

Irmgard Emmelhainz
**Geopolitics and
Contemporary
Art, Part One:
From
Representation's
Ruin to
Salvaging the
Real**

e-flux journal #69 — January 2016 Irmgard Emmelhainz
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01/12

In the 1960s and '70s, politicization meant taking a position, establishing and following a political program, taking up armed struggle, putting one's skills (including art) at the service of the revolution, fighting in the name of the horizon of state socialism, and acting in solidarity with anti-imperialist and decolonization struggles. Artists and militant networks were drawn together by political affinities, and Palestine, Vietnam, and Chile were symbols of anti-imperialism. This form of politicization translated into an aesthetic practice of international vanguardism, contestation, criticality, counterhegemony, and postcolonial memorialization and assertion, within the framework of a politics of representation. Since that time, however, this kind of politics has come to be perceived as a form of violent nationalism that led to authoritarian states and propagandist aesthetics. Politics has become inseparable from the neoliberalized political economy, as well as from culture.

Within representation's ruin, what used to be "outside" of capitalism – like marginality, queerness, or race – has been symbolically incorporated and deprived of its capacity to disrupt and contest. Figures of otherness have disappeared and been subsumed into "lifestyle" options. The underclass is a blurry horizon disconnected from the flows of global capitalism; far from being a political figure, the underclass is sometimes subject to site-specific intervention, pacification, betterment, development, and community-building projects. Its emancipatory horizon lies in entrepreneurship. Moreover, in the twenty-first century politics is no longer representative, but what some theorists call "post-politics." Following Jodi Dean, this means that politics now aspires to a superficial democracy that neutralizes antagonism and denies democracy's limits and mechanisms of exclusion. "Post-politics" thus implies the disavowal of the fundamental division conditioning politics, as equality has come to mean inclusion, respect, and entitlement. "Post-politics" means consensual politics, the end of ideology, the neoliberal withering away of the state in some areas and its strengthening in other strategic ones, and the financialization of the economy.¹

Insofar as democracy has become the goal of political action, visibility has become a key feature. This form of politicization presupposes that displacing signs may contribute to destabilizing or mobilizing people, providing tools for articulations that can enable specific political goals. As a consequence, cultural production has become inextricable from political action. We must also consider what was made evident by the 2011–13 worldwide

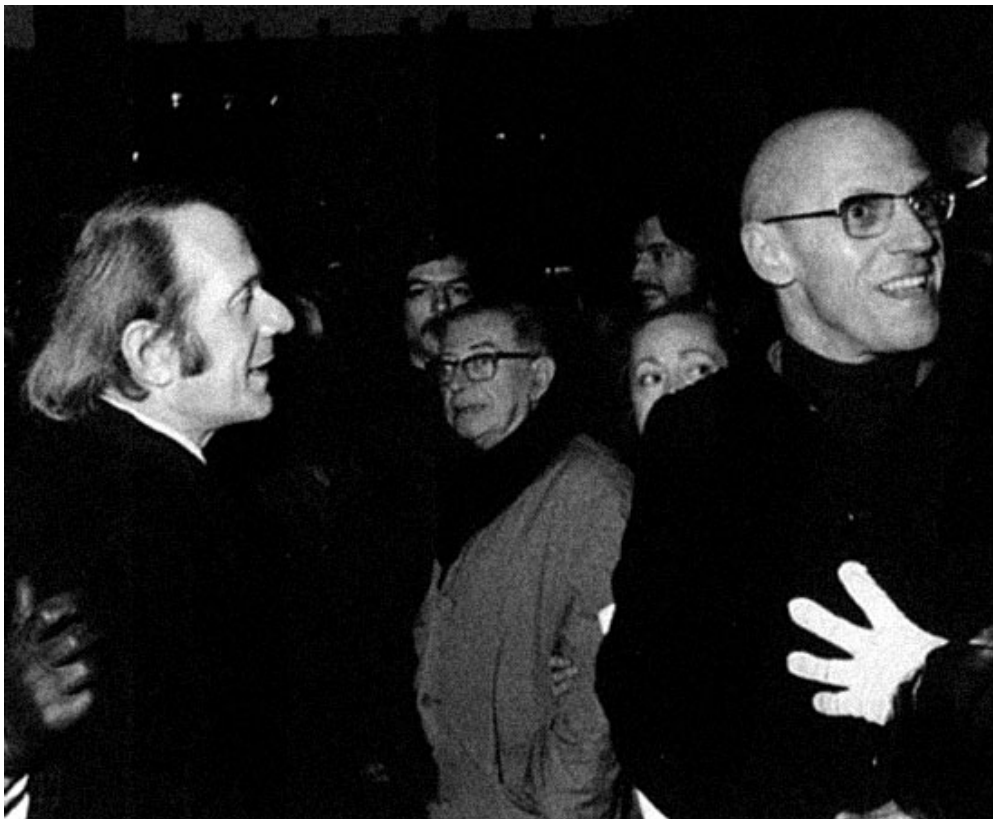
mobilizations: the huge gap that exists between government (political parties, elections, institutions) and the actual forms in which we are being governed, which give shape to our lives and the ways we make a living – according to the interests of international trade organizations and corporations. “*Que se vayan todos,*” or “They all have to go,” has been the motto on the streets of Argentina since the early 2000s, even if “they” all eventually end up staying. In Egypt, Tahrir Square took Mubarak’s head, and the Tamarod (rebellion) movement took Morsi’s. Collective self-determination was reclaimed in the streets, and yet the people’s goal was not to get organized and take power because, first, power creates the fiction that gathering and protesting is enough to change things, and second, because politics no longer works as representation.

If traditional forms of power were representative and lodged in institutions and persons, power is now hidden in infrastructure (a highway, a supermarket, software, fiber optics, a data center, corporate providers of energy and water) and materialized as spatial arrangements. Post-representative forms of power manifest themselves as the organization, design, and configuration of the world; these forms of power are architectural and impersonal, as opposed to

02/12

representative and personal.² Moreover, politics is also post-ideological, which means that critical disposition, symbolic gesture, political position, and everyday life are completely dissociated. This dissociation leads to pervasive contradictions: denouncing hunger in Africa, but drinking coffee at Starbucks; expressing solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza, but consuming Israeli goods; protesting against violence, but exploiting one’s own employees; opposing slavery, but buying clothing manufactured by enslaved people in Southeast Asia; expressing concern about global warming, but buying food in supermarkets; applying for government and corporate funds to produce projects that critique them. Our post-political and post-ideological era is characterized by a sharp discrepancy between political position, political action, and symbolic gesture.

In what follows I would like to address the transformations in militantism in the context of the shift from representation to post-politics and post-ideology, as manifested in politicized art in recent decades. This shift embodies the passage from the ruin of representation to sensible politics: from internationalism to multiculturalism, antiglobalization, and recent artistic production that, aside from taking up the



"Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault discussed the shifts in militantism and their implications in a public dialogue on March 4, 1972."

task of rendering visible the invisible, has proposed forms of salvaging reality, of self-organizing transient communities, bettering the conditions of living and working, and imagining new forms of communal organization, social therapies, and useful art. One of the questions that urgently needs to be asked concerns the role that contemporary art plays in geopolitics, if we consider the art world as an industry, as the harbinger of neoliberalism, and as a tool for pacification, normalization, and gentrification. Relatedly, can the nation-state still function as a container for globalized struggles? What can the political art and militancy of the 1960s and '70s contribute to these struggles?³

The Ruin of Representation

A century ago and up until the 1960s, political action was framed under unions, parties, and associations, and consisted in attending rallies and organizing strikes, meetings, and marches. In this context, militants delivered pamphlets and gave speeches – what is known as “agitation” work. For instance, Lucy Parsons was a member of the Communist Party and an indefatigable agitator who also belonged to the Chicago Working Women’s Union and joined the Socialist Worker’s Party in 1877. Parsons

03/12

travelled throughout the United States and became a well-known labor leader and one of the main defenders of anarchism, Black people, and the rights of prostitutes.⁴ Another militant, French philosopher Simone Weil, sought to transcend the domain of politicized speech (although she was known to have given speeches at workers’ meetings in Le Puy, where she taught philosophy) and engaged in factory and peasant work as well as in armed struggle with the Republican Army in Spain. In the 1960s, a major shift took place in political engagement, especially after May '68. Following in Weil's footsteps – and in opposition to Jean-Paul Sartre, who kept militant action and philosophy as two separate activities – figures such as journalist Ulrike Meinhof, philosopher Régis Debray, and filmmaker Masao Adachi bypassed the party as the container for progressive politics and engaged directly in armed struggle, seeking to join theory and practice. Maoist students also rejected the party and worked alongside laborers and peasants, no longer seeking (as Lenin's had prescribed in his text “What is to be Done?”) to militate ahead of them, but to learn from them.

Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault discussed the shifts in militantism and their implications in a public dialogue on March 4,



Guillermo Gómez-Peña,
*Declaration of Poetic
Disobedience*, 2006. Video
still. Image copyright of the
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Bank.

1972.⁵ They posed the question of the role of intellectuals in relation to the struggles of students, workers, and prisoners. In the discussion, Foucault defined two types of politically involved intellectuals: “outcasts,” who engage in actions that are regarded as subversive or “immoral” by bourgeois society (i.e., Jean Genet); and “socialists,” who use discourse to reveal particular truths (i.e., Rosa Luxemburg). Intellectuals had traditionally taken the latter role, serving as “the consciousness of the people.” The events of May ’68, however, marked the awareness that the masses no longer needed intellectuals to represent them or to describe their various forms oppression. For Deleuze, the role of the intellectual was no longer to situate himself ahead of workers, but to contest the very forms of power that position intellectuals as producers of knowledge. Thus, what was problematized by May ’68 was precisely the notion of the “representative consciousness.” Intellectuals had been rendered aware of how they propagate discourses of power disguised as “knowledge,” “consciousness,” and “truth.” For Foucault and Deleuze, there could be no representation, not because there wasn’t a signifier (“archaism”) that could bring together a given group based on

04/12

common interests, but because in “speaking for others,” there is always an unconscious desire operating: to know, appropriate, and have power over the Other, denying him or her the right to self-consciousness.

Foucault and Deleuze thus gave intellectuals the task of organizing struggles beyond representation and “class consciousness.” They posited militancy as a matter of denouncing, speaking out, finding targets, and creating tools to fight different forms of power and oppression. This cleared a path for an array of different struggles beyond class consciousness, rooted in the cultural and social arenas, as well as for a politics of counter-information, which privileged the mass media as a site of militant intervention. New micropolitical struggles targeted the processes of subjectivation (*subjectivation*) and subjugation (*assujettissement* or *sujétion*), which assigned roles, functions, and identities to individuals subordinated by a given form of power. These struggles sought to use the logic of subjectivation to organize militant self-consciousness, constructing an active, politically constituted subject or subjectivity that could counter the process of subjugation. In the domain of art, after the shifts prompted by the



Minerva Cuevas's *Mejor Vida Corp* offers a student card to an exhibition visitor, 2012.

ruin of aesthetic-political representation (manifested in philosophy as post-structuralist theory), artists developed conceptual art strategies that aimed to dematerialize the art object in order to resist its ever increasing status as a commodity. Through institutional critique they began to question the conditions of art production, and through a pedagogy of viewership, they made art (most notably video art) that sought to counter the spectacle.

From Anti-Imperialism to the Global Celebration of Difference

Parallel to student and worker struggles in Europe, anti-imperialism and decolonization battles were underway in the third world, seeking to establish alternatives to Western capitalism. Cuba, China, Palestine, Chile, and Vietnam were key referents in the 1970s. Communism was a “living hypothesis,” a horizon that mobilized the belief, passion, and will of a large part of the revolution and inspired solidarity from the Western world.⁶ The political figures brought about by anti-imperialism were the empowered peasant or slum-dweller and the colonized subject fighting for their own emancipation against empire. By the 1980s, however, the revolutionary anti-imperialist subject and project had been disavowed as a sort of aberration of decadent socialism, A new de-ideologized form of third-world emancipation, beyond the international division of labor and the figure of the worker as a politically self-defined subject, was foregrounded. Anti-imperialism had implied universalizing a cause or giving a name to a political wrong; the “wretched of the earth” emerged for a historically specific period of time as a new figuration of “the people” in the political sense. But a new ethical humanism took over, replacing revolutionary and political sympathy with pity and moral indignation, transforming the latter into political emotions within the framework of human rights.⁷

This led to new figures of alterity in the 1980s and '90s: the “suffering other” who needs to be rescued, and the postcolonial subaltern demanding restitution, presupposing that visibility would follow emancipation. These figures became the postcolonial, ethnically self-defined and self-represented subjects struggling for recognition and for a place from which to speak their own suppressed, unheard, or forgotten narratives: “I speak therefore I am,” utters performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña in his *Declaration of Poetic Disobedience* (2006). In order to avoid the representation of identities based on archaisms (or “essentialisms,” as Gayatri Spivak put it) that would perpetuate the discourses of Western society’s “Other” through nationalisms, myths, and other types of ethnic-

specific narratives, in the 1980s postcolonial theorists posited a *differential structure of identification*, in which identity was conceived as always being in the process of formation, constructed through ambivalence and “splittings.”⁸ What became crucial politically, according to Homi Bhabha, was the articulation of “interstitial moments,” or processes produced in the articulation of differences. For Bhabha, “third spaces” can allow for an elaboration of “communal” representation, generating “new signs” of cultural difference as “sites of collaboration.”⁹ The concept of “difference,” however, came to be trivialized. By the late 1990s it manifested itself in the art world as biennials in marginal corners of the world, somehow fulfilling the multicultural utopia of globalization.

Under the site-specific intervention model of the biennial, space came to be regarded as epistemically rich; delivering experiences or intervening in everyday processes took over from representation. Site-specific art sought to infuse social criticism into the everyday. As a moral statement, however, site-specific intervention became the limit of its own political effect. Confined within the art world, it provided contrasts and pointed at potentials, yet fell short of modifying the background of political turmoil, and even caused epistemic violence to the site in question. Site-specificity had been liberatory insofar as it had enabled the displacing of essentialized nation-state identities and had introduced the possibility of multiple identities, allegiances, and new meanings. This was prompted by what Susan Buck-Morss described as a compensatory fantasy that responded to the intensified fragmentation and alienation of an expanded market economy.¹⁰ Thus, in the “biennialized” art world, multiculturalism, polyphony, and marginality actually came to affirm white hegemony, insofar as they expressed a moral struggle for *recognition*. Considering that fluid identities are made possible by the privilege of mobilization and thus bear a specific relationship to power, a new class division based on degrees of mobility was established: on one side, a transnational class of cultural workers with smooth access and safe passage, pondering the *elsewhere* of global processes; on the other, migrant workers and refugees crossing borders as “illegals” to survive.

Globalphobic Aesthetics and Tactical Media

With the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, the political horizon of communism as a promise, a utopia, an intellectual construct, and a political vision waned. Instead, it became a place and an event in actual history, a disastrous experiment manifested in totalitarian dictatorships.¹¹ As

05/12

e-flux journal #69 — January 2016 Irmgard Emmelhainz
Geopolitics and Contemporary Art, Part One: From Representation's Ruin to Salvaging the Real

06/12



Suzanne Lacy, Annice Jacoby, and Chris Johnson, *The Roof is On Fire*, 1994. Performance, Oakland, California.



The group Yapi Sanat places a protest statue in front of the Istanbul Biennale at Istanbul Modern.

neoliberal policies were implemented and free trade agreements were signed across the world, the antiglobalization movement arose in the mid-1990s, opposing neoliberal reforms and fighting for fair trade, sustainable development, human rights, and corporate accountability. Following Brian Holmes, this movement was the first attempt at a widespread, meshworked response to the chaos of the post-'89 world system. Within this framework, anticapitalists critiqued the failures of neoliberal governance from an array of different positions: democratic sovereigntists, anti-border libertarians, and the more traditional, union-oriented Keynesians.¹² The antiglobalization movement conceived itself as a social base for criticizing corporate capitalism, globalization, and the growing political power of multinational corporations, exercised through trade agreements and deregulated financial markets.

Antiglobalization protesters converged at gatherings of world leaders, most notably in Genoa 2001, and at their own international conferences, like the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil that same year. The political subjectivity embodied by the movement was theorized by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, who, in line with May '68 post-representational politics, sought to go beyond the worker-based identity of the "proletariat" and the homogeneity inherent in the concept of "the people." They thus they coined the term "the multitude." For Hardt and Negri, the multitude is a social being formed in the no-place of capitalism. It is a decentered network of singular cells within Empire immanently producing the "common," which is also the substance of the multitude and the condition and end of production (the *locus* of surplus value). The multitude exists within the imperial rule of biopower, a form of social control that regulates and administers life from within, extending through consciousness, bodies, and the entirety of social relations. As opposed to taking over power and the means of production, as Marxism prescribed in the twentieth century, for Hardt and Negri the task of the multitude is to democratize the common(s), exploit networks of social production with the purpose of achieving autonomy, and undermine the sovereignty of biopower. The flesh of the multitude, however, embodies a series of ambivalent conditions that can become dangerous: social production can either lead to liberation, or be caught in a new regime of exploitation and control, feeding biopower.

In parallel with the antiglobalization movement, artistic production veered toward anticapitalist politics, characterized by interdisciplinarity and the adoption of an array of countercultural positions and political

affiliations, with the goal of creating autonomous zones, albeit symbolically. Examples include art collectives producing counter-informative, didactic, and symbolic interventions or actions against capitalism in the public sphere: REPOhistory, Group Material, Guerrilla Girls, WochenKlausur, Colectivo Cambalache, Las Agencias (Yomango, Prêt à Revolter, and so forth), Ne Pas Plier, Haha, the Yes Men, Superflex, Mejor Vida Corp., the Center for Land Use Interpretation, the Atlas Group, Raqs Media Collective, and Chto Delat. At the same time, tactical media emerged, with strategies like attacks on servers as digital "sit-ins." But while this form of creative activism lasted only until a globally integrated system of electronic surveillance was implemented after September 11 (as clandestinity became impossible and this form of attack was criminalized), antiglobalization art and activism have been criticized for having no political program, or for having the vague program of using imperialism against itself.¹³

For Hardt and Negri, the multitude has the desire for world equality, freedom, and a global democratic society, and it has the power to achieve them; but it has no discernible goals or agenda beyond opposing capitalism and appropriating production. The limitations of the antiglobalization agenda are illustrated by one of the actions performed within the framework of Yomango, a Spanish artistic project of social disobedience. The Yomango project involved disseminating instructions on how to appropriate goods available in globalized stores, followed by gatherings in which the goods were shared. Designed to facilitate the redistribution of the commons, the action, however, obscured the international and thus imperial division of labor and the conditions of production surrounding the goods that the participants appropriated for themselves.

Following Brian Holmes, the antiglobalization movement ultimately faltered due to the cultural consequences of globalization, that is to say, the global success of American mass culture, which extinguished local cultures only to resurrect them in a Disneyfied form. The antiglobalization movement was also defeated by the very neoliberal program that launched it in the first place, which manifested itself as a military, moral, and religious return to order, a massive expansion of capital, and a worldwide clampdown on civil liberties.¹⁴ In the realm of "high culture," the expansion of American mass culture went hand in hand with the globalization of Western modernism as the lingua franca of contemporary art, derived from an emptying-out of postmodernity as a critical and temporal category, and its replacement by a

08/12

e-flux journal #69 — January 2016 Irmgard Emmelhainz
Geopolitics and Contemporary Art, Part One: From Representation's Ruin to Salvaging the Real

singular and internally differentiated global modernity.¹⁵

Relationality and Salvaging Art

In parallel with the antiglobalization agenda, a current in art production sought to experiment with different forms of collectivity and community beyond identity and processes of identification. Relational art of the 1990s was the catalyzer for transient communal gatherings that sought to revive social relations and counter the alienation brought about by the spectacle. This form of art, described by Nicolas Bourriaud, envisioned the audience as a community and unfolds in the realm of human interactions, elaborating meaning collectively. Instead of having a “utopian” agenda, relational artists sought to find provisional solutions in the here and now; this is why relational artworks insisted on being used rather than contemplated.¹⁶ Another current of this participatory aesthetics was described by Claire Bishop, who put antagonism at its core in the creation of situations in which the members of a collectivity are confronted, thus drawing the limits of society’s ability to fully constitute itself.¹⁷ There were also “dialogical” practices, exemplified by the work of Suzanne Lacy, which brought together an array of different people (i.e., high school students, the police, the media) and dispositive, repurposed for the creation of transversal spaces for dialogue.¹⁸ In Lacy’s piece *The Roof is On Fire* (1994), part of her Oakland Projects, 220 public high school students took part in unscripted conversations about family, culture, race, and education while sitting in one hundred cars on a rooftop garage, with Oakland residents listening to them. Lacy’s work combines institutional and social apparatuses with educational workshops, mass media, and policy development.

We can regard relational, participatory, and dialogical art practices as experiments with new models of social and political organization. These experiments emerged in the face of the fragmentation, the destruction of social bonds, and the alienation brought about by globalization. These practices also evidenced how art has become a form of experimental activity that overlaps transversally with the world through its flight into other disciplines, dispositive, and regimes, with the purpose of addressing sociopolitical concerns. Participation, however, has its limits, as it is one of the forms of neoliberal governance and power. Following Eyal Weizman, at the horizon of participation there is collaboration, “the tendency to forcefully, or willingly, align one’s actions with the aims of power, be it political, military, economic or a combination thereof.”¹⁹

The problem is that the options from which we are allowed to choose cannot themselves be challenged, and thus participation ends up forcing the subject into compliance with power. This form of power has been conceptualized by Wendy Brown as “neoliberal governance,” and its focus is creating incentives to negotiate goals in common.²⁰

Governance in this regard implies the creation of systems that enable administered or controlled inclusion through the fetishization of democracy. Via integration, individuation, and cooperation, democracy is reduced to “participation,” yet divorced from justice. Discontent is placated.²¹ Participation thus raises political and ethical dilemmas, demanding that the power relations enabling participation be urgently questioned. Participatory art, however, can be understood as an effort to experiment with ways to restore community links that have been destroyed or threatened by neoliberal policies. Similar to Jean-Luc Godard, who has posited the image as a form of “salvaging the real,” W. J. T. Mitchell has posited site-specific or relational art as a form of “salvaging,” digging out things, recovering ruins, and rescuing neighborhoods by involving art and collaboration between institutions and communities.²²

Art is expected to “save” reality by reviving the singularity of places and persons – here we can recall the use of locality and site- or cultural-specificity in the 1990s. It is not that the world or reality has been lost, but rather that our connection to and belief in them have been destroyed, and thus need to be saved. Art can help. For Mitchell, art’s new vocation is to remake the world both literally and symbolically as a way of constructing social solidarity and forms of imagining together (e.g., Pedro Reyes’s repurposing of guns as musical instruments, or Theaster Gates’s Dorchester Project, which involved the renovation of formerly abandoned buildings in Chicago’s South Side). The role of this kind of art has been to experiment with ways to restore vital contact with the real, highlighting the current crisis of presence due to extreme alienation in the West.

Politics of the Art World and Politics of Resistance

Antiglobalization, relational, and interventionist forms of aesthetic practice exemplify the different ways in which art and politics have related to each other within politicized aesthetics. But there are other ways in which politics and aesthetics converge. There is, for instance, a politics of the art world, as exemplified by Hito Steyerl’s video *Is the Museum a Battlefield?* (2013). In this video-performance,

09/12

e-flux journal #69 — January 2016 Irmgard Emmelhainz
Geopolitics and Contemporary Art, Part One: From Representation’s Ruin to Salvaging the Real

which is also a kind of documentary, Steyerl eloquently connects a shell casing found on a battlefield in Turkey to the military-museum-industrial complex, revealing the ties between the weapons industry, transnational corporations, “starchitecture,” and global biennials. The genealogy of Steyerl’s video can be traced back to the institutional critique of 1970s, ’80s, and ’90s, which aimed to elucidate the discourses behind exhibition practices and raise concerns about art sponsorship.

Taking institutional critique even further, recently there have been mobilizations that transcend the domain of art production to become direct political action within museums. For instance, last June members and allies of the group Gulf Labor temporarily occupied the Guggenheim in New York to protest the working conditions of laborers building the new Guggenheim museum in Abu Dhabi. The group Liberate Tate has also engaged in various direct actions to shed light on British Petroleum’s sponsorship of the museum. Artists are less and less keen to separate creativity, exhibition venues, and the sponsors that support them. They are reluctant to give credibility to sponsors that fund art in order to whitewash their own crimes.²³ These political acts – which involve taking a position, issuing demands, and boycotting – are different from the politically engaged practices I elucidated above, which have used the art world as a strategic space for political discussion and experimentation.

Through disruptive actions, groups Gulf Labor and Liberate Tate protest against labor exploitation, the capture of public space, climate injustice, and gentrification. They denounce the art world as “a spectacular subsystem of global capitalism revolving around the display, consumption, and financialization of cultural objects for the benefit of a tiny fraction of humanity, the 1%.”²⁴ Artists at the 2015 Istanbul Biennial organized a “productive disruption” to highlight the escalation of violence in Turkey, demanding a return to peace negotiations between the Turkish government and the Kurdish PKK.²⁵ At the 2015 Venice Biennale, artists issued a “Letter for Palestine” that called attention to the campaign for the academic and cultural boycott of Israel.²⁶ Also expressing solidarity with Palestine, at the 2014 São Paulo Biennial 176 of 199 participating artists signed an open letter opposing Israeli “cultural sponsorship” of the event. The curators supported the letter, and in response the Fundação Bienal de São Paulo agreed to “clearly dissociate” Israeli funding from the overall sponsorship of the exhibition.²⁷ Artists are now raising awareness about the epistemic and physical violence committed in sites of art

production *elsewhere*. They are trying to restore contact with the political real by investigating and denouncing labor exploitation and new forms of enslavement: the figure of the worker as a site for politicization is returning to the fore.

Creating assemblages that link actors from the art world to projects oriented toward political action, these actors seek to create subjectivities and terrain for political acts by locating power struggles (instances of subjectivation), and are sometimes linked to social and political movements, autonomous collectives, and alternative media. Following Gregory Sholette, however, these forms of art tend to be characterized by the problematic absence of any ideological counternarrative to capitalism and by the belief (ever diminishing) that “cultural producers can bring something extraordinary to the underprivileged masses via the benefits of serious art.”²⁸ Many of these practices described so far do not constitute political acts in themselves: images and symbolic gestures have served as back-ups to help activists gain political influence and visibility. While art and the art world have indisputably served as a self-reflexive site, and elucidated on global processes of oppression and expropriation, experimental laboratories or platforms for communal organization, collective therapies, speculative politics, yet as vehicles for visibility, politicized aesthetics these formats are not in and of themselves, a means to resist. Moreover, we must consider that critiques of capitalism need a social base, as well as forms of organization to resist against the neoliberal destruction of forms of life and common experiences. We must also take into account that nowadays, power is embedded in everyday objects and environments, that power is the order of things itself: it is not only infrastructure, but the way in which it works, is controlled, and built.²⁹ These forms of power make the nation-state deaf to any demands we might make of it. The nation-state today legitimizes itself not through democratic processes, but by neutralizing citizen demands through governmentality, and by governing its populations differentially, as we will see in the following part of this essay.

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11/12

e-flux journal #69 — January 2016 Irmgard Emmelhainz
Geopolitics and Contemporary Art, Part One: From Representation's Ruin to Salvaging the Real

- 1 Jodi Dean, "Politics without Politics," *Parallax* 15.3 (2009): 20–36.
- 2 See Comité Invisible, *A nos amis* (Paris: La fabrique, 2014), 72–83.
- 3 These were some of the questions posed at the Sharjah March Meeting in May 2015.
- 4 See Angela Y. Davis, *Mujeres, raza y clase* (Madrid: AKAL, 2004), 157–159.
- 5 Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault, "Intellectuals and Power: A Conversation Between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze," *Language, Counter-memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977).
- 6 See Maurizio Lazzarato, "From Knowledge to Belief, from Critique to the Production of Subjectivity," *Transversal*, April 2008 <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0808/lazzarato/en>
- 7 See Irmgard Emmelhainz, "From From Third Worldism to Empire: Jean-Luc Godard and the Palestine Question," *Third Text* 23.100 (Fall 2009): 649–656.
- 8 See Stuart Hall, "Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities," *Culture, Globalization and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representations of Identity*, ed. Anthony D. King (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 43.
- 9 Homi Bhabha, "Frontlines/Borderposts," in *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*, ed. Angelika Bammer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 269.
- 10 Susan Buck-Morss, *Thinking Past Terror: Islamism and Critical Theory on the Left* (London: Verso, 2003), 64.
- 11 See Boris Groys, "The Post-Communist Condition" <http://becoming-former.tumblr.com/post/262880375/the-post-communist-condition-boris-groys-the>
- 12 Brian Holmes, "Continental Drift: Activist Research, From Geopolitics to Geopoetics," *framework X ephemera* 5.X (2005): 741.
- 13 See Gregory Sholette, "Art Out of Joint: Artists' Activism Before and After the Cultural Turn," *The GULF: High Culture/Hard Labor*, ed. Andrew Ross (New York: OR Books, 2015), 80.
- 14 Holmes, "Continental Drift," 741.
- 15 See Peter Osborne, "The Postconceptual Condition or, the Cultural Logic of High Capitalism Today," *Radical Philosophy* 184 (March–April 2014): 19. This singular modernity is akin to what Nicolas Bourriaud termed the "Altermodern" in his *Altermodern* (London: Tate Publishing, 2009).
- 16 See Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October* 110 (Fall 2004): 51–79.
- 17 As in Santiago Sierra's *confrontations* or in Thomas Hirschhorn's *Bataille Monument* (2002), which was part of Documenta 11. Ibid.
- 18 See Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004).
- 19 Eyal Weizman, "The Paradox of Participation," introduction to Markus Miessen, *The Nightmare of Participation* (Frankfurt: Sternberg Press, 2011), 9.
- 20 Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (New York: Zone Books, 2015),
- 21 Ibid., 129.
- 22 Mitchell delivered these remarks in a lecture at the 2015 Sharjah March Meeting. The voice-over in Godard's *Histoire(s) du cinema* (1998) says the following: "Même s'il est bondé d'égratignures au point de ne plus être utilisable, un petit rectangle de 35 millimètres est capable de sauver l'honneur de la réalité toute entière" [Even fatally scratched, a small rectangle of 35 millimeters is capable of saving the honor of the whole of reality].
- 23 See Global Ultra Luxury Faction (G.U.L.F.), "On Direct Action: An Address to Cultural Workers," in *The GULF*, 134.
- 24 "Global Ultra Luxury Faction (G.U.L.F.) Manifesto," June 25, 2015 <http://supercommunity.e-flux.com/texts/on-direct-action-an-address-to-cultural-workers/>
- 25 See "Artists at Istanbul Biennial plan 'Productive disruption' to demand resumption of peace talks," *e-flux conversations*,

September 1, 2015
<http://conversations.e-flux.com/t/artists-at-istanbul-biennial-plan-productive-disruption-to-demand-resumption-of-peace-talks-with-kurds/2375>

26

See Hrag Vartanian, "Artists Launch Letter for Palestine Campaign at Venice Biennale," *Hyperallergic*, August 13, 2015
<http://hyperallergic.com/229304/artists-launch-letter-for-palestine-campaign-at-venice-biennale/>

27

See Guy Mannes-Abbott, "The Emergent Wave of Artworld Activism," *The GULF*, 98.

28

Sholette, "Art Out of Joint," 83.

29

Comité Invisible, *A nos amis*, 84–86.

12/12

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Geopolitics and Contemporary Art, Part One: From Representation's Ruin to Salvaging the Real