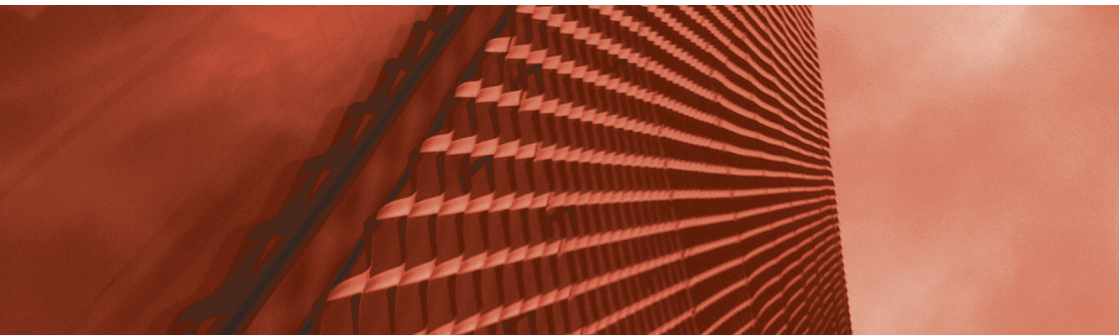# CULTURAL POLICY, CRITICISM & MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

Issue 6 | Autumn 2012

CULTURAL POLICY, CRITICISM & MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

Edited by Zeena Feldman

CITY UNIVERSITY LONDON

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Introduction: Being interdisciplinary

This issue of *Cultural Policy, Criticism and Management Research* brings together work from the domains of cultural criticism and policymaking. Collectively, the articles trace matters of social, political and aesthetic sensitivity:

- **Louisa Avgita** investigates interplays between the universal and particular in the performance art of Marina Abramović, and locates how the concept of the Balkans is produced and depoliticised therein.

- In a discussion of late twentieth century feminist print collectives, **Jess Baines** reflects on links between communication technology and projects of emancipation and empowerment. Through two case studies, Baines provides a local history of critical media practice.

- Focusing on cultural policy in Scotland and Finland, **Tara Byrne** explores how the economic discourse of the creative city operationalises culture to disrupt and reformat cultural policymaking practices.

- **Robert Luzar** draws on his own fine art practice and the works of Bergson, Deleuze, and others to analyse the relationship between time, corporeality, presence, and movement in this exploration of virtual experience.

Taken together, these articles speak to the challenges of interdisciplinarity. Such challenges are, in part, grounded in matters of methodology, seen here in each author's negotiation of the relationship between theory and practice. Indeed, this volume can be read as a dialogue between the two—between epistemology and ontology, knowing and doing.

The challenge of interdisciplinarity also extends to, and is a reflection of, the cross-border intellectual homes to which the contributions are indebted. Such disciplinary traversal is a positive challenge. It is a call-to-action which enables more holistic treatment of the complexities of contemporary social and cultural practice, and serves to undermine 'the compartmentalisation of scientific and professional knowledge [and] the sectoral division of responsibilities in contemporary society' by prioritising research that rejects fragmentation and honours 'local contexts and uncertainty' (Lawrence & Després 2004: 398, 399). As a result, this volume offers pluralistic approaches to knowledge production and a critical gaze toward boundary formation, together with a prompt to (re)consider the pragmatic utility of the disciplinary borders in question.

The works contained herein grapple with myriad traditions of evidence and terrains of expertise – sometimes in complicity, sometimes in opposition, always in curiosity. It is in that spirit of curiosity that this issue of *Cultural Policy, Criticism and Management Research* proceeds.

Zeena Feldman
Editor

REFERENCE
Lawrence, R. J. and Després, C. (2004) 'Futures of transdisciplinarity', *Futures* 36(4): 397-405.

Marina Abramović's universe: universalising the particular in Balkan Epic

Louisa Avgita

ABSTRACT

This article discusses the conceptualisation of the Balkans in the work of performance artist Marina Abramović. I focus on her exhibition *Balkan Epic* (2006), which included works produced between 1997 and 2005 that addressed the concept of the Balkans. I examine the systematisation of Balkan ambiguity and the transformation of the personal into the universal that takes place in the process of Abramović's performances, as well as within the exhibition space. Abramović's representations designate the artist as a mediator between the personal and the universal and suggest the spatialisation of the past. In this environment, history is substantiated in the body of the artist; it becomes universalised and naturalised and confirms the dominant ideology of globalised capitalism through a process of complete depoliticisation.

An artist should look deep inside themselves for inspiration
—*The deeper they look inside themselves, the more universal they
    become*
—*The artist is universe*
—*The artist is universe*
—*The artist is universe*

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Marina Abramović, *Manifesto* (2009)

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INTRODUCTION

In this article I discuss Marina Abramović's narration of the Balkans
as was developed in the exhibition *Balkan Epic*,[1] staged in Milan in
2006. My aim is to examine Abramović's universalisation of Balkan
ambiguous particularity, to explore the transformation of her own
personal experiences into universal images and to discuss her Balkan
representations as ideological manifestations of contemporary
globalised capitalism. In my view, ideology expresses universality and
indicates the subject position from which the universal is conceived.
In globalised capitalism, cultural particularity and ideological
constructions of otherness do not constitute reactions to the levelling
forces of a culturally unified globalised world; rather, they are its own
by-products, poised to support the globalised economic structures of
late capitalism. As Mari Carmen Ramirez (1996: 25) notes in regard
to cultural representations in identity exhibitions,

> [c]ontrary to a generalised fallacy, late consumer capitalism does not
> operate through cultural homogenisation, but through the marketing
> of the appearance of 'difference' and particularity.

Within this framework, I examine Abramović's marketisation of Balkan
particular ambiguity which constitutes an ideological manifestation
and cultural product of contemporary capitalist structures. I consider

the exhibition as an ideal field for the expression of prevailing political and ideological conceptions. According to Bruce W. Ferguson (1996: 180), 'the exhibition's representivity […] is an exemplary identification of the direct political tendencies (democratic, nationalistic, feminist, regionalistic, postcolonial or whatever) on offer'. Therefore, the curatorial discourse is analysed as a political and ideological determinant of the concept of the Balkans in contemporary globalised capitalism.

In the first section of this paper I address the question of the universal in performance art and the turn of the personal into the universal as an ideological act. I also examine how Balkan in-between, ambiguous particularity emerged in the 1990s and was concretised in Abramović's work, contributing thus to the articulation of the ideology of globalised capitalism. In the second section I explore Abramović's exhibition *Balkan Epic* and her production of Balkan works in order to identify the ideological patterns permeating her work's discourse and the transformation of her personal experiences into catholic representations of Balkan ambiguity. In the third section I focus on the spatialisation of history and the essentialisation of historical time in Abramović's ritualistic performances. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of Abramović's representations as part of contemporary capitalist structures and neoliberal ideology.

THE IDEOLOGY OF THE BODY: WHEN THE PARTICULAR BECOMES UNIVERSAL

The idea that the artist mediates between the personal and the universal has often been reproduced in various contexts within the art discourse. The universalisation of the artist's subjectivity has certainly been claimed as proof of being an artist, insofar as it designates the communicative role of art and its ability to transcend barriers through the indisputable particularity of the artist. For example, consider how the 'spicy' details of Tracey Emin's personal life are exposed in her works and discussed in

her presentation on the Saatchi Gallery website: 'Tracey Emin reveals intimate details from her life to engage the viewer with her expressions of universal emotions' (saatchi-gallery.co.uk). The claimed transformation of Emin's personal life into something that appeals to universality reflects an attempt to confirm Emin's pop voyeuristic works as art.

The presumed convergence of the personal and the universal in the very body of the artist – particularly in the case of performance art – makes the artist relevant not only to the public but also to potential buyers and sponsors: the artist activates the space around a performative action, embodies universal values, undermines, questions or confirms common beliefs and indicates a unique moment of experience that is shared by the audience. The ritualistic engagement of the public in performance art turns the latter into a field for the reproduction of ideology, insofar as the artist is him/herself transformed into a powerful universalised representation. The feminist scholar Peggy Phelan (1996: 148) claims that performance art is ontologically nonreproductive and therefore opposes the logic of capitalism: 'Performance clogs the smooth machine of reproductive representation necessary to the circulation of capital'. In contrast to Phelan, I argue that in performance art the artist him/herself *is* a reproductive representation insofar as his/her body is universalised through the act of performance. The reproduction of the universal through the personal in the art of performance turns the body of the performer into an ideological body, whether it engages with the ideology of capitalism or opposes it.

The powerful reproductive representation of performance art is manifest in the work of Marina Abramović. In recent years, the over-promotion of Abramović as a cult figure of performance art in the USA has been accomplished through various paths, from the performance *House with the Ocean View* (2002) presented at the Sean Kelly Gallery in New York and reproduced in an episode of the popular television series *Sex and the City*, to MoMA's *The Artist is Present* (2010) which instigated the expression of fervent admiration by the American pop

singer Lady Gaga. The recent popularisation of Abramović has appeared almost a decade after the high priestess of performance art rebranded herself as Balkan through various works from 1997 to 2005, which were either new (*Balkan Baroque*, *Count on Us*, *Balkan Erotic Epic*) or restaged older pieces (*Rhythm 5*, *Tomas Lips*). The advancement of her cultural particularity as the main constituent of her work during those years provides yet another field for the universalisation of the particular through art, turning Balkan ambiguity into a universal value and Abramović's own body and registered experiences into conveyors of 'History' and 'Culture'.

In my argumentation, *Balkan Epic*'s conceptualisation of the Balkans as an ambiguous particularity corresponds to the image of the Balkans as systematised by the critique of Balkanism that was elaborated in the 1990s and 2000s. The discourse of Balkanism and its critical deconstruction in the work of historians and theorists, such as Maria Todorova (1997) and Vesna Goldsworthy (1998), have led to the construction of new spaces of Balkan otherness based on poststructural and postcolonial reconsideration of the other's space. These theorists describe Balkanism as an in-between discourse, in contrast to Orientalism which is the discourse of opposition. According to them, the Balkans, due to its geographical and historical position in relation to 'advanced' Europe, can be described as liminal, lowermost, marginal, ambiguous, intermediate and transitional. Todorova (1997: 11) insists on the idea that the Balkans does not constitute the opposite of the West. Being part of Europe and lacking the colonial legacy of the East, the Balkans stands in the area between the two incompatible worlds, bridging different races, religions and stages of development. As she notes, 'Unlike orientalism, which is a discourse about an imputed opposition, Balkanism is a discourse about an imputed ambiguity' (Todorova 1997: 17). Todorova's statement summarises the concretisation of Balkanism as an independent discourse and the systematisation of Balkan otherness as an ambiguous representation.

The exhibition *Balkan Epic* was organised in the period after the fall of the Eastern Bloc and the nationalistic wars in Yugoslavia in the 1990s, when the negative stereotypes about the Balkans revived. In the period that followed an intense interest in both undermining and reversing these images was expressed within the context of European and American cultural and academic institutions (Goldsworthy 2002). At the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, many exhibitions, conferences, symposia and publications critically discussed the revitalised arguments against the Balkans and considered issues of Balkan culture and identity, the relationship between centre and periphery and the 're-invention' of the Balkan Peninsula after the wars in Yugoslavia.[2]

Reconsideration of the negative concept of the Balkans in this context and the reformulated representations that this entails have contributed to the repositioning of the Balkans within the structures of globalised capitalism in the period after the disintegration of socialist regimes. The repositioning is achieved at the political, social, cultural and economic levels through systematic international interventions, including those launched by military action, NGOs, political organisations such as the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and cultural institutions such as the Soros Open Society. The supposedly 'humanitarian' profile of all these activities, from the bombardments of Yugoslavia by NATO forces in 1999 to various cultural initiatives, facilitates the fast and violent introduction of neoliberal politics and free market economics to the Balkans.

Under this perspective, Balkan ambiguity systematises a space of fluidity that aims to positivise the Balkans and accustom it to the flexible environment of globalised capitalism. As shown below, Abramović substantiates in the exhibition *Balkan Epic* the Balkans' ambiguous position between oppositional concepts such as brutalism and eroticism, aggressiveness and naivety, war and peace. In her works, Balkan particularity of in-betweenness is validated as a universal

quality. Her personal experiences and family history are universalised through rituals and images that articulate the Balkans' eternal ahistorical character. By doing so, Abramović transforms the historical and political Balkans into essentialist representations that obscure the political environment in which Balkan exoticisation and universalisation takes place.

BALKAN EPIC AND THE REPRESENTATION OF BALKAN AMBIGUITY

Balkan Epic was Abramović's solo exhibition curated by Adelina von Fürstenberg and held from 20 January to 23 April 2006 at the exhibition space Hangar Bicocca in Milan. The aim of the show was to present a series of Abramović's works about the Balkans, made between 1997 and 2005, on the occasion of her last major project *Balkan Erotic Epic* (2005). The exhibition included one of the most discussed works about the Balkans, *Balkan Baroque*, which refers to the wars in Yugoslavia and was presented at the 47th Venice Biennial in 1997. In that performance, Abramović washes with a brush a huge pile of large animal bones, as a symbolisation of ethnic cleansing and a ritual of purification (Figure 1). The exhibition also included *The Hero* (2001), a piece dedicated to Abramović's father who was one of Tito's partisans fighting against German occupation forces during World War II; *Count on Us* (2003), which refers to the unsuccessful intervention of the international community in the Balkans during the wars in Yugoslavia; the video *Tesla Urn* (2003), an homage to the Serbian scientist Nikola Tesla; and *Nude With Skeleton* (2003), a self-portrait which shows Abramović's nude body covered by a skeleton.

In these works, Abramović uses motifs similar to those that we see in her first performances from the mid 1970s, in which she attempts the disavowal of her traumatic past in Tito's Yugoslavia. Among the first performances that Abramović made while still in Yugoslavia were

Figure 1. Marina Abramović. *Balkan Baroque*. Performance-installation (detail). Venice Biennale, June 1997. Photograph by Attilio Maranzano. Reprinted with permission, courtesy of Marina Abramović Archives and Sean Kelly Gallery, New York.

Rhythm 5 (1974), which *Count on Us* is based on, and *Tomas Lips* (1975). Both performances involve her emotional understanding of her native country—Tito's Yugoslavia—symbolised in Abramović's use of the five-pointed star, which was on the Partisan flag and then the flag of Yugoslavia. In *Rhythm 5* Abramović lays in the middle of a blazing star and is removed by the public when they realise she has lost consciousness due to the lack of oxygen. In *Tomas Lips*, having eaten one kilo of honey and drunk one litre of wine, she cuts a five-pointed star into her stomach with a razor blade, breaks a glass with her right hand, whips herself and then she lays on a cross made of ice blocks, while a radiator makes the wounds in her stomach bleed; people from the audience carry her away 30 minutes later.

After these works, in 1976, Abramović left Yugoslavia and moved to Amsterdam where she pursued an international career and was acknowledged as one of the most prominent performance artists in the world. It is in the period of the wars in Yugoslavia, the dissolution of the country and the violent transition from socialism to capitalism that

Abramović gradually returns to the themes related to her 'homeland'. In 1993, the performance *Tomas Lips* was repeated in various venues in Europe and the USA as part of her work *Biography* – and then repeated again in 2005 at the Guggenheim Museum in New York. In 1997, with *Balkan Baroque*, Abramović turns her attention back to her native country, though this time in different terms. She now becomes not Serbian or Yugoslavian, as in her 1970s works, but Balkan. In this context, she uses the concept of the Balkans to address the barbarism of the war, but also the purity of primitivism. All the works in the exhibition *Balkan Epic* are made during this period.

The exhibition opened and closed with Abramović's two major works, *Balkan Baroque* (1997) and *Balkan Erotic Epic* (2005). These determined the concept of the exhibition and summarised the artist's definition of the Balkans. The two edges of the exhibition signify the two edges of Balkan mentality, as stereotyped in Balkanism. On the one hand, the brutality of war, tragedy, nationalism, insanity and hostility and on the other, the purity of nature and love, paganism, humour and community. Rituals, traditions and centuries-old customs related to the human body, sexuality and eroticism are revived in *Balkan Erotic Epic*.

The oppositional poles of anger and tenderness are embodied and performed by the artist – they are substantiated in the double role that Abramović takes up in the two works. She assumes the position of the distant narrator of Balkan otherness, in a role that suggests neutrality and detached objectivity, identified with the Western observer; alternatively she enacts passionately the Balkan myth, using her own body. Thus, in *Balkan Baroque*, she is shown on a screen dressed as a scientist with a white medical robe, narrating the story of the wolf-rat, which is about how people kill the rats in the Balkans by prompting them to eat each other. This story symbolises Balkan brutality and the 'natural' instinct of killing each other. After her narration she changes into a passionate folk singer, performing songs from Serbia and Croatia.

Her Balkan self is dramatically completed in her performance atop a pile of bones, where she acts out national and personal traumas.

In *Balkan Erotic Epic* she appears in the sober outfit of an academic folklorist (Figure 2). Dressed in black and wearing glasses, Abramović narrates Balkan customs that subsequently are dramatised on screen and indicate the naturalness and purity of eroticism and the human body, long lost in advanced societies, but preserved in the Balkan essence (Figure 3).[3] In opposition to the distant role of the neutral narrator, there is the performed role of the Balkan soul played by actors or by Abramović herself who appears half-naked hitting a skull repeatedly on her stomach, in a dramatic gesture which reveals again her suffering Balkan self. Abramović becomes what Hal Foster (1996: 174) calls 'the artist-ethnographer', indigenous and an outside information giver, at the same time. These two works correspond to Balkan in-betweenness, the
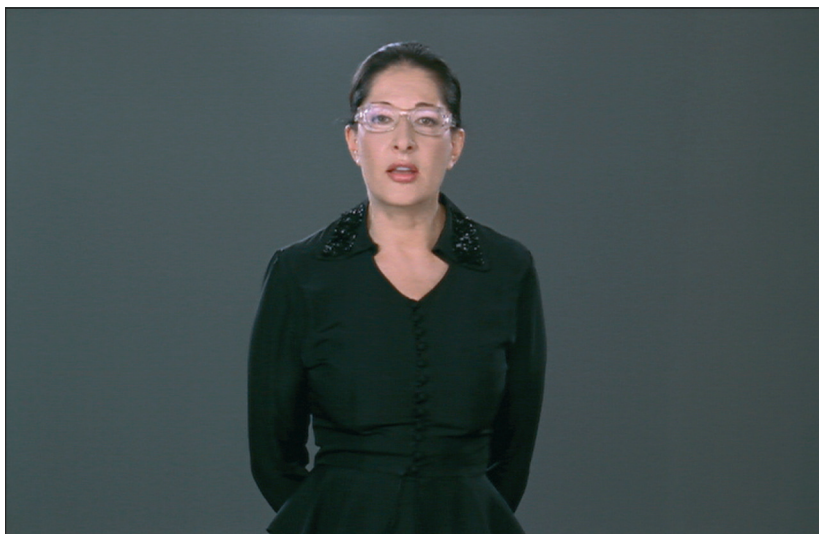
Figure 2. Marina Abramović. *Balkan Erotic Epic (The Professor)*. Video still. Belgrade, 2005. Photograph by Milan Dakov. Reprinted with permission, courtesy of Marina Abramović Archives and Sean Kelly Gallery, New York.

Figure 3. Marina Abramović. *Balkan Erotic Epic (Women in the Rain)*. Video still. Belgrade, 2005. Photograph by Milan Dakov. Reprinted with permission, courtesy of Marina Abramović Archives and Sean Kelly Gallery, New York.

double nature of the Balkans, which oscillates between aggressiveness and tenderness, blood and honey, and represents the Balkan ambiguity that Todorova (1997: 18) refers to when she describes the Balkans as 'incomplete self'. In that sense, the Abramović exhibition is among the most accurate contemporary representations of the stereotyped images of Balkanism in the visual arts field.

Apart from Balkan in-betweenness, the works *Balkan Baroque* and *Balkan Erotic Epic* also represent Abramović's ambiguous identity, her double gaze and twofold position. She is the artist who left her country to become one of the world's most acclaimed performance artists. She is also a Balkan artist who reproduces 'Balkan' self-destructiveness in most of her performances. This double character is suggested in the two roles she plays in these two works. Thus, the detached observer is both the voice of the 'neutral' Western – or international – community

which analyses and objectively describes Balkan reality, and the voice of the detached Abramović, who, after decades spent living away from the Balkans, can see her native country through the 'objective' eyes of the West. On the other hand, there is the artist who experiences, suffers, enjoys and acts in passion like 'all Balkan people'. In Abramović's works the distant narrator is identified with the objective and naturalised West of globalised (universal) capitalism, whereas the suffering self is equated with the postsocialist intimate (personal) Balkans of violent subjectivity.

Abramović's double identity, in its Western and Balkan projections, is interpreted and represented in a stereotypical manner: the West which observes and the Balkans which destroys itself. Abramović is herself the bridge between the international art scene and the Balkans, and, therefore, is the most appropriate person for introducing Balkan identity to the international art market. As she mentions in an interview in the *Balkan Epic* exhibition catalogue (Abramović, 2006a: 66), after she left her native country in 1976, she only came back three times to work there, always on commissioned projects: the first time for *Balkan Baroque*, a work made for the Venice Biennale; the second for *Count on Us*, a project sponsored by a Japanese Museum on the condition that it was related to her birthplace; and the third time for *Balkan Erotic Epic* which was made after an invitation by Neville Wakefield for the collection *Destricted*, which includes short films of sexual and pornographic content by various artists. After a long denial of her Balkan self, Abramović returns to the region as a mediator in the period when the Balkans is at the foreground as a new artistic product.

In the following section I explore the role of Abramović's rituals in the deconstruction of historical time and therefore in the standardisation of Balkan particularity as yet another ahistorical identity. There, I discuss how the essentialisation of the Balkans as an in-between entity is achieved through the spatialisation and ritualisation of time in the exhibition space.

THE SPATIALISATION AND RITUALISATION
OF THE PAST IN *BALKAN EPIC*

Abramović's exhibition constructs new narratives which deny linearity and progressivity. These narratives dissolve clear distinction between the past, present and future, and instead put forward a space of simultaneity. After all, the exhibition space is a space of synchronicity, a construction that transforms successive time into simultaneous space. The viewer experiences everything concurrently as the narrative develops in the rooms. This experience makes the exhibition the ideal manifestation of Foucault's (1986: 22) heterotopia: 'We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed'.

The substitution of modern linear historiography with plural histories is sustained by the very rationale of temporary art exhibitions, which construct multiple and often contradictory meanings about a topic, all substantiated by the curator or the institution. Art theorist Boris Groys (2007: 54) argues that 'instead of narrating the canon of art history, independent curators are beginning to tell each other their own contradictory stories'. Even within the context of a single exhibition the stories that the curator tells may be contradictory. Significantly, all of these stories appear equally relevant and plausible.

The deconstruction of authoritative historiography justifies the role of the curator/artist as the subject which curates histories, and strengthens his/her position as the interpreter of ideas and the mediator between the past and the present, the artist and the viewer. Here, we pass in the field of art from the authority of Art History to the authority of the subject-curator/artist, and from fact to belief. In this sense, Abramović's own body instantiates History, she becomes History, and by universalising her historic body through the rituals of performance art she obstructs the possibility of politicising the past. Her body is not a means for protest or political struggle but a naturalised field of compromise and consent.

The transition from fact to belief is evident in Abramović's exhibition *Balkan Epic*. There, the reconsideration of history is achieved through 'exotic' Balkan images. These images refer to the Balkans of authenticity and long-standing traditions and rituals, which not only designate the essence of the Balkans but transform the latter into the fundamental nature of the human. Seen as part of the narrative about the new postsocialist (and post-nationalist?) Balkans of multiplicity and flexibility, images of recent Balkan cruelty and violence become rather exotic representations which add to the Balkan particularity. Besides, these images not only exoticise the Balkans but also exoticise the concept of the West, which becomes the saviour – although sometimes inefficient in its role – and the provider of a neutral, 'civilised' space for Balkan democratic invention and negotiation. The West becomes the field on which Balkan democracy blossoms.

Even when Abramović's works are critical of the presence and actions of international institutions (for example in *Count on Us*), they still present these organisations (the UN, the EU, the USA) as neutral powers entitled to intervene and to sort out what Balkan people are themselves not capable or willing to do. The failure of the West to act efficiently or properly confirms and justifies in Abramović's discourse the regulating role of Western institutions in the Balkans. What would the position of the artist have been if the UN had not sent expired medicine and food, as Abramović (2006b: 45) alleges, and the EU and the USA had kept their promises to help? The artist blames the West for not fulfilling its humanitarian role. By saying this, Abramović engages with the meta-political discourses of globalised capitalism and transnational governance, which justify military interventions around the world via a depoliticised defence of human rights.

Balkan Epic constructs a space beyond history. In these works history is personalised and transformed into memory. As the art critic Steven Henry Madoff (2006: 21) states in the exhibition catalogue:

> these works are memory objects, places evoked that are always
> about the pastness of the past…. These performance pieces are not
> mirrors of place and time as much as they are mirrors of lostness. The
> performances are images that reflect no actual historical event; they are
> not imitations of a specific geographical reality nor, taken as a series,
> are they historically regimented. They are in fact historically diffused,
> almost ahistorical in their casual relation to any linear historical
> narrative.

In this ahistorical space, Abramović transforms history into fragments
of memory. Thus, in *Balkan Baroque* her parents appear on screen,
reinforcing her personal involvement in the suffering and catharsis of
the Balkans, whereas in *Hero* she refers to her father's heroic past. The
wars in Yugoslavia become the Balkan wars in Abramović's ahistorical
and apolitical time. History is transformed into the distant past and
the Balkans is naturalised and aestheticised in the playful images
of eternal truth encountered in *Balkan Erotic Epic*; in this way, the
Balkans becomes forever attached to tradition in a work that bears no
resemblance to contemporary life in the region.

In *Balkan Epic*, apart from references to personal memory and Balkan
history and identity, Abramović also focuses on the essence of the Balkans
through tradition and ritual, and in this way completes the unification
of the past and the present. The claimed authenticity of the rituals and
customs presented, their origins in the depth of time and their approach
to the human body and sexuality, turn the Balkans into a space of
diachronic purity and truth in which the human is reunited with nature.

In the work *Balkan Erotic Epic*—the highlight of the exhibition—
Abramović stages rituals, traditional practices and customs that refer to
Balkan eroticism and sexuality and the artist returns to her own country
in order to find 'pure' and 'authentic' eroticism. In an interview in *Flash
Art*, Abramović (2005: 89) says about *Balkan Erotic Epic*:

> I wanted to present things that were both truly ritual and erotic. It seems
> like we have made ugly everything that is erotic. We have lost a sense of

our sexual awareness for things from social history, practices that were used in totally different ways but we are not used to reading them – such rituals are de-eroticised to us because they are unfamiliar. You see this man with an erection becoming the energy for a different purpose and it puts a new meaning (which is actually the old meaning) back into this gesture. There is no vulgarity – it is something else completely.

The Balkans of the innocent gaze and primordial knowledge brings back to contemporary societies what is presumably lost and forgotten in Western civilisation. The exhibition curator, Adalina von Fürstenberg (2006: 11), explains in the catalogue:

> The nudity in *Balkan Erotic Epic* may seem offensive to our modern, Western sensibilities but these images are amply compensated by the innocence and spontaneity characteristic of a primitive and pagan civilisation that no longer exists. The images talk to us about something buried deep in our consciousness – which is why they may seem scandalous – something primordial, archaic. In a certain way, this last work sheds light on everything Abramović produced earlier by revealing the mystical value inherent in the nude body.

In the same mode, the art critic and curator Fulvio Salvadori (2006: 15) writes in the catalogue that 'today the body is disoriented because it has lost contact with the nature in which orientation is embedded', whereas in antiquity 'the display of nudity in ritual orgies and dances acted as an outlet for erotic energy and as a reconnection with the body of the universe at the moment of mystical ecstasy'. This 'mystical ecstasy' is what the Balkans can offer contemporary disoriented humans.

The ritual plays an important role in Abramović's work – indeed, her performances can be seen as rituals aiming at salvation, relief, even punishment. In *Balkan Erotic Epic*, Abramović's ritualistic art seems to find its origin in distant Balkan culture. The ritual is also important in *Balkan Baroque*, in which Abramović cleans big animal bones for hours, as a means of catharsis from the Balkans of war and aggression. The narrative of rituals and tradition shapes the Balkans as a place of

postmodern nostalgia: Balkan backwardness and parochialism become the alternatives to contemporary 'over-civilised' societies that have lost contact with the essence of life. In this narrative, however, the Balkans is forever trapped in its backwardness and parochialism. Under this perspective, rituality dispenses with history as a political reading of the past by turning the latter into a universalising process of salvation and personal experience. The discourse of the universalised Balkans of eternal subjectivity aims to positivise representations of aggressiveness, fierce nationalism and authoritarianism derived from the threatening Balkan 'reality'.

The works presented in *Balkan Epic* refer to the past by deploying symbols of national identity. Abramović pays homage to Nikola Tesla, the Serb scientist and inventor who is regarded as one of the greatest figures of Yugoslavian culture. In *Count on Us*, Abramović repeats one of his experiments with wireless electricity, and in the video installation *Tesla Urn*, the artist is shown holding an urn with his ashes. The video *The Hero* is another work in the Balkan series. There, the artist is shown sitting on a white horse, holding a white banner. It is a tribute to Abramović's father, who was a celebrated partisan war hero during World War II. The video's soundtrack is the Tito-era Yugoslavian national anthem. The artist identifies here her family's history with the history of her nation and the Balkans, as she also does in *Balkan Baroque*. In these works, Abramović does not deny or deconstruct but exorcises the Balkan past of nationalism and authoritarianism in the rituals of her performances, using her own body: her body is a space of accumulated Balkanism and a means for discarding its negative burden.

CONCLUSIONS: ABRAMOVIĆ'S UNIVERSE AND THE NATURALISATION OF CAPITALISM

In conclusion, through her works, Abramović systematises a concept of Balkan universality that denies a political reading of the region's current

postsocialist, triumphantly neoliberal context. In Abramović's works the recent turbulent history of the Balkans becomes part of her suffering rituals and is then transposed through art into the dehistoricised universal entity of Balkan ambiguity that can in turn be personalised by the viewers as a 'Balkan experience'. Everyone can see in Abramović's Balkans part of his/her self.

Universalising the personal, however, through the mystifying powers of art is turned into a process of complete depoliticisation when seen in reverse, that is to say, as a process of personalising history. Under this perspective, the personal represents an idealised universal History which can be experienced by everybody. In contrast, following Jacques Rancière's (1998: 36) understanding of politics, the political reading of the past involves a subjective reading of 'the part of those who have no part', a reading which substantiates the Universal and prompts a shift of perspective. According to Rancière (2010: 35), 'Political struggle is not a conflict between well defined interest groups; it is an opposition of logics that count the parties and parts of the community in different ways'. The subjective reading of 'the part of those who have no part' is the Universal, seen from a different point of view; if the dominant perspective naturalises the Universal, then the 'part of those who have no part' confirms the reversed Universal by advocating its subjectivity.[4] In this sense, by conforming to the logic of the dominant ideologies that systematised the Balkans as a coherent entity of either old-fashioned evil aggressiveness or neo-postmodern ambiguity and relativity, Abramović's work offers a naturalised space for an essentialised, apolitical Balkan suffering.

The essentialised Balkan ambiguous identity has become part of Abramović's own 'mysterious' profile and branding strategy. In November 2011, she organised the Gala at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Los Angeles, and in July 2011, she performed in the production *The Life and Death of Marina Abramović*, directed by the American director Robert Wilson and staged at Manchester Interna-

tional Festival. In both events, Balkan 'essence' was an integral part of the performances. In *Life and Death*, the Balkans forms the historical setting of Abramović's biographical narration, whereas in the glamorous MOCA event the Serbian folk singer Svetlana Spajic, who also appeared in *Balkan Erotic Epic*, provides an additional snapshot of cultural identity. After reducing the Balkans to an apolitical and ahistorical entity, Abramović has incorporated it into her own public profile, as the queen of performance who organises high-class galas for the elite of the American art establishment. In her video presentation at the MOCA event (YouTube.com 2011), Abramović opposes the European system of state subsidised arts and claims to favour the American framework of business and bank sponsorship. These private funders, according to her, have replaced kings, aristocrats and governments as the new art patrons. In this historical moment of economic crisis Abramović's ahistorical Balkanness contributes to the naturalisation and depoliticisation of the harsh neoliberal attack against the welfare state. The artist is universe, as Abramović claims in her manifesto, only, *this* universe happens to identify with violent capitalism.

NOTES

1. In the text I refer both to the exhibition *Balkan Epic* and to the work *Balkan Erotic Epic*, the last of Abramović's works dedicated to the Balkans. *Balkan Erotic Epic* was included in the *Balkan Epic* exhibition.

2. *Balkan Epic* was one among many exhibitions and art events which rebranded the Balkans in positive terms as a concept of relativised cultural ambiguity. Other exhibitions included *In Search of Balkania* (2002), *Blood and Honey: the Future's in the Balkans!* (2003) and *In the Gorges of the Balkans: A Report* (2003); all of these were organised by famous international curators.

3. Abramović (2006a: 66) not only appears as a researcher on screen; she also conducted research in library archives and examined old manuscripts in order to find the stories she narrates.

4. The incommensurability between the two perspectives is analysed by Slavoj Zizek through the scheme of the 'parallax view'. In his analysis of the Hegelian concept of parallax, Zizek (2006: 42) points out that there are no binary symmetrical signifiers that constitute the One. Instead, one of the two parts can stand by itself, while the other represents nothing more than the gap which separates the two – the second part stands for the asymmetrical shift of perspective. Along this line, there is no common ground between the two perspectives; that is to say, there is no neutral universality (Zizek 2006: 30).

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Experiments in democratic participation: feminist printshop collectives

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ABSTRACT

Relatively cheap and accessible, digital technologies have facilitated both social movements and the individual 'citizen' commentator not only in the production of alternative and critical discourses but also in the potential to connect to a global public. As Jenny Kidd in a recent issue of this journal has noted (along with many others), much has been and continues to be made of the 'democratic potential' of accessible networked information technologies. However, little over 30 years ago direct access to simple printing technology was also perceived as facilitating contestatory and empowering alternatives to the forms and practices of dominant media and culture. Print, it should be remembered, was in many parts of the world and for much of the twentieth century (at the very least), the main form for radical, democratic and alternative critical media practice. This article examines the output and practices of two London-based feminist printing collectives that operated between the 1970s and early 1990s and for whom the principles of democratic participation and access were central. Their activities are discussed in relation to the specific, changing and sometimes challenging, politico-cultural contexts in which they existed.

KEY WORDS

INTRODUCTION

This article draws on my ongoing research into the late twentieth century history of UK radical and community printshop collectives. The issue of 'democracy' was at the heart of these organisations, not only in terms of *what* was produced and *how*, but—for some groups in particular—*for whom* and *by whom*. The dominant membership of many printshops was reflective of the leftist cultural-political scenes from which they emerged; in other words, university or college educated, white, mostly middle-class and often male. However, although rarely a majority, women were in fact key participants in many organisations. Furthermore, and perhaps unsurprisingly given that the appearance of the printshops coincided with the emergence of the Women's Liberation Movement in the UK, a number of women-only printshops were set up by feminists.

The issues of access and participation are, albeit in different ways, defining ones of any political movement concerned with equality and self-determination. In the case of the women's movement(s) in the UK, this was not only so in the campaigns against the legal and social structures that restricted women's involvement in public life but also in relation to participation in the movement itself. The historical and specific case of the women's printshops, by way of (necessarily imperfect) example, offers an opportunity to raise, if not answer, specific questions about some of the constituents of an alternative democratic media practice.

What follows is firstly an historical and contextual overview along with a general description of radical and community printshops. The focus then turns to the women-only printshops, highlighting the statements and practices of two particular London-based collectives,

Lenthall Road Workshop (1975–1993) and See Red Women's Workshop (1974-1990). The article draws on the author's interviews with former participants from both organisations as well as surviving documents and posters from the interviewees' and the author's personal collections. Individual interviews were carried out in 2011 with five women from Lenthall Road, who were involved with the workshop at different times between 1981 and 1993 and four women who were part of See Red for different periods of time between 1981 and 1990. Source material was drawn from the See Red archive held at the Women's Library based at London Metropolitan University.

BACKGROUND

In both Europe and North America between the late 1960s and 1970s, numerous politically motivated, collectively run printing workshops were set up to facilitate the cheap and sympathetic production of radical materials. In the UK, most cities had at least one of these printshops (Kenna *et al.* 1986) and by 1982, in London alone there were at least thirty such places. They mostly started on a voluntary basis, with donated or cheaply acquired equipment in either rent-free spaces (often squats) or low-rent premises. An early poster (Figure 1) from one of the printshops, See Red Women's Workshop (1974-1990), makes the imperative explicit: 'The freedom of the press belongs to those who control the press'. (The slogan on the poster is of course a productivist and feminist rendition of the well-known statement by A. J. Liebling).

These printshops emerged out of a specific historical conjunction of technological possibility and political and cultural imperatives: the availability of screen-printing and small offset litho technologies and the cultural-political developments of post-1968 radical politics. Both screen-printing and small offset were relatively cheap and learnable technologies — in fact screen-printing equipment can be made by hand. Screen-printing facilities had begun to appear in art schools in
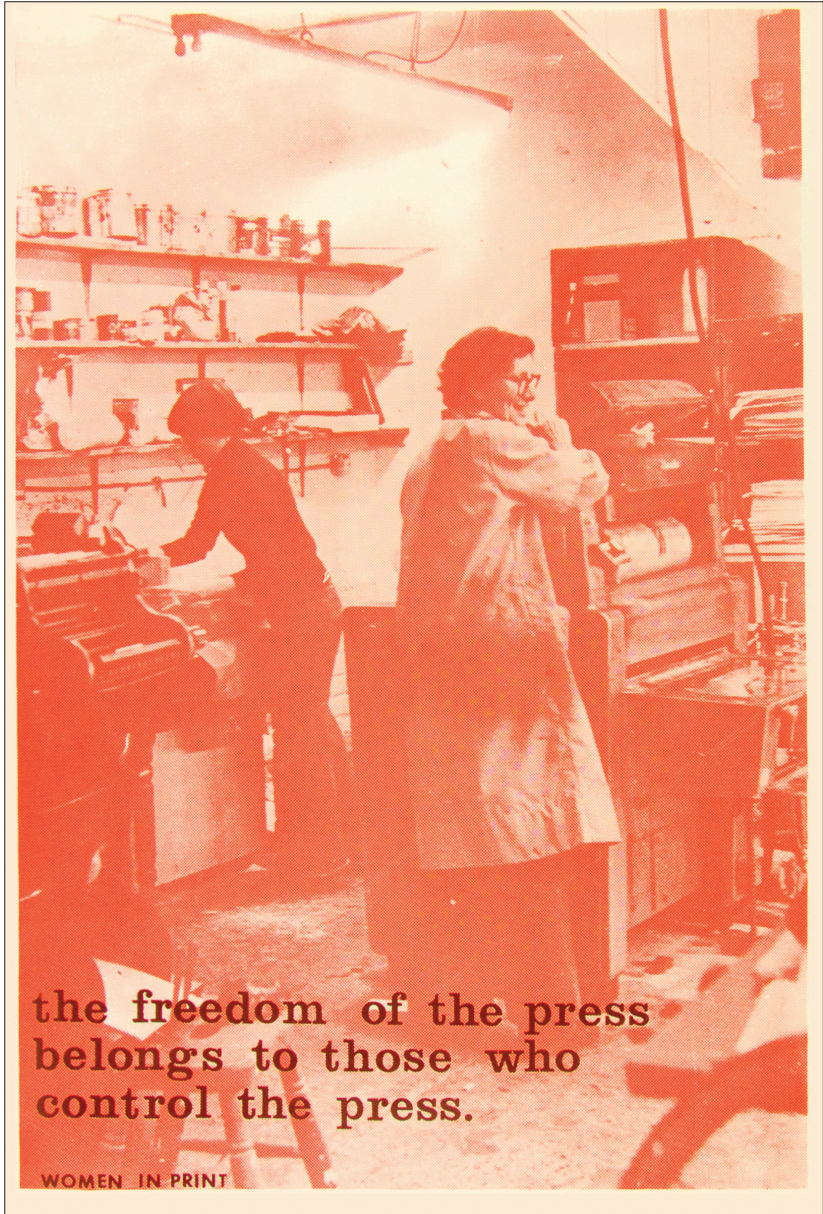
Figure 1. See Red poster (c1976). The Freedom of the Press. Image courtesy of the author.

the 1950s and '60s, where many early printshop members first encountered the process. Small offset was marketed as office equipment; 'so simple even a woman could learn it' read a trade advertisement at the time (Zeitlyn 1974). The relevant elements of the cultural-political developments are approximately as follows: the emergence of a libertarian left, the development of 'second wave' feminism and the rise of community activism (Saunders 1974, Segal 1980). The new radicalisms extended the sites of struggle to the home, school, health service, neighbourhood, environment and so on, as well as to cultural forms and practices. This period also saw the resurgence of worker co-operatives in the UK (Cockerton *et al.* 1980, Mellor *et al.* 1988).

Most of the printshops were initially informed by a politically charged ethos of 'self-help' (DIY), access and participation — and non-hierarchical organisation. The printshops were not just about producing content but were also concerned with the enactment of radically democratic politics within the organisations themselves. This 'everyday practice' or 'prefigurative politics' was central to much of the political organising described above (Boggs 1986, MacCabe 2007). The theory, expressed by Carole Pateman (1970), was that democratic participation in everyday activities and especially in the workplace was 'educative', providing the necessary disposition for creating a truly democratic society. It can also of course be seen in the more explicitly Gramscian terms as part of the attempt, by various strands of post-1968 radicalism, to create a viable counter-hegemony.

The principle of skill sharing was central to the printshops and operated on two levels. Firstly, for a number of groups, this principle was part of a broader turn to an aspect of local activism, whereby 'radicals in almost all professions were agitating to ensure their skills were available to working class people' (Kenna *et al.* 1986: 8). Part of the ambition was to 'de-mystify' and open up areas of knowledge that would in turn empower 'communities' to organise independently (Zeitlyn 1974). The second trajectory relates to skill specialisation within an organisation.

Many workers collectives of the 1970s and '80s, including some of the printshops, held an anti-specialisation ethos expressed through the practice of some sort of 'job rotation'. This meant that members needed to learn all aspects of the process. Specialisation was construed by some as 'monopolisation of knowledge', and therefore a potential 'instrument of power' (Rothschild and Whitt 1986: 105). Job rotation, in theory, distributes power/knowledge, and helps to create the conditions for equal engagement in decision-making processes. Additionally it provides a varied, less monotonous and alienated work life.

All the printshops printed for a diverse range of radical, political, cultural and community organisations; however, work that breached the basic principles of either the group as a whole or an individual member would, at the least, be discussed if not rejected. Political perspectives of members within different organisations usually shared some common left or left-libertarian ground; anti-capitalist, anti-hierarchy, pro-feminist, anti-imperialist, anti-racist and so on, but were by no means unified. Some members had worked previously as printers, a significant number had been to art school and most had been involved in some sort of political/community activity. Given their background, the printshops need to be seen as part of networks of political and cultural activists, publishers and distributers, facilitating a considerable amount of radical and community print media.

The following extract from an early 1970s radical print manual (*Print: How You Can Do It*) is illustrative of some of the early intentions. It states that 'The powerful world of professional print can undermine the rest of us by making us passive consumers.' But that,

> Using minimal techniques described here, we can produce good results by ourselves, in an un-alienated way. The reader and producer are neighbours, we can learn from each other and start the collective task of re-inventing our own culture. While we learn the limitations and capabilities of the machine we develop our own language (Zeitlyn 1974: 3).

The discourse here is structured around a series of distinctive elements: community, culture, participation, empowerment, self-determination and self-help. The presentation of the technology as simple and therefore easy for anyone to learn ('minimal techniques'), signals its participatory and democratic potential. The printing press is enrolled as a comrade-in-arms in the creation of a new social imaginary.

The proliferation of the printshops was such that by the mid 1980s, in London alone, there were about 30 workshops still operating collectively, mostly formed as worker cooperatives, and financially surviving — and paying some sort of wages — either by operating 'commercially' (primarily for campaigning, community and alternative arts organisations) or being supported by grants. Funding grants came from Left-Labour run local authorities, the Greater London Council's (GLC) Community Arts and Women's sub-committees, Greater London Arts (GLA) or in the case of one printshop in particular (Union Place), the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. Although many, but not all, of the printshops had started on a self-help or DIY basis, three basic printshop models emerged: radical service printers, community/ self-help printers and poster collectives. The radical service printers were economically self-sufficient and provided print (and sometimes design) for the types of groups indicated above. Community/self-help printshops aimed to be participatory workshops for use by local groups and were supported by grants (from the funding bodies listed previously). Poster collectives tended to be relatively self-contained groups that designed and printed their own political posters.[1] Some, such as See Red (1974-1990) received funding for part of their existence, others, such as Poster Collective (1972-1990) maintained economic independence and operated on a voluntary basis throughout. So in the main, most places had to negotiate their survival and identities in relation to either their 'customer base', or the priorities of the various funding organisations that supported them. For a combination of reasons the printshops had all but disappeared by the mid 1990s. The

research this article is drawn from explores these reasons. As might be expected, the explanation can be found in a series of interconnected factors relating to membership, finance, technological developments, skills, working relations and a significantly changed political and cultural (and funding) context.

FEMINIST PRINTSHOPS

Now to turn to the specific example of feminist printshops. These also existed in the different forms listed above, i.e. service printers, community printshops and poster collectives. Their aims and practices shared the general ethos and practices referred to earlier—specifically, anti-hierarchical organisation, skill sharing and the desire to facilitate the production of politically and culturally radical materials. However, there was an additional dimension. The feminist printshops also construed printing as a challenge to male dominance. Not only did having control of a press give them the power to produce feminist material (autonomy) but also 'mastering' traditionally male identified technology was perceived as both personally empowering and a step towards dismantling limiting constructions of gender (See Red 1980, Kenna *et al*. 1986, Jackson 1987, Chester *et al*. 1981). Learning to print was in a sense a feminist action, in a similar way to learning other conventionally male skills and to some extent tapped into the broader feminist movement of the 1970s and 1980s, whereby many projects and classes were set up by and for women to learn typically male trades in women-only environments (Cockburn 1983, Segal 1980). For instance, in 1975 the feminist 'Women in Manual Trades' group was established, holding well-attended national conferences for many years. Their poster (Figure 2) not only encourages a working class woman 'to learn a trade, because it's better paid' but also critiques the reasons women are discouraged or excluded from traditionally male areas of employment.

Figure 2. Women & Manual Trades poster. Image courtesy of the author.

The majority of the women-only printshop collectives were self-sufficient service printers who printed for a range of radical and community organisations but prioritised feminist groups. Examples included Women in Print (London), Moss Side Community Press (Manchester) and Sheffield Women's Printing Co-operative. However, the organisations I will be focusing on here – See Red Women's Workshop and Lenthall Road Workshop – became recipients of grant aid and as such were not dependant on their printing services for wages.

The two particular groups under discussion both started as women's collectives in London in the 1970s. Lenthall Road Workshop (LRW) began in 1975 and See Red Women's Workshop (See Red) in 1974. LRW eventually folded in the mid 1990s; See Red ceased operations in 1990. Although each group had a different focus (LRW was a community printshop and See Red was a poster collective) and at various points would represent distinct strands of feminist politics, what they had in common throughout was the desire to facilitate or create alternative media that challenged mainstream assumptions about women and that represented women's actual lives and experiences. Each also wanted to provide images that 'empowered' women.

LENTHALL ROAD WORKSHOP (LRW)

LRW (which produced the Women & Manual Trades poster shown in Figure 2) was started by three women in dilapidated council-owned premises, for which they paid a low rent and where the workshop stayed until the end. Although they started without any funding, gradually LRW received grants from Arts Council of Great Britain, Greater London Arts Association (GLAA), Greater London Council (GLC) and Hackney Council to pay for wages and fixed operating costs. LRW facilitated screen-printing and photography access for a range of community and feminist groups and ran classes in both techniques for different women's and girls' groups. They also produced some of their own feminist posters.

Like other community arts and media projects of the time, the discourse and ambition was very much about access, 'de-mystification', participation and empowerment through direct involvement in the process of making communications media. The aim was also that the media produced would contribute toward empowering others. In their 1984 annual report LRW wrote: 'It is also important that we provide a space where positive images are produced that challenge the white, male heterosexual middleclass able bodied norms which glare from every hording, magazine and television set' (LRW 1984: 1). Figure 3 shows two examples of posters from the workshop that sought to do this.

Figure 3. LRW posters. Rolling Sisters / Zami. Images courtesy of the author.

While the focus was initially on women as a broad category, as the collective membership changed this became more specifically addressed to black and working class women and women from marginalised ethnic groups. In a 1986 statement the LRW wrote:

> Our work is aimed at opening up the skills and technology of communication which is otherwise restricted to a narrow social section able to specialise, qualify and afford the privilege (…) We prioritise work with women, working class and minority groups for whom communication has a special relevance (…) Being female or a member of any of the minority groups has traditionally meant exclusion from whole areas of public life, becoming 'invisible' or being misrepresented (in Kenna *et al.* 1986: 36).

By the time of this statement the collective itself was composed of all black women, mostly from working class backgrounds. In the same article the LRW says that this was a deliberate policy[2] to try and reflect — and thus make the workshop more welcoming to — women from the local black and working class communities of Hackney 'who were under-using our resource'. This comment and action is an acknowledgment of the disjunction that often occurred between those running community projects and a considerable proportion of the intended 'recipients'. The fact that the workshop received funding for wages, and as such removed the reliance on voluntary labour was, it

Figure 4. LRW posters. Stay Warm / Hasbudak. Images courtesy of the author.

can be argued, important for the attempt to change this dynamic. The early printshops were to a significant extent supported by the 'squatting and claiming' culture of the libertarian left (Landry *et al.* 1985), which although in principle was open to all, in reality tended to be dominated by (white) middle class ex-students, often with no dependents. Funding

for wages potentially opened up participation to those who had to earn a wage, pay rent, support dependants, in other words most 'ordinary' people. Grant support however brought its own problems, which will be briefly discussed toward the end of this article.

The move by LRW to address both the membership and range of women who felt welcome in the workshop resonated with wider debates in the women's movement in which feminist theories, organisations and groups were being challenged about how women's experience was defined, who was defining it and from what position. (A well-known example would be the criticisms levied at the National Abortion Campaign (NAC), a significant UK feminist organisation of the 1970s; minority women were, in fact, often pressurised into abortion or sterilisation by racist policies, and the NAC slogan 'Abortion on Demand' raised the issue of '*for whom?*'.) Women were not equally excluded nor were all women misrepresented in the same ways. The issues of representation and recognition *amongst* women was to become a defining feature of 1980s feminist discourse and as such permeated the women-only printshops, albeit in different ways and to different degrees.

LRW continued to receive government funding until the early 1990s but each year the money available decreased and eligibility criteria became more complex. Without sufficient income for wages, the workshop gradually petered out. In its final phase, according to former printshop members that I interviewed, it was essentially a one-woman enterprise printing t-shirts and other merchandise for the commercial lesbian scene. This reflects the direction of at least some strands of feminist creative energy in the early 1990s. The context in which LRW had started in the 1970s and then developed in the 1980s (with support from the municipal socialism of Hackney Council) had radically altered. Not only had this period witnessed ten years of Thatcherism and the dismantling of state funded services and community provision, but it also was host to an increasingly exhausted women's movement.

SEE RED WOMEN'S WORKSHOP

See Red was started by a group of women in about 1974 and was a poster collective that designed and screen-printed feminist posters. They also took on design and printing for women's and community groups. They existed without funding until 1982, supporting themselves through part-time work elsewhere, state benefits, cheap housing and poster sales. See Red shared premises—which they entirely fitted out and plumbed themselves, both as a point of pride and for economic reasons—with the feminist offset litho collective Women in Print. Despite their limited funds See Red produced a considerable range of feminist posters covering a wide range of issues, from general consciousness raising calls, to critiques of the media and sexist advertising, to posters about the disappeared in Latin America, support for women in various national liberation struggles from Ireland to Zimbabwe and so on. The posters were produced and sold as cheaply as possible (See Red 1980). The text from this notice put out in 1974 describes the collective's initial aims and position:

> We are a recently formed group of women interested in visual aspects of the Women's Struggle. We want to combat images of the "model woman" which are used by capitalist ideology to keep women from disputing their secondary status or questioning their role in a male dominated society. Any women interested are welcome to come round and meet us and to use our facilities and learn printing methods.

Female oppression is understood from a socialist feminist perspective, and part of the way to combat it is for women themselves to develop an alternative and critical counter-media. The issue of solidarity with other women's struggles was important, as were homegrown campaigns against cuts to state services and against racist groups such as the National Front. Posters were designed to both raise consciousness and empower.

These posters (Figure 5) indicate the collective's early socialist orientation. In the UK, unlike the US, a significant number of women

Figure 5. See Red posters.
Capitalism / The Women Are Not Free.
Images courtesy of the author.

who were active in the women's liberation movement had also been involved in left politics, and part of their struggle had been to persuade their male comrades to take feminist politics seriously (Rowbottom 2001, Segal 1980, Lent 2001). Both of these posters connect feminism to socialist analysis and as such indicate to some extent the audience they are addressing.

Figure 6 shows two examples of the 'solidarity' posters, both of which were produced in collaboration with women's groups organising around

Figure 6. See Red posters. Latin America / Armagh. Images courtesy of the author.

Figure 7. See Red posters. Sexist Adverts / Lovable. Images courtesy of the author.

those struggles. The posters in Figure 7 relate to the problem of mass media and offer solutions: turn it off or get the spray can out! Graffitiing or otherwise altering of sexist advertisements was a regular feminist activity. (Photographic postcards of the resulting improvements were often disseminated through alternative and feminist bookshops.)[3]

See Red also produced a series of women's health posters including 'Our Body' (Figure 8). Another poster in the series gave straightforward information about making contraception choices. Self-determination in relation to the female body was a central principle of 1970s feminism and this in turn demanded knowledge about one's own body. In 1971, the Boston Women's Health Collective published the manual *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, which would become a key resource for numerous women's groups and individuals in both the US and the UK, and from which the See Red poster no doubt takes its title. (Note too that it is not 'your body', but 'our body'. This is not an infantilisation but an address
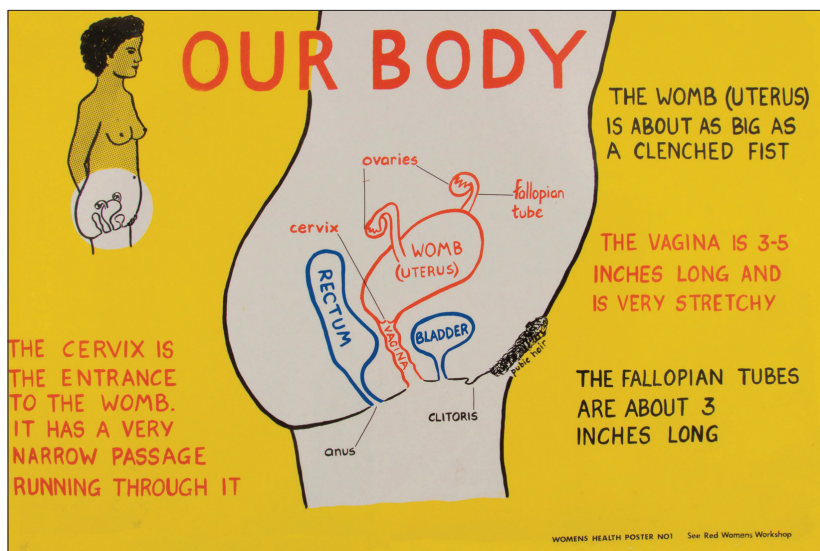
Figure 8. See Red poster. Our Body. Image courtesy of the author.

from within, and to, a collective female body). The women's health movement was another example of radical professionals working at a grassroots level, sharing and 'de-mystifying' their knowledge in order to empower others. The See Red posters were aimed at women and girls, and were used by a wide range of health groups and centres as well as youth clubs across the UK.

Many of the early See Red collective members had been to art school and similarly to those involved in the community printshops, were to some extent aligned to a wider leftist and feminist critique of the 'institutions of culture' and their value systems of taste, genius, legitimacy and presumed universality. See Red members were among those activists who had rejected an individualised creative practice and put their skills to collective poster making in order to further the aims of feminist politics. In an interview with the feminist magazine *Spare Rib*, one member states: 'It's taken us several years to get over the ideas drummed into us at art school – like the idea of an artist having some magical quality – the creator. Deciding to work collectively is a way of challenging the idea of the artist as a self engrossed individualist' (See Red 1980: 53). Furthermore, the posters that they produced were explicitly not to be seen as works of art, but as accessible objects of consciousness raising and empowerment and therefore, were intended to be produced and distributed as cheaply and widely as possible (See Red 1980).

See Red received Greater London Council funding for wages and rent from 1982 to 1986, ending when the Thatcher administration disbanded the GLC. Again resonating with debates within the women's movement, the promise of wages raised the issue about the 'who' of collective membership. For some workers, this provided an opening to include more women whom they felt would not have been able to otherwise participate. A difficult period ensued, not least because the continued involvement of the women who had built up the workshop and poster catalogue over the preceding eight years was challenged by the insistence of some more recent members that the new, paid positions

should be entirely occupied by black and working class women. This period in the workshop's history has been described by one former member as indicative of a 'very boxed-in form of identity politics' within the broader UK Women's Liberation Movement (Robinson 2011), which by the early 1980s had changed significantly. Lesbians had become more dominant on the feminist cultural scene and in many organisations, and as such, campaigns relating to domestic labour and to some extent reproductive rights seemed to hold little personal relevance. The explicit socialism of earlier feminist activity had been marginalised from different directions. A case in point was the changing of the text in one of the above See Red posters by later members of the collective from 'capitalism also depends on domestic labour' to 'a service a day and he'll work, rest and play'. The new rendition adapts a slogan from mass visual culture (capitalist advertising) not as a critique of that form, but to create a message with a populist and humorous address primarily to women. The sense of solidarity with the male 'worker' is noticeably absent. Lastly, in terms of the changes within the feminist movement during the 1980s, a significant amount of energy was directed towards making challenges within it. However, unlike the recognition by the National Abortion Campaign in the 1970s that a woman's right to choose *must* 'preclude the possibility of racist population politics' (Hoggart 2010), the 1980s-era internal politics of the women's movement did not always result in analysis and activism that confronted broader political and social structures (Mirza 1997).

During the period See Red was grant-aided (1982-1986) and until its final demise, no new posters were added to the catalogue, although the collective sustained production of many of those that had been previously designed. They continued to print work for local campaigns and women's groups and also set up, with local schools, a poster design and printing scheme for girls. The reason for the lack of new posters is not entirely clear, and was no doubt due to a combination of elements, some of which may be related to issues raised in the previous section.

However one factor stated by ex-members was that being grant-aided required significant amounts of administration, and none of the workers were experienced in this area, making it a time consuming and arduous task. To some extent, it seems that being grant-aided actually served to defeat the original intentions of the workshop. After 1986, while continuing to fill a diminishing number of orders from the See Red catalogue, the collective endeavored to reinvent the service printing aspect under another name, printing products to be purchased by an emergent, more consumer-orientated lesbian and gay culture. (Not so different from the fate of LRW). Despite a sustained attempt, the remaining members simply did not have the capital resources nor, they now reflect, the entrepreneurial acumen to succeed commercially. Not only this but, for their typical customer base, screen-printing was also increasingly seen as an expensive form of print especially compared to photocopying. Finally, many of the groups that had previously used See Red for service printing had also lost grant aid and had either folded, or were operating on minimal resources.

CONCLUSION

Both of these collectives were committed to social change through the use of print media. Key to both groups was the issue of access—LRW through developing the participatory ethos of community media and See Red through a commitment to creating and distributing counter media as cheaply as possible. Each reflected significant aspects of the changing politics and critical debates of the late twentieth century women's movement in the UK. Both engaged with different local groups and struggles and each opened up their workshops to schoolchildren. Their posters did not just adorn the walls of communal kitchens in Islington squats and student unions, but also featured in youth clubs and law, health and advice centres. Both groups actively considered not only who their audiences and users were and could be,

but also how this was reflected in their own membership. Similar to other feminist organisations of their time, they were also acutely aware of the practical constraints to 'participation', including those related to childcare. LRW, for example, stated as a specific problem that they were 'at present unable to provide a safe space for a crèche on site for our users' (Kenna *et al.* 1986: 37). Within the women's movement disabled women had not only drawn attention to their representation as victims but also to the real, practical problem of physical access to spaces. This resulted in a widespread practice of stating explicit access details on publicity materials, as well as consideration of the suitability of venues for events. Again, the women's printshops within their specific constraints attempted to address this (Kenna *et al.* 1986).

There has been much interest and enthusiasm in recent years about the participatory, collaborative and activist potential offered by 'new media' technologies. This is not to be dismissed by any means, and several ex-members of the printshop collectives whom I interviewed said 'if only we'd had the internet' or words to that effect. As Kevin Howley observes 'the notions of access and participation so thoroughly embedded in the discourse of new media' (2010: 6) have always been an intrinsic part of both the practice and literature of community media. For the organisations discussed above this was extended by the debates of the women's movement. I do not wish to hold these groups up as an ideal of the feminist discourses that informed them, especially when the focus on 'who is doing' came at the expense of 'what is being done' (Mirza 1997: 9). However if what excites us about the development and use of digital networked technologies is that they seem to signal some kind of democratic potential, we *still do* have to ask who that demos includes. Looking to examples of previous attempts at facilitating democratic, participatory alternatives to dominant media forms and practices may enrich both our critique and our aspirations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

1. This distinctions were not absolute by any means, there was a cross-over of activity between the three types of group, as will be become apparent in the case studies discussed.

2. This is contradicted somewhat in interviews with two ex-members who said that in their memory this actually happened much more organically.

3. The photographer Jill Posner was a significant if not the main person behind this; she in turn had been associated with LRW.

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The creative city and cultural policy: opportunity or challenge?

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ABSTRACT

The creative city paradigm is an economic and managerial discourse concerned with the creation of successful and competitive cities and regions. This article examines how the discourse manages claims relating to the role of culture in the economy and culture's role in providing key attractions, amenities and atmospheres in cities (attracting 'the creative class' and corporate investment).[1] It also explores how the creative city acquired a progressive, benign public profile—a profile that aligns the creative city paradigm with the political, social and economic contexts and interests of cultural policymakers. This article proposes that the creative city paradigm and its related discourses operate as 'implicit' or 'effective' modes of cultural policy that impact on and potentially displace 'explicit' forms of cultural policy discourse. Through discourse analysis of key cultural policy documents produced between 2000 and 2010, this article establishes the extent of this impact within the Scottish and Finnish contexts. Furthermore, the article also investigates whether the creative city paradigm presents a challenge for cultural policy or public policy more broadly.

INTRODUCTION

Few models and discourses of urban development have been as wide-ranging, influential[2] and documented in recent years as the *creative city paradigm* (hereafter called 'the creative city'). As an international discourse prevalent in Europe, North America and Asia, it has operated across local, regional and national levels and has been both benignly interpreted by city authorities and municipalities, as well as significantly critiqued and contested in the academic sphere (Peck 2005; Glaesar 2005).[3] Yet, despite its quasi-cultural thematics and its inextricable links with the creative economy,[4] cultural policy analysts have been relatively unengaged with the discourse. Although there are exceptions to this,[5] the lack of an explicit dialogue about the creative city by policy analysts is significant given the scope and level of critique by other disciplines (sociology, social and political sciences, and economics in particular) and conversely, the attention the cultural policy analyst sector pays to related thematics.[6] This lack of serious critical engagement between the two discourses might therefore suggest an absence of creative city thematics in cultural policy publications. However, cultural policies across Europe, in line with their respective economic and enterprise policies, are far from disinterested in the creative city. This is demonstrated by analyses of cultural policy discourse and texts over the first decade of the twenty-first century in Scottish and Finnish contexts, both of which show clear evidence of creative city discourse transfer, although often used disingenuousnessly and without explicit attribution or citation of key creative city authors.

While there are different models of the creative city, it is political economist Richard Florida's that dominates contemporary cultural policies. I will therefore focus heavily on Florida's model here. Florida's specific creative city consists of an urban and regional development concept tied to theories about work, place and creativity, and specifically the importance of place to job creation and private investment, the

contribution of cultural amenities and practitioners (or workers) to city and regional identity and liveability, as well as the necessity of creativity in constructing successful and globally competitive post-industrial cities and regions. Essentially therefore, this article argues that although the creative city offers an economic framework to city development, its role in advocacy for the inclusion of cultural activities, environments and people ('the creative classes') impacts on and influences culture and cultural production, rendering it an 'implicit' form of cultural policy. In so doing, it also impacts on 'explicit' (or nominal) cultural policy (Ahearne 2009).

Choosing to analyse cultural policy vis-à-vis creative city discourse, while acknowledging its location within the significantly broader creative economy discourse, allows for a detailed consideration of a discrete and specific narrative of culture, place and economic development which extends beyond the familiar economic tropes of 'creativity', 'innovation' and the 'cultural and creative industries'. This article offers an in-depth examination of specific policy documents, tracing particular themes and concepts, and in doing so indicates the influence of the creative city as a powerful model of local, regional and national regeneration through culture, providing for a more nuanced analysis of influences on cultural policy than the creative economy alone. The presence of the creative city discourse within cultural policy also demonstrates the continued influence of urban economic development narratives in cultural policy over the last forty years, and the significant impact of late 1990s EU regional development policies.

This article argues that the relationship between the creative city and cultural policy is under-examined and deserves closer scrutiny from a cultural policy perspective, because this can reveal hidden assumptions, private interests and discursive transfers, with potential impacts and legacies for culture and policy. Ultimately, it is contended that in order to understand the contemporary dynamics of both the creative city and

cultural policy, it is imperative to assess each through the lens of the other, thereby uncovering unexpected alignments, as well as conflicts, with potential consequences for both. In seeking to determine the exact nature of the relationship between the creative city discourse[7] and cultural policy, this article will briefly introduce the various concepts, models, and discourses surrounding them, as well as describe the interaction and interconnection between them. In order to illustrate this, I will use specific examples from Scotland and Finland, introduce the notion of *displacement* in relation to cultural policy and conclude with a discussion of the implications of this displacement for culture.

Any discussion of cultural policy must start with reference to the 'exceptionally complex term' *culture* (Williams 1981: 10), which for the purposes of this article (and in relation to both cultural policy and the creative city), refers to the noun describing expressive and communicative activities whose outcomes are sometimes documented (for many, synonymous with 'the arts'). Attempts to define cultural policy are therefore necessarily subject to the same heterogeneities as culture itself (Gray 2010), ranging from: 'strategic courses of action designed to prescribe and shape cultural practices' (Ahearne 2009: 144), to more Foucauldian interpretations:[8] 'cultural knowledges and practices that determine the formation and governance of subjects' implying 'the management of populations through suggested behaviour' (Miller and Yudice 2002: 15). While it has been asserted that the creative city's economically-driven mobilisation of culture (and creativity) is instrumental (Holden 2006: 14),[9] many would argue that the complex influences at play and pressures within cultural policy render it no less strategic, being broadly based around national and government agendas, other policy areas, perceived benefits and value systems and different approaches and discourses (Belfiore 2008).[10] Thus it has been asserted that 'the very notion of a public policy for culture necessarily implies a view according to which the state supports the [arts/culture] on the grounds of its perceived 'usefulness' to achieve a welcome outcome'

(Belfiore and Bennett 2006: 6). Instrumentalism is therefore key to both the creative city and cultural policy.

THE CREATIVE CITY

Although the 'creative city' is reputed to have been first coined in Australia in the 1980s, (Landry 2006: 10) it only came into regular use in the late 1990s and early 2000s, occupying a historic continuum originating in the 1970s and centring on the application of culture to urban economic development.[11] Specifically, its origins lie in the post-war relationship between urban and cultural policy and the attempt to halt post-war urban decline, as well as the growth of interest in culture's role in the economy, regeneration and the development of cities after the recessions of the 1970s (Bianchini 1993). From this interest in both regional development and city regeneration, two dominant interpretations of the creative city have emerged: that of the urban-centred view of culture and creativity (often aligned with discourses of 'innovation') as a 'tool' for re-energising and democratising cities (e.g. Landry and Bianchini 1995; Landry 2000; Bianchini 1993; Bianchini 2004) and Richard Florida's (2002, 2005) economically-driven regional development thesis.

For Landry, the creative city proposes a culture-centric thesis where 'cultural resources are the raw materials of the city and its value base; its assets replacing coal, steel or gold' (Landry 2000: 7). In contrast, for Florida, the creative city aims to attract high earning and high human capital workers, who are 'attracted more by cultural amenities than by recreational amenities and climate' (Florida 2005: 99). These workers are Florida's 'creative class', replacing 'knowledge workers',[12] and refer to highly valuable 'talent', or 'people who add economic value through their creativity' (Florida 2002: 68), rather than through manufacturing or delivering services. Although popularly misconstrued (usually by artists and designers) as referring to the culturally creative, the creative

classes actually refer to a disparate range of individuals from doctors, solicitors and health workers (the 'problem solvers'), synonymous with the professional classes, to what Florida calls the 'super creative core', or scientists, engineers, IT workers, and cultural practitioners.[13] While the economic contribution of the (cultural) super creatives is relatively neglected in Florida's work, many interpretations of the creative city situate the 'cultural and creative industries' (CCIs) as a central economic contributor to cities, regions and nations and they are routinely described as one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world.[14] In this way, the creative city uses creativity as a key value, employing it to describe important workers (as above), but also (and perhaps more associated with Landry), as a strategy to address a city's social, environmental, and economic issues. In Florida's 'creative age', jobs follow these highly educated and mobile workers, in contrast to the older industrial model of workers following jobs, illustrating his '3 Ts' mnemonic relating to (the need for) technology, talent, and tolerance (i.e. diversity). Thus, despite the peripheral role accorded to artists in Florida's thesis and the distinct romanticism surrounding descriptions of them (Florida 2002),[15] as well as critiques of the term's perceived exclusivity (Peck 2005), membership in the creative class has created increased political visibility for the culturally creative.

In addition to popularity at municipal levels, a benign view of creative city and creative economy discourses is also reflected in and enhanced by the media's attachment to economically driven and ideologically optimistic knowledge economy frameworks, deploying apparently 'progressive' thematics such as creativity (used almost exclusively in economic contexts), innovation, growth, entrepreneurialism, and competition (Galloway and Dunlop 2007; Leadbetter 1999; Oakley 2009).[16] These portrayals are typically framed within a meritocratic and sustainable narrative of urban development, with a focus on liveability, as well as culture (and or creativity),[17] essentially harnessing the soft connotations of creativity and culture to

the hard promise of economics and creating a normative perception of the creative city and economy at a popular level.

The mixed set of agendas or uses for culture and cultural funding is demonstrated in shared histories between the creative city and cultural policy (particularly as it relates to urban development policies) as demonstrated earlier. In the well-documented cultural economic 'turn' of the 1980s and 1990s and growth of the local authority remit before that, cultural advocacy and the rhetoric of public investment and support for culture became hugely important (Bianchini and Parkinson 1993; Kong 2000; Hesmondhalgh and Pratt 2005; McGuigan 1996). Post-war welfare (Keynesian) cultural policies, emphasising state funding, national prestige and the 'autonomy' of art and cultural producers (based on non-economic and social arguments) gave way to explicitly economic cultural imperatives (using the language of 'investment' and 'return'), increased managerialism, the rise of the entrepreneur, the growth of the cultural (later creative) industries, and the normativity of privatization, neoliberalism and markets.[18] By the end of the 1990s, the regional development agenda of the hugely (culturally) influential and massively funded European Structural Funds (Evans and Foord 1999) was only part of the context for the growth of creative city influence, but underlined the inextricable bridging of urban and regional development (encompassing social and economic concerns) with cultural policy.

In summation, the placing of culture as an important amenity in cities; the acknowledgement of its contribution to the economy through the cultural and creative industries ; the platforming of the creative classes; and an emphasis on the importance of creativity (albeit undefined) and innovation, have created a convincing funding narrative for cultural advocacy and led to the creative city as a touchstone for cultural arguments in both planning and cultural contexts (whether explicit or not). Also, consistent with the more general definitions of cultural policy cited above, reading the creative city discourse as itself a mode of 'implicit' cultural policy (Ahearne 2009)[19] allows us to look

constructively at the discourse and critically at 'explicit' cultural policy itself. Thus, a preliminary examination of both creative city and cultural policy discourses suggests that despite the creative city's explicitly economic rationale, their interests, influences, themes and approaches are aligned: instrumentally deploying culture in the service of extrinsic (economic and social) objectives; the centrality of the creative industries[20] and cultural practitioners to both discourses; a shared concern for spatial planning and the environment; a shared urban and regeneration history; a shared understanding of culture as a 'noun'; and a shared role as modes of cultural policy. Given these shared histories and interests, it is perhaps not surprising to find evidence of creative economy rhetoric in general and the creative city discourse in particular within European national cultural policies. Below, I focus specifically on evidence from Scotland and Finland.

SCOTTISH AND FINNISH CONTEXTS

In seeking evidence of the influence of the creative city discourse on cultural policy, two discursive strands are discernable: the 'macro' discourse of the creative economy and the 'micro' strand of the creative city. Within cultural policy, the creative economy discourse typically references themes of creativity (and derivations thereof) and innovation, the cultural and creative industries as a central progressive economic model (often mobilised around intellectual property)[21] and the promotion of enterprise and entrepreneurialism. In Scottish and Finnish contexts, this is demonstrated through a liberal and at times relentless use of the 'creative' prefix, which, attached to various nouns and descriptors, operates as a talismanic word, reflecting a worldview of creativity as inherently progressive and benign. (According to Raymond Williams (1965: 19), 'no word in English carries a more consistently positive reference than 'creative'.) Alongside this, sits a tension between sub-discourses of creativity as indicative of an individual or 'heroic'

model of individual talent, representing the traditional focus of cultural policy, and the promotion of apparently socially-driven, democratic and community discourses of creativity as a ubiquitous and equally distributed skill. Ultimately, it can be argued that the creativity prefix illustrates post-industrial and knowledge economy boosterism. Finally, as part of its continuing concern with economic justifications for culture, and with the renewed pressures of recession,[22] creative economy discourses retain a strong focus on measurement, data and cultural evidence-gathering.

Observable within this macro discourse however sit specific creative city tropes, including invocations of 'talent' (and in particular 'attracting' and 'harnessing' talent), references to the creative class (with echoes of human capital and knowledge economy discourses), reiterations of the place-making and identity-building attributes of cultural amenities and cultural tourism, the need for technology and diversity, and Enlightenment/modernist notions of 'progress' and discourses of change, often cited without reference to the creative city or its authors.

Northern European, and in particular Scottish, cultural policy, provides an interesting account of creative economy and Floridian creative city influences. Thus Scottish cultural policy explicitly reflects thematics of attracting and retaining 'talent', the nurturing of diversity, tolerance and competition and an acknowledgement of the importance of technology in facilitating creativity (and vice versa). While ties with the creative economy (and consequently the creative city) have been perceived by many as a post-devolution spin-off from an ideologically English New Labour government (Schlesinger 2009b; Hassan 2010; Hibberd 2008; Mulholland 2008), when viewed against the backdrop of a history of city development and marketing activity in Scotland (as part of an interest in cities as central to the nation's economy), a history of economically enforced emigration (prompting policies to 'attract' people back), and nationalist discourses of uniqueness and difference, the

creative city concept can be seen to have a particular resonance there. The lineage and import of city marketing is exemplified in activities leading up to and following Glasgow's City of Culture title acquisition in 1990 (Tretter 2009), as well as urban initiatives designed to leverage 'monopoly rents' from the symbolic value of cultural amenities[23] and showcase marketing (cultural branding) initiatives designed to increase private capital investment.

From 2000 to 2010, and following the birth of a new, officially devolved Scottish cultural policy, key political and cultural policy documents not only espouse nationalistic ideas of Scottish uniqueness (and advantage) and heroic notions of individuality, but also show significant assimilation and recitation of both creative economy *and* creative city references.[24] One of the most common examples of the latter in Scottish discourse is the lexicon of attraction, or repeated calls for using culture (and events) to attract workers (reflecting the problems of economic emigration alluded to above) and investment, as well as to enhance competitiveness. It is the specificity and combination of culture, creativity, place, competition, talent and amenity that eschews more general creative economy attribution, and takes us beyond familiar older discourses invoking culture and regeneration/development. Illustrating this, policymakers are challenged to 'ensure that Scotland can exploit its advantages to attract international events in all aspects of culture, including sport' (Scottish Executive 2000: n.p.), invocations of Scotland as 'a globally attractive location' and attempts to convince 'that more people [are] were choosing to live and work in Scotland' (Scottish Executive 2000: 13). Exhortations such as the 'extraordinary creativity of the Scots' (McConnell 2003) are common, as well as references to Scotland as a 'vibrant, cosmopolitan, competitive country and an internationally recognised creative hub' (Scottish Executive 2004: 1). Culture is described as a 'national dynamo' giving the Scots the 'edge we [they] need in a competitive world' (Scottish Executive 2004: 1, 4). Later documents explicitly cite 'the creative class' and name-

check Florida and Landry (Cultural Commission 2005),[25] indicating a confidence and willingness to attribute key conceptual sources less evident in earlier publications.

The narrative of success, attraction and 'policy attachment' (Gray 2007), or the idea of culture being used to deliver other government priorities (such as prosperity) remains central to cultural policy rhetoric of the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) since their election in 2007. The priorities for government, national and local, as well as cultural organisations like Creative Scotland, are a 'successful and prosperous Scotland' and SNP policy documents routinely outline how culture 'can contribute to that success story' (Scottish Government 2008: 1), unambiguously stating how culture can contribute to the 'delivery' of other government innovation and research outcomes. Culture (and creativity) is described as helping to 'create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish' (*ibid.*), as well as attracting 'international partners and new talent' (*ibid.*: 2). Much of this discourse proposes existing scenarios (i.e. that Scotland is already attractive) while also proposing the need to become more so, citing Scotland as 'the most attractive place for doing business in Europe' (*ibid.*) and dependent on its provision of 'a high quality cultural infrastructure and diverse recreation and participation opportunities' (*ibid.*).

Many also see the new and heavily critiqued[26] development agency for the arts and creative industries in Scotland (Creative Scotland)[27] as a reflection of the creative economy agenda and of instrumentalism more generally (see Sweeney 2010; Schlesinger 2009a; Roy 2010). However, Creative Scotland (CS) specifically espouses a development-oriented and place-making model of cultural policy, consistent with creative city discourse. This is demonstrated by the presence of ideas of culture as an 'attraction' for workers/'talent':

> Our vision is that Scotland is recognised as a leading creative nation
> – one that attracts, develops and retains talent, where the arts and the

creative industries are supported and celebrated and their economic contribution fully captured' (CS vision statement) and later, 'Creativity is the essential ingredient for successful cities, It's what makes them unique and defines them as places. A city that invests in culture and creative individuals has potential and opportunity that reaches beyond the arts, and can inspire a whole community (Creative Scotland 2011: 5 and 2010: n.p.).

However, a more sustained embrace of the creative economy agenda (and terminology) at the cultural policy level is demonstrated in Finland, with more explicit references to the creative city discourse than in Scotland, albeit coupled with a sophisticated awareness of Floridian critique. Key Finnish government documents consistently position creativity, culture and the creative industries as an economic, social and political (and 'civilising') force forming a major part of Finland's international exports (a key thematic in Finnish cultural policy), playing a key role in its diplomatic affairs (see Finland Ministry of Education 2009) and increasing Finland's regional and international competitiveness (Finland Ministry of Education 2010: 4). In fact this entrepreneurial emphasis in Finnish cultural policy (dating from the late 1990s), references Finland's declining social democratic culture and has been called the 'competitiveness society' model of cultural policy (Sokka and Kangas 2007). Finland also repeatedly stresses the links between culture and commercial creativity, emphasising that it is 'no longer a mere attraction factor but directly relates to innovation' and affirms the 'significance of creativity for innovativeness in general' (Finland Ministry of Education 2010: 7). This takes the creative city thematic of 'attraction' further. Similarly to Scotland, there is also evidence of a spike in creative city discourse mid-decade, with citations of Richard Florida's creative class, his '3 Ts' theory, and his competitive creativity indexes (Finland Ministry of Education 2005: 2010). The latter report explicitly and repeatedly refers to the 'development of urban areas into 'creative cities' (Finland Ministry of Education 2010: 10), and invokes

both human capital and creative class concepts through statements such as: 'the real scarce resource in the world is skilled workers and professionals, and creative, well-educated citizens. […] the most likely locations where they are to be found are creative environments, [and] world-class knowledge clusters' and 'it is these competent professionals and knowledge clusters that companies thirsting after innovations are looking for' [sic] (*ibid.*: 6). Accompanying this are the usual discourses of regional development and innovation (environments) (*ibid.*: 8), but also an awareness of critiques of the creative city discourse, and a cautioning against strict adoption of Florida's thesis (*ibid.*).

In comparing cultural policy discourses of Scotland and Finland, particularly from the mid to late 2000s, we can see the shared thematic of culture as a force of attraction for both workers, visitors and investment, and in Finland, a particular emphasis on linking culture with wider creativity and innovation agendas. Although this indicates the international impact of the creative economy agenda, it also demonstrates the continued presence of specific creative city discourses in cultural policy.

Cultural policy's retention of the development rhetorics of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, its focus on the creative industries, and its specific references to the creative city discourse demonstrates continuing policy 'attachment' to economic agendas and as such, attempts to harness the prestige, mandate and political advantage attached to these ideological frameworks. This is perhaps to be expected given the persistent economic rationalism in government policy more generally, and the perennial need for culture ministries to justify themselves. However, we might expect a more nuanced and critical narrative to emerge from a domain synonymous with critique and analysis, particularly in light of a seriously contested model (see Malanga 2004; Glaesar 2005; Daly 2004). A more critical approach might serve cultural (and public) policy better. It seems likely, however, that this disavowal of critique is due not to ignorance, but rather a deliberate obfuscation in order to simplify

the role of the creative city in augmenting cultural advocacy and part of wider legitimising discourses in cultural policy.

In this context, the imposition of non-cultural rationales on the funding of culture, whether it be an economic return on the cultural and creative industries, the development, capital and tourism potential of cultural cities, the harnessing of 'talented' workers in a mobile and globalised world or any of the social impacts of culture, essentially maintains a long tradition of using cultural policies towards non-cultural ends. Sociologist and philosopher Jürgen Habermas has coined the term 'colonisation'[28] to describe the economic domination of the 'lifeworld' (or series of communications and meanings which allow us to understand the world), of which culture is a key part. In his view, the colonisation of culture, or the lifeworld, by systems of power and the economy, essentially takes away the necessary preconditions for the operation of a healthy public sphere and hence the context necessary for a functioning democracy. In this way, the reproduction of creative city discourses within cultural policy represents an explicit colonisation of culture and hence is a threat to the basis of civic society's productive relationship with the state.

While it is true that this colonisation and instrumentalism are not new to cultural policy, the creative city can be said to exacerbate an already economics dominated discourse. However, this colonisation has other significant implications for culture and cultural policy. It has been argued that excessive economic rationalisation leads to market-driven rationales for cultural production and funding based on what is perceived as 'popular' or 'useful' culture, providing a 'return' on investment (McGuigan 2004); an over-promising of what is deliverable through culture (leading to disappointment and loss of trust); an overemphasis on quantitative data and that which can be quantified; a negation of the capacity for culture to be disruptive (predicated as cultural policy is on culture as a force for social and economic 'good') but perhaps most critically, an exposition of the presence of private

discourses (i.e. property development) in public policies, which ultimately impacts on representative democracy and results in a loss of 'legitimacy' within cultural policy (Holden 2006).[29]

The idea of legitimacy loss in relation to cultural policy can be considered not only in relation to colonisation, the dominance of economic rationales, private benefit discourses and an over-reliance on instrumentalist advocacy (as Holden would argue), but also as an ingrained suspiciousness and historic lack of engagement with technology and the creative industries (n.b. Adorno and Horkheimer 1998), a perceived elitism deriving from 'high' or arts-based definitions of culture, and the continued failure of cultural policy to deal with the broader political issues of cultural production, such as the precariousness of creative labour (McRobbie 2004; Lorey 2006).

With this in mind, it is impossible to ignore the proposition that creative city discourse, albeit within a creative economy framework, is in the process of displacing (an already problematic) explicit cultural policy, or at least challenging its legitimacy, resulting in the loss of understandings of cultural value as well as democratic participation in public policies. The challenges to cultural policy posed by the creative city certainly allow for new points of unflattering comparison, but equally do not obfuscate the many cultural problems engendered within the creative city itself.[30] In addition, these challenges do not ignore the impact of the broader creative economy on cultural policy. Finally, to consider the creative city alongside, and as, a cultural policy, does not disavow the different ends to which both discourses may be working, though this is not always clear. In short, though the creative city and cultural policy are both flawed cultural frameworks, this does not negate the challenge the former poses to the latter.[31]

Some of the questions remaining to be asked include: What is at stake if creative city discourse is 'colonising' cultural policy and exposing private benefit value systems? If cultural policy, and hence state support, is displaced or delegitimised, would culture be 'better

off' and what would an 'ideal' cultural policy look like? This is a more complex question than can be answered in this article. However, it is worth considering whether the creative city might be thought of as a conceptual starting point for a re-thinking of cultural policy, as part of a general overhaul of means-end rationalist public policies. Could the paradigm's arguably holistic view of the city and its development, its emphasis on both 'high' and popular culture (despite some misunderstandings concerning 'high' cultural infrastructures) as well as its remarkable branding, communication and persuasive abilities, be used to better serve culture more generally? Could a re-configured model of the creative city which promotes the different but potentially compatible agendas of culture, society and economy, work with existing cultural policy to jointly benefit culture? And how ought we define 'benefit' in the first place? Nevertheless, perhaps the greatest value in considering the creative city as an embedded discourse within cultural policy is how it demonstrates the hidden presence of knowledge discourses in public policies, working towards private rather than public benefit and what that indicates about public policy and representative democracies.

CONCLUSION

This article has demonstrated similarities between the creative city and cultural policy discourses and genealogies, positing the creative city as an implicit cultural policy, but also evidencing the influence of the former discourse on the latter, as part of wider creative economy influence. The article has shown that this influence illustrates a recent and specific variety of 'colonisations' of cultural policy by economic rationales, revealing the hidden dominance of elite networks of power beyond democratic control and the continued instrumentalisation of culture through policy, which together are represented as a crisis or a displacement of explicit cultural policy. References to cultural

policies in Scotland and Finland have demonstrated creative city discourse transfer, indicating the continued presence of the discourse in the European context. Finally, this article has posited that a critical interpretation of the creative city paradigm in the context of cultural policy, together with a consideration of its positive attributes, can provide the platform from which to question the ethical basis of cultural and public policy more generally.

NOTES

1. The 'creative class' is a concept devised by political economist and creative city author Richard Florida. His book, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How it's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* (2002), has been highly influential in urban and metropolitan areas.

2. As demonstrated through creative city branding evident in cities (e.g. Creative Cincinnati, Creative Birmingham, Creative London, Creative Berlin), nations (e.g. Creative Britain) and networks (e.g. UNESCO Creative Cities and the British Council's Creative Cities).

3. The academic community – particularly the social and political sciences – has robustly and repeatedly critiqued the creative city concept, in relation to exclusivity (excluding the 'non-creatives' and service classes from its focus) and the resulting social inequities; a lack of originality (being based on other economic and cultural development theories of the 1970s and 1980s); excessive investment in economic values as the sole driver of urban development (Scott 2006); and what is claimed to be dubious evidence of its success.

4. The Creative Economy is defined variously, but specifically by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development as 'creative assets potentially generating economic growth and development; It can foster income generation, job creation and export earnings while promoting social inclusion, cultural diversity and human development; It embraces economic, cultural and social aspects interacting with technology, intellectual property and tourism objective; It is a set of knowledge-based economic activities with a development dimension and cross-cutting linkages at macro and micro levels to the overall economy; It is a feasible development option calling for innovative,

multi-disciplinary policy responses and interministerial action; At the heart of the creative economy are the creative industries' (UNCTAD 2008: 15).

5. Existing analyses of the creative city (and indeed the creative economy) discourse in relation to cultural policy are limited to the creative industries and citations of the putative 'creative class'. See McGuigan (2009); Oakley (2009); Hesmondhalgh (2007).

6. Examples of thematics related to the creative city discourse regularly appearing in journals such as the *International Journal of Cultural Policy* and *Cultural Trends* would be the creative industries, discourses of 'creativity', regeneration, instrumentalism and the creative economy.

7. The 'creative city' concept represents both a discourse in terms of having a significant body of 'text and talk' (Van Dijk 2001: 356) and a paradigm (or prevailing model) of urban, regional and national development.

8. See Foucault (1978) for a discussion of the construction of subjects by governments.

9. The use of the term 'instrumental' logically suggests that there are other primary, 'cultural' or 'intrinsic' reasons for supporting culture, characterised as the 'subjective experience of culture intellectually, emotionally and spiritually'.

10. Although many think of cultural policy as a post-war concept linked to the building of nation states and new political and social identities (as exemplified in the founding of Northern European Arts Councils in the 1940s and 1950s and France's Ministry of Culture in 1959), the state and 'ruling classes' (both secular and religious) have long been involved in supporting, regulating and intervening in relation to culture, with specific political, social and economic ends in mind, amounting effectively to early cultural policies.

11. A key and early work in the discussion of the arts in regeneration is given in Wynne (1992); see also a fuller description of the historical continuum in Bianchini and Parkinson (1993).

12. The *knowledge economy* (and hence 'knowledge workers') was coined by management consultant Peter Drucker in the 1960s to describe the post-industrial trading of ideas rather than manual labour.

13. In Florida's thesis, cultural practitioners are also described as 'bohemians' who create an alternative and tolerant atmosphere attractive to the creative classes, and thus need to be nurtured, despite the contradictions inherent in being both the subject and object of the attraction (Florida 2002: 200–211).

14. See Government of Ireland (2008), section 2.12: 'Estimates value the sector at 7% of the world's GDP and forecast 10% growth per year'.

15. This romanticism is also demonstrated by Florida's (2002: 201) suggestion that artists are disinterested in money, exemplified by his assertion that 'if they [artists] can make money in the process (i.e. of working), that's wonderful'.

16. As both a symptom and expression of wider economic imperatives, the parallels between the knowledge economy, creativity discourses, the creative city paradigm and cultural policy are striking. With its emphasis on information exchange, intellectual property, idea generation, technology, creativity and innovation, the knowledge economy has championed and become the 'posterchild' for the creative industries, leading critics to note their transformation into 'just one more 'knowledge economy asset" (Galloway and Dunlop 2007). A description of the knowledge economy as 'cosmopolitan and open', with the imperative of rewarding and investing in 'talent and creativity', 'people and education' and its need for cultures that are 'democratic and dissenting' and 'open to new ideas from unusual sources', (Leadbetter 1999: ix), suggest both a strong belief in its possibilities, as well resonances with culture, and creativity and creative city discourses (in particular, Florida's creative city '3 Ts' acronym). As such, the knowledge economy offers a framework for the creative city paradigm as well as being itself implicated in cultural policy.

17. The creative city discourse is often positively referenced in the media simply by referring to vibrant or 'up and coming' cities as 'creative cities', rather than any explicit reference to a set of distinct ideas. The following is a quote from the travel section of an Irish newspaper: 'Toronto is stepping into the limelight as a vibrant and *creative city*' and 'behind the generic exterior lies a vibrant, creative, multicultural population which makes Toronto far more attractive than its appearance might suggest. In this regard it is not dissimilar to Berlin, another city that makes up for its rather humdrum looks by virtue of the *creative energy of its inhabitants*. And, as in Berlin, Toronto's creative community is successfully raising and *changing the profile* of the city. The city's legion of musicians have made it a North

American alternative rock capital, and its artists are *rejuvenating entire neighbourhoods*' (O'Dwyer 2010, emphasis added). See also Starr (2008) and Connolly (2010).

18. See Harvey (2005) for more on neoliberalism.

19. According to Ahearne, you can 'call *explicit* or *nominal* cultural policy any cultural policy that a government labels as such' and '*implicit* or *effective* cultural policy any political strategy that looks to work on the culture of the territory over which it presides (or on that of its adversary)' (2009: 143, emphasis original).

20. Although the creative industries are discussed within a cultural policy framework, they are often situated (policy-wise) in an economic context or portfolio.

21. For more on this and the 'copyright industries', see Howkins (2001).

22. See Mundy (2009) for an explicit example of this kind of argumentation, positing confidence boosting, rebranding, mobility, revenue, transforming spaces, social support, employment flexibility, community expression, personal empowerment and (the key policy requirement), value for money.

23. Monopoly rent (and all rent) 'is based on the monopoly power of private owners of certain portions of the globe. Monopoly rent arises because social actors can realize an enhanced income stream over an extended time by virtue of their exclusive control over some directly or indirectly tradable item which is in some crucial respects unique and non-replicable' (Harvey 2006: n.p.).

24. In analysing a number of key cultural policy documents such as 'Scotland's National Cultural Strategy' (1999/2000), 'A Literature Review of the Evidence Base for Culture, the Arts and Sport policy' (2004), 'Cultural Policy Statement' (2004), 'Our Next Major Enterprise' (2005) and the 'Scottish Arts Council Review of Strategies 2002–2006', it is possible to see not only spirited references to the uniqueness of Scottish creativity and the creative economy (e.g. regeneration, talent, innovation, creativity, creative industries and competition), but also detect a specific creative city discourse. All available online at www.scotland.gov.uk.

25. This is the final report of the Cultural Commission's reviews of cultural policy in Scotland, available online at www.scotland.gov.uk.

26. These criticisms relate to a lack of clarity over its enterprise versus subsidy model, its role vis-à-vis other enterprise bodies charged with the creative industries, a general scepticism over the prioritisation of the industrial model of culture, and a lack of clarity over the application of the 'arms length principle'. See Hibberd (2008) for a discussion of the development of Creative Scotland and Chávez-Aguayo (2010) for a discussion of 'the arms length principle' in relation to Creative Scotland.

27. Creative Scotland replaced Scottish Screen and the Scottish Arts Council, and has been in development for a number of years throughout the 2000s. See www.creativescotland.com.

28. 'Colonisation' is a Habermasian (1973) concept linked to notions of crisis.

29. Holden (2006) specifically refers to the lack of shared expectation and values between the government (funding cultural policy and looking for measurement, accountability and delivery of other policy areas), cultural practitioners (institutions and individuals making culture who require freedom from prescription) and the public (who want to engage).

30. Issues with the creative city include: the lack of understanding of how and why culture is made (and Florida's creative class grouping); the platitudes of the ubiquitous 'creative' brand (so that anything and everything uses the creativity prefix like a magic mantle) and the inflated economic arguments for culture promoted by creative city advocates.

31. Peck (2005) argues that creative city strategies are significantly cheaper than long-term urban development strategies, and that this relative cheapness increases their popularity among city officials.

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Remarking the here over now

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ABSTRACT

This article critically explores how a particular figure—a cipher and model for recording movement and physicality—endeavors to make the 'new' palpable within experiences of its figuration, or becoming. Informing this investigation is a critical assessment of an artwork developed under research led through the fine art practices of drawing and live-art presentations. This artwork tests uses of video to record and capture processes of becoming, namely through physicality and figures of the line as interval. This article also employs debates about liveness and presence in order to reconsider how video can play a direct role in live-art genres concerned with mark-making and reflections of gesture. Questions arise in how the 'new' is structured around reduction and problems with measuring line and interval through separation and division. Underlying this investigation is a critical commentary upon the philosophical foundation of the virtual.

KEY WORDS
video, the virtual, drawing, body, thought, time

> *The relation of the new is modeled on a child at the piano searching for a chord never previously heard. This chord, however, was always there; the possible combinations are limited and actually everything that can be played on it is implicitly given in the keyboard. The new is the longing for the new, not the new itself: That is what everything suffers from.*
>
> (Adorno 1999: 32)

CONSIDERING HOW TO OPEN

'Newness' can be considered as a point of emergence; it can be the sense of where a combination of elements are localised to invoke an advent of some new possibility. Rather than anticipate a new subject or object, one would encounter here, or there, the sense that makes possible some figure, or thought. The purpose of this article is to evaluate whether this point can be further perceived as a moment, or as a sheer condition and sense of opening. What newness confronts, otherwise, is a frustration with how the opening and locus is profoundly conditioned by a temporal order, located either inside or outside of history.

Certain theorists, such as Henri Bergson and Brian Massumi, seek a sense of the new by regarding the present as it perpetually recurs.[1] Situating the new in terms of a 'now' poises duration within an immanent presence, an affect that transcends history by becoming a point of emergence and transformation. As Bergson summarises: 'to be in the present and in a present which is always beginning – this is the fundamental law of matter: herein consists *necessity*' (Bergson 1999: 210, emphasis original). What challenges a critical approach to seeking any other combination of the new is that the now-as-duration is conditioned by absolute, irreversible necessity. For Bergson, duration is new; it is now and ever, a perpetual present. But how might we understand the 'new' as no longer 'now' and reconsider this localising

element, a 'here' that would be also 'there', from a certain point predicated by temporal disconnection?

The 'new' projects the present 'as the identity of duration and eternity: that 'now' which is not so much a gap 'in' time as a gap 'of' time' (Osborne 1995: 14). If we set aside the question of history, and look closer at the mechanics intrinsic to duration and action, we can attempt to present a critical examination of this gap via movement, matter and the body. We can do this by focusing on the gap as an interval situated in the perception of movement, both through video and the recording of a body moving through space. Massumi elaborates the theoretical position that perceives the gap as the new, in terms of a dynamic locus of thought located between a flow of images.[2] For him, thinking occurs as a form of invention, beginning anew, both immanent and manifest *in* the stream of images as a passage of movement.[3] Moreover, thinking, here (now) is a virtual action; by expressing itself perception affects an image of thought, a virtual affective form of perceiving and thinking. The virtual is not merely something thought about so much as it is the experience of what is more actual than real, affecting a cerebral engagement through vibrations and rhythmic forces intrinsic to the physics of streaming images, or 'the *interval* of transmission'.[4] Within this passage of images the interval unfolds the sense of a perpetual present, but the body operates as an extension of forces through images. The body functions to multiply these strains of image by moving and embodying their continuous streams, invoking a 'circus of the body' (Massumi 2002: 203), thus providing a visceral experience of the new (a virtual-thought).[5]

Hence, the foundation of my investigations here will be based upon an example derived from an artwork, which presents the passage and movement of the virtual as a kind of indexical mark: the moving body embodied and encapsulated by the digital moving-image stream. I will focus on the way moving-image apparatuses, such as digital video, capture and document movement and the body. Moreover,

what I endeavor to articulate is a notion of a body, and the possible place which it can determine, that is not an extension of duration and virtual movement. Recording a body through video can enable one to breakdown the actions, not merely to allow for the perception of movement as such, but to situate the body in a strategy aside from the virtual 'now'. In turn, one would then try to formulate a notion of opening a position—a body and figure that can be thought. Seeing a body arrested *from* movement opens the condition of thinking anew either in the place of here, or even there.

A PASSAGE OF IMAGE AND MOVEMENT

In this section, I would like to consider the digital stream of images as an index, a medium composed of light and rhythmic feedback, which, in turn, can enable one to perceive a virtual movement. To see how this could occur, but also to bring closer attention to this mark-like quality of the virtual as a hyper-material medium and image, we can try to explore how this arises in practice.

A fundamental mode of my investigation is exercised through a form of practical research, which is based in fine art. I discover much of my subject matter during the process of experimenting with movements and positions of my body in conjunction with mark-making. Mark-making is derived from drawing practices which act by initiating first-thoughts, or *primi penseri*.[6] One can draw to express either the process of generating ideas or one can give a presence to the act of generation without continuing it as a process. My approach to the mark has evolved to emphasise the latter. A process is at points discontinuous, where the body and mark no longer coincide to render an imperceptible relation (between the two), nor further a conceptual basis of a continuum.

So, I will begin by employing one example of an artwork, through which I have directly employed my body in a meditation on the virtual

nature of the mark. *Passages* (2009-10) describes a video transmission which records a body shifting around a space and image, while it expresses a movement intrinsic to the video medium. What adds to the complex form of *Passages* is that it examines the video stream as an extension of the mark, whereby I recreate the sequence in a sculptural installation. A selection of frames extracted from a series of videos—each documenting my body rapidly moving along brick walls, flanked by paved concrete floors—are re-presented in printed form. Measuring twenty by fourteen centimeters, each printed image rests mounted on a panel and sits at an angle against the base of the wall. As three centimeters separates each image panel a shadow peers behind the serial formation of panels. The concrete spaces appearing in the photo prints are now supported and complimented by the density of the wall and the floor. This linear installation appears constructed as a conduit and spatial cavity, the exterior panels faced by images of a nearly barren wall. Barely any object appears in the image. The row of panels appear to run endlessly in either direction, without beginning or end. Here, now,
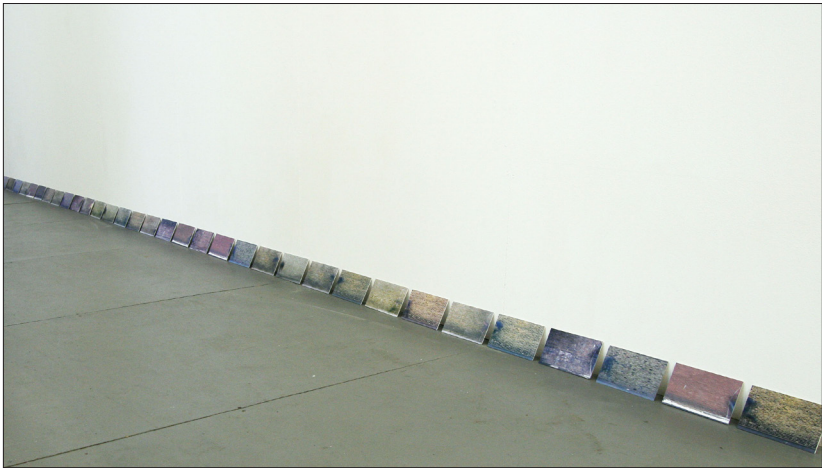
Installation details of *Passages* (2009-10). From Harrington Mills Exhibition Space (Nottingham, UK, 2010). Photograph courtesy of David Manley.

runs a dynamically composed physical expression of the virtual passage, displacing the live presentation of the video.

For the moment, to investigate the now as a continuum, I will concentrate on the situation set here by this work. Once I evaluate how a discourse of the virtual discusses the interval, as either an unbridgeable gap or the continuum as such, I can return and elaborate elements, namely the appearance of marking within this virtual passage-mark.

A passage functions as a place of movement emerging through a multiplicity. According to Massumi, 'the multiplicity of constituents fuses into a unity of movement. The resulting patch is a self-varying monad of motion: a dynamic form figuring only vectors' (Massumi 2002: 183). Movement is a virtual multiplicity, a singular vector perpetually evolving a transient variability: 'A vector is *transpositional*: a moving-through points' (Massumi 2002: 185, emphasis original). At no point, however, do virtual mediums, particularly video, allow movement to be punctuated; the digital vector is a ceaseless and seamless stream of images, a continuous feedback of light and digital noise. Video is a way of articulating the problem posed by the virtual passage, for what returns is never the body, recorded and seen, but the embodied digital signal returning to itself, and circulating this feedback (Massumi 2002: 185). This is why video exercises a sense of incorporeal movement that permeates all spaces and elements outside of the video-frame; because it projects and concentrates, literally and psychologically —or 'virtually' forcing—an intensified place of purely passing emerges. Video can also force a way of looking closer, of penetrating the screen, and allow one to perceive the actions beyond the screen more critically.[7] One could, eventually, become aware of opening up the interval by locating the spectator as s/he moves in relation to the movements expressed 'through' the video, completely separate and distinct from the 'now' expressed on the screen.

DISPLACEMENTS IN LINEAR TRANSMISSIONS

What the arguments supporting a virtual transmission of embodied feedback (movement) inhibit is not the possibility of entering the screen so much as being able to perceive a continuum, without being implicated in becoming perceived as a constituent of virtual multiplicity. I must perceive the arena of movement through a body-screen cum moving-image and put myself into the line of transmission, and never rest (repose) as a spectator, or voyeur (Nancy 2005).

As mentioned earlier, the virtual addresses the line as a form of thought transmission, a perception that affects other perceptions over a continuous interval. 'Perceptions and thought are two poles of the same process,' writes Massumi, 'they lie along a continuum' (2002: 91). Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari specify the line as *rhizome*, an imperceptible movement of lines along an irreversible continuum, a multiple stream that affects the bifurcation of other multiple lines. In itself, the line maintains a primary function of moving itself unconditionally, and this occurs by its rhizomatic quality of disrupting its consistency and opening out more lines of movement. As Deleuze and Guattari state (2002: 281),

> Movement has an essential relation to the imperceptible; it is by nature imperceptible. Perception can grasp movement only as the displacement of a moving body or the development of a form. Movements, becomings, in other words, pure relations of speed and slowness, pure affects, are below and above the threshold of perception.

What can we think of the line if it solely perpetuates a continuum, a movement? Where does the body become other to the imperceptible trace of displacement and bifurcation? What can be perceived here is that the interval stands—if it ever rests—as a complicated image of the imperceptible. To take Eric Alliez's comment about virtual movement: 'virtualization… hollows out a moving void' (Alliez 2005: 87). Equally, Deleuze discusses the sense of the virtual as the bare instance of passing, what he translates into the Stoic notion of the Aion—an empty form of

time—and later elaborates, through his reading of Proust, as four forms of time: time wasted, time lost, time rediscovered, and time regained.[8] Time is a unique sign, a disjunctive synthesis, implicating more lines while embodying no total sense of the line; '*it is therefore on the lines of time that the signs intersect and multiply their combinations*' (Deleuze 2008: 56, emphasis original). Its empty form is what has 'freed itself of its present corporeal content and has thereby unwound its own circle, stretching itself out in a straight line' (Deleuze 1990: 165). Whether the line expresses any other combination of its multiple sign asks a question of how movement operates, namely if it strictly encircles and encapsulates a 'now' outside of the present.

In order to maintain a concept of the line which is not one universal totality, the line must move and pass into combinations of a multiple extra-temporal instant. It is a perpetual becoming, 'the Instant which is endlessly displaced on this line and is always missing from its own place' (*ibid.*: 166). A line could present nothing *but* the sense of lines through their velocities. Movement is multiplied by the thought it conjures and affects: a barely present line that opens itself as a passage, inside of which is sensed the perpetual vibration of velocities. Interval is a present and presence of the movement of sheer relating, line for line, a transmission that constantly and perpetually engulfs the body and every element into the imperceptible. Such a 'thought' is constitutive of movement as such, when the interval becomes bare and automatic: 'It is only when movement becomes automatic that the artistic essence of the image is realized: *producing a shock to thought, communicating vibrations to the cortex, touching the nervous and cerebral system directly*' (Deleuze 2001: 156, emphasis original). Is it a shock to think that a thought based on the virtual line is barely a sense of something, a touch of sonic effects that conjure a barely visible wisp of speeds? Deleuze's statement is situated within his investigation of cinema, particularly when he looks at the image as sign, that 'forces thinking and what thinks under the shock' (*ibid.*). Would the interval ever be able to be thought

and perceived, as any kind of image, without the force of shock and provocation of engaging with an imperceptible movement? By shifting our focus to Bergson's notion of duration we will see whether the line can have its sense of empty interval encountered and perceived outside of its integral movement.

Bergson's observation leaves us with an image where no entity or body is present other than the sonic effects transposed within a kaleidoscope of colour: 'If we could stretch out this duration, that is to say, live it at a slower rhythm, should we not, as the rhythm slowed down, see these colors pale and strengthen into successive impressions, still colored, no doubt, but nearer and nearer to coincidence with pure vibrations?' (Bergson 1999: 203). The question is now whether the image can be separated from the movement, and even suspended as a still photographic form of recording the body as a potential agent of movement.

Time, according to Bergson, is not *made* possible by constructing individual frames, and revolving through them in rapid succession; time is actual *when* it makes, when it is embodied, endured and no longer needs to be thought of and constructed in an abstract space. He writes, 'just as we pass through the immobile to go to the moving, so we make use of the void in order to think the full' (Bergson 1998: 270). In *Creative Evolution* (1907), in the section entitled 'The Cinematographic Mechanism of Thought and the Mechanistic Illusion', he discusses two theoretical illusions which put time and consciousness, or thought, into jeopardy. One intellectualises time as being full, or continuous, when in fact time is never experienced. Most of all the intellect tacitly maintains the void as a logical and necessary idea. A void is what enables one to perceive 'reality' as what 'reaches being only by passing through 'not-being,' and continue living by upholding a philosophical fallacy' (*ibid.*: 276). At best, one could attempt to represent the image around a void, by constantly substituting one image of a still figure over another; but one never presents the emptiness, because 'there is no absolute void

in nature' (*ibid*.: 281). Formulated under a logical judgment, writes Bergson, 'we shall affirm that such or such a thing is, we shall never affirm that a thing is not' (*ibid*.: 291).

Bergson finally comments upon the cinematic as a fabrication of reality by stating: 'it is true that if we had to do with photographs alone, however much we might look at them, we should never see them animated: with immobility beside immobility, even endlessly, we could never make movement' (*ibid*.). Here, the gap separating the photo images provides no possibility for developing a point, an opening in which to examine the intricacies of virtual movement. Rather,

Panels 4b19 and 5d7, from *Passages* (2009-10). Images courtesy of the artist.

perceiving an image of a blurry figure testifies to the vibratory essence of movement affecting an indivisible continuum as a whole. Bergson argues, 'let the interval between two consecutive states be infinitely small: before the intervening movement you will always experience the disappointment of the child who tries by clapping his hands together to crush the smoke. The movement slips through the interval…' (*ibid*.: 308). Hence, an interval, as a point devoid of movement, perceived under a literal mechanical cinematographic schema, never affirms a movement.

BEING ALONG-SIDE HERE & THERE

To construct the moving image as a physical artefact seems to estrange the perspective which Bergson's arguments advance. Sculpting it, however, allows me to not merely parody the gap, to literally translate a division into an absolutely empty space; instead, it allows me to better situate a singular activity of visually recording the movement implicit in mark-making.

In the position of the spectator, walking along and then standing in front of the image panels set at my feet, I noticed an irreducible proximity of my body to the movement expressed by the video-image, re-presented by the serial construction of image panels. When one crouches down and looks at the images s/he sees two white lines, flanking the edge of the video-image-frame. Running vertically and appearing like ticks, these bracket-like traces present marks reminiscent of writing, or what Carrie Noland identifies as *jambages*: 'the vertical lines of letters (the technical sense of 'jambages') and the rhythmic, measured stride of the digits as limbs ('jambages')' (Noland 2009: 207). Certainly, these marks inscribe but they also cite an act of separating a space not shared by the virtual mark of transmission.

These vertical ticks arrest the horizontal line of movement. The tick appears overlapped with parts of the semi-transparent body. Together they form a 'measured stride', indicating a space that divides and distinguishes the image from being encountered as a perpetual 'now' and a non-locatable presence.[9] Without addressing the gap as an empty void, we can instead stop and engage with this opening, a spot which remains a question, without perceiving it as derived from an order of movement and bifurcation. As a spectator, I see my body appearing on the still image, a figure half-drawn, semi-transparent, pulled into, leaping or falling over the vertical tick-jambages, and out of the horizontal frame—what could, otherwise, in the Bergsonian reading, be viewed as the puff of smoke that escapes perceiving intervalic-movement. In other

words, the interval based on a non-temporal presence emerges by being shared by the space in which the spectator stands.

Hence, the gap, as much as the wall and floor, initiates a perception of this presence-in-separation; a position of standing with and apart is incumbent upon the 'here', in which one stands alongside the sculpted passage, and the 'there' present in the image.

These marks help distinguish the image in space. They open a place that is here, and there, around the image, a kind of multiplicity separate from the virtual form expressed by the digital/virtual arena. To distinguish movement from the image, while retaining the sense of opening a place of the body conjures a relation to what Jean-Luc Nancy observes as the *pure image*. The pure image signifies what is seen as much as it does the unseen, i.e. the distinct: 'The Distinct is set apart: the distinct mark of sense, its *trait*. It is the stigma, that is, the incision that separates' (Nancy 2005: 3). There is a mark that the image carries, that separates and withdraws a sense from the absolute sensation of the flowing transmission of the virtual: 'A non-sensory trait that is not embodied in any sense' (Nancy 2005: 125). Situating a place of the body is made possible by pursuing a strategy of marking while *withdrawing* a movement within the medium of a virtual vector. Thus emerges a place of here *and* there; a separation that can establish an opening—a question of the place, what it is, what could be, a bare locus—*without* attaching a definitive schema to the locus. Distinctly, a phase of separation invites no identification of it, either as a transcendental, virtual time or as space. This was a significant observation that occurred to me, that the distinction of the interval can be re-marked as a pure separation and spacing (Nancy 2005).

RE-MARKS UPON WHERE TO CONCLUDE

Using an unconventional approach to both video and a form of drawing I have taken this as the occasion to disclose some of the complexities of

marking and virtually recording movement. Because of the philosophical nature of drawing, a practice based on expressing operations of thought, the correlative of mark-making can uncritically extend the foundational elements of movement, embodiment and the line. When these elements are marked again—marking the unmarked, vibrational sense of a linear, bifurcating movement—an operation of displacement is enabled, separating the mark from the body, and the virtual vector from the spectator. Here, or there, on and off the screen occurs a measure of the body, thus shifting the interval from being virtually perceived.

We can ask if the question of the new is to be regarded as a place of emergence in terms of a longing for another transcendental schema. To employ Jacques Rancière's critical comment, those endeavoring to identify a virtual multiplicity and its notion of radical temporality invoke a desire to *have* the non-representational, to experience a 'material presence, the spirit made flesh' (Rancière 2009: 8). Experiencing, making tangible the medium of a virtual-becoming, expresses the new in terms of an openness; but when the virtual interval is directly expressed as a kind of gap, it requires perceiving the line-movement as absolute and constantly present. Massumi confirms this when he states that the virtual is 'a purification of experience, thought-out (the only-thought)' (Massumi 2002: 92). And this attitude—itself a perception of a mode of thinking—embraces a transcending presence, a tangible resonance and movement of feedback to be uniquely outside of the possible combinations for re-presenting the new. This is the possible response of a virtual multiplicity to newness: 'Its not-an-object is the indeterminate excess of self-active, connective potential continuing through and renewing history' (Massumi 2002: 240). The virtual is, therefore, somehow outside of history whilst immanently affecting it, *absolutely*. Consequently, the virtual's predicament, by ousting the possibility of combinations, invokes a promise of its presence by continuously moving upon itself, affirming one option: 'let us save the 'heterogeneous sensible" (Rancière 2010: 124).

Endeavoring to situate a dynamic relationship between the image, the body (as the subject that immediately appears in it) and the trace of a mark revolves around an effort to open a multiple discourse, which overrides one that can only be 'thought-out'. There can occur, as I have attempted to show, a coordination of these factors, where neither one substantialises a legacy conditioned by a primordial duration. Nor does this establish another supra-empirical and transcendental mode of making sensuous a model of space. What can, however, be addressed is the act of opening up, which is captured in Nancy's description of the opening as 'a being-there of the beyond' [un être-là de l'au delà]: 'because the image, then, is above all the *there* of a *beyond*. It is not at all its 'representation': it is a thinking-there, thinking as the effectivity of a place opening itself to presence' (Nancy 2005: 125, emphasis original). Certainly, my presentation of examples which support my arguments here are partially removed from an orthodoxy of the image, as marks inscribed on a surface. Nevertheless, seeing a body and the evidence of its passing through a space situates a condition of emergence and presence, or place. Moreover, the act of the body, and its displacement with the mark opens a space to a place of thought. This place, this sheer opening of a 'here', a kind of 'beyond' (there) is the spot in which an act of thought can occur anew, without longing for something other than what is here/there, namely presencing (becoming).

NOTES

1. 'Newness: what is comparable to itself […] For the art of catalyzing a relational emergence is philosophy in action. The conceptual newness is there, in the event, enacted' (Massumi 2002: 175-176).

2. 'The virtual, as such, is inaccessible to the senses… Its fleeting is in the cracks between and the surfaces around the images' (Massumi 2002: 133).

3. 'An event, a passage: 'force' is a verb. Its action is unobeyable because, across its unrefusable repetition, it commands creation. Its imperative is the new' (Massumi 2002: 160).

4. 'Media transmission is the becoming of the event' (Massumi 2002: 89-132).

5. See chapter 4, 'The Evolutionary Alchemy of Reason' in Massumi 2002.

6. For a historical survey of drawing, and its role in generating thought, see Petheridge 2010. In terms of methodology see Cain 2010.

7. I am alluding to Jean-Luc Nancy's description of the screen as a species of the pure image: 'In a sense, we must not even speak any longer of a screen: video is not of the order of the screen, but of penetration. One is not a spectator but a voyeur. Video means 'I see,' whereas theao means 'I look' (and kineo is 'I move')' (Nancy 2005: 74).

8. For a full description of the four forms of time, see Deleuze 2008: 54-6.

9. Henri Michaux makes a similar observation with regards to an experience of displacement, related to the graphic mark, when he writes, 'this emptiness, unlike any other emptiness, would deserve another name. August, encompassing as much as excluding, saturating, at times solemn, above all 'NON-TEMPORAL' (or so it seems), absolutely non-locatable (in that you don't know whether you encounter it inside yourself or also outside)' (Michaux 2002: 172).

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