TAKING BACK THE DOLLAR: ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIES: 2006

The following is a transcript of a panel organized by Carin Kuoni of the Vera List Center for Art and Politics at the New School in New York City. It took place in 2006, and was moderated by Gregory Sholette with participants including Paul Glover (Ithaca time dollars founder), Matthieu Laurette (Paris-based artist), Carolina Caycedo (Columbian born artist), Yates McKee (U.S. art critic), and Maka of the collective Yomango (Barcelona, Chile, Mexico).

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CARIN KUONI: Thank you first off very much for coming despite rain. And I gather the Westside subway is not working at all and it is a Friday in the smmer at this point, so thank you for being here. We're presenting this panel as part of a cycle on forgiveness. And the idea is that one is forcibly going to acknowledge and perhaps even engage with an adversary of some kind in our society, in our country. The artists on the panel were invited because they provide alternatives to the capitalistic system in which we find ourselves and it's quite heartening and encouraging and empowering and bolding to see just the range of practices that they represent and the number of artists who deal with alternative economic exchanges of some kind, whether it's gifts or barter or legal or illegal trades of some kind.

I'd like to thank them very much for being here. TThe moderator tonight is Gregory Sholette who is an old friend of mine I'm happy to say. Artist, critic, curator, a co-founder of Repo History, an artist collective that deals with or dealt with repossessing history. He's currently in a group show at Wave Hill and he's the author of several books. One of them is *The Interventionist* and forthcoming is *Collectivism after Modernism, the Art of Social Imagination after 1945*; that's from the University of Minnesota Press being published this fall.

Without further ado, just a brief acknowledgment to the staff at the Vera List Center. Pamela Tillis is Director of Public Programs at the University. Kerry Schneider works at the Vera Liar Center and as always, Lillian Fellmann. So again thank you very much for being here and Gregory you would be the first one.

GREGORY SHOLETTE: Thank you, Carin. Thanks everybody for coming in such inclement weather and making it here in one piece. Carin is right, we know each other from Repo History. What people don't always know is that Repo History really got its start in her loft here in New York City in many ways. Our meetings took place there for quite a long time. I'm going to

introduce each of the speakers just a little bit more and then sort of turn it over to them and then we'll have a question and answer period.

But what each of the speakers brings to the discussion this evening is that they're raising fundamental questions about the production of economic value. And in one way or another, their projects ask how such value is created, can it be produced in new ways, even ways that are perhaps not compatible with capitalist economy, and what is the minimal institutional framework necessary for its accumulation, exchange and circulation?

Our guests have also challenged in a sense the very nature of value by revealing how something that's really very abstract which we take for granted all the time is fundamentally linked to every day social relations, and they actually sort of pull this out and bring it into the open through their work. The way they accomplish this kind of reverse alchemy is really up to them to describe, but first we're going to be hearing from Carolina Caycedo. I first met her, Carolina, in London a few years ago and she's been working with the group Calabaches Collectiva, which she'll be speaking about, that was founded in Bogotá in 1997. And Collective was really developed what was called sort of a paradoxical museum of the streets, where everyday objects were collected, displayed in public, and then they were swapped with passersby to create what they called an ever changing recollection of objects reflecting the diversity of everyday life in the streets.

Carolina's most recent work also involves free exchange, but her practice has shifted from that of an artist as archeologist to maybe an artist as a socioeconomic prototype, and I'll let her describe what that is. But she does say about her work now, that it is beautiful, satisfying, ecologically friendly, revolutionary and generous.

Following Carolina will be Robert Glover. He's somewhat of an exception of this evening.

CARIN KUONI: Paul.

GREGORY SHOLETTE: I'm sorry?

CARIN KUONI: His name is Paul.

GREGORY SHOLETTE: Paul Glover, pardon me. Paul Glover, Robert's not here. Paul is something of an exception. He's actually an economic activist, and in 1991 he established a form of localized currency called Ithaca Hours. And it's a system based on the exchange of non-federally produced paper money that can only be circulated within the city limits of Ithaca. Since then, since 1991, the equivalent of several million dollars in value has been traded using Ithaca Hours and that, in turn, provides a kind of increased economic independence for the city, which

he'll talk more about I'm sure. But it's also not hard to see how Paul's project, Ithaca Hours, offers a kind of fiscal alternative to both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which as we know have been implicated in the debt crisis of developing nations.

Our third speaker will be Matthieu Laurette. He lives in Paris and also in New York and he's represented by Yvon Lambert Gallery. Matthieu's work has appeared at the Institute for Contemporary Art in London, the Palais de Tokyo, the Stedelijk Museum and P.S. 1 here in New York. But he describes what he does as Aturning the laws of marketing and the mass media to his advantage. In other words, he is a hacker or hijacker who appropriates the tools of what Guy de Bord famously called the Spectacle and [detorns] these apparatus for other ends.

An example of this economic hijacking was his project the Great Exchange in the Basque region of Spain. And it began when Matthieu purchased a brand new automobile, actually using the money that was given to him as an artist fee. It ended several weeks later with a collection of inexpensive blue drinking glasses. I'm not going to say any more because I know he's going to talk about how that came about, how that project came about.

The second to last speaker will be Maka. She is an artist and activist living in Mexico as well as a member of the group Yomango, which is a kind of loosely-based collective that was founded in Barcelona but now actually has chapters in Germany, Argentina, Chile and of course Mexico. And some of you know the SpanishYin Spanish Yomango is slang for >I take' and it's also a kind of pun on a popular Mango clothing brand that now has retail outlets in London and all the way to Cairo, which I was surprised to see recently.

Yomango's mission is deceptively simple and it might be summarized this way. The economic alternative to capitalism is not to renounce your desire for commodities but instead to steal them. Yomango offers its own line of clothes and accessories to help carry out this mission, and it also has marketing advice on its website. For example, Dare to Desire, Yomango is Your Style, Risky, Innovative. It is the articulate proliferation of creative desires. Yomango, feel pretty. And of course the idea of shoplifting or the five-fingered discount has a very long history and it's often linked with political resistance. But what's unusual about Yomango, is that it kind of transforms this idea of theft into a kind of lifestyle brand.

Now our final speaker is Yates McKee. Yates is a Ph.D. candidate in Art History at Columbia University and an alumnus of the Whitney Independent Studies Program. He's also a member of the informal collective and reading group known as 16 Beaver Street. His presentation this evening will fittingly provide some critical insight into our topic, and his talk is going to draw

from an essay that he will soon have published in October Magazine entitled ASuspicious Packages on Alia Hassan Khan's Gift.

Yates' thesis compares the recent interest in generosity amongst the especially socially concerned artists and activists, with the near total privatization of everyday life under neo-liberalism. I mean, there is after all a very thin line between the act of charity and the fortification of class divisions. Yates' project in a sense projects these ambiguities onto the terrain of the geo-political, especially in the post 9/11 so-called clash of cultures.

So each speaker will have about 10 minutes to speak. I'll be holding up numbers so you know when you get to the one-minute, the three-minute mark, and then I'm going to ask one question after they're finished and then I'll turn it over to everyone else. Thank you.

CAROLINA CAYCEDO: Hello. I'm going to talk about two projects today. The first one is the Street Museum. Can we turn off the lights a bit? Thank you. The Street Museum started in '97 as a collective project in the streets of Bogotá. We started working in this very rundown area in the center of the city that you can see up there. It's called [Ecartouche]. It doesn't exist any more, it's gone under gentrification.

So during this process we really wanted to kind of obtain objects out of this kind of island in the city, like outlaw space, where people did have an alternative economy basically based on recycling. All the recyclers from Bogotá lived in this area, and they would have this kind of wooden carts you see over there. And they would tour the city picking up card boxes, paper, glass and plastic from other people's rubbish and taking it back to this zone and selling it and living out of this. But these people would use this cart not only as their vehicle for work but also they would live in these carts, of course, you know, very poorly.

So we started collecting objects in good state, shoes, clothes, books, toys, among friends, and we started exchanging them with people from the streets. Like you can see exchanging like a pair of boots for just a piece of can or you know. And then we started conforming what is called the Street Museum nowadays. With all these objects we would collect by exchanging with these people, then we would do like spontaneous street exhibitions like you can see in that photograph, where we would show all theses objects and then passersby could swap them also. And so by this way we were trying to leave little seeds of this place in other people's hands in order to keep a kind of memory of this disappearing subculture, I would say.

So you have more examples of like street displays. And then we started getting invited to exhibitions around the world and so we would start taking all these objects collected in this

downtown area of Bogotá to other places like Lubiana, or that's in Paris actually. And we would, you know, kind of adapt the street museum to local marketplaces or free-trade places. For example, that example in Paris, we noticed when we got there that most of the street vendors use a little sheet to put all there objects, so if the police come they can quickly pick up the sheet and run away. So we kind of copied them a bit.

And this is more like an inside door displays in museums or institutions. So the idea was to give a bit of importance to everyday objects that at some point could be considered rubbish, but I guess some people's rubbish is other people's treasure. And many exchanges would take place, you know, simple -- I don't know, you can see some examples over there.

So that's the first project I was involved, barter project, I was involved in. It was a collective effort. And then slowly I started shifting to more personal desires of exchange or something, and at some point I decided I want to incorporate services, to offer services, and to make the exchanges a bit more personal. Because in the Street Museum, yeah, we would negotiate with the object and somehow the exercise we proposed to people was to revalue or to think about the value of the object and just create a new value at that moment of exchange, instead of being attached to monetary values imposed by a system.

But after that we lost contact with the people or that stopped there. It was just an object for trade. So in 2002, I was invited to do this public project in Vienna, and it's a place called [Succession], and they were actually asking me to do a public project, like to give them some presence in the public space in the street. And I felt a bit fishy about it because sometimes they ask you to do public projects, just like you're like a clown, to give them some presence, to give an institution some presence in the street and then I didn't want to do this really.

So I came up, you know, like all this interest of making more personal exchanges were in my head, and I decided to propose them to live in Vienna without money for three weeks. The only thing I asked from them was this van and gasoline for the van and all the rest like food, a place to stay, a place to wash, to cook, whatever, I would find through exchange.

So I got a great inspiration from this woman. She's a German woman, her name is Heidemarie Schwermer, and she stopped living with money in '96. She has a booked called *Living Without Money*. And she was a psychiatrist. She's a 60-year-old woman, and in '96 she decided to live without cash at all. She moved into a student house and she sometimes helps to cook and to clean the place and she lives there for free. And I got in touch with her, and I asked her that I

wanted to do this project but I felt, you know, that it was not going be enough radical, that I was just going to do it for three weeks, what would she think about it? And she said, AGo for it, experience it for the first time and then you'll find your way somehow.

And she was telling me that her life is like a game where she arranges and rearranges the rules every day according to her necessities, and that she felt totally free. That she's not an ascetic because she has everything she needs when she needs it. She's a very creative person with a lot of friends.

So, okay I went for it. I did this project in Vienna, three weeks living without money, it went really nice, made good friends through it. After I returned to London where I was living at the moment, I got rid of a lot of my stuff because when I went home again I realized that most of the things I had at home I didn't need them any more.

And yeah, I had this website, I kept on doing exchanges now and then. At some point I got pregnant and the website disappeared for a bit. And I moved to New York in September last year, and I got included in the Whitney Bienniale and they asked me to doYwell, yeah, to think about projects. I thought it was the perfect opportunity to revive the day-to-day project again. First, because New York is so expensive and I really needed like to find other ways to obtain things I needed. Second, because New York is a city again that is ruled by money and you're used to paying for everything here. And second, I wanted an excuse to meet more people in New York and to find my way around the city without depending on like selling/paying relationships but more, you know, casual encounters based on barter or whatever.

So I reconstructed the website, bought a van again. This one I bought for $800 from a guy in Brooklyn. And during the last two months and a half that the Whitney was up, I was offering through the website exchanges, a whole range of services. This is like the online form you can fill, you can fill in on the website that's actually up. I'll give you the address later. So most of the people were contacting me through the website. I received like around 300 barter requests during those two months and a half, but I needed around 40 barters because there was a negotiation involved.

And this is basically the list of things I offered. So in this first column you will see what I offer. Spanish lessons, follow someone, read a book loudly, very everyday, trivial activities, nothing very professional. And on the other side you will see what I need in return.

So I guess that the triviality of the list also permits a wider approach to exchange. And also the interaction between myself and others come in many levels, and it's really nice when the

rule of barter one-for-one blurs somehow and there's more just a generosity gesture involved or a sharing gesture, I think that's when the project really works.

So this is the van inside. I customized it somehow. It's my private car. It's my family car that becomes public once it hits the road and exchanges started to take place. And I'm just going to talk about some of the exchanges I did. With this guy Pako, I went to pick up his bike somewhere in Brooklyn, from Williamsburg to Sunset Park, and he gave me back Internet access anytime I need it. During the project I needed it a lot, so that was good.

And this is Sinclair, I took care of her an afternoon while her parents went out for lunch, and then Sinclair's mother saw these pants for Oona. That's my baby on the left side. And it was really nice because they became playmates, so after the exchange we keep on meeting to take them to the swings and stuff.

And this is Sarah that's here in the audience. I helped her move her stuff, herYshe was moving home from Bushwick to Clinton Hill, I think. Sunset Park, sorry. And she gave me back a bag of groceries, a paper sculpture for my van, because I want to host an exhibition in my van and that's one of the things I'm asking for in return, artwork. This was really nice how it happened because part of the installation in the Whitney, there was this red phone that people could actually pick up and it would be a direct line to my cell phone. So I was receiving around between 5 to 20 calls a day of people asking to barter something or requesting an exchange. And she picked it up by chance and then we kind of negotiated over the phone that same day.

To Veronica, I filmed her in her performance. She was sewing these security cloaks out of security blankets and she gave me back all this VHS movies.

This is Mickey, she came over to my place and gave me this drawing and this mini DVD tape and I gave her this backpack, because she was here for a weekend and her backpack had broken. So she needed a new backpack and I had this one I was not using that much.

This is Adam. I gave him a Spanish lesson and he gave me back some grocery shopping. And among the things he gave me was this halibut, Alaskan halibut, which a friend of his fished. So you can see it's not for sale. I guess there was no other way I could have obtained this fish. And then his mother gave me this very much needed trainers, sneakers, sorry, in exchange of his portrait. So I draw him and send it back to his mother and she sent me over the post the sneakers.

And to Grady, I draw his portrait and he gave me these three books. That was really nice because he invited me over to his home. I went with Oona, and it's funny how people just open

their doors of their house somehow. There's a lot of trust involved in this project and in all of my projects. And although I'm in a vulnerable position also because I guess I anywhere they [can call] or something. Fortunately nothing of that has happened. And when people actually invite me to their houses or to their spaces, I feel like I'm drilling a hole into their private life and I really like that. Like this sudden intimacy takes place with someone I don't know before, and I guess that's the nice thing about barter, that it's like an universal language and that all the social barriers are jumped in one step and you don't have to go through all this social process of meeting someone. So that's a really nice thing about this project they say.

This is Sandra. I took her to La Guardia Airport and she send me back these books about teaching.

This is Blanca. She took a lot of my daughter's outgrown clothes to make her sculptures and she gave me two bottles of wine. I gave Andrew a haircut and he bought a packet of diapers for my baby and this book.

And one of the most requested services was Spanish lessons, so at the end I decided to put together an advanced conversation group. So we met every two Sundays in the park or somewhere, and we would just analyze the text and I would correct their vocabulary and their pronunciation. And every Sunday I would come back with a lot of goodies like Pampers for my baby, or books, Humus, bread, paper for printing, Nutella.

Todd, I gave him a haircut also and he invited me to dinner. I don't have photographs of the dinner. I totally forgot to take them. And it's really nice that the exchanges just simply are part of your daily life, you know. And at some point when you actually make friends through the barter, it's really nice to see how well the fine division between everyday life and art just blurs and all is the same thing.

And this is the last trade I'm going to talk about. Amy, I helped to move her things into a new apartment in Harlem, and she gave me all these goodies also, a photographic camera, some bags, plates and cutlery, and books and toys for my daughter, some clothes. So, yeah, I would say that day-to-day maybe, I don't rely on it totally, you know, to obtain all of my necessities, but it really is an important part of my life in the sense that it does give me things I need to keep on living, for example. And also it's the space where I know people that otherwise I probably would have never met.

And I think that exchange is very important because you can replace the dependence on authority. So that's the important thing about it. [Applause]

PAUL GLOVER: You can turn on the lights if you like. The conversion of New York City to a Carolina economy is going to be a big challenge. This is the world capital of capitals and people are accumulating anonymous digits faster than friends. Though within New York City a lot of people are making friends and there is a lot of barter going on.

In Ithaca, New York, in 1991, just after the first oil war, invasion of Iraq, I was particularly disgusted with our reliance as a society on an oil empire and wanted to contribute to the creating of an economy which would bring together our values for peace, social justice and environmental repair with our daily lives because shopping is voting. When we buy something we are voting for whoever made it. We're giving our power, our dollars usually, to them for having made that and providing it to us.

So in Ithaca, New York, a small city of about 30,000 people, half of whom are students, the other half are year-round residents, a lot of people know each other. There's a farmer's market with 110 vendors all selling things made within a 30-mile radius. There was a nice food cooperative and a very active credit union. There are dozens and dozens and dozens of small businesses owned by people who have been activists and who are dedicated to these values, to the environment and social justice. And I have a varied background. I lived in that community, I knew a lot of people, and I was tapped on the shoulder by forces on the scene to undertake something unusual in the modern era of moneymaking. And I was moved.

I am a graphic artist, and I undertook a performance art program which has lasted 15 years. I went and designed paper money and made some Xerox copies of it and went around with it to my friends and waved it at them and said, AThis is going to be money, we'll trade it with each other, sign up here. And then I handed them a clipboard and they said okay. And within three months I had corralled 90 people onto the list and they made the list of the things that they offered, the goods and services that they offered, and the goods and services that they needed. So it was essentially a barter list facilitated by a local paper currency. And the money is denominated as hours, an hour of labor. One Ithaca hour with a waterfall on it is worth an hour of basic labor, or $10, which is twice the minimum wage in the United States of America. And on the front is an Ithaca waterfall, an old engraving of an Ithaca waterfall, there are hundreds of waterfalls crashing into the valley of Ithaca, and on the back it says ATime is money.

This is a monument of nature. This is a foundation of our existence as a community and nature is the foundation of all business, of course, as well. I'll pass these around and I'd ask you to

give them back to me at the end. I passed these around at a Rotary meeting and one of them didn't come back. But you are all honorable persons who are concerned about the future of our economy.

And this money, joking aside, began to be welcomed by more and more people until ultimately over 500 businesses in Ithaca, including the bank, movie theaters, bowling alleys, health clubs, restaurants, the medical center, the public library, pretty much anything in town. You can pay rent often with this money, garage sales, poker games. I've heard of some marijuana sales. In fact, the half-hour note is printed on 100% hemp paper which is 50% Spanish hemp and 50% Mendocino, California hemp which is illegal. So if you touch this, you can...but if you touch it you are part of theYyeah, so.

So the half-hour then would be worth $5. And the money can be transacted either for labor value. People can trade it for an hour of labor. If persons feel that their hour of labor is worth more than the average hour of labor, they can charge multiple hours per hour, multiple Ithaca Hours per hour. But this puts at the center of the transaction the question, who's labor is worth more than someone else's? Instead of saying an hour is an hour, no one may charge more than an hour, we allow it to be flexible, to be part of a cultural change in our community by which over years people get adjusted to the idea that, well, digging ditches is very hard, it's physical labor, but we should respect it. It's maybe even more valuable than being a lawyer conceivably.

This is a quarter hour, worth a quarter hour of basic labor or $2.50. A thermal ink invented in Ithaca which when rubbed causes it to disappear, and if someone tries to Xerox it it makes it difficult to counterfeit. So the eighth hour, with the Salamander on the front and on the back a bug found so far only in Ithaca, is worth $1.25. The bug eats bacteria which feed on slime mold, and the slime mold degrades fallen trees and converts the fallen trees to soil. Soil is the foundation of agriculture which feeds us, particularly in Ithaca where we have so many organic farms. So this bug is an essential part of civilization and of business, and we honor it on our money as the eighth hour.

The two-hour note honors the Native Americans who were living in Ithaca 10,000 years ago in the shadow of the glaciers, and they lived there for thousands of years without shopping malls or highways. We honor them for that. This is printed on 100% cattail paper. I harvested the cattails beside the railroads tracks and we mashed it into a pulp.

So the money has transacted now 15 years later many millions of dollars of trading value, of value, and has been part of transactions worth many millions more. So the dollar value is significant, though still a small part of the overall large economy dominated by multinationals and

large businesses. But it has facilitated connections. It has reinforced shopping patterns with locally-owned small businesses instead of chain stores. It has introduced people to each other. Thousands of individuals as well as these businesses have been on a list, we have a trading list, like Carolina's list but of these thousands of people. Once the money is introduced into circulation systematically, anyone can use it. And so it has moved all over the place and even beyond Ithaca it has been used.

We make loans of the money without charging interest and that's a fundamental monetary revolution. Because control of where you make loans, by banks, control of where money comes from decides what happens. It decides who gets richer, it decides whose neighborhoods fall apart, it decides who lives well, who lives poorly, who is healthy and who is unhealthy. So making of loans is a very great social power, and we are taking control of that with our own money system.

And likewise of course the images that we put on the money. This is a cultural power. On the dollars, nearly all of the people on dollars are slave holders, Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton. Jackson was a particularly enthusiastic slave trader and even Benjamin Franklin had a slave. And so our money, by contrast, has monuments of nature and artifacts of local manufacturer that we respect. And this is the first paper money in the United States to honor an African-American woman and a lifelong local educator, after whom a school has been named. And on the back part of a poem by Langston Hughes and the days of Kwanza, and this transacts in Ithaca also.

We make grants of this money to community organizations, over 100 community organizations so far. And so we are bringing sectors of the economy together, individuals, small businesses, some large businesses, non-profit organizations. And we could even go so far, although I transferred control of Ithaca hour system in 1999 to an elected board of directors. Before then it had just been whoever attended the monthly meeting could help make the policy. It was an anarchist system. It was not even incorporated until 1999.

Well, I had something important to say. We've had a lot of fun with this. I mean, the marketplace should be a place, again in reference to what Carolina has made so clear, it should be a place where people become friends and lovers and political allies. That's a marketplace, that's an essential humanity of trading which has been overridden by the scramble for digits, for numbers, for bank accounts. And the prevailing marketplaces, many of you would agree, is indifferent to communities, to humanity and the environment, though in some cases it benefits humanity, the environment. It at the same time is considerably a dysfunctional economy through which people get rich by putting people in jail, by cleaning up after traffic accidents. I mean if people drove

safely, the economy would fall apart. If people quit committing crimes the economy would fall apart, you know.

In one minute, my gosh, there's so much to say about prevailing economy. But that's the fun of creating your own economy, that we have a critique which goes on endlessly. And you can read thousands of books and more thousands of articles about how our economy is inhuman and destructive and we're going to collide with a brick wall, the great wall of inhuman... China and the United States, the empires combined are falling apart because of a collision with the limit to the access to oil ultimately. We know all these things, and we would like to be part of a system which went in a different direction.

To make a local currency system work, to make a local trading system work, to strengthen local and regional farms and businesses and create the creative sector is a lot of grunt work, it's a lot of networking. In Ithaca I rode my bicycle everywhere. It was a lot more efficient than riding in a car. I talked to thousands of people literally to get them to be part of this system. It's a relentless PR process also to keep people excited about this. It's much more than saying, well, we have some money and it will help us trade with each other and we'll have more money and it will be really good. No, you've got to be a fanatic.

And I fit the bill in Ithaca and I've had a lot of fun with it. I started then a health insurance program, a health co-op. I'd be happy to talk with any of you after. A hundred dollars a year and people are covered for everyday emergencies. And we started a free clinic in Ithaca. I call it the Health Democracy Movement. If any of you go to the website healthdemocracy.org you will see, I finished a book recently called *Health Democracy,* how we can take control of that domination also by which millions of Americans have no health insurance for struggle to pay, with premiums higher than they can afford or jobs they hate just so they can have health insurance. We can liberate America from that also.

So, yeah, there are ways, there are alternatives. It's an exciting world before us and local currency is one part of that. [Applause]

MATTHIEU LAURETTE: Hello, my name is Matthieu Laurette. I'm French, sorry for my English. Well, so the question is which alternative economies are we talking about here. Alternative within the existing economy or can we create alternative economy outside? So, I'm the third presentation now. So one of the questions I asked myself when I started to be an artist was can you create your own economy within the existing economy? And how also can you become an artist? Is there a way to become an artist?

The first thing I did was that I went first on the TV show the DatingYthe French version of the Dating Game Show on TV. And when the presenter asked myself what do you want to be later I said, AWell, an artist. She asked me, ADo you want to be a painter or a sculptor? And I said, AWell, multimedia artist, which in '93 was only used within the art world. It was not for computers, DVD or whatever we use it now for. So this was of course a way to use the economy, the strength in the economy and like the systems were already existing. So instead of like having my first solo show or first group show I went on TV and sent invitation cards, so that people would watch this TV show.

So at the same time, I started another project, like around early >90s as well, which is called Money Back Products. It's a series of investigations on how can you survive in the economic, I mean, post-capitalistic market within supermarkets and surrounded by all this kind of economy. So I realized there is like, especially in France, I mean, and all over Europe, I mean, here it's a bit different, works differently. But products with offers like first pair of shades free or satisfaction guaranteed or your money back. Basically it's a regular product that you can buy in supermarkets and if you send back the receipt and like your bank details, then like a few weeks later you receive the money back directly transferred into your bank account. You just have to say that you're not happy with the product. It's like the consumerYit's not the consumerYI mean, like it's not the, what is it called sorry the consumer services. I mean, it's not the real complaint. It's really like they launch new products with offers where they advertise on TV on the products with big logos saying satisfaction guaranteed or your money back and so on.

So I started to realize there were many like these and I started to buy them more and more. Then I thought it could be relevant for other people as well. Because only less than 0.01% of the people who bought this product were asking for their money back. Although many probably bought it because they expected to have their money back.

So I started a website explaining how you can do it, with all the explanation and all the tricks as well like, I mean, how toYbut the idea was to stay legal all the time. So I had to open different bank accounts because it's only like once per household, I mean, asking the money back. So I had to have different addresses and so I started also to use bank accounts of other people, and so on. And the website was so that everybody couldYlike for example, I make deals with collectors. They would send me money and then I would like send them like all the receipts and they would get back the money and I would live for free.

But I did it also for myself and for others, and I put most of this on a website first but then also I spoke to different media. And in '97 I happened to be on the cover of Le Monde with an article describing a new way of life. It was called like ATomorrow We Will Eat for Free, which was a kind of portrait of my way of living and eating and consuming.

I also went on TV. A few years later, I appeared also in a trashy tabloid in the U.K. where I was called the Freebie King, so I was revealing all my secrets you see. So if you want to know about the tricks and the secrets, I mean, actually I have a few flyers left so maybe you can pass them around.

Then also I opened some showrooms first in different places where I was like reselling at same price, at cost price, the products with all the tickets attached to it and receipts attached to it so that people could get their money back as well. And I also organized guided tours in supermarkets, where I would bring people and explain then how they can do it for free and, I mean, as well.

I would advertise for this for different media, so not only art people would be there but at least like most of the time I also do likeYI went on tour with a van, it's called Money Back Life, AVivant Remboursé in French. This was in the Nantes and in different cities. I also do like some lectures where I was explaining that. Ninety-nine percent of the audience was people totally outside of the art world, I have to mention.

So I went on TV explaining all this, on national television, and I became a kind of media moron, a freak or something after a while. And and basically I ended the project in -- sorry, I'll have to come back. I ended the project in 2001 when [Harold Zimmen] invited me to the Venice Biennale and he asked me, ACan you show this project there? And I was like, AWell, it's something I started really like on different level and things. But, so that [end of first tape] ... retrospective only through the point-of-view of the media, so it was on TV, the clips where I was explaining all this, but there was selective enlargement of press cuttings. I commissioned the Wax Museum in Paris, like an equivalent of Madame Tussaud's, to make a wax figure of me with a shopping cart.

So now I'm going to talk about another project which is the one Gregory mentioned at the beginning which is a project called El Gran Tuequé, the Great Exchange, sorry for my Spanish. So it was initiated but, I mean, there was this organization called Consonni in Bilbao that is a kind of non-for-profit organization. They do public art projects but they don't have the space and they don't have specific way to work with, I mean, as public art the idea is like really not to do at all like a sculpture or something.

So basically what the guy told me at the beginning was there an amount of money coming from the Basque government and that could be the starting point for a project. And we realized that the money was about the price of a brand new car, so we decided to buy a car and make some deals with the TV company, a private commercial TV company there, and have like a weekly program on TV during the time it would last, where the idea would be to swap this car for something brand new that would be bought in a shop, so that there would be a price and that we would stay within that kind of economy.

So after three weeks of promoting this kind of exchange, people could call like a hotline 24-hours. We had like the best offer was likeYso this was like the TV presenter and the car that was six times a day on this channel, TV. So the first swap was we exchanged that car for a computer and brand new printer and everything, bought in the most beautiful shop in Bilbao. And the week after we exchanged that, which was already like 1/3 of the price of the car at least, then we exchanged that for a brand new Sony TV Trinitron, whatever. Then like after a few weeks it was only like I think after it was like a fridge and different things and after a few weeks, it was just like this juice maker. And then we ended three months later with a set of six glasses that cost only one dollar.

So, of course, this was not really the kind of TV show you would see usually because usually it's the opposite. At the end you get in the car, you can get the car. Well, basically of course this was like something that was visible first like the leaflet you saw, so it was distributed in every letterbox, every household within the area, in Bilbao, received this flyer in his letterbox. So it reaches of course several thousands and thousands of people. And this was a sort of very popular TV show, and it was discussed like sometimes we were in the subway when we would hear people talking about it, can you believe that and blah, blah, blah someone got this.

So, and this was a huge debate because it was public money. And, you know, Basque country or so like as a specialYI mean, how can I describe itYit was quite nationalistic. So I I'm not Basque, not even from the Basque side in France. So it was also discussed for different reasons like that so it was very, very interesting in that sense, like that the economy, well, how do you spend the money? Can you spend public money? Is it okay to redistribute the monies? Everything was visible, nothing was hidden, you know. Because the show on TV was like first there was this trailer where we're advertising for the object of the week. Then there was like other episodes where we would film the people buying the object and then in the second shot they would get the other object, and it was only one take each time.

Another kind of economy I've been involved with is the economy of the art world really like, I mean, like what is it to be involved in a road show. In '99 I was involved in a show called Le Capital, Capital, directed by Nicola Beaulieu. And this was a show in a place where entrance was free, and I decided to set up an entrance fee but it was totally illegal because you couldn't do that. So we worked with lawyers and we realized it was possible if it will be optional. So there would be like at the entrance, when you enter the exhibition, the first artwork you would see would be likeYat the entrance you would be told it's free. Then we arrive one meter inside the exhibition and would be told, okay, it's ten francs optional..

So you could buy the tickets, and we had to set up like a non-for-profit organization that would get that money and then...well, it was very complex but it was veryYand so my idea was also like, I don't know if you know Nicola Beaulieu, all these writings and all these things. I really wanted to test him, so he became the President of this non-for-profit organization, so that at least if I would steal the money he would be responsible as well.

Another way of using the public money or the money you get out of your artist fee or this is when there is no artist fee, how do you get paid? Like, there was this show called Social [inaudible] in Helsinki which was a series of shows in a non-for-profit place in Helsinki where I realized that in Finland the money isY I mean, art is kind of spent throughYI mean, one part of the money is coming through the lottery. And so basically some part of the money for this show was coming through the money that was coming through lottery, I mean, basically.

So I decided to buy some scratch cards and to take four people in the audience during the opening and they would scratch the card. It looks like a very seventies performance for a while, it was boring and long. It was fun at the beginning but one hour of people scratching cards in front of you is not always very funny. And so I would be like the supervisor, and of course all the winning cards would be mine at the end and would be my fee. And all the cards lost would go back to the minister that gave us that money. So like 5.1% would go to youth activities, 20% to sports, 19.5% to science and 44.6% would go back to art and what was left for the visitor after an exhibition, all the wasted money, put back in the pocket ofY.

And also you have to know like the slogan for the Finnish lottery is AIt's Always a Fin that Wins, which means that, well you get back the money at the end.

Another very economical project I've been working on it's called the Citizenship Project. I've been resourcing information with lawyers and also on the Internet about like what citizenship is nowadays. And because like citizenship is the only thing that is not supposed to be sold. I mean,

no country can sell...every citizenship law/act defines the citizenship as something that defines you but that can't be bough. You can only be granted or it's only when you were born. It has different ways to define it, it but never you can buy it usually.

But if you go on the Internet you can find prices and they're legal prices, through legal systems. I'm not talking about fake passports. If you set up like an economical system like for example if you maybe invest about this money in Panama, in some part of the economy, then you will be granted this. Like for example, for Panama I think it's like in the forest industry. For Belize you can imagine of course it's really a way to hide money for Americans sometimes, by the way. So it's like all these things that I've been resourcing. So this is a donation box that is usually in front of museums or different places and you can also send checks and I would cash those money and maybe we'll get this.

A few years ago in New York I set up like a kind of sub-project for this which was called AHelp Me To Become a U.S. Citizen. It was for a show at Artist Space, so this is the website. I don't know where to investigate this project. It was at the Venice Biennale in 2001 where I asked Al Zimmen to write to all the countries that were not part officially either of the pavilions or neither in the international exhibitions, to ask them if they would provide me with a citizenship, and then I could be an artist for that country. None of them agreed so far as well, you can imagine.

All this later was pasted... It was called the Other Pavilion and it was like right at the entrance of the [Jardinier], all those Xerox copies of letters.

Then I'm going to talk about like two recent projects like I just did last month. This is a project for a show in a commercial gallery in London where as part of the other things that are displayed in this show, one is a series of an edition of bank notes, I mean, British pounds signed with this. This is a kind of a [bait] or remix of a project by Joseph [Voice] from the >80s where he signed bank notes with this statement Kunst = Capital and I just added Spectacle. So it's like Art=Capital=Spectacle. We're now in the 21st century. So those bank notes are shown. There's four on display on the wall and you can buy them and when they're sold there's those red dots like in galleries, you know, and they're all in a safe. They're sold at cost price because you can't sell money, so basically it's like five pounds is five pounds, ten pounds is ten pounds and 50 pounds is 50 pounds. '

And there's another project which is called AOpportunities That Make Lots of Money, which is actually also the title of the show in London. It says first choose a blank paper or wool,

size doesn't matter. Choose a black marker for paper or black spray paint or vinyl lettering. Size doesn't matter. Write ALet's Make Lot's of Money. Watch and think about it as long and as often as you want and it's like an additional [three]. So still remains for sale.

And that will be the end of my presentation for today. I'd just like to end for that. [inaudible] was a project that I did which is still on view at the [unintelligible] right now.

MAKA: Thank you very much for the invitation.

INTERPRETER: So to begin, thank you very much for the invitation.

MAKA: [Speaking in Spanish].

INTERPRETER: So to begin to explain what Yomango is, I would like to begin with a candidate [inaudible]. Maybe not everyone has one, we didn't realize how many of you were going to be here. So the recipe for the candy is a popular recipe from Mexico which is burned milk and sugar, and it's just a popular recipe that dates back many, many years and is in all parts of the country. But about five or six years ago an international corporation named Barclay, I think, patented that recipe. And last week a group of girls in Mexico City decided to >mangar' some of these sweets for you guys to share, to share with you guys. And the act of >mangar' is not just to steal the sweet from the store. The importance of the act is to re-appropriate basically the knowledge of this recipe which this company is trying to patent and sort of liberate it and share it with you guys. Like to liberate this object which is a prisoner of capitalism in the same way that we are prisoners of capitalism.

Also she would like to reiterate that Yomango isn't a collective. She doesn't represent anyone, and she has just come here to give her testimony as a person who practices Yomango which is kind of more of a philosophy in all parts of the world and quite a beginning in the States. It's an action, which allows you to acquire that which is offered by advertising, but which in reality you're not actually permitted to have with you. But like an actor, like a magic trick and a transformative act of disobedience. And at which an act whose value is in transforming objects from having only sort of a commercial and a monetary value and in this manner to liberate the wishes.

And if we understand the capitalist system as a jail, which limits our possibilities only according to the interests of the powerful. Then the act of >mangar' is a bit like a pact between two prisoners. The object of the prisoner of commercial value, and we are prisoners to the act of consuming. It's about giving new significance to the act of consuming, you know, in giving sort of

new significance to the objects that we are consuming, and liberation of these objects. This is a bit like a philosophy and can be like an art, and much the same way that art does, the act of >mangar' is a transformation, a symbolic transformation.

So you make an object disappear and you bring about happiness and that is the magic trick. And this is the happiness that the capital system has decided to kill, but it can't be killed because happiness in life is not tangible, it's not an object, it's an idea. It's a thought and a feeling, and it's a human right which can never be killed. The practice of >mangar' is like free software that you have the possibility to modify and to perfect that you can later share and that you can enrich the collective experience of all people. And it exploits the creativity of alternatives, tools and techniques, the dynamics which flow and proliferate and which are just waiting to be re-appropriated and circulated.

It's not stealing, Yomango is not simply stealing. Property is theft. And Yomango exploits the creativity, common creativity, and Yomango is a practice which is as old as the abusive or the theft of property as private property. This act takes its strength when the abuse of private property is strong as well, but it's contextualized within that system. When somebody you don't know gives you a French cheese, very expensive, this is Yomango. That this person made this cheese disappear in order to reappear. That he is, you know, changing the significance of this object and giving it a value which is different from only the commercial value. A little bit like the candy that you guys have.

Now that it's here in your hands, it is sort of like it released having only the value of the commercial object and now becomes about this idea that it carries of the recipe which is being patented and which now she's trying to distribute and to kind of free that information and to make the object a symbol, the popular recipe in your hands. It proposes a completely distinct form of socialization, different than capitalism, that you need to consume to make yourself more beautiful. Yomango proposes to liberate the object and also the knowledge. So she's going to list a sort of aYgive a kind of a list of objects which can be considered Yomango. Because it's not just about stealing things from the supermarket, for example, it's not just the simple act of theft which can be considered Yomango. For example the people which practice the >mangar', when they come home with the objects from the supermarket, we take the brand names off so that these brand names don't have a presence in our daily life.

Also to jump the turnstile is an act of Yomango. And when you take a book in order to read it for yourself and also to re-circulate the information in the book amongst your friends. That

it was born in first-world countries as practice, even though it was born in first- world countries. So it was started in Barcelona in first-world countries but it has spread to a lot of places where people really like the practice like Chile and Mexico. It's a practice that they have participated in for many years. And finding sort of affinity groups in many parts all over the world. [Applause]

YATES McKEE: Killer project that crystallizes some of the broader issues that have been addressed by the panel, specifically the relationship between subjectivity and economy, or to paraphrase Greg's statement, Ahow art and cultural practices might disrupt normative economic processes and open the possibility of alternatives. And so on the one hand, I want to affirm this theoretical and political development and artistic development, but I also want to question or unsettle it a little bit as well.

And so I'm just going to be looking at this one project entitled Gift by an artist called Alia Hassan Khan. It was first installed at Apex Art in 2003 several blocks north of Ground Zero, and you can sort of see the site through the coordinates there. So when visitors first encountered this little pile of yellow boxes, they might recall a sort of affinity with the candy spills and other takeaway projects of Felix Gonzales-Torres. So it wants you to accept this generous offering. What one would find inside was actually a kind of a monstrous object in which the distinctions between organic and technical, edible and inedible, nutrient and poison are put into question, belying the smooth internationalization or digestion promised by the package label.

What it was is a round dense food item that some audience members might identify as a >ladu', a typical South Asian dessert such as one might find in many of the numerous cab stands of Lower Manhattan. This might have been interpreted as a friendly token as site-specific cross-cultural exchange were it not drafted with a metal supplement fashioned crudely from electrical wire and other bits of metal hardware. Affixed to the top of the globular dessert, the wire supplement resembled the stem of an apple, or more ominously the fuse of a homemade bomb. Addressed as targets of a threat as much as recipients of a donation, how is one to respond to this ambivalent offering? What, if anything, was one to do with these things?

According to a translated announcement on the gallery wall, these inscrutable objects constituted Aa food gift to the people of the United States, echoing an address directed to Afghanis and the Islamic world at large by the U.S. Air Force in October 2001 during what was billed as a campaign of humanitarian relief. The U.S. dropped hundreds of thousands of packages marked in English Afood gift from the people of the United States and containing ready-to-eat nutritional objects alien to the Afghan diet, such as peanut butter.

However, this altruistic missive missed its mark, failing to secure the boundaries between innocent civilians and enemy combatants, targets of relief and targets of violence. As human rights group quickly publicized, the yellow packages were approximately the same size and color as the other objects being dropped from American planes, i.e. cluster bombs, 10 percent of which remain unexploded upon hitting the ground.

After an international outcry, the military found itself compelled to broadcast this special announcement over Afghan radio warning civilians not to mistake the hurtful for the helpful and vice-versa. They said, APlease, please exercise caution when approaching unidentified yellow objects in areas that have recently been bombed.

And so I have to skip a bit, but one would ask what would it mean to displace the sense of a suspicious package or an unidentified object in the context of lower Manhattan? But I can't talk about that too much here.

So the work, while simultaneously indebted to and critical of a particular episode of imperial altruism, Hassan Khan's packages are not a mere vehicle for the return delivery of geopolitical content to an anti-war American audience. The formal structure of gifts mimics not only the dropping of unidentified yellow objects over Afghanistan, but also a prominent tendency in contemporary art to posit the logic of gift exchange as an exemplary response to questions of public distribution, spectatorial activation and the de-privatization of everyday life.

Inspired by Marcel Mouse's canonical 1924 study, these tendencies understand gift economy as the pre-figuration of a form of communal solidarity and mutual obligation punitively blocked by the possessive individualism of the mainstream art world and the capitalist market of which it forms a part.

These tendencies are also marked by a passivist streak, echoing Marcel Mouse's injunction to what he called the so-called civilized world of post-war Europe that, quote, AIt is only by opposing a reason to feeling, by pitting the will to peace against certain sudden bursts of insanity that people succeed in substituting alliance, gifts and trade for war, isolation and stagnation.

So Hassan Khan inhabits this >food not bombs' impulse, yet unsettles it from within through a reference to an instance of giving in which the opposition between care and combat, helping and hurting, donation and domination was accidentally short-circuited. But rather than simply negate contemporary enthusiasm for what New York Time's critic, Colin Cotter has called Generosity as an Art Medium, Hassan Khan partakes of it in order to warn against taking

generosity for granted as a guarantor of social harmony or political radicality, marking what Marcel Mouse called the unstable state between festival and war that haunted his own analysis.

In this respect, >Gift' resonates with Claire Bishop's a ground breaking critique of Nicola Beaulieu's concept of relational esthetics especially as it pertains to [person's name]'s preparation and distribution of free Thai food in the space of the art gallery. While Beaulieu claimed that such gestures create a convivial arena of exchange that is inherently democratic in its open-ended and participatory nature, Bishop charges it's [a series] of formalism on the grounds that he posits these principles as political ends in and of themselves without attending to what she calls the quality of the relations in question. She writes, AWhat [name] cooks, how and for whom are less important to Beaulieu than the fact that he gives the results for free. This results in a claim for social engagement unburdened by political specificity and institutional self-criticality that Arests too comfortably with an ideal of subjectivity as a whole and community as imminent togetherness.

So while Bishop's critique has proven crucial in renewing a debate about the status of the political and contemporary art, the scope of her insights is limited to figures operated well within the official circuits of the international art world. She has failed to register the emergence of a powerful neo-situationist impulse on the part of many young artists to Arealize art by abolishing it. That's a phrase from [DeBoers]. Through a relocation of their practice within the expanded networks of activists counter-publicity that have proliferated over the past decade in tandem with the counter-globalization and anti-war movement, the counter economy of the Gift, figures prominently in these networks as both a non-proprietary mode of material exchanged exemplified by a phenomenon such as open-source code sharing, copy-less publishing in Indiamedia.org, and more generally as an organizing principle of anti-capitalist subjectivity associated with the historical task of what Naomi Klein has called >Reclaiming the Commons from neo-liberal privatization'.

This is just a little item from Richard [Barbrook's] Cyber Communist Manifesto to get us into the way in which the distinction between commodity and gift basically sets up a whole set of oppositions that anti-capitalist, neo-situationists, cultural practices often will identify with; namely those on the right.

Okay so, technically enabled by the Internet and by no means confined to cyberspace, the networks in question are often claimed to actualize the formal principles invoked so vacuously by Beaulieu such as self-organized productions, de-commodified distribution, horizontal dialogue, festive position, programmatic open-endedness. Whereas Beaulieu looks to these principles to

compensate for a bleak landscape of post political ennui, groups such as the Notes from Nowhere Collective resituate them at the heart of what they call the irresistible rise of global anti-capitalism, a project of political, economic and cultural democratization that challenges the neo-liberal mantra >there is no alternative' with the quasi-utopian imperative of the world's social forum, i.e. another world is possible.

This is to say that in the art practices that are associated with this tendency, the figure of the street is really crucial. Now even if a practice doesn't happen in the street, it can take place in various discursive and digital and architectural environments. This figure of the streets remains the sort of ideal to which art practices should aspire. And as Nato Thompson, Curator of the Interventionists Exhibition that I know Yomango and also Greg were involved with, Nato writes, Athe streets have long embodied the public sphere, a space where the entire citizenry can participate democratically and freely. Most political artists desire to reach the general public and so the streets are the most natural field of action.

So this appealed to the street as a realm of direct democracy was explicitly linked with the counter economy of the gift in the Gift of Masks, a wearable media intervention staged as part of the Carnival Against Capital organized in response to the FTAA Summit being held in Quebec City in April 2001. Haunted by images of anarchist violence from the >99 demonstrations in Seattle against the WTO, the Quebec police had announced the ban on any item that would conceal the face of protestors, which is puppets and masks and so forth.

So in response, a temporary collective calling itself Mask Factory produced and freely distributed thousands of scarves to assembling demonstrators. On one side they featured an image of a mouth restrained behind a chain link fence, referring to the violation of free speech and the enormous security perimeter. The other side featured another mouth, this one unrestrained with a maniacal carnivalesque grin. So when tied around the lower part of the face, the mask functioned simultaneously as protection against tear gas, as acts of civil disobedience and a symbolic link between demonstrator's bodies to match the ominous body armor of riot police on the other side of the fence.

Emblazed along the edges of the scarves is a text paraphrasing a statement from Sub-Commander Marcos with a Zapatistas, who's offered his famous mask as a surface for the projection of anti-capitalist solidarity around the world. And the text reads, AWe will remain faceless because we refuse the spectacle of celebrity, because we are everyone, because the carnival beckons, because the world is upside down, because we are everywhere. By wearing

masks we show that who we are is not as important as what we want and what we want is everything for everyone.

So at the level of its distribution form, the gift of mask claims to realize the microscopic instance of the total generosity announced in the text, temporarily actualizing the democratic de-commodified future implicit in protestors' resistance to the global expansion of the neo-liberal market relations. Recounting the project in the *We Are Everywhere* book, activist and theorist, Brian Holmes writes, AOur idea was to play the political gift against the totalitarianism of the economy, to practice the dispersive art, to spark off conversations through the act of giving signs to strangers, an act that could be performed by anyone since we gave large quantities to people we didn't know. Everyone seemed to love it and it was a fantastic pleasure to do all around as people were doing similar things.

So addressing the general, visual and kind of affective milieu of anti-capitalist protests in general, Holmes indicates the theoretical inspiration for the project in Quebec. He writes, AThe spectacle of these great gatherings overflowing with freely given creations could appear like a new form of the Potlatch ceremonies described by Mouse, a gift-giving ritual where demonstrators try to out-do their adversaries through open displays of generosity.

Okay, so against the watered-down rhetoric of generosity invoked by Beaulieu, that I think we would all want to distance ourselves from, like oh yeah, give away good and that's in itself political, right? So against that impulse, Holmes seems to be attuned to the dimension of excess aggression and challenge inscribed in gift-giving, what Mouse called the total services of an antagonistic type that he saw as both enabling and putting at risk socialized life itself. However, in Holmes account, the antagonistic force of the gift, which is to say that ambivalence between hospitality and threat, is only projected outward, helping to draw the line of the community of protestors and what he calls the totalitarianism of the economy which they oppose. In drawing this line, the internal constitution of the community remains untroubled and the gift functions as a consolidating medium between the local embodied >we' of the street and the global projected >we' of everywhere.

So in its supposed capacity that creates this moment of communitarian imminence over and against the privation of the market, the gift bears an important affinity with that other figure of pre-capitalist disalienation celebrated by the situationist and neo-situationist, namely carnival, which, ABreaks down the barriers of capital and releases the creativity of each individual. It throws

beauty back into the streets, streets in which people begin to really live again. And that was also inscribed on the mask.

I can't follow my argument all the way through here, but basically what I see going on here is that there is a certain art historical lineage going on here that looks to a certain reading of surrealism mediated by the situationists, where they look to the mask, to carnival, and to the Gift as figures of cultural alterity or figures of pre-capitalist social organizations that are ways to de-familiarize the logic of the market, in other words to make the market strange as something that's artificial and not natural. That was actually what Hal Foster has identified in the history of surrealism as something that has to do with the uncanny and with trauma and violence, actually something that's much more... [END OF SIDE B].

Again I want to look at the way in which Alia Hassan Khan's work can unsettle this and question this. And one way to look at that is to say what would happen if one actually tries to follow the instructions that Alia gives us and one were to try to and ingest and digest and in some sense incorporate or identify with this object? Well, if one does that, then one is left over with this little morsel, this indigestible morsel of remains that loses its figural integrity and it becomes something that in some sense exceeds the idea of identification of economic circularity, and so forth.

So basically, as in my longer article, I want to look at this as a kind of counter memorial, as something that interrupts memory but also calls out for memory. That calls for a response but also blocks that response or makes the response impossible. And this ambivalent structure is what I see as really important about the work. And rather than it just being me like raining on the parade about how great street protests are and so forth, this actually I think can heighten our sense of responsibility to those who aren't here, who aren't in the here and now of the protest against FTAA, who aren't in the here and now of like giving away things in the street and so forth. Those with whom we should not want to have a relationship of solidarity and of identification, which isn't to say one doesn't want to have a relation of political and ethical responsibility, but it's about recognizing the gap or the lack of identity between oneself and others who are not here, or those who are gone, or those who are lost or those who have disappeared.

I think an anti-capitalist neo-situationist appeal to the gift is not adequate to deal with. And I would actually speculatively posit that we have a difference between a sort of post Seattle utopianism and a post 9/11 engagement with trauma and bearing witness and a certain kind of ethics of difficulty that is not just about smashing capitalism, I suppose.

So in any case, I'm sorry I can't elaborate on that more, but that would be my sort of provocation in the end there for me to say like post 9/11, post-Seattle, like whatever that means. Thank you. [Applause]

GREGORY SHOLETTE: Could the panelists come up and join us at the table here please. Thank you.

I'm going to start off with one question and then I'm going to call on people in the audience to speak. I guess the question that's most on my mind when I look at all this work is why now? Why is this work that is open-sourced, that is about bartering, is about drop giving, all these challenges to the normal economy, why are they happening now at a moment when the economy has become so completely hegemonic and capitalist? And perhaps the second part of this question is why are artists so much at a center of this? Is there something particular about the way artists are trained, or is it perhaps the institution of art itself or something else? What is it about that connection? And I'm very curious to hear what people have to say about it. Please.

PAUL GLOVER: Well, artists think outside the box and many artists don't know how to think inside the box. Middle-class is hurting, it's time for a revolution. That is to say, people are more open to ideas of different ways of meeting needs, spiritual needs as well as material needs and the challenge of bringing the spiritual ideas of community, the necessity of a healthy environment.

GREGORY SHOLETTE: If I could just though add one thing, and maybe I didn't make myself clear.

PAUL GLOVER: You can, yeah.

GREGORY SHOLETTE: At this point, and particularly we saw this in the >90s, we had the entrepreneurial spirit saying, look what artists do, think outside the box and that's become kind of a mantra amongst certain business people, you know. And so we're in a moment where the artist is almost a kind of a model for the new economy and yet here we are also trying to posit some kind of alternative to it. And it just seems to me that there are a lot of contradictions that are happening at the same time, although I agree with everything you said. Anyone else like take a shot at it?

CAROLINA CAYCEDO: I think we are realizing that capitalism is terribly inefficient and we're kind of tired of seeing that it only produces waste. So I guess people are getting more and more conscious about it, artists, not only artists, writers, I don't know, filmmakers. But I also think that why the artist...it's is because what I said before. Art and life has a very fine barrier for so

many people, and I think more and more people don't believe in the separation of work time and leisure time, you know, which is probably the strongest way of control right now. So I guess from the art world it's easier to go against this division of time.

YATES McKEE: And also I think that the phenomenon of Ad Busters, if sometimes somewhat esthetically un-engaging, is nevertheless a really important sort of mediation point between people who were trained simultaneously as graphic designers and actually working in the new economy and so forth. And then people who work simultaneously readingYsituationists, reading Naomi Klein and [Kelly Lassen] and these type of folks. And I think the basic insight of the Ad Busters movement, and it goes back to this, is that capitalism is as much a cultural and ideological horizon as a technical set of policies and prescriptions, and that I think that art and cultural production more generally does have some kind of a purchase if it can sort of work, if it can show the way in which some kind of imaginative esthetic cultural transformation is [constitutive] of the process of actually critiquing capitalism that gives a certain kind of entry point.

The question, of course, the danger would be if Ad Busting were to become an end in and of itself, right. And the question is how do you mediate between on the one hand these kind of cultural practices that de-familiarize the economy and then the actual policy debates and legislative battles and labor struggles that would accompany that? And I think it's really a question of sustainability, and I think that the experiment in Ithaca is very interesting in that sense, because on the one hand again sort of opening some kind of cultural horizon, but also actually setting up kind of institutions that can be viable in some sense. But then, of course, the question is how does that kind of cultural economic experiment relate to the global economy, right, and relate to issues of investment and work and so forth that go on in that local area?

GREGORY SHOLETTE: Yeah.

MAKA: [Speaking Spanish].

INTERPRETER: It appears to her the relationship between artist and thisYthat mostly artists and activists belong to the social middle-class that are being affected now by the capitalist system. It's very logical that these people are in a position to sort of vindicate the system which...

GREGORY SHOLETTE: Okay. Let me open up to some…yeah, Steve.

STEVEN WRIGHT: [Inaudible - far from microphone] particularly enjoyed Paul, and I was particularly [inaudible] ... that supposedly think outside the box because of course the mainstream art world is one giant box in which artists operate and perhaps think. And that is what

seriously, in my opinion at any rate, circumscribes and curtails art's use value towards the sort of ends which all of the panelists seem to more or less share.

I thought that the first two presentations, Carolina's and Paul's, were a particularly interesting contrast because although Paul described himself as a graphic artist who has undertaken a performative art project, its coefficient of artistic visibility is so low that for most of the people who were interested certainly in this sort of healthcare project which you've initiated and the exchange economy mediated by money, or the money you've printed, appears to be informed by artistic competence but does not seem to perform art. In other words, it is not visible as art and therefore gains an operative value which I think Carolina's project specifically loses because, although there were some examples of the museum in the streets of Bogotá and in Paris, there was also a number of examples of its re-contextualization within the framework of the art world.

I won't go into that That will be one example, one critical example I would give, but there was another one which I thought was even more significant which you also mentioned, Carolina, is that the rather dramatic gap between the number of requests for services for which you received and the number which you actually fulfilled. Which makes me think that perhaps this has more to do with promoting your index within the reputational economy of the art world than with actually engaging in a sincere way with people who actually engaged in the protocol which you had established and then were, I mean, by definition disappointed or didn't see their requests taken into consideration and fulfilled.

GREGORY SHOLETTE: Do you want to respond, Carolina?

CAROLINA CAYCEDO: Well, actually I think the number of requests denied has to do more with practicality in my life, and it's a negotiation that takes place and when you go to a supermarket you cannot negotiate a price, there's a fixed price. But when you are dealing with a personal value or set of values, then you can negotiate and you can decide, and I have the power of putting a price to my time and to my objects. So, yes, of course I have the power to deny most of the requests, because people were not understanding the proposal I was giving them or the invitation, and I think it wasn't fair, so I denied.

STEVE: The remark I could have made also, I could have made it on the basis of what Yates was saying about Jerry [Vaneshes] work. It strikes me as being somewhat similar because of course within a symbolic economy, artists come with a very high degree of symbolic capital, and the people that they associate into their relational projects have a much lower level of symbolic

capital. But that it seems to function very much that the labor which they inject into the process is used very much the way that Marx analyzed capitalism, to allow the artist to accumulate still more symbolic capital and thereby rise higher in the reputational economy. And I think that's one of the major downfalls. That's why I say the art world is sort of a box which is very much premised on this type of exchange value to the detriment of use value.

PAUL GLOVER: The art world, sure, is in a box of the art world. It's contained. The creativity insurgent spirit of the artist is put into a safe place. And if you allow yourself to be kept in a safe place by people with money, this is the way people with money often want art to be located. So Ithaca Hours is an art project but it's much more than an arts project. It's among other things an art project. It's for me personally a way to communicate my sense of the community spirit or the community through graphic symbol. And that symbol has been powerful throughout the community and it's been very gratifying in that way.

But the effect of it is to have strengthened the creative arts in Ithaca with more discretionary income in Ithaca, more money with which to make transactions in Ithaca than merely dollars. People are able to buy things other than rent and groceries. People are able to go to concerts. People are able to buy CDS. People are able to buy art with the Ithaca Hours, which is presented in a form of a directory. People get to know each other and to give either Ithaca Hours or dollars. So it strengthens the art and it helps the artists to break outside of the art box.

STEVE: It's interesting that a lot of the people involved are artisanal or service providers in some way or another in Ithaca. I was curious to ask you though, has the federal government said what about our taxes, or the state government?

PAUL GLOVER: Well, when this began we had a lot of media attention. In fact, it peaked in 1996 when we were on the PBS TV half-hour, the CBS >This Morning', >Good Morning America'. The New York Times seven times has referred to it and done articles about it, the Wall Street Journal and so forth. The National Enquirer. We have been everywhere and in fact around the world. They always ask is it legal? And I thought it would be prudent to answer yes and I did. So they wrote that down. Some of them took the extra effort to contact the IRS, the FBI, the Secret Service, the Treasury Department. In the United States you can do anything unless it is specifically prohibited. In many countries you can only do what is specifically permitted.

But they, when contacted, could not find a law against printing hours and trading hours. And so they said, well, yeah, you can do it, they can do it. It culminated when The Wall Street Journal called me and said, AIs it legal? And I said, Yes. I have no idea and it probably is illegal,

it's probably illegal, which was part of the fun as far as I was concerned. I mean, I'm colliding right now the Pennsylvania insurance department and I'm doing something as far as they're concerned illegal. So I said to The Wall Street Journal, yes, it's legal and so their headline was Communities Print Local and Legal Currency. There, you know, you can't more authoritative than The Wall Street Journal.

GREGORY SHOLETTE: Indeed. I think we have time for maybe another question from the audience. Anyone?

FEMALE SPEAKER: I have a comment on what's called Art and Physics which to grossly oversimplify talks about how artists were able to create a visual and tangible language for discoveries that were being made in science and physics having to do with quantum theory, which kind of took humanity out of a mechanical universe and into one that's based on chaos and probability and all these big changes. And I just hope that all of you artists are a similar sort of foreshadowing for our own evolution as people because I think that your work is really, really inspiring and I hope that it will continue to permeate, people's lives not just in this room but kind of all around so you can impact. So, thank you very much.

GREGORY SHOLETTE: Okay. With that, thank you all very much. [Applause]

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