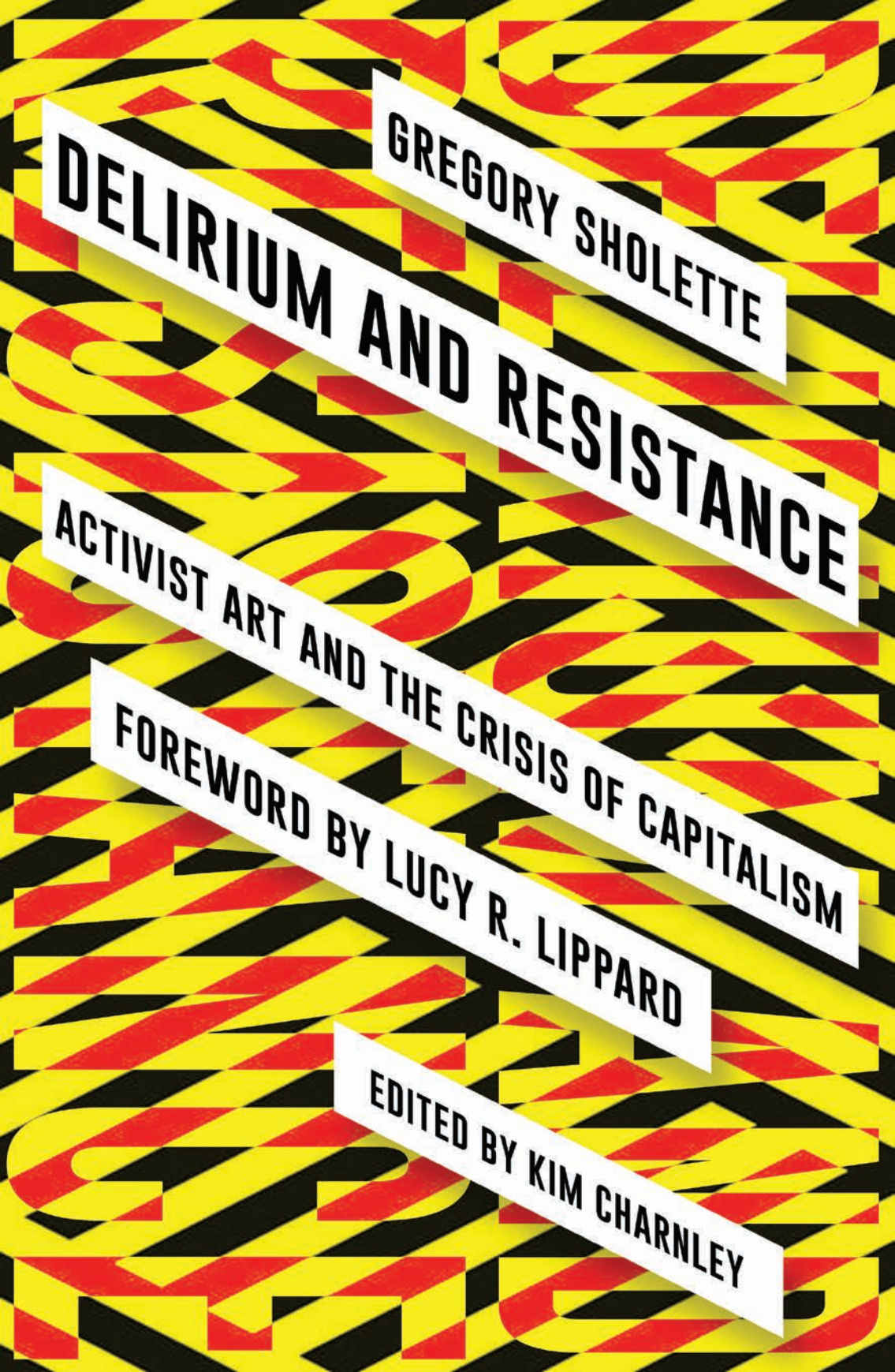
GREGORY SHOLETTE
DELIRIUM AND RESISTANCE
ACTIVIST ART AND THE CRISIS OF CAPITALISM
FOREWORD BY LUCY R. LIPPARD
EDITED BY KIM CHARNLEY

Part II

Cities without Souls

Introduction II: Naturalizing the Revanchist City

The rebuilding of public spaces since the 1980s shows signs of the same homogenizing forces of redevelopment … smooth[ing] the uneven layers of grit and glamour, swe[eping] away traces of contentious history … This is another way the city loses its soul.

Sharon Zukin[1]

Aggressive mimicry often involves the predator employing signals which draw its potential prey towards it, a strategy which allows predators to simply sit and wait for prey to come to them.[2]

Romulus broke down and wept at Remus' funeral.[3]

The emergence of a distinct art activist scene in New York City in the 1980s was closely related to a gradual recognition of, or perhaps refusal to accept, artists' involvement in processes of gentrification. The relationship between art and gentrification is now widely acknowledged, and it is a feature of all global cities. However, New York has become the most cited example of the volatile combination of utopianism and artistic careerism that fuels gentrification, and accompanied a wave of young, white and primarily middle-class newcomers as they took up residence in the economically impoverished and ethnically diverse neighborhoods of Manhattan island in the early 1980s. The artists' communities in SoHo, and then the East Village, seem to have made way for the "regeneration" of inner-city neighborhoods, which, in the process, displaced existing communities. This pattern has since been reproduced in other boroughs of New York, and in major cities of the world, as artists are increasingly considered integral to urban regeneration. At the same time, artists and other creative laborers have proven a willingness to critique, protest, boycott and occupy neoliberal institutions and policies. The essays collected in Part II situate my work in this particular place and time, as a member of the art "gentry" and one of its critics, while noting the shift in urban mythology from a feral, post-industrial city, to the present-day creative city where nature and the remnants of an industrial past are symbolically reconciled, as attractions for tourists, investors and an expanding urban gentry, sometimes giving rise to moments of upheaval and resistance.

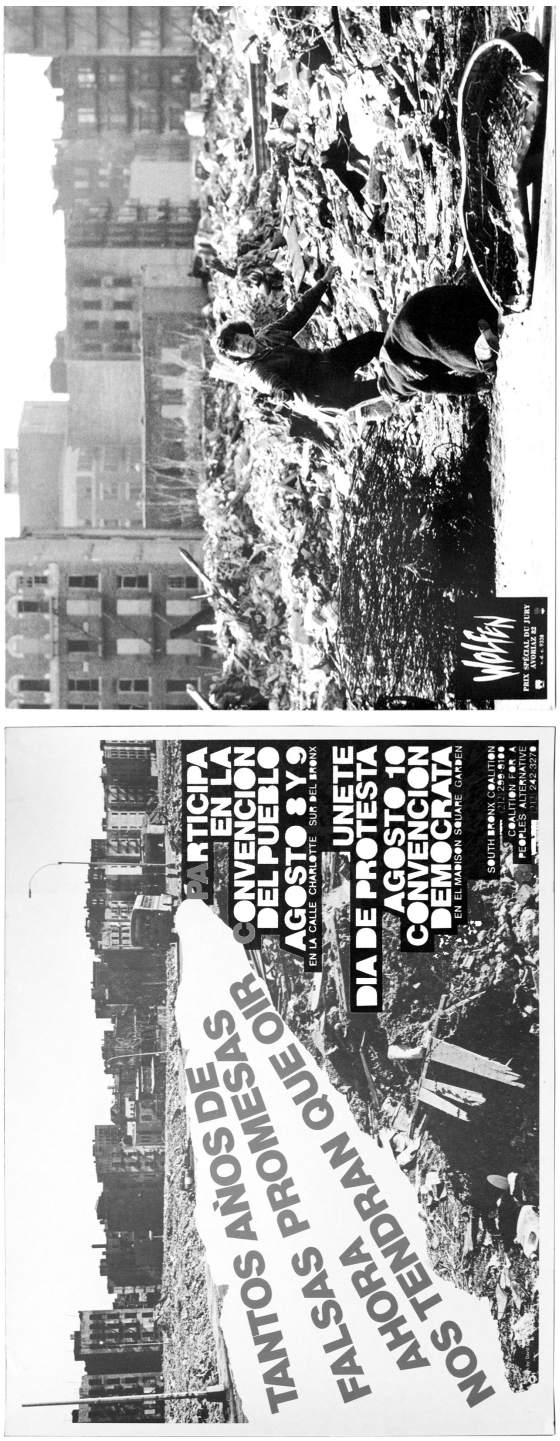

Figure 14 *Every Crack is a Symbol*, a mixed-media video installation by Emanuel Almborg incorporating footage from the 1981 film *Wolfen* (2015) (Video still E. Almborg)

Unnatural City

For three eight-hour days in May, 1974 German artist Joseph Beuys confined himself with a living coyote to a secure enclosure inside the René Block Gallery in Southern Manhattan. Beuys was engaged in fieldwork, writes Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes, transforming art into "applied or active/activist anthropology."[4] In one photograph, shot towards the end of the piece we see man and canid lying side-by-side and looking out the window like a couple of warm, mammalian siblings.[5] This was the point in the project where the beast is said to have grown docile after hours spent in Beuys' shaman-like presence. (Still, just as the artist is seen wearing his signature felt hat, so too is his heavy wooden shepherd's staff visible close at hand.) But other than this one view out the window, Beuys allegedly saw very little of New York. As per his instructions, the artist was hustled from the airport by ambulance, wrapped entirely in felt, and taken directly to the gallery enclosure. He later returned for his flight back to Germany in exactly the same fashion. What he did not see therefore was a city on the brink of bankruptcy, its infrastructure in ruins and increasingly abandoned by race-panicked White European-Americans.

A little over one year after Beuys's *I Like America and America Likes Me* performance piece, President Gerald Ford publicly rejected bailing out the largest municipality in the country, leading the tabloid *Daily News* to declare "Ford To City: Drop Dead." Once a deal was struck, however, it required austerity measures that included freezing the salaries of city employees, closing hospitals, libraries and fire stations, and raising public transportation fares to make way for the new masters of the city, the Finance, Insurance and Real Estate industries, or simply FIRE. These same policies would later be expanded and applied to the entire US and UK economies under President Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, often understood as watershed moment of neoliberal economic policy. In other words, the founding of the *new* New York City came at the expense of trade unions, the working poor and the public sector. But unlike the she-wolf's foster child Remus, no public officials wept as they vanished from the city, cleansed to make way for high net worth individuals, as the FIRE economy fundamentally changed the class composition of the city.

The first chapter of Part II, on gentrification, entitled "Nature as an Icon of Urban Resistance on NYC's Lower East Side, 1979–1984" (chapter 4) was written in 1997 for the journal *Afterimage*. It addresses the hopes and paradoxes of activist art in the pre-gentrified and ethnically diverse 1980s Manhattan neighborhood where I lived when I first came to New York.

Without lionizing the various but too-few efforts at resistance against gentrification and displacement by artists, the chapter attempts to map out the way several specific projects engage with images of the natural world in order to make sense of the city, or to critique the failing world of urban capitalism. One of the projects discussed took place in the early hours of 1980 when a group of artists from the COLAB (Collaborative Projects) collective broke into a city-warehoused[6] building on the Lower East Side and installed an impromptu exhibition called the Real Estate Show. Before the day was over, the NYPD had shut down the illegal squat gallery. As it happened, Joseph Beuys was back in New York for his Guggenheim Museum retrospective. After the German celebrity took part in a press conference in support of the shuttered exhibition an embarrassed Mayor Ed Koch relented, eventually giving the COLAB artists another nearby location to reinstall their project. The Real Estate Show reopened a few weeks later with Rebecca Howland's street drawing of a monstrous white octopus crushing tenement buildings pasted on the façade, an image exemplifying the participating artists' hostility to both municipal policies of urban abandonment and commercial strategies of property speculation.

Political Art Documentation/Distribution (PAD/D) soon picked up where the Real Estate Show left off, mounting the Not For Sale street art project in 1984 that not only protested gentrification but explicitly linked the phenomenon to the rise of the entrepreneurial East Village art scene on New York's Lower East Side (which was, we insisted, "not for sale"). "Nature as an Icon of Urban Resistance" (chapter 4) tries to catch sight of a future city that is as different as can be from the present revanchist, neoliberal model. Resistance, it seems to propose, will come in the form of an inner-city zone of autonomy, informally organized by a scruffy cadre of long-term residents, housing activists, progressive artists and an intransigent detachment of persistent vegetation and animals that, despite all odds, continue to thrive at the margins. For some eight years PAD/D generated art for political demonstrations, published a newsletter, hosted monthly public forums and did all of this with virtually no public funding relying instead primarily on the volunteer labor of its activist art membership.

PAD/D's activities wound down in 1988, just as the Cold War was coming to an end and NYC's gentrification stepped up apace with an event that even the *New York Times* described as a "police riot," as dozens of NYPD assaulted squatters and homeless people living in Tompkins Square Park.[7] One could easily describe the horror of that day as a wolfpack in blue uniforms turned loose upon their prey, precisely the words written on an anti-police brutality protest sign only one year after Richard Luke,

a 25-year-old black man, was killed by white officers in Queens, New York. The wolfpack "in blue" description was itself a cutting reference to the media's portrayal of five young men of color falsely accused of beating and raping a white jogger one month earlier on April 19, 1989. The media condemned the Central Park Five, describing their activity as "wilding." It was not until DNA tests proved their innocence 13 years later that forced confessions by police were targeted as endemic facets of racial profiling by the NYPD.[8] Thus, in more ways than one, a baleful bestiality seemed to lurk within the New York City of the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s.

Feral City

The image of a coyote gazing out at skyscrapers evoked the loss of connection to the natural environment: the wound that Beuys's activist-ethnography was intended to locate, perhaps to heal. Ironically, as the city continues to gentrify, the rats, pigeons, roaches and other scavenging species of the financially deteriorated 1970s and 1980s have been forced to make room for animals better known in rural settings, including deer, raccoons, skunk, opossum, the occasional black bear and, of course, coyotes. On Staten Island, white-tailed deer populations have risen over 3000% in six years, and the Gotham Coyote Project now tracks a couple of dozen animals that first moved to the Bronx around 2006 and have now fanned out into other boroughs. In 2015 one coyote even wandered about the Chelsea art district in Manhattan, an unknowing tribute to the nameless creature who performed alongside of Beuys almost four decades earlier.[9] Coyote populations have also been established in Chicago and Pittsburgh, two cities discussed in Part II.

This resurgence of urban-based wildlife—which may be due to increasing maintenance of city parks—has given rise to nature tourism in the form of guided walking tours and family kayaking trips. Vanished from the 2016 New York City is the image of a wild malevolent jungle with its obvious racialized undertones. Gone too are the Wild West "trail blazers" who "tamed, domesticated and polished" various rundown neighborhoods, as one full-page 1983 real estate advertisement in the *New York Times* proclaimed (by now these "settlers" have probably fled escalating rents and the city's colorless docility). What remains is itself like a sci-fi movie, a parallel urban universe completely removed from any future that might have been extrapolated from the devastated 1970s or 1980s. Unreal nature in a real 1980s city has become today real nature in an unreal city.

One symbol of this urbanized nature stands out above all other contenders: New York City's High Line Park.[10] Covered in wildflowers, ailanthus trees and carpets of weeds, an abandoned mid-nineteenth-century elevated railway in Lower Manhattan served—like so many forsaken parts of the city once did—as the illicit destination for graffiti artists, photographers, informal urban explorers, as well as homeless people, drug users, runaways and prostitutes. In 2009, it was repurposed into a city park by a team of architects, designers and engineers using funds drawn from both public and private sources. Less than a decade later the High Line has become a prime global tourist attraction as well as the anchor for a burst of nearby real estate development, including luxury condominiums, upscale hotels and restaurants, blue-chip art galleries and the new Renzo Piano designed Whitney Museum art building. Not surprisingly, the High Line's elevation of a cultivated wild space set above urban commotion, as well as its seemingly magical powers of spillover regeneration, has spawned copies elsewhere. London's proposed Garden Bridge follows the NYC prototype by pooling sizable sums of public money with privately raised capital in a project that will regularly shut down for private events. Similar endeavors are planned in Philadelphia, Chicago, Sydney and Rotterdam.

The return of nature to the neoliberal city has an obvious ideological message: urban space has erased the past and achieved an uncanny urban pastoral, or neoliberal eudaimonia. The violence of the city has been tamed, at least on an aesthetic level. Of course, the obverse of this tranquility is the experience of the working-class, marginalized populations who were once subjected to racialized imagery of the urban "jungle" or the "frontier," and have been replaced by another "nature," one that has been cleansed of all antagonism, , as if performing a semiotic inversion of Rosalyne Deutsche's critical observation from the early 1980s that the city was *socially* cleansing public spaces of unwanted humans, including of course the homeless.[11]

Within a few decades of the urban devastation that I witnessed in the early 1980s a new metropolis emerged that did not completely erase the past, but rather encapsulated this malignant history as a souvenir for memory-wiped gentry. The third essay in Part II, from 2004, acknowledged that the battle to realize a non-gentrified *city from below* had, for the moment, already failed. "Mysteries of the Creative Class, or, I Have Seen the Enemy and They Is Us" (chapter 5) is almost unique amongst my writings in so far as its sardonic, first-person voice addresses my own return to NYC after several years of teaching in Chicago. In it I am confronted with the reality of what Neil Smith called the revanchist city whose elite retaliate toward those they

are displacing by seemingly crying out: "Who lost the city? And on whom is revenge to be exacted?"[12]

"Mysteries of the Creative Class" addresses the predicament of being a socially engaged artist in a city metamorphosing into an enormous gated community for the ultra-wealthy. I write with alarm that I encountered the visage of a city that I once knew which is now "being transmuted from lead to gold," a process of alchemical conversion affecting both its physical and mnemonic traces of the past.[13] Such profound disenchantment is not mine alone. Richard D. Lloyd's neo-bohemia is a soulless theme park; Martha Rosler's reclaimed city is saturated with "naturalized creativity and hipster-friendly memes"; while Sharon Zukin's *Naked City* has simply lost its soul.[14]

Nonetheless, "Mysteries of the Creative Class" does at least manage to wind up with a positive thought experiment—one that seems to anticipate events in Zuccotti Park some eight years later. At the conclusion of the essay I imagine the recently built Millennium Hotel suddenly occupied by its own service workers acting in cahoots with luxury establishment's creative class clientele:

> The bartenders and the brass polishers and cooks, the laundresses and bell hops throw down their aprons and spatulas to join in mutinous celebration with artists, web designers and musicians. Raiding the wine cellar, they open up all 33 executive-style conference rooms, set up a free health clinic in the lobby, transform the hotel into an autonomous broadcasting tower and party in a universe of creative dark matter.[15]

The insurrection finally came in the Fall of 2011; a rebel festival swiftly spreading across the US and into other countries (but also preceded by uprisings in public squares from Cairo and Madrid to Athens and Tunisia) as the contradictions within different sectors of unemployed people following the 2008 financial crisis turned into a wave of protests targeting economic austerity and neoliberal policies more generally. Particularly visible in Occupy Walls Street (OWS) was the so-called Creative Class. The penultimate essay of Part II, "Occupology, Swarmology, Whateverology" (chapter 6), returns to the theme of the surplus archive explored in *Dark Matter* (see chapter 9) by proposing that a type of *archival agency* was at work within OWS. This archival activation generated speculative expectations simply by constituting a massive assemblage of once-shadowy productivity and resistance now brought into light in the present. Ultimately I suggest that Zuccotti Park's cardboard encampment with its inventory of

no political demands and its free OWS library existed in a state of creative lawlessness temporarily at odds with neoliberal capital and its revanchist urban policies, but with a definite desire, if unknown trajectory, towards the future. Those on Wall Street took singular advantage of the massive *Charging Bull* sculpture located close to the New York Stock Exchange; intended to be an icon of capitalist perseverance following the 1987 Black Friday market collapse, it is primarily a favorite with selfie-snapping tourists (though it is assigned a 24/7 NYPD guard detachment). Some credit the occupation of Zuccotti Park as inspired by a poster of a woman striking a ballet pose atop the masculinist beast's back. The poster was created by the Canadian culture-jamming group Adbusters and, as Yates McKee writes, it graphically flipped the bronze bovine's power "against itself in what would become the foundational meme of Occupy Wall Street."[13] In any case, the pro-capitalist metallic creature remains standing as if it were also an uncanny, burnished totemic counterpart to the actual return of abundant animal life in the new New York City.[17]

Repurposing the Wolfen

Creatively reusing the past is a paradigm well suited to an era where no vision of the future sits on the collective horizon: this is the secret of our own time, of course. In order to understand the banal utopia of the neoliberal city historically, I will return to 1980, the year the filmmaker Michael Wadleigh began shooting a film adaptation of horror novelist Witney Streiber's story *The Wolfen* on East 172nd Street in the South Bronx, an area of the borough so damaged from neglect that, a few years prior to this, a German film crew used it as the set for a movie about the firebombing of Dresden in 1945.[18] In retrospect one can see how this odd urban thriller, retitled simply *Wolfen*, captured the vertiginous transition of a crumbling working-class city that would later be reborn as an ultra-gentrified metropolis, a neo-Bohemian enclave celebrating creative workers and delirious development schemes benefitting the global elites. As a historical document the film shows the sheer scale of destruction that had been wreaked on the city by de-industrialization and calculated neglect.

Wolfen's plot parallels such post-war cinematic terror films as Jacques Tourneur's neo-gothic *Night of the Demon*, Don Siegel's paranoiac *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and Nigel Kneal's sci-fi *Quatermass* series in so far as scientifically minded skeptical protagonists gradually acknowledge the presence of a menacing, unnatural force capable of disturbing the normal course of everyday things. But while 1950s popular culture often addressed

anxieties over communist infiltration or homosexual contamination, *Wolfen* appeared at a time when the left, both old and new, was in decline and as identity politics rather than international class struggle was on the rise. By the early 1980s, not only had Keynesian policies of social spending failed to stabilize the economy, but also much of the leftist organizational energy stemming from 1968 was either being consumed by factionalism or disintegrating in the face of a well-funded right-wing backlash. To many, this political and cultural entropy found expression in crumbling post-industrial cities whose metonym was the South Bronx. Whatever *Wolfen*'s menace was, it did not come from without, but from within a space of a decomposing unreality, one that is nevertheless fully enclosed within the logic of capitalist crisis.[19]

The movie's narrative is set in motion by the execution-like slayings of a wealthy, Donald Trump-like developer, his trophy wife, and bodyguard, all gruesomely beheaded with near-surgical precision. Police begin to suspect a terrorist conspiracy. My memory is that this scene symbolically played out the racial and class resentment many New Yorkers felt at the time towards the white establishment elite. And, while the organized New Left was in disarray and decline, 1981 was far from lacking in militant left politics, though of a highly factional nature. For example, that year saw the bombing of a bathroom at JFK airport by the Puerto Rican Resistance Army, the kidnapping of a US Army general in Italy by Red Brigades, and the armed robbery of an armored van just north of New York by a black splinter group of the Weather Underground known as the May 19th Communist Party that included three fatalities among bank guards and police. *Wolfen*'s terror, however, turns on a different threat. In a pivotal scene, the lead police investigator (Albert Finney) enters a smoke-filled bar frequented by Native Americans. Physically enervated by false leads, more killings and a close encounter with the killer whose identity has left him stunned, he is warned by an older man (Apache actor Dehl Berti) that what he is after is in fact an ancient race of wolf-like predators who once lived alongside indigenous humans, hunting with them. It was only later, after Europeans arrived, that the smartest went underground to feed on the homeless or the addicted among urban decay in "the new wilderness: your cities … the great slum areas, the graveyards of your fucking species … in their eyes, you are the savage."[20]

In their canny collaborative essay, "Werewolf Hunger (New York, 1970s)," cultural theorists Alberto Toscano and Jeff Kinkle persuasively argue that *Wolfen* represents a "critical moment in the collapse of radical politics and the emergence of a feral neoliberalism against a backdrop of urban

dereliction and real estate speculation."[21] I am going to spend a bit of time building on their interpretation, not only because the film's anti-capitalist imagery stayed with me for decades after first seeing it during the year of its release, but also because, like Toscano and Kinkle, when looking at issues of gentrification some 35 years on—a timeframe that runs almost parallel with the introduction of economic austerity measures, deregulation and privatization in NYC and elsewhere—*Wolfen* appears as an ever more prophetic statement.[22]

The film certainly captures themes present in the four chapters that make up Part II of this book, including the place of naturalized (and unnatural) white anxiety about what is lurking in the failed post-industrial city, as well as the figure of the artist, who appears sometimes as gentrifier or capitalist regenerator, and at other times as an activist and an angry spirit of marginalized resistance just biding his/her time for the day of revenge. In Toscano and Kinkle's reading, the Wolfen are an ambivalent resistant subject that rises up against capital. *Wolfen*'s political unconscious—to apply Jameson's hermeneutic—portrays a world teetering on the point of implosion from every possible angle. Pointing to the physically fatigued white police detective, Toscano and Kinkle observe that every character in the movie appears worn out, including the city, which is surrounded by an "exhausted working-class and radical left."[23] In fact, almost all of the characters in *Wolfen* will be dead or might as well be. As another Native American played by Edward James Olmos says ominously to protagonist Finny, "you don't have the eyes of the hunter, you have the eyes of the dead," but he could also be talking about capitalism in 1981. Toscano and Kinkle, however interpret the Wolfen as akin to gentrifying artists who move into the run-down inner cities in search of low-cost housing, only to become "unwitting collaborators with capital." Artists exploit the weak and clear away debris, thus preparing neighborhoods for development, before they themselves are displaced later on. Therefore, what Finny saw, Toscano and Kinkle suggest, was "not the shock troops of gentrification, but its janitorial squadron."

And yet, as an artist living in NYC during *Wolfen*'s summertime premiere, my reading is somewhat different. It's not so much that Toscano and Kinkle get it all "wrong," they just don't allow the movie's political unconscious to fully play itself out. I recall not a sense of shock while viewing *Wolfen*'s docu-depiction of the South Bronx, but of familiarity. That devastated neighborhood closely resembled my own on the Lower East Side, a partially ruined zone where the carcasses of overturned, tireless cars accompanied collapsed buildings filled with refuse that nonetheless served as impromptu

homeless shelters and shooting galleries for heroin addicts, later to become crack-smoking dens in a year or two. While artists undoubtedly played their part in regenerating these spaces, helping sweep in the no-collar creative class and FIRE economy, they almost always found themselves in turn the victims of its machine-like processes of displacement and expulsion. In addition, some artists, though certainly too few, attempted to fight back against these circumstances.

On several occasions Toscano and Kinkle seek to answer a central question, "The South Bronx and Wall Street, what's the connection?"[24] In Wadleigh's film, the speculator breaking ground for the construction of a luxury high-rise located inside the Wolfen's South Bronx hunting grounds instigates their ruthless retaliation. This is the ostensible reason he is hunted down and exterminated. However, intentionally or not, the filmmaker also establishes a conspicuous symmetry, linking two unproductive surplus populations: the class of wealthy speculators, financiers, rentier-capitalists and pseudo-aristocratic social freeloaders who skim value off the top of society while adding little or nothing back to it, and the sick and dispossessed whose failed lives bear the brunt of capitalism's failure. Thus the ruined South Bronx of 1981 and Wall Street connect at the level of cultural signification.

Toscano and Kinkle are right, therefore, when they identify the movie as an oblique treatise on the arrival of what we now call neoliberalism, with its privatization schemes, gated communities and aggressive enclosing of the commons, but, rather than the beasts signifying merely the feral counterparts of self-serving artists and *creatives*, Wadleigh's depiction of the Wolfen is far more ambivalent. It is important to note that the Wolfen kill without prejudice or remorse, much as Nietzsche's amoral beasts in *Beyond Good and Evil* devour weaker prey. They appear to be a force of nature that transcends humanity, like the Big Other of Jacques Lacan's symbolic order, a sort of impersonal superego "that relieves us of responsibility for what we desire" theorist Marc James Léger remarks, with reference to certain forms of community art practice.[25] In this repurposed scheme, as Toscano and Kinkle propose, the Wolfen are artists foraging at the edges of a ruined capitalist city, but these monsters also mark the otherness of capital as nature, red in tooth and claw; its thing-like drive that is inherently alien to life. In this sense the artist-Wolfen play Renfield to Dracula, promised eternal life in a delirious space where Wall Street and the South Bronx, the center and periphery, are impossibly conjoined on East 172nd Street, in an uncanny spatial collision where capital's normally hidden contradictions become visible in vertiginous free-fall.

Wadleigh goes to some lengths to show us the beasts at home within this breach. Thanks to infrared heat-sensitive film we "see" with the predator's preternatural vision as they stalk us from a hallucinatory *near-beyond* just adjacent to our own world. Before the movie ends, we witness a zoologist, the chief of police and the city coroner meet the same end as the fated tycoon van der Veer. Tellingly, Finney's character survives the massacre, first by casting rationality aside, and then, with head almost bowed, by accepting not only the fact that the Wolfen exist, but that they, and not the police, or intelligentsia or financial elites, are the city's truly uncontested top predators. Toscano and Kinkle conclude their allegorical reading by stating that: "what lies in tatters beneath the rubble is the precarious social-democratic compact of postwar New York City. What rises in its wake is a city where the memories have largely been wiped and the ruins elided, the unrestrained voraciousness of capital now but an everyday appetite."[26]

The placid wanderers of the High Line need to be read through, or understood as, the ciphers of the Wolfen's predatory subjectivity. Werewolf hunger has become an "everyday appetite," in the sense that it is equally banal and aestheticized, though it continues to tear capitalist sociality apart from the inside and brings us to another moment of disintegration. It is not only artists, but a pervasive class consciousness that is marked by this contradiction: a simultaneous avid competition with and contemplation of nature.

Regenerating Cities without Souls

A principal concern of the final text of Part II is to look at how the displacement from art into life, or perhaps more accurately art into capitalism, has led to disputes and encounters with labor unions, financial administrators, the law, police, and other social agencies typically located outside the literal and historical boundaries of a work of art. "Art after Gentrification," concludes Part II by focusing on three recent socially engaged art projects in which a contemporary art aesthetic breathes new life into existing, frequently failed urban structures mixed with creative industry business enterprises. But it also reflects on the prominence and challenges faced by social practice artists who are now selectively being recognized by the art world mainstream, even as states and municipalities appear increasingly incapable of either governing or reasonably managing the social sphere, as accelerating urban gentrification makes apparent.

The first case study examines Assemble, a London-based designer-collective and their collaborative regeneration project in a devastated

neighborhood in Liverpool, England. Following the analysis of Assemble, I present an evaluation of Theaster Gates and his work, including Dorchester Projects, the South Side Chicago art enterprise that is poised for replication in economically challenged cities around the globe. The chapter concludes with an appraisal of Conflict Kitchen in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, an art project that has morphed into a successful fast-food business in a city rated by the Movoto real estate brokerage firm as one of America's top ten most creative cities.[27] The link between creative industries, gentrification and upper-class indignation is not a simple one, and it has taken years to come into focus. Still, as early as 1984, Rosalyn Deutsch and Cara Gendel Ryan formulated an answer to a question not yet asked. The primary target of the affluent urban gentry is "directed against those who will never serve the interests of 'postindustrial' society, as either workers or consumers." It is a retribution that carries with it "the

Figure 15 *Gentrification*, drawing on paper, © Peter Kuper, 1984
(Image P. Kuper)

full vengeance of two hundred years of capitalism," in which, as Deutsch and Ryan pointed out decades ago: "people, dwelling in the lower strata of what Marx identified as capital's surplus population, are [viewed as] victims 'chiefly' of their own 'incapacity for adaptation,' an incapacity which results from the division of labor."[28]

Or, as then NYC Mayor Ed Koch is alleged to have put it, "If you can't afford to live here, mo-o-ove!"[29] Meanwhile, the fetishization of the wild and untamed within the ultra-gentrified metropolis, like a saccharine reworking of the city's *Wolfen* past, is served up in a pastoral, family-friendly Disney movie manner for the tourists, city-boosters, FIRE denizens, and the elite glitterati. Its version of urban nature is grafted seamlessly onto the fossilized remnants of a now-distant, troubled past to emerge as a resplendent, made-to-order enclave for the twenty-first-century ruling classes and their administrators. The dark side, as Saskia Sassen and Neil Smith have noted, is that the neoliberal city's gentrifying policies are vengeful, predatory expulsions, not merely "displacements," to adopt the less brutal sounding and preferred terminology of the creative economy. Because once victims are "displaced," the truth is they can no longer return.[30] And so perhaps Beuys was right (or was it Romulus?), to think beyond present contradictions—of capitalist cities and failed nations, of class divisions and socially engaged collective art—is to lead us back into a world of feral signifiers and rough beasts, slouching and scavenging about the margins of the "new normal" crisis economy, a repurposed predatory art species ideally suited to this time and this place.

Soulless City Limits

On October 29, 2012, the largest hurricane of its type on record struck the New York region, killing 233 people and causing some $75 billion in property damage. "Superstorm Sandy" shifted the discourse around sustainability and the city's collective future. That we now face amplified natural forces made catastrophic through anthropocenic human intervention is without doubt. And yet, if Sandy was this decade's "Big Other," made all the more monstrous by surplus carbon emissions and negligent governmental politics, its uncontrollable terror was prophesied by other, man-made creations run-amok, including the legendary Golem, and Shelley's tragically reanimated experiment in *Frankenstein*. While the storm, like the Wolfen, dealt its fury evenly to both wealthy and poor neighborhoods of the city, those with fewer resources suffered longer, more severe periods of

post-disaster rehabilitation. In response, post-Occupy Wall Street activists, including many artists, mobilized to voluntarily fulfil civic obligations in low-income storm-damaged neighborhoods that the city, state and federal governments were, unlike Rome's mythic she-wolf, simply incapable or unwilling to care for.

4
Nature as an Icon of Urban Resistance on NYC's Lower East Side, 1979–1984*

The state of this Lower East Side of New York City provides pictures for painters, operas for actors and poets from urban shambles of a slum where monstrous inequity is met with savagery, a nearly perfect specimen of malignant city life … yet this neighborhood has also functioned as a cultural insulator. Within it bosom minority cultures have remained intact, and new ideas have incubated.

Alan Moore[1]

Urban cycles of decline, decay, and abandonment followed by rebirth through rehabilitation, renovation, and reconstruction may appear to be natural processes. In fact however, the fall and rise of cities are consequences not only of financial and productive cycles and state fiscal crises but also of deliberate social policy.

Martha Rosler[2]

Loisaida's wounds are bandaged with posters, stencils, and graffiti that bear witness to the internal struggles and triumphs of its diverse populace.

Lucy R. Lippard[3]

Metaphors of urban decay and trauma, but also of rebirth and incubation suggest natural processes above all. Likewise in pulp fiction, detective novels and *film noir* cinema the city often appears as a malevolent creature whose effect on humans is typically corrupting. And yet, as Martha Rosler points out, urban cycles of expansion and contraction, construction and demolition, are anything but natural phenomena. Why then does the naturalization of culture, and in particular the representation of the inner city as natural forms or processes, so often appear in the work of artists? In this chapter I look the figurative use of "nature" in the work of several visual artists and artists' groups active on the Lower East Side of Manhattan from

* This chapter was first published in 1997.

Figure 16 Becky Howland' s photocopied flyer for The Real Estate Show, 1980 (Image B. Howland)

the late 1970s to the mid 1980s. What makes these artists' works cohere is that each uses natural iconography—nature as image or as idea—to critically respond to the entwined processes of real estate speculation and class displacement known as gentrification, while effectively treating the neighborhood itself as a thing brimming with "malignant city life."[4]

By and large the work examined below was initially seen in outdoor locations, often on abandoned buildings. These "street" settings presented their own artificial ecology, where competing species of images inhabited an environment of licit and illicit visual noise that included: wheatpasted hand bills, commercial advertising, signage from retail businesses, fluorescent graffiti, as well as stencils and posters, some of which also presented anti-gentrification messages to the public. One response to urban speculation involves satirizing the naturalizing language of the real estate industry itself. Through advertisements and press releases, land developers, speculators and even the city administrators described low-income neighborhoods like Hell's Kitchen or the Lower East Side as "untamed territories" where upwardly mobile white renters were called on to serve as "trail blazers" or "urban pioneers."[5] The other way artists "naturalized" or challenged the

myths surrounding gentrification on the Lower East Side is less straightforward. It involves what Craig Owens described as a search "for lost difference [that] has become the primary activity of the contemporary avant-garde." Owens's critical remarks were aimed at the shallowness of the East Village art scene in the early 1980s which: "seeks out and develops more and more resistant areas of social life for mass-cultural consumption."[6]

Owens's acerbic analysis frames in historical terms what he called the "shifting alliances" between artists and other social groups, by comparing the fascination of the 1980s avant-garde with the "racial and ethnic, deviant and delinquent subcultures" of the Lower East Side to the infatuation of a previous avant-garde with the "ragpickers, streetwalkers and street entertainers" of mid-nineteenth-century Paris. Yet, despite Owens's important insights, he misses some of the irony generated by the artist's role in gentrification. For example, Owens applies arguments made by Thomas Crow in his essay "Modernism and Mass Culture" to the phenomena of the East Village art scene. Crow understands what he terms "resistant subcultures" to be the source material for high-art avant-garde recycling. But like Crow, Owens also bestows upon these marginalized groups an "original force and integrity" that is later appropriated by high art and turned into a commodity, thus tacitly investing subcultures and marginalized communities with an exploitable, organic richness manifested as "difference."[7]

Against the "puerilism" of the East Village art scene, Owens champions the anti-gentrification imagery produced by members of Political Art Documentation/Distribution (PAD/D), a project that I helped organize in 1983–1984, and which I detail below. Yet in describing PAD/D's work as "mobilize[ing] resistance against the political and economic interests which East Village art serves,"[8] Owens fails to notice the way the same search for "lost difference" also operated within progressive cultural formations, including the work of PAD/D, even if this longing occasioned more reflexive practices, as I hope to reveal. In various and often unexpected ways, therefore, the work under consideration naturalizes urban culture, extending this process to all parts of the Lower East Side, including the streets, the political economy, the history and even the heterogeneous population of the neighborhood. Within the work of these artists, "Loisaida" (as the local Latino population called the region, based on a 1974 poem by Nuyorican writer "Bimbo" Rivas) is represented variously as an endangered species or as one that is biologically out of control; a tableau in which predators and prey are locked in a primeval struggle; a cyclical organic process revealed to be man-made; or a corrupted ecological utopia in need of liberation. It is this last instance

that I will turn to in my conclusion, when examining some of the art from the late 1990s that reworks the ecological themes of the last decade but so far remains primarily wedded to art world display.

Malignant City

Like myself, many of the artists immigrating to the Lower East Side in the mid to late 1970s were voluntary refugees from the managed communities of New Jersey, Long Island or towns in the Mid-West or California, places where life's rough edges and natural disorder had been displaced in favor of the regularity of landscaped yards, shopping malls and parking lots. To these children, whose parents had themselves fled the cities, the mix of Afro-Caribbean, European and Asian cultures proved enduringly vital, despite the crumbling tenement buildings and empty lots. In many places the Lower East Side circa 1979 indeed looked like a B-movie version of life amid the ruins of a nuclear or ecological catastrophe. Overturned cars, resembling animal carcasses, with their chassis' stripped of parts, were strewn along the sides of streets, especially on the alphabet avenues B, C and most of all D. Burnt-out or demolished properties cut spaces between tenement buildings. These openings became filled with rubble, trashed appliances, syringes, condoms, as well as pigeons, and rats. Often they appeared to be returning to a state of wilderness as weeds and fast-growing locust trees began to sprout from the piles of fallen bricks and mortar. Along some stretches of avenues B, C and D there were more square feet of this antediluvian-looking scenery than there was extant architecture.

Still, residents in this predominantly Hispanic community could be seen organizing gardens amid the rubble and hurrying in and out of tenements to work (always elsewhere), fetch food or to go to a social clubs. In the summer, older Ukrainian men played checkers in Tompkins Square, while the women would sit together on the opposite side of the park conversing near kids dressed in black leather with Mohawk haircuts, the remnants of an already fading punk scene. Both groups shared their space with street vendors, graffito writers and children chilling in opened fire hydrants. Always a conga drum sounded, meting out a near 24-hour pulse. Even the neighborhood's ethnic and cultural vitality could be read as a dense forest of signs where typographical tracings, some in Spanish or English but others in Hebrew, Chinese or Slavic characters, overlapped on brick or stucco walls and in shop windows. Along with this melange of texts was the visual chaos of newsstands, billboards, wheatpasted handbills, graffiti, political slogans and murals that depicted angry looking brown or yellow workers

raising their fists. The total effect was that of a mongrel thing: part living, part mineralized ruin, part text, but always more authentically "natural" than the genteel communities of either SoHo or Nassau County. Before discussing the art in detail, let me present a highly abbreviated history of the neighborhood and the arrival of a new wave of artists beginning in the late 1970s.

The Anti-suburb

Celebrated by many who were raised on the Lower East Side, this working-class neighborhood formed the first home to generations of Americans entering the United States beginning in the 1850s. Along with consecutive waves of Irish, Germans, Italians, and later eastern European Jews, Chinese, Puerto Ricans, it was also a place where the artistic avant-garde—from the publishers of the radical paper *The Masses* to the first cooperative galleries to the Beat poets—flourished alongside one another. Like an American Left Bank, it was here that aspiring actors and artists drank coffee, ate ethnic foods and encountered the urban poor, the chemically dependent and the slumlord.

By the late 1960s the Lower East Side was still a place for political activists, small businesses, hippies, Yippies and junkies, and a vibrant Hispanic culture (mostly Puerto Rican but also Dominican) of social clubs, sidewalk domino games, botanicas and bodegas. At this point the falling property values sped on by bank red-lining and municipal neglect, made much of the intact rental property a target for arson, as some landlords who preferred insurance money over some unlikely rise in property values contracted for the destruction of their own miserable investments.

Then, in the latter half of the 1970s, came a new wave of young immigrants. Many of these young people who moved to the streets west of the Bowery, south of 14th street, and north of Delancey were artists—a class of individuals traditionally willing to forgo bourgeois comforts, even risk their safety, in the pursuit of two goals. One of these was to be discovered in the traditional manner by a patron, a ticket out of the East Village for the lucky few. The other hope was to come into contact with something authentic, such as the imagined organic quality of other peoples (ethnic) communities. However, the national and regional economy of the 1970s was in a virtual depression and the low-income areas of the city were the worst hit. This malaise was reflected in the *fin-de-siècle* spirit of the art and club scene in the Lower East Side. Downward mobility caused by high unemployment and a tight money supply literally cut off any route

leading out of low-rent neighborhoods and back into the middle class (at least until the boom years of the mid 1980s, and then at the price of 70-hour work-weeks).

Yet in spite of this sense of "zero" options, combined with such ominous signs as the energy "crisis," when people shot each other at gas stations, or the unprecedented global nuclear build-up of the 1970s, the punk years were filled with a sense of macabre festivity. As one observer put it:

> The first generation to grow up under the specter of nuclear annihilation angrily came of age in an era of diminishing expectations. It was in this atmosphere that a rock club CBGB opened in New York's East Village [in 1975] … CBGB launched the punk movement, and it's no coincidence that many of the early punks looked like survivors from a nuclear holocaust.[10]

Ronald Reagan became the Republican presidential contender in 1979, offering steep tax cuts for the wealthy, and promising a demolition of the liberal welfare state established after the Great Depression of the 1930s. Dubbed "Supply Side Economics," Reagan's policies were interpreted by the working classes and poor as little more than trickle-down leftovers, and unending attacks on the social safety net. Today we refer to this ultra-free-market outlook as neoliberalism, in which the deregulation of markets, and the privatization of public assets go hand in hand to move capital up the class ladder. But in 1980 the former Hollywood actor was elected president and immediately began implementing his "Voodoo Economics" (as his own staff referred to these policies in private), as well as making occasional bizarre remarks in public about a coming biblical showdown. All of this left some thinking that President Reagan was proof enough that the world had all but ended, and that the only option that remained was to party (or to imitate a party at any rate.) The tone was set for the 1980s as one of extremes: excessive consumption on one hand; homelessness and poverty on the other.

Nevertheless, throughout the 1970s some Lower East Side artists inevitably folded into this anarcho-apocalyptic moment did pull back somewhat. They attempted to develop a specifically political and resistant agenda to the forces of gentrification and displacement. Still, these art-activists understood that they were themselves central to these processes as typically white, well-educated young people whose very presence enhanced the desirability of a given neighborhood for more mainstream middle- and upper-income residents. Some also began to grasp that later on they were

themselves going to be displaced by the same processes artists helped set in motion. Finally, when a second wave of artists began arriving in the late 1970s and early 1980s, these political possibilities became exceptionally sharpened, if only temporarily, before the juggernaut of gentrification overwhelmed all resistance.

Copping an Octopus

> *The smoke of burning buildings fills the street… Rats and dogs are coming out to eat … the rich have been buried in the basements of their buildings … throw away your clothes you no longer need them.*[11]

In the last weeks of 1979, a splinter from the four-year-old artists group Collaborative Projects (COLAB) entered a city-owned building on Delancey Street that had been sitting empty in Loisaida for years. Aiming to liberate and occupy the site as a means of exposing "the system of waste and disuse that characterizes the profit system in real estate,"[12] the Committee for the Real Estate Show opened their "squat-gallery" to friends and the public on January 1, 1980. The show was filled with coarsely made artworks that decried rent-gouging landlords, city-run development agencies and what would become a favorite target of the new scene: the "suburbs," as a series of suburban real estate photographs with sardonic captions like "3 BR, no rats, no unemployment" demonstrated.[13]

Outside the building, in a move that prefigured the pop-piracy of East Village art, Rebecca Howland copped the image of a monstrous octopus—the consummate left-caricature of big business—and painted it onto the bland facade of the Real Estate Show. In the creature's tightly coiled arms were two tenement buildings, a bundle of cash, a gem (signifying the speculator's perception of the building), and a dagger. But one of the beast's arms had been violently severed. The artist positioned this liberated limb just above the entrance to the building forming an arrow that directed the eyes of the neighborhood toward both the exhibition and to the example set by the artist's collective action. Within the context of the Lower East Side, with its graffiti-covered brickwork, handmade store signage, street graphics and didactic murals, the Real Estate Show's polymorphic sea creature appeared inevitable, natural, like a denizen attracted to the region's visible ecological fatigue. Howland also put her octopus icon on the Real Estate Show's fliers and posters, some of which were printed over actual page-spreads from the *New York Times* real estate section, thus turning the creature into a veritable logo for the squat-action.

Howland would in fact continue to use the mollusk-image in her work for years, her most ambitious version a large three-dimensional sculpt-metal piece from 1983 titled *Real Estate Octopus with Dead Horse* that she made for the walkway of the Williamsburg Bridge. *Real Estate Octopus …* presented Howland's now emblematic invertebrate writhing beneath the towers of the World Trade Center as if it were the radioactive spawn of a secret Port Authority experiment. One likely source for Howland's initial octopus effigy may have been the mural "Chi Lai—Arriba—Rise Up!" by Alan Okada on a building just five blocks to the south of the Real Estate Show. Within Okada's four-story-high painting a squirming cephalopod, draped in a US flag, clings like a parasite to the figure of a money-grubbing landlord. Another source for Howland's image is undoubtedly the 1901 novel *Octopus* by radical socialist author Frank Norris, where the railroad is represented as a many-armed monster. This connection is all the more interesting in that Norris's beastie symbolizes the expansion of capital into the western frontier. In the following passage Norris's protagonist Presley first encounters the rail-road monster: "Presley saw again, in his imagination, the galloping monster, the terror of steel and steam, with its single eye, Cyclopean, red, shooting from horizon to horizon … with tentacles of steel clutching into the soil, the soulless Force, the iron-hearted Power, the monster, the Colossus, the Octopus."[14]

It is difficult to miss Howland's version of real estate speculators with their "tentacles … clutching the soil" of the Lower East Side. But the real estate "insurrection" was itself a mixture of anarchistic bravado and analytical naïveté. The artists mimicked the direct action strategies of 1968 and in doing so they imagined that the community would be inspired to take similar action and stop the irrational warehousing of useful property. There was, however, nothing irrational about the city's plan for the neighborhood. It was part of a long-standing grand design to weaken investment and living conditions in certain low-income areas so that re-development could later be carried out that would attract real estate developers and upper-income residents.[15] Neither did neighborhood people necessarily get the point of the exhibit. According to artist Joe Lewis, a fellow COLAB member, "a lot of people saw the show, the community people, they thought it was just a group of artists protesting that they could not show their work anywhere."[16]

The day after the opening of the Real Estate Show, the city padlocked the building. Then, after receiving some bad press helped along by the appearance of artist Joseph Beuys, the city reversed itself and offered the artists a smaller space a few doors away to resume the exhibition. Soon after the Real Estate Show debacle, the city offered artists still another storefront,

a few blocks north on Rivington Street to use as an ongoing gallery. The new space was named ABC No Rio after a garbled nearby sign reading ABOGADO NOTORIO. Since 1980 the space has occasioned changing exhibitions, musical events, happenings and an occasional educational art project with neighborhood kids. (And most recently the No Rio building was discovered to be structurally unsound: it will be replaced by a state-of-the-art green building designed by Paul Castrucci.)[17] The Real Estate Octopus was just one specimen in an ersatz natural history of the Lower East Side targeting landlord abuse and neighborhood degradation. While Howland's tentacled speculator cast the real estate wars in terms of natural predation and defense, artists such as Christy Rupp and Michael Anderson presented images of animals as signs and victims of an urban environment gone wrong.

Rats, Kingfishers and Voodoo Economics

In works like *Rubble Rats* and *Rat Patrol*, artist Christy Rupp approaches the Lower East Side as if it were the locus of an ecological disaster. In 1979 Rupp pasted some 4,000 offset images of running rats throughout the city. The action, titled *Rat Patrol*, was intended to make "visible during the day what went on at night."[18] Rupp also played on traditional images of plagues or miasma, where corruption spreads like an infection throughout the urban body. What was the source of this contagion? In an interview with the *New York Post* in 1980 the artist stated "Rats are not terrorists … I see them as part of the history of ecology, in the whole chain of things. It's simply that they're out of control in the cities."[19] Elsewhere the artist has commented that "Rats are a symptom," insisting that garbage and "the environment and economics" are the cause, presumably of natural imbalance in cities.[20]

The success of *Rat Patrol* was followed by a series of rodent-sized sculptures such as *Rubble Rat*. In 1980 Rupp made the work by casting a rat with cement directly onto a pile of bricks she found in the debris and weed covered backyard at ABC No Rio. In keeping with the camouflaging common to the animal kingdom, Rupp's small concrete sculpture is at first indistinguishable from other chunks of broken building that littered the area. Partly embedded in the debris it is only when the rat figure is at last discerned that are we tipped off to the artifice of the work. A somewhat different reading of the work places it in the category of the post-traumatic souvenir, along with other petrified curiosities such as the melted watches in Hiroshima or the mummified inhabitants of ancient Pompeii. The piece first appeared in No Rio's inaugural exhibition, put on by the anti-nuclear

coalition Artists for Survival in May, 1980. In contrast to Rupp's more recent, skillfully crafted and assertively beautiful animal sculptures, these scabrous rodents retain a strong ambivalence about art as commodity production. The abject look of Rupp's sculptural vermin hints at another ambivalence by reflecting at once the rawness of "malignant city life" on the Lower East Side as well as an uneasiness over the absence of bourgeois standards. Once again my speculation is that, for Rupp as well as other East Village artists, the inner-city landscape appeared as pathological, as "malignant city life." And whether her representations of rodents were intended to make visible a nocturnal urban ecology or to amplify the already abundant evidence of New York's social and environmental crisis, these works are symptomatic of art that used the poor ecological hygiene of the city to agitate for social improvement.

In 1984 the activist art group PAD/D launched the second of two anti-gentrification projects on New York's Lower East Side, and artist Michael Anderson added another specimen to Loisaida's expanding zoological garden. Anderson's silk-screened poster "In Memorium" featured the unusual pairing of an endangered animal, a bird known as a kingfisher, together with an altogether different endangered species, the neighborhood "mom and pop" store, in this case the Orchidia, which was a popular Lower East Side restaurant serving a unique combination of Ukrainian and Italian cuisine. The Orchidia had recently been forced to close down because of unregulated commercial rent increases brought about by the "upturn" in the neighborhood's property values. But it was also one of the focal points for neighborhood anti-gentrification activists such as the Lower East Side Joint Planning Council, who used the Orchidia situation to expand community participation and garner media attention. Anderson was an exhibition preparator for the American Museum of Natural History at the time, and was also actively involved in anti-gentrification work in Brooklyn and on the Lower East Side. The poster, which was made for a neighborhood-wide art project called *Out of Place: Art for the Evicted*, has a bold headline that is dedicated: "To those felled by environmental/economic pollution." On the left side of the 24×30-inch piece is the image of a dead bird. Beneath it in small type is a label-like caption reading: "BELTED KINGFISHER (*Ceryle Alcyon*) Found in New York City alive but with legs paralyzed. Died August 25th 1983 of suspected poisoning by environmental pollutants." To the right of the kingfisher memorial Anderson has printed an image of the neighborhood eatery along with another testimonial that reads: "ORCHIDIA RESTAURANT After almost 37 years at 2nd Avenue at 9th street, landlord Sydney Wiener, in defiance of community opposition

raised rent from $950/month to $5,000/month. The Orchidia, despite protest, closed April 11, 1984." Surrounding both images is an irregular color smudge—one blue, one red, like the color of the dyes used to stain microscopic specimens—and within these blots are images of roses and hovering cherubs.[21]

Along with Anderson's memorial to economic and environmental pollution was another lament for a lost neighborhood business that was part of the *Out of Place* project. The Garden Cafeteria had been a Jewish cafeteria-style restaurant located on East Broadway, which had recently been bought out by a Chinese restaurant (more likely a symptom of the changing demographics of the Lower East Side than real estate gouging). The artist Marianne Nowak paid tribute to the establishment's passing in the form of color Xeroxed images of actual gardens interspersed with Cafeteria diners. Arranged in the form of a single horizontal panorama on the delapidated building that would temporarily be known as the Guggenheim Downtown, the work linked urban life and personal memory with natural cycles of growth and dissolution. But where Anderson's grapgic lament "In Memorium" worked as a visual and conceptual pun, mixing document with lamentation and patently confusing the categories of nature and culture, "Garden Cafeteria" resolves this opposition by using nature to invoke the rapture of dwelling on what has recently been lost.

In general, the reconfiguring of the economic sphere—labor and capital—into a metaphor of natural processes is not unlike the ideological sleight of hand that Marx and Engels charged the young Hegelian philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach with perpetrating when they insisted he: "does not see how the sensuous world around him is, not a thing given direct from all eternity, remaining ever the same but the product of industry and of the state of society."[22]

The authors further demystify Feuerbach's idealization of the German landscape using the history of a species of tree arguing: "the cherry-tree, like almost all fruit-trees, was, as is well known, only a few centuries ago transplanted by commerce into our zone, and therefore only by this action of a definite society in a definite age it has become 'sensuous certainty' for Feuerbach."[23]

Sensuous certainty may have been on the minds of Ronald Reagan's publicity handlers when they "spun" their offensive against working-class interests in terms of bucolic national resources. The Republicans' vision of the American landscape was not unlike that of Feuerbach's Germany over 130 years before, only here just as melting snowcaps on mountain peaks wondrously find their way to your kitchen's faucet, so too Reagan claimed

would an unprecedented federal tax cut for the wealthy mysteriously and assuredly "trickle down" to those in the economic lowlands. This is the background from which artist Ed Eisenberg's street poster titled *Reaganomic Galleries* is derived as a silvery waterfall surrounded by informational graphic boxes. Upon close inspection these parenthetical captions carry out two operations. First they attempt to trace the history of the economic assault on the neighborhood in terms of the trickle-down metaphor and, second, they relate this deregulatory spirit to the emergence of the East Village Art Scene of the 1980s.

Eisenberg's waterfall street artwork starts with the 1981 tax bill cutting taxes to corporations and the upper class, splashes its way down to the revitalization of the luxury art market before passing through the gush of the East Village Art Scene, and finally lands in a pool where the caption reads: "some young art stars profit handsomely; communities poor residents continue to dehydrate." Other works generated by the PAD/D Not For Sale group were similarly "exhibited" in the streets and invoked concepts of natural history in a more ethnographic mode, including the ironic poster by Nancy Sullivan that depicted an iconic cowboy on horseback with a bold caption that read "Area Natives make your Reservations Now." Behind the lasso-wielding horseman is an image of a desert in the Southwest. Both images appear on a sheet of graph paper, suggesting the rationalizing of natural landscape in the wake of invading capital. This Euro-expansionist sentiment carried over to Edgar Heap of Birds' poster with the word Natural spelled backwards:

ꓶAꓤUTAИ
WE DON'T WANT INDIANS
JUST THEIR NAMES
MASCOTS
MACHINES
CITIES
PRODUCTS
BUILDINGS

LIVING PEOPLE

Like artist John Feckner, whose spray-painted slogans "Growth/Decay," and "Broken Promises," were stenciled onto the exterior of crumbling buildings and torched car bodies both downtown on the Lower East Side and uptown in the South Bronx, Hachivi Heap of Birds' (aka Hock E Aye

Vi) and Sullivan's posters functioned as ironic warnings about the effects of what might be termed ecological urban colonialism. Although, as artist Janet Koenig and member of the PAD/D *Out of Place* project cautioned, the contradictions involved in making art against gentrification were not going to be resolved within the cultural sphere:

> In many Manhattan communities the leading edge of gentrification has been artists … What relationship then, do politically conscious artists have to this situation? For artists, mere awareness of their roles in gentrification is not sufficient. On the one hand, this project attempts to raise consciousness about the issue, on the other hand, it can be seen as another "Off Off West Broadway" encroachment on the Lower East Side community.[24]

Figure 17 Anton Van Dalen, *Abandoned Car with Dog and TV*, pencil drawing, 1977 (Image Anton Van Dalen)

Ecotopia on the Lower East Side?

Within these varied reconfigurations of city as nature and nature as city, another tendency is visible. This includes artists who presented designs,

often of a fantastic nature, for a new ecological-urban utopia. In fact the Lower East Side already had a tradition of both pragmatic and fantastical ecological undertakings that combined the recycling of natural resources with the existing architecture and community. Though beyond the scope of this chapter, a short list of these attempted projects would include: La Plaza Cultural and garden on East 9th Street, Adam Purple's Garden of Eden, buildings with solar panels and windmills located on East 5th and East 11th Streets, the Quondo urban agricultural collective on Houston Street and even a purported fish farm in the basement of an abandoned tenement building. At one time even Buckminster Fuller had been involved in demonstrating to members of CHARAS (a Nuyorican community center run by artists and poets) and the Young Lords, a former Puerto Rican gang turned into community activists, how to construct geodesic living structures for the neighborhood. The list could also include the home of Anton Van Dalen, a senior member of the East Village art scene. Born in Holland during the Second World War, Van Dalen moved to the Lower East Side in the mid 1960s. On the roof of his building were pigeon coops and in the first floor an indoor "farm" of rabbits and chickens. Van Dalen's surrealist-inspired art enlarged upon this improbable urban agrarianism by offering a three-dimensional wooden pigeon-coop car and the Auto Botanica: a Ford made of leaves, as well as emblematic street stencils of a woman's shoe with a dove nestled inside, a flying bus launching missiles, and an x-rayed arm with a vine sprouting from its lace-like arteries suggesting a dual reference to drug-shooting galleries that proliferated in the neighborhood's partially demolished buildings, and the ever-present potential for a grassroots revival of Loisaida's "mean streets."

In a more theoretical hybrid of ecology and activist ideals, artist and architect Peter Fend, who was active with the Real Estate Show, presented his plan for a project he called OECD or Ocean Earth Construction Development. Fend's idea was to set up a "community corporation" that would design environmental engineering projects and then channel the profits from these into neighborhood improvements. This green-stock would be held exclusively by residents of the Lower East Side, who would in turn democratically vote on how profits would be used. Under the slogan of "Delancey Street Goes to the Sea" Fend aimed to secure autonomy for the neighborhood by establishing "an independent energy and wastes-conversion cycle, possibly in Jamaica Bay or the shoals off Staten Island, and to build structures which—being elevated above existing structures or lots—are virtually exempt from taxes or rents." Exactly where the "profit" would come in Fend's project is unclear. Together with fantastic

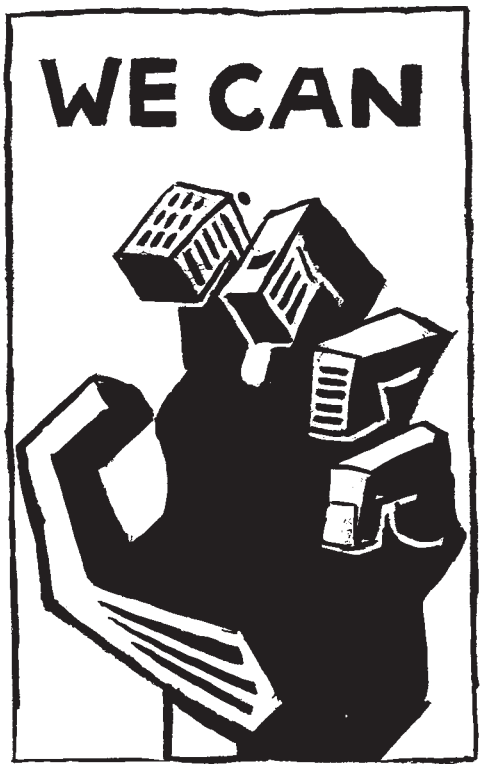

Figure 18 Seth Tobocman, *WE CAN*, linocut on paper, 1988
(Image S. Tobocman)

reworkings of topographical maps so that nations might be organized around shared resources and drainage basins, Fend was a sort of East Village version of the conceptual art team of Helen and Newton Harrison. But Fend's libertarian-like schemes fitted the entrepreneurial style of the 1980s more than the anti-commercialism of early 1970s conceptual art.

The theme of proposing to fix the environmental and social-economic problems of the inner city through conceptual projects reappeared in the work of 1990s artists like Mark Dion and Nils Norman. Dion's project for the exhibition, Culture in Action in Chicago in 1992/1993, combined a high school science project with a field trip to a South American rainforest, and resulted in temporarily recycling an abandoned building in Chicago into what Dion described as an "eco-drop in center and clubhouse." According to the curator of the project, Mary Jane Jacob, the participating young Chicagoans learned "to frame nature in art context and to frame art

in relation to the natural world. It initiated in the students a way of thinking about nature."[25]

Closer to issues related directly to the Lower East Side as a site of social and political contestation are the conceptual schemes and prototypes made by British born artist Nils Norman. In an exhibition at American Fine Arts in 1997, Norman presented detailed scale models and blueprints for a number of utopian architectural and/or garden projects including the Sky Village for Tompkins Square Park (designed for both habitation and defense against city marshals and police), a communally owned solar-powered news kiosk for senior citizens, and a proposed agricultural workers collective to be known as the Underground Agrarians. This micro-utopia would be constructed at Norfolk and Delancey Streets on the Lower East Side (recall that the Real Estate Show was held on Delancey in 1979). With each of the precise plexiglas-covered miniatures in the exhibition is a Site Analysis. The model-site is broken down in the document into various life-sustaining functions including: "Food Coop, Specialized info/book shop (gardening, tenant rights, autonomous energy use), Prosthetic Gardening Limbs Shop, Self-composting toilet, and Sustainable model permaculture roof garden." The Organizational Structure is composed of work detachments and democratically elected commanders who supervise "composting, watering, weeding, sowing." Norman even proposed re-naming Delancey Street Wobblies Street, after the radical turn-of-the-century workers' organization known as the Industrial Workers of the World or Wobblies. Norman's models, even more than Dion's largely symbolic investigations, borrow from the little-known history of left politics and ecological utopianism, including the kind of iconographic and polemical uses of nature that I have touched on in this chapter. Nevertheless, in light of the present anti-progressive and the self-satisfied insularity of the 1990s art industry, it is this often less-than-ideal history of actual political work by artists in places like the Lower East Side that is in danger of being forgotten, or romanticized like an exotic, organic thing.

There is a seductive pleasure in the new ecological art, not least derived from the conceptual linkage, especially strong in Norman's projects, to the history of collective practices and militant political resistance. And while New York City's Lower East Side continues to serve as the "natural" site for locating these alternate histories, what cannot be stressed enough is the need to move beyond idealized exhibition settings into long-range commitments where conceptually refined concepts are put to use in the malignant cityscape that gives birth to such urban art activism.

5
Mysteries of the Creative Class, or, I Have Seen the Enemy and They is Us*

The full-page advertisement in the Sunday edition of the *New York Times* depicts a trio of smartly clad, sophisticated young white people conversing over a glass of wine. Intentionally rendered in a retro-1930s Art Deco style, the illustration is captioned "An Oasis In Times Square." The ad goes on to explain that the illustrated place is where the traveler who is weary from business can discover tranquility and a "new level of self-indulgence," right in the midst of busy Manhattan, This was 1999 when, with bank-rolled panache, the Hong Leong Group launched the Millennium Premier. It was the global real-estate group's first New York project, and immediately I sensed the arrival of something different at work, some shift in tactics within the decade-old project of "upclassing" the city. I also knew something troubling about the hotel's recent past that made my hunch even more compelling, and deliriously logical.

A veteran of anti-gentrification activism on the city's Lower East Side some 20 years earlier, I still recall the clumsy call for "pioneers" to brave the city's harsh urban frontiers. But by the late 1990s this type of gambit had largely played itself out, at least in Manhattan. Already most of the island was well on its way to full-blown gentrification and what was left of the poor and working class largely scattered by force or rising rents in the wake of reverse white flight that began in the 1980s.

However, this late 1990s wave of gentry wanted nothing to do with leaking pipes or chasing away crack-heads from street corners, and under no circumstances would they wear overalls. Yet the hotel's curiously retro illustration also avoided references to the fevered, techno giddiness of those blissful, pre-crash 1990s. Instead, the unknown artist lovingly invoked the modernist conceit of the machine age some 60 years prior. Nor was it camp, for the irony was too far adrift from any rhetorical moorings to signal "spoof." Instead, like an arcane plot out of a Philip K. Dick novel, the very visage of the city I knew was being transmuted from lead to gold. The more I

* This chapter was first published in 2004.

Figure 19 Cover of *El Diario* newspaper showing Marina Gutierrez's controversial REPOhistory street sign, which focused on a quota-system regulating public housing by race that favored white residents and was illegally removed from public display by local politicians, 1998

(Photo G. Sholette Archive)

looked, the more I saw. Quaint cafés replaced actual coffee shops. Futuristic bars and art galleries took over food processing and light industrial shops. An ersatz cosmopolitanism was everywhere and the millennium was a part of this larger whole that involved wiping clean not merely the physical traces of the past, but its memories. What filled up the ensuing breach were

artful surrogates and clever replicas of a city that no one had ever lived in but that nevertheless looked strangely familiar. Certainly it is easier to see this in retrospect, but the Millennium campaign signaled the start of an entirely new era in the administration of free market urban renewal. More abstract, more inspired, more creative. The question I wanted to answer most, then and now, is whose minds the hotel chain's marketers hoped to, well, gentrify, and what ghosts they sought to keep at bay?

It was the artists collective known as REPOhistory that provided the key to unlocking this mystery, but its startling solution, like Poe's purloined letter, turns out to have been right in front of me all along.

Located on West 44th Street, the Millennium Premier Hotel stands in a once largely Irish and working-class neighborhood, formerly known as Hell's Kitchen but re-christened with the sanitary-sounding moniker "Clinton" by real estate speculators in the 1980s. This new Times Square is no longer the porn playground of the fiscal crisis 1970s. It has been rehabilitated: safe for families, safe for business, efficiently emptied of homeless people and sundry other uninvited sorts. In May, 1998, however, a metal street sign appears outside the Millennium. The sign is flagged off of a lamppost, meters away from the hotel's tastefully subdued, black marble façade. Mounted low enough for passersby to read, its text begins portentously: "What is now the Millennium Broadway Hotel used to be the site of 4 buildings including an SRO [single room occupancy] hotel that provided badly needed housing for poor New Yorkers …"

Artist and architect William Menking designed the plaque to look like a busy montage of newspaper clippings. The story of the hotel's less than tranquil past continues in bold type:

> In 1984, New York City passed a moratorium on the alteration of hotels for the poor. Hours before the moratorium was to go into effect, developer Harry Macklowe had the 4 buildings demolished without obtaining demolition permits, and without turning off water and gas lines into the buildings. NYC officials declared, "It is only a matter of sheer luck that there was no gas explosion." Attempts to bring criminal charges against Macklowe for these actions were not successful. Macklowe built a luxury hotel on the site, then lost it to the current owners. The demolition of hotels for the poor during the 1970's and 1980's added to the city's growing homeless population. While streets of the "new" Times Square seem paved with gold—for many they have literally become a home.

Like the materialization of an army of Dickensian apparitions, the Millennium/Macklowe sign was one of 20 temporary historical markers specifically sited around New York that made up the public art project *Civil Disturbances: Battles for Justice in New York City*. Sponsored by New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI) and produced by the art and activist group REPOhistory, its aim was to publicly landmark legal cases in which civil rights were extended to disenfranchised peoples. The content of the signs ranged from the famous *Brown vs. the Board of Education* desegregation case to the first woman firefighter sworn into service in New York City. Others however, pointed to occasions when the law had failed to protect as promised and Menking's sign was in this category. Initially, for a time the city tried to stop REPOhistory from installing *Civil Disturbances*. After weeks of legal maneuvers however, the signs went up from spring 1998 to late winter 1999. Nevertheless, right from the start several signs vanished after installation. Menking's was among them.

Responding to an inquiry, the Millennium freely admitted having its staff confiscate the legally permitted artwork. They even returned it to the group. However, along with the returned sign came a letter threatening legal action if any attempt was made to reinstall it. The grounds? REPOhistory was damaging hotel business. It seems the return of an inopportune past can prove a powerful trigger, revealing hidden ideological tendencies in what appears otherwise to be a purely market-driven process of privatization and gentrification. After considerable debate that internally split REPOhistory roughly along lines of activists versus artists, Menking's sign was reinstalled, but now at a greater distance from the hotel. And, despite further threats, the sign stayed in place, the project's permit ran its course, and neither side took legal action. It is five years on. Aside from this text and other scattered citations, Macklowe's "midnight demolition" is forgotten along with those he cruelly displaced. At the tranquil oasis in old Hell's Kitchen stylish guests still sip wine, discuss art and continue to manufacture content for the information economy.

All of this is familiar now: the 1990s affection for the 1920s and pre-crash 1930s, its weird merger of avant-garde aesthetics, high fashion and post-Fordist management theory all dolled-up in a neo-modernist longing for limitless progress. So what if the occasional act of terror was, and remains, indispensable to make it all seem real? Why dwell on conflict? If the creative class has supplanted the traditional laboring class in many places it has done so by greeting capital as potential equal, not as adversary. Winners are admired. Losers, on the other hand, are truly abject, lacking the aptitude to become exploiters themselves. Asserting a collective disarray, an

enduring a-historicity and a belief they have transcended labor/management antagonisms, creative workers think they can even avoid being exploited in the long run because their big, table-turning breakthrough is always just around the corner, always about to make that longed-for reservation at the swanky Millennium tower a reality.

Anyway, it's 2004, and billionaires abound. According to Forbes' recent survey they number a record 587.[1] Still, it's difficult not to notice a connection between this fact and the new economy, with its deregulated markets, rampant privatization, decaying worker protection and widening gap between rich and poor. Nor are the super-rich all petroleum refiners and armament producers. Many belong to the so-called creative class. Among those joining the ten-figure income bracket include the rags-to-riches writer of Harry Potter stories, J.K. Rowling; Google creators Sergey Brin and Larry Page; and Gap clothing designer Michael Ying. So why am I still surprised when I walk down formerly forbidding streets to see such upscale consumption? Designer outlets, smart eateries, bars radiant with youthful crowds, and taxis shuttling celebrants to and fro. Block after block the scene resembles a single, unending cocktail party strung like carnival lights up and down nearby 7th and 8th avenues. Between these cheerful stations other men and women, mostly in their forties and fifties, haunt the shadows, gathering glass and metal recyclables from public waste bins. Certainly losers can't harm you. But what about ghosts?

I enter bar "X": its ambience probably not much different from bars in the Millennium New York, or Millennium Shanghai, or Millennium London. I shout for a dry, gin Martini over the mechanically generated industrial music. (A cartoon thought-bubble appears, "Am I the only person in here with a beard?")[2] My mind returns to REPOhistory and its altruistic necromancy some six years earlier. "If the enemy wins, not even the dead will be safe," Walter Benjamin once declared.[3] Not safe from whom? Perhaps it was the noise and the alcohol, but a surprising correlation asserts itself. REPOhistory was part of the creative class. While its objectives were different, REPOhistory, like RTmark, the Yes Men and similar artistic agitators made use of available technologies and rhetorical forms to reach the same erudite consumer-citizens this swanky bar hoped to attract. The Millennium had been correct all along: we were the competition. With a little toning down of its righteous antagonism REPOhistory could have even taken its place among the web designers, dressmakers, MTV producers and other content providers of the new, immaterial economy. And come to think of it, right before the group folded it was increasingly being asked to travel outside to this or that city or town and install public markers about the quaint olden

times; the local barber shop, the saloon, the red-light district and parade grounds. I had indeed found the enemy: it was me.

Like forgotten letters in some dimly lit archive, those not immediately part of the radical shift in the means of production remain out of sight, out of mind, fleeing from demolitions, downsizings and sometimes rummaging for cans. Not that this zone of dark matter was not always present and surrounding the upwardly mobile types such as the Millennium crowd. What is new, however, is the way this far larger realm of unrealized potential can gain access to most of the means of expression deployed by the burgeoning consciousness industry—that ubiquitous spectacle essential to the maintenance of global capitalism. By the same token, the so-called "insiders" might, if circumstances permit, decide to cast their collective lot in with the losers and the ghosts. REPOhistory et al. prove it can happen. Because even the new creative class, with its 80-hour work-week and multiple jobs has a fantasy, one half-remembered perhaps and a bit mad, yet still evident in times of stress and economic uncertainty. It goes like this: the bartenders and the brass polishers and cooks, the laundresses and bell hops throw down their aprons and spatulas to join in mutinous celebration with artists, web designers and musicians. Raiding the wine cellar, they open up all 33 executive-style conference rooms, set up a free health clinic in the lobby, transform the hotel into an autonomous broadcasting tower and party in a universe of creative dark matter.

I finish my drink and return home to wrap up the essay I promised the fine, creative folks at *Mute* magazine.

6

Occupology, Swarmology, Whateverology: The City of (Dis)Order Versus the People's Archive*

Figure 20 The People's Library, Occupy Wall Street (OWS), Zuccotti Park, NYC, October 1, 2011
(Photo G. Sholette)

I

The archive, with its icy temperature and motionless repose, may seem like an unlikely place to begin thinking about Occupy Wall Street (OWS), a dynamic and still-unfolding phenomenon (in November, 2011) whose precise nature appears impossible to determine, let alone file away like a

* This chapter was first published in 2012.

stack of dog-eared documents. Unlikely, if we approach the idea of the archive as a physical collection located in a specific time and place, or as a set of historical documents that uphold this or that interpretive school. But what if we invoke something like an archival agency, something that now and then animates the *longue durée* of resistance "from below." After all, things have changed since we witnessed the power-scrubbing of Zuccotti Park's People's Library and the mulching of the encampment's 100-page opus of dissent written on corrugated scraps of cardboard and inverted pizza boxes, some torn, trimmed, or simply folded down into manageable dimensions for extended protest.[1] We witnessed the demolition as an echo of the Baghdad library's destruction eight years earlier in 2003, when US and UK troops stood by as that archive was reduced to ashy pulp. It is this we must grapple with and theorize, this residue that authorities determined to be expendable, or even threatening, even if such engagement takes us places we would, under other circumstances, prefer to avoid. (For, after all, doesn't the act of conquest demand the erasure, in whole or part, of an enemy's communal identity, just as resistance centers on defending or recreating the archive?)

OWS has an odor. Its lustful, repetitious and messy imagination is articulated not only through fat felt markers on tent flaps and recycled materials, but also on naked bodies, and on moving and dancing bodies, as well as the multicellular superorganism known as the General Assembly. Still, to describe this as an archive—or *swarmchive*—is to suggest that OWS is more than an accumulation of conceptual, biological and material textures. It is also something being written, call it a promissory note, an obligation to a future reader from a place already dislocated in time (though admittedly aided by time-bending cybertechnologies like YouTube and Twitter). Not what does, but what will, the archive mean, Derrida once asked, to which he then replied: "We will only know tomorrow. Perhaps."[2] Tomorrow began at 1:00 a.m. on November 15, 2011 for OWS, the hour of Zuccotti Park's brutal erasure on orders given police by Mayor Michael Bloomberg. The NYPD raid seemed to express something else. Call it a repulsion toward damp, cardboardy smells and commingled sweat, or a fear of the breathy exhalations emanating from the People's Microphone, with its mandatory intervals of listening and hearing, and its uncanny pantomime of mechanical apparatus as if some inert thing were being jolted back to life. But perhaps most unsettling of all was the way OWS established a link with the dispossessed and discarded homeless at the very center of private real estate and finance capital, a tactic Mike Davis perceptively contrasted recently to the university sit-ins of his generation in the 1960s that, while

certainly confrontational, nevertheless remained bound up within less contested academic spaces.[3] It seems that when today's *creatives* rebel, they take no hostages; they make no demands.

So there it was, occupied Zuccotti Park, filling up, hour after hour, with multiple signs of urban dispossession and homelessness, from sleeping bags to makeshift shelters, virtually everything that the "quality-of-life" city detested about the vanquished liberal welfare city, and everything it wanted to forget, including the drifters and hustlers, addicts and graffiti taggers who are nevertheless continually generated by its deregulatory policies.[4] There was no bold objective, such as forcing ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) off campus, or establishing a Black studies program. Instead, facing inward, the OWS General Assembly painstakingly constructed systems of communication, grew antennae, spawned internal laws and methods of governance, all the while appearing from the outside to be so much dead capital, a homeless hive of unemployed kids with too much time on their (jazz) hands, growing, festering, like a blot or a bruise, directly on the belly of the global finance leviathan. Is it any wonder city patriarchs sent police to punish Richard Florida's children turned warrior class?

II

"Leave us alone!" asserts the towheaded cadre of mind-melded children in the 1960 British science-fiction film *Village of the Damned*.[5] Mysteriously born all at once to the unimpregnated women of a rural English hamlet, the children possess collective powers of telepathy and worse. They also have an enormous appetite for knowledge. A professor played by George Sanders, the one human they tolerate and who serves as their teacher, eventually destroys them in a suicide attack. But even as the final credits roll, we never fully understand who, or what, they were. We never learn what they were after.

III

Police, not protesters, were visible on day one of Occupy Wall Street, September 17, 2011. They massed in all directions, ringing Wall Street, shielding storefronts, securing Citibank, Chase, Wells Fargo, and Morgan. And then there were those two, slightly chagrined officers standing watch over *Charging Bull*, the bellicose bronze sculpture that dominates the northern edge of Bowling Green Park. An irony likely lost on most who passed by is that artist Arturo DiModica's giant bovine was an unannounced

"gift" that he dropped in December, 1989 to lift Wall Street's downcast spirits after the crash of 1987. Initially seized by police as illegal street art, the statue was soon born again as a 7,000 lb (3.5 tons) photo-op relished by tourists, filmmakers, city boosters and anti-capitalist protesters.

One intrepid demonstrator stood out on the first day. She carried, sandwich-board style, a photographic reproduction of Damien Hirst's *For the Love of God*, the diamond-spattered platinum skull allegedly valued at over £50 million. No other statement or slogan was present, as if the no-longer "Y" British artist's profligate *memento mori* was the indisputable portrait of our epoch. But only a few days into the occupation at nearby Zuccotti Park—the privately owned public space that demonstrators ultimately settled into after failing to take possession of Wall Street proper—a functioning commonwealth had germinated. It was complete with daily meetings aimed at self-governance; food and trash services; recycled gray-water treatment systems; a generator-powered digital media station; and an expanding collection of books and publications dubbed the "People's Library," nestled in rows of boxes with handwritten labels like International Relations, Music, Religion, Fiction, Non-fiction, Feminism, and Racial Justice. According to movement librarians, an estimated 5,000 volumes were located at Zuccotti Park prior to the NYPD raid of November 15.[6] The encampment also gave life to dozens of smaller subdivisions, including Jail Support, Medics, Direct Action Painters and, one of the largest, Arts and Culture, with its own subdivisions, including Arts and Labor, Alternative Economies, and Occupy Museums. Among other immediate necessities is restoring knowledge of past attempts at organizing cultural workers such as Art Workers' Coalition, Artists Meeting for Cultural Change, Political Art Documentation/Distribution (PAD/D) and Group Material. Much of this history has been shorn from the record to form a missing mass or cultural dark matter.[7] The articulation of this shadow history is now taking place through teach-ins, email exchanges and archival websites, all of which are, so far, beyond the reach of police.

IV

"What do they want?" demands the mainstream media. OWS has no response. No policies, no demands, and only a stated desire to be left alone. "The 1% is just beginning to understand that the reason Occupy Wall Street makes no demands is because we aren't talking to them. The 99% are speaking and listening to each other."[8] Zuccotti Park: *Das Unheimliche.*

V

Scrawled dollar signs, credit cards, monstrous octopuses, mutated American flags: like pages torn from a faded copy of *The New Masses* (rather than *Adbusters*), Zuccotti Park's artistic iconography was replete with anti-capitalist slogans, clenched fists and top-hatted millionaires. But this time the slogans were a great deal cheekier than those printed in the radical leftist magazine of the 1920s and 1930s, and the fists were attached to people wearing Guy Fawkes *V for Vendetta* masks rather than muscular "workers." Meanwhile, the millionaire—pulled down from his pedestal, bearded and broke—did not refer to the sketchbooks of communist artists William Gropper or Hugo Gellert, but was appropriated straight from Parker Brother's Monopoly board game. One sign simply implored "Occupy through Art." Yet, despite the twenty-first-century self-consciousness, OWS released a repertoire of protest tropes that, like a grammar of dissent waiting in the wings, came to the fore as the encampment participants discovered they were legally bound by New York City ordinances to pre-electronic forms of protest. Thus there were citations, statements, manifestos and entire letters directed to the public. "Did you lose your home? Wall Street stole from you." One text with blue-on-red writing proclaimed tragic loss as a leftover handhold from what was once a cardboard box floated off to the side like an errant exclamation mark. Along with the ubiquitous beige of cardboard signage there were silk-screened T-shirts, a few oil paintings, and professionally designed typographic posters by *Adbusters*, the Vancouver-based culture-jamming magazine that first called for a Wall Street occupation which officially began on September 17, 2011. Shepard Fairey, of *Andre the Giant* stencil-art fame, morphed his own controversial Barack Obama election poster "Hope" into an explicit reference to Anonymous, the online hacktivist entity strongly associated with new forms of digital civil disobedience. But the President wearing a Guy Fawkes mask with the tagline "We Are the Hope" simply did not go over well with some OWS organizers. Fearing that Fairey's graphic promoted links to the Democratic Party, the former street artist was taken to task and asked to revise his design in what amounted to a series of online studio critique-sessions: long-distance learning, OWS-style. "While it definitely looks cool, whether intended or not, this sends a clear message that Obama is co-opting OWS."[9] The movement may not have demands, but it is exceedingly conscious of its image, as befits a twenty-first-century rebellion.

VI

> *I'm not a smooth writer and am barely managing to focus now on something i need to finish* [writes the Egyptian artist Maha Maamoun in an email] *but in general, positions, attitudes and temperaments are changing here with every headline. its a constant tug and pull. a constant recalibration of expectations. many players rising that were not known before, and many known ones falling. its interesting to see this "organic" process play out. its not easy. every detail is a battle … it's definitely taking a huge amount of time away from work. most of our time is spent following the news in every form. resulting eventually in loss of concentration and burnout. personally, i feel that previous drives in my work have been halted or changed. there is some kind of rupture but its not clear where exactly and what it will lead to. result is a need to be quiet and research and find one's (new) center of gravity … i think activists and artists, and those who are both, are all putting in time and effort when and how they can. and since this is a prolonged situation, it is understandable that participants come in and out of action depending on their ability and time. burnout is experienced by all, and thus the need to take time out in order to be able to come back in. that is to say, divisions of roles are not so clear.*[10]

If a real-world crisis politicizes artists and cultural workers, sometimes to the point that they abandon their studios and galleries to engage in agitation, organizing, the production of ephemeral street art or direct action, then is this to be understood as an aesthetic lacuna similar to a mason throwing cobblestones at soldiers, or a seamstress smuggling food to demonstrators in the hem of her skirt? Or is art's occasional venture into radicalism something else altogether, perhaps an inescapable phase of aesthetic investigation that ironically must jettison aesthetic investigation itself (or temporarily seem to discard it)? Must it be the case that, when artists take their turn on the barricades, along with the partisans and oppressed, the dispossessed and the evicted, they are there because, aside from playing *for* the enemy, they simply have nowhere else to go? Or are they, along with the practice of aesthetics itself, a kind of blockage or lesion found within society's disciplinary structures, only functioning fully as a grammar of dissent in times of crisis?

VII

I visited the encampment again on October 1. Immediately following the evening's General Assembly, OWS protesters streamed out of Zuccotti Park

Figure 21 A painting on cardboard carried aloft up Broadway by OWS Zuccotti Park demonstrators, October 1, 2011
(Photo G. Sholette)

and swarmed up Broadway. Within the torrent of handmade protest placards—"Workers Rights are Human Rights," "Jail Bankers, Not Protesters," "Occupy Everything"—I spotted a trio of art students (they must have been art students), who lofted what looked like an abstract painting over their heads. Watery, colored shapes have soaked into a rectangle of beige cardboard. In truth, it was an elegantly odd picket sign that looked a bit like a DIY Arshile Gorky, and was oddly fragile, bobbing up and down in the crowd. A short time later OWS flocked onto the Brooklyn Bridge, where 700 demonstrators were arrested. God only knows what became of the corrugated Gorky.

VIII

Take another look at the infamous University of California, Davis, pepper-spraying video on YouTube. Watch it to the end to see the power reversal that follows the abusive violence. Students surround police. After the crowd uses the People's Microphone, one student begins to chant, "You can go." Others gradually follow in unison, "You can go." "You can go." "You

can go." Like a colony of insects guided by pheromones, the police turn and march away. Applause.

IX

Capitalism, like nature, has no "history," hisses the ghost of Milton Friedman from the great beyond. Perhaps this explains why the *city of disorder*—Alex S. Vitale's sarcastic moniker for post-Giuliani New York—loathes the archive. It's too ungainly for a town that is always investing in its present, a city that worships the erotics of gentrification and delights in the joyful liquidation of memory. In truth, this state of affairs may have been perfectly acceptable for a generation of precarious workers, artists among them. Until recently, the creative "cognitariat" demanded neither a past nor a future, but only an opportunity to be productive all the time, 24/7, as a mode of life. That was tolerable, until capital placed its boot on the big hand of time. Suddenly both history and hope lurched into view, and memory, an archaic vestige, was foisted onto them like a millstone. Liberating the future becomes the logic of the archive, and perhaps this is why the political scientist Jason Adams argued that OWS is "increasingly complicating static images of space: it is, in short, occupying time."[11] If encampments at Zuccotti Park and other squares and public spaces around the globe marked nothing else, they marked the lawlessness of the law, or what passes for law. The real crisis is less about finance than about the social ruins that are no longer allegorical memories archaically dotting a forward-looking, modernist landscape, such as Walter Benjamin held dear. Nor are they merely ungovernable disaster zones or self-contained spaces of decay within stateless states and collapsed cities. In short, ruins have become our destiny. Do you remember Occupied Berkeley and its revolt of anointed intellectual heirs decrying their education as a necrosocial graveyard "of liberal good intentions, of meritocracy, opportunity, equality, democracy?"[12] Despite batons, pepper spray, rubber bullets, buckshot, tear gas, polycarbonate shields, orange dragnets and military sound amplifiers, what has been occupied is the long duration of resistance: Trenton's Army of Unoccupation, the Flint Michigan sit-down strike, the Woolworth cafeteria sit-in strike, Berkeley's "plant-in" at People's Park, an attempted occupation at New Hampshire's Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant, the Seneca Women's Peace Encampment, Tompkins Square "Guilianiville" in New York, as well as Seattle, Genoa, Iran, Tunisia, Egypt, Greece, Spain, Wisconsin, Wall Street—all impure, repetitive, and often self-mythologizing, occasionally sentimental, sometimes resentful, even reactionary. It is the murmur of the

other archive, with its excesses, and magic gift-economies, its aesthetics of attraction, and its reanimation of dead time. Now there is only *after OWS*, no longer is there a *prior to.*

X

Immediately after the police raided Occupy Oakland, a protester spoke to a radio reporter and assured her that OWS had been dispersed for now, but would soon collect again in other locations, "like water." Spores, buds, mushrooms, swarms, rhizomes, air, water; the swarmchive has emerged as a thing that seems to ask: What Am I? The answer is very simple: You Are the Swarmchive. You Are the Social.

7
Art After Gentrification

The practice of repurposing resources that already exist—versus innovating or engineering new ones—is an area of significant overlap between contemporary art and twenty-first-century capitalism. Low-risk and relatively low-cost, the process of creative reuse generates fantastic value-adding possibilities. Or so it seems. Where a defunded inner-city neighborhood previously lay in tatters, a rising spirit of self-repair and hope now emerges, and where once the overlooked working class was forced to

Figure 22 Assemble collective's Yardhouse studios for London creatives under construction
(Courtesy Assemble)

devise survival tactics along the edges of formal capitalist markets, they are now part of the urban "place-making" paradigm, if not in the flesh, then at least evoked in post-industrial, upcycled decor. At the same time, "change agents" orchestrate redundant populations (viewed from capital's perspective), and discarded assets (unrealized profits) into art projects that symbolically resolve decades of racial and class-based maltreatment by police and abandonment by city planners in post-industrial regions such as Toxteth, Pittsburgh and Chicago. Just as real estate speculators and city planners discovered the value of culture for upgrading urban infrastructures, so too have a growing number of contemporary artists learned to mimic and perhaps intentionally mistranslate neoliberal enterprise culture into a repertoire of ex-onomic tools and "art+realty" hybrids that game the system against itself. Complex mutual strategies of imitation and mimicry between art and neoliberalism rediscover, in strange new forms, the contradictions that underlie this phase of capitalist development. As social regenerative art projects mobilize underutilized workers, for example, labor conflicts that were once identified with the economic sphere emerge within art. Real workers, even when their labor results in art, have a tendency to resist and push back in search of their own interests and security, sometimes even seeking recognition for their own creativity, as we shall see. One aim of this chapter, therefore, is to explore the place of gentrification in a bare art world. The mainstream embrace of socially regenerative art practices may, sometimes, turn the system against itself, but it is by no means immune from discord; especially because the logic of economic crisis permeates everywhere, even the boundary between art and life.

> *Young creative professionals who operate in these collective spaces are blurring the lines between commercial and non-commercial work, shifting from one to the other, depending upon the project.*[1]

> *The ability of art to "accumulate" all social phenomena as instances of itself comes to resemble what capital does, in its self-expanding movement as the automatic subject.*[2]

Assemble

Sixteen cosmopolitan hipsters lean against, squat atop or straddle across the skeletal wood frame of a three-story building in early construction stage. Wearing subdued street garb rather than sensible work clothing, one passes a square point shovel to another who dangles overhead, three engage

in conversation, still another is steadying a ladder though no one seems to be on it, and high above on a roof joist sits a lone figure gazing into her mobile. None engage in actual work (why is a tool used for shoveling gravel and soil handed up?), instead they mimic acts of physical labor. The measured spacing between each of the 16 also implies a mode of loose collectivism particular to our time, as if those present were a flash mob responding to a text message: 'meet at such and such location, pick up a tool and/or find a place to sit, pose and wait for the photographer to arrive.'[3] Note the remnants of a damaged brick wall visible in the distance? This is definitely not a community barn-raising in some wind-swept prairie, but a redevelopment project located in a neglected inner city. Though it could be set in numerous inner-city regions or forgotten neighborhoods abandoned to ultra-free-market neglect the photo was taken in a former industrial area in London known as Sugar Hill Lane, now undergoing "regeneration." And the image is popular. As of this writing some 5,000 websites host digital copies of the image, which makes it "viral" by art world standards.[4] Its popularity is simple. We are looking at the London-based collective Assemble, a self-described cadre of designers, builders, artists and organizers who in December, 2015 were awarded Tate's prestigious Turner Prize for contemporary art.[5] For some, including members of Assemble, this art world recognition came as a surprise. For others, including those who wish to fortify a link between urban regeneration and social practice art, it was all but inevitable.

Assemble's Turner award primarily honored another inner-city regeneration project involving residents of Granby Four Streets, an ethnically mixed area of Toxteth, Liverpool. For decades, inhabitants organized themselves into DIY work committees and guerrilla gardening teams to repair damage left over from a racially charged, anti-police rebellion some 30 years earlier.[6] "After the riots an invisible red line was drawn around the area," explained a resident of Granby of 40 years, before describing an "unspoken policy of no maintenance and no investment."[7] Successive neoliberal governments, nominally right- and left-wing, continued the policy and refused to address Granby's plight, actively disinvesting in the neighborhood for decades. As the recently released papers of a former Thatcherite minister admitted with regard to the government's official practice of inner-city abandonment, Toxteth represented a "tactical retreat, a combination of economic erosion and encouraged evacuation."[8] Locals fought back with the "weapons of the weak," blocking bulldozers and planting vegetables in the rubble, though not always entirely successfully. Some residents gave up and left, but a resistant core remained to establish

a Community Land Trust (CLT) in 2011, giving Granby greater control over municipal funds and guidelines. Two years later, social investment company Steinbeck Studio Limited commissioned Assemble to develop a social regeneration project with the Granby Four Streets CLT, restoring to date a ten-unit section of building stock with plans for a winter garden and local artisanal cooperatives in the development stage.

Comparable stories can be identified across Europe and North America, where disinvestment in former working-class areas has been a key consequence of neoliberal reforms. Deserted by policy makers, the residents of marginalized zones develop their own micro-political agency pivoting on a DIY skillset of salvaging, recycling, grassroots entrepreneurship and forms of direct resistance that sometimes target both conservative and liberal policies (especially given that for many years neoliberal agendas have dominated both the UK Labour Party and the US Democratic Party, although battles within these parties, involving Corbyn and Sanders respectively, represent challenges to this alleged *fait accompli*). Granby Four Streets is one of many examples that include neighborhood improvement projects, homespun cultural programs, and cooperative food/urban gardening projects, as well as tactics for evading eviction. Though each of them is defined by its particular context, comparable examples can be identified across the world, including the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network; the Focus E15 Mums in Newham, East London; Radical Housing Network in Tower Hamlets, London; Experimental Station and Reuse Center on Chicago's South Side; the Brooklyn Anti-gentrification Network; Baltimore Development Cooperative; or the Kaptaruny Art Village where sculptor Artur Klinau is transforming an abandoned town in rural Belarus into a literal "Straw Village" for himself and his artist friends.

While some of this activity involves artists or finds support from internationally based non-governmental organizations and even occasionally from enlightened municipal governments, in large part these grassroots rejuvenation and resistance projects are carried out through the pooled labor of local residents. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that one obvious solution to governmental neglect is found at the heart of the very same regions that capitalism withdrew from as it sought to stabilize itself following the economic collapse and racial and class-based rebellions of the 1970s and early 1980s. This socioeconomic self-repair prototype appears to be voluntary, but it is in fact virtually obligatory, forming the coercive rationale for twenty-first-century, top-down forms of "creative" urban redevelopment such as "Place-making," a quasi-privatized initiative popular with cultural foundations and municipal agencies, as well as real estate developers.[9] The

social practice art template fits here perfectly, and seems to be a win-win for all concerned. City managers leverage low-cost cultural and community assets to solve seemingly intractable infrastructure problems; blighted neighborhoods are made livable again; and artists get an opportunity to apply their talents to real-world problems outside the solitude of their studios. Typical of the enthusiasm for "arts-initiated revitalization," a 2010 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) White Paper described job creation and the reuse of "vacant and underutilized land, buildings, and infrastructure."[10] And while it raises the issue of gentrification and displacement of long-term residents, the solution offered aimed to retain affordable spaces for members of the creative class, without a single proposal for shielding minority and low-income residents from permanent expulsion.

Like the US, the UK Arts Council has promoted the Creative Industries approach since the end of the Cold War in the 1990s but, as Josephine B. Slater and Anthony Iles also point out in their critique of regeneration art projects, "state-led regeneration proper developed in the wake of the inner city riots which erupted across Britain's cities in 1981, in London (Brixton), Liverpool (Toxteth), Birmingham (Handsworth) and Leeds (Chapeltown)."[11] The regeneration efforts that were made, of course, need to be understood in the context of a widespread post-industrial decline, especially in the north of England, which is widely credited as a key factor in the outcome of the Brexit vote to leave the European Union. Whether state-led regeneration, or creative place-making, has ever been anything more than a token gesture is a moot point. Similar observations could be made about the South Bronx, Detroit, Baltimore and parts of Los Angeles where creative place-making is being tested out or is already under-way in communities dominated by people of color. Irrespective of the effectiveness of these interventions when set against the structural tendencies that exist within capitalism, however, the 2015 Turner Prize Jury should be understood as a tribute to the Granby citizens themselves, including their bottom-up form of self-governance, which managed to salvage a story of hope from the maelstrom of neglect and disinvestment. This story is easily lost in the arguments about the extent to which Assemble's work is art: the decision to award of the prize to Assemble certainly highlighted differences of opinion among artists, and shows that the contemporary art world's so-called social turn—as Claire Bishop pronounced it a decade ago—has arrived on the doorstep of the mainstream art establishment.[12]

Social practice art confronts us with a disarming sincerity that is refreshingly at odds with the typically contrived affect of the contemporary art world. As Turner Prize jury member Alistair Hudson explains his

decision to award the prize to Assemble, the collective is "not in the hierarchical structure of the art world [and] not about making art forms but about changing the way the world works, making the world a better place, making life more artful."[13] The power of this William Morris-like aesthetic affirmation radiates back into the collective. In a profound moment of de-alienation, one member of Assemble states about her experience in Toxteth that, "the sense of community is much stronger than anywhere I've ever experienced in my whole life."[14] This same unassuming euphoria can also be seen in Assemble's group portrait in which their neatly choreographed bodies feign blue-collar toil while playfully making allusion to nineteenth-century forms of communal work. This curious, even jocular, detachment from "labor," underscores the group's blithe relationship to the complex political stakes involved in what they do. After all, theirs is not an image mocking work itself, but neither is it a classic depiction of nineteenth- or early twentieth-century emancipated socialist labor either. The group's ironic workerism is more likely a form of collectivism after modernism, as Blake Stimson and I termed this phenomenon, which is to say, it is communalism grounded in plasticity, unity founded on difference.[15] One might even describe it as "whatever" collectivism in so far as social solidarity is staged via a networked aesthetic, more than it is through physical togetherness or the immediate relationship to work.

Still, there is no satisfactory escape from the contradictions bound up with contemporary high culture, especially under present conditions of "bare art," as discussed in Part I of this volume. This is a post-avant-garde situation robbed of deep historical resources, and devoid of future utopias, with only the cunning technology of reuse available. Not surprisingly, one of its primary competencies is superimposing a certain spontaneous naïveté onto clever cosmopolitanism, precisely what we see manifest in Assemble's mass-selfie. Whatever real gains it may achieve, social regeneration art is tailor-made for a non-revolutionary now-time, covering up the effects of crisis with the infinite return of the same.

Gates

Perhaps no artist embodies this curious blend of urban sophistication and uninhibited enthusiasm better than the virtuosic Theaster Gates. Like Assemble, Gates ducks the label "artist" (or at least he does some of the time), and yet like Assemble he is the recipient of a distinguished art world prize, the Artes Mundi. Known for leveraging sizable sums of public and private capital, Gates purchases and renovates vacant real estate on

Chicago's fiscally depressed and primarily Black South Side. Gates casually and somewhat credulously sets aside the label artist in order to describe his work as "practising things—practising life, practising creation."[16] His reputation is embellished with a delirious combination of real and fictional monikers such as designer, architect, social worker, archivist, and urban planner, with the last of these listed on his actual curriculum vitae along with ceramicist.[17] An African American originally from the Near West Side of Chicago, Gates has rehabilitated some 32 abandoned South Side homes in what he calls the Dorchester Project. Most of this work is carried out under the auspices of his non-profit umbrella organization the Rebuild Foundation. With 2014 assets of about half a million dollars, Rebuild is the quintessential embodiment of a sustainable, artist-driven regeneration enterprise. Its mission statement promises to reactivate "underutilized properties," invest in "creative entrepreneurs" and empower "neighborhood transformation" through artist-driven "Intentional Aesthetics," the latter term a possible tweak on the expression "intentional community."[18] Yet, while this represents Gates's community advocacy, it is a different side of his practice that most distinguishes him from Assemble.

Gates departs from his British counterparts in two fundamental ways. First, his connection to the University of Chicago, where he was appointed Director of the Arts + Public Life initiative in 2011, and, second, via his skillful capitalization of art world prestige and his own ethnic identification, resources mobilized not only for the South Side rejuvenation projects, but also for his individual art practice. By actively repurposing building and industrial materials such as lumber, wooden doors, tar, tires, roofing tiles, furniture, and even decommissioned fire hoses into works of art, Gates is able to sell these mixed-media assemblages for considerable sums of money at the top tier of the global art market while concurrently making reference to African American culture. While Assemble also retails what they call "upcycled" furniture made from urban detritus, so far these pieces have not rocketed to blue chip status; perhaps because not even the Turner Prize can overpower an art collector's preference to possess an individually authored art object. Notwithstanding the recent embrace of socially engaged art, when it comes to commercial investments by wealthy patrons, the art world remains a fundamentally conservative economic system, one that can, however, be repurposed. To whatever degree gambling with art as a financial investment strategy has always been present, playing itself out behind the closed doors of the art world, today there is no concealment needed: intervening within the system is an unabashed hallmark of *bare art*, just as financial scheming is of capitalism in general.

Figure 23 Theaster Gates, *Bank Bond*, limited edition artwork, 2013, marble, 6 1/8 × 8 5/8 × 13/16 in. (15.5 × 21.9 × 2.1 cm) © Theaster Gates. Photo © White Cube (Photo: Ben Westoby)

In 2012 Gates purchased the abandoned Stony Island Savings & Loan bank building from the city of Chicago for $1, repurposing a portion of its marble interior, including material from the water closet, into a limited edition of 100 "Bank Bonds," or more accurately, "Art Bonds." Acid-etched into each sardonic collectable is the motto "In Art We Trust." (Some of the marble came from the bank's urinals, thus reinscribing the Duchampian readymade not only with acid but also a dose of Nietzschean *ressentiment*?)[19] The following year at the Basel Art Fair in Switzerland Gates's White Cube gallery offered the satirical securities for $5,000 a piece: "I found myself with a failed bank, and here I was being invited to Basel, the land where banking never failed. So what did I do? I asked bankers to help me save my bank. That felt poetic."[20]

Gates exhibits a witty, even facetious, disposition towards money, including the question of how it is acquired and what it can do. The capacity to toggle back and forth between a market-based art practice and not-for-profit social entrepreneurship provides Gates with several advantages, including managing multiple taxable income streams and expenses such as his studio of assistants. This same financial *RealARTpolitik* carries over into virtually all of the artist's practices, sometimes appearing in a mischievous form

as in the Duchampian "Art Bond" gambit, but at other times taking on a more indignant expression, almost as though one finally catches a glimpse behind the Gates phenomenon of a vexed class and racial frustration at work: "It's unreasonable to think that only collectors should have the luxury to be conscious of that [investment value of the art object], and that if an artist ever became conscious of the economics associated with the art world then they would no longer be pure. That's bullshit."[21]

Much of the power and moral authority of Gates's work derives from its engagement with race: "For as long as I can remember the everyday things of black people have had deep resonance for me … It's from this place of thankfulness and reverence that I start a more critical examination of how the world sees blackness and, by extension, how the world sees me."[22] The relationship between appearance and identity, especially in the visual art world, is too complex to tackle meaningfully in this chapter except to say that perhaps more than any other frequently cited socially engaged artist Gates's "unapologetically black" (his phrase) practice has singularly rebooted the color spectrum emitted by art as social intervention, permanently altering what African Canadian artist Deanna Bowen calls "optical politics."

What is curious here is that Gates is not the first artist of color to work in the medium of direct social engagement; that distinction typically goes to African American artist Rick Lowe's *Project Row Houses* (1993) that transform abandoned real-estate into art installation, and which is clearly a strong influence on Gates, but also Asian American Mel Chin's *Operation Paydirt* (2006–ongoing), if we stick with the social practice genealogies developed by Tom Finkelpearl, Shannon Jackson, Nato Thompson and Grant Kester, among others, and if we hold to Claire Bishop's 2006 historical bracket for the start of the "social turn."[23] Other precedents also exist in this regard, including Tania Bruguera's *Behavior Art School* (*Cátedra Arte de Conducta*, Havana, Cuba: 2002–2009); Coco Fusco's anti-Guantanamo Prison performance *Bare Life Study* (2005); William Pope.L's interactive cross-state vehicle *Black Factory* (2004); Daniel J. Martinez and VinZula Kara's West Side Chicago protest parade *Consequences of a Gesture* (1993); and also perhaps David Hammons infamous snowball vending action *Bliz-aard Ball Sale* (1983), or Adrian Piper's *Funk Lessons* (1983–1985, though Kester considers the latter more pedagogical than socially participatory). However, none of these social medium works by artists of color have made "blackness" a topic of discussion for social practice artists to the same degree, and in just a few short years, even before the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag went viral in 2013. Perhaps this is because, in a social practice field primarily populated by non-commercial careers, Gates has not shied

away from an individual studio practice or from the market, thus bringing him into more eyeball-to-eyeball contact with the dominantly white art world pecking order. Or maybe it is because he has consistently asserted his *otherness* within this supposedly neutral, color-blind framework, as he did in a statement from a 2013 live-blog interview, "I don't have to perform blacker, but that I become blacker in the presence of all you white people."[24] And with regard to the artworks he produces for a largely white art world, "Black art is art that can triple code."[25]

Further complicating the riddle of Gates's meteoric career is that he was almost certainly introduced to the possibilities of material salvaging and creative reuse by fellow South Side (white) artist Dan Peterman. A long-time proponent of recycling who is better known in Europe than in the US, Peterman is also the co-founder of Experimental Station (ES), a mixed-use cultural center or "border institution," as Peterman describes it, where Gates has shared a small studio for the past decade along with a bicycle refurbishing shop, a local farmer's market, a vegan delicatessen and a documentary production studio known as Invisible Institute that was instrumental in forcing the city to release the sequestered dash-cam video of the 2014 police murder of black teenager Laquan McDonald.[26] Peterman owes his own association with the art of recycling to Chicagoan Ken Dunn, a waste reuse maestro who founded the Chicago Resource Center in 1973. Dunn began experimenting with urban sustainability by employing jobless South Side residents picking up discarded cans and bottles. First of its kind in the city, the Center now has over two dozen employees and hosts the Creative Reuse Warehouse where artists, among other reusers, pay modest fees to locate and release the possibilities latent within what Chicago had simply forsaken.[27] Peterman likens the idea of reuse to "a medieval economy or someplace where everything is still in the loop, where everything is being reworked, everything has the potential to be viewed with a new perspective."[28] However, the notion of keeping it small and keeping it local is simply not part of the "bare art" equation, or of an art world intent on unbounded expansion. By contrast, Peterman's recycling loop almost resembles an autonomous gray zone economy: "We can actually seriously build an economy for the city of Chicago based on what are conventionally conceived of as liabilities: all the vacant lots and vacant land, the food waste and yard waste can be turned into valuable compost and turned into farms that can provide materials."[29]

While Peterman and Dunn emphasize sustainable community-oriented economies that attempt to gain some degree of political autonomy, their approach to material reuse differs from Gates in so far as the latter

extends his recycling strategies not only into the mainstream art market, using a more or less Duchampian strategy to attract the surplus value of art collectors, but also expands the paradigm into such highly ambitious regeneration undertakings as Dorchester Projects or the Stony Island Savings & Loan library.

Peterman's "recoverable liabilities" include for Gates not only housing stock, but also undervalued and underutilized human capital, thus his direct artistic intervention into the social as a material in its own right. In addition, with some 60 people now in his employ, and the prominent rejuvenation projects as proof, the artist has delivered a significant, though still largely symbolic retort to capital's problem of waste and surplus, material and labor. And, by gaming the autonomy of high art (real or not, artistic autonomy still has cachet in the market), Gates gradually expands his practice beyond its initial locality. While he cut his teeth on Chicago's South Side, the artist now insists his real challenge is "the same as it is in Liverpool, or wherever, it is: what do working people do now the industry has gone?"[30] As a lecturer and policy adviser in the ravaged Mid-West cities of Detroit and Gary, but also the austerity-choked nation of Greece and the racially and class divided city of Bristol, UK, Gates will likely be disseminating his Dorchester Project model far beyond Chicago.

In this broader context, the significance of the 2008 real estate bubble implosion for Gates's practice is impossible to overlook. The artist's first property was purchased with a sub-prime mortgage loan, and when the housing collapse hit Chicago he leveraged additional properties.[31] Simultaneously, post-crash quantitative easing by the US Federal Reserve helped to boost the upper tier of the art market, as historically low interest rates pushed capital towards stocks, but also art, whose notoriously opaque and unregulated market was flooded with cash. This was certainly a key reason why the art market did not collapse along with other high-income investment instruments, and one of the reasons why Gates's individual art practice could operate so effectively: there was stimulus money, guaranteed by the state, surging into the art market.[32] And if all of this peels back a layer or two to Gates's renown it is also important to note that hidden genealogies and economic stimuli are common to the under-theorized, and under-historicized, field of socially engaged art. Neither should this diminish the artist's effort to establish through his own creative reuse activities a Black art consciousness, though it does situate this ambition within a long history of such practices on Chicago's troubled South Side. Because, along with alternative economic experimentation and regeneration projects, this regeneration paradigm also collides with a decades-old, complex history

of racial tension between the University of Chicago and the surrounding African-American community: the former consisting of a traditionally white and privileged enclave that for years virtually blockaded its campus from residents of the surrounding low-income African American South Side community. However, as sociologist Julia Rothenberg writes, with the hiring of Gates the university now suddenly appears as "a magnificently generous benefactor and font of support for Black cultural life in the community." Such is *RealARTpolitik* in the creative city.[33] And it is also possible that Gates, as well as other social practice artists such as Conflict Kitchen that I now turn to, really did began their projects by slyly mocking the creative city model itself, only to discover over time that they had become essentially indistinguishable from it.

Conflict Kitchen

An art project that poses as a successful fast-food restaurant in a post-industrial American city may seem like an odd inclusion in this chapter on regenerative social practices, but the creative city must be fed, figuratively, as well as literally, and the consumption of food is, after all, our primary embodied relationship to the abstract forces of social production (Gates has also recently opened up a coffee shop on Chicago's South Side he calls the Currency Exchange Café). Contemporary artists have approached commodification in their work for decades, primarily focusing on issues of fetishization in relation to the work of art itself. Approaching group consumption itself as a site of potential intervention is less typical, though precedents reach back to Rirkrit Tiravanija's gallery-framed curry dinners, or further to the artist-run FOOD restaurant in New York's SoHo art districted between 1971 and 1974,[34] but neither Tiravaniga nor FOOD was organized as an entrepreneurial social art project, especially one that could effectively be franchised to other regenerative city settings. In 2010 artists Jon Rubin and Dawn Weleski opened Conflict Kitchen (CK) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, "a take-out eatery that only serves food from countries with which the United States is in conflict."[35] Sometimes described as a "Trojan horse" by founder Rubin, CK specializes in a rotating menu of cuisine from Iran, Venezuela, Cuba, Afghanistan, North Korea, Palestine and, as of this writing, the indigenous nation's alliance of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy: all countries that are in political and/or military conflict with the United States.[36]

According to the project's website, CK operates seven days a week using "the social relations of food and economic exchange to engage the general

public in discussions about countries, cultures, and people that they might know little about outside of the polarizing rhetoric of governmental politics and the narrow lens of media headlines." Fulfilling such a solemn mission involves cooking authentically prepared ethnic dishes and serving them in graphically designed informational wrappers that focus on the culture, people and politics of a given adversarial nation. Though CK offers diners a flavorful and inexpensive meal, it also compels patrons into an intimate encounter with their alleged enemies. In other words, there is a mischievous, even ironic dimension to the project's stated ambitions that reminds us that CK is also a work of contemporary art. Location also matters. Twice selected for an All American City Award (by contrast, New York City has never won), Pittsburgh is a small northeastern service-oriented city that nevertheless represents itself as a beer drinking, blue-collar sports town.[37] Pittsburgh is moderate in size and politically liberal in outlook, and CK has naturally attracted a great deal of local media attention. When CK began serving Iranian food in 2010, not only did they discover Pittsburgh's previously cloistered Persian community, which began to flock to their restaurant, but their project's regional media focus went national and then international.

With bright blue and gold colors alluding to ancient Persia, the "Kubideh" Kitchen wrapper included short paragraphs about such topics as the 1979 revolution, conflict with Israel, the US perception of Iran, and nuclear power, as well as such less charged subjects as tea, bread, film and fashion. But when, in the Fall of 2014, the kitchen staff began turning out traditional Palestinian meals, including Shawarma roasted chicken, falafel and baba ganoush, things got ugly. The new menu was wrapped up in a packaging design citing a range of topics raised by Palestinians living in Pittsburgh, but also from interviews conducted during a ten-day visit to Palestine in May, 2014 by CK director Rubin, and co-directors Weleski and chef Robert Sayer. One wrapper reads in part, "Israeli soldiers shot our friend Bassim [with a tear gas canister] it made a big hole in his chest and killed him. The canister was made in Western Pennsylvania." Still other short texts focus on marriage, dating and olive trees, and all of this was printed on CK food wrappers.[38]

Almost immediately after CK began to serve Palestinian food, the project received a death threat, forcing Rubin and Weleski to shut down operations for several days as authorities investigated. Previous to the threat, pressure from conservative Jewish organizations forced one of the project's sponsors, the University of Pittsburgh's Honors College, to withdraw their funding. CK later reopened under police protection but with heightened media attention from global news agencies including the *Washington Post*, *Al Jazeera*, the

BBC and *El Mundo*. Media attention has grown steadily over the years with even *Tonight Show* humorist Jay Leno once referring to the art project in one of his stand-up routines. But this comedic connection is less baffling when one learns the importance of humor to Rubin's aesthetic tactics:

> Humor is the thing the visual arts have that gets you in the gut … I'm doing a project with my friend who lives in Iran to have a sitcom in Los Angeles and Tehran. The family will be stuck in two realities at the same time. The kid knows what's happening and the others don't. Conflict and miscommunication is the core of comedy.[39]

Rubin concludes by rhetorically asking if it is possible to "create an innocuous environment to bring up political issues without censorship?" The "Trojan horse" recipe he and Weleski operate from is clear. Smuggle politics in through the back door of a familiar setting, in this case a fast-food restaurant. This artistic subterfuge built upon CK's previous iteration as the Waffle Shop, a late night Pittsburgh eatery where customers could order vegan waffles and take part in a live television broadcast involving "the storytelling vernacular of a talk show."[40]

The Waffle Shop developed out of an undergraduate art seminar Rubin taught at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) between 2009 and 2012. Before long it evolved from a social art experiment into a full-fledged enterprise in which a series of rotating hosts conversed with patrons in the type of empty patter typical of televised talk show programming. Supported in part by the Center for the Arts in Society at CMU, though mostly funded by its own sales, the Waffle Shop was located in the East Liberty section of the city. According to a 2009 article in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* the once economically blighted neighborhood was "on a rocket's trajectory," with upscale food stores, hotels, a Home Depot and more than a dozen developers actively transforming its bankrupt infrastructure into an attractive target for capital investment.[41] As in so many similar rejuvenation scenarios, East Liberty's mostly black, low-income residents were systematically edged out of the neighborhood in order to make way for middle- and upper-income residents, who are also predominantly white.[42] Much of this renewal was taking place via public–private partnerships. In this regard, the Waffle Shop was both similar and different. Rubin managed to get a reduced rent from the landlord and that cost was picked up by CMU. At the same time the Waffle Shop soon managed to generate its own revenue from sales, reportedly employing some 450 students over the course of its business life.[43] Rubin's student-run art project operated between the

hours of 10 p.m. and 3 a.m.; giving it the air of a nightclub for insomniacs. The Waffle Shop's curious mix of food enterprise plus a side of reality TV seemed made-to-measure for the so-called creative class: knowledge-based professionals whose flexible, adrenaline-charged work schedules favored a place with cheap coffee and sugary confections for knocking out that website design, concert deal or press release on a tight, redeye deadline.

In practice, however, most regular waffle eaters came from the Shadow Lounge, a late-night hip-hop music club located next door. That did not prevent Pittsburgh policy shapers from seeing the Waffle Shop as a creative cities type venture, useful for anchoring broader urban changes. Assistant city planning director for development and design cited the project when she stated "art can stimulate development. For example, the Waffle Shop became an East Liberty destination that contributed to the neighborhood's development buzz, officials said."[44]

Whether or not grabbing a midnight snack plus a side of *realitytainment* led to the kind of buzz that transformed the East Liberty neighborhood into one of the city's hottest rental locations is unclear but, as cuisine, the Waffle Shop ranked fair to good on Yelp.com.[45]

As television, it was no less trite than most broadcast fare. But as art, the Waffle Shop, just like Conflict Kitchen, put forth an imposing organizational model that Rubin insists, "hybridized many social identities as it simultaneously functioned as a restaurant, talk show, business venture, public artwork, and classroom."[46] What presumably keeps it ontologically grounded as contemporary art is CK's dialogically aesthetic ambition. For art historian Grant Kester, dialogical art draws indirectly on the ideas of Russian Formalist Viktor Shklovsky and German playwright Bertolt Brecht. At the start of the Russian Revolution in 1917, Shklovsky's technique of *ostranenie* (остранение) or defamiliarization sought to make what is familiar strange, thus freeing it from cultural ossification. Notably, his estrangement process contrasts with the aesthetic approach of artists Tatlin, Popova and Rodchenko, whose concept of Constructivism sought to replace existing cultural forms with a completely new society merging art and life. It was Brecht who blended aspects of both avant-garde tendencies in his own estrangement effect, by instructing actors to alienate their performance from traditional bourgeois theater's illusionary *mise-en-scène*. Ideally, once the fourth wall separating audience from stage was lifted, a real time-space remained behind in which candid and improvised reflections on art and politics and revolutionary change could unfold.

Sensing that the late twentieth-century neo-avant-garde had stripped these practices of their social and political context, Kester takes issue with

the resulting tendency to serve up cultural alienation for its own sake, without the secondary process of critique, reflection and reassessment provided for in earlier avant-garde theories. Pointing to the paradox of "liberating" a subjugated population by cruelly negating the comfort of representational conventions and clichés, Kester proposes that the next step after shocking the viewer is engaging in participatory conversation about the shortcomings of existing social conditions. The resulting dialogical aesthetic aims to reimagine art and society as a more democratic collaborative project.[47] Curiously, CK splices Kester's dialogical aesthetic directly into the context of a carefully staged world of deception in which patrons' expectations are reprocessed through an intimate encounter with their alleged geopolitical enemies. That there is humor in this confrontational platform there is no doubt. Whether or not diners leave the kitchen more enlightened is difficult to assess, though perhaps Rubin and Weleski will make outcome evaluation part of their project going forward. Still, it is probably more accurate to suggest that both the Waffle Shop and CK's version of audience estrangement is not an attempt to resurrect pre-war avant-garde techniques, but instead derives from secondary or even tertiary pop-cultural sources, including *The Daily Show* and *Saturday Night Live*, whose reality television parodies and mock-news broadcasts borrow indirectly from early twentieth-century art innovators, including Brecht.[48]

Notably, Conflict Kitchen's name and mission closely resemble another food-related art project entitled Enemy Kitchen (EK) developed six years earlier by Iraqi-American artist Michael Rakowitz. While neither Rubin nor Weleski have officially commented on the similarities of the two projects, Rakowitz amiably grants that, "there is room in the world for both projects to exist." EK's origins are also in the classroom where, beginning in 2003, concurrent with the US invasion of Iraq, the artist taught middle-school students how to make his Iraqi-Jewish mother's chewy Kubba dumpling dish. The classroom became a space for "dispersing cooking technique and a space for conversation making as an act of resistance." EK later evolved into a Chicago food truck that employed US veterans of the Iraq War as sous-chefs/servers taking orders from Iraqi refugee chefs. The ensuing conversation between truck operators and residents is the heart of Rakowitz's project that he believes inverts power relations between military personnel and refugees so that "friction and discomfort is made visible."[49] Rakowitz, trained as a sculptor, explains that "instead of the kind of didactic approach Conflict Kitchen take with their wrappers, I am interested in having people in relation to the object": the paper plates on which EK's food is served are replicas of Saddam Hussein's hospitality dinnerware, and

EK's kitchen knife was forged for Rakowitz by Hussein's personal sword maker. And while Rubin and Weleski have not sought to expand the range of what constitutes actual "conflict" to include their own city, one could easily imagine a curated African American cuisine phase, complete with wrappers exploring issues of displacement in a gentrifying creative city like Pittsburgh.[50]

Bare Art/Real Estate

Up to a point, Assemble, Gates's Dorchester Projects, the Waffle Shop and Conflict Kitchen all pivot on a similarly anomalous logic, in which participants' reality frame is undermined and sustained at one and the same time. On one hand this brings the laws of capital, as well as state and municipal regulators, directly into art's ontological frame. Whether post-Fordist capitalism now resembles art or vice versa, virtually everything we thought we knew about "serious" culture has been peeled away with astonishing force, leaving behind a raw, and in some ways vulnerable thing: a bare art world, fully congruent with the political and economic emergency that marks our contemporaneous present. On the other hand, in a society dominated by entrepreneurship and risk, such "real-world" practices as regenerative social art inevitably serve to map the tactics of a certain artistic vanguard directly onto the raw and unmediated capitalist reality of the twenty-first century.[51] Without contesting the dialogical value of these practices at a local level, as Marina Vishmidt warns, the transfer of art from the sphere of culture into the realm of real estate, contract law and business, permits:

> art to stop *being art*, or to stop being *only* art, and allows it to start playing a much more direct role as a channel of empowerment, governance, and even accumulation—if only of "social capital"—for specific communities and in specific contexts … we thus seem to be living through a moment of semantically frictionless yet socially devastating fusion between the social and capital.[52]

I would go a step further, but also one step back, by suggesting this slippery transition from art to life is more real than a mere semantic integration, one that is therefore free of neither class conflict nor racial and gender discord. Since contemporary art no longer has any meaningful contextual or formal limits, it is also no longer possible for any art practice to radically exceed or subvert the field's existing boundaries or discursive

framing. This *bare art* condition is a state of cultural overexposure in which the horizon of art's future possibilities is also its infinite conventionality made visible as an exhausted canonical finitude, and it is not always clear that empowerment can be the result. *Bare art* has merged with life, while life is permeated by capital. What was once capital's crisis is now also that of art, institutionally as well as epistemologically and ontologically. What is overlooked by Vishmidt's understandable pessimism, therefore, is that this change of status forces art into an encounter with social frictions operating within capitalist forces of production. This is especially evident when socio-economic art practitioners mobilize the undervalued labor power of other artists for their own projects. Probably, almost certainly, it always was this way, though now, under the stark conditions of bare art, there is no reliable means of concealing this fact. The truth will out, leading to conflicts of a decidedly real-world nature once perceived as largely external to art.

In a 2009 University of Chicago public forum, Theaster Gates confessed to listeners that his temporary staff wanted "healthcare benefits … they want their family members to fly free to Documenta … they made me rich …what do I do?"[53] Musing on this situation, but also on divisions of labor within the contemporary art world in general, John Preus, a former Gates studio manager and fabricator, rhetorically asks:

> how is it that the image of labor is still so compelling? From the early yearnings to turn lead into gold, to the fountain of youth, we have returned to the blue collar transformations of hands and material as a sort of spiritual placeholder, reifying the Laborer as the inarticulate alchemist, the one whose knowledge of the material world is true and pure … Is this simply another instance of the poet falling in love with the shipbuilder, ostensibly amplifying the plight of the common man against the supposed frivolity of the upper classes and academics? Could we call this phenomenon Bluewashing? And how far can such populism stretch, as the celebrity of the artist increases?[54]

These days Gates produces his studio based art by himself, while assistants are deployed to fabricate projects related to the Rebuild Foundation side of the artist's career. Nevertheless, whenever "intentional aesthetic" practices tap into actual legal, economic and social production frameworks labor-related conflict inevitably arises. In August, 2015, staff members of Conflict Kitchen decided to form a union: "Inspired by food service workers across the country fighting for fifteen dollars an hour, we the workers of Conflict Kitchen have decided to come together to organize

for living wages, fair benefits, and recognition of the key role we play in the [art] project."[55] The project's business success has required a staff including a full-time chef, a couple of management personnel and project researchers, as well as over a dozen kitchen employees, who voted to join Local 23 of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union in an effort to improve working conditions at CK. As one employee explains: "I've had eight jobs in Pittsburgh since I moved here ten months ago. Like Conflict Kitchen, not getting paid enough is the baseline for all of these jobs."[56] Another staff member, however, focuses on the aesthetic dimension of the job, reporting that, along with better wages:

> about half the staff wanted to be more involved in researching and programming. All of us are interested in harnessing our skills and interest and applying them to a project in a small way, and making more money and having the benefits we deserve will give us the power and confidence to make small changes and programing ideas that might change the direction of Conflict Kitchen.[57]

CK's employees have come to realize that they not merely artistic representations of food preparation workers who perform their tasks as if on display in some historical village re-enactment, but are instead actual food service employees on the payroll of a socially engaged art project known as Conflict Kitchen. No doubt Brecht would approve of this double estrangement procedure in which an allegedly non-alienated artistic labor force undertakes its own self-alienation in order to generate a more "real" mode of collective solidarity that demands recognition for the value it adds to a work of contemporary art, which also happens to be a profitable commodity. It is important to add that the CK labor conflict is directed less at Rubin and Weleski, or at the art project, than it is towards Carnage Mellon University (CMU) which contracts the kitchen's workers. Nevertheless, it is clear that a socially engaged artwork such as CK that is virtually interchangeable with reality also inevitably thrusts all of its participants into a day-to-day struggle with the legal, inter-social, and economic minutiae of contemporary life operating beyond the sphere of autonomous art's safety zone. That same up-scaling of an art work to fully synchronize with life, in fact to become interchangeable with the everyday world, would once upon a time been celebrated as a triumph for the avant-garde but, under current circumstances, this shift reflects conditions particular to the crisis of capitalism, as well as art's own response to the impoverished status of the bare art world.

Social Practice/Social Labor

The ethos of socially engaged art makes managing worker-oriented concerns an especially knotty affair. Which is to say, in a bare art world, contemporary artists, especially social practice "regenerative" artists, find many of the conflicts and dilemmas inherent to autonomous bourgeois art not only remain in effect, but have now been raised up to a higher level of concreteness. While Rubin and Weleski allowed the CK unionization to take place, and Gates has publicly struggled with such issues, there is a broader transformation under way as contemporary art and labor disputes spread.

Since the 2008 economic crisis we find art fabricators, cultural interns, studio managers and so forth collectively growing more assertive about their right to better working conditions and higher pay. In early summer of 2016, art world megastar Jeff Koons is alleged to have abruptly "laid off" 14 of his painting staff in response to an attempt at unionization. Whether or not this proves accurate is perhaps less important that the fact it seems perfectly plausible because enterprise culture has made such day-to-day conflicts just another facet of the bare art world phenomenon. To these

Figure 24 Fight for 15 (dollars per hour wages) take-away cup o' noodles with statements and portraits of pro-union Conflict Kitchen workers on each lid (pictured is former CK employee Mr. Trevor Jenkins). A project by Madalyn Hochendoner and Clara Gamalzki.

(Courtesy the artists)

labor-related tensions we can add the activism of WAGE (Working Artists for the Greater Economy), Arts & Labor, Gulf Labor, GULF (Global Ultra Luxury Faction), Debtfair, and BFAMFAPhD.org discussed in the Introduction to Part I, "Welcome to Our Art World," but also the recently formed UK Artists' Union England, the art as social factory research of the Slow/Free University of Warsaw, the investigation of divisions of artistic labor by the European think-tank Former West and, even as I write this, the Guerrilla Girls are organizing a joint action with the Precarious Workers Brigade in London focusing on unpaid art world internships, and WAGE is preparing to roll-out a new coalition program called *WAGENCY* that seeks to go beyond issues of fair pay to tap into the developing political potential of artistic labor in general, while in in the Basque region of Spain the educational staff of the Guggenheim Bilbao are protesting in the streets to denounce the "McDonaldization" of major museums by arguing, "We live a moment without precedents in museum history, which has lost respect for the cultural worker, turned into staff throwaway."[58]

This is not a comprehensive list. What it evinces, however, is the fact that we are experiencing a phase of long-overdue reflection, advocacy and action focused on the working conditions of artists and cultural workers. This reaction is spurred on by the chronically unmanageable repercussions of the financial collapse. But if cultural labor's response is to rise above the important, though limited, need to improve the distribution of art world benefits by addressing deeper structural and political concerns, it may depend on our ability to link present conditions of bare art to the crisis and delirium of capital. As capitalism's long-term contradictions deepen, in the form of an ever-weirder symptomatology of bizarre negative interest rates, persistent underemployment and excess populations, an oversupply of artists and an ever-accelerating series of Ponzi-like schemes involving bubble-and-burst debt and investment cycles, fundamental questions arise about the role of art. Art now speaks the grammar of finance, doing so with such aptitude that no accent is evident (though one is frequently affected), but labor disputes and signs of class struggle arise within it. At the same time, the sincere and sprightly good will of socially committed artists and urban rejuvenators stretches out far beyond the province of high culture in a desperate search for a solution to the failures of neoliberal capitalism, and mainstream art prizes are awarded to them. Even though the art world is insulated from the economic effects of crisis, it becomes disorganized by it. One newly advertised project in NYC pretty much sums up the situation with uncanny precision (and note the reference to "Intentional Community"): "Art Condo is a professional real estate project and an

'Intentional Community' based in the social sculpture ideas of Joseph Beuys [and] a community-drive real estate enterprise that helps creative individuals purchase and develop buildings, collectively, in partnership with neighborhood residents."[59]

Expect more, not less, of these hybridized art and business enterprises as the crisis drags on. More Beuys-inspired condos, pop-up cultural ventures, university-funded art eateries and public–private creative place-making initiatives. However, if cultural entrepreneurship and creative reuse represent art's gift to capital, the gift is not free of a contaminating animus, or even a degree of venom. On the one hand, we find low-income residents and communities of color raising charges of "art-washing" and heightened gentrification when such projects are brought into discussion. On the other hand, social regeneration art illustrates a means of temporarily reappropriating and distorting mainstream market enclosures, adding local value to people and spaces abandoned by capital. In the crisis management portfolio, social regenerative practices are one tool among others, and probably the preferred mechanism for taming, or at least seeming to, a system spinning out of control: small in scale but high in visibility, such projects keep at arm's length difficult ideological questions about the role that state and municipal agencies might play in moderating the deleterious effects of capitalism.

In order to save itself, capital goes to extraordinary lengths, absorbing alien modes of production into its repertoire of perseverance, including experimental modalities of avant-garde art, even if these are assimilated only superficially, at a formal level. And yet the more capital subsumes what was once "other" to it, including labor as Negri and others pointed out decades ago, or the reproductive systems of biopower as Federici and other feminists have insisted, or dark matter creativity for that matter, the more capital returns to itself the destructured society it has created, sometimes with a vengeance.

three very delicate monsters, indeed." Karl Marx, *Capital* , vol. 1, Penguin Classics reprint edition, 1992, 787.

77. Sholette, citing Simon Sheikh, in *Dark Matter*, 70.
78. Marco Baravalle, "Art, Creativity and Cultural Labor Between Neoliberal Devices and the Drive Towards a Common Use," a paper for m.a.c.lab, University of Venice, Italy, 2014, www.academia.edu/29360147/ART_CREATIVITY_AND_CULTURAL_LABOUR_BETWEEN_NEOLIBERAL_DEVICES_AND_THE_DRIVE_TOWARDS_A_COMMON_USE._THE_CASE_OF_S.A.L.E.-DOCKS_IN_VENICE.
79. See discussions about WAGE, Debtfair, Occupy Museums, Gulf Labor Coalition, and similar groups in the Introduction to Part I: "Welcome to Our Art World," page 00.

Introduction II: Naturalizing the Revanchist City

1. Sharon Zukin, *Naked City: the Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*, Oxford University Press, 2010, xi.
2. "Aggressive Mimicry," Wikipedia article, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aggressive_mimicry.
3. Arthur Cotterell, *The Pimlico Dictionary of Classical Mythologies*, Random House, 2000, 83.
4. Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes and Victoria Walters (eds.) *Beuysian Legacies in Ireland and Beyond: Art, Culture and Politics*, Meunster, 2011, 14.
5. A canid is a member of the Canidae, the mammal family that includes dogs, foxes, hyenas, wolves and coyotes. Regarding Beuys's canid, there is no reliable account of either the source of the animal, or its fate after the encounter with the artist, though speculation is that it came from and was returned to a local zoo.
6. Warehousing property amounts to holding useable buildings or spaces vacant in order to rent, lease or sell at a higher value once a neighborhood is fully gentrified. See Picture the Homeless organization: http://picturethehomeless.org/announcing-the-housing-not-warehousing-act/.
7. "Yes, a Police Riot," editorial, *New York Times*, August 26, 1988, www.nytimes.com/1988/08/26/opinion/yes-a-police-riot.html.
8. The defendants spent between six and thirteen years in prison, between the crime in 1989 and their collective exoneration in 2002. On the wolves in blue uniform responsible for the death of Richard Luke see Don Terry, "Angry Protest Assails Police in Man's Death," May 24, 1989, *New York Times*, www.nytimes.com/1989/05/24/nyregion/angry-protest-assails-police-in-man-s-death.html . And on the scandal of the so-called Central Park wilding wolfpack see the Peabody Awarded documentary, *The Central Park Five*, directed by Ken and Sarah Burns, and David Mcmahon, 2013.
9. Artist Dillon de Give was so inspired by the appearance of "Hal" the Central Park coyote that he created a social practice project called *The Coyote Walk Itinerancy*, https://coyotewalks.wordpress.com/.
10. An excellent analysis of the project is found in Julia Rothenberg and Steve Lang, "Repurposing the High Line: Aesthetic Experience and Contradiction in West Chelsea," *City, Culture and Society*, November, 2015.

11. Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996.
12. Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*, Routledge, 1996, 227.
13. "Mysteries of the Creative Class" (chapter 5 in this volume, page 00).
14. Richard Lloyd, *Neo-Bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Neoliberal City*, Routledge, 2010, 231; Martha Rosler "The Artistic Mode of Revolution," *e-flux*, 33, 2012, www.e-flux.com/journal/the-artistic-mode-of-revolution-from-gentrification-to-occupation/; Zukin, *Naked City*.
15. "Mysteries of the Creative Class" (chapter 5 in this volume, page 00).
16. Yates McKee, *Strike Art! Contemporary Art and the Post-Occupy Condition*, Verso, 2016, 87.
17. The Wall Street mascot was first installed illegally by a wealthy Italian artist as push- back against the 1987 stock market crash, and later officially adopted by the city, but one can't help wishing that the *Charging Bull* sculpture had been present a few years earlier when Wadleigh shot his film, the sight of a Wolfen howling on its back would have been delectable.
18. Greg Bankoff, Uwe Lübken and Jordan Sand, eds., *Flammable Cities: Urban Conflagration and the Making of the Modern World*, University of Wisconsin Press, 2011, 352.
19. If anything, the undecidable signification of the Wolfen has only been amplified in 2016 as financial and political crisis eat away at our peace of mind, while the Islamic State and "war on terror" chip away at our sense of stability from without, but also increasingly from within.
20. Albert Finney plays a NYC detective, Diane Venora the criminologist, late tap-dancer and actor Gregory Hines is the coroner, and a young Edward James Olmos appears as a Native American militant, though no tribal affiliation is revealed.
21. Alberto Toscano and Jeff Kinkle, *Cartographies of the Absolute*, Zero Books, 2015, 105.
22. Curiously, there were two other hit "wolfish" films of that era: *The Howling* and *American Werewolf in London* but only *Wolfen*, despite an initial weak box-office showing, transcends the horror genre to address socio-political issues of the day that still appear relevant now.
23. Toscano and Kinkle, *Cartographies*, 135.
24. Ibid., 111.
25. Marc James Léger, "For the De-incapacitation of Community Art Practice," *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*, 6, 2008, www.joaap.org/6/another/leger.html.
26. Toscano and Kinkle, *Cartographies*, 136.
27. Movoto real estate site: www.movoto.com/blog/top-ten/most-creative-cities/.
28. Rosalyn Deutsche and Cara Gendel Ryan, "The Fine Art of Gentrification", *October*, 31, Winter 1984, 95.
29. Olaf Kaltemeire (ed.) *Selling EthniCity: Urban Cultural Politics in the Americas*, Routledge, 2011, 239.
30. Saskia Sassen, *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy*, Belknap Press, 2014; Smith, *New Urban Frontier*.

4 *Nature as an Icon of Urban Resistance on NYC's Lower East Side, 1979–1984*

1. Alan Moore and Marc Miller, "The ABC's of No Rio and its Times," in Moore and Miller (eds.) *ABC No Rio Dinero: The Story of a Lower East Side Art Gallery*, ABC No Rio, 1985, 1. Available at: http://98bowery.com/return-to-the-bowery/abcnorio-the-book.php
2. Martha Rosler, "Fragments of a Metropolitan Viewpoint," in Brian Wallis (ed.) *If You Lived Here: The City in Art, Theory and Social Activism*, Bay Press, 1991, 25.
3. Lucy R. Lippard, "Too Close to Home," *The Village Voice*, June 14, 1983, 94–95.
4. A concise analysis of the art world's role in the gentrification of the East Village can be found in two texts from the 1980s. First, a commentary by Craig Owens, "The Problem with Puerilism," first published in *Art in America* in 1984, 135, and reprinted in his volume of collected works: *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power, and Culture*, University of California Press, 1992, 324–325; see also Rosalyn Deutsche and Cara Gendel Ryan, "The Fine Art of Gentrification", *October*, 31, Winter 1984, 95.
5. Consider the language used in this advertisement from a full page ad in the New *York Times* as quoted by urban geographer Neil Smith: "The Armory [a new condo facility] celebrates the teaming of the Wild Wild West with 10% down payment and twelve months' free maintenance. The trail-blazers have done their work. West 42nd street has been tamed, domesticated, and polished into the most exciting freshest most energetic neighborhoods in New York." Wallis, Rosler, *If You Lived Here: The City in Art, Theory, and Social Activism: A Project by Martha Rosier (Discussions in Contemporary Culture)*, New Press, 1998, 108.
6. Owens, "The Problem with Puerilism."
7. See: Thomas Crow, "Modernism and Mass Culture," in Benjamin Buchloh, Serge Guilbaut and David Solkin (eds.) *Modernism and Modernity*, Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design Culture, 1983, 252–255.
8. Owens, "The Problem with Puerilism."
9. Compare this to Walter Benjamin's description of wall posters in the Arcades of nineteenth-century Paris: "the first drops of a rain of letters that today pours down without let-up day and night on the city and is greeted like the Egyptian plague" or shop signs "recording not so much the habitat as the origin and species of captured animals." From Walter Benjamin's *Passagen-Werk*, quoted by Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project,* MIT Press, 1989, 66.
10. Steven Hager, *Art after Midnight: The East Village Scene*, St. Martin's Press, 1986, 1.
11. Excerpted from the poem, "Thermidor," in Moore, *ABC No Rio Dinero*, 185.
12. Excerpted from the "'Manifesto or Statement of Intent' Committee for the Real Estate Show, 1980," Moore, *ABC No Rio Dinero*, 56.
13. Ibid., 61.
14. Frank Norris, *The Octopus: A Story of California*, Doubleday, 1901, 48.
15. A useful account of Manhattan's planned urban restructuring from an industrial working-class city to a professional service economy can be found in Robert Fitch, *The Assassination of New York*, Verso, 1993.
16. Moore, *ABC No Rio Dinero*, 57.
17. See: www.abcnorio.org/newbuilding.php

18. Rupp, quoted from the exhibition catalog of Deborah Wye, *Committed to Print: Social and Political Themes in Recent American Printed Art*, Museum of Modern Art, 1988, 86.
19. Rupp quoted in Moore, *ABC No Rio Dinero*, 78.
20. Rupp quoted in Wye, *Committed to Print*, 86.
21. Details related to these projects derive from materials in the author's own archives, http://www.darkmatterarchives.net/?page_id=72, as well as from the PAD/D Archive at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, https://www.moma.org/research-and-learning/research-resources/library/faq_library_collection?x-iframe=true#padd
22. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology 1845–46*, New York International Publishers, 1979, 62.
23. Ibid.
24. Janet Koenig from PAD/D's journal *Upfront*, 6–7, Summer 1983, 3.
25. Mary Jane Jacob in "Outside the Loop," from the catalog to the exhibition Culture in Action: A Public Art Program of Sculpture Chicago, Bay Press, 1994, 114.

5 Mysteries of the Creative Class, or, I Have Seen the Enemy and They Is Us (2004)

1. In 2015 the total number of billionaires had risen to 1,826 according to statistics found on Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billionaire ; but the 587 number comes from Luisa Kroll, "The Rich Get Richer," February 26, 2004, Forbes online: http://www.forbes.com/2004/02/26/cz_lk_0226mainintrobillo4.html.
2. Ironically the bearded "hipster" fashion was only getting under way in 2004, and was mostly confined to the "creative class" neighborhood of Williamsburg Brooklyn at the time.
3. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in Hannah Arendt (ed.) *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, Schocken Books, 1968, 255.

6 Occupology, Swarmology, Whateverology: The City of (Dis)Order versus the People's Archive

1. Well, not all of this proto-archive was destroyed, because some museums were already collecting OWS protest signs and other material culture from Zuccotti Park before the police raid, see for example: Cristian Salazar and Randy Herschaft, "Occupy Wall Street: Major Museums and Organizations Collect Materials Produced by Occupy Movement," AP/Huffington Post, December 11, 2011, www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/12/24/occupy-wall-street-museums-organizations_n_1168893.html?ref=new-york&ir=New%20York.
2. Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz, University of Chicago Press, 1995, 36.
3. "One of the most important facts about the current uprising is simply that it has occupied the street and created an existential identification with the homeless. (Though, frankly, my generation, trained in the civil rights movement, would have thought first of sitting inside the buildings and waiting for the police to drag and club us out the door; today, the cops prefer pepper spray and 'pain compliance techniques.') … The genius of Occupy Wall Street, for now, is that it has temporarily

liberated some of the most expensive real estate in the world and turned a privatized square into a magnetic public space and catalyst for protest." Mike Davis, "No More Bubble Gum," *Los Angeles Review of Books*, October 21, 2011. Available at, http://tumblr.lareviewofbooks.org/post/11725867619/no-more-bubble-gum.

4. According to a 2014 report by Coalition for the Homeless, the number of homeless families soared after Mayor Bloomberg took office. See Sate of the Homeless 2013: http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/state-of-the-homeless-2014/. Since that time conditions have continued to worsen in NYC.
5. *Village of the Damned* was based on the novel *The Midwich Cuckoos* by John Wyndham, and was first made into a film in 1960, directed by Wolf Rilla, followed by a 1963 sequel entitled *Children of the Damned* by Anton Leader, and a 1995 remake of the original by John Carpenter.
6. The librarians are quoted in "Destruction of Occupy Wall Street 'People's Library' Draws Ire," *Guardian*, November 23, 2011, www.guardian.co.uk/world/blog/2011/nov/23/occupy-wall-street-peoples-library.
7. For more on my concept of cultural dark matter see Sholette, *Dark Matter: Art and Politics in the Age of Enterprise Culture*, Pluto Press, 2011, as well as chapter 9 in this volume, page 00.
8. "We Are Free People," editorial *Occupied Wall Street Journal*, November 20, 2011, http://occupiedmedia.us/2011/11/we-are-free-people/.
9. "After Conversations with Occupy Wall Street Organizers, Shepard Fairey Releases Revised 'Occupy Hope' Design," November 21, 2011, https://obeygiant.com/occupy-hope-v2/.
10. From two e-mails to the author dated August 6 and August 7, 2011.
11. Jason Adams, "Occupy Time," *Critical Inquiry*, November 16, 2011, http://critinq.wordpress.com/2011/11/16/occupy-time/#more-191.
12. "Occupied Berkeley, 'The Necrosocial'," November 18, 2009, http://anticapitalprojects.wordpress.com/2009/11/19/the-necrosocial/.

7 Art after Gentrification

1. *Creative New York*, Center for an Urban Future report, June 2015, https://nycfuture.org/research/creative-new-york-2015, 23.
2. Kerstin Stakemeier and Marina Vishmidt, *Reproducing Autonomy: Work, Money, Crisis and Contemporary Art*, Mute Books, May 2016, 42.
3. A "flash mob" is an assembly of individuals gathered via networking technology to carry out what appears to be a spontaneous short-lived, though typically absurd activity such as dancing or singing in a predetermined public space and just as quickly dispersing again.
4. Google Image search, August 12, 2016.
5. Assemble website: http://assemblestudio.co.uk/?page_id=1030.
6. The 1981 riots are often considered the result of a surge in unemployment amongst Toxteth's largely black community that was already suffering as a result of Margaret Thatcher's monetarist economic policies. Alan Travis, "Thatcher Government Toyed with Evacuating Liverpool after 1981 Riots," *Guardian*, December 29, 2011, www.theguardian.com/uk/2011/dec/30/thatcher-government-liverpool-riots-1981.
7. Eleanor Lee, interviewed by Oliver Wainwright for "The Street that Might Win the Turner Prize: How Assemble are Transforming Toxteth," *Guardian*, May 15, 2015.

8. On the British government's abandonment of the region see Travis, "Thatcher Government Toyed with Evacuating Liverpool after 1981 Riots."
9. According to www.arscapediy.org "Creative Placemaking is an evolving field of practice that intentionally leverages the power of the arts, culture and creativity to serve a community's interest while driving a broader agenda for change, growth and transformation in a way that also builds character and quality of place." See http://www.artscapediy.org/Creative-Placemaking/Approaches-to-Creative-Placemaking.aspx.
10. California's Hollywood Boulevard implemented an Arts Retention Program to "preserve arts and cultural renovations," which amounted to preserving two theaters. This is celebrated by the NEA as a means of "Avoiding Displacement and Gentrification," from Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa, *Creative Placemaking*, NEA, 2010, 17, https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf.
11. Josephine B. Slater and Anthony Iles, "No Room to Move: Radical Art and the Regenerate City," *MUTE* Journal, November 24, 2009, www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/no-room-to-move-radical-art-and-regenerate-city.
12. Claire Bishop "The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents," *Artforum,* February, 2006, 179–185.
13. Keiligh Baker, "A Spruced-up Council Estate …," *Daily Mail*, May 12, 2015: www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3078395/Spruced-council-estate-one-year-s- Turner-Prize-hopefuls.html. That said, it is also fair to say that Assemble has built their practice upon models developed by such collectives and individuals as Park Fiction, www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/parkfiction/; Rick Lowe's *Project Row Houses*, http://projectrowhouses.org/; Dan Peterman's Experimental Station, http://experimentalstation.org; and the Baltimore Development Cooperative, http://miscprojects.com/tag/baltimore-development- cooperative/
14. From a Bloomberg Tate Museum short documentary about Assemble at, www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tramway/exhibition/turner-prize-2015/turner-prize-2015-artists-assemble.
15. Blake Stimson and Gregory Sholette (eds.) *Collectivism after Modernism: Art and Social Imagination after 1945*, University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
16. Gary Younge, "Theaster Gates, the Artist Whose Latest Project is Regenerating Chicago," *Guardian*, October 6, 2014, www.theguardian.com/society/2014/oct/06/theaster-gates-artist-latest-project-is-regenerating-chicago-artes-mundi.
17. White Cube gallery, http://whitecube.com/artists/theaster_gates/information/theaster_gates_cv/
18. The Rebuild Foundation is at, https://rebuild-foundation.org/. The concept of "intentional community" is discussed in the chapter 11 in this volume, page 00.
19. Without expressly saying so, Gates's *Art Bonds* appear to reference Duchamp's 1919 *Tzanck Check*, a hand-drawn $115 check drawn on the artist's fictitious institution "The Teeth Loan & Trust Company Consolidated of New York."
20. Cited in Andrew M. Goldstein, "Theaster Gates on Using Art (and the Art World) to Remake Chicago's South Side," *Artspace*, September 24, 2015, www.artspace.com/magazine/interviews_features/qa/theaster-gates-interview-53126.
21. Ibid.
22. Enrico, "Theaster Gates: Black Archive/Kunsthaus Bregenz," VernissageTV, April 25, 2016, http://vernissage.tv/2016/04/25/theaster-gates-black-archive-kunsthaus-bregenz/.
23. Bishop, "The Social Turn."

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27. The Chicago Creative Reuse Center is at http://resourcecenterchicago.org/.
28. Peterman and Dunn interviewed by A. Laurie Palmer in *Immersive Life Practices*, Daniel Tucker (ed.) *The Chicago Social Practice History Series*, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2014, 186.
29. Ibid., 186.
30. Cited in Tim Adams, "Chicago Artist Theaster Gates: 'I'm Hoping Swiss Bankers Will Bail Out My Flooded South Side Bank in the Name of Art,'" *Guardian*, May 3, 2015, www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/may/03/theaster-gates-artist-chicago-dorchester-projects.
31. John Colapinto, "The Real-Estate Artist," *New Yorker Magazine*, January 20, 2014, www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/01/20/the-real-estate-artist; see also Kim Charnley, "Theaster Gates's Dorchester Projects and the Craft Paradigm," Plymouth College of Art website, http://makingfutures.plymouthart.ac.uk/accepted-abstracts/theaster-gates-s-dorchester-projects-and-the-craft-paradigm/.
32. Ivan Lindsay, "An Unintended Consequence of QE: An Art Market Boom," September 10, 2013, http://stremmelgallery.com/art-word-an-unintended-consequence-of-quantitative-easing-an-art-market-boom/.
33. Julia Rothenberg, cited from an unpublished presentation "Theaster Gates: Chicago's Entrepreneurial Artist," Presented at International Sociological Association meeting in Vienna, Austria, July 12, 2017.
34. Rirkrit Tiravanija's first *pad thai* art work/dinner took place in the Paula Allen Gallery in NYC in 1990 and was celebrated soon after as a form of "relational aesthetics" by critic and curator Nicolas Bourriaud. The cooperative restaurant known as FOOD was founded by Gordon Matta-Clark, Carol Goodden and Tina Girouard in 1971 and closed three years later. It was located on the corner of Prince and Wooster Streets in downtown Manhattan at a time when the New York artists' community was both local and relatively small. FOOD literally helped lay an affective foundation for the city's art world apart from commercial interests. The cooperative was celebrated in 2013 not by a scholarly museum exhibition, or even with a relational aesthetic art project, but by a curated restaurant by Cecilia Alemani installed at the Frieze Art Fair.
35. Conflict Kitchen website: http://conflictkitchen.org/.
36. Trojan horse comments made by Rubin and Weleski during a presentation to ASJWG (Art & Social Justice Working Group) at the Brooklyn home of Paul Ramirez Jonas, February 19, 2015.
37. Pittsburgh was once the anchor of US steel production; today the majority of job occupations there are not working class, but service and administrative related, including office support (16.8%), sales (10.5%), food preparation (8.9%), health

care (7.2%), education (5.7%), business and finance (5.1%), management (4%). By contrast, construction, maintenance, transportation, production, farming and fishing are only 20.5% of total regional employment, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2015, www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic/news-release/occupationalemploymentandwages_pittsburgh.htm.

38. See: "New Palestinian Interview Wrappers" online at, http://conflictkitchen.org/2015/04/16/new-palestinian-interview-wrappers/.
39. MIT Comparative Media Studies website, http://cmsw.mit.edu/video-conflict-kitchen-jon-rubin/.
40. Jon Rubin's website, www.jonrubin.net/#/the-waffle-shop-talk-show/.
41. Diana Nelson Jones, "East Liberty Becomes a Vibrant Community," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, June 8, 2009.
42. "The city's housing policies over the past four decades led to 'the forced migration of black people from Pittsburgh to the suburbs,' with the black population declining to 79,789 in 2010 from about 102,000 in 1980, a 22 percent drop," Tom Fontaine, Hill District group: as quoted in "Civic Arena Plan Unfair to Black Residents," *Trib Live*, January 7, 2016, http://triblive.com/news/allegheny/9737974-74/housing-affordable-black.
43. Adrian McCoy, "Waffle Shop to Close in East Liberty in July," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, June 22, 2012, www.post-gazette.com/ae/tv-radio/2012/06/22/Waffle-Shop-to-close-in-East-Liberty-in-July/stories/201206220215.
44. Joe Smydo, "Program Designed to Expand Artwork through Pittsburgh," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, August 13, 2012, www.post-gazette.com/local/neighborhoods/2012/08/13/program-designed-to-expand-artwork-through-pittsburgh/201208130125.
45. Customer reviews from Yelp.com include: "I wouldn't go here for the food alone, but it is a neat little venue with a live talk show, which is something you don't see every day." "Pretty good, actually, but not worth a detour." "The format is irrefutably weird." "Quirky spot. Great for a late night bite." www.yelp.com/biz/waffle-shop-pittsburgh.
46. Artist Jon Rubin's website, www.jonrubin.net/the-waffle-shop-talk-show-1/.
47. Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*, University of California Press, 2004.
48. Both programs emerged from Chicago's satirical comedy troupe *The Second City* whose founder, Paul Sills, in turn employed both the improvisational techniques made famous by Viola Spolin, but also the radical cabaret theater of Bertolt Brecht as reported in Stephen E. Kercher, *Revel with a Cause: Liberal Satire in Postwar America*, University of Chicago Press, 2010, 122.
49. All quotes are from a telephone interview with Mike Rakowitz, conducted March 1, 2015.
50. CK has featured a two-day menu created by local African American and Caribbean chefs celebrating "Juneteenth" (June 19–20), which marks the date in 1865 that Texas finally abolished slavery, thus bringing all states into accordance with President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1863.
51. Even MoMA has organized an exhibition entitled Tactical Urbanism, with mixed socioeconomic implications, as reviewer Neil Brenner argues in "Is 'Tactical Urbanism' an Alternative to Neoliberal Urbanism?" http://post.at.moma.org/content_items/587-is-tactical-urbanism-an-alternative-to-neoliberal-urbanism.

52. Marina Vishmidt, "Mimesis of the Hardened and Alienated: Social Practice as Business Model," e-flux, 2013, www.e-flux.com/journal/43/60197/mimesis-of-the-hardened-and-alienated-social-practice-as-business-model/.
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54. Excerpted from an unpublished memoir by John Preus shared with the author on August 23, 2016, 12:12 p.m.
55. "Conflict Kitchen: Fight for 15", FaceBook page, www.facebook.com/conflict kitchenworkers/?hc_ref=SEARCH.
56. "Edmund" interviewed on "Conflict Kitchen: Fight for 15," ibid.
57. From a telephone interview with Conflict Kitchen employee Clara Gamalski, October 29, 2015.
58. WAGENCY: Artist Certification & Coalition is, according to WAGE, "intended to build economic and political solidarity among artists by uniting them around shared principles of equity"; and on the Guggenheim Bilbao, www.laizquierdadiario.com/Educadores-del-Museo-Guggenheim-de-Bilbao-despedidos-por-hacer-huelga.
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Introduction III: Critical Praxis/Partisan Art

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3. David Garcia and Geert Lovink, "The ABC of Tactical Media," 1997, http://subsol.c3.hu/subsol_2/contributors2/garcia-lovinktext.html
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