



I stood before the source

*I stood before the source, an empty tomb;
to be closer to the source is all I needed.*

– Emma Charles, *Fragments on Machines*

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October 16–December 3, 2016
Blackwood Gallery

Abbas Akhavan, Bureau d'études, Emma Charles, Revital Cohen & Tuur Van Balen, Carole Condé + Karl Beveridge, Mark Curran, Wally Dion, Keith Hennessy/Circo Zero, Ashley Hunt, Jeremy Hutchison, Richard Ibgby & Marilou Lemmens, Will Kwan, Gerald Nestler, Public Recordings, Public Studio & Darlene Montgomery, Hank Willis Thomas & Christopher Myers

Curated by Letters & Handshakes

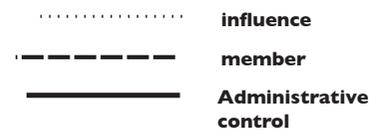
Capital is the lifeblood that flows through the body politic of all those societies we call capitalist, spreading out, sometimes as a trickle and other times as a flood, into every nook and cranny of the inhabited world. It is thanks to this flow that we, who live under capitalism, acquire our daily bread as well as our houses, cars, cell phones, shirts, shoes and all other goods we need to support our daily life. By way of these flows the wealth is created from which the many services that support, entertain, educate, resuscitate or cleanse us are provided. By taxing this flow states augment their power, their military might and their capacity to ensure an adequate standard of life for their citizens. Interrupt, slow down or, even worse, suspend the flow and we encounter a crisis of capitalism in which daily life can no longer go on in the style to which we have become accustomed.

Understanding capital flow, its winding pathways and the strange logic of its behaviour is therefore crucial to our understanding of the conditions under which we live. In the early years of capitalism, political economists of all stripes struggled to understand these flows and a critical appreciation of how capitalism worked began to emerge. But in recent times we have veered away from the pursuit of such critical understanding. Instead, we build sophisticated mathematical models, endlessly analyse data, scrutinise spread sheets, dissect the detail and bury any conception of the systemic character of capital flow in a mass of papers, reports and predictions.

- David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital and the Crises of Capitalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), vi.



Pictographic Grammar



Organizations

Public organizations and services



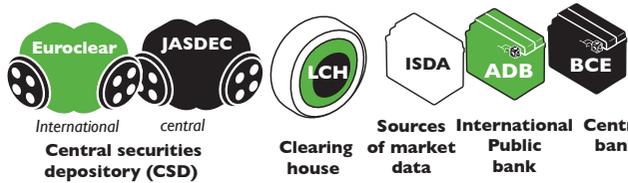
State Tax haven Regional Union



Council Regional organisation International governmental organisation



Authority or regulation body Commission or office Commandement body Secret service Committee



International central sources of market data International Public bank Central securities depository (CSD) Clearing house



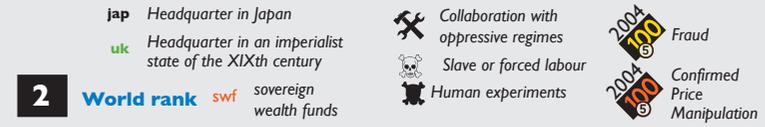
Laboratory Research Center High school for business & administration

Social organizations



pressure group (lobby) International Religious Organisation International Voluntary Organisation International non governmental & non for-profit Organisation (NGO) International Forum Movement Clubs Secret society Political party international

Companies

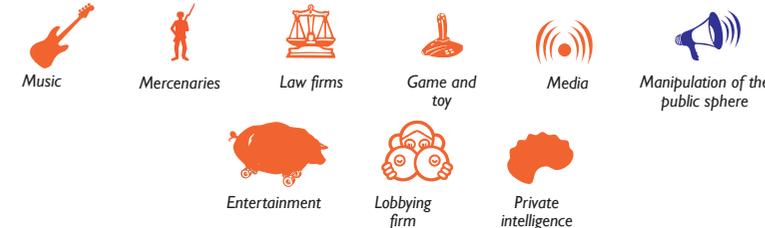


2 World rank swf sovereign wealth funds
 Sinar Mas Group indo Conglomerate
 Pension Fund of Norway Norw Pension fund
 Goldman Sachs usa Financial company
 Lex Mundi Firm network
 FannieMae Public Company
 Nova Scotia gb Company

Production and distribution companies



Producing desire and consentment companies

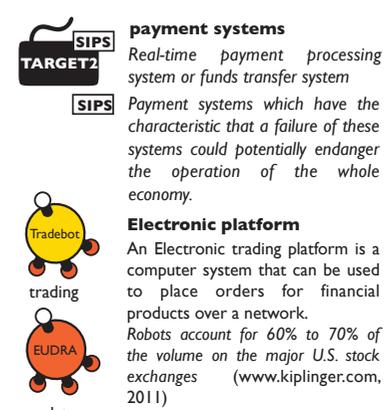


Bank, trade and market companies



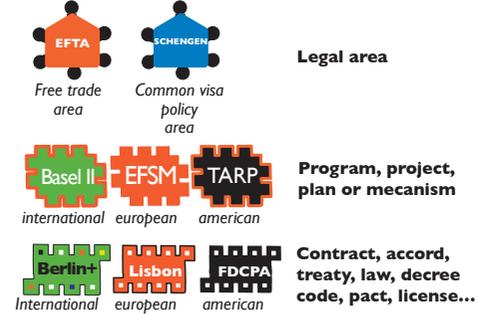
Technical & symbolic systems and devices

Finance



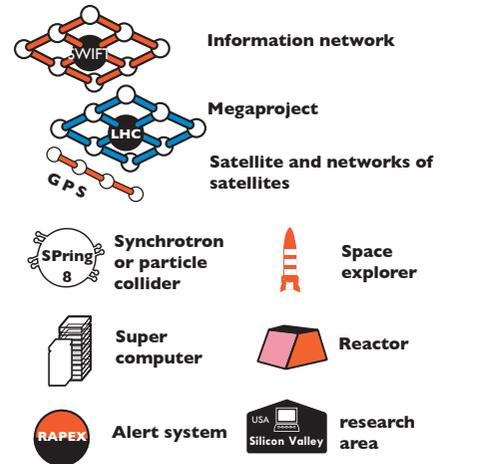
payment systems Real-time payment processing system or funds transfer system
 SIPS Payment systems which have the characteristic that a failure of these systems could potentially endanger the operation of the whole economy.
 Electronic platform An Electronic trading platform is a computer system that can be used to place orders for financial products over a network.
 Robots account for 60% to 70% of the volume on the major U.S. stock exchanges (www.kiplinger.com, 2011)
 Dark pools Alternative electronic stock exchanges where trading takes place anonymously, with most orders hidden or "iceberged".
 CDX Index
 Paydex Score and ratio
 Euribor Rate
 Shanghai Stock Exchange Stock, bond exchanges

Juridical or normative devices



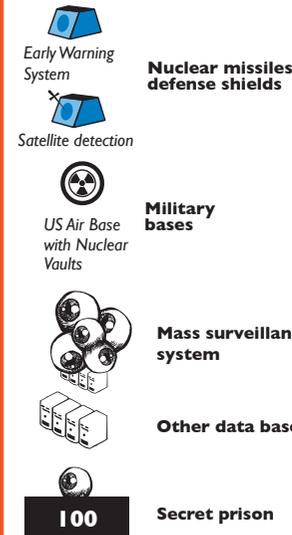
Legal area Free trade area Common visa policy area
 Program, project, plan or mechanism international european american
 Contract, accord, treaty, law, decree code, pact, license... international european american

Other technoscientific devices



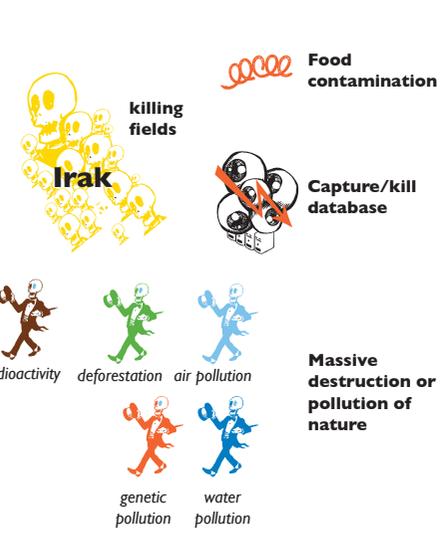
Information network
 Megaproject
 Satellite and networks of satellites
 Synchrotron or particle collider
 Space explorer
 Super computer
 Reactor
 Alert system
 research area

Army



Early Warning System
 Satellite detection
 US Air Base with Nuclear Vaults
 Military bases
 Mass surveillance system
 Other data base
 Secret prison

Deaths and wastes



Food contamination
 killing fields
 Capture/kill database
 radioactivity deforestation air pollution
 Massive destruction or pollution of nature
 genetic pollution water pollution



Bureau d'études
World Government, 2013

Inkjet print on vinyl, 7ft x 24ft

World Government is a meticulously detailed map organized in two main parts. The left region of the map presents a range of agencies of global political-economic power, which, since the Second World War, have been strongly shaped by the US empire. Populating this side of the map are geopolitical “free-trade” blocs, a complex of cartels and oligopolies in key domains of commodity production (ranging from food to pharma to petroleum), and, the core of this part of the map, the global financial node, spanning corporate banking institutions, tax havens, and stock exchanges. The right side of the map details international politico-military agreements, which are conjoined to the system of trade territories. Alongside the imperial-military

complex, whose elements range from state surveillance programs to defence contractors, this region of the map presents the soft-power complex of the public relations and entertainment industries—the peace-keeping producers of desire and consent—as well as institutions of Internet infrastructure underpinning these industries. Accompanied by a pictographic to aid in navigating this cartographic research, the map presents, in aggregate, a constellation of inter-linked power structures constituting a veritable World Government. There is no dictator inhabiting the center of this map. Rather, *World Government* reveals a networked system, a network that is nonetheless composed by a control class, which, consciously or unconsciously, seeks to reproduce its power in and through this network. Puncturing this vast map of the global political economy of contemporary capital are, however, nodes of organized dissent.

Carole Condé + Karl Beveridge
The Plague, 2009

Archival pigment print, 48in x 54in

The Plague refers to the dual crisis of the current economy and the environment. Set in an international airport, it portrays various contemporary and historical characters. Grouped in the front are various corporate types, representing the contemporary follies of financial capital. At the back of the image, on the left side, are characters representing the major historic financial crises (bubbles), beginning with the Medici Bank in the 15th

century and progressing through the major downturns of the 1720s and 1870s, the Great Depression of the 1930s, and the start of the current crisis in the 1980s. Behind the corporate figures are historic economists and environmentalists, from Adam Smith and Karl Marx to Milton Friedman and Rachel Carson. On the other side of the image are the people who suffer the consequences of and also resist ongoing economic and environmental devastation. A whirlwind of frogs blows through the airport, referencing both the Biblical plague of frogs and the fact that frogs are an environmental indicator species.



Emma Charles

Fragments on Machines, 2013

HD Video with sound, 17 mins

Fragments on Machines reveals the physical framework and materiality of the Internet, a vast network often considered solely in abstract terms. The title is adopted from a text by Karl Marx in which he seeks to trace the inversions that mark the relationship between human and machine in the capitalist production process whereby through increased automation the machine is no longer a tool at the hands of workers but an increasingly dominant power.

The film observes the evolution of architecture in New York City to accommodate the nodes and connectors that comprise the physical manifestation of the “virtual” world. New York is home to many of the great buildings that symbolize 19th and early 20th century industrial capitalism.

Today, these monuments of brick and steel house the servers and computers that drive post-industrial financial capitalism.

High-frequency trading firms move to be as close as possible to Internet infrastructure: the closer these firms are, the faster their algorithms can trade. It is no coincidence, then, that sites such as the Verizon Communications headquarters, which is explored in *Fragments on Machines*, are located in the heart of New York’s financial district. Elusive yet pervasive, data centres consist of room upon room of copper and fibre-optic cables, computer servers, and ventilation systems. With direct links to the companies they serve, these Internet hubs become a kind of unofficial space for trade.

Divided in three chapters (“Metropolis,” “Servers,” “Flood”), *Fragments on Machines* was filmed during and following Hurricane Sandy, pointing to the collision between nature and machine.



Hank Willis Thomas & Christopher Myers

Am I Going Too Fast?, 2014

HD Video with sound, 8 mins

Am I Going Too Fast? is a digital tapestry of the intersecting worlds and interactions of craftspeople, shopkeepers, and ordinary folks whose lives have been transformed by new technologies, cell phone banking, and micro-finance; threads that weave together to form a web of connection and possibility in contemporary Nairobi. As *The Guardian*'s Sam Jones writes: “According to [Christopher] Myers, the popular western image of poverty is as stale as it is wrong. ‘It’s static: it’s this image of the idle poor and the child standing in the midst of rubble, and we really wanted to challenge that flatness and give a more nuanced and layered idea of what poverty is,’ he said. ‘Poverty is a lot of people working very hard; poverty is endless amounts of ingenuity, poverty is structural problems that haven’t been addressed, and we wanted to reflect all of that.’”¹

¹ Sam Jones, “Sundance Short Film Competition Invites Innovative Development Stories,” *The Guardian*, April 25, 2014.



Public Studio & Darlene Montgomery

The One and the Many, 2016

Installation with toner

The One and the Many is a floor work using toner from spent printer cartridges. Toner is composed of polymer, a molecule whose etymology is “many parts,” and carbon, the basis of all life on Earth. Carbon both creates and destroys. As object and life form, it has a mimetic quality; in fact, carbon is, arguably, mimesis itself. Carbon moves through the cycles of mimesis. It begins as “archaic,” conceding to nature’s superiority and replicating nature’s bare existence; shifts to the “magical,” in its human manipulation; and, finally, resides in the “rational,” in its industrialization, eventually destroying the life it creates.¹

Since industrialization, anthropogenic emissions and land-use changes have rapidly increased atmospheric carbon dioxide, leading to global warming. Toner powder takes over a thousand years to break down, and most is taken to landfill. There is the potential for toner to be recycled in a

closed-loop system; this, however, would cut the long tail of capital.

We are interested in the temporal rhythms in the object (toner/carbon), and want to work with these rhythms rather than against them. To reveal carbon’s nature, and subsequently ours, we turned the object back on itself to reframe it in a subject-object relation. The seeming insurmountability of capitalism and its partner, climate change, is embodied in toner, as a product and producer of capitalism deeply embedded in global networks of intersubjective communication. Perhaps being presented with the raw object at the centre of this communication allows for greater reflexivity in our subjective consciousness, a condition toner’s usual invisibility precludes.

¹ Simon Mussell, “Mimesis Reconsidered: Adorno and Tarkovsky contra Habermas,” *Film-Philosophy* 17, no.1 (2013): 212-213.

Wally Dion

Wing, 2016

Circuit boards on plywood, nails
24in x 96in

In palaeontology, scientists use embedded bone fragments of extinct animals to date specific rock beds. If enough samples are found in various parts of the world, these fossils can be used to create a geologic record of events going back millions of years. Rarely, however, will a complete skeleton be discovered in a single location. More often, the remainder of an animal’s characteristics—its size, weight, and outward appearance—are uncertain and left

to modeling and guesstimation until sufficient fragments can be collected to reconstruct a complete skeleton.

These are the Thunderbirds. They have existed in the past and continue their existence today. For thousands of years, people have fashioned mythologies in an attempt to understand the power and significance of the Thunderbird. Viewed collectively as fossils, or as living prophecy, Thunderbirds are pulled from the tar sands of northern Alberta, hydrofracked from the bedrock of the Marcellus Shale, and resurrected from the uranium mines of northern Saskatchewan to live again among human beings.



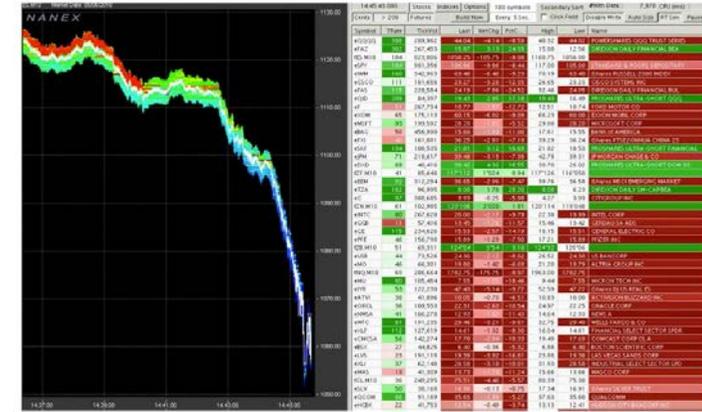
Will Kwan

Finite States (Automatons), 2016

Installation with digital images, 66in x 199in

Finite States is a series of works that examines the interplay between spectacle and secrecy in the financial market system and its effect on our belief in the prospect of open spaces of exchange. Tracking the financialization of the economy, the rise of autonomous technologies, the transformation of trading exchanges, and the influence of public relations, the works chart the migration of information, decision-making, and accumulated wealth from the material world to the realm of the non-visible.

Finite States (Automatons) is an installation of PR images of the daily bell-ringing on the balcony of the New York Stock Exchange. This longstanding but increasingly carnivalesque ritual and the widely circulated visual meme that it generates belie the secretive trading infrastructure and the hidden flows of capital that characterize the current financial economy. In this light, the ceaseless production of this image takes on a mechanical and recursive quality, a self-replicating impulse that becomes pathological, decadent, and dehumanized.



The left chart shows the Flash Crash in the S&P 500 Index Futures covered live by Ben Lichtenstein. Market liquidity is indicated by color scheme, ranging from red (highest) to violet (least). Nanex LLC

Gerald Nestler
COUNTERING CAPITULATION,
2013–14

Video with sound, 11:20 min

COUNTERING CAPITULATION: From Automated Participation to Renegade Solidarity engages with the inquiries that followed the Flash Crash of May 6, 2010, the biggest one-day market decline in financial history. Based on a remarkable forensic analysis that contradicted the official findings of the regulatory authorities, Nestler argues that in the current legal framework evidence of market events can only be produced by a counter-provocation—the double figure of the expert witness emerges when the forensic analyst is joined by an inside source.

With the ambivalent, contingent, and marginal figure of the renegade—simultaneously a traitor and an educator—at its heart, *COUNTERING CAPITULATION* proposes a multilayered, transdisciplinary artistic prac-

tice engaged in creating narrative instabilities that coagulate dissent into insurrection. This is initiated by a reading of aesthetics as an “aesthetics of resolution”—which encompasses the entire semantic field of the term and its philosophical, scientific, technological, legal, social, artistic, and political meanings—and aims at moving towards its *poietics*, that is, from perception to action.

The video concludes with a call for “renegade solidarity” to counter the excess of (automated) evaluation and decision-making schemes, not only as regards finance but also proprietary black-box regimes in general.

Flash Crash charts and animations: Nanex LLC
Animation: Sylvia Eckermann
Sound editing: Szely
Synthetic algorithm voice over: Alva & Tom



Mark Curran
THE MARKET, 2010–ongoing
 (excerpts)

HD Video with sound, photographs,
 artifactual material, furniture

In the aftermath of the global economic crisis of the late 2000s, the ongoing multi-sited research project *THE MARKET* critically addresses the functioning and conditions of global financial markets. This ethnographically informed project incorporates photographs, film, sound, artifactual material, data visualisation, and verbal testimony. Positioning finance as a pervasive force, *THE MARKET*'s themes range from the algorithmic machinery of financial markets to the absorption of crises as the normalization of deviance. It profiles traders, bankers, and financial analysts, and includes documentation from London, Dublin, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, and Addis Abeba.

Algorithmic Surrealism was filmed in Amsterdam's Zuidas, a centre for algorithmic trading and shadow banking. The film's narration is adapted from a text by former trader Brett Scott. *Algorithmic Surrealism* suggests that, with the forecasted dis-



appearance of human traders within a decade, the hegemony of high-frequency trading will perpetuate minority wealth in the globalized capitalist system.

The financialized nation state is the conduit of contemporary financial capital. *Normalisation of Deviance* applies an algorithm identifying the words "market" or "markets" in speeches by national finance ministers and then transforms the resultant data to create an installation soundscape; the translation of Jeroen Dijsselbloem, the Netherlands' Minister of Finance and Eurogroup president, is presented at the Blackwood.

Algorithm and sound composition: Ken Curran

Ashley Hunt
Corrections Documentary Project,
 2001–ongoing

9 videos with sound, 2 printed posters, furniture

Corrections Documentary Project is an ongoing body of work on the prison-industrial complex, centred upon the politics and economics of, and resistance to, the massive expansion of the US prisoner population since the 1970s (now referred to as mass incarceration). The project is comprised of nine videos and maps that reveal the manner in which this system helps to structure and preserve the racial and economic hierarchies we associate with the past in today's society.

Corrections is the first film in the series, focused upon the re-emergence of prison privatization since the 1980s. Tracing its history, the film uses the profit motivations of that industry to help us recognize the

pursuit of power and control that drives mass incarceration. Out of this film grew a series of short videos, *Footnotes*, which explore these issues and grassroots efforts to oppose the system within specific histories and local organizing efforts. Along with the *Prison Maps*, the project demonstrates the growth of the prison system for reasons "other than justice," where prisons are offered by the state to solve problems of poverty and joblessness, health and mental health crises. The project also addresses the symptoms that come from the legacies of racial and class warfare—in both the rural communities where new prisons are commonly built and the urban communities from which prisoners most often come.





Keith Hennessy (Circo Zero)
Turbulence (a dance about the economy), Performance lecture

Performance lecture:
 Wednesday, October 19, 6:45pm,
 Blackwood Gallery

In a performance lecture, Hennessy shares the content, forms, tactics, and contradictions of *Turbulence*, which will be collaboratively performed at the Blackwood Gallery in 2017.

Turbulence (a dance about the economy) plays with normative disruptions and calculated disregard for generally accepted rules of engagement. A collaborative cre-

ation, the work is an experimental hybrid of contemporary dance, improvised happening, and political theater; it is a bodily response to economic crisis. Instigated before Occupy and engaging questions of debt, value, and exchange, *Turbulence* is intended as both provocation and affirmation of global movements for economic justice.

Responding to economic and ecological crises, *Turbulence* is an experiment not only in performance, but also in developing alternative modes of producing performance. Integrating new cast members as generative collaborators for each performance, the work resists fixed or pre-determined outcomes. Improvisation is both survival strategy and political tactic.

Public Recordings
CAPITALIST DUETS, 2015, 2016

***Performance:**
 November 24–26, 8pm and November 27, 2pm
 The Theatre Centre, 1115 Queen St. West, Toronto
 \$15

Performers: Franco Boni, Margaret Dragu, Katie Ewald, Francesco Gagliardi, Ame Henderson, sandra Henderson, Adam Kinner, Amy Lam, Samira Mohyeddin, Aliya Pabani, Liz Peterson, Luke Reece, Mila Volpe, Evan Webber

Because there is only so much to go around. Or is there?

CAPITALIST DUETS is seven independently authored duets performed simultaneously as an unaffected spectacle, complete with merchandise table. There is no composer, no architect, no central authority—only the radical aesthetic modulation of fourteen paired performers, each holding tenuously to the logic of their own creation. *CAPITALIST DUETS* concludes a three-year experiment to devise a group work responding to the commodity status of contemporary performance: whereas the structure of a conventional show represents a planned (attention) economy, *CAPITALIST DUETS* employs free-market dramaturgy.

Three duets—sandra Henderson & Liz Peterson, Ame Henderson & Adam Kinner, Katie Ewald & Evan Webber—created the first iteration of *CAPITALIST DUETS* for OFFTA in Montreal in 2015. Their hard-won conceptual approach was something they nicknamed an “attention market”—a translation of supply-and-demand principles into a collaborative compositional system. For this iteration of *CAPITALIST DUETS*, the fourteen artists involved received a micro-grant for the time, props, travel, costume, and other expenses related to their duet. With no other guiding framework in place, the hidden labour of production becomes startlingly visible, and the visible, in turn, becomes practice. From dancer to choreographer, theatre technician, and art-presenting partner, everyone involved in *CAPITALIST DUETS* holds the status of performer, and every performer dances according to the same rules.

Lighting design: Paul Chambers



*Produced by Public Recordings in collaboration with The Theatre Centre and co-presented by the Blackwood Gallery.

Revital Cohen & Tuur Van Balen
75 Watt, 2013

HD Video with sound, 10 min loop
6 bespoke made-in-China objects (resin, aluminum, electronics), 72in x108in acrylic billboard print

A labourer over the course of an 8-hour day can sustain an average output of about 75 watts.

(Marks' Standard Handbook for Mechanical Engineers)

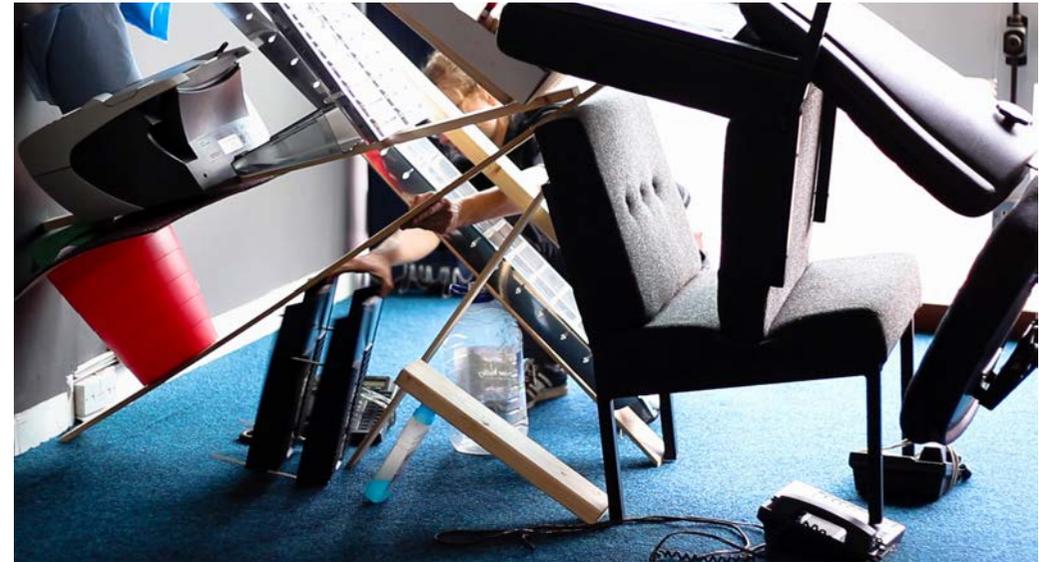
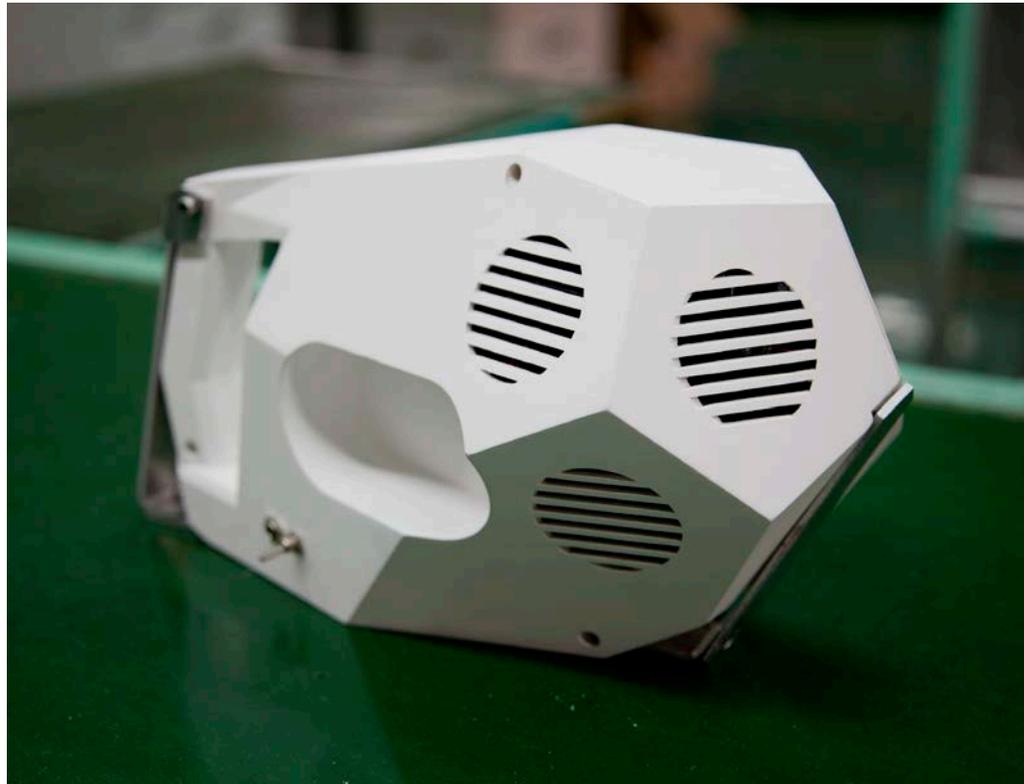
In *75 Watt*, a product is designed especially to be made in China. The object's only function is to choreograph a dance performed by the labourers manufacturing it.

The work seeks to explore the nature of mass-manufacturing products on various scales, from the geopolitical context of hyper-fragmented labour to the bio-political condition of the human body on the

assembly line. Engineering logic has reduced the factory labourer to a human-machine through scientific management of every single movement. By shifting the purpose of the labourer's actions from the efficient production of objects to the performance of choreographed acts, mechanical movement is reinterpreted into dance. What is the value of this artifact that only exists to support the performance of its own creation? And as the product dictates the movement, does it become the subject, rendering the worker the object?

The assembly/dance took place in Zhongshan between March 10–19, 2013 and resulted in 40 objects and a film documenting the choreography of their assembly.

Choreography: Alexander Whitley
Film production: Siya Chen



Richard Ibghy & Marilou Lemmens
Real failure needs no excuse, 2012

Single channel video with sound, 23:48 mins

Consisting of a series of actions filmed in an empty office building in Glasgow, *Real failure needs no excuse* investigates the transgressive potential of non-productive action and its relation to labour, work, and the imagination. The video presents continuous flows of actions in which materials are ordered, piled, and assembled in various configurations. Precariously balanced structures, visible for only a short time, collapse (because everything, eventually, collapses) to make way for new shapes and arrangements.

The relentless flow of action in the video parallels the motion of capitalist expansion that always demands more and more work. Yet, if we can think of the performer's actions as a kind of labour, then it is one that postpones indefinitely an end result. In its constant stream of action, it remains forever in the realm of making where nothing ever gets made, in the realm of production where nothing ever gets produced.



Abbas Akhavan

Trope, 2016

Sculpture, dimensions variable

“Trophy” (a prize of war) comes from the Latin *trophæum* (a sign of victory), originally *tropæum*, which is a transliteration of the Greek *tropaion* (monument of an enemy’s defeat) from neut. of adj. *tropaios* (of defeat) from *trope* (a rout), originally “a turning” (of the enemy). In common usage, “trope” describes a word, phrase, or image used in a figurative way in order to create an artistic effect. In this case, *Trope* is the shape of the wound dressing put over the face of a poached rhinoceros—an animal bracketed by competing intentions towards nature. *Trope* suggests a defaced species, a new face, or a permanent imprint that is the result of both harm and care, poaching and conservation.

Jeremy Hutchison

Fabrications, 2013–16

5 pairs of distorted jeans, 5 photographic C-prints, HD Video with sound

Fabrications constructs a para-fiction around the history of Palestine. Evoking a blue land ravaged by colonization, it describes a dazzling geological phenomenon: vast quarries of raw indigo. Through a series of distortions, fictions, and counter-histories, the work performs the uncertainty that pervades Palestine’s borders, topologies, and geopolitical status. It concentrates a state of ambiguity into a poetic delusion. As such, the land itself becomes a vessel for the imagination. In producing this work, Hutchison collaborated with the employees of Al-Aqqad & Partner Fashions, a denim producer based in Nablus. For a six-month period during Palestine’s Second Intifada, this factory operated under the immediate

sightline of an Israeli tank: its cannon pointed directly at the building. To understand the physiological effect of these labour conditions, the artist commissioned the factory to manufacture jeans that represented what it was like to manufacture jeans at the factory.



Opaque Epiphanies

Alberto Toscano

Some years ago, it was common to lament, in critical circles, the taboo on “naming the system”: capital’s unlimited reign was everywhere cloaked in euphemism. While challenges to that reign have been fitful and fragile over the last decade of staggered crisis, the cognitive demand for figures, images, narratives, and allegories of the social totality has been nothing if not insistent.

Across domains, genres, and media—from the economic treatise to the television serial, the novel to the art installation—the same prescription: it cannot represent itself, it must be represented. Underlying it, a common sense: disorientation is the quality of our present; a strategy of emancipation demands a cartography of domination; the collective must be cognitive; knowledge of the levers prepares the power to seize them. And, over and over again, the urge to represent is itself the object of dramatization—each fiction a metafiction, every scene tracked by its commentary, all information transmuted into its allegory.

That the representation of capital should so often devolve into a representation of representation is perhaps unsurprising. The demand to visually or narratively identify and encompass a social *form*, a *relation*, a *totality*—a demand often acknowledged to be impossible in the same breath it is proffered—cannot but raise metaphysical conundrums, in all their sordid anxious everydayness. Among them is what we could term the speculative identity of epiphany and opacity.

From the regulatory ethics of fair trade to the commodity-chain narrative, the contemporary Western subject-supposed-to-want-to-know (to mangle Lacan) is beset by profane revelations—products producing their production processes, and at times their producers. The habits of exchange and consumption are brought to a standstill, letting us glimpse the otherwise unattended material choreography of extraction, exploitation, transportation. If we follow Alfred Sohn-Rethel’s *Intellectual and Manual Labour* in regarding spatiotemporal arrest as the secret of the exchange-abstraction, and thus of the commodity,¹ there is a resonant irony in this recurrent scene: the interruption that is coterminous with the emergence of exchange-value is only made perceptible by a blockage in the motions of use.

Ben Lerner’s recent novel *10:04*—a kind of metacommentary on cognitive mapping in its own right—features just such a scene, the ecological causation of social blockage making visible the teeming infrastructural logic of our everyday life:

the approaching storm was estranging the routine of shopping just enough to make me viscerally aware of both the miracle and insanity of the mundane economy. Finally I found something on the list, something vital: instant coffee. I held the red plastic container, one of the last three on the shelf, held it like the marvel it was: the seeds inside the purple fruits of coffee plants had been harvested on Andean slopes and roasted and ground and soaked and then dehydrated at a factory in Medellin and vacuum-sealed and flown to JFK and then driven upstate in bulk to Pearl River for repackaging and then transported back by truck to the store where I now stood reading the label. It was as if the social relations that produced the object in my hand began to glow within it as they were threatened, stirred inside their

*packaging, lending it a certain aura—the majesty and murderous stupidity of that organization of time and space and fuel and labour becoming visible in the commodity itself now that planes were grounded and the highways were starting to close.*²

This veritable model of the “commodity origin scene” folds the complex linearity of the “chain” into the vertical cut and auratic aesthetic of the epiphany, in a “revelation by estrangement.”³ Among the preconditions for this queasy capitalist sublimity (majesty and murder—more Burke than Kant, perhaps) is treating the immense accumulation of commodities in terms of the concatenation of concrete labours, surveyed from the viewpoint of a pervasive if consciously impoverished figure of subjectivity: the ethically-anxious, hyper-reflexive consumer, whose principal prism for understanding capitalism is logistical (“flown,” “driven,” “transported”). This experience of capital, in which the interruption of the habitus of exchange and circulation is followed by the front-staging of the material conditions of possibility of consumer life, is only an experience to the extent it imaginatively projects itself onto physical activities, fictionally ascending the chain, journeying upriver against the current of the commodity flow. This epiphany is not related to the opacity of capital simply in the sense that it suspends and thereby reveals the mode of production’s customary invisibility, but in how it reiterates and reinscribes that opacity.

What Lerner’s alter-ego narrator senses, the relational “glow” in the commodity, is an aura precisely in the sense that it imaginatively re-enchants that plastic container of instant coffee, in keeping with the personalised, empiricist fantasy that one could “follow” the phases of production, and that the exhaustive description of the process of making and moving would as such be knowledge of capital. Specifically capitalist social relations—of production, exploitation, property, class—are not really part of this “para-normal” experience. And the imaginary aura would be the same no matter what the chain.

In choosing instant coffee as the occasion for this speculative vignette on the aesthetics of the economy, Lerner may have been thinking of the memorable nexus of coffee, crisis, and everyday life in Brecht and Dudow’s *Kuhle Wampe*.⁴ Then again, he may have also been under the influence of what is perhaps the most ideologically influential iteration of the commodity origin scene, Milton Friedman’s “Lesson of the Pencil,” from his great neoliberal propagandistic success, *Free to Choose*. In this lecture on the awe-inspiring virtues of the free market, without needing crisis or storm to set the stage, Friedman impishly enjoins his audience to discover capitalism’s world-historical uniqueness and brilliance in the most banal of objects and the most prosaic of social mechanisms, but also to witness the emergence of a human collectivity without sovereignty, solidarity, or deliberation, indeed, without any contact at all:

Look at this lead pencil. There’s not a single person in the world who could make this pencil. Remarkable statement? Not at all. The wood from which it is made, for all I know, comes from a tree that was cut down in the state of Washington. To cut down that tree, it took a saw. To make the saw, it took steel. To make steel, it took iron ore. This black center—we call it lead but it’s really graphite, compressed graphite—I’m not sure where it comes from, but I think it comes from some mines in South America. This red top up here, this eraser, a bit of rubber, probably comes from Malaya, where the rubber tree isn’t even native! It was imported from South America by some businessmen with the help of the British government. This brass ferrule? [Self-effacing laughter.] I haven’t the slightest idea where it came from. Or the yellow paint! Or the paint that made the black lines. Or the glue that holds it together. Literally thousands of people co-operated to make this pencil. People who don’t speak the

same language, who practice different religions, who might hate one another if they ever met! When you go down to the store and buy this pencil, you are in effect trading a few minutes of your time for a few seconds of the time of all those thousands of people. What brought them together and induced them to cooperate to make this pencil? There was no commissar sending . . . out orders from some central office. It was the magic of the price system: the impersonal operation of prices that brought them together and got them to cooperate, to make this pencil, so you could have it for a trifling sum. That is why the operation of the free market is so essential. Not only to promote productive efficiency, but even more to foster harmony and peace among the peoples of the world.⁵

The imperial arms behind the invisible hands of the price-system could not be more conspicuous in Friedman's example (namely in the sinister understatement about the source of Malayan rubber: "with the help of the British government"), but I want to underline that his origin story is also a fable about why we can, and indeed should, neglect specific origins. Vulgarising Friedrich von Hayek's epistemological attacks on socialist planning, Friedman's is a paean to *ignorance*: "I haven't the slightest idea where it came from." Crucial to this stance is the fact that Friedman is not retracing the genesis of a simple commodity (the coffee bean), but one that for all of its apparent simplicity is actually composed of multiple interlocking commodity chains.

In the *docta ignorantia* that celebrates the impersonal working of price we can see how the political stakes of neoliberalism are shadowed by an aesthetic assumption. According to Friedman, we should (vaguely, hypothetically) imagine the far-flung, complex sources that go into the most seemingly insignificant of our everyday commodities precisely in order to accept and celebrate the fact that *we can't know and shouldn't care where the pencil came from* (or who laboured in its production). In a way, what Friedman is telling us is that *the commodity has no origin* (or at least, to paraphrase the terminology of gourmet coffee purveyors, no "single origin"). Or, that its real origin lies in "the magic of the price system."

In trying to experience what we cannot know, and to know what we cannot experience, both scenes reach for the numinous: Lerner's auratic "glow" is the terribly ambivalent presence of capitalist relations in the suspended product; Friedman's "magic," the coordination of production and consumption through the abstract parameters of competition. Yet, for all of its shameless shilling and the glib effort to sweep all the blood and dirt of accumulation under the carpet, Friedman's vignette is the more theoretically compelling: the nexus it establishes between the ignorance of origins and the power of abstraction casting doubt on our desire, so effectively thematized in *10:04*, to see or sense the whole of capital in each of its parts, or products.

The trade in any good (coffee included) was no less complex, or implicitly violent, in non-capitalist systems of commerce than in the commodity-chains briefly projected by Lerner's narrator. The *differentia specifica* of capital lies in the impersonality of its rule, in how, to cite the *Grundrisse*, "individuals are now ruled by *abstractions*, whereas earlier they had depended on one another."⁶ But the abstraction is not that of a homogeneous, automatic, and transparent mechanism of competition, as Friedman proposes; it is the abstraction of labour homogenised in a system of classed exploitation. Behind prices lies the constitutively antagonistic, endemically violent social form of value. And that form cannot be the object of any revelation, except for the revelation of its opacity to individual perception, to any experience stamped with the essential illusion of "mineness."⁷

- 1 "There, in the market-place and in shop windows, things stand still. They are under the spell of one activity only; to change owners. They stand there waiting to be sold. While they are there for exchange they are there not for use." Alfred Sohn-Rethel, *Intellectual and Manual Labour: A Critique of Epistemology* (London: Macmillan, 1978), 25.
- 2 Ben Lerner, *10:04* (London: Granta, 2014), 19.
- 3 My use of this passage by Lerner is indebted to Benjamin Noys's "Epic Fails: Scale, Commodity, Totality" (available at https://www.academia.edu/18976730/Epic_Fails_Scale_Commodity_Totality) and Marlon Lieber's "Bodies and the Logic of Capital: A Reading of Ben Lerner's *10:04*" (available at https://www.academia.edu/26923448/Bodies_and_the_Logic_of_Capital_A_Reading_of_Ben_Lerners_10_04). I owe Lieber's essay the reference to Bruce Robbins's concept of the "commodity origin scene." See his "Too Much Information," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 43 no. 1 (2010): 78-82. The expression "revelation by estrangement" is from Noys.
- 4 See Alberto Toscano and Jeff Kinkle, *Cartographies of the Absolute* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2015), 157-8.
- 5 Quoted in Anne Elizabeth Moore's perceptive essay, "Milton Friedman's Pencil," *The New Inquiry*, December 17, 2012, available at <http://thenewinquiry.com/essays/milton-friedmans-pencil>
- 6 Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* (London: Penguin, 1973), 164.
- 7 "The essence of the transformation of values into prices is that though capital extracts surplus value locally, it does not let those who do the extracting command and expend this surplus value. The hand of capital is different from its mouth and its asshole. This transformation is real, but it causes illusions in the brains of both capitalists and workers (including you and me!). It all revolves around mineness, the deepest pettiness in the Maya of the system. For capital appears as little machines, packets of materials, little incidents of work, all connected with little agents of complaint, excuse and hassle. Each individual capitalist complains about 'my' money,

each individual worker cries about 'my' job, each union official complains about 'my' industry; tears flow everywhere, apparently about different things, so that capitalism's house is an eternal soap opera. But mineness is an essential illusion, though illusion all the same. Capital is social, as is work, and pitiless as Shiva to the complainers, but needs their blindness to feed itself. It no more rewards capitalists to the extent that they exploit than it rewards workers to the extent that they are exploited. There is no justice for anyone but itself." George Caffentzis, "The Work/Energy Crisis and the Apocalypse" (1980), in *In Letters of Blood and Fire: Work, Machines, and the Crisis of Capitalism* (Oakland: PM Press, 2013), 27-8.



ELEVATOR C

ELEVATOR A

THE CONGRESS

I stood before the source Letters & Handshakes

*I stood before the source, an empty tomb;
to be closer to the source is all I needed.*

- Emma Charles, *Fragments on Machines*

Money, commodities, advertisements: capitalism's representations are ubiquitous. Less generic are representations of capitalism, the moving target theorized in Alberto Toscano and Jeff Kinkle's recent book *Cartographies of the Absolute*. In it, the authors return to Frederic Jameson's suggestive proposal for a practice of "cognitive mapping,"¹ and critically survey a wide sample of efforts of cultural producers, especially artists working in visual media, to "see it whole."² While refusing to abandon the category of totality, Toscano and Kinkle recognize that artists' representations of capital are inevitably partial, fragmentary—"the absolute" referenced in the book's title "gesturing towards that which defies representation."³

Contemporary efforts that nonetheless strive to visualize and narrate capitalism are further complicated by the crowded catalogue of concepts that political economists and other critical theorists have forwarded to name and interrogate its specific modalities: "cognitive capitalism,"⁴ "communicative capitalism,"⁵ "extractive capitalism,"⁶ "financial capitalism,"⁷ "post-colonial capitalism,"⁸ "post-Fordist capitalism,"⁹ "racial capitalism,"¹⁰ and "the new spirit of capitalism,"¹¹ to flag only a handful. Alongside the recognition of "varieties of capitalism," however, some activist-scholars contend that a "capitalocentric"¹² lens runs the risk of obscuring existing alternative models of organizing economic life.

Capitalism, as Toscano and Kinkle write, "poses an *aesthetic* problem, in the sense of demanding ways of representing the complex and dynamic relations intervening between the domains of production, con-

sumption and distribution, of making the invisible visible."¹³ To work on this problem in the current historical moment is (as ever) to do so amid a tumultuous mix of continuity and change, of grinding repetition and astonishing transformation: unprecedented income inequality, perpetual technological innovation, persistent resource wars, resurgent xenophobia, shapeshifting trade geographies, climate crisis, escalating debt levels, austerity-driven policy, anxieties over the future of work, declining unions, a fractured Left. And although social conflict is among the most reliable of historical continuities, contemporary efforts to represent capital operate under the weight of the assumption that "there is no alternative."

If capital, according to one of Marx's formulations, is "value in motion,"¹⁴ how might this process be pictured? Particularly, when, in an age of high-frequency trading, the speed at which value circulates is measured in milliseconds? How might commodity chains, and the globally distributed backs upon which they are drawn, be rendered visible? How might the exceedingly complex meshwork of transnational institutions, within which commodity production takes place, be diagrammed? How might emerging methods, continuing fault lines, and experiential consequences of restless marketization be performed? How might the digital fragmentation of work, the tunneling optics of metrics, and the algorithmic tailoring of what appears on our divided screens affect a social capacity to see systemically? And, what is politically or pedagogically expected of aesthetic strategies that take up the challenge of representing capitalism? How, also, to represent this object—which is not an object, but a relation—without recapitulating its magnitude, such that the desire for critical apprehension is overwhelmed, or the prospect of transformative agency foreclosed?

This exhibition is less interested in work that treats capitalism ironically, that freezes



a single familiar icon of capitalism's domination, or that promotes a social practice in which a failure of capital's state is temporarily soothed. Instead, the work in this show traverses capital's sources and pathways. The imperative to accumulate may be unidirectional but its forms are all over the map, as is registered in a constellation of concepts: *accumulation by dispossession*,¹⁵ positing that the enclosure of the commons, intrinsic to capitalism's violent beginnings, is an ongoing process; *settler accumulation*, describing and unsettling the "quietness of possession" of Indigenous land and resources;¹⁶ *the regime of accumulation*,¹⁷ naming geographically and historically specific ensembles of economic and extra-economic factors that provide some stability to a system organized around a volatile pursuit; *overaccumulation*,¹⁸ identifying a recurrent tendency for wealth to stockpile, awaiting devaluation or relocation; *accumulation by extinction*, recognizing the disappearance of multiple forms of life as a process "at the heart of capitalist accumulation";¹⁹ an "immense accumulation of spectacles,"²⁰ which, for Guy Debord, is how "all of life presents itself" under conditions of modern production; and accumulation as a kind of *alien power*,²¹ which is to say that the "I" that stands before the source is also non-human.

I stood before the source features recent work confronting the problem of representing contemporary capitalism, with the exhibition tracking, in particular, its underpinning logic of accumulation: the *infrastructures*, from copper wire to data centres, that facilitate it; the *labour*, from the scientifically managed to the creatively autonomous, that energizes it; the *governance systems*, from Internet standards to trade regimes, that choreograph it; the *crises*, from flash crashes to prolonged slumps, that wrack (and renew) it; the *sensibilities*, from productivism to enterprise, that support it; and the *new zones*, from sharing to incarceration, that are engulfed by it. Crisscrossing these themes, the exhibition

prioritizes research-intensive inquiries into contemporary *scenes of accumulation*—airports, mines, data centres, trading bots, communication, special economic zones, correctional facilities, vacant office buildings inhabited by speculation, and beyond.

Navigating through some of capital's pathways, sources, sites, and detritus, *I stood before the source* utilizes two exhibition spaces as well as other campus and off-campus locations. Gypsum partitions the elgallery and scaffolding flanks the walls in the Blackwood Gallery, simultaneously multiplying and dividing both exhibition spaces by two. Producing a viewing platform and a lower deck, the scaffolding enables viewers to enter into a direct dialogue with the scenography of capital, whether by enabling inspection, furnishing a balcony, or fashioning a stage. Scaffolding, also, of course, signals that which props up accumulation, or the infrastructures, material and symbolic, that make capital operative and attempt to safeguard against its collapse. But these support structures, which are inherently perilous and ultimately overshadowed by what it is there to produce, also conjure an affective burden.

Mapping tightly integrated circuits of global political-economic power, *tracking* vast accumulations of "dead labour" as technological architecture, *listening* in on the plunge and rebound of financial markets, *envisioning* divisions of labour in global production processes, *descending* into the open pits of the market, *anticipating* new horizons of market expansion and *probing* the latter's strategies of cultural legitimation, and *staging* the injuries of "accumulation for accumulation's sake,"²² the works brought into relation for this exhibition provide counter-narratives of and alternative ways of seeing contemporary capitalism. *I stood before the source* is the first of a two-part exhibition series at the Blackwood Gallery, the second of which imagines a shift from the metrics of accumulation to the requirements of care as an ordering principle of social relations.

- 1 Frederic Jameson, "Cognitive Mapping," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Carey Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 347-357.
- 2 Alberto Toscano and Jeff Kinkle, *Cartographies of the Absolute* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2015), 51.
- 3 Toscano and Kinkle, *Cartographies of the Absolute*, 23.
- 4 Yann Moulier Boutang, *Cognitive Capitalism*, trans. Ed Emery (Cambridge: Polity, 2012).
- 5 Jodi Dean, *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).
- 6 James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer, "Class Struggle on the New Frontier of Extractive Capitalism," in *Extractive Imperialism in the Americas* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 128-143.
- 7 Christian Marazzi, *The Violence of Financial Capitalism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011).
- 8 Sandro Mezzadra, "How Many Histories of Labor? Towards a Theory of Postcolonial Capitalism," in *Transversal* (2012): <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0112/mezzadra/en>.
- 9 Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004).
- 10 Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1983).
- 11 Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Gregory Elliot (London: Verso, 2006).
- 12 J-K Gibson-Graham, *A Post-capitalist Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).
- 13 Toscano and Kinkle, *Cartographies of the Absolute*, 53. Emphasis in the original.
- 14 Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume 3* (1894): <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1894-c3/>
- 15 David Harvey, "'New' Imperialism: Accumulation by Dispossession," in *Socialist Register* 40 (2004): 63-87.
- 16 Nicholas A. Brown, "The Logic of Settler Accumulation in a Landscape of Perpetual Vanishing," in *Settler Colonial Studies* 4, no. 1 (2014): 1-26.
- 17 Michel Aglietta, *A Theory of Capitalist Regulation: The US Experience*, trans. David Fernbach (London: Verso, 1979).
- 18 David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
- 19 Justin McBrien, "Accumulating Extinction: Planetary Catastrophism in the Necrocene," in *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*, ed. Jason W. Moore (Oakland: PM Press, 2016), 116. The phrase "accumulation by extinction" is from Moore's introduction to *Anthropocene or Capitalocene?*
- 20 Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1994), 1.
- 21 Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, (New York: Penguin, 1973).
- 22 Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume 1* (1867): <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/>

Biographies

Abbas Akhavan's practice ranges from site-specific ephemeral installations to drawing, video, and performance. The domestic sphere, as a forked space between hospitality and hostility, has been an ongoing area of research in Akhavan's work. More recent works have shifted focus, wandering into spaces just outside the home—the garden, the backyard, and other domesticated landscapes. Akhavan is the recipient of the Kunstpreis Berlin (2012), the Abraaj Group Art Prize (2014), and the Sobey Art Award (2015).

Bureau d'études is a French artist group that has researched and mapped structures of political-economic power and capitalism for the past 15 years, sometimes in collaboration with writer Brian Holmes. Bureau d'études initiated a *zone de gratuité* in Paris from March 1999 to September 2000, and founded, with Ewen Chardronnet, the newspaper *Laboratory Planet*. The group now lives and works in the countryside in Saint Menoux, France, where it works on collective projects across agriculture, commons, and cartographic research at *Ferme de la Mhotte*.

Emma Charles is a London-based artist. Working with photography and the moving image, her practice explores the way contemporary value systems of time, productivity, and labour are altered through technological progress. Recently, Charles has oriented her research towards the materiality of the Internet, going beneath the urban veneer to uncover the infrastructures within our technologically driven modern life. Charles holds a Masters in Photography from the Royal College of Art. She has exhibited and screened at Jerwood Visual Arts (London), ZKM (Karlsruhe), HKW (Berlin), Jeu de Paume (Paris), LUX (Scotland), and ICA (London). Charles is the recipient of a 2016 Arts Council England award and a ZKM commission, and was recently published

in *Reset Modernity!*, edited by Bruno Latour (The MIT Press, 2016).

Revital Cohen & Tuur Van Balen are London-based artists working across objects, installation, and film. Since graduating from the Royal College of Art in 2008, they have been exhibiting and lecturing internationally. Recent exhibitions took place at Kunstverein Düsseldorf, Lunds Konsthall, Moscow Biennale of Young Art, Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary (Vienna), Fotomuseum Winterthur, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (San Francisco), HKW (Berlin), and the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo. Recent screenings and artist talks include the ICA (London), TENT Rotterdam, Congo International Film Festival (Goma), and Cenart (Mexico City). Their work is in the permanent collections of MoMA and M+ Museum (Hong Kong).

Carole Condé + Karl Beveridge live and work in Toronto. They have collaborated with various trade union and community organizations in the production of their staged photographic work over the past 40 years. Their work has been exhibited across Canada and internationally in both the trade union movement and art galleries and museums. Recently, their work has been included in the Noorderlicht Photo-festival (Groningen), Manif d'art 7, Québec City Biennial, and the exhibition *Really Useful Knowledge*, Museo Reina Sofía (Madrid). Condé and Beveridge have been active in several labour arts initiatives including the Mayworks Festival (Toronto) and the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre (Hamilton). They received the Ontario Federation of Labour's Cultural Award (1997), Honorary Doctorates from OCAD University (2010) and NSCAD University (2015), and the *Prix de mérite artistique* from the Université du Québec à Montréal (2013).

Mark Curran is an artist-researcher and educator who lives and works in Berlin and Dublin. He holds a practice-led PhD, is Lecturer in the Photography program at

the Institute of Art, Design and Technology in Dublin and Visiting Professor in the MA program in Visual and Media Anthropology at the Freie Universität Berlin. Incorporating multimedia installation and informed by ethnography, since the late 1990s Curran has undertaken a cycle of long-term research projects which critically address the predatory context of global capital. He has exhibited at DePaul Art Museum (Chicago), Xuhui Art Museum (Shanghai), Encontros da Imagem (Braga), Grimmuseum (Berlin), FORMAT (Derby), Gallery of Photography (Dublin), Belfast Exposed, Centre Culturel Irlandais (Paris), Noorderlicht (Groningen), and Limerick City Gallery of Art.

Wally Dion (b. 1976 Saskatoon, Saskatchewan) is a visual artist living and working in Binghamton, New York. He is a member of Yellow Quill First Nation (Salteaux). Dion holds a BFA from the University of Saskatchewan and an MFA from Rhode Island School of Design. Dion's work has contributed to a broad conversation in the art world about identity and power. Dion has participated in numerous solo and groups exhibitions, including at the National Museum of the American Indian (Washington, DC), Esker Foundation (Calgary), and MASS MoCA (North Adams). His work can be found in collections of the Canadian Museum of Civilization (Gatineau) and Canada Council Art Bank, among others.

Jeremy Hutchison is a British artist based in London. After studying linguistics, he received an MFA with distinction from the University College London Slade School of Fine Art. His practice examines performance as a mode of manufacture: a way to produce realities. He constructs situations that disorder socio-economic procedures, reimagining the power relations encoded in dominant discourse. Hutchison's work has been exhibited internationally, including recent shows at the ICA (London), Modern Art Oxford, V&A (London), Z33 (Hasselt), Nassauischer Kunstverein (Weisbaden), EVA

International Biennale (Limerick) Saatchi New Sensations (London), Rurart (Poitiers), Galeri Mana (Istanbul), Paradise Row (London) and Southbank Centre (London). He was recently a member of the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York.

Keith Hennessy is a performer, choreographer, teacher, writer, and activist. Born in Sudbury, Canada, he lives in San Francisco and tours internationally. His interdisciplinary research engages improvisation, ritual, and public action as tools for investigating political realities. Ideas and practices inspired by anarchism, critical whiteness, punk, and queer-feminism motivate and mobilize Hennessy's creative and activist projects. Hennessy directs Circo Zero, and was a member of the collaborative performance companies Contraband with Sara Shelton Mann, CORE, and Cahin-caha, cirque bâtarde. Hennessy has an MFA in Choreography and an unfinished PhD (ABD) in Performance Studies from UC Davis.

Ashley Hunt uses photography, the moving image, performance, map-making, and writing to engage social movements, the exercise of political power, and the disciplinary boundaries that separate art worlds from the larger worlds in which they sit. The bulk of his art-making documents the expansion of the US prison system and its effects on communities as one way to address structures that either allow some people to accumulate power or keep others from getting power, while learning from the ways people come to know, contribute to, or resist these structures. Hunt's work has been exhibited in venues ranging from DiverseWorks (Houston), MoMA, Tate Modern, Documenta 12, and Project Row Houses in Houston through to community centers and prisons. Hunt is the Co-Director of the Program in Photography and Media at CalArts and is on the Visual Art faculty of Vermont College of Fine Arts.

Richard Ibhgy & Marilou Lemmens have developed a collaborative practice that

combines a concise approach to the form and construction of the art object with a desire to make ideas visible. Spanning multiple media, including video, performance, and installation, their work explores the material, affective, and sensory dimensions of experience that cannot be fully translated into signs or systems. They have examined the rationale upon which economic actions are described and represented, and how the logic of economy has come to infiltrate intimate aspects of life. Recent solo exhibitions have been held at the International Studio & Curatorial Program (New York), Leonard and Bina Ellen Gallery (Montreal), VOX - Centre de l'image contemporaine (Montreal), and Trinity Square Video (Toronto), among others. They have participated in several group exhibitions including, recently, the XIII Bienal de Cuenca (Ecuador), 14th Istanbul Biennial, La Biennale de Montréal, 27th Images Festival (Toronto), Manif d'art 7: Quebec City Biennial, and La Filature, Scène Nationale (Mulhouse, France). They live and work in Montreal and Durham-Sud, Quebec.

Will Kwan is a Hong Kong-born, Canadian media artist. His work has been exhibited at the 2014 Folkestone Triennial, 2010 Liverpool Biennial, 2007 Montréal Biennale, 2003 Venice Biennale, MoMA PS1, Cooper Union, ZKM (Karlsruhe), Contemporary Art Centre (Vilnius), Polish National Museum, Zendai Museum of Modern Art (Shanghai), Art Museum at the University of Toronto, The Power Plant (Toronto), and the Western Front (Vancouver). Kwan has been artist-in-residence at the Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art (Manchester), Headlands Center for the Arts (San Francisco), and the Irish Museum of Modern Art. Kwan's work is held in the collections of the M+ Museum (Hong Kong), Folkestone Artworks (Kent), and the University of Toronto. Kwan is an Associate Professor in Studio at the University of Toronto Scarborough and graduate faculty in Visual Studies at the Daniels Faculty of Architecture, University of Toronto.

Letters & Handshakes is a collaboration of Greig de Peuter (Associate Professor, Department of Communication Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University) and Christine Shaw (Director/Curator, Blackwood Gallery and Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Visual Studies, University of Toronto Mississauga). Letters & Handshakes' past projects include the forums *Fighting Foreclosed Futures: The Politics of Student Debt* (2012), *Remaking Cultural Relations: Artistic Livelihoods and Collective Alternatives* (2014), and *Surplus³: Labour and the Digital* (2015), and the exhibition *Precarious: Carole Condé + Karl Beveridge* (2014). Previously, de Peuter and Shaw were active in the Toronto School of Creativity & Inquiry (2005-2010), which curated *Here be Dragons: Cartography of Globalization* (2005) and *A Potential Toronto* (2007).

Darlene Montgomery designs landscapes. Her career has focused on large public space and infrastructure projects in Canada, the United States, and the Middle East, many of which have won prestigious awards for reclamation, historic preservation, master planning and placemaking. Currently, she designs landscapes that focus on time and natural processes for MJMA, an architecture firm that designs beautiful, huge, monolithic community buildings. She graduated from Queen's University and the University of Toronto. She is interested in the contemporary and the technological sublime. This is her first collaboration with Public Studio.

Christopher Myers is an author, illustrator of books for children and young adults, and an artist who lives and works in New York. He has written numerous books and notable essays, amongst them the much-discussed "The Apartheid of Children's Literature," which ran in *The New York Times* in 2014. He has illustrated books for authors including E.E. Cummings, Zora Neale Hurston, his father Walter Dean Myers, and Misty Copeland. He has collaborated with traditional shadow puppet makers in Jogjakarta,

silversmiths in Khartoum, conceptual video artists in Vietnam, young musicians in New Orleans, woodcarvers in Accra, and weavers in Luxor. He also co-directed with Hank Willis Thomas the documentary film *Am I Going Too Fast?* Myers' work has been shown at MoMA PS1 (New York), Contrasts Gallery (Shanghai), Prospect Biennial (New Orleans), and The Ethelbert Cooper Gallery of African & African American Art at Harvard (Cambridge).

Gerald Nestler is an artist and author who combines theory and postdisciplinary conversation with video, installation, performance, objects, graphics, text, and sound to explore what he terms the "derivative condition" of contemporary social relations and its paradigmatic (financial) models, narratives, and operations. He is currently working on the aesthetics of resolution as a means to produce counter-fictions and imaginations that support renegade activism. Nestler graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna (1992). After collaborating in early net art projects he examined financial markets as a broker and trader. His work has been shown internationally and has received several grants and awards. He is a practice-based PhD candidate at the Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths, University of London.

Public Recordings develops and presents projects that test hypotheses about group work through performance, education, publishing, and other collective gestures. With the goal of providing a readable index of problems and solutions in and through experiential practice, we use the structural and administrative framework of a dance company to question the meanings and possibilities of shared space. Based in Toronto, Public Recordings has staged projects in Calgary, Cardiff, Chalon-sur-Saône, Edmonton, Ghent, Halifax, Kitchener, Leuven, Ljubljana, Montreal, Nottingham, Ottawa, Paris, Pula, Terni, Toronto, St. John's, Vancouver, Vienna, Yokohama, and Zagreb.

Public Studio's practice spans topics such as war, globalization, ecology, and political dissent. Elle Flanders completed her PhD in 2014, and has mentored with feminist artists Mary Kelly and Martha Rosler. Tamira Sawatzky is an architect working in Toronto. After 12 years with the architectural firm MJMA designing award-winning buildings, Sawatzky started her own multidisciplinary practice and formed Public Studio with Flanders. Together, they have garnered critical attention, won public art commissions and awards, and exhibited at the Venice Biennale, MoMA, Berlin International Film Festival, EVA Biennial, and TIFF. They were 2016 artists-in-residence at the AGO. They collaborate with artists and thinkers across disciplines; this is their first collaboration with Darlene Montgomery.

Hank Willis Thomas is a photo-conceptual artist working primarily with themes of identity, history, and popular culture. He holds a BFA in Photography and Africana studies from New York University and MFA/MA in Photography and Visual Criticism from the California College of the Arts. His monograph, *Pitch Blackness*, was published by Aperture. He has exhibited at the International Center of Photography, the Fabric Workshop and Museum, and Studio Museum in Harlem, among others. Thomas' work is in numerous collections including the MoMA, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Whitney Museum of American Art, Brooklyn Museum, and National Gallery of Art (Washington, DC). He is represented by Jack Shainman Gallery in New York and Goodman Gallery in South Africa.

Alberto Toscano is Reader in Critical Theory and Co-Director of the Centre for Philosophy and Critical Thought at Goldsmiths, University of London. He is the co-author of *Cartographies of the Absolute* and author of *Fanaticism* and *The Theatre of Production*. He edits the Italian List for Seagull Books and sits on the editorial board of the journal *Historical Materialism*.

Programs

FREE CONTEMPORARY ART BUS TOUR Sunday, October 16, 12–5pm

The tour starts at Koffler Centre of the Arts at Artscape Youngplace (180 Shaw Street) and then departs for Blackwood Gallery, Art Gallery of York University, and Doris McCarthy Gallery. To RSVP: email smunro@kofflerarts.org or call 647-925-0643 x 221 by Friday, October 14 at 5pm.

OPENING RECEPTION & PERFORMANCE LECTURE

Wednesday, October 19, 5–8pm

Performance by Keith Hennessy (Circo Zero) at 6:45pm

A FREE shuttle bus will depart from Mercer

Union (1286 Bloor Street West) at 5:30pm and return for 8:30pm.

In a solo performance lecture, Keith Hennessy shares the content, forms, tactics, and contradictions of Circo Zero's *Turbulence (a dance about the economy)*.

PERFORMANCE CAPITALIST DUETS BY PUBLIC RECORDINGS

November 24–26, 8pm and November 27, 2pm

The Theatre Centre, 1115 Queen St. West \$15

CAPITALIST DUETS employs free-market dramaturgy in response to the commodity status of contemporary performance. Seven independently authored duets perform simultaneously as an unaffected spectacle on stage at The Theatre Centre.

Image Credits

Page 1, 40: **Jeremy Hutchison**, *Fabrications* (production still), 2013–2016. Courtesy the artist and Delfina Foundation.

Page 5: **Revital Cohen & Tuur Van Balen**, *75 Watt* (production still), 2013. Courtesy the artists.

Page 6-7: **Bureau d'études**, *Pictographic Grammar*. Courtesy the artists.

Page 8: **Bureau d'études**, *World Government* (detail), 2013. Courtesy the artists.

Page 9: **Carole Condé + Karl Beveridge**, *The Plague*, 2009. Courtesy the artists.

Page 10: **Emma Charles**, *Fragments on Machines* (video still), 2013. Courtesy the artist.

Page 11: **Hank Willis Thomas and Christopher Myers**, *Am I Going Too Fast?* (video still), 2014. Courtesy Kambui Olujimi and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

Page 12: **Public Studio and Darlene Montgomery**, *The One and the Many*, 2016. Courtesy the artists.

Page 13: **Wally Dion**, *Wing* (detail), 2016. Courtesy the artist.

Page 14: **Will Kwan**, *Finite States (Automatons)* (detail), 2016. Courtesy the artist.

Page 15: **Gerald Nestler**, *COUNTERING CAPITULATION. From Automated Participation to Renegade Solidarity. High-frequency trading and the forensic analysis of the Flash Crash, May 6, 2010* (video still), 2013-14. Courtesy the artist.

Page 16: **Mark Curran**, *Void Visitors Pass (Deutsche Börse AG) (After 1 year negotiation, Access denied)* Eschborn (Frankfurt), Germany March 2012. Courtesy the artist.

Page 16: **Mark Curran**, *Bethlehem, Trader (negotiation 1.5 years)* Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX) Addis Abeba, Ethiopia September 2012. Courtesy the artist.

Page 17: **Ashley Hunt**, *Corrections Documentary Project*, 2001–ongoing. Courtesy the artist.

Page 18: **Circo Zero**, *Turbulence (a dance about the economy)* (performance still), 2010–2012.

Photo: David Visnjic. Courtesy the artists.

Page 19: **Public Recordings**, *CAPITALIST DUETS*, 2015, 2016. Logo: Jeremy McCormick. Photo: Adam Kinner. Courtesy Public Recordings.

Page 20: **Revital Cohen & Tuur Van Balen**, *75 Watt* (production still), 2013. Courtesy the artists.

Page 21: **Richard Ibghy & Marilou Lemmens**, *Real failure needs no excuse* (video still), 2012. Courtesy the artists.

Page 22: **Abbas Akhavan**, *Trope* (a study), altered digital image, 2016. Courtesy the artist.

Page 23: **Jeremy Hutchison**, *Fabrications (indigo mountain)*, 2013–2016. Courtesy the artist and Delfina Foundation.

Page 28-29: **Emma Charles**, *Fragments on Machines* (video still), 2013. Courtesy the artist.

Page 31: Scaffolding installed in Blackwood Gallery. Photo: Sam Holmes.

Acknowledgments

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October 16–December 3, 2016

Abbas Akhavan, Bureau d'études, Emma Charles, Revital Cohen & Tuur Van Balen, Keith Hennessy (Circo Zero), Carole Condé + Karl Beveridge, Mark Curran, Wally Dion, Ashley Hunt, Jeremy Hutchison, Richard Ibghy & Marilou Lemmens, Will Kwan, Gerald Nestler, Public Recordings, Public Studio & Darlene Montgomery, Hank Willis Thomas & Christopher Myers

Curated by Letters & Handshakes

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Visual Studies
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
MISSISSAUGA

Gallery Hours

Monday - Friday: 12–5pm
Wednesday: 12–9pm
Saturday: 12–3pm

The gallery is wheelchair accessible. Portions of the current exhibition contain stairs. FREE and open to the public.

