society
*PETA vs the Veget Aryans at How Berkeley Can You Be?*
*The Meat Parade, Berkeley, 1996*
Video
Filmed by Puzzling Evidence TV

Suicide Club / Cacophony Society / Burning Man / Billboard Liberation Front
Installation (detail)
Mixed-media (photos, prints, videos, publications) assembled in cooperation with John Law, Chuck Cirino, Olivier Bonin, Doug Wellman, Scott Beale and Jon Alloway.
Suicide Club / Cacophony Society / Burning Man / Billboard Liberation Front
Installation (detail)
Mixed-media
Assembled in cooperation with John Law, Chuck Cirino, Olivier Bonin,
Doug Wellman, Peter Field, Nicole Rosenthal and Scott Beale
Cacophony Society and PeopleHater
Car Hunt
Blue Wing Playa Nevada, October 1995
Event conceived by Robert Burke & John Law
Produced by Law, Burke in partnership with Chip Flynn and PeopleHater
Filmed by Chuck Cirino for Weird TV
This 1975 Oldsmobile Vista Cruiser Station Wagon was armour-plated for protection of the engine compartment. All-steel wheels with rebar tread were made. Servos to control steering, acceleration and braking were installed by PeopleHater. The car was legally registered in the State of California with the vanity plate: CARHUNT. A “nuclear” family of dummies was installed. The car was hunted down from moving vehicles by hunters from the Cacophony Society using live ammunition and an increasing caliber of deadly ordnance.
Suicide Club
The Naked Cable Car Ride
San Francisco, Easter Sunday Morning 1977
Cacophony Society
The 5th Annual SantaCon
(Santarchy, Santa Rampage, Crimson Tide, etc).
Starting in San Francisco in 1994, the event recurred yearly. This iteration was in New York City in 1998 with the specific photo taken as “Santa” “protested” the United Nations. SantaCon broke free of Cacophony around this time and for better or worse, depending on who is commenting, spread around the world. SantaCon(s) now take place in hundreds of cities worldwide involving thousands of Santas.
This event was a collaboration between Jack Napier (John Law) of San Francisco’s Cacophony–related Billboard Liberation Front and New York billboard artist Ron English. Taking place on Memorial Day 2005, this action was, to date, the only animatronic billboard alteration in history.

It was a celebration of the 50th anniversary of McDonald’s Corporation and its mascot Ronald McDonald. After seeding Earth with the viral McDonald’s feeding stations in 1955, the alien creators of McDonald’s left Earth only to return in 2005 ready to harvest the now properly fed and mutated human livestock, replenishing their alien food supply.
6. LUTHER BLISSETT

Luther Blissett is a multi-use name, a collective alias, a shared identity adopted by hundreds of artists and activists from the summer of 1994, spreading from Italy to the rest of Europe, to the United States and South America. For reasons that remain unknown, the name, which was borrowed from a 1980s British soccer player of Afro-Caribbean origin, became an extremely popular phenomenon and managed to create the reputation of a folk hero.

The Luther Blissett Project was the applied myth of a common cause. With the aim of disrupting the cultural industry, Luther Blissett was able to create a common phantasmagoria and a shared philosophy throughout the 1990s. It was a “folk hero”, an open identity that could be adapted to anyone, or at least, to all those wanting to subvert the everyday life in the urban space and the hierarchical mechanisms of power. Luther Blissett also implied a deep criticism of the very concept of politics, questioning authority, leadership and the mechanism of political representation. Even if many Luthers worked to disrupt capitalism, they also tried to appropriate pop culture for their own ironic purposes, turning their actions into long-lasting collective performances. Between 1994 and 1999 – the year of Blissett’s Seppuku, a symbolic suicide orchestrated by some of the early conspirators involved in the LBP – Luther Blissett became an icon for many people involved in the international underground scene. This installation contains various materials shared and spread by Luther Blissett through the network of Bulletin Board Systems, mail art and among the underground circuits of self-organised events and “open situations” in the course of the 1990s.
This is Not Luther Blissett
Luther Blissett
Mixed-media (posters, photos, prints, stamps, stickers, flyers, soundtracks, publications) from the Luther Blissett Project archive assembled in cooperation with Andrea Natella.
What Strange Powers Did The Ancients Possess?

A SECRET METHOD FOR THE MASTERY OF LIFE

My name is LUTHER BLISSETT. I can't promise that you'll win the title of "World's Most Perfectly Developed Man," as I did. But I do say that I believe I can make a mighty powerful NEOIST out of you—in a very short time. In fact, you can prove it to yourself—without risking a penny. And I have good reason for believing I can do it. Because during the last 10 years I have turned many thousands of weaklings—fellows who were ashamed of their bodies—into beautifully-proportioned human dynamos of strength, energy, and tireless endurance . . . with the kind of muscular development that needn't take "back talk" from any one. My big free book will tell you how my secret of Dynamic NEOISM may be able to do such a job for you. Where shall I send your copy? There's not a bit of cost or obligation on your part. So mail the coupon now.

Luther Blissett:
néoiste un jour,
néoiste toujours
LUTHER BLISSETT
NON ACCETTA SCONTRO IDEOLOGICI MA SOLTANTO RISULTATI PRATICI
Toto Peppino e la guerra psichica (AAA edizioni)

LUTHER BLISSETT
NON È UN LIBRO GROSSO E LUNGO MA DURO E CHE DURA
Toto Peppino e la guerra psichica (AAA edizioni)

LUTHER BLISSETT
SCATENA CONTRO DI VOI TUTTE LE POTENZE DELLA GUERRA PSICHICA
Toto Peppino e la guerra psichica (AAA edizioni)

Luther Blissett
Book advertising, 1996, Italy
Stickers

left:
Luther Blissett
Néoist un jour, 1995, Italy
Photocopied flyer
Tagliare lungo le linee tratteggiate.
Cut along the dashed lines.

Full license available at
http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/legalcode
Anna Adamolo is the acronym for “Onda Anomala” (Anomalous Wave), the name of an Italian movement of students, teachers and researchers protesting against the cuts in the education, university and research in 2008–2009.

Anna Adamolo was a fictional identity built up by a network of Italian people with diverse backgrounds and competences, calling for a reflection on political methodology during conflicts. Anna Adamolo managed to become a self-representing Italian Minister of Education, University and Research in the context of the students’ and teachers’ struggles operated by the “Onda Anomala” (Anomalous Wave) national movement in 2008 and 2009. The Anomalous Wave included many individuals and groups who refused to be described as one movement following the same flag, but whose common objective was to contest and abolish the “Gelmini Education Reform Bill”, bearing the name of the Italian Minister of Education, University and Research, Mariastella Gelmini. From the end of 2008, Anna Adamolo served this unrepresentable movement as a collective name that could be adopted in the squares and in the streets by anyone who chose to do so. The use of Facebook as a strategic medium for viral communication and networking was crucial, demonstrating that social media could be manipulated in unpredictable ways. This installation shows the timeline of the Anna Adamolo experience integrating online and offline practices as well as the tools people used to appropriate and spread the Anna Adamolo fictional identity during the months of protests.
The Anomalous Wave movement adopts the wave metaphor to give itself a more fluid definition and uses it to describe itself as unrepresentable and unstoppable.

The movement proposes self-organization and self-education as models for knowledge dissemination.

November 14th, 2008 – National strike of students and teachers in Rome

May 19th, 2008 – About 10,000 students march through the streets of Turin against the G8 University Summit

October 2008 – Protest against the “Gelmini Education Reform Bill”

The Bill considers, among other measures, educational funding cuts and fixed-term contracts for researchers, thereby reducing the overall budget for public education.
Anna Adamolo

November 14th, 2008 - The Anna Adamolo identity
is definitively revealed, she is the Wave Minister

End of October 2008 - Gelmini’s Facebook
profile is created during the first wave
of the movement’s occupations

A blog is founded from
which it is possible
to download various
materials and to get
more information about the
objectives of the operation

Anna Adamolo first appears on the pages
of the social network Facebook in some group pages,
in which she presents herself as an alternative
to Law 133 of the Gelmini reform

Maria's Gelmini’s Facebook profile is turned into
Anna Adamolo’s
Gelmini's Facebook friends think that hackers
have hacked the Minister's profile and start
expressing their anger on the FB wall: but there is
no real Minister profile, only the one created by the
same people who have turned it into Anna Adamolo.

Creation of ‘Fake Ministry Site’

On the fake Ministry Site, the multiple-user role of Anna Adamolo makes her first public appearance,
emboldening the identity of the Wave Minister. Anna Adamolo’s biography is presented together
with all the texts written by those who had previously recorded their protest messages by calling
a notorious number shown on the home page.

The visitors can record their experiences and thoughts about the education protest.
They can surf the AA Ministry website as a mirror for public and collective dissent, where
all the individuals in this movement can emerge and have a voice.

Intense networking activity has already turned
Anna Adamolo into a symbol for many activists
and members of the Anomalous Wave movement.

Activists also start to interact on Anna Adamolo’s Facebook wall as well.
From that moment on, a graphic character of Anna Adamolo starts to circulate as the project’s “logo”.
DALL’ONDA ANOMALA NASCE ANNA ADAMOLO
ANNA ADAMOLO È LA PLURALITÀ DEL MOVIMENTO CONTRO LA RIFORMA GELMINI, È IL RIFIUTO A GIOCARE CON IL FUTURO COME SE FOSSIMO A UNA PARTITA DI MONOPOLI E IL GRIDO DI UN NO E LA FERMEZZA DI TANTI Sì.
ANNA ADAMOLO È UN IMMAGINARIO NON DOMATO E NON NORMALIZZATO, È LA VOLONTÀ DI TENERE APERTO IL MOLTEPLICE E IL POSSIBILE CONTRO L’ARROGANZA DI UN PENSIERERO CONTABILE, È IL RIFIUTO DI SANARE LE DIFFICOLTÀ DELL’OGGI CON LE MISERIE DI DOMANI ANNA ADAMOLO È “NOI LA CRISI NON LA PAGHIAMO” ANNA ADAMOLO SONO LE STUDENTESSE E GLI STUDENTI LE PRECARIE E I PRECARI LE MAESTRE E I MAESTRI LE BAMBINELLE I BAMBINELÌ LE MAMME E I PAPÀ CHE IN QUESTI MESI HANNO PORTATO NELLE PIAZZE D’ITALIA UNA PROTESTA MAI VISTA CONTRO I TRUFFATORI DEL PRESENTE E DEL FUTURO
FROM THE ROGUE WAVE
ANNA ADAMOLO IS BORN.
ANNA ADAMOLO IS THE PLURALITY OF THE MOVEMENT
AGAINST THE GELMINI REFORM.
SHE’S THE REFUSAL TO PLAY WITH THE FUTURE,
AS IF IT WAS A MONOPOLY GAME
SHE’S THE CRY OF ONE NO
AND THE FIRMNESS OF MANY YESES.
ANNA ADAMOLO IS AN UNTAMED AND NON-NORMALISED IMAGINATION;
SHE’S THE WILL TO KEEP OPEN THE MULTIPLE AND THE POSSIBLE
against the arrogance of an accounting thought;
SHE’S THE REFUSAL TO REMEDY TODAY’S DIFFICULTIES WITH TOMORROW’S MISERIES.
ANNA ADAMOLO IS
"WE WON’T PAY FOR THE CRISIS"
ANNA ADAMOLO IS THE STUDENTS
the precarious employees
the teachers
THE PROFESSORS
THE CHILDREN
THE PARENTS
WHO IN THESE MONTHS HAVE BROUGHT TO THE STREETS OF ITALY
AN UNPRECEDENTED PROTEST AGAINST THE SWINDLERS
OF THE PRESENT AND OF THE FUTURE.
Anna Adamolo
Installation (detail)
Mixed-media (prints, stamp, stencil)
An intertwined feedback loop between art, business entrepreneurship and strategies of disruption.
9. LES LIENS INVISIBLES

Les Liens Invisibles is an Italy-based artist duo. Their work is an eclectic recombination of pop net culture, reverse engineering techniques, social media subvertising and media re-appropriation. Since 2007 Les Liens Invisibles have been infiltrating global communication networks in order to join and expand the invisible connections between art and real life.

Adapting the idea of Seppuku, the Japanese ritual suicide of “stomach-cutting” to the context of Facebook, Les Liens Invisibles invited users to deactivate their Facebook accounts. Taking inspiration from the Seppuku as performed by Luther Blissett in 1999, the Seppukoo virtual suicide symbolised the collective detachment from a mechanism designed to make profit by connecting people. Users were invited to instigate a viral suicide process so as to increase their score in the Seppukoo ranking system, by inducing their friends to commit virtual suicide as well. The virtual suicide service functioned through a specific script, which derived from the disruption of Facebook’s “Deactivate” system. In 2009, it was not possible for users to voluntarily erase their profiles, and the company kept all data. The process of virtual suicide started when a user logged in to the Seppukoo service, the same usually used to log in to Facebook. Through an open source software (Open Inviter) and a PHP library, Seppukoo built a simulated process of user navigation connected to that of Facebook, in which the user accessed the home page, logged in with his or her username and password, and moved on to the deactivate page. This installation includes videos of the operation that initially used important testimonials to spread the information. The flow of logs of the people that committed virtual suicide are visible on a screen.
In 2009 a bunch of popular fictitious identities haunted the ethereal Facebook network. Their account names were stolen from notable real personalities – suicidal VIPS, rockers, philosophers, historic personalities – in order to perform one of the most controversial viral campaign about life, death and virtual eternity.

The team – formerly Guy Debord, Vladimir Majakovskij, Kurt Cobain, Jim Morrison, Elvis Presley, Luther Blissett, Chet Baker, Romeo & Juliet, Ian Curtis, Elliott Smith, Virginia Woolf, Gerard Horst and Cleopatra VII – was been directed and coordinated by Les Liens Invisibles’ art director Guy McMusker to increase all component’s friendship connections and to constitute, the sub-infrastructure for the spreading of the seppukoo conceptual virus.

As for many other “real” Facebook users, a basic partition of repeated-actions drove the testimonials’ accounts through their social life experience: adding, accepting, inviting, subscribing, quoting, commenting, suggesting, requesting, liking and connecting. The more they moved along the net, the more they became popular. The more they became popular the more they increased their friends list, expanding their social connections. Because, you know, everyone needs friends like these.

Finally, reenacting their ultimate real-life act, in the early hours of 5 of November 2009, the testimonials performed a collective suicide, disseminating the seppukoo virus all over their communication extensions. Seppukoo went pandemic in a few minutes, reaching more than 50 thousands Facebook users who had been invited to join the great suicidal network.

So, what are you still waiting for? Do like them, go down in history with Seppukoo!
This is the end, your only friend. The end.

The secret of a successful marketing campaign consists in a great testimonial. Seppukoo got the best ones.

Jim Morrison
rank +1000
score 0pt
“This Is The End, My Only Friend.”

Elvis Presley
rank 64
score 1110pt
“Look guys, if you’re just going to stare at me, I’m going to bed.”

Kurt Cobain
rank +1000
score 0pt
“I need an easy friend..”

Virginia Woolf
rank 19
score 2138pt
“Someone has to die in order that the rest of us should value life more.”
In 2009 a bunch of popular fictitious identities haunted the ethereal Facebook network. Their account names were stolen from notable real personalities – suicidal VIPs, rockers, philosophers, historic personalities – in order to perform one of the most controversial viral campaigns about life, death and virtual eternity.

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The secret of a successful marketing campaign consists in a great testimonial. Seppukoo got the best ones.

Les Liens Invisibles
(Project Assistant: Alessio Falchi)
Seppukoo Testimonial Wall, 2015
Digital print
There was a small place on the web.

And 20,000 samurai were buried there.

Then networked life was torn asunder by an ambitious net company...

But the valiant self-sacrifice shown when they fought social network authorities...

is still remembered with admiration.

They were samurai!

What's that?

Yeah, it's a Cease & Desist letter from Facebook. They say we have to kill Seppukoo.com

It was raining when arrived the day of reckoning.

...we will spread our protest all over the net showing people what Facebook really is.

That will settle the tide of the battle!

VIRTUAL SUICIDE

Victory?

OR DEATH?

Or neither since we don't need a suicidal service anymore!
Les Liens Invisibles

Seppukoo - This is the end (Trailer), 2011

Video

This is the story of 20,000 samurai who fought, not for ambitions,...

But they committed virtual suicide to have their honor saved.

Facebook authorities blocked them before they could save all the connected people.

As soon as the viral suicides became pandemic...

20,000 suicides in a month
1,000,000 messages sent

They want we cease any activity.

They want we delete and destroy our site.

As soon as they pass through here...

泥

汗

血

VIRTUAL LIFE

SURREND

SURVIVE

Try the Do it Yourself Seppukoo!

Help me! Has Seppukoo died?

Yes. But you don't need it anymore.
You got Seppukoo!

Congrats Jim!
By committing seppukoo you finally reached the light at end of the tunnel of your virtual life. You ceased to be someone in order to finally become anyone. We hope this is just your first step for the definitive liberation of your body from any identity constriction.
Please, don’t be afraid for your account. Facebook is merciful, stores your private data for the eternity and allows you to login back to life whenever you want, but remember: you can commit seppukoo only once. Don’t miss this occasion.

Visit your new memorial page »
R.I.P.

JIM MORRISON
DIED ON 5TH NOV, 2009

Jim's last words were:
"This Is The End, My Only Friend."

Commit Seppukoo
Do like Jim Morrison! Go Seppukoo!
For Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša, life, artistic practice, theoretical reflection and political involvement are not divided. For almost 10 years now, through their work, they have been building a complex narrative structure on topics such as proper names, identity and the signature, particularly focusing on the legal aspect of art practices and on the political imaginary in law. The central characteristic of their production is an ambivalence on multiple layers, crossing the borders of formal and media conventions.

Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša are three Slovenian artists who all changed their names to Janez Janša, the name of the former Prime Minister of Slovenia. Their disruptive name changing gesture, which initiated in 2007 an experience of self-historification by intertwining public bureaucracy and intimate everyday life, creates a constant tension between what is public and what is private, and the meaning of “mediation” in art. As Janša, Janša and Janša demonstrate through their work, they disrupt the relational scheme between art and life, bringing art into life instead of life into art. By exhibiting the letter Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša sent to the former Prime Minister of Slovenia, Janez Janša, we want to bring attention to the gesture of provoking a radical change in one’s personal life as a critical artistic methodology. Their signatures mark the beginning of a liminal ritual within the “intimate bureaucracy” of their lives, playing with the constraints imposed by our society and stressing the limits of the boundaries between over-identification and disruption.
Spoštovani g. Janez Janša,

Mogoče je do Vas že prispela informacija, da smo trije Ljubljaničani, vsi trije ustvarjalsi sodobne umetnosti, ki s svojim delom redno predstavljamo Slovenijo po svetu, ter vsi trije člani Slovenske demokratske stranke, pred kratkim zamenjali imena in primke in se preimenovali v Janeza Janšo. Če tega še ne veste, smo veseli, da Vam polno poezijo iz prvih rokov.

Naša odločitev je zavestna in posledica tehtnega premisleka. Za nas ni meja med našim delom, našo umetnostjo in našimi življenji in menimo, da se v tem prav nič ne razlikujemo od Vas. Skupaj živimo za to, kar ustvarjamo, in če nam dovolite, bi navedli besede iz pisma, ki ste nam ga poslali ob včlanitvi v SDS, »več nas bo, prej bomo na ciju«.

Ker bi Vam osebno radi podrobneje predstavili naša stališča in ker bi radi preprečili eventualno nezgodne razumevanje, ki bi jih v našo razmerje lahko vnesel nekdo zaradi napačnega razumevanja, bi se radi z Vami osebno srečali. Predlagamo, da bi se to zgodilo čimprej, če le mogoče, pred 14. avgustom 2007, do takrat smo namreč vsi trije v Sloveniji. Zavedamo se, da je Vaš umik zelo natpran in se mu bomo seveda skupaj prilagodili.

V upanju na Vaš skorajšnji odgovor Vas lepo pozdravljamo.

Janez Janša
Slomškova 27
1000 Ljubljana

Janez Janša
Neubergerjova 25
1000 Ljubljana

Janez Janša
Gestrinova 3
1000 Ljubljana
Ljubljana, 30 July 2007

Dear Mr. Janez Janša,

Perhaps, by now, the news has reached you that three people from Ljubljana (all three of us are contemporary artists whose works regularly represent Slovenia overseas and we are also members of the Slovenian Democratic Party [Slovenska demokratska stranka/SDS]) have recently changed their names to Janez Janša. If you have not been made aware of this, we are pleased that we can deliver the news firsthand.

Our decision was a conscious one and it came about as a result of careful consideration. For us, there are no boundaries between our work, our art, and our lives. In this respect, we believe we are no different from you. We live for what we create and with your permission, we would like to quote here the words from the letter you sent us when we joined SDS: “The more we are, the faster we will reach the goal!”

Since we would like to explain our position to you in detail as to avoid possible misunderstandings, we would like to meet you in person. We suggest that we do so as soon as possible, preferably before 14 August 2007 – the three of us will be in Slovenia until then. We are aware of how busy your schedule is, and so we will do our best to accommodate you.

We are looking forward to your response.

Kind regards,

Janez Janša
Slomskova 27
1000 Ljubljana
[signed]

Janez Janša
Neubergerjeva 25
1000 Ljubljana
[signed]

Janez Janša
Gestrinova 3
1000 Ljubljana
[signed]
Janez Janša (prime minister, 4th from the left), Janez Janša (6th from the left) and Janez Janša (7th from the left) at the 9th Summer Sport Games of the Slovene Democratic Party, Celje, 2007
Photo: Janez Janša
Peng! is a collective producing creative political stunts and enriching campaigns with subversion, humour and civil disobedience. They specialise in subversive direct action, culture jamming and civil disobedience. They use these tactics to create difficult moments for politics and business and to make media stories about social justice.

In May 2014, Peng! Collective created two personas, “Google employees” Gloria Spindle and Paul von Ribbeck, and sent them to the re:publica festival in Berlin, a tech and innovation conference with over 5000 participants. Not long after Google’s actual acquisition of Nest Labs and the growing public curiosity about what Google would do with it, the timing was perfect for Gloria and Paula to present Google Nest, a suite of products designed to make users once again feel safe and connected on the Internet, after all those disturbing revelations about surveillance. The products: Google Trust (insurance against surveillance and data theft), Google Bee (personal drones), Google Hug (an app to monitor users’ emotional needs and match them with others with the same) and Google Bye (an online profile for the afterlife), were supposedly created by Google after an assessment of user needs based on an analysis of their emails and search terms. This installation shows a video of the product launch.
Google Nest: Your safe place.

Imagine a better web. Imagine a web where you feel at home. Where you feel protected and have the power to protect what matters the most to you. Where your data creates solutions, not problems. Google Nest offers you a future built by you, and for you.
Why Google Nest?

In 2014 we purchased Nest Labs, an innovative little company reinventing unloved but important devices in the home such as thermostats and smoke alarms. We saw the potential of the brand to go further and to incorporate a range of new products for living life on the web with ease and comfort. The intention behind Google Nest is to restore confidence in the opportunities the internet offers. The products themselves are the result of an intensive period of studying user behavior in response to increased debate around privacy and government surveillance. They are designed to address the concerns our users have, about their data, with practical solutions.
Google Trust.
Opt in for total protection.

It's easy to get paranoid in these times. With surveillance, hacking and government requests for data on the rise, we need to start thinking seriously about self-protection. Your use of Google services like Gmail, Gchat and Google Search is based on trust. We take that seriously. While we cannot always protect information about you, we can help protect you. Google Trust offers you the world’s first model for data insurance.

It's completely free, you pay with your data. The more Google products you use, the higher your insurance payout will be in case of data misuse through secret service or private criminals. Your policy will be automatically offered to you, based on our assessment of your risk.

Google Hug.
There for one another.

Having a bad day? Chances are high that someone else is too. And they're probably not far away. 82% of the average person’s human interactions are now digital – which leaves very little for real connection. Who do you reach out to when you need face to face contact just to share your feelings or drink a cup of tea?

With our unique behavioral monitoring algorithms, embedded within all Google tools and services, we know when you're not at your best and what kind of interaction you might need to feel better. Google Hug helps you find others nearby who have the same needs you do. Anytime. Just reach out and you'll find what you're looking for. We promise.
Google Bee.
Your little friend in the sky.

Introducing the first personal drone. Google Bee watches over your house and family when you are away, ensure your kids are going where they say they are going, and collects the best moments of your life to share with your family at the end of the day. Solar powered and suited to all weather conditions, the Bee flies above you (up to 1200 feet) almost unnoticced and collects information determined by you.

Or send the Bee on special missions: to check on the state of a party or to document the flying salmon. The possibilities are endless! You never need to miss out on anything again: concerts, birthday parties, conferences. It can even carry your garbage out! Google Bee lets you be in two places at once.

Google Bye.
Be remembered.

Nobody wants to leave this world unnoticed. Everyone deserves a proper sendoff. Google Bye is a service to help you make sure you’re remembered the right way. Each time you use a Google service, like downloading an app from the Play Store or watching a video on Youtube, you tell us a little bit more about yourself. Why leave that valuable information with us when you can share it with others?

The Google Bye Profile will act as a memorial to you, highlighting (in images, video, audio and text) your unique character, achievements and special moments from your life. Automatically shared with all your contacts and living on in Google search results, it preserves the best version of you for others to cherish. So get busy living. We will handle the rest.
Google Bee

our little friend in the sky
Laura Poitras is an artist, journalist and Academy Award-winning documentary film director and producer. She is the author of a trilogy of films about America post-9/11. The last film, *Citizenfour*, is about NSA mass surveillance and Edward Snowden. Along with Glenn Greenwald and Jeremy Scahill, she is co-founder of *The Intercept* (firstlook.org/theintercept).

In January 2013, Laura Poitras was contacted by an anonymous source claiming to have evidence of National Security Agency (NSA) illegal activity. After several months of anonymous emails, she travelled to Hong Kong with journalist Glenn Greenwald to interview the source, Edward Snowden. Her NSA reporting contributed to a Pulitzer Prize for Public Service awarded to *The Guardian* and *The Washington Post*. This is the interview of Edward Snowden published on 9 June 2013, when he publically revealed himself and the PRISM Programme to Poitras and Greenwald in the Mira Hong Kong Hotel. Filmed and edited by Laura Poitras / Praxis Films.
Trevor Paglen’s work blurs the lines between science, contemporary art and journalism to construct unfamiliar, yet meticulously researched ways to see and interpret the world around us. He is the author of five books and numerous articles on subjects including experimental geography, state secrecy, military symbology and photography. Paglen’s work has been exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Tate Modern, London; the Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and numerous solo and group exhibitions. He holds a PhD in Geography from U.C. Berkeley.

Circles is a film of a rotating landscape taking the British intelligence and security organisation GCHQ as its focal point.
Laura Poitras
PRISM: Snowden Interview, 9 June 2013
Video (Praxis Films)
Screenshot (detail)
The Something Something Exploitation Process

One sentence outline of the hideous project. Reference a team code index like 'B15561-L', suggesting countless other branches scattered throughout a vast, Kafkian surveillance complex employing 1/10th of the U.S. population and several of your friends.
Julian Oliver is a New Zealander, critical engineer and artist based in Berlin. His work focuses on software art, data forensics, creative hacking, computer networking, counter-surveillance, object-oriented programming for artists, augmented reality, virtual architecture, video-game development and information visualisation. He is an advocate of Free and Open Source Software and his work has been presented at the Tate Modern, transmediale, the Chaos Computer Congress, Ars Electronica and FILE – the Japan Media Arts Festival, among others. Julian received the distinguished Golden Nica at Prix Ars Electronica 2011 (with Daniil Vasiliev).

This installation hosts LibreOffice templates based on existing Snowden NSA and GCHQ releases. Offered as canvases for deployment and play, they serve to comment on the unusual predicament in which a stream of PDFs from a single source drives clandestine shifts in the cultural and political reality. Use the Snowden Templates to fuzz journalists, to test their vigilance and integrity or just to feed your relentless, fist-eating paranoia that the NSA and GCHQ leaks might actually be a part of a vast and evil Alternate Reality Game designed by Glenn Greenwald. Afterall, as Julian Oliver points out, what do we know?
Arrogant, self-congratulating text parading utter contempt for the basic right to privacy and/or constitutional law. Should contain at least one spelling error and be badly centered within teh slide.

Descent of Doom

BRANCH AND PROJECT NAME, IN RED.
EXPLOITATION TEAM

Workflow Challenges

List challenges here while being frustratingly ambiguous with technical details. Cite at least one popular service (OTR, OpenVPN) or encryption standard (not RSA) as being a challenge. This helps to alleviate total despair while instating a false sense of trust. Mention one previously known project with a ridiculous name, like TURTLEPOWER or BLEAKINQUIRY. Be sure to invent and cite a new project, like DIFFERENTPLUM, NOSEOPERA, FITTYDOLLAS or NEUROTOE.
Rethinking Oppositions in Art, Hacktivism and Business
DISRUPTION

The Seminar
In parallel with the group exhibition, the seminar developed the topic of Networked Disruption through five discussion sessions and presentations organised over two days, followed by a collective round table.

The seminar presented a constellation of activist and hacker practices, as well as those of artists, who work on the interferences between networking participation, political criticism and disruptive business innovation. By connecting together disruptive practices of networked art and hacking in both California and across Europe, it adopted a historical perspective on the notion of social networking. Furthermore, the concept of disruption was applied to the recent debate on geopolitical surveillance after Edward Snowden’s disclosures, investigating critical practices and new strategies of oppositions that are happening within closed systems.

**Participants of the seminar included:** Annie Machon (UK), Bani Brusadin (ES), Baruch Gottlieb (CA/DE), Florian Cramer (DE/NL), Ida Hiršenfelder (SI), Janez Janša (SI), John Law (US), Loretta Borrelli (IT), Luther Blissett (IT), Vittore Baroni (IT), Vuk Čosić (SI).

**Curated by:** Tatiana Bazzichelli (IT/DE).
The departure point of this presentation is the assumption that, on the one hand, networking grassroots communities of hackers and artists have served to accelerate capitalism since the emergence of digital culture and cyber-utopias, yet, on the other hand, they have also served to strengthen antagonism against it, by generating critical artistic practices and hacktivist interventions based on technologies and methodologies of sharing and networking. Such mutual disruption and coexisting oppositions between art, business and networking shows how hackers and artists have been both active agents of business innovation as well as those undermining it. In this presentation, the analysis of disruption as a critical framework and of disruptive business as an artistic strategy, becomes a means for introducing immanent practices of hackers, artists, networkers and entrepreneurs. The concept of business is questioned by its etymology and from an ethical point of view. The aim is not to create a historical or philosophical analysis of social and artistic practices, but to reflect on different modalities of generating criticism, shedding light on contradictions and ambiguities, both in capitalistic logic and in art and hacktivist strategies, while rethinking oppositional practices in the context of networked culture.
The current meaning of openness and the rhetoric of decentralisation, freedom and exchange in social media cannot be fully understood without tracing back the practice of networking in the underground artistic contexts over the past decades. This session proposes to analyse the roots of social networking based on both analogue and digital networked art and to connect them with the post-digital critical reflection. Social networking is seen as a practice of community creation, towards the imagination of common spaces of intervention – and identity identification – where symbols, myths and memes are shared. This panel describes the genesis and the creation of a number of grassroots artistic networks between the 1980s and the 1990s, across both Europe and the US, and questions the practice of networking today. A common thread connects the network of mail art, Neoism, Luther Blissett and, more recently, in the post-digital era, the Anonymous entity. Such practices of disruption have been “social networks out of the box”, therefore generating viral practices, strategies of networking and “radical play”, both online and offline.
The presentations in this session share a philosophy that works towards the embodiment of a shared identity, generating semantic disruptions, questioning social and cultural categorisation and closed systems. The case of the Anna Adamolo fictional identity (Italy, 2008–2009) demonstrates how to conceive of strategies of un-representability during demonstrations and strikes. Such action emerged from inside the Italian students movement, acting through the cracks and interstices of institutional Italian politics and viral business logics of social media and Web 2.0. Alongside, Janez Janša focuses on the acts of changing one’s personal name and the effects of such a gesture in mainstream press and institutional politics, opening up a series of questions, from what is real and what is mediated to questions of identity and the political in art.
Thursday, March 12, 2015
2:00 pm−2:15 pm
Introduction by Tatiana Bazzichelli

2:15 pm−3:00 pm
Chaos Cacophony and Dark Saturnalia: How an obscure secret society in San Francisco in 1977 changed the way adults play for decades to come
A presentation by John Law, introduced by Bani Brusadin

The urban exploration and pranks group the Suicide Club, founded in January 1977, was the protean cradle of ideas that, while obscure at the time, have gone on to influence world-wide trends, sub-cultures and social movements. Starting in 1986, the San Francisco Cacophony Society, a more open experimental organisation that rose from the ashes of the secretive Suicide Club, was the group that created the Burning Man Festival. Chuck Palahniuk’s *Fight Club*, arguably the most influential American novel of the 1990s as well as a statement defining an entire generation’s cultural displacement, was directly inspired by Cacophony and the earlier Suicide Club. The first decade of the 21st century saw the rise of a mass movement of street games and urban play epitomised by the new social media phenomenon of “flash mobs” and the world-wide “urban exploration” culture. Cacophony was one of the primary sources in the early encouragement and implementation of these types of play. Street art and media pranking were a part of the scene...
as well, embodied in the advertising pranking of the Cacophony-affiliated Billboard Liberation Front (starting in 1977) and the punk rock circus and bike rodeo underground that blossomed in the 1990s, instilling a DIY spirit into the alternative performance scene world-wide.

3:00 pm–4:00 pm

Common Participation and Networking Enterprises

A conversation between Baruch Gottlieb, Dmytri Kleiner and John Law, moderated by Bani Brusadin

The third session focuses on the libertarian tradition of American counterculture and the analysis of the intersection between business and the libertarian critique of the establishment. Exploring the business strategy of creating a large network of engaged users to produce revenue, presenters argue that today we are facing a progressive commercialisation of networking practices and contexts of sharing and social relationships. Such a process is emphasised by the description of the evolution of the Burning Man Festival, from a countercultural gathering of libertarian and experimental people, drawing from the experiences of the Suicide Club and the Cacophony Society, to a platform designed to shape business strategies based on exchange and participation. Drawing upon Fred Turner’s paper “Burning Man at Google” (2009), we propose to consider Burning Man as a metaphor of a social network in which all the participants contribute for free in
the creation of a shared commons, but in which the owner receives the final revenues. Alongside, the proposal of an alternative to capitalism by working within capitalistic logic is suggested by the notion of Venture Communism developed by the Telekommunisten collective, who will present the latest miscommunication technologies, including the new release OCTO P7C-ES, a metaphor of a centralised social network made of intertwined pneumatic tube offline-technology, ready to be disrupted by the visitors.

4:30 pm–6:00 pm
Disrupting from Within
A conversation between Annie Machon and Vuk Čosić

In the last session, the concept of “disruption” is taken from business contexts to the realm of surveillance systems and geopolitical forms of control. How can we apply the strategy of disruption today, in the context of increasingly invasive corporations and surveillance by government agencies, and with the threat of your every move being recorded? Inspired by whistleblowing — revealing social injustices or misconducts by corporations and governments to a wider public — disruption becomes a strategy to start “fighting” the systems we want to oppose from within, reflecting on conscious modalities of “oppositions” that come from the inside of the machine. Annie Machon, a former UK MI5 intelligence officer who left the service to help blow the whistle on the
crimes and incompetence of the British spy agencies, discusses how to empower people to act consciously in society, culture and the media environment and to become the protagonists of their lives.

6:00 pm−7:30 pm

Networked Disruption Round Table
Participants: Annie Machon, John Law, Vittore Baroni, Tatiana Bazzichelli, Loretta Borrelli, Luther Blissett, Baruch Gottlieb, Janez Janša, moderated by Ida Hiršenfelder

The final round table discussion brings together the participants of the symposium to reflect on the logic of disruption as the act of opening up control mechanisms that can effect both institutions, organisations and media corporations. Furthermore, the goal is to make people reflect on such mechanisms – questioning and envisioning a critical perspective to generate unpredictable feedback and unexpected reactions – and on the new imaginative forms of empowerment that come from our everyday life.

All videos available on-line
www.vimeo.com/channels/networkeddisruption
Tatiana Bazzichelli is artistic director of the Disruption Network Lab, an ongoing platform of conference events on art, hacktivism and disruption at Kunstquartier Bethanien in Berlin (www.disruptionlab.org). Former programme curator at transmediale festival in Berlin from 2011 to 2014, she initiated and developed the year-round ‘reSource transmedial culture’ project. She was post-doctoral researcher at the Leuphana University of Lüneburg, as part of the Centre for Digital Cultures and the Institute for Culture and Aesthetic Digital Media, Faculty of Cultural Studies (2012–2014). In 2011, she received a PhD degree in Information and Media Studies at the Faculty of Arts of Aarhus University in Denmark. In 2009 she was a visiting scholar at the H-STAR, the Human-Sciences and Technologies Advanced Research Institute of Stanford University in California. She wrote the books: *Networked Disruption: Rethinking Oppositions in Art, Hacktivism and the Business of Social Networking* (DARC Press, Aarhus University, 2013); *Networking: The Net as Artwork* (Costa & Nolan, Milan, 2006/DARC Press, Aarhus University, 2008), and co-edited with Geoff Cox *Disrupting Business: Art and Activism in Times of Financial Crisis* (Autonomedia, New York, 2013). Active in the Italian hacker community since the 1990s, her networking project AHA:Activism-Hacking Artivism won the honorary mention for digital communities at Ars Electronica in 2007. She has organised several exhibitions and events, such as SAMIZDATA (2015), Networked Disruption (2015), HACK.Fem.EAST (2008), Hack.it.art (2005), in Berlin, Rome and other European cities. She was born in Rome and since 2003 she has been living in Berlin.

www.disruptionlab.org
www.networkingart.eu
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Networked Disruption
Rethinking Oppositions in Art, Hacktivism and Business
aksioma.org/networked.disruption

Curated by: Tatiana Bazzichelli

Exhibition
Škuc Gallery, Ljubljana, Slovenia
11 March–3 April 2015

MMSU – Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rijeka, Croatia
23 April–14 May 2015

Guided tour
https://vimeo.com/122888080

Seminar
Kino Šiška Centre for Urban Culture, Ljubljana
11–12 March 2015

Film screening
Olivier Bonin, Dust & Illusions – 30 years of history of Burning Man
Stara mestna elektrarna – Elektro Ljubljana (SMEEL), Ljubljana
26 February 2015

Side event
Julian Oliver, COVER ME
Link Point, Brescia
28 March 2015
Head of production: Janez Janša
Producers: Marcela Okretić, Joško Pajer, Petra Corva
Executive producer: Sonja Grdina
Assistant: Boris Beja

Production:
Aksioma – Institute for Contemporary Art, Ljubljana, 2015
Artistic director: Janez Janša

Drugo more, Rijeka
Artistic director: Davor Mišković

Škuc Gallery
Artistic director: Vladimir Vidmar

In co-production with:
Abandon Normal Devices (AND), Kino Šiška Centre for Urban Culture, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rijeka


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NETWORK DISRUPTION:
Rethinking Oppositions in Art, Hacktivism and Business


The exhibition involved actors who directly engage with hacktivism, art, civil liberties and social networking to expose the contradictions of capitalistic logics and power systems and operate at the convergence of business and art, becoming key to unleashing the paradoxes of the social networking phenomenon.

In the business world, a disruption is an unexpected innovation that comes from within the market itself. In the art and activist field, disruption means to generate unpredictable practices and interventions which play within the systems under scrutiny.

Nowadays even business is adopting hacker and artistic strategies of disruption, what is the response given by artists and hackers?

Featuring: Anna Adamolo, Anonymous, the Billboard Liberation Front, Burning Man Festival, the Cacophony Society, Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Julian Oliver, Laura Poitras, Les Liens Invisibles, Luther Blissett, Mail Art, Neoism, Peng! Collective, the Suicide Club, Telekommunisten and Trevor Paglen.

http://aksioma.org/networked.disruption