

# *Hacking Art Education*

Arte Útil as an educational methodology to foster  
change for curriculum planning

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Much of the data presented in this thesis was obtained in collaboration with multiple groups of students and people. Data were collected through action-research carried out by myself at international Master Artist Educator, ArtEZ, Arnhem (NL), Artistic High School 'Duccio di Buoninsegna', Siena (IT), Unidee – Cittadellarte Fondazione Michelangelo Pistoletto, Biella (IT) and Decentralising Political Economies platform in collaboration with The Whitworth, Manchester, LJMU City Lab and The Asociación de Arte Útil. There, I played a major role in the preparation, execution, data analysis and interpretation. Any contributions from collaborators engaged in the research are explicitly referenced in the text.

Consequently, I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Unless I state otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

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## *Abstract*

This thesis examines the principles of Arte Útil and their application in art education to formulate a new methodology for the composition of the curriculum as a tool for change in both museums and universities. I contend that, previous attempts to apply a change in curriculum planning that emerged in the context of socially engaged art avoided outlining a methodology to be employed in educational institutions.

Therefore, this thesis' overarching aim is to demonstrate how Arte Útil, in applying both art-based methods in tandem with educational methodologies - proposed by socially engaged art, feminist-engaged pedagogy and the undercommons – for the conception of the curriculum furthers institutional change on many levels.

What emerged from applying a qualitative method during action research and from the case studies analysed for this thesis, is that artists often infiltrate the institution of education through their artworks. The institution typically welcomes their intervention as if it was 'just' art when, in fact, the implementation of curriculum changes. Hence, I argue how unconventional education models, framed as Arte Útil, could be successfully implemented within schools, universities and museums. The result is the development of long-term pedagogic sustainability through processes of participatory institutional hacking.

Undertaken with multiple cohorts of students and communities of practice, this thesis situates across museum studies and education. It concludes in the production of a curriculum-as-a-toolkit – such as *Hacking (Art) Education*, available as a website - that includes a series of resources in the form of syllabi, scores for workshops, and exercises, a glossary and a timeline that can be used to infiltrate schools, universities, and museums through the application of the principles of Arte Útil that constitute a new educational methodology.

## *Acknowledgements*

As this thesis comes to an end on the tenth anniversary of *The Museum of Arte Útil*, I would like to thank my colleagues who, in 2013, believed that with this exhibition, we could display what art could do when put in the hands of everyone outside of the institutions. Nick Aikens, Tania Bruguera, Clare Butcher, Annie Fletcher, Charles Esche, Alistair Hudson, Gemma Medina Estupiñan, Stephen Wright and Collective Works (Karin Mientjes and Peter Zuiderwijk) became more than colleagues, and I am forever grateful to Tania who was the one who brought us together.

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# *Introduction*

## 1. Preamble

I would like to start with a story that turned me inside out (Adams, Ellis and Jones, 2017) and was a turning point for my research.

One day, I was in class with a cohort of MA students to whom I proposed the course ‘Arte Útil in The Netherlands’<sup>1</sup>. During a particularly quiet discussion when I asked the room for some mid-term evaluation, one student said: ‘You should understand that for us it is difficult [co-creating with our teachers] because we have been taught for all our lives that to be good students we just have to listen’. My presence was not perceived as the usual teacher or tutor, although my attempt to use Arte Útil as an educational methodology is based on well-known pedagogues who operate in the framework of critical (Freire, 2018) and feminist (hooks, 2014) pedagogy, and other methods elaborated by socially engaged art practitioners (Bruguera, 2022; Helguera, 2010; Godínez-Nivón, 2010; Calstelblanco, 2011; García Canclini, 2019). I felt I had made an assumption that frustrated students because they did not understand what was expected of them. On the one hand, I was conscious that my teaching method of

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<sup>1</sup> The syllabus is available on [www.hackingeducation.art](http://www.hackingeducation.art)

mixing the principles of the transpedagogy (Helguera, 2011) with those of the feminist-engaged pedagogy posits that ‘the community is the curriculum’ (Cormier, 2008) was quite unorthodox. On the other, I assumed students were ready for it. I made the classic mistake of a newbie socially engaged art practitioner: I forgot to approach the student cohort as an existing constituency. I forgot to give them time to welcome me as part of the group and declare that I was there to learn from them too. This episode made me look at my practice from the opposite side of the room, as part of a constituency. It helped lay the foundations for the conception of Arte Útil as a pedagogical methodology in itself. This experience was crucial in conceiving the basis for the necessity of this thesis and helped me formulate the research question discussed below.

This practice-based thesis argues how using the Arte Útil archive to write an alternative curriculum for the institution of art education is a form of successful *piggybacking* to create and apply new teaching tools. Borrowing Stephen Wright's lexicon (2013), *piggybacking* is a form of usership that describes how artists operate in various legal and ethical grey zones that are not always regulated.

“In a society whose distribution of resources is so massively and systemically skewed, piggybacking may be seen as a user-driven form of redistributive symbolic justice.” (Wright, 2013)

Redistribution of justice seems to drive those art practitioners who choose to challenge the norms and infrastructures of education (for example, curriculum planning) through their artworks. Wright's terminology and the principles of Arte Útil provide the framework for this thesis.

In light of this, the project that resulted from the action research situates at the intersection between the field of museum studies and art education. For it, I argue

that it establishes models of institutional repurpose and participatory curriculum planning as the theoretical framework for understanding and practically advancing the operational practices of Arte Útil. I argue that Arte Útil must be recognised as a new pedagogic methodology.

In *Reflexion on Arte Útil* (Bruguera, 2016), Tania Bruguera articulates the foundational principles of Arte Útil that allow her to propose a differentiation from other ways of making art. When used for proposing a symbolic gesture, she declares that art does not provide an excellent platform to provoke change. Rather, Arte Útil offers the tools of art to provoke change beyond the art context. In doing so, artists who practice Arte Útil, embed themselves into reality as both artists and civic servants. Bruguera defines this process as activating what she terms the ‘feasible utopia’: identifying a field of possible change. Therefore, the artist’s duty is no longer to make a symbolic representation of that change but to find forms in which their imagined proposal might work and ultimately be implemented in a field other than art. In a later text (Bishop and Bruguera, 2020), Bruguera explicitly addresses the differentiation that needs to occur between socially engaged art and Arte Útil. Similarly, Miwon Kwon, in her seminal book *One Place After Another* (Kwon, 2002), calls for the articulation of a *collective artistic praxis* as opposed to community-based art. Kwon seems to lay the basis for the emergence of Arte Útil as a method in and of itself:

“... collective artistic praxis, I would suggest, is a *projective* enterprise. It involves a provisional group, produced as a function of specific circumstances instigated by an artist and/or a cultural institution, aware of the effects of these circumstances on the very conditions of the interaction, performing its own coming together and coming apart as a necessarily incomplete modelling or working-out of a collective social process.” (Kwon, 2002)

Arte Útil adds to Kwon's proposal that art processes have the potential to reverberate after the encounter between artists, cultural institutions, and constituencies thanks to usership. Thus, usership is the condition for art to be liberated from its constraints of being perceived only as such and be able to produce effects beyond the context where it arose.

What emerged from applying a qualitative method during the research and from the case studies analysed for this thesis, is that artists often infiltrate the institution of education through their artworks. The institution typically welcomes their intervention as if it were just art when, in fact, the implementation of curriculum changes. Hence, I argue how unconventional education models, framed as Arte Útil, could be successfully implemented within schools, universities and museums. The result is the development of long-term pedagogic sustainability through processes of participatory institutional hacking.

A range of contemporary art and historical art practices currently exist that are, or have been, interested in challenging dominant education systems. Projects such as free universities and alternative art schools suggest new pedagogical models that could function outside the official academic system and potentially be more inclusive. For example, the experience of *Open School East*<sup>2</sup> in London, United Kingdom (2013) – now relocated in Margate – which was established by a collective

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<sup>2</sup> *Open School East* was founded in 2013 in East London. It brought together a free study program for twelve artists and a series of public activities that facilitated interactions between artists, residents, and other audiences. It was established in response to the increase in tuition fees, student debt, and bureaucracy in arts education in the UK. Since 2013, the project relocated to Margate, Kent, and it offers four different development programs: the Associate Programme (a part-time, year-long development training for emerging artists from diverse backgrounds); the Young Associate Programme (a free art career program for people aged 18-21 living in the area); the Despacito Art School (open to 5 to 12-year-olds); the Public Programme (events, activities, and workshops open to everyone).

of curators and artists, or *The Public School*<sup>3</sup> (2007) founded in Los Angeles (United States of America) and successfully grown into a global network of classes without curricula.

Equivalently, education has been a fertile ground for artists and curators willing to enact utopic pedagogical models. From Joseph Beuys and Heinrich Böll's *Free International University* (FIU)<sup>4</sup> founded in 1973 in Düsseldorf (Germany), to the 'educational turn'<sup>5</sup> described by Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson (2010), artists and curators have been proposing alternative schools. Albeit proposing different formats, those projects could operate outside and across art institutional frameworks, providing a different approach to (rather than simply reacting to) the neoliberal idea of 'Lifelong Learning'. However, in this thesis, I will argue that the condition of operating outside the academic system weakens the impact of both alternative and established education institutions.

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<sup>3</sup> *The Public School* was founded in 2007 by Telic Arts Exchange in Los Angeles, California. The project consisted of an independent school with no curriculum and no degrees provided. The core of the project was a website (<https://thepublicschool.org/>) where people could find classes offered for free on the most disparate topics. The online library [aaaarg.org](http://aaaarg.org) (now [aaaarg.fail](http://aaaarg.fail)) was related to the school and offered digital books despite copyright restrictions.

<sup>4</sup> *Free International University* (F.I.U.) was founded in 1973 by Joseph Beuys and Heinrich Böll in Düsseldorf, Germany. The aim of the project was to reorganize cultural and social life, including political economy, through a multidisciplinary approach based on research, discussion, and cooperation between arts and sciences. The idea of the F.I.U. emerged from Beuys' 'expanded concept of art,' which understands creative research as the basis for shaping culture as a 'social sculpture.' For Beuys, schools should have been free from the control of political parties and the state; thus, the 'expanded concept of art' comprehended a complete renewal of the educational system. Methods and content of teaching were put into discussion, as well as research and teaching modalities. Major presentations of F.I.U. took place at Documenta in Kassel, Germany, in 1977 and 1982; London's Battersea Arts Center in the UK in 1978; Guggenheim Museum Gallery in New York, USA, in 1979; Edinburgh Festival in the UK in 1974, 1976, 1980, among others.

<sup>5</sup> With the 'educational turn,' O'Neill and Wilson expand on art practices that emerged from the mid-1990s, using collaborative and research-based methods to create art, thereby questioning existing educational and institutional structures. In particular, they emphasize curatorial practices that use art as an educational format or as a new method, as well as those that integrate art into educational programs and processes. This turn led to a renewal of curatorial formats that included pedagogical strategies such as talks, symposia, and discussions implemented within traditional institutional art spaces. In this way, curating became an expanded educational praxis in itself.

Despite the numerous examples mentioned above<sup>6</sup>, there currently is a lack of new education models implemented by artists and curators within universities, art and design schools and departments. This thesis demonstrates how Arte Útil methodology could fill this void.

In the context of education, projects and exhibitions presented as alternatives to the current organization of schools, universities, academies, and curricula have not resolved the question of to what extent they provide longer-term change. As I will argue later in Chapter one, some of the reasons are a lack of sustainability due to the temporary nature of exhibitions and funding, combined with scarce involvement with constituencies committed to long-term struggles for radical changes in education. Because Arte Útil imagines and implements real change – as the archive demonstrates – as I will explain later with the analysis of the case studies, their strategies can be studied and repurposed according to the needs of the constituency that advocates for change. However, in this thesis, I am not focusing on policy transformation. My focus is on making visible that several issues have been emerging in the composition of curricula, and they have become the object of contestation (for example, a lack of bibliographical references to examples outside of the Western canon, different organization of teaching methods to become more inclusive, and so on). For this reason, I sought to focus on different educational configurations, such as formal and informal education in The Netherlands, Italy, and the United Kingdom, rather than those countries’ policies. Yet, I argue that policy implies the existence of a group of people who will decide on writing guidelines (a policy, indeed) and that they will impose it as the main model to everybody else. This would be antithetical to the research question of this thesis. Arte Útil does not

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<sup>6</sup> I have included a timeline within the website that highlights how, from 1821 to today, there have been numerous attempts to direct the discussion towards education from the field of art. Although some projects have become courses, their duration, in some cases quite considerable, does not imply a change in the curriculum. Included in the timeline are case studies in the Arte Útil archive, schools founded by artists, curricula, exhibitions on the ‘educational turn’, art projects, books, conferences and events that considerably impacted art education. <https://www.hackingeducation.art/timeline>

impose itself as a model that fits all; on the contrary, in advancing usership, it provides a methodology as a renewed starting point, to be adapted to specific socio-political contexts by the users. As argued by David Graeber:

“...when faced with a social problem my impulse is not to imagine myself in charge and ponder what sort of solutions I would then impose, but to look for a movement already out there, already trying to address the problem and create its own solutions.” (Graeber, 2018)

I propose to follow the principles that define the ‘undercommons’<sup>7</sup> (Harney and Moten, 2013) to analyse the impact of the Arte Útil archive as the primary resource for curriculum planning. I suggest that using the case studies included in the Arte Útil archive, in fact, could be read as an ‘undercommoning’ practice in and of itself. As a resource that originated within the institutional context of a museum, the function of the archive is twofold. On the one hand, it operates as a mechanism to (re)write an archaeology of practices drawing from the principles of socially engaged art to the articulation of Arte Útil. On the other, the archive proposed itself as a vehicle to advance a counter-narrative of what art could be, expanding on usership. Ultimately one of the aims of the archive was to use – or abuse – the structure that has been already in place (in this case, the museum and the exhibition) to operate collectively, to learn from practices situated at the edge of the institutions, through a micro-political approach that developed out of necessity. That is precisely how Stefano Harney and Fred Moten articulated their theory of the undercommons

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<sup>7</sup> "The undercommons" is a concept proposed by Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, which, in the context of education, defines a constellation of rebellious, radical, and fugitive networks that use their positions within the university to go beyond and against its power structures. Through the process of conscious and unconscious labor that tends to form a radical sociality (undercommoning), conspirators work in the shadow of the university "to abuse its hospitality, to spite its mission, to join its refugee colony, its gypsy encampment, to be in but not of" (Harney and Moten, 2013). For them, conspirators, such as teachers, aim to organise but without a plot. The goal of the undercommoning process is not to end inequalities and find a new order, but to tear down the same world that creates those inequalities. Therefore, universities become testing grounds for elaborating "modes of being with and for others, within and against any plot" (Desideri and Harney, 2013).

(2013). Additionally, in opposition to operating outside the institutional framework to achieve change, Harvey and Moten borrow their proposal from black and indigenous people of colour and their struggle for emancipation. The undercommons intend to completely dismantle the existing institutional structures to build a new world order:

“Our goal – and the “we” is always the right mode of address here – is not to end the troubles but to end the world that created those particular troubles as the ones that must be opposed.” (Harney and Moten, 2013, p.9)

I believe that Arte Útil can be considered a pedagogical methodology because of its effectiveness in proposing change. Arte Útil imagines transformation and, at the same time, provides the toolkit to activate it. Artworks become a manual for the yet-to-come because they create a precedent to demonstrate that change is possible to achieve.

## 2. Methodology: the application of autoethnography for action-research

I began this introduction with a story that helped me to put forward the question of the ‘usological turn’. The anecdote has the twofold aim of: 1) situating my writing in the context of autoethnography applied to contemporary art theory; 2) contextualise my work as curator, art educator and academic, which is inevitably entangled with the initial group who worked for the foundation of Arte Útil as a way of reconfiguring art’s historical narratives (Vázquez, 2020).

As a result, the use of autoethnographic writing that appears across the chapters shows my engagement as a curator, art educator and academic researcher. For this



reason, *Hacking (Art) Education* serves as both an online resource for users and a site for scholarly rigour.

I decided to use autoethnography to describe how my personal experience has intensely influenced the scope of the research that sees the emergency of usership as a new category within contemporary art. Hence, I am profoundly invested as a theorist, educator and, above all, human being who believes that art can be used as a tool for thinking of the world otherwise because I experienced it in the first person. Thus, using autoethnography as a method for research and writing has allowed me to use my personal relation to the project that started in 2013 to describe and interpret practices at the intersection between the self and social life (Adams, Ellis and Jones, 2017). For me, Arte Útil's principles represent a way of thinking about art, a way to live, and a praxis. At this point, I feel I cannot disconnect who I am, what I study and how I do it.

Autoethnographic writing, as a form of qualitative research method, in tandem with semi-structured interviews and action research, helped me to critically observe ten years of work and lived experience in collaboration with the Asociación de Arte Útil. Autoethnography gave me the tools to connect my personal experience to broader cultural, political, and social theories while writing this thesis. Thanks to autoethnography, I could acknowledge my relationship with others involved in the research and at the same time demonstrate that the research is 'evidence-based'. I argue that autoethnography focuses on meaning generation within cultural and social contexts rather than causality and effectiveness principles. For it, there is no separation between researcher and research participants, and the inquiry does not have to follow strict protocols. In short, it is about lived experience (Witkin, 2022). The practical part of the thesis is the result of autoethnographic research as new knowledge whose aim is to stimulate new practices. As Adams, Ellis and Jones (2017, 20) wrote about their autoethnographic method:

“We feel that autoethnography, as Audre Lorde writes about poetry, is not a *luxury*, but instead a method that forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into an idea, then into more tangible action.”

I approached Arte Útil at the beginning of 2013 when I was invited to join the curatorial team for *the Museum of Arte Útil*, a solo exhibition by Tania Bruguera at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven (The Netherlands). As extensively described in chapter two, my task was to compose an archive of case studies from the 19th Century until today, using art as a tool to advance societal change. Being a 'socially engaged art practitioner', it was easy to access the principles proposed by Bruguera. Nevertheless, I was unaware of what was at stake for her in proposing to name a movement. For her, developing a new project means intervening in the political spectrum and, therefore, activating a process that goes beyond the realm of art and aesthetics. Bruguera speaks about ‘art with consequences’ to highlight that placing an artwork into the world is not a symbolic act. It is real. Therefore, she asks, on the one hand, for the recognition of a specific role for art (articulated through the principles of Arte Útil); on the other, she warns artists that they should be aware of both their responsibility and duties to society at large.

One of the concepts furthered by Bruguera is that of *Political Timing Specificity*. This definition proposes to intervene in a specific moment when politics are not yet formulated, and decisions are not yet taken through the means of art, especially in situations where there is a lack of citizens' agency. In this way, art gains traction in the realm of politics and, therefore, triggers those who detain political power to take art into account. Despite how Political Timing Specific Art may seem to contradict some of the principles of Arte Útil concerning the longevity of a project, I argue they feed each other. The pillar that supports this thesis behind Arte Útil is the notion of usership (Wright, 2013). The notion of usership denotes the

impossibility of an artwork to appear as always the same precisely because, through use, it may be transformed in terms of both engagement and fruition. Then as well, it is impossible to re-stage Political Timing Specific artworks because the political scenario changes quickly, especially in the Cuban context that Bruguera knows best. Both Arte Útil and Political Timing Specific Art need to respond to the current political situation where the artwork is proposed, arises, and is being used. Usership transforms the work and gives it another meaning and agency. Political Timing Specificity seeks the constant re-orientation of the work to address the current context.

Borrowing Sara Ahmed's thoughts on use: when a letterbox is occupied by birds and becomes a nest (Ahmed, 2019), it is not available for the usual function. Nevertheless, its use-value – and I would add its specific function - is not lost.

The practice-based research part of this thesis builds on one of the operational modes of the Arte Útil archive. Moreover, it takes on participatory action research to develop the practical part, such as the curriculum-as-toolkit, involving participants—namely, students and residents who were part of the courses I led—to examine curriculum limitations and advance proposals to change them for the better. Inspired by the principle of critical education, the participatory action research approach helped me to challenge the existing hierarchical relationships between research and action and between the researcher and the 'researched'. For it, I developed a series of participatory syllabi - aiming at constituting a curriculum - that have been used to activate seminars, workshops and other pedagogical activities proposed in several art schools, academies, and museums internationally. In chapter four, I will extensively describe the projects.

*Hacking (Art) Education* is a website conceived as a toolkit that provides a series of resources in the form of syllabi, scores for workshops, and exercises, that can be used to infiltrate schools, universities, and museums through the application of the

principles of Arte Útil. In parallel with the concept of ‘piggybacking’ highlighted earlier, I borrow the notion of ‘hacking’ again from Stephen Wright (2013). According to Wright and his analysis of McKenzie Wark’s *A Hacker Manifesto*, keeping knowledge and information in a state of scarcity is inefficient and absurd because it leads to a duplication of effort amongst users. Thus, hacking here is intended to liberate the knowledge-production process and its results (information, images, sounds, and other social resources) that one might find useful. In addition to Wright’s interpretation of Wark’s work, the title of this thesis builds on Sara Ahmed’s reading of hacking (Ahmed, 2019). Ahmed suggests a more practical approach as an active and disruptive action that does not repurpose the pre-existent structures but instead breaks them to build new ones from scratch. Therefore, I propose hacking as a multifaceted tactic that combines rebellious deviance, exploration and creative innovation (Scott, 2015).

The practical element of this thesis developed thanks to a series of invitations from different art and education institutions interested in hosting introductory presentations on Arte Útil. The research was developed at the ArtEZ - University of the Arts in the Netherlands (2019-2022), Artistic High School ‘Duccio di Buoninsegna’ in Italy (2019), UNIDEE Residency programme in Italy (2021-2022) and Decentralising Political Economies platform (2020 – ongoing) realised in collaboration with The Whitworth, the Institute of Art & Technology at the Liverpool John Moores University, and the Asociación de Arte Útil. I used each invitation to propose different generative activities that gave me input to compose the toolkit in the form of a curriculum. In reimagining the educator and student relationships, I proposed my personal work experiences, such as a feminist-informed, anti-racist and collective framework, radical and critical pedagogical methodologies, and a belief in social justice, self-determination and the undercommons. The result is a series of tailored workshops realised in collaboration

with the inviting institutions, including users' contributions and feedback, to advance the operational aspect of Arte Útil and articulate a methodology.

Depending on the focus of each workshop, they all comprehend either an introductory presentation, different readings focussed on the case studies taken from the Arte Útil archive, a glossary of key terms, scores for workshops, and/or practical exercises to apply the principles that were discussed through the course of the activities.

This thesis is also informed by the Liverpool John Moores University's establishment. Notably, the School of Art and Design that is part of Liverpool Jhon Moores University is one of the legacies of the Mechanics Institute, which was established in the city in 1823 (the first Mechanics Institute in the UK opened in Edinburgh in 1821, followed by Glasgow and London in 1823, and Manchester in 1824. All of them became universities). The mechanics institutes were established during the XIX century as a direct response to the need to provide free education to a growing number of workers migrating from the countryside to the newly industrialised cities. Whilst philanthropists who financed the institutes were often entrepreneurs that were looking forward to improving and educating a new workforce, at the same time, the institutes provided an excuse to advance charitable solutions for the growing poverty affecting urban masses. The mechanics institutes became fundamental for developing a labour movement that laid the basis for the elaboration of the trade union movement. As argued by John Byrne (2017):

“...the mechanics institutes became a bourgeois resource for improving the quality of a new industrialised labour force and a hotbed for the effective political radicalisation of that same labour force. As such I would argue that the legacy of the mechanics institute carries within it the potential for dialectically rethinking the role and function of education and activism today.”

Proposing to hack art education through Arte Útil's principles represents a solid proposition for the possibility of an alternative. The research builds on models of practice to potentially invert the flow of production from the centre to the periphery through the co-design of a curriculum that demands and proposes a real change in the centre of the decision-making process. Thus, placing the project at the intersection between museums, universities and constituencies allows its operation on the institutionalised state power.

The ethical implications of this thesis are crucial to reflect on. From the decision to use the Arte Útil archive, which I helped conceive, maintain, and expand, to planning workshops involving students and co-producing content to include in the toolkit; to preparing interview questions and submitting proposals to the Ethical Committee at the University; this research had questioned ethical demeanour in many levels. In September 2021, this study was approved for ethical conduct by Liverpool John Moores University (minimal risk) to ensure that all contributors involved in the research would be informed and give their consent to use what emerged from the workshops. Everyone gave their informed consent for the interviews. When possible, they have been contacted since their participation to ensure their ongoing consent to expand the ethical implications that this thesis proposes to further.

### 3. Thesis structure

This thesis develops over five chapters that include an Introduction and a Conclusion, with the central three dedicated to the delineation of the theoretical work which accompanies the project.

Chapter One delves into the origin of a theory of use applied to art, looking at the appearance of the terms *Arte Útil*, *Arte Utile*, *Useful Art* and *Usable Art*. I sought to

place focus on those definitions that emerged in the XX and XXI Centuries to highlight the role that art played in imagining new forms of social organisations after the impact of the Industrial Revolution on workers' lives and how artists and cultural workers responded to it. The analysis starts from the theories developed and applied by John Ruskin in England, then it continues with the explanation of the term in the work of Juan O'Gorman (1934) in Mexico, Pino Poggi (1965) in Italy, Eduardo Costa (1969) and Jean Perrault (1981) in the United States of America, and Tania Bruguera (2011) in Cuba. The geographical distribution of the artists will come as a fundamental parameter to consider, especially for the development of Bruguera's theory. Aiming at becoming a movement, the comparison between the instances furthered by these artists and theorists suggests the appearance of a global tendency in developing theories centred on usership and art. After that, I delve into the conception and realisation of the Arte Útil archive, focussing on its growth from a resource supporting the conceptualisation of the exhibition *The Museum of Arte Útil* (2013) to a pedagogical device to be employed across institutions of art and education in dialogue with different constituencies. This passage is necessary to understand the shift from the representational to the operational method that Arte Útil suggests in and of itself, which is discussed in the following paragraph dedicated to the description of *Broadcasting the archive* (2015). The latter project emerged thanks to the former exhibition. It helps me to highlight how, through collective curatorial-led research, I could foresee the potential for Arte Útil to be conceptualised as a methodology beyond its temporary manifestation of a project proposed in a museum. The chapter concludes with the description of *Escuela de Arte Útil* (2017) a project conceived by Tania Bruguera in collaboration with curators at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco (USA) and the Asociación de Arte Útil, which I coordinated. The *Escuela* developed in parallel with *Broadcasting the archive*, and it helped me problematise the notion of authorship and usership with respect to the institution. Many questions arose through the process, such as; "What do institutions expect when they commission a project to

an artist in terms of authorship?”, “Is it possible to propose forms of radical collaboration?” and “Furthermore, how will the same process be framed in the university or the museum?” This chapter attempts to answer these questions through a comparative and autoethnographic analysis.

Chapter Two describes a range of pedagogical theories considered to develop the Arte Útil methodology. Hitherto, I describe the previous attempts at hacking (art) education through the application of socially engaged art methods, the proposal of feminist-engaged pedagogies and finally, the practice of the undercommons. This section takes into consideration seminal texts such as Paulo Freire’s *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), Pablo Helguera’s *Education for Socially Engaged Art* (2011), bell hooks’ *Teaching to Transgress* (2014), Jeanne van Heeswijk’s *Toward the Not-Yet: Art as Public Practice* (2021), Sarah Ahmed’s *What’s the use? On the Uses of Use* (2019) and to conclude Stefano Harney and Fred Moten’s *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (2013). Up to today, these texts best describe previous attempts to repurpose the institution of education by introducing new pedagogical models and emphasising alternative forms of participatory curriculum planning. In light of this, the research builds on these theories to establish models of institutional repurposing and participatory curriculum planning as the theoretical framework for understanding, developing and practically advancing the operational practices of Arte Útil. Hence Arte Útil will be added as a new pedagogical methodology among the other proposals, including critical pedagogy and feminist-engaged pedagogy.

Finally, Chapter Three will introduce the *Hacking (Art) Education* project, available at [www.hackingeducation.art](http://www.hackingeducation.art). *Hacking (Art) Education* is a website that functions as a curriculum to be used in the context of museums, galleries, and schools. Following the usological tendency encouraged by the principle of Arte Útil, it does not need to be mediated by its creator (in this case myself). Rather, it provides theoretical and



practical tools that need to be repurposed and adapted to the context where it will be proposed. The website comprehends a series of syllabi, including readings and other media produced over the course of the research, different readings focussed on the case studies taken from the Arte Útil archive, a glossary of key terms, and practical exercises to apply the principles of Arte Útil to facilitate workshops in schools and museums.

## 4. Contribution to knowledge

In conclusion, this thesis contributes to developing a methodology of Arte Útil to be used as a toolkit in institutions of art and education as a form of curriculum planning using the means of art. The operational modalities Arte Útil employs to manifest itself into the world, such as hacking and usership considered in this thesis, suggest an operational approach that starts implementation before all the details of a plan have been settled (Bertrand, 2019). Hence, the conception, delivery, and dissemination of the curriculum operate on a 1:1 scale<sup>8</sup>. It follows that the curriculum is intended as a practice that does not use any surrogate, representation, or object to situate itself into the (art) world: it is the work in real life. The work is what it is (a curriculum) as well as its proposition (a research-led project in the form of a curriculum). It is the work in real life.

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<sup>8</sup> 1:1 scale is a concept formulated by Stephen Wright in *Towards a Lexicon of Usership* (2013) and used as one of the Arte Útil criteria formulated by curators and researchers at the Van Abbemuseum, Queens Museum and Grizedale Arts for the exhibition *The Museum of Arte Útil* (2013-2014). The concept highlights a refusal from a range of practices - framed as Arte Útil - of using any device, surrogate, representation, or object to represent what they are. 1:1 scale practices situate themselves into the world by being what they are (for example, a coffee company, a restaurant, and so on) and their proposition. It is the work in real life that refuses representation, and users often activate it.

Ultimately usership cannot be controlled. It is necessary to human life and, as such non-renounceable. When he tries to argue for the origin of a theory of use, Giorgio Agamben analyses the Franciscan rule. He affirms that perfect life overlaps with the legibility of the world (Agamben, 2013). Similarly, 1:1 scale art and monastic rule propose a shift from a level of practice to act as a form of life and living. Agamben continues discussing that the fusion between practice (of the rule) and life happens through use. In fact, what he seems to be furthering is that a form-of-life in and of itself is defined through use when Franciscans reject ownership. If, as Saint Francis affirmed, human beings had the use of things without ownership, their practice and life can be entirely realised outside the determination of the law.

In the light of this, I propose to add Agamben's thoughts on use, to the conceptual tools to explore the principles of Arte Útil even more in-depth. The combination of Agamben, Wright and Bruguera's work on defining usership defines the basis of my proposal: Arte Útil, when considered as an educational methodology, proposes a new practice that places itself beyond the common distinction between the art project and the educational one. In claiming its peculiar double ontological<sup>9</sup> character, Arte Útil frees itself from a strict categorization such as art, education, activism and so on, while operating within the institutions as an infiltrator.

Thus, as the proposal of the undercommons suggests, the curriculum uses institutional structures to which we are accustomed, offering a new way of thinking and doing art education.

Arte Útil is like sowing seeds that can potentially germinate in hostile environments thanks to the care of its future users that nurture them.

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<sup>9</sup> Double ontology is described by Stephen Wright in *Towards a Lexicon of Usership* (2013) and is strictly connected to the idea of a 1:1 scale. Art that appears on a 1:1 scale refuses any device for its manifestation. It is what it is and its artistic proposition. 1:1 scale art has a primary ontology as whatever it is and a secondary one as the artistic proposition of the same thing.

## 5. Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the research

I cannot deny that the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the research for this thesis. However, not in a considerable fashion; I had to rethink the structure of the workshops designed for an embodied experience and adapt them to the online environment. Nevertheless, I could work in person with students at the international Master Artist Educator, University of the Arts in Arnhem (The Netherlands) and with the high school students of the Liceo Artistico ‘Duccio di Buoninsegna’ in Siena (Italy) between October and November 2019. These two experiences gave me enough data to further the project's design. After the pandemic hit, together with the invaluable support of my director of study, Professor John Byrne, I was able to design the next phase of the action-research that took the form of a series of toolkits, essays, and interviews developed for Decentralising Political Economies platform (<https://dpe.tools/>) that lead to an online Roaming Symposium I co-organised between October and November 2021 in collaboration with The Whitworth and the City Lab, Institute of Art and Technology at LJMU (<https://dpe.tools/resources/roamingsymposium>). The conclusive workshop that was held at Unidee, Cittadellarte – Fondazione Pistoletto in Biella (Italy) happened in person in March 2022, and it combined elements that were proposed both at an early stage of the research, such as exercises and activities inspired by feminist-engaged pedagogy and socially engaged art practices, to apply the methodology of Arte Útil. Finally, most of the semi-structured interviews with the co-producers of the workshops happened online, except for one.

# *Chapter One: Arte Útil: a project, a movement, a method*

## 1. Arte Útil, Arte Utile, Useful Art and Usable Art: the appearance of the terms over the course of XX and XXI century

This chapter delves into the origin of the term *Arte Útil* (O’Gorman, 1934; Bruguera and España, 2011; Bishop and Bruguera, 2020), *Arte Utile* (Poggi, 1965), *Useful Art* (Costa, 1969) and *Usable Art* (Costa; Perreault, 1981), and in particular it considers how the principles supporting the definitions have evolved and intersected starting from the beginning of 1900 until today.

The concept of uses of art is not new. Especially in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in Europe, the idea of using art as a tool for change played a decisive role in imagining new forms of social organizations after the impact of the Industrial Revolution on workers’ lives. The collaboration of John Ruskin with the Arts and Crafts movement in England is one of the first examples. However, Ruskin’s aesthetic theory has been associated with the idea that contemplation of

beauty is disinterested by any utilitarian considerations, even though the entirety of his thought stands in contrast to the notion of aesthetic autonomy. Therefore, one of the most noteworthy and debated aspects in Ruskin's thinking is the question of the uses of art. According to Kenneth Daley (1997), the cause of Ruskin's misinterpretation is to be found in his early work, where he seems to reject any art that is practically relevant to everyday life. Yet, in his Oxford lectures, Ruskin explicitly repudiates his previous affirmations. Undeniably, the later Ruskin consistently confutes the idea that art is not connected to practical use in some way. On the contrary, Ruskin's emphasis on the relationship between beauty and use demonstrates his resistance to the idea of aesthetic autonomy, which may have been supported beforehand. In his Oxford Lectures, Ruskin did not question the notion of beauty over use. The emphasis on the practical function of art and its use is intended to protest the social conditions of his day as industrialisation emerged as one of the leading causes of a dehumanising world. In his Inaugural Lecture, Ruskin presents a dismal portrait of England's state of the arts. In contrast to encouraging the creation of excellent art, he affirmed that the rapid development of the commerce system, improved means of communication with foreign countries, the sudden emergence of vast and ignorant patronage, and the growing demand for popular art, all work against the creation of outstanding art. The arts exalt human life; however, they cannot exist if the ethical, political, and social state of that human life is not virtuous. As a matter of fact, Ruskin was a keen advocate for the fundamental importance of an education that had creativity at its core. In this context, he formulated his theory on the relationship between art and use, that was the subject of one of the Oxford's *Lectures on Art* (1870), where he argued that:

“the fine arts are not to be learned by Locomotion, but by making the homes we live in lovely, and by staying in them; – that the fine arts are not to be learned by Competition, but by doing our quiet best in our own way; - that the fine arts are not to be learned by Exhibition, but by doing what is right,

and making what is honest, whether it be exhibited or not; and, for the sum of all, that men must paint and build neither for pride nor for money, but for love.”

From Ruskin’s statement, it is clear that a fracture between art and use was already visible to his contemporaries; through his work as an educator, he had been already thinking about a cure. For example, in 1874, he taught twelve students from Balliol College how to repair a road in North Hinksey, a town in Oxfordshire. Amongst the students, a young Oscar Wilde described the experience:

“So he went out round Oxford and found two villages, Upper and Lower Hinksey, and between them there lay a great swamp, so that the villagers could not pass from one to the other without many miles of a round. And when we came back in winter he asked us to help him to make a road across this morass for these village people to use. So out we went, day after day, and learned how to lay levels and to break stones, and to wheel barrows along a plank—a very difficult thing to do. And Ruskin worked with us in the mist and rain and mud of an Oxford winter, and our friends and our enemies came out and mocked us from the bank.” (Wilde, 1908)

Despite the prevailing belief that Oxford undergraduates should focus on philosophy and literature rather than construction projects like building roads, Ruskin's compelling arguments successfully swayed a dozen students to support his cause. The road aimed to impart an extended lesson on the practicalities of social change, transcending class and societal norms. Instead, it promoted joy in manual labour and presented an artistic solution to a practical issue. Aesthetics played a crucial role, as the objective was to create the most beautiful road adorned with wildflowers, accompanied by daily lunch service and intellectually stimulating conversations.

Although the road was never finished, part of it still exists, and it is known locally as *Ruskin's Road*.

It is through the analysis of historical materialism and throughout the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels that the causes of the conceptual split between art and use become clearer. Arguably, the materialist perspective on history emphasises the necessity of examining art in the context of its economic origins. Consequently, art is not a standalone entity; its creation is shaped by broader social conditions. In particular, Marx and Engels' (1978) perspective challenges the notion that art and the economy operate independently of each other in isolated realms. They continue to argue that examining art in isolation from other fields would lead to erroneous assumptions about the essence of art, perpetuating the myth promoted by the ascendancy of the bourgeoisie that art exists independently of the external world. The societal division of labour impacts artists, and their work is simultaneously shaped by the geographic and historical context in which they create. Nevertheless, as argued by Danielle Child in her analysis of collective modes of art production, art—or how artists produce—can also affect how society operates (Child, 2011).

As John Byrne pointed out, looking at Marx's distinction between use value and exchange value (2016), the first is both qualitative and bodily (base), and it regards the necessity of material and social production; the latter tends to be quantitative therefore, more connected with how abstraction occurs (superstructure). Hence history is driven by material and economic conditions, while social sciences, philosophy and culture by an ideological superstructure (Byrne, 2016). However, Marx admits to a 'reciprocal influence' between the base and the superstructure, identifying that spiritual production can also influence material production. Therefore, the economic base informs the realms of art, politics, religion, and so on, and these realms can also inform the base. In conclusion, historical materialists understand the influence of wider social circumstances on making art.

In our Western context, this separation acted as a clear-cut, reinforced by the Kantian principle of the disinterested aesthetic function (Kant, 1952) formulated at the end of the eighteenth century together with the notion of the autonomy of art. For it, Immanuel Kant argued, art has a 'purposeless purpose' that extracts it from any function and use. Artistic activity is understood as something that differs from all the others, and that is removed from everyday life:

“As the realm of non-purposive creation and disinterested pleasure, this whole was contrasted with the life of society which it seemed the task of the future to order rationally, in strict adaptation to definable ends.” (Kuhn, 1965)

In the *Critique of Judgment* (1790), Kant does not investigate the work of art but the aesthetic judgment as the subjective aspect of the detachment of art from the practical concerns of life. He argues that the aesthetic judgment is situated between the realm of the senses and that of reason: "the delight which determines the judgment of taste is independent of all interest," where interest is defined by "reference to the faculty of desire." Kant, in articulating the universality of aesthetic judgment as compared with the particularity of the judgment to which the bourgeois social critic subjects, clarified the detachment of the aesthetic from all practical life contexts. Thus, Kant designated a unique position for aesthetics, situated between sensuous experience and reason. He characterised the judgment of taste as both free and disinterested. Therefore, in bourgeois society, the dissociation of the work of art from the praxis of life becomes transformed into the idea that the work of art is entirely independent of society. Together with that, disinterested spectatorship becomes one of the pillars of modernity, and the almost irreproachable autonomous character of art and artists inhibited the advancement of a theory of use.

The attempt to reconcile art and use - and the introduction of usership as a new category in opposition to spectatorship - is a common thread among the examples



discussed in this chapter. Likely, the proposition to combine autonomy and heteronomy has been simultaneously a possibility and an obstacle for a theory of use to emerge. ‘What if we recognise that art as a tool for change disappears into our life and it simply becomes part of it as in 1:1 scale?’ ‘What if we do not need conceptual edifices (Wright, 2013) to acknowledge our expert culture?’

In order of appearance, the Spanish term *Arte Útil* seems the first to emerge in the literature. Architect and artist Juan O’Gorman (1905 - 1982) on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1933, presented a paper titled “The ‘artistic’ art and the useful art” (*El arte ‘artístico’ y el arte Útil*) (Guzmán Urbiola, 2020) at the National School of Arts (*Escuela Nacional de Artes Plásticas*) in Mexico City, where he sought to place focus on the uses of art and architecture for the sake of the collectivity rather than of a restricted group of specialised audience (O’Gorman, 1934). In October of the same year, during a conference organised by the Society of Mexican Architects (*La Sociedad de Arquitectos Mexicanos*), O’Gorman in rejecting *los sentimental* (art’s sentimentality), reiterated his radical critique of the historicist cultural climate of post-revolutionary Mexico. He argued for functionality in architecture, where the social component must drive the creative process (Osorio, 2006). Supposedly, O’Gorman wrote a short text between the two conferences, “Various forms of the artwork” (*Diversas formas de la obra de arte*), expanding on the same principles. In his short essay he restated his firm position towards those who represented the so-called expert culture. In particular, he raised a crucial issue, which represents a common thread connecting all the other definitions that will be examined later in the chapter, such as the desire to break with the current canon:

“Why, a priori and at first glance, must the academic way of thinking accept that only the useless is art, that only what is done for the purpose of pleasure is pleasant? This formula or recipe is as implausible as saying that only foie

gras pâté is food, or even worse, in many cases, toothpaste.” (Guzmán Urbiola, 2020) <sup>10</sup>

The work of O’Gorman was mostly critical of a range of theories in the field of architecture that estranged art from a social application, excluding the possibility of engaging with pressing societal urgencies for the benefit of the people. The principles discussed by O’Gorman on both occasions, were probably elaborated when he was appointed by the Ministry of Public Education (*Secretaría de Educación Pública*) to oversee the design and the construction of a consistent number of schools in Mexico City in 1932. Therefore, we can affirm that O’Gorman’s *funcionalismo* (functionalism) gained institutional validation during those years, for it is evident by the development of houses for the workers and the indigenous population that kept him mainly focused during those years.

Thirty-two years later, in 1965, another artist Pino Poggi (1939) wrote the *Manifiesto Arte Utile I- Avantgarde Utile*. In the same line of thoughts, the manifesto, printed in Italian, German, English, and on a later stage in Slovenian, explains how:

“AVANTGARDE UTILE... is intended to help give the average man a clear grasp of his real problems in life... AU is additionally and especially effective outside the museums, galleries and theatres which as we have long known are monopolized by a select portion of society.” (Poggi, 1965)

Like O’Gorman, Poggi seemed to take a stand against the growing gap between art’s gatekeepers and the rest of society. What emerges from Poggi’s writings is an explicit opposition in respect to the same group identified as the expert culture, who

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<sup>10</sup> My translation of the original Spanish: ‘¿Por qué a priori y a primeras vistas se tiene que aceptar el académico modo de pensar de que sólo lo inútil es arte, de que sólo aquello hecho con el propósito de agradar sea agradable? Esta fórmula o receta es tan inverosímil como decir que sólo la pasta de foie-gras es comida, o peor aún en muchos casos la pasta de dientes.’

affirmed that art only exists in as of itself as part of the artistic realm. In contrast for him art should be freed from its conceptual edifices and at the same time, those conceptual edifices should be repurposed by usership (Wright, 2013). What is striking in Poggi's proposition is his venture about the practical consequences of usership when it becomes complicit – or refuses to be so - with other fields, such as the market. As he writes:

“An AU work of art retains its significance for society only as long as the latter recognizes it as one of its own problems. Once society has reached a solution to that problem, the AU work of art has forfeited its right to exist. It remains as a document. The AU work of art is also for sale. When it becomes an object of speculation, however, it loses its “Utile” value entirely, in other words, it is reduced to a commercial product like any other.” (Poggi, 1965)

What is worth mentioning for the sake of this research is that through the introduction of a specific word ‘Utilist’ – a term that already sounds close to the one introduced later by Tania Bruguera in the context of her theorisation, such as ‘User’ - he attempted to assign a new role for the audience:

“For the Utilist, this means a continual process of disengagement from outdated modes of thought and action. The struggle for material existence is conjoined with the struggle for new conditions of social existence. And in this struggle the Utilist joins in organised cooperation with all those striving for social progress.” (Poggi, 1965)

Poggi continued to cultivate the principles of *Arte Utile* through other three manifestos written throughout his artistic research, respectively, in 1966, 1980 and 1994. There, he progressively unpacked how his notion of *Arte Utile* would be relevant to changing artists' approach to civic duties and vice versa. His research

culminated in a praxis combining artistic research as a living practice that led him to construct his own house in the countryside of Sicily (Italy), where he still resides (Poggi, 2018). However, his art production remained in the realm of representation rather than becoming operational, and the attempt to define what art should do to provoke change stayed on paper.

Only after four years, in 1969, Eduardo Costa (1940) conceived his *Useful Art Works* in the context of a series of performances and actions across New York City as part of *Street Works* (1969). It could be a coincidence that Poggi and Costa, without knowing each other's work, formulated similar principles and definitions of what art should be to respond to a world in turmoil. However, precisely because both artists were in their late twenties when they wrote their definitions, it could be interpreted as a sign of the times. The sixties, particularly the late years of the decade, culminated in the global protests of 1968 triggered by the radicalisation of students worldwide. Those years became compost for the experimentation and development of radical political, social, cultural, and economic theories as the result of a profound critique of established ideologies. Students and workers understood at the outset that for demanding change, their methods, slogans and local struggles should have been shared with as many people as possible; hence they should have been articulated through a common language (Kerry, 1969). Amid those societal unrests, the realm of art was not immune to responding to the impetus for profound change. On the contrary, as noted by Will Bradley, it was precisely "the desire for social change that led artists to align themselves with wider social movements or to break with the established institutions of art" (Bradley and Esche, 2007). For some activist movements, art became, on the one hand, instrumental for the communication of the revolutionary ideology, and on the other, art represented a bourgeois practice that must have been suppressed in favour of direct action (Bradley and Esche, 2007).

This was precisely the climate Eduardo Costa was immersed in when he developed his *Useful Art Works* in New York City in 1969<sup>11</sup>. *Useful Art Works* consisted of two different interventions realised together with Scott Burton (1939 - 1989) across the city – the streets and the subway, respectively – “intended to attack the myth of the lack of utility of the arts, while being in themselves a modest contribution to the city living conditions” (Costa, 1969). In particular, through the constant dialogue with Burton he started reflecting on the difference between *Arte Útil* and *Usable Art* (*Arte Usable*). Costa identified a crucial distinction between the two terms that appears clearer if we consider both Spanish versions of them, rather than the English one: whether the first emphasizes on the usefulness of art intended as a tool, the latter signifies that art could fulfil merely a utilitarian function (Costa, 2018). Therefore, the fact that he decided to use English for his original intuition, could have been more a literal translation for the sake of being comprehensible with respect to the milieu where he presented his works rather than a conceptual one. For Costa, the main difference between *Arte Útil* and the rest of the art practices was, on the one hand, the context where it was presented – the public realm – and, on the other, its appearance as something else. For him, both aspects were what rendered art as part of everyday experience besides being recognised as such<sup>12</sup>. In a text he wrote about Burton’s oeuvre after the artists’ death, he explains:

“Usable artworks are furniture and sculptures at the same time, they have a strong conceptual basis, the legacy of Minimalist austerity, and attempt to be benefit their users...Usable Art is specifically addressed (from museums or in the form of public art) at a socially mixed audience and surpasses the idea

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<sup>11</sup> Costa, E. (2018) Interview by Tania Bruguera and Gemma Medina Estupiñan. Skype. December. My translation from Spanish: ‘*Estábamos todos como devorados por una masa de ideas creativas que no nos permitían descansar, ni reflexionar, ni hacer muchas movidas preparatorias, para hacer algo bien, más profesionalmente o menos profesionalmente.*’

<sup>12</sup> Costa, E. (2018) Interview by Tania Bruguera and Gemma Medina Estupiñan. Skype. December. My translation from Spanish: ‘*Pero de todos modos no hay porque llamarlo arte. Igual es arte, igual funciona en la vida.*’

of design in favour of more complex objects that steal the functionality of furniture to articulate a series of visual, practical and ideological premises.”  
(Costa)

*Usable Art* gained modest institutional traction thanks to a series of exhibitions curated by John Perreault (1937 - 2015) in 1981, who used the exact definition as the title for it. The exhibition was presented in different art galleries in New York, such as the Queens Museum among others (August 1 – September 27). It showcased the work of some artists who animated the interventions as part of *Street Works* in 1969 such as Scott Burton, Vito Acconci, Eduardo Costa and others. Perreault focused particularly on the tactility aspect (Perreault, 1981), which is apparently inhibited before art, and he seemed to anticipate what Giorgio Agamben articulated later with his book on the profanation of the sacred status of art (Agamben, 2007). In the same way, Perreault affirmed that art is taken out from its use – therefore out of touch - in everyday life for the need to keep it under control:

“Art is dangerous. It must be defined so it cannot be part of everyday life. It must be confined to museums, for its own protection certainly, but also to protect the body politic from discord, self- indulgence and desire. It must be made of special art materials; it must be precious and useless.” (Perreault, 1981)

As for the sixties, also during the eighties, a political and cultural crisis emerged that laid the basis for radical movements to arise that culminated with the anti-globalisation movements after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Similarly to what happened during and after the students’ riots in the late sixties, art was hit by a need for renewal, like every realm of society, to rethink again its form, content, meaning and, above all, its role (Saviotti and Fiocco, 2021).

To close the circle around the terms, the last two in order of appearance are *Arte Útil* and *Useful Art* in Tania Bruguera's oeuvre. Both terms have been used interchangeably since the early 2000s according to the context where Bruguera presented her work, being in Spanish-speaking countries or elsewhere. From 2011 with the publication of a special issue of *Controindicaciones* entirely devoted to *Arte Útil* (Bruguera and España, 2011) and the opening of the *Immigrant Movement International* (2011) in Corona, Queens (USA), the latter term has gained more political value across the development of her projects. For Bruguera, the use of the Spanish term has become more and more urgent as it represents a political statement - as well as being more nuanced - for the recognition of terminology coming from other places rather than the English-speaking countries or the international art world who uses mainly English to recognise themselves. She wrote:

“Making art in Latin America can have real consequences for artists who decide to engage with social or political commentary... The Spanish terms I use force critics to try and understand my artistic position; it is a decolonising act—a way to argue that some terms will never be completely understood unless we inhabit them.” (Bishop and Bruguera, 2020)

Both terms emerged first in the context of *Cátedra de Arte de Conducta* (Behavior Art School), an art project carried out between 2002 and 2009 in the artist's home in Havana (Cuba), that was formalised as an art school devoted to the study of the interconnections between performance, politics and their role in society. The curriculum encouraged students to conceive actions as artworks “aimed to transform some spaces in society through art, transcending symbolic representation or metaphor, and meeting with their activity some deficits in reality and in life, through *Arte Útil* (Useful Art)” (Bruguera, 2002 - 2009).

Bruguera has been deeply invested in developing a conceptual framework for the term and a practice around *Arte Útil*'s principles. Unlike the artists mentioned

earlier, her proposition has been embraced by others, such as artists, curators, critics, theorists and whoever collaborates with her for a project, who appropriate and spread *Arte Útil*'s principles through their work. If the official appearance of *Arte Útil* conceived as a movement (Van Abbemuseum, 2013), arrived through an exhibition in a museum – *The Museum of Arte Útil* – frolicking with all the instruments used by the avant-garde, that presentation filled a gap in the discourse around how to present, engage, support, and display socially engaged art practices. In particular, one of the aims was to spotlight controversial questions such as the institutional instrumentalisation of those involved in the projects and to problematize the decreasing leverage of art interventions both outside and inside the art institutions when translated into an exhibition. As noted by Charles Esche (Van Abbemuseum, 2014), the principles of *Arte Útil* suggested by Bruguera challenged the institution precisely because it asked how and if museums would become contemporary with their own time and which kind of art they would support.





Fig. 1.1 Room of Propaganda, Legitimation and Belief, *The Museum of Arte Útil*, 2013-2014. Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven. Photo: © Peter Cox, Courtesy Van Abbemuseum.

The first conceptual knot worth exploring to draw a conclusion for this chapter is about the tension that *use* and *art* generate when considered part of the same definition.

Either if *Arte Útil*, *Arte Utile*, *Useful Art* and *Usable Art* represent an act of radical inclusion for those practices (and audiences) that are not immediately recognised as part of the art environment, they ask for the same level of legitimization, recognition, and the right to be perceived as both art and something else. It is evident how impatience toward art institutions, particularly the museum, drives the formulation of the principles discussed earlier. There seems to be an intrinsic conflict in refusing those power structures that decide what art should be while simultaneously demanding attention from the same power structures. In the first place, artists speak to art institutions, and their proposals should also be discussed among peers in an

institutional context. Despite the call to leave the museum behind, it seems that a theory of use still needs such expert culture to emerge and eventually be validated both in and outside the institutions of art. A possible overcoming of the binary logic behind what art should and should not be is suggested by Stephen Wright (2013) through the application of the theory of *double ontology*. The notion of double ontology reveals that practices inscribed in the format of ‘art as a tool to be used’ appear mainly in two different forms. They are what they are - such as a civic intervention on the street signs of New York City in the case of Costa’s work - and the proposition of what they are – such as a performance that takes the shape of a civic intervention.

“Practices with ‘double ontologies’ do not immediately appear as art, though that is where their self-understanding is grounded. To that degree, at least, they do indeed break with the basic tenets of autonomous art.”

The notion of double ontology does not help frame usership or advocate for its recognition. On the contrary, it highlights the impossibility of being contained and the challenge to the expert culture. This is the main contribution that the recognition of usership as a category might bring: the acknowledgement that there is still a new path to explore for art which becomes visible as something else. Wright continues:

“...to describe practices in these terms is to make them inherently reliant on performative capture to repatriate them into the art frame – otherwise, their secondary (artistic) ontology remains inert, and not so much disappears as fails to appear in the first place. From the perspective of institutional theory, this is intolerable: what is not performed as art, is not art, and so is lost to posterity. But in another way, that may be precisely the point. To disappear from that ontological landscape altogether in order to gain traction somewhere else.”

Hence, it could be argued that the fact that artists started their fights for the recognition of their propositions among their peers first, was a conscious way of highlighting that art could have a real and tangible impact outside of the museum. Therefore, its uses needed to be taken into account.

To conclude, it could be helpful to identify the similarities and differences between the abovementioned definitions. The most evident common aspect is the desire to break with the current canon that confines art in the realm of spectatorship. In particular, what is shared between all the definitions is a need to open up the space for a different range of theories to emerge that embraces a radical approach toward art and culture emphasising usership. The radicality of all the propositions stems from their attempt to place art at the service of non-trained art audiences, broadening its effect until it melts into life, possibly without the mediation of an institution. Especially concerning the latter aspect, proposing to look at art through the lens of usership provokes a tension between art's recognition and validation when it becomes a tool for change as highlighted by the double ontological status. Perhaps this is why, despite several attempts to advance Arte Útil's principles within the mainstream art context, the conversation has slowly faded until it was stimulated again by someone who ignored the previous attempts. Significant is the historical context for Bruguera's definition to emerge: since the early thousands, it has been a climax of world crises – such as environmental and economic - which culminated with a health emergency caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 that pushed society to rethink itself, starting from its institutional structures.

Again, at the core of the discussion seems to be the museum's structure and what it should become to respond to the current urgencies of the world. A possible answer which is situated within the Arte Útil context could be the shift from participation to usership as suggested by the *museum 3.0* (Wright, 2013). Users are different from

spectators and participants because, through use, they produce new content that cannot be merely consumed, experienced and owned.

“But what if the museum made way for usership, actually embedding it in its modus operandi? A museum where usership, not spectatorship, is the key form of relationality; where the content and value it engenders are mutualised for the community of users themselves? Where the usership of museums, like that of languages, produces their meaning?” (Wright, 2013)

However, if art is by and for everyone, and the creative process does not need art institutions to be recognised as such, ‘What is in it for those institutions that endorsed the hacking?’ Ultimately, the question the artists pose is whether something can also be art in becoming useful without undermining its original status. This inevitably takes into question the physical and conceptual architecture of museums, galleries and art schools and what usership would imply for them. Nonetheless, every attempt at a definition of use and art has been complicit with the very same institution trying to subvert, precisely because - as a practice embedded in everyday life - the instituting is part of the process. In this way, the new vision these practices might have is for a transversality that can influence, through infiltration, also the political body of the same institution (Tan, 2021).

What *Arte Útil*, *Arte Utile*, *Useful Art* and *Usable Art* propose may sound tautological in the first instance: using art to deactivate art’s aesthetic function (Wright, 2013) in order for it to depart from its confinement. However, it is imperative to recognise and acknowledge that usership brings a radicality that affects not only the artistic realm, but also the political, intended as every aspect of social life (Saviotti and Fiocco, 2021).

## 2. The Arte Útil Archive: case studies at the intersection of art and pedagogy

At the origin of this dissertation is the composition of the Arte Útil archive through a curatorial research-led process in the context of an exhibition – *The Museum of Arte Útil* (2013-2014), and its development as a pedagogical device to be employed within the institution of education continually in dialogue with different constituencies.

The Arte Útil archive was the result of a year and a half of research started in 2012 carried on by Tania Bruguera in collaboration with independent researcher and art historian Gemma Medina Estupiñan and me (at the time of the research, I had been awarded a curatorial fellowship by the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht, The Netherlands), the curatorial teams at the Queens Museum in New York, United States of America, the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, The Netherlands, Grizedale Arts in Coniston, England, an international group of correspondents<sup>13</sup>, and an open call. The archive presents a growing number of case studies that imagine, create and implement beneficial outcomes, by advancing tactics that change users' behaviour not just with respect to approaching art, but also in their everyday life. The definition of Arte Útil is entangled with the conception of the criteria<sup>14</sup> used to gather the case studies, and the research itself led by the writing process behind them. Hence, to be included in the Arte Útil archive a project should:

1 – Propose new uses for art within society

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<sup>13</sup> The initial list of correspondents is available on <https://museumarteutil.net/archive/>: Rael Artel, Claire Bishop, Clare Butcher, Binna Choi, Teddy Cruz, Ekaterina Degot, Galit Eilat, Tom van Gestel, Grizedale Arts, Claire Hsu, Abdellah Karroum, Grant Kester, Heejin Kim, Michy Marxuach, Cuauhtémoc Medina, Gabi Ngcobo, Paul O'Neill, Sarah Rifky, Caterina Riva, Lucía Sanromán, David Teh, Nato Thompson, Vivian Zihlerl, Magdalena Ziolkowska

<sup>14</sup> The criteria used in this dissertation represent a revised version that has been adopted since 2015. The first version was used to gather the case studies for the first presentation of the archive as part of the exhibition 'The Museum of Arte Útil' at the Van Abbemuseum and they are available at <https://museumarteutil.net/about/> [Accessed: 16<sup>th</sup> July 2021].

- 2 – Use artistic thinking to challenge the field within which it operates
- 3 – Respond to current urgencies
- 4 – Operate on a 1:1 scale
- 5 – Replace authors with initiators and spectators with usership
- 6 – Have practical, beneficial outcomes for its users
- 7 – Pursue sustainability
- 8 – Re-establish aesthetics as a system of transformation



Fig. 1.2 The Arte Útil archive, *The Museum of Arte Útil*, 2013-2014. Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven. Photo: © Peter Cox, Courtesy Van Abbemuseum.

In the first instance, the necessity to define a set of principles was essential to create a collective understanding of what Arte Útil means and to be able to share that idea with an extended group of curators, artists, students, constituencies and users. Secondly, the criteria were pivotal in scoping the research about which case studies to include and demonstrating how they could function as guidelines for other

researchers working in organisations willing to engage with the archive. Lastly, they helped those involved in the first phase of the project to make the selection process as transparent as possible. Through the criteria, the research that constituted the archive allowed the extended curatorial team, to understand the curatorial process differently. Consciously moving from the exhibition device to the realm of usership, became a radical way of producing knowledge that questioned concepts such as universal evidence and the supposed neutrality of the researcher and the institution; matters that are proper not only of the art institutions but above all of the academia (Rito and Balaskas, 2020).

Despite the sincere effort to open up the process to public scrutiny and to break the hierarchy supporting such decisions taken behind institutions' closed doors, as noted by Alec Steadman - who was one of the first curators to engage in presenting the Arte Útil archive outside of the institutions who conceived it first - the risk to apply the criteria subjectively was real (2016). The criteria exist in a liminal space between complete liberation and total coercion that still raises the ethical question about which project should be included or excluded within the Arte Útil movement and why. Steadman continues with his critique, saying that:

“For an initiative with radical political intent such as Arte Útil, it is essential that the form of any selection process live up to the collective ethical imperative of the projects it represents. If Arte Útil wants to fulfil its ambition to represent (or even be) a movement, it must open up decisions about what that movement is to all those it frames within it. I would argue all the initiators and all the users of the projects included within the archive should be included in the process setting the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion for their community. Exactly how this might be achieved is of course a complex problem with no easy solutions. But the opportunity of a para-institution with a focus on such radical forms of practice must be seized to develop new radical institutional processes. Otherwise, the Arte Útil

archive is in danger of repeating the same logics of power its contents are actively fighting against.” (2016)

These words functioned like a reality check, and for this reason, we became invested in pushing forward the process toward collectivising research aiming for a constituency-led approach.

After the exhibition *The Museum of Arte Útil* was over, it became clear that those criteria must have been applied to our working method too, especially regarding sustainability. As Medina Estupiñan and I were soon identified as the custodians of the Arte Útil archive thanks to our involvement as researchers since an early stage, we organically assumed the role of both infiltrators-in-conspiracy with constituencies, artists, and users on the one hand, and activators of the archive both inside and outside the institutions’ walls.

To do so, after one year and a half of programming, we defined a protocol conceived as a toolkit for its activation as a meta-artwork or art-work-as-para-institution (Steadman, 2016) that could have helped us to re-think our multiple roles within the project.



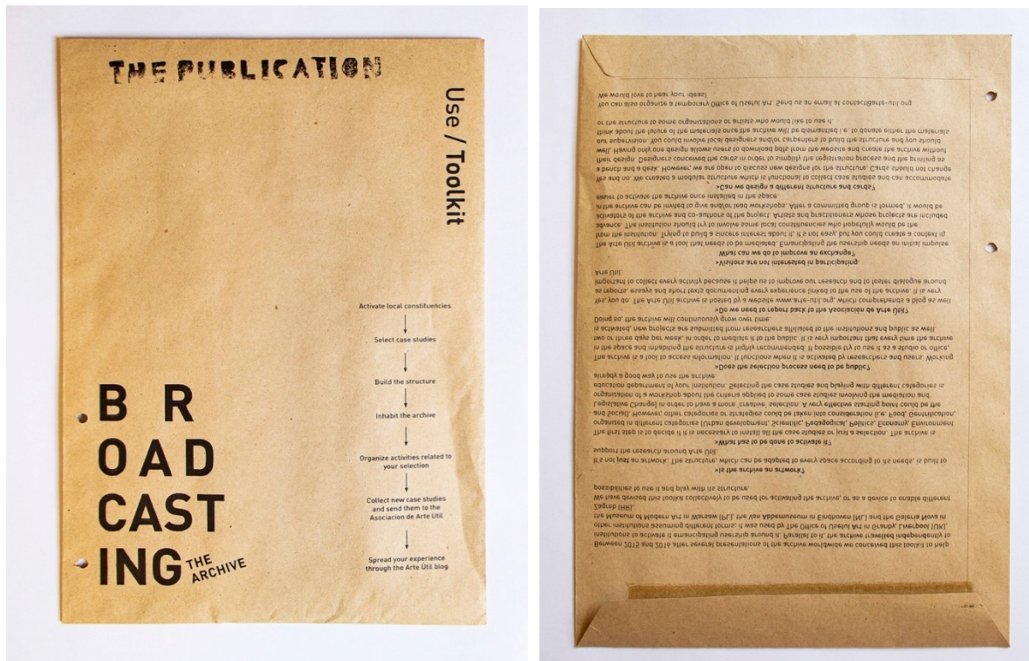


Fig 1.3 Broadcasting the archive – The Publication, Front and Back of the Toolkit for Institution, 2018. Photo: © Christine Van Meegen

The first conceptual edifice (Wright, 2013) we addressed was the aesthetic function of the artwork. A heated debate arose about whether the archive should have been considered an artwork. Problematising and going beyond concepts such as authorship, expert culture and spectatorship through a practical approach helped us to boldly declare that the archive is not *just* an artwork (Estupiñan and Saviotti, 2019). The structure that displays the cards which record the case studies and the way of interacting with them – whatever it might be – can be adapted to every space according to the needs. It is built to support the research around Arte Útil as a way to exceed the reiteration of inherited epistemologies. Far from being an easy endeavour, the effort has been constantly challenged by the idea of not replicating the same structures Arte Útil aims to tear apart. Acting in conspiracy became a safety net as soon as we reconciled with the constant precariousness of being independent researchers – therefore a flexible and cheap resource for institutions who wanted to use the archive –. In contrast, at the same time, it enabled us to embody the archive and be identified

as gatekeepers from the same institutions. Precisely because the nature of the archive is that of a meta-work that exists online as a free index, the information about the case studies existed within a set of intentions, protocols, habits, practices, and inspirations to see what art can do rather than what it could be. I believe that has been, and still is, the biggest challenge for museums and galleries, which need to operate in the realm of spectatorship, sell tickets, always discover new artists and are reluctant to give away their role as guardians.

At the time of this writing, the archive has become a tool to access information on projects, an excuse to make the research process public, and a repository of interviews, texts and reports that are the result of students and constituencies' interaction with it, and finally a network of artists and activists who might employ the same strategies and tactics on a 1:1 scale.

One of the primary uses of the archive has been in the context of art schools of different grades, universities, and education spaces, mainly in Europe and the United States of America. Therefore, this chapter has dedicated special consideration to the category of 'pedagogical'<sup>15</sup> case studies within it.

I will take as a starting point Bruguera's notion of 'feasible utopia' (Bruguera, 2016) as the identification of a field of possible change where artists do not just make symbolic representations, but they create other forms to implement their proposals also beyond the art context. In particular, Arte Útil case studies that operate in the field of education expose first the contradictions and injustices residing in those institutions and, like a virus, ultimately change them (Bishop and Bruguera, 2020). Such institutional transformation is often brought about through the implementation of curriculum change, often introducing elements of critical, feminist and radical pedagogy that will be analysed in the following chapter. Here I will describe specific

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<sup>15</sup> The case studies included in the archive are organised according to different categories such as urban development, scientific, pedagogical, politics, economy, environment, and social.

case studies in that I have been directly engaged in different capacities, and that can be read as artworks-as-manuals (Decentralising Political Economies, 2021).

The idea of 'progressive education' has been extensively theorized and proposed by John Dewey (1923), who saw in the aesthetic experience embedded with education the potential for social transformation. As a result of the development of critical thinking in the student's body through art, in his opinion, a just and democratic society would thrive.

“...When this happens, schools will be dangerous outposts of human civilization. But they will also begin to be supremely interesting places. For it will then come about that education and politics are one and the same thing, because politics will have to be in fact what it now pretends to be, the intelligent management of social affairs.” (Dewey, 1986)

The questions that arise at this point are the same that were posed with respect to the agency of the archive in as of itself; Is it possible to teach a radical approach that seeks to reorganise the existing configuration of the system within the system itself? And, to borrow Audre Lorde's key enquiry, to what extent do these tools differ from those of the master?

As noted by Sam Thorne in his book *School: A Recent History of Self-Organised Art Education* (2017) often, projects and exhibitions that use education as a battleground result in propositions for alternative schools that do not resolve the question of to what extent those projects provide a longer-term change. Moreover, the so-called educational turn in the arts (O'Neill, Wilson and De Appel Arts Centre, 2010) weakened the impact of some projects that resulted from the intersection of art and radical pedagogy. Lack of sustainability due to temporary commissions and funding combined with a lack of involvement with constituencies committed to long-term

struggles for radical education might be among the reasons why the impact in provoking systemic change is low (Graham, Graziano and Kelly, 2016). As part of the Arte Útil archive, there are some examples of art projects that emerged from the intersection with education according to the modalities described earlier. For example, *The Public School* was a project founded by Sean Dockray and Fiona Whitton as part of the Telic Arts Exchange in Los Angeles (California) in 2007. The project was framed as an independent and alternative school without tuition, curriculum, or regular study plan and did not provide a degree. The core of the project was a website where users could find lessons about the most disparate topics proposed by the same users who constituted both the students and the teachers' cohort. Classes would take place in person, and over the course of time, the school became an incubator for other projects that would be generated from the classes. Through the website, *The Public School* expanded globally and was accompanied by another website *aaaaarg.org* (now *aaaaarg.fail*) a shared online library active since 2005. The library has become one of the most successful para-academic projects developed outside institutional frameworks. Readers, like the students at The Public School, are not only consumers but contributors. They can upload and reorganise the digital books according to their interests, such as creating specific reading lists. Despite a lawsuit against its initiator in 2016, *aaaaarg.fail* is still accessible through a virtual private connection (VPN). When questioned if a project like this could provide alternatives to conventional university art education, Dockray answered that:

“instead of speculating about the mutations in accreditation from disciplinary pressure, alternative imaginaries, and financial discipline, what about mutating our understanding of what education could be, divorced from the value conferred on via degrees. I think I am less interested in seeing these schools as different ways of doing the same thing than a different way of doing the thing.” (Thorne, 2017, p.150)

The position articulated by Dockray seems to suggest a withdrawal, as theorised by Paolo Virno (1996). According to Virno's political theory of exodus, the multitude actively decides for mass defection – in this case, from the State - rather than protest. This defection results in an *engaged* withdrawal, which undermines the mechanism of political representation. Hence, the multitude does not aspire to become a majority precisely because it aims to refuse to become government (Virno, 1996, p. 200).

Following an opposite approach, the proposition of the *undercommons* (2013), articulated by Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, suggests an attitude that antagonizes any other criticism and resistance toward the institution as such. What they propose is to use – or abuse – those structures that are already in place, operating collectively under the radar, somewhere at the edges of the institution, through a micro-political approach that developed out of necessity from the excluded, in particular from black, indigenous and people of colour. As they affirm when they describe how the undercommons operate in the realm of education:

“The only possible relationship to the university today is a criminal one. [...] one can only sneak into the university and steal what one can. To abuse its hospitality, to spite its mission, to join its refugee colony, its gipsy encampment, to be in but not of – this is the path of the subversive intellectual in the modern .” (Harney and Moten, 2013, p.206)

Similarly to the undercommons, another thesis that suggests infiltrating as a practice for breaking into the system to provoke change is sustained by Sara Ahmed when she refers to *queer use* (Ahmed, 2019, p.199). For Ahmed, ‘queering use’ means using things in different ways, misusing them, and releasing their potential precisely because use cannot be properly proper (Ahmed, 2019, p.208). Ahmed identifies the modality of operating as either a hacker or a vandal because, as such, they provoke a break into a system when there is no legitimate access to that system. That break

then becomes a leak, and this is how the failure of that system becomes visible (Ahmed, 2019, p.225).

Those two approaches suggest a high level of performativity, improvisation, and communality that one can find in projects such as *Tequiografías* (2010) by Daniel Godínez-Nivón and *The Para-Site School* (2011) by Felipe Castelblanco, both included in the Arte Útil archive.

*Tequiografías* is a project that blurred the boundaries between art, education and social justice, employing a process of co-creation with the same communities that the project wishes to address. Godínez-Nivón continuously engages in a dialogue with four ethnic groups who are part of the Assembly of Indigenous Migrants (AMI) in Mexico City, to collectively produce new school monographs. He does so through *tequio* a format of assembly recognised by the community to which he belongs, consisting of an unpaid and mandatory social service delivered by male members of the indigenous groups living in the city. School monographs are highly diffused in the country and sold in stationery stores to help pupils study history, geography, traditions, and other aspects related to culture and everyday life. Each monograph is double-sided and provides visual representation and written information about every specific topic. Due to their massive standardisation and diffusion, they do not consider the diversity of the Mexican indigenous population and often, ethnic groups are stereotyped if not excluded from the representation. Hence, *Tequiografías* is a project whose methodology informs the project itself: members of the AMI decide the topics to address during the *tequio*, and the artist facilitates the process of drawing and writing the explanation of the chosen subjects. In this way, the project combines the recognisable format of school materials with a renewed message, resulting from a collective discussion process regarding content, representation, and graphic style.

*Tequiografías* are sold in the same stationary stores as the traditional monographs, therefore, they enter the ordinary. In this way, the project contributes to the

recognition of diversity and to the pluralisation of the meaning of Mexican stories (García Canclini, 2019). Godínez-Nivón distributed thousands of *Tequiografías* to primary and secondary public school teachers, and they are free to download from his website.

To conclude, the project uses art as an alibi to experiment and affirm the idea that an equal, inclusive, and fair education system should be possible. Godínez-Nivón, using his position as an artist who already has access to an institutional environment, plays with his role by instituting power to challenge the same institutions he operated from within, hacking them, and giving space for others to access and redistribute agency to the production and use of educational materials.

*The Para-Site School* was initiated by Felipe Castelblanco in 2011 when he was approached by a group of Latino youth while a graduate student at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh (USA). The project responded to a specific request by the youths who organised advocacy for the DREAM Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act) and the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). Castelblanco invited them to reverse the mechanism: rather than advocating for their right to study, he worked with them at the university to create a series of classes and curricula that operated at the intersection between education, research, institutional practices and participatory art. Castelblanco used his own position as a student - so already part of a system - to use the university's resources and facilities, such as its faculty, classrooms, equipment, access to open calls for funding, and so on, to create education opportunities for a plethora of users who would otherwise be excluded from the official education system because of their immigration status. The project allowed minorities, undocumented migrants and artists facing immigration restrictions to attend college or higher education in the United States of America and Europe, activating a series of secret curricula and, at the same time, allowing researchers within the university to experiment and research critical and radical pedagogy. Taking his condition of being a foreigner in another

country as a starting point, Castelblanco affirms that he operates as a practitioner rather than an artist; for him, The Para-Site School is not a project; rather, it is a practice. In fact, he emphasises the sustainability of his way of working and antagonises the idea of art practice as an excuse to produce an event. As pivotal of his methodology then stood the idea of being a parasite himself: taking from an organism - the university - to pass it to another - the constituency (Castelblanco, 2011).

The project travelled until 2018 in different universities and schools and in intervening in education by means of art, sparked political imagination through enactment, action and forms of co-production resulting in other autonomous projects such as *The Borderless TV*, a film production initiative by refugees, who produce content in collaboration with filmmakers in Cologne, Germany.

What emerged from the analysis of *The Para-site School* and *Tequiografías* is crucial to clarify how the realm of art can be considered as an alibi not only to experiment, but to affirm through practice that the idea that an equal, inclusive and fairer education system should be possible. Godínez-Nívon and Castelblanco reimagined what they could achieve as artists w

,ho are already part of an institutional environment to play with their roles. They used their instituting power to challenge the same institutions they operate from within, hacking them, and giving space for others to access and redistribute agency.

### 3. Broadcasting the archive

*Broadcasting the archive* (2015-2018) was one of the first projects which emerged as a consequence of the *Museum of Arte Útil*. It was co-curated by Gemma Medina Estupiñan and me in dialogue with the Van Abbemuseum, a network of institutions



and groups<sup>16</sup> that were interested in supporting the critical discussion about the principles of Arte Útil. It was funded by the Mondriaan Fund through a ‘Curator Researcher’ grant that awarded both Medina Estupiñan and I a monthly stipend for a year. It received additional support through the ‘Art of Impact’ grant, which covered travel and production expenses. We took as a starting point the city of Eindhoven, in particular its history related to the technological advancements fostered by Philips. In 1927, the company presented its first radio reception set, improving the radio technology applied by Italian engineer Guglielmo Marconi, used mainly as a wireless telegraph. The Radio Lamps developed by Philips made it possible to transmit clear and amplified signals: not only morse code but also spoken messages and music. Scientists who were working at the NatLab built the PCJJ, the first shortwave radio station in Europe that could transmit radio broadcasts over long distances. The PCJJ was used to connect the Netherlands with its territories overseas, and Eindhoven was where a revolution in communication started. Inspired by the history of the city, we conceived a format for the project which could connect our locality with the rest of the world through the idea of broadcasting the Arte Útil archive through the internet and digital media. The focus of the project was threefold: 1) we were keen to emancipate usership around the Arte Útil archive by providing information to groups who were organising in their community; 2) we wanted to expand the research that started with the exhibition; 3) we were looking forward to learning from some projects that were included in the archive.

We applied a qualitative methodology through action research to collaboratively link the theory built on Arte Útil, to its practice. We used methods such as co-creation, dialogical and speculative activities, exercises, and city walks so that the programme could unfold with the organisations and the group of

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<sup>16</sup> The partners and collaborators of the project were Visible project (Brussels, BE), Aleppo (Brussels, BE), Avalancha (Barcelona, S), The Luminary (St. Louis, MO), Baltan Laboratories (Eindhoven, NL), Hivos (Eindhoven, NL), Tenerife Espacio de las Arte and University de la Laguna (Tenerife, S), The Umbrella Network (Eindhoven, NL), Liverpool John Moores University (Liverpool, UK), The Quad Collective (Liverpool, UK), Arts Catalyst (London, UK), Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (Middlesbrough, UK), Unidee (Biella, IT).

practitioners involved. The starting point of every iteration was a general question decided in collaboration with those involved (for example, gentrification of the city); the topic was extensively analysed using case studies included in the archive through a comparative approach; once we achieved a common understanding of a specific issue looking at how different groups have tackled it, we proceeded in discussing specific urgencies and the tools we could apply to address them through the means of art. Therefore, the programme responded to each context where the archive functioned as a catalyst for developing small, tailored actions.

For example, when we proposed *Broadcasting the archive #9* at the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, UK (October 2016), we worked with artist Emily Hesse to gather data about schooling, unemployment and migration flow in the Teesside region, England. The scenario was so complicated to address that we wondered if it still made sense to talk about art in a place where even essential services are lacking. We asked ourselves, “What value could a one-week workshop have in that circumstance?” The answer came from the local constituencies when they identified the museum as the ‘space for possibility’. Before the directorship of Alistair Hudson and the application of the principle of *Arte Útil*, in fact, there was a lack of such a hybrid point of reference for an expanded group of people who could not identify with those who usually have access to these kinds of spaces (Culture Radar, 2021).

Being one of the researchers who have maintained the archive of *Arte Útil* since its development, I have a broad overview of the artists included, the collected projects, and the strategies activated. However, some gaps inevitably exist regarding the geographical and cultural contexts within which these projects operate. For this reason, the structure of each workshop was based on the mutual sharing of knowledge and experiences through a dialogic process inspired by the methodology of the critical pedagogy (Freire, 2018). The research that would lead to every workshop always started with coding a situation through listening. Hence, listening

facilitated the interaction and the development of a sincere relationship and mutual trust between the curators and the different parties throughout the program. In particular, the case of *Broadcasting the archive #9*, Middlesbrough presented a series of urgent issues to be explored, such as the huge migratory flow of asylum seekers mainly from sub-Saharan Africa, the low level of schooling especially among girls and the lack of affordable housing. As a pretext to activate the discussion, we used the archive as a sort of manual of good practices that could be used in the region, extending the invitation to those who conceived these projects, namely the artists and housing rights activists.

Together with Bini Araia, an activist from the association Investing People and Culture<sup>17</sup> and Miguel Amado, the senior curator at the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, we organised a visit to Liverpool to meet the founders of *Granby Four Streets CLT*. In Granby, the residents of the neighbourhood have activated a series of initiatives by directly inviting the collective Assemble to initially renovate three abandoned houses and then, by creating the Community Land Trust, sell them at fair prices to former residents or people with low income to avoid the gentrification of the neighbourhood. The visit was a tactic to also invite members of the Middlesbrough city council, who came and could learn from Granby's residents' experiences and see first-hand what they had achieved. In this case, the archive functioned as a link between two different contexts and communities but faced the same issues, such as a lack of affordable houses. The archive provided an example that could be readapted to Middlesbrough's context.

Workshop after workshop, we composed a toolkit with the twofold aim to document the process and be used as a method for research (Estupiñan and Saviotti, 2019). The archive provided the artistic response defined by the principles of *Arte Útil*, and it materialised as a practical suggestion to local questions.

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<sup>17</sup> Investing in People and Culture (ICP) is an association of volunteers that works to support asylum seekers in particularly problematic psychological conditions primarily related to depression. <https://localgiving.org/charity/ipc/> [Accessed: 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022]

The last phase of the project saw its growth into a public pedagogy. *Broadcasting the archive* started to gain traction across different art academies and art schools. We decided to follow the educational trajectory in applying the principles of Arte Útil to produce and disperse knowledge through a collective process which could involve students as our constituency. Thus, the project evolved in a series of collaborative and flexible syllabi that unlocked the possibility for speculation on the meaning of curatorial research-led practice to both the mediation and the use of the archive. The project started to resonate with what Irit Rogoff argued in response to the so-called ‘educational turn’. For Rogoff, the educational approach could be understood as an expansive and generative moment that opens a new horizon that emerges during the process, leaving behind the praxis that was its initial starting point.

To conclude, *Broadcasting the archive* was the turning point for conceiving a toolkit to infiltrate and be dispersed through the institutions of art and education, and it provided the operational basis for this dissertation.



Fig 1.4 Broadcasting the archive #06, *The Luminary*, 2015. Saint Louis (MO). Photo © Brea Youngblood.

## 4. Escuela de Arte Útil

*Escuela de Arte Útil* (2017) was a commissioned project by Tania Bruguera as part of the retrospective exhibition *Tania Bruguera: Hablándole al Poder* (June 16 – October 28, 2017) curated by Lucía Sanromán and Susie Kantor presented at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco (United States of America). It was organised in collaboration with the YBCA Fellows, California College of the Arts, San Francisco Art Institute, the University of California Berkeley, and San Francisco

State University. It was arranged with the Asociación de Arte Útil and me as the curriculum coordinator<sup>18</sup>.

For this project, Bruguera proposed to update her seminal project *Cátedra de Arte de Conducta*, by applying the principles of Arte Útil. The result was the conception of a reformulated artwork in the form of a free course taught weekly by Bruguera and guest lecturers. For this, Bruguera enriched her glossary related to her oeuvre with the term ‘Update’, which indicates the impossibility of replicability of a specific project due to its political specificity. Two main questions that ran along with the former and the latter projects are: ‘How do you bring a classroom to life as if it were a work of art?’ (Guattari, 1995), and ‘Can this artwork provoke a structural change in both the institution of art and education?’ As argued by Bishop (2012), *Cátedra de Arte de Conducta* had three main urgencies: to contribute to the art scene in Cuba and train a new generation of artists; to respond to a lack of institutional infrastructures for the development of art in the country; to respond to travel restrictions and the poor access to information on Cuba’s citizens.

It is clear at this point that *Escuela* needed to be rethought to respond to the context of San Francisco and the Bay Area; it could not simply be a replica of the *Cátedra*, even though it may share some methods. Hence, students who enrolled to *Escuela* through their universities received credits for attending (it did not happen for the *Cátedra*). Therefore, the fact that the class was free for students and open both to auditors and the visitors of the exhibition was challenging in the context of the United States of America, where most people are forced into massive debt for basic needs such as education.

Several steps were taken to arrive at the final form of the project. Because the aim was to create a joint course between four art schools and universities in the Bay

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<sup>18</sup> The *Escuela de Arte Útil* was presented later at the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo in Mexico City (August - September 2018) and the Institute for Contemporary Art in collaboration with VCAarts, Richmond, VA (April – May 2018).

Area, it was imperative to activate an exchange between the institutions to consider the peculiarities of each of them at the outset of the process. The Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, in concert with the Asociación de Arte Útil, acted as the fulcrum of a series of activities tailored in preparation for *Escuela*. For this, I worked as a tutor for a group of students from the San Francisco Art Institute who were attending the collaborative module 'Evolving the Archive: Arte Útil in the Bay Area'<sup>19</sup> with Lucia Sanróman and Fiona Hovenden as instructors. Students worked with me as part of the Asociación de Arte Útil in selecting and adding new case studies submitted to an open call addressed to the Bay Area art community. From January to May 2017, they helped us conduct research in San Francisco and the Bay Area, creating a toolkit with key questions, a bibliography, a timeline, and a map of Arte Útil case studies to be used during *Escuela*. The course culminated in 'The Evolving Office,' in which they transformed the Diego Rivera Gallery in campus' main building, into a temporary Arte Útil office space that was available and open to everyone for a week<sup>20</sup>. The archive enriched by the new case studies included as the result of the collaboration with the students, was used as the main source to develop the curriculum for *Escuela*.

The eight weeks course for *Escuela* was designed around six main themes such as 'institutional self-criticism', 'active hyperrealism', 'reforming capital', 'a-legalism', 'sustainability' and 'usership' (former themes explored at *Catódra* were 'jurisdiction', 'useful art' and 'trafficking information'). Such topics were extensively introduced and discussed through the practice of the visiting lecturers as

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<sup>19</sup> 'Evolving the archive: Arte Útil in the Bay Area' was a collaborative class conceived as a joint venture between YBCA, the Asociación de Arte Útil, and SFAI. It is conceived as a contribution to the exhibition 'Tania Bruguera: Talking to Power / Hablándole al Poder' organised by YBCA. It was co-taught by Fiona Hovenden, Lucía Sanromán and Alessandra Saviotti.

<sup>20</sup> The Evolving Office: An Arte Útil Project provided a space for visitors to hold discussions, read, listen, and delve deeper into the Arte Útil archive. Instead of an exhibition that is usually organised by students at the conclusion of each course, the project was conceived as an office to create a laboratory and investigative space on the principles of Arte Útil. <https://sfai.edu/exhibitions-public-events/detail/evolving-office-an-arte-util-project> [Accessed 16 July 2022].

an umbrella and simultaneously a bridge between theory and practice. As a result, students met national or international guests and members of local projects included in the archive, who spent considerable time working with them every week (4 hours, three days per week).

*Escuela* was in itself a tool to challenge both the art institution and the institution of education. Firstly, it was important to create a neutral environment - represented by the exhibition space – to host the programme and to be fair with all the schools involved. Secondly, the project provided an outstanding curriculum that included at least two guest classes per week led by speakers such as Bruguera herself, Debt Collective, Daniel Godinéz-Nivón, Jeanne van Heeswijk, Alistair Hudson, Rick Lowe, Damon Rich & Jae Shin, Bonnie Ora Sherk, The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project and WochenKlausur and other contributions delivered online. Students organised themselves in mixed groups so they could work on a couple of assignments every week to get acquainted with the principles of Arte Útil and eventually present either a proposal or a prototype for a project to be realised beyond the class.

*Escuela* was highly time-consuming, the programme was dense, and I was personally challenged by the conversations happening in class regarding the teaching methodology. For example, the attempt to dissolve the teacher-student divide, one of the pillars of Freire's thought that were followed as guidance to articulate the teaching method, was not always clearly articulated through the practice. This provoked a status of continuous tension between students, visiting lectures and the coordinators of the project. Besides, even though we envisioned the curriculum as an open and flexible space devoted to listening, 'unlearning' and sharing experiences with the students rather than simply lecturing them, the teaching team was chastised for not being inclusive enough<sup>21</sup>, for example by omitting other examples outside of

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<sup>21</sup> 'Personally, one of the few criticisms I have is the lack of acknowledgement of artistic creativity outside the bounds of Western art-historical categories (which might have been addressed in later



the Western canon. True, the majority of case studies discussed came from a Western perspective rather than a global or southern one. However, the curriculum was designed to respond to some of the Bay Area's current urgencies by inviting contributors dealing with specific urgencies in the United States of America. Nevertheless, *Escuela* provided us – as the teaching team – with an excuse to learn, research and strive to be as inclusive as possible while exposing the methodology to public scrutiny. The project has been developed as an additional tool in the Asociación de Arte Útil's repository that may be modified and used by others. At the same time, we served as both the project's first users and its initiators.

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sessions). It's impossible to imagine any Indigenous culture where art is not entangled in politics, spirituality, and everyday life. Although the contributions of all the historical references Hudson nods to (Ruskin, Bauhaus... etc.) are extremely valuable, I was disappointed to see a historicisation of modernity without a mention of what 80% of the world was experiencing under the brutality of colonialism. This omission is often identified in decolonial theory and constitutes one of their main criticisms of Postcolonial and Postmodern theory: although postmodern thought challenges and problematises Modernity, it does so within the bounds of European knowledge and by relying on its categories and epistemology. In that regard, *Arte Útil* does not seem to consider critical thinking (and art!) outside of Europe either as a precursor for their philosophy or in terms of bringing epistemic diversity into the initiative'. Muniz Reed, I. (2018) *Use the Museum*. Art and Australia [online] Available at: <https://artandaustralia.com/online/online/disquisitions/use-museum.html> Accessed 16 July 2022.



Fig. 1.5 Installation view, *Tania Bruguera: Talking to Power / Hablándole al Poder*, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, 2017. Courtesy Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Photo © Charlie Villyard.

In rethinking two projects - such as *Cátedra de Arte de Conducta* and *Arte Útil* - to propose a new one - such as *Escuela de Arte Útil* - and to explore 'update' as a method employing pedagogy as the vehicle, Bruguera aimed for structural intervention. For example, contrarily to *Cátedra* that did not give credits to students although being part of the Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA) in Havana, *Escuela* provided credits to every student who undertook the class while enrolled in their university.

As noted by Abbott (2012), this way of using pedagogy resonates with the idea that pedagogy can be considered to occupy different structural spaces. This can occur from the physical in the form of building and institutions - such as the gallery space in our case - to the symbolic, including policy or curriculum, and into the perceptual in the form of subjectivity production. Abbott continues in his argument, saying that

education generates subjectivity not only through the content of the knowledge produced but also through the form of that knowledge and the learning models that correspond to it. This is the turning point toward the conception of Arte Útil as a methodology.

To conclude, I build on both Abbott and Bishop's reflections to argue that Arte Útil inspired projects that position themselves across art and education infiltrate across institutions thanks to their double ontological status. *Escuela* represented a way to rethink both the structure of the art school and the museum or gallery. It illustrated art in the form of education to encourage the transformation of existing structures through the incursion of ideas associated with artistic imagination.

## 5. Conclusion

This chapter has examined the origin of the term Arte Útil and how it had previously appeared in other translations (such as Arte Utile in Italian and Usable Art in English) throughout the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries. This opening chapter aimed to consider how these definitions have evolved and intersected until today. I would conclude that the attempt to reconcile art and use is a common thread in the examples I discussed. However, I would contend that the introduction of usership in opposition to spectatorship represented the main obstacle to the emergence of a theory of use in art.

As I have also highlighted, until the formulation of Tania Bruguera's theory through the conception of the archive, use applied to art was considered mostly critical speculation confined to the realm of representation rather than becoming operational. However, as the attempt to trace the history of Arte Útil through the archive demonstrates, use and art is a praxis that emerged at the end of the Nineteenth Century to become one of the new ways of doing art in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries. In fact, through the analysis of different case studies, I argue that the

possibility of change that usership entails manifests particularly in the formulation of an art pedagogy that puts the uses of art at the centre.

The following chapter addresses the previous attempt to formulate educational methodologies using art methods. In particular, I will look at the methods applied by socially engaged art practices, feminist-engaged pedagogy and the undercommons. I will build on these three methodologies to affirm that Arte Útil could be considered a methodology in itself to hack the institutions of art and education.

# *Chapter Two: Previous attempts at hacking education*

## 1. The proposal of socially engaged art practice

In this section, I analyse the role of socially engaged art practice in delineating a new range of methods I build on for establishing Arte Útil as a methodology. In 2006, Helguera proposed the term ‘transpedagogy’ to outline a specific approach that artists employ to combine art, education, and pedagogy in their practice:

“I define the word (transpedagogy) as the migration of the discipline and methods of education into art-making, resulting in a distinct medium where the artwork is constituted simultaneously of a learning experience of process and a conceptual gesture open to interpretation.” (Helguera, 2010)

The notion of transpedagogy emphasises the (mis)use of the educational system to create hybrid settings between formal and informal experiential learning. In this way, projects that arise following a transpedagogical approach foster the creation of their own autonomous environment, primarily outside of an academic or institutional framework. By doing so, Helguera recognises a tendency to retain an area of

ambiguity that results from a contradiction lying in creating different areas of learning. He discusses that socially engaged art practices, despite creating the condition that allows education to occur, often use art as an alibi to avoid outlining a methodology to be employed in educational institutions. Thus, the term ‘pedagogy’ functions as a safety net if used in museums and galleries.

Nonetheless, it becomes more problematic to evaluate pedagogical art projects using standard evaluative schemes provided by educational institutions. As argued by Clare Bishop, socially engaged art is inclined to move beyond the artistic realm but never to the point ‘of comparison with comparable projects in the social domain’ (2012, p.19). There is no exception for socially engaged art projects that chose education as their social domain.

At this point, I consider it legitimate to ask, “What is the methodology that socially engaged art projects use when situating themselves across the field of art and education?”

To address the question posed earlier, I intend to begin with analysing the definition of ‘New Genre Public Art’ articulated by Suzanne Lacy in her ground-breaking book *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (1995); later, I propose to move through several theoretical lenses (Kester, 2004; Rogoff, 2010) for the articulation of socially engaged art to be read through the perspective of critical education (Pizzolato and Holst, 2017; Freire, 2018) Subsequently, I intend to compare it with the definition of socially engaged art articulated by Pablo Helguera in his book *Education for Socially Engaged Art* (2011); and finally in the last part of this section, I will demonstrate how these examples might be used to evaluate the transformative efficacy of an Arte Útil methodology.

Suzanne Lacy recognises the peculiar character of New Genre Public Art in a discipline whose engagement strategies become public and are at the core of articulating its aesthetic language. Hence, the formation of relationships through the

development of a critical artistic language that touches upon values, ethics and social responsibility may itself become the artwork (Lacy, 1995, p.19). The emergence of relationships through a dialogical format as the new (im)materiality of the practice that claims to transform, and affect reality, was taken by its detractors as proof that New Genre Public Art is not art. The articulation of New Genre Public Art and the conversational aspect that denotes the operational modality through performativity rather than its manifestation as a physical object is received as an open provocation from the expert culture. In the same line of thought, Grant Kester argues that when confronted with artworks based on a dialogical format, the same expert culture seems to be lacking the right critical tools to approach it. As a result, critics who still apply criteria based on visual gratification for evaluating socially engaged art affirm that such works are non-aesthetic because they do not offer enough visual pleasure (Kester, 2004, p.10). Almost a decade later, Claire Bishop, in her analysis of practices that emerged in the late '90s, affirms that people constitute the central artistic medium and material in projects that use theatre and performance to manifest. The concept of the artist has shifted away from the individual creator of isolated artworks to being intended as a collaborator and facilitator of *situations*. Therefore, the notion of artwork as a finite and marketable product has evolved into an indefinite endeavor. Additionally, the audience becomes a co-creator or active participant. However, Bishop affirms that changes artists would like to achieve through their works are often more aspirational than implemented. Yet, she acknowledges a tendency of artists engaged in social practices to collectively strive to challenge established norms of artistic creation and engagement within capitalist frameworks. The position of Bishop is relevant to this thesis because she contended that the so-called 'social turn' is not a new development within art but a return to engaging with the social context as part of an ongoing history to rethink collectively what art should be (Bishop, 2012, p. 3). As I will argue later, the same movement towards and away from a certain way to practice and interpret art (in the context of this thesis, to the concept of usership) is a condition for a specific praxis to emerge

despite others. She poses the same question Kester and Lacy asked in problematising the aesthetic Field's role (Bishop, 2012) in pedagogical art projects.

However, her point is not to find an answer to those who object that socially engaged art is an anti-aesthetic phenomenon but to understand how the different media that socially engaged art employs contribute to the experience being generated. One of these media is the field of pedagogy and education. She recognises a new meaning for aesthetic in the sense of 'aesthesis' such as:

“an autonomous regime of experience that is not reducible to logic, reason or morality.” (2012, p.18)

In this way, the aesthetic experience occurs through new factors – education and pedagogy – although it maintains the potential to put reality into question and change or reorganise it.

As I argued in chapter one, the proposition to combine autonomy and heteronomy in art – and consequently to highlight the transformative power of art with a double ontology – has been simultaneously a possibility and an obstacle, also in this context. In this milieu, the importance of a pedagogy of socially engaged art starts to emerge as the fulcrum to developing a theory of the discipline. As pointed out by Lacy:

“The notion of sustaining or continuing a connection begun through the artwork is an expression of personal responsibility that has a pedagogical trust, often expressed as educating engaged community members, students, or even the art world. This pedagogy is rarely as doctrinaire as its critics would have it. Rather, the artist imparts option for developing activist and aesthetic work, generally on the constituency's own terms.”



Thus, through education, art becomes the tool to intervene on different levels – from the community to the school and the art institution - and to provoke transformation. I argue that conversation and dialogue – when situated between education and art - activate a process of emancipation that helps break the hierarchy between artists and their constituencies. Similarly to the dissolution between artist and community separation, at the outset of the formulation of critical pedagogy by Paulo Freire (2018) is the suspension of the teacher-student divide:

“through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers.”

In the late sixties, Freire developed his critical pedagogy as a rupture, insisting on the breakdown of teacher-student hierarchy through conversation. As I argued in chapter one, the global protests of 1968 triggered by the radicalisation of students worldwide accelerated the emergence of radical political, social, cultural and economic theories. Freire’s theory is not an exception during those years. In light of this, I propose to draw a parallel between the artist’s and the teacher’s role with respect to their community of reference – such as the public and the students - through the lens of critical pedagogy.

In addition to Freire’s theory, I propose to look at the notion of the ‘organic intellectual’ by Antonio Gramsci because it confirms the potential impact of education on the emancipation of citizens.

Although Gramsci’s understanding of an intellectual élite could appear redundant to a contemporary reader, it is essential to revisit his thought to draw a parallel with artistic pedagogy. For Gramsci, the intellectual élite does not symbolise the repressive authority we may identify with at first glance. Gramsci believed that intellectuals would emerge from the same class they would guide. Therefore, anyone

could be an intellectual and such an intellectual is a fundamental figure in organising together with leaders. At this point, Gramsci's dedication to advocating for a fair schooling system for children, who, through proper evaluation, would not have been disadvantaged before students from better economic conditions, can be better understood. Hence, the 'organic intellectuals' can develop a reciprocal relationship with the 'masses' (from whom they arose) and stay immersed in their class's concerns and needs.

Thus, Gramsci's thought can be read under Freire's critical pedagogy; every teacher is always a student and vice versa (Entwisle, 1979, p.127).

Said that, artists who operate in the framework of socially engaged art practices often do not belong to the community they address. When this happens, dialogue is the vehicle to fill the gap between the artist and community as an integral part of the artwork (Known, 2002). This may explain the tendency to approach a pedagogical process as a way for the artists to learn from the community as they would be students once more. As a result, the will to combine the student and teacher position often develops into a pedagogical project such as a school or a curriculum. Socially engaged art practices that situate themselves across art, education and pedagogy explicitly refer to the methods of critical pedagogy, especially in using conversation as a tool for emancipation.

Similarly to Lacy's approach, what strikes from Helguera's analysis of socially engaged art (2011) is the emphasis on its modes of operation rather than on the definition of the principles that characterise the practice:

“Socially engaged art functions by attaching itself to subjects and problems that normally belong to other disciplines, moving them temporarily into a space of ambiguity.” (Helguera, 2011, p.5)

I propose to use the definition of ‘extraterritorial reciprocity’ articulated by Wright (2013) to clarify what the ‘space of ambiguity’ mentioned above might be and why it becomes relevant for this research. Classified as a new form of usership, ‘extraterritorial reciprocity’ denotes the tendency of art to abandon the territory of the self-referential art-based context to enter another field, for example, the legal, the economic, the pedagogical and so on. In doing so, the void art creates when it departs into another field becomes free for other social practices to use in a gesture of reciprocity. Hence, extraterritorial reciprocity involves a high level of collaboration and negotiation between the symbolic realms of art and non-art (yet) so that it provokes the emergence of relationships between meanings that were previously (apparently) unrelated.

Thus, the ‘space of ambiguity’ results in a highly desirable condition for socially engaged art practices, particularly for those who reciprocally vacate to the context of education.

Education provides the ideal toolkit for process and research-based collaborative practices, including inquiry-based methods, dialogues, workshops, and other activities focused on audience engagement. Hence, socially engaged art practice constantly piggybacks.

However, exhibitions, conferences, and socially engaged art projects that were part of the so-called educational turn since 2006 failed to connect openly with massive student protests around 2010 and later across Europe, asking for a systemic change (Graham, Graziano and Kelly, 2016). In many cases, socially engaged art practice operating as pedagogy failed to activate structural interventions despite proposing new methods to intervene in art and education. As I pointed out earlier, the risk of proposing socially engaged art as a pedagogy only in the context of museums and galleries without developing tools also to infiltrate universities and schools as well weakens the potentiality for long-term change as they might propose at the outset. As a result, I would argue that using the tools provided by socially engaged art

practice is incomplete because it offers a methodology that focuses too considerably on the art project rather than producing tools to hack education.

## 2. The proposal of feminist-engaged pedagogy

In this section, I propose to analyse the practice of feminist-engaged pedagogy and the attempts to apply its methods to formal and informal adult education. Later, I built on some procedures inspired by feminist-engaged pedagogy applied to the arts to define the methodology of Arte Útil. In particular, I propose to discuss the idea of the ‘not-yet’ which emerged in the work of feminist scholars such as Ann Manicom (1992), Hannah Arendt (Arendt and Kohn, 1977), and that was later interpreted by Jeanne van Heeswijk (Heeswijk, Hlavajova and Rakes, 2021) in her recent works. I argue that feminist-engaged pedagogy and the notion of the ‘not-yet’, if employed in the art and education context, bridges the proposal of socially engaged art practices and the undercommons that I will examine later in this chapter. Therefore, this section is intended to act as a link between the proposal of socially engaged practice and the undercommons for formulating the methodology of Arte Útil, which I will describe in chapter three.

Like socially engaged art practice, feminist-engaged pedagogy emerged as a response to the frustration of the lack of new methods within an institutional framework that could not subvert pre-existing organisational protocols. As a reaction to that frustration, feminist-engaged pedagogues started to explore settings outside of traditional schools and universities. According to bell hooks:

“The most exciting aspect of teaching outside conventional structures and/or college classrooms has been sharing the theory we write in academia with

non-academic audiences and, most importantly, seeing their hunger to learn new ways of knowing, their desire to use this knowledge in meaningful ways to enrich their daily lives.” (hooks, 2003, p.XI)

Consequently, thanks to feminist consciousness-raising practices that became widespread in the late sixties and into the eighties across the arts and beyond, more women who entered the universities challenged and began to demand changes in the curriculum. The demand for change in patriarchal curriculum and teaching practices completely altered the classroom. Additionally, feminist-engaged pedagogy appeared in parallel with post-colonial struggles, workers' struggles, and radical pedagogy as a tool to further popular education practices for the emancipation of citizens. Subsequently, learning started to be seen as a revolutionary (hooks, 2014).

The most significant transformations proposed by feminist pedagogues have been: 1) centring the act of teaching on the individual experience of each learner and teacher; 2) reconfiguring the space where teaching is taking place and recognising its influence; 3) encouraging collaboration within the community of learners to achieve change.

Firstly, in both formal and informal feminist classrooms, the individual experience nurtures the development of a community of learners who can find their specific voice through dialogue in classroom. Hence, the personal experience is articulated thanks to a non-hierarchical and more cooperative classroom with the assumption that ‘learning should begin in, and value students’ experience’ (Manicom, 1992). Secondly, altering the configuration of the space where teaching occurs - for example, by putting the chairs in a circle - challenges and transforms power relations between teacher and students. As I argued in Chapter one, the dissolution of teacher and student hierarchies is foundational for implementing both the critical and the feminist pedagogical plan. Thirdly, encouraging collaboration between learners

helps to consider them as a group and make visible the dismantling of power relations reproduced in the classrooms and facilitate constituency-building.

The tools offered by feminist-engaged pedagogy do not represent a set of rules to be followed and applied without context. As argued by Manicom, feminist-engaged pedagogy is a ‘standpoint’; it should develop an analysis that informs and reforms how teachers and students act in and on the world. Analogously to socially engaged art practices, feminist-engaged pedagogy proposes to consider education as a tool for social change:

“The intrinsic link between feminist pedagogy and organising for social change reflects the connection between the classroom and the world outside of it.” (Manicom, 1992)

The concept of standpoint has been practised extensively by socially engaged artists who develop their projects according to the principles of critical pedagogy, as I described in the previous section of this chapter. Hence, I propose to interpret the meaning of ‘standpoint’ under the lens of feminist-engaged pedagogy because rather than closing the circle around women as the subjects who experienced patriarchal oppression, it helps to articulate that knowledge production is ‘a political, ethical and intellectual commitment to understanding social relations from a materialist vantage point (based on experience) that undoes the violent abstraction of bourgeois thought.’ (Carpenter and Mojab, 2017). Grappling with the complexity of abstraction and imagination poses a challenge for feminist-engaged educators. Then, the methods applied by educators within this framework articulate and reveal the relationship between the self and the social realm as well as between consciousness and the material world, which influences the individual experience of reality.

At this point, I propose focussing on two specific methods feminist-engaged pedagogues use to hack education. The first method I seek to focus on is the practice of conversation and dialogue, which also emerged earlier in this chapter. As I argued previously, conversation and dialogue are the first tools to be used to question traditional protocols in both art and education (Lacy, 1995; Kester, 2004; Helguera, 2011; Freire, 2018; Heeswijk, Hlavajova and Rakes, 2021). According to bell hooks, conversation is at the outset of the development of democratic education. Here, conversation is intended as an exchange of ideas between teachers and students and inside and outside academic settings. The question at this point is: “How do we engage students to consider issues of reciprocity through dialogue?”

Some of the strategies discussed by hooks are simple; for example, just keeping a journal and dedicating some moments to reading it aloud from time to time to the group would be ‘an exercise in recognition’ of individual experiences (hooks, 2014). Through conversation, a community is created where, at the basis, there is respect for individual voices: students feel free to talk – and talk back. However, as for the socially engaged artists, the issue of power relationships between them and the community of reference is always present. Nevertheless, the effort of feminist-engaged pedagogues is to recognise and acknowledge an imbalance of power:

“I am also not suggesting that I don’t have more power. And I am not trying to say we are all equal here. I am trying to say that we are all equal here to the extent that we are equally committed to creating a learning context.”  
(hooks, 2014, p.153)

The use of conversation and dialogical forms of teaching fostered the recognition of the specificity of the cohort of students in contrast with the modern notion of the universal - or homogenous - cohort. As I argued previously, this change also occurred in developing socially engaged art practices that started to welcome

different audiences who approached the work from multiple points of view. In parallel, the idea of specificity led artists using the feminist-engaged framework to question who would be experiencing the work and how. Consequently, in both museums and schools, there has been a development in thinking about participation, how to engage with different constituencies and the institution's role in this change of paradigm (Lacy, 2022).

The second method that I consider is the development of strategies to be used to enhance imagination. Feminist-engaged pedagogies facilitate learners and students to assume an active role in the process of education. As argued by Gert Biesta (2012) in his analysis of Arendt, active beings take initiative to begin something new and to bring it into the world. Thus, action is freedom. That freedom is interpreted by Arendt as the possibility to ‘call something into being which did not exist before’ (Arendt and Kohn, 1977, p.151).

In the same line of thoughts, Jeanne van Heeswijk articulated the ‘not-yet’<sup>22</sup> as a practice aimed at social change:

“Powered by imagination-as-practice, and not just hope but commitment, the not-yet breaks with a utopian function of art and politics. It does not outsource livable time and life-in-common to a future that never arrives or an island that is nowhere to be found, populated by new, improved subjects or better than-human humans. Rather, the not-yet attempts to carve an “aesthetic-life-world” in here and now. [...] the not-yet connects to multitude of elsewhere and elsewhens to assemble a composition of forces to sustain

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<sup>22</sup> Jeanne van Heeswijk builds on the notion of visionary fiction articulated by Walidah Imarisha to formulate the concept of the ‘not-yet’: “Visionary fiction is a term – that I started using to talk about imaginative writings and then expanded to art – that can help us understand current power dynamics and support us in imagining ways to build new futures. For me, visionary fiction is intimately and inextricably tied to radical movements for change and liberation movements” in Heeswijk, J.v., Hlavajova, M. and Rakes, R. (2021) *Toward the Not-Yet: Art as Public Practice*. Utrecht: BAK, basis voor actuele kunst. p.26



livable life not simply against, but *in spite of*, the reality of the present.”  
(Heeswijk, Hlavajova and Rakes, 2021, p.13)

The not-yet was formulated and implemented through the exhibition *Trainings for the Not-Yet* at BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht (The Netherlands) in 2019. The exhibition took the format of a series of twenty-two classes from September to December 2019, convened with almost fifty international guest trainers<sup>23</sup>. The choice of a pedagogical format to articulate van Heeswijk’s proposal for change arrived after two decades of engaging with constituencies in Europe and beyond – for example, through projects such as *Freehouse* (1998 - ongoing) or *Homebaked* (2015 - ongoing) that are included in the Arte Útil archive. In the case of *Trainings for the Not-Yet*, the exhibition explicitly referred to the necessity of:

“dissolve the divisions established by formal education, fixed structures, policies and identities, and to take up often unrecognised knowledge and desires.” (2021, p.14)

van Heeswijk rejected the position of the single author, she remitted herself to a plethora of other collaborators, and she put into practice the basic principles of feminist-engaged pedagogy, namely conversation, collaboration and direct experience to act in the real life. Reflecting on the artist’s role, she argues that:

“The role of the artist here is to create the conditions for the necessary interruption of the rational order to take place, both by intervening in “real life” and by using the critical infrastructure of art. The exhibition, [...] was cast as a learning environment and a training ground; the artworks, thus

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<sup>23</sup> The complete *Trainings for the Not-Yet* programme is available at <https://www.bakonline.org/program-item/trainings-for-the-not-yet/training-program-trainings-for-the-not-yet/> Accessed: 15 August 2022.

assumed a role of learning objects with which to practice – *train for* – the not-yet” (2021, p.15)

Even though feminist-engaged pedagogies developed prevalently within formal educational settings, their methods seem more successful if practised in informal educational sites, as the proposal of socially engaged art. It is evident how the experience of van Heeswijk’s exhibition demonstrates what was argued by hooks earlier; that is, learning is never confined solely to an institutionalised classroom. Assuming the position of feminist-engaged radical educators means breaking with the idea that what has been taught in schools (and I add museums) is not part of one’s experience. Yet the question remains: “How to create the condition for more educators to embrace feminist-engaged pedagogies within academia to intervene in the real life of students and learners?”

If, as argued by Manicom (1992), teaching according to feminist principles entails connecting the classroom to community struggles, it means actively interweaving with other movements, such as environmental and anti-racist organisations, labour unions, and other progressive movements that organise for social change. Therefore, the question remains: “How to invert the centrifugal force that pushes these instances outside the institutions, to provoke change inside them?” and: “Is it possible to activate a mutual exchange between radical instances, such as the proposal of socially engaged art practices discussed earlier, with that of feminist-engaged pedagogy?”

I propose to add the practice of the ‘undercommons’, which I will discuss in the next section, as the last theoretical reference that constitutes the methodology of *Arte Útil*.

### 3. The proposal of the undercommons

In the last section of this chapter, I discuss the theory of the undercommons formulated by Stefano Harney and Fred Moten (2013) and its applications in the context of education. I argue that thanks to the undercommons, it is possible to develop an operational approach toward implementing change within the institutional context. Although the approach suggested by Harney and Moten might appear in opposition to the principles of critical pedagogy, as I will argue later, the undercommons suggest acting in a conspiracy at the centre of power structures to undermine and tear them apart. Subsequently, I propose approaching the work of Sara Ahmed on the use and education (2019) under the lens of the undercommons, who come to a similar conclusion by introducing hacking as a mode of usership (Wright, 2013).

As I argued earlier in this chapter, the proposal of socially engaged art, feminist-engaged pedagogy, and the undercommons, if applied alone as methods for change, still need to be completed. I insist that all of them are interdependent and complete each other – even though sometimes apparently in opposition – in the methodology of *Arte Útil*.

The undercommons oppose the notion of the commons because it denotes a space created between those who have been excluded from the use of shared resources and their associated rights and advantages. Hence, the undercommons is a conceptual space inhabited mainly by ‘black people, indigenous people, queers and poor people’ as detailed by Halberstam (2013). The practice of the undercommons is relevant to the research because it forms when the excluded subjects engage each other in what Harney and Moten (2013) describe as study. Study here is intended as a spontaneous social activity:

“study is already going on, including when you walk into a classroom and before you think you start a class, by the way.” (Harney and Moten, 2013, p.112)

I argue that the social aspect of study proposed here is analogous to hooks’ feminist-engaged pedagogy discussed earlier in terms of the spontaneity of the lived experience. hooks affirms that learning happens everywhere, inside and especially outside the classroom (2014). Analogously, Freire’s pedagogy of the oppressed stresses the social nature of study (education, in his terms) as a standpoint to question power. The main difference between the undercommons and the critical pedagogical approaches lies in the intentionality of study: the undercommons is unpredictable and unplanned, while critical education is planned and structured.

Thus, I argue that usership provokes a similar experience to study if read in terms of non-intentionality. Usership, as proposed in the context of *Arte Útil*, offers an operational mode in which realisation begins before all the specifics of a plan have been finalised (Bertrand, 2019).

As in the context of the case studies discussed in chapter one, usership is intended as a collective noun that defines another possibility of engagement within the arts. Mainly, usership represents a challenge to traditional notions such as spectatorship, ownership, and expert culture. Because use cannot be stopped or ordered, it can become highly controversial for going hand in hand with abuse and misuse. Users use what is already available rather than providing something new; yet through use, they may transform both the terms of engagement and fruition. Similar to the membership of the undercommons, users are aware that they are not owners. Therefore, usership does not perform. On the contrary, it highlights an event that happens here and now. As Ahmed (2019) explains, what usership offers when a letter box occupied by birds becomes a nest is not available for the usual routine; nevertheless, its use value is not lost. It is transformed.

The collective character of study is the latter aspect that connects the proposal of socially engaged art, feminist-engaged pedagogy, with the practice of the undercommons. Study in fact, is described by Harney and Moten as follows:

“what you do with other people. It’s talking and walking around with other people, working, dancing, suffering, some irreducible convergence of all three, held under the name of speculative practice... The point of calling it ‘study’ is to mark that the incessant and irreversible intellectuality of these activities is already present.” (2013, p.110)

I argue that the tension between the three proposals analysed in this chapter lies in the fact that they further a range of methods to be applied in various institutional contexts; however, except for feminist-engaged pedagogists who attempt to formulate a methodology, the other proposals do not do that, despite advancing innovative methods. In the case of the undercommons, as Christoph Brunner and Gerald Raunig (2015) noted, planning does not aim to become a model but rather a metamodel ‘in resonance of a presence that is felt yet unmediated’. However, the dispersion of the model happens through abstraction (as opposed to what feminist-engaged pedagogy proposes) when a multiplicity of minor practices relate to singular concerns. Nevertheless, in this case, the re-singularisation (Brunner and Raunig, 2015) provides correspondence areas beyond a local or temporal condition. The undercommons do not want to reduce the point of view of the many, their singularity and division in a shared condition. On the contrary, it proposes the composition of new forms of living and new values to inform any mode of organising through practice as forms of self-preservation.

To explain how the undercommons manifest in practice, I briefly discussed in chapter one two case studies, such as *The Para-site School* and *Tequiografias*, that

are included in the Arte Útil archive. I claim that both follow the theory of the undercommons to approach the institutions of education and eventually hack them. In this section, I will focus on *The Para-Site School* since I will extensively analyse *Tequiografías* in the following chapter when describing the curriculum planning phase of the research.

As explained by its initiator, Felipe Castelblanco, *The Para-Site School*:

“Infiltrate the university in a parasitical way and uses its resources, people and infrastructure to embrace & serve immigrants and artists-nomads excluded by official universities in the USA and Europe. This project explores education as artistic material and the university as a contested political arena. The Para-Site School often operates in secrecy within different institutions in order to form unlikely alliances and protect the identity of the students, prevent deportation and redistribute knowledge where it is most effective.” (Castelblanco, 2011)

In the paragraph quoted above, Castelblanco seems to refer to the undercommons explicitly. From a close reading of the terms he uses, the choice of words such as ‘infiltrate’, ‘excluded’ and ‘secrecy’, for example, already embraces the epistemological shift suggested by the undercommons. I argue that this semantic selection is often associated with questionable actions that cause problems rather than proposing solutions. However, it is precisely the quest of the undercommons as envisioned by Harvey and Moten: a desire not to change something – in our case, the institution of education through the means of art - but to make it stop working, to sabotage it, to highlight its inadequacy, and reinvent it from scratch. At this point, it can be argued that the proposal of the undercommons is not that of reconciliation with those institutions that reproduce exclusion; rather, it proposes to actively embody the same hostile behaviour to achieve a different aim. Ultimately, as argued

by Sara Ahmed, to transform a system, the only possible way is to make it stop working (2019):

“When you stop the machine from working, you have damaged the machine. Plumbers might need to become vandals, or we might have to pass as plumbers (fix the leaks) to become vandals (making the leaks bigger).” (2019, p.212)

She continues:

“You have to break into a system when you do not have legitimate access to that system. A break can be how you leak information out as well as how you expose the failure of that system.” (2019, p.225)

The embodiment of a specific role that comprehends the artist, the educator, and the vandal – using Ahmed's terms - is central for Castelblanco: he physically becomes the vehicle for activating the project. For example, through *The Para-Site School*, he re-directs funding to projects in the Amazon<sup>24</sup> or helps a student who, despite having received a study grant to the USA, cannot travel for VISA issues and loses the first year of class<sup>25</sup>. As Castelblanco argues, *The Para-Site School* aims to become an

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<sup>24</sup> In 2019 The Para-Site School redistributed funding from Swiss universities to Ñambi Rimai, an indigenous Media Collective operating in the Colombian Pan Amazon region. By doing so, the organisation organised training for with leaders from five Indigenous Nations (Awà, Inga, Kamënstà, Quillancinga and Siona) to support the creation of the first Pan-Amazon Indigenous Media collective for the biocultural peace-building. The programme’s mission is to restore indigenous self-governance, defend the rights of the land and promote the conservation and communication across the ecosystem through film, radio and multimedia productions.

<sup>25</sup> In 2012 artist and artist Nima Deghani from Iran, was awarded a scholarship to study at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh (USA). His student VISA was delayed due to bureaucratic complications, so he was not able to attend school for the whole first year of the scholarship. The Para-Site School used performance and data streaming to virtually bring Deghani to the USA and as a result Deghani was able to interact with the cohort of students in Pittsburgh while being in Iran.

embodied tactic for the redistribution of knowledge and epistemic justice, to be enacted in various contexts.

To conclude, the proposal of the undercommons adds to the methodology of Arte Útil the perspective of the excluded, who do not want to be included by those in power but aim at creating a completely new institutional system. Building on this third position will help to demonstrate that Arte Útil includes the three methods analysed in this chapter, and it offers a real toolkit for proposing effective change within both the institutions of art and education.

## 4. Conclusion

It can be concluded that the educational methods applied by socially engaged art, feminist-engaged pedagogy and the undercommons are the practical and theoretical references for the conception of a methodology of Arte Útil.

As I contended throughout the chapter, education was a tool that social movements applied to strengthen and organise internally. Therefore, the relationship between educational methods and their application to concrete actions, was an assumption, not a question. However, as Rebecca Tarlau (2014) argued, critical pedagogy scholars often forget to connect radical education practices with concrete examples of social change. I contend that the methodology of Arte Útil can supply this lack. I have argued in this chapter that the latter, in applying both art-based methods in

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Sometimes through the body of Felipe Castelblanco, who became a surrogate (or living avatar) for Nima Deghani.



tandem with educational methodologies for the conception of an inclusive curriculum, would further institutional change on many levels. Revealing that the case studies taken into consideration in this chapter use Arte Útil's principle to intervene both in museums and art schools, using art as an alibi to do so, this chapter has demonstrated how Arte Útil articulate its own educational methodology across and because of the application in both fields.

The research presented in this chapter has been comprehensively connected to my practice as both curator and art educator; therefore, as I have already emphasised the methods used in the three examples, in the following chapter, I will focus on Arte Útil as a methodology in itself through the description of the action-research that I've carried on for this thesis.

# *Chapter Three: Hacking Art Education. Curriculum Planning and the Usological Turn*

## 1. The constituency-led curriculum: applying the methodology of Arte Útil

In the previous chapters, I traced the origin of the term Arte Útil, its development from the intuition of several artists and theorists to the conceptualisation of the art movement; finally, I analysed its principles at the intersection of socially engaged art, feminist-engaged pedagogy and the undercommons to articulate an educational methodology that will be the focus of this last chapter. To do so, I have conceived a digital toolkit in the form of a curriculum that comprehends: a series of syllabi, including readings and other media, produced throughout the research, different texts focused on the case studies taken from the Arte Útil archive, a glossary of key terms, practical exercises to facilitate workshops in schools and museums and a timeline of Arte Útil case studies, events hitting schools, exhibitions, art projects books and conferences that were produced around the topic. Because the project's aim is

dispersion of research, I have added a survey to map the usership of the website. All these elements constitute a toolkit, such as *Hacking (Art) Education*, available on [www.hackingeducation.art](http://www.hackingeducation.art)



Fig. 3.1 Hacking (Art) Education, [www.hackingeducation.art](http://www.hackingeducation.art) homepage screenshot. 2023.  
Photo © Alessandra Saviotti

*Hacking (Art) Education* is the result of a three-year practice-based research in collaboration with the Asociación of Arte Útil ([www.arte-util.org](http://www.arte-util.org) where I coordinate the public programme and the maintenance of the archive), The Whitworth in Manchester and the City Lab through the Institute of Art & Technology at the Liverpool John Moores University. The project developed thanks to various invitations from art and education institutions interested in hosting introductory presentations on Arte Útil. I used each invitation to propose generative activities that gave me input to compose the toolkit in the form of a curriculum. I argue that the conditions for the project's development were ideal: being invited as a curator to develop further my research while at the same time using those platforms to advance my academic research gave me the possibility to expand the methodology of Arte

Útil beyond the repetition of inherited epistemologies (Rito and Balaskas, 2020). In chapter two, when I described the approach of the undercommons, I argued that operating as an infiltrator or at the interstices of the institutions can foster change. In the same line of thoughts, Mélanie Bouteloup seeks to leave behind the opposition between academic, artistic, and I add curatorial research because when the categories are blurred, renewal occurs:

“Artistic research is about inventing a structure that allows for the means of research to develop in tandem with its content. Thinking radically is about looking for a form while researching its contents, rather than presupposing it.” (Bouteloup, 2020)

*Hacking (Art) Education* developed thanks to the contributions of the students at the international Master Artist Educator at ArtEZ University of the Arts in Arnhem (The Netherlands), the cohort of residents at the UNIDEE, Cittadellarte – Fondazione Michelangelo Pistoletto in Biella (Italy), the students and teachers at the Artistic High School ‘Duccio di Buoninsegna’ in Siena (Italy) and the collaborators at Decentralising Political Economies platform ([www.dpe.tools](http://www.dpe.tools)).

*Hacking (Art) Education* is a website that can be used by many users such as art educators, artists, curators, theorists, students and whoever would like to engage with and apply the principles of Arte Útil to operate a series of changes in the composition of the curriculum.

The starting point is the study of the Arte Útil archive as a repository of practices that can be repurposed and adapted through usership to respond to the needs of constituencies. Particularly in art education, participatory curriculum planning constitutes the theoretical framework for understanding and advancing the operational practices of Arte Útil.

I decided to give the project the form of the curriculum to explore the totality of learners' experiences that occur in the educational process through the means of art. As the Latin root of the words suggests – *currere*, to run, to proceed – the curriculum is, above all, a process. I will not attempt to give a precise definition of a curriculum; the literature already highlights many definitions (Downey and Kelly, 1986, p.184). Nonetheless, as I argued in Chapter two, the definition I adopt will inevitably inform a particular approach to curriculum planning. Hence, if applying different pedagogical methodologies suggests that education has different meanings to different people, it must be accepted that ‘the view taken of it will crucially determine the view one takes of the curriculum’ (Downey and Kelly, 1986, p.186).

If an attempt to a definition should be made, I propose to use Kelly’s:

“An educational curriculum at all levels should be concerned to provide a liberating experience of thought, of social and political empowerment, of respect for the freedom of others, of an acceptance of a variety of opinions, and of the enrichment of the life of every individual in that society, regardless of class, race or creed<sup>26</sup>.” (Kelly, 2009, p.8)

I intentionally designed the project to encourage learning also outside of the delivery of a single workshop or activity. However, the more I tried to give the project a clear structure, the more I was confronted with the impossibility of containing usership and the contradiction in imposing my view on it. Undoubtedly, I had to face ‘curriculum problems’. As William Reid has suggested, curriculum problems are ‘practical problems which are moral rather than technical in nature’ (Reid, 1978, p.29).

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<sup>26</sup> I argue that gender should also be one of the aspects mentioned by Kelly.

I contend that Arte Útil, as a methodology which builds on the principles of socially engaged art practices, feminist-engaged pedagogy and the undercommons, is the key to overcoming the so-called curriculum problems mentioned earlier. Arte Útil, in proposing tactics to rehearse the future (Byrne, Estupiñán and Saviotti, 2017), highlights the necessity for artists not to react to certain events merely but rather to prevent those events by creating artworks that might suggest a different idea of how our future could be. As argued by Alistair Hudson, the artwork becomes a manual for social change (Hudson, 2020); accordingly, I suggest using that manual across universities and museums.

Therefore, I propose to decode Arte Útil's principles and approaches and apply them to curriculum theory to respond to societal change's rapidity. As argued by Albert Victor Kelly, a school, as the place where education often occurs, should be where learners are prepared to face social change itself, to adapt to and to initiate changes in the norms and values of the community.

“If the school is not in itself to transform the culture, it is certainly there to produce people who can and will transform it... schools must become better modes of cooperation and community as well as teaching and learning.”  
(Kelly, 2009, p.63)

At this point, the pedagogical character of the Arte Útil archive comes in the foreground as the bridge between museums and the university, and it facilitates the creation of a new learning environment across the two fields. Following the so-called ‘Usological turn’<sup>27</sup> proposed by Wright (2013, p.65), usership is intended as a site of value emanating from the collective production of knowledge. Therefore, if it is not used, the Arte Útil archive fails (Estupiñán and Saviotti, 2019). Such ‘Usological

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<sup>27</sup> With the ‘Usological turn’, Stephen Wright intended to denote the rise of practices that welcome the use and repurpose of the work of art, challenging the usual categories of authorship and spectatorship.

turn' has been actively embraced by many, through the activation of the Arte Útil archive on numerous levels – through various iterations of the Office of Arte Útil or Useful Art, for example,<sup>28</sup> - to activate its potentiality to 'function as a crowbar to crack open the existent concept of art and its institutional space' (Wright, 2018).

Through qualitative research, the archive's functionality emerged as a link between general questions that would arise from the analysis of the included case studies with local issues and specific urgencies. Hence, the programmes developed as part of the research aimed at responding to each context where the archive operated as a catalyst, whether a classroom or a museum. Consequently, applying Arte Útil's principles to design every activity enhanced the co-designing sessions with users. As a result, the archive informed the syllabi that supported the workshops. Besides, I considered Arte Útil, rather than an art movement, a methodology for students, curators, artists, researchers, and other educators.

At this point, the main question is: 'How could I integrate the 'Usological turn' with the traditional methods of co-production, co-authorship, and co-curating applied in the context of socially engaged art, feminist-art pedagogy and the undercommons to cross from the art context to a learning environment?'

I will build on the notion of the constituency museum to demonstrate that arriving at a constituency-led curriculum is possible by applying the methodology of Arte Útil. In particular, I seek to focus on one operational mode of Arte Útil, such as 'hacking'.

John Byrne, in the introduction of *The Constituent Museum: Constellations of Knowledge, Politics and Mediation: a Generator of Social Change* (Byrne et al., 2018), opens with an enquiry: 'What would happen if museums put relationships at the centre of their operation?'. Relationships appear at the outset of developing a

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<sup>28</sup> The documentation of each iteration of the Office of Arte Útil or Useful Art is available on [www.arte-util.org](http://www.arte-util.org)

new approach to the conception of museums' programmes that should become open to the input of the communities they (pretend to) work with. Relationships are, in fact, the vehicle through which Arte Útil manifests its principles, especially in the educational environment, with the complicity of the tradition of socially engaged art practices, feminist-engaged pedagogy and the undercommons.

If the constituent museum is serious about welcoming a constituency-led approach, I argue that it becomes a place of study, where study should be intended as an undercommoning practice. Hence, the constituent museum becomes a collective practice rather than a container of practices:

“The constituent museum, then, does not have a department of education but it is entirely constituted as a collective learning space: rather than exhibits, it performs. It does things to its members and to the situations and places in which it operates...

The constituent museum is not a place of knowledge production but a place of study, a site for becoming with others through art in motion, its architecture is not the architecture of a building or an institution, but the architecture of love, it is the architecture that holds us in the brokenness we share.” (Arlandis, 2018)

Yet what should be the subject of study and the methodology to apply to the constituent museum has not been formulated until this thesis.

The methodological approach that Arte Útil suggested in this context helps to:

1 – Encourage the formation of ‘constituencies’ – rather than communities<sup>29</sup> - as sites of social and political struggle that use the means of art for anticipating change.

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<sup>29</sup> The distinction here is necessary for it suggests an additional methodological shift from socially engaged art to Arte Útil. According to Rancière (1999, p.2), the term community suggests a group of



The temporality, fluidity, and constantly changing nature of the constituencies go beyond the idea of a community that participates in the realisation of a project;

2 – Put conversation, cooperation, and kinship at the centre of developing a dialectical exchange between constituents following the approach of feminist-engaged pedagogy. Nevertheless, this approach does not necessarily need to generate a consensus among the subjects involved in the study;

3 – The curriculum developed following Arte Útil’s methodology is the tool for study to be applied in both museums and universities. The fact that it is self-directed by constituencies who operate as the early users, makes it flexible and therefore, adaptable.

To conclude, I built on the notion of ‘study’ furthered by the undercommons, to propose that museums and schools are both places where knowledge is produced by and with constituencies. Therefore, the implementation of Arte Útil’s methodology - that stems from art to evolve in education - for curriculum change is the direction that both institutional environments should follow if a change is needed. *Hacking (art) education* is liberating knowledge from scarcity through producing a toolkit in the form of a curriculum to be used by constituencies:

‘Keeping information secret is inefficient; it leads to an absurd, unaesthetic duplication of effort amongst the information’s usership’. (Wright, 2013, p.33).

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subjects who speak the same language. Therefore, belonging to a community often implies a relation with a specific location rather than interest, as suggested by the constituency definition. For the community, the shared living condition might foster the development of relationships; whereas for the constituency, belonging to a specific place is secondary concerning the formation of the group.

## 2. Unlearning the syllabus: the toolkit as a curriculum

After receiving an invitation to present the different activations of the Arte Útil archive from its birth, I proposed to transform my intervention from a lecture to a workshop.

The result is a series of long and medium-term engagements with those institutions open to welcoming my suggestion and working with me, particularly in rethinking how my proposal could become a specific pedagogy. Such institutions were the international Master Artist Educator (iMAE) at ArtEZ in Arnhem (NL), the Artistic High School (Liceo Artistico) ‘Duccio di Buoninsegna’ in Siena (IT), and the UNIDEE – Cittadellarte in Biella (IT). Their trust allowed me to develop the action research that constitutes the practical part of this thesis. In the following pages, I describe the process of composing the syllabi - tailored for each constituency and open to their contribution - including users’ feedback that I gathered through semi-structured interviews.

### 2.1 Arte Útil in the Netherlands

Since 2017 together with Gemma Medina Estupiñan we have led a seminar on *Arte Útil in the Netherlands* within the iMAE<sup>30</sup>. In 2019 when the invitation was renewed, we asked for more time and a dedicated budget, to design a course – rather than a seminar - that could last a semester and operate as both an art project and a class integrated into the study plan. We discussed with the director of the course, John Johnston, to approach the cohort of students with the intention to co-create with

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<sup>30</sup> The previous iterations of the collaboration were carried on under the umbrella of *Broadcasting the archive*. Syllabi are available at the dedicated website: <https://broadcastingthearchive.tumblr.com/arnhem>

them rather than for them. This has allowed me to design the first syllabus that constitutes the action research for this thesis, to encourage and compare various chances of using the Arte Útil archive within an academic framework.

The programme started on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September 2019, with two weekly meetings, and ended on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2019. As described in the syllabus:

“The module is organised as practice-based training, where instructors will give a broad introduction to the Arte Útil archive, the criteria, some notions around radical/critical pedagogy and the development of a constellation of projects worldwide, which have been developed since 2013 by a flexible group of engaged artists, curators and citizens. Moreover, students will have the possibility to visit some pioneer institutions in the Netherlands, which have been developing different approaches to socially engaged practices and political art as well as challenging how art history has been told. Students will work in groups to engage with the selection criteria and the theoretical framework these criteria embody, as well as the partners invited to present their projects. For 6 weeks, students will work closely with artists and organisations, in order to gain insights into the practice through a learning-by-doing approach.

Finally, through a series of reading groups, students will engage with different theoretical approaches to the practice, and they will help in identifying new works to add to the archive, and explore ways to support the expansion and mediation of the Arte Útil archive as a project in itself.”

(2019)

For the academic requirements, it was imperative that the syllabus followed a specific structure to guide students through the first semester. However, the real tool of the study was represented by the archive. Hence, it became the educational device that the students and I - as the instructor – used to research relevant aspects linked to

their backgrounds, geographical contexts, and interests. In this case, the educational approach employed can be viewed, according to Irit Rogoff (2008), as an expansive and generative effort that creates a new perspective that emerges during the process, leaving behind the praxis that served as its starting point.

To merge the speculative approach with the practical one, the first half of the programme was devoted to introducing the principles of Arte Útil through theoretical exercises (such as *The Coefficient of Art* described later in the chapter), workshops with invited artists who were part of the Asociación de Arte Útil's network (Lodovica Guarnieri and Miyu Yamamoto), embodied activities (such as exercises inspired by the *Theatre of the Oppressed* by Augusto Boal), and a toolkit to activate concepts discussed during each meeting (such as the activation of a *Mapping Tool* used by the Asociación to unpick its economic structure). To bring students closer to the practice and network developed by the Asociación de Arte Útil, we invited guest speakers, organised field trips to projects' locations in The Netherlands, and visited exhibitions and archives that were complementary to the time spent in class. When applied to practice, the exposure to the 'outside' and attempting to push the course on a 1:1 scale, were the most challenging endeavour. As F. argued:

“(Arte Útil) needs a huge background acknowledgement of art history and a little bit of sociology. Almost every single word needs some explanation.”  
(Interview conducted in June 2022)



Fig. 3.2 Visiting projects in Eindhoven with the cohort of the international Master Artist Educator, ArtEZ, Arnhem (NL). 2019. Photo © Alessandra Saviotti

As noted by L. there was initial resistance to framing Arte Útil throughout the criteria:

“I would feel a bit of resistance (against the criteria). Like to have to fit an artwork within some criteria...let’s just not put ourselves in these categories.” (Interview conducted in July 2022)

Although the vision of the iMAE explicitly refers to experiential learning strategies (Kolb, 1984) it took a long time for the cohort to become accustomed to a rhizomatic teaching and learning approach proposed by the course (Saviotti and Medina Estupiñán, 2022). As reported by F.:

“If there were no Arte Útil we would have been even more unsure about what we were learning at that time. This means Arte Útil indeed opened our minds. It opened our eyes. And I was lucky that I was empty; I was a blank piece of paper. Arte Útil kept the learning (process) open. And it kept the communication (between students and instructors), in my opinion, on the same level. So, there was no hierarchy or gatekeeping. At least compared to now.”<sup>31</sup> (Interview conducted in June 2022)

The second part of the course was dedicated to applying the 1:1 scale criterium to the syllabus. To do so, we organised a six-week mentorship programme developed in collaboration with collectives and individual artists that were invited to offer the students practice-based training in their studios. Students were asked to work in pairs and to choose from a provisional list of artists and collectives<sup>32</sup> we composed for them, with whom they wanted to work and be mentored throughout the development of their final school projects. The aim of the mentorship programme was, on the one hand, to give students the possibility to be guided by others rather than Gemma and me, adding other approaches to Arte Útil from the field; on the other, we aimed at redistributing the resources that the use of the archive had implied. Thus, it was essential for the development of the programme that every mentor was paid. The cohort convened its experiences with each other in class weekly, so I could follow

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<sup>31</sup> This person is currently enrolled in another M.A. in London, UK.

<sup>32</sup> Invited mentors were Libia Castro and Ólafur Ólafsson, based between Rotterdam (NL) and Reykjavik (IS); Rebecca Gomperts, initiator of *Women on Waves*, based in Amsterdam (NL); project *Freehouse* initiated by Jeanne van Heeswijk in Rotterdam (NL); Kevin van Braak, based in Arnhem (NL); Hans Kalliwoda, initiator of the project *BeeCare Amsterdam* (NL), *Foundation We are* in Eindhoven (NL); and Gluklya, based in Amsterdam (NL).

the process and facilitate collective responses to certain issues that could have emerged during the meetings with the artists.

This method confronted the students with a certain discrepancy between the tempo and praxis of socially engaged art practices and Arte Útil versus that of the school projects. As A. pointed out, reflecting on her experience with her mentor:

“(It) was very good for me to learn that when you work collectively, specifically in a place that has already a specific scheme, you don’t own anything. You are not the author. You are just providing with what you know. And then, if (the project) changes, it changes. And that is ok as well.”  
(Interview conducted in June 2022)



Fig. 3.3 Presentation of the mentorship programme at the international Master Artist Educator, ArtEZ, Arnhem, NL. 2019. Photo © Alessandra Saviotti

Almost every feedback revealed the constraints within the university's conventional structures and expectations. As pointed out by another student after a field trip to a museum, institutional protocols, schemes, and control settings are challenging to overcome with collective authorship.

Some other comments helped me reassess my assumption that students would have preferred to spend more time outside the school than in the classroom. Particularly after the first two weeks of field trips, there were some complaints regarding the inconveniences of travelling across different cities and the lessons' unusual – or lack of – structure. As L. reported:

“I also feel that a one-year master's maybe is a bit short. Perhaps the structure of the master's itself was a bit confusing. But it was also a very big opener of possibilities.” (Interview conducted in July 2022)

Nonetheless, later feedback expressed appreciation of the rhizomatic approach in bringing back a sense of wonder, as ‘if they were on a primary school trip, recovering the quality from being open and genuinely interested in listening and learning.’ (Saviotti and Medina Estupiñán, 2022)

Horizontal dialogue, collaboration, and a sense of care were some aspects that students appreciated the most. As L. argued:

“I loved the travel as a method. You learn so much by moving (around) with your peers...I would feel that moving around The Netherlands with you



loosened a lot (the boundaries) between teachers and students.” (Interview conducted in July 2022)

In conclusion, the course was positively evaluated by the cohort of students and the programme leader. This allowed me to develop the methodology of Arte Útil further applied to education.

However, I cannot overlook some frictions that emerged during the process due to my intricate position as an external lecturer developing a project on a 1:1 scale rather than just teaching. As argued previously (2022), Gemma and I attempted to foster co-creation. We shared authorship with the students while activating the project at the university, which has a fixed and codified set of behavioural rules. This entailed a shift in our way of working, implying the need for more time and space for unlearning certain habits from both sides.

Yet, opening the programming process to collective authorship revealed how case studies fundamentally shaped the workshop. Because Arte Útil suggests ‘an operational mode that begins implementation before all the details of a plan have been settled’ (Bertrand, 2019), co-creating with students and invited contributors allowed a collective experimentation that concretely affected the perception of the whole curriculum. Eventually, the archive became the tool we used to infiltrate and question working protocols within the educational institution.

The possibility of using the archive freely enabled anyone involved in the course to activate a curatorial process intended as a collective action. This provoked tension between the nature of the project in and of itself: ‘Is the syllabus an art project?’ ‘Is the syllabus *just* a syllabus?’

Nevertheless, as Arte Útil’s methodology states, users co-curated and co-created with me, adding discussion points that nurture the outcome of this thesis.

## 2.2 Arte come strumento (Art as a tool)

*Arte come strumento* (Art as a tool) was a two-day module (18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019) organised as part of *Contemporary Landscape – exploring new edges*, a project arranged by a consortium of three associations<sup>33</sup> that operate in Siena<sup>34</sup>, Italy. The project focussed on the relationship between the city of Siena and its peripheries, and the role of art and culture in shaping their identities. For it, the associations planned a series of activities in preparation for an exhibition, to explore the topic and applied a constituency-led approach. Through focus groups, workshops, and brainstorming sessions, they extended the creative process to the residents of the city of Siena and its surroundings. The Asociación de Arte Útil was invited to coordinate the educational programme aimed at the students at the Artistic High School (Liceo Artistico) ‘Duccio di Buoninsegna’ in Siena. According to the curators Alessia and Christian Posani:

‘The project fostered a process of re-appropriation of constituencies’ skills. It did so, not only to study and preserve the historical and artistic heritage as it has been delivered to us, but also to recreate it, renewing it and declining it in a participatory and international contemporary dimension, open to all those who would like to participate. During the entire project, everyone was a

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<sup>33</sup> Associazione Culturale Altana, Associazione Fuoricampo and Associazione Culturing.

<sup>34</sup> Siena is a city in the Tuscany region, Italy. It has a population of about 60,000 people. It is home to the oldest bank in the world, the Monte dei Paschi, founded in 1472, and one of the oldest universities in the world, the University of Siena, founded in 1240. It was one of the most prominent cities in Europe in the Middle Ages, and several significant artists were born and worked in the city (Duccio di Buoninsegna, Ambrogio Lorenzetti, and Simone Martini, to name a few). These links with a glorious past are present today and have the clearest manifestation in the *Palio*. The *Palio di Siena* is a traditional bi-annual horse race that takes place around the main square (*Piazza del Campo*) and is attended by large crowds. For every edition of the *Palio*, the inhabitants of each city district (*contrade*) organize several events in preparation for the race throughout the year, and each district has a dedicated museum to the *Palio*. Traditions play a vital role in the identity of the inhabitants of Siena, and this may be one of the causes that slow down the emergence of different kinds of art practices.

student, a teacher, and a travel companion to discover the contemporary landscapes that have not yet been explored.<sup>35</sup>(Posani and Posani, 2019)

As described in the previous section, the process of composing the syllabus went through different design and approval phases. The rules for presenting projects which involve students at a high school, in fact, are stringent. The syllabus needed to pass an evaluation positively from the school director, the teachers, and ultimately the parents of the students should have been informed about the programme's content in advance so they could authorise their sons' and daughters' participation for a so-called 'extra-curricular activity'. Hence, I asked the curators to accompany me through the process by sending the outcomes of the focus groups, workshops and brainstorming sessions to get familiar with the development of the discussions since I could not meet the students in advance.

The collaboration between the cultural associations operating in Siena and the high school was not new. As the curators pointed out, there has been a constant exchange, yet limited to visits to the exhibitions. According to the curators, the will to include Arte Útil in the project's development at school was derived from a wish to undermine the concepts and foundations the professors teach to the students. At the outset, Alessia and Christian Posani identified Arte Útil's potential for infiltrating the school and addressing topics such as gentrification or the tension between the centre and periphery that would not be possible to include in the traditional curriculum.

Conscious of my responsibility in leading students and teachers through a new conception of what art can be, I designed the syllabus, including exercises to introduce the principles of Arte Útil from practice first, rather than theory. For example, to understand each student's relationship to the city, I asked everyone to think of the centre of the room as the school and to position themselves in the space

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<sup>35</sup> My translation from Italian.

near or far from the centre based on how many kilometres they travelled to reach the school. This brief exercise revealed a series of aspects concerning their use of the city: for some was just the place they went to study, and for others, they spent most of their time. Then, for each exercise, I asked them to respond with a drawing that could reflect their thoughts about the activity. The complete syllabus, where the other exercises are explained, is available on the website.



Fig. 3.4 Arte come Strumento (Arte as a tool), workshop at the Artistic High School 'Duccio di Buoninsegna', Siena, IT. 2019. Photo © Alessandra Saviotti

According to Alessia and Christian Posani, the rhythm of the module was well-balanced between practical and theoretical exercises. During the interview I conducted in December 2022, they mentioned that some of the students' drawings made during the module were displayed on press conference day. Surprisingly for

them and the teachers (and for me, too), the shyest and most vulnerable students who usually do not participate in class, decided to step on the stage and talk about their experience during the module. Posani argued that it was a clear signal for them that ‘something happened during those two days’. Unfortunately, due to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic that unfolded in the following months, it was impossible to accompany the students toward the end of the project and to conduct a proper evaluation as planned by the curators.

The module was quite challenging for many reasons: primarily because it was the first time that I had to re-adapt the syllabus to a high school; secondly, I encountered the resistance of a teacher, who was present during the workshop and kept objecting to both the case studies I presented and my approach. If the first obstacle was immediately overcome thanks to the students' openness to adapt their behaviour to the module, the second needed to be addressed adequately; therefore, the objections remained unresolved. The teacher raised his doubts, and he explicitly revolted his explanation to the class. I was deliberately left out of the conversation – even though I was in the same room – and utterly disempowered. I argue that this is a side effect of applying the Arte Útil methodology in a context so regulated, such as a high school, and forgetting to introduce the practice first to those who hold the power in that context. The mistake the curators and I made, was to overlook the ground-breaking effect of the methodology precisely because it mainly questions the education protocols.

As argued by Posani:

‘It (Arte Útil) exploded as a supernova, so the teachers did not know what to expect later that day.’ (Posani and Posani, 2022)

Again, the time frame for applying the Arte Útil methodology in that school was not in line with that of the art project; if, on one side, students were ready (probably

because it was communicated to them as an extra-curricular activity), the teacher was not. Yet, I argue that precisely because the module touched such a sensitive territory as curriculum planning, the clash happened. As discussed earlier, the classroom is not a neutral working environment; the teachers' power and the institution's authority reflect the larger society. To address this, I proposed a reconfiguration of learning through the Arte Útil methodology that offered students new tools to understand what happened around them. As argued by Biesta, education constantly implies a risk:

‘not the risk of failure due to the lack of diligence or poor planning, but because education is less about filling a bucket and more about lighting a fire.’(Biesta, 2013, p.1)

I suspect that the professor was aware of that.

To conclude this section, I decided to follow the path suggested by bell hooks (2014), when she affirmed that the best way to increase the potential for creativity and innovation is for teachers to take more risks in their pedagogical practices with students. Therefore, I designed the module to create a new learning space that could encourage both students' and teachers' curiosity to question commonly held beliefs and push the boundaries of their practice to pursue a new understanding of what art can be. With this approach, I intended to create a bridge between their study and future practice, so they could look at the master of the Renaissance<sup>36</sup> with renewed eyes and recognise that using art as a tool is an option for the many, not for the few.

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<sup>36</sup> When I asked the cohort to write down their favourite artists, the majority mentioned the masters of the Renaissance, such as Donatello and Raffaello. The only contemporary figures who emerged from the exercise were a British music band and Banksy.

## 2.3 Applying the Arte Útil methodology in the context of *Embedded Arts Practice* at UNIDEE

To close this section about action-research on unlearning the process leading to the composition of the syllabus, I am exploring the two years collaboration with UNIDEE Residency Programmes at Cittadellarte - Fondazione Michelangelo Pistoletto in Biella (IT), which started at the beginning of 2020, and it ended with the last workshop in March 2022. Hereinafter, I explain the three seminars I proposed that were adapted to unfolding events due to the pandemic. The first week of activity was instrumental in rethinking and adapting methods to the online environment; the second was more structured and richer in collaborative activities; the third, which happened in person, benefitted significantly from the previous two.

Cittadellarte was founded by Michelangelo Pistoletto in 1999 in Biella (IT) with the intention to become the place where social transformation could be planned and applied through the means of art. In the “*Progetto Arte*” manifesto (1994), Pistoletto stated that artists should take responsibility for “establishing ties among all other human activities, from economics to politics, science to religion, education to behaviour”. To materialise his vision, Pistoletto organised the institution around different *Offices (Uffizi)*, taking care of various social activities such as art, politics, economy, education, production, communication, work, religion, science, philosophy, ecology, nourishment, rights, and sport. Today, Cittadellarte gained the status of a foundation which, with its departments devoted to education, art, food and fashion, hosts independent associations and organisations intertwined with each other’s and the city’s social fabric<sup>37</sup>. The education office is *UNIDEE – University*

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<sup>37</sup> The association currently based at Cittadellarte are: Let Eat Bi (farming supply chain and ethical economy); Better Places / Hydro (youth aggregation, music, theatre, performance); Love Difference (association of social advancement dedicated to interculturality); Piemex (circuit of commercial credit); GASB (Gruppo do Acquisto Solidale Biella – Biella’s group for ethical consumption behaviour); Fondo Ambientale Italiano; Parental middle school “Big Picture Learning”; Coffee and Restaurant Crossquare.

*of Ideas*, which hosts four residency programmes each year, open to artists and other professionals internationally who could go to Biella for up to three months to research. The programme's focus is to provide visiting researchers with tools and instruments to activate an exchange between art and those not necessarily working in the art field, 'weaving together moments of interdisciplinary research, exchange of knowledge and practical activities.'

In this context, I was invited to propose a one-week-long intensive module as part of the programme developed by visiting curator Andy Abbott (2020 - 2022) devoted to exploring *Embedded Arts Practice*. For Abbott, *embeddedness*:

'emphasises the context and place specific, long-term research methods that may involve co-production or collaboration, and – perhaps most importantly – an ambition to mesh with the social fabric of everyday life.'(Abbott, 2022)

Immediately after the invitation, the COVID-19 pandemic hit and due to the impossibility for mentors and selected artists to travel to Italy for the modules, Abbott reframed the programme according to two main questions such as: 'What can we do from this place?' and 'What future can we build together?'. The residency format changed to two longer hybrid residencies (a ten-week programme in the Autumn of 2020, an eight-week programme in Spring 2021), followed by four weeks of intensive in-presence 'labs' in November 2021 and March 2022. The programme's restructuring allowed me to develop a module responding to current limitations. I had to rethink the initial format to a more flexible set-up to grow through the course of two years, adapting to the online environment, and that concluded with the in-presence lab in March 2022.

For this, I decided to extend the invitation to a long-term collaborator, Gemma Medina Estupiñan, so we could frame our intervention using the *Arte Útil* methodology in an unexplored context, such as the online environment. The module



started on Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2020, with a presentation on the Arte Útil archive and its development, followed by a Q&A that was live broadcasted to forty selected residents connected from their homes. According to the changes in travel regulations, some residents could travel to Biella and spend the week at Cittadellarte; on Sunday, we could connect online, meet virtually with the new cohort, and see the documentation of the previous group, who was able to spend time there, in the form of ‘traces’ in the space—this moment of hybrid overlapping of two groups created a common experience to proceed with a group critique in the afternoon. The week ended with a series of one-to-one tutorials to discuss the projects they intended to develop during the module.

This first adaptation of the syllabus was very challenging. For example, it was nearly impossible to fully apply some methods mentioned earlier to shorten the distance between mentors and residents while meeting online for a couple of hours. For this reason, to introduce the third meeting before proceeding with the group critique, we proposed an exercise that could help to familiarise ourselves with each other. In a situation where the mediation of the screen was limiting the development of intimate relationships between the attendees, before the residents’ presentations on Monday, we proposed to tell each other a fun fact about ourselves that few people know. This simple exercise helped to bring to the virtual table other aspects that would otherwise remain unexplored due to the lack of facilitating informal conversations and situations that could not arise online.

For the second module (15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021), Abbott extended the idea of *embeddedness* by proposing mentors to provide tools to facilitate the creation ‘of infrastructures for a more inclusive (art) world’ (Abbott, 2022). In this case, the focus was more practical than theoretical and aimed at providing insights on alternative structures, frameworks, and organisational forms for developing socially engaged art projects. Therefore, as a starting point, I decided to frame my module using the *Decentralising Political Economies* platform ([www.dpe.tools](http://www.dpe.tools)). I will

explore the use of dpe.tools later in this chapter, but for now, I will explain its activation in the context of UNIDEE.

For it, I invited Wales-based artist Owen Griffiths to develop a series of exercises to propose to the residents, according to his method of ‘digging where you stand’<sup>38</sup>. The practice of Griffiths focuses on rethinking events, rituals and spaces of dialogue through making gardens, co-designing spaces, curating events and making feasts. Applying the Arte Útil methodology, I encouraged Griffiths to use one of his methods, such as garden-making and food production, to design a workshop tailored to the context in which we were operating. On the first day of the module, we asked residents to introduce themselves through *A [Capitalist] Reading of our Usual Breakfast*, an exercise aimed at creating ‘a score to foster a collective experience of being together and apart through an embodied practice’ (2021). We suggested starting with an activity that everyone could recognise as part of their morning routine, such as breakfast, because it is immediate and tentatively one of the few habits that have not changed despite the confinement. According to Sara Carpenter and Sharhrzad Mojab, in fact:

‘We cannot engage with the complexity of this reality without turning our attention to the many layers of abstraction that are present in our daily life, abstractions that exist not just in thought but in the material, practical activity of life.’(2017)

Starting from one’s usual breakfast represented a point of access to the meaning of political economy intended as the study of production and trade and their relations with distribution law, custom regulations, and government. Hence the exercise aimed to understand the relationship between global trade and individual responsibility to

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<sup>38</sup> For Griffiths, ‘dig where you stand’ can be seen as an instruction, an invitation and a provocation. It proposed, on the one hand, action and reflection and, on the other, movement and stillness. Griffiths applies this definition to his working method in Swansea (Wales) and encourages working locally as a political choice to create a network of ‘local work’ outside the usual centre of art productions.

imagine our ‘ability-to-respond’ (Sachs, 2016) to the economy using the means of art. As a result, we received photos, audio and video descriptions, short texts and maps highlighting the complexity and sometimes the impossibility of tracing where food comes from. For example, conversations developed around topics such as the exploitative nature of food production, the fact that most of the food we eat today is not local anymore, and the privilege it implies to know where food is coming from.

This exercise fostered the co-design of a follow-up activity with the residents to explore what they could forage outside their homes to add some practical tools to apply Griffiths’ ‘digging where you stand’ method in their locales. The group shared online what they could find during an hour's walk from their homes, and the individual activity helped reconnect each of them to local traditions linked to the uses of plants. We collected short stories from everyone gathered by one of the residents in a ‘new map of the commons’.

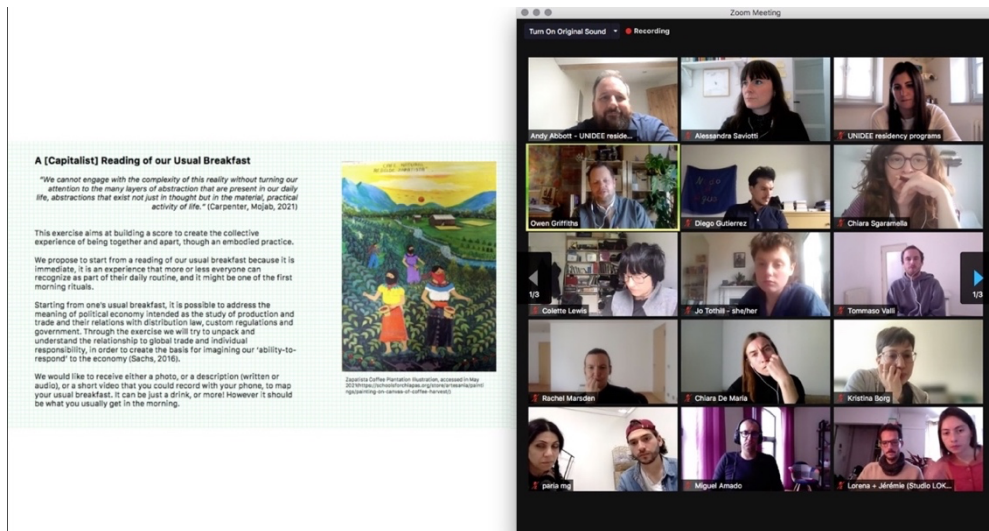


Fig. 3.5 A *(Capitalist) Reading of our Usual Breakfast*, online workshop at Unidee Residency Programme *Embedded Arts Practice*, Biella, IT. 2021-2022. Photo © Alessandra Saviotti

The previous two online sessions were fundamental in developing the third module *Artwork as Toolkit*, in Biella (Italy), from the 21<sup>st</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2022. For it, I invited Gemma Medina Estupiñan and Owen Griffiths<sup>39</sup> to revisit some of the activities we proposed online for an in-person experience. The module was organised around two main exercises, *The Coefficient of Art*, which I will explore later in a dedicated section, and *A [Capitalist] Reading of our Usual Breakfast* described earlier.

I gathered feedback from the residents through semi-structured interviews in September 2022 that helped me better articulate the potential of applying the Arte Útil methodology. Unlike the previous workshops, I did not have to deal with the rigid infrastructure and the constraints of the universities or the high school's study plan. Besides, I could quickly introduce the principles of Arte Útil because the residents were already knowledgeable about applying socially engaged art methods. This allowed me to emphasise the practical implications of using the 'artwork-as-toolkit' and look at how Arte Útil could be understood as an expanded technology that manifests on a 1:1 scale.

As explained by N.:

'I came to the residency with the idea of sharing good practices. I understand it as creating tools that would help (me) ground a whole series of reflections, which comes from people or experiences with more or less this type of attitude.' (Interview conducted in June 2022)

The fact that everyone in the group was open to putting their practices under scrutiny under the lens of Arte Útil accelerated the breaking of hierarchies between the group of mentors and residents. Very soon, a high number of urgent questions emerged,

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<sup>39</sup> Owen Griffiths could not participate in person due to travel restrictions, but he was available for online one-to-one meetings with the residents.

such as: ‘How can we condense a conversation into something practical again?’, ‘What happens when we deal with tough moments?’, ‘What are our tools for self-advocacy?’ and so on.

The group decided to share their tools to address those questions by co-designing an ‘exquisite toolkit’, including methods they use in their art practice.



Fig. 3.6 The Exquisite Toolkit realised by the residents of *Artwork as Toolkit Lab* at Unidee Residency Programme, Biella, IT. 2022. Photo © Alessandra Saviotti

The toolkit was not a tool to erase the differences between the various approaches, but as affirmed by N.:

‘(it) enhanced diversity, in the sense that in a method like that, authorship is not lost; (creating a collective toolkit) does not imply making multiples or copies. On the contrary, we tried to work on lines of thought and lines of action. However, everyone must make them their own, being able to make them useful within the context in which they live or work to hook up their personal practice.’ (Interview conducted in June 2022)

Despite the overall positive feedback, some criticism emerged with respect to the idea of providing art tools that those in power might co-opt. As affirmed by H:

‘I think having that idea, or those terms, or this focus around usefulness is good for funders and the government who does not see art and culture as something to have for the sake of enjoying life... It is a useful language for my end to get more money, legitimise my being in a particular place that maybe I am not allowed to be, and gather people together for a common goal more amorphous than just creating a better world... So if art is seen as a means of social control - which I am sure some conservatives would think – or, in a more benevolent way, of prolonging health and well-being, then you will be a better worker. You know, it is the idea of social prescription.’  
(Interview conducted in June 2022)

Doubting about the usefulness of art in provoking change is a common objection, as I highlighted in chapter one. Nonetheless, I propose to read H.’s criticism in the context of the undercommons. As H. pointed out later, co-optation of her work by those in power is the only way she gets money for her projects. This position sounded very cynical and disenchanting at first; however, if it is considered in the context of art practices that impact policy, for example, I affirm that it hides the impulse to go beyond mere representation. I suggest reading this position as parallel to Moten’s conclusion that to change the world, we must tear it entirely apart (Harney and Moten, 2013).

The module was also interpreted as a significant bonding and empowering experience, mainly because for most people – me included – it was the first experience in person after years of working remotely. Almost every person I interviewed mentioned the vital role that the archive had in making visible a global network of practitioners that use art to imagine a different way of living. As H. affirmed when referring to the experience with the other residents:

‘There are many people doing good work all over Europe. That made me feel like I was not as lonely. So, I think these networks or residences can also be a tool where you need to be reminded of why you are doing what you are doing.’ (Interview conducted in June 2022)

Finally, for C.:

‘Learning about the projects (included in the archive) ... was very validating. It gave me confidence that there is an alternative in the art world.’ (Interview conducted in June 2022)

To conclude, as noted by Abbott, in a period of travel restrictions and physical distancing, the practical challenges were massive, primarily when the core of the residency experience was essentially based on the informal and invisible learning that come from being in a place and through meetings with peers (Abbott, 2022). During the first module, I experienced the same dilemmas when asked to address the future of socially engaged art practices, *Arte Útil*, collaborative work and critical pedagogy. I could not find any plausible answer to the urgent questions posed by the residents. However, using the *Arte Útil* methodology helped me and the group find ways to adjust our understanding and application of educational methods. Ultimately, the fact that I was invited to deliver three modules in the frame of

different programmes stretched over two years confirms that the methodology has been identified as meaningful for both the institution and the groups<sup>40</sup>.

### 3. Decentralising Political Economies: activating the toolkit

During the first semester of 2020, and intending to resist the global tendency of moving online what was planned for the museums and the university spaces, I worked together with my supervisor Prof. John Byrne, at that time Director of the City Lab (which forms part of Liverpool John Moores University's Institute of Art and Technology), Poppy Bowers, Head of Exhibitions at The Whitworth in Manchester and Vicky Carr, Designer at Textbook Studio, to conceive the online platform *Decentralising Political Economies*, or DPE (<http://dpe.tools/>). DPE was initially proposed as a programme of live workshops with a corresponding series of online and offline publications that could support Whitworth's ongoing inquiry into the constituent museum and the uses of art (Whitworth, 2020).

DPE became an additional tool to connect my action research at the City Lab with other local, regional, and international initiatives through the conception of toolkits to be included as part of the website. In addition, it represented a prototype for using the connection with the Arte Útil archive to increase and expand its agency in both education and art institutions. To do so, DPE is organised into four main sections: Info, Library, Toolkits and Blog. Each section has a specific focus and offers a set of materials encouraging users to explore online content and invite its use offline. Assuming that the different stakeholders involved have diverse interests in DPE, for

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<sup>40</sup> At the time of this writing, the Unidee residency programmes have been shifting its organisational structure. The current artistic director, Juan Sandoval, stepped down from his position. In agreement with Paolo Naldini, Director of the Pistoletto Foundation, he proposed extending the decision-making process to three other experts. An advisory board of five experts was created, including Sandoval himself, Andy Abbott, Paolo Naldini, Beatrice Catanzaro and myself.



example, making the research process public in the case of the museum and strengthening the relationship between the university, the local government and constituencies, the questions that motivated and still drive the inquiry are urgent: ‘How can we co-design and co-create models of practice that start from the periphery and demand real change at the centre (while being at the centre ourselves)?’ and ‘How can we enact practices of resistance as implied by the methodology of Arte Útil and the proposal of the undercommons, to suggest other rhythms?’

In the attempt to address these questions, the Blog<sup>41</sup> functions as a discursive platform hosting several interviews and conversations with artists and curators that have been part of the international network developed by the Asociación de Arte Útil, The Whitworth and the City Lab.

For this thesis, I will focus on the Toolkits section, not just because I acted as the editor, but also because it provides a series of tools to be used as a testing ground to rethink how our understanding of art might change (in terms of accessibility, spectatorship, usership and its dissemination) as a consequence of its social, political and economic use (Byrne and Saviotti, 2022). DPE’s Toolkits section aims to talk to existing institutions of power, such as museums and universities, using formats they recognise, such as the syllabus, the video lecture, a score to facilitate workshops, and the symposium.

The first contribution I conceived for DPE’s Toolkits builds on the concept of 1:1 scale, particularly in proposing to approach the city as its own map. Combining the previous methods developed as part of *Broadcasting the archive* and the *Escuela de Arte Útil* discussed in Chapter one, I proposed a syllabus for the class *State of Emergency: Art as a tool to imagine the world after the [ ]*. The syllabus is prepared

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<sup>41</sup> The Blog includes my interviews with Prof. John Byrne, artist Owen Griffiths, head of exhibitions at The Whitworth Poppy Bowers, former curator and head of collections at the Van Abbemuseum Christiane Berndes, and curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Whitworth Leanne Green.

for an 8-week practice-based class in the form of Liverpool's city guide, 'developed to discover and study how different constituencies organised themselves to face a specific urgency in the city over the course of the history using art as a tool.' (*Decentralising Political Economies*, 2020). The attempt is threefold: 1) to offer a course that could function both online and offline; 2) to show the results of my research on Arte Útil case studies in Liverpool; 3) to contribute with a series of methods offered by the initiatives included in the syllabus that could be adapted and enriched by the students as users.

For it, I have included case studies in Liverpool which are part of the Arte Útil archive (such as *Homebaked* and *Granby Four Streets Regeneration*) and other initiatives that have been proposing new approaches to socially engaged art practices and political art (such as *Kitty's Laundrette*, *Squash* and *The Florrie*), as well as challenging how art history has been told (such as the *Liverpool and Slavery Walking Tour*). The syllabus also lists readings, video interviews, short documentaries and references to similar case studies included in the Arte Útil archive, which provide several theoretical approaches to the practice to support individual initiative and research. Unfortunately, due to the development of the COVID-19 pandemic, I could not deliver the class in person. However, the research that led to the conception of it was carried on through four field trips to Liverpool between November 2019 and February 2020. During those months, I could visit the projects and meet with their initiators.



Fig. 3.7 Visit to Homebaked, Liverpool, UK. 2020. Photo © Alessandra Saviotti

In the forthcoming pages, I will thoroughly describe the last contribution, such as *Decentralising Political Economies: Roaming Symposium* (19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> October, 5<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021). In collaboration with Poppy Bowers and Prof. John Byrne, I organised the symposium to launch DPE's content after one year of preparation and research. I decided to focus on the premises of DPE, such as providing an environment that could publicly support and showcase how artistic and curatorial research develops and translating the symposium into a toolkit. Therefore, I proposed resisting the logic of the single event (for example, the format of the research seminar hosted by the museum) or the traditional academic conference (where panels, workshops, and seminars overlap over a couple of days). To do so, I planned the sessions – four panel discussions and four workshops - over a month and

a half. I invited guests to send a pre-recorded presentation of about twenty to thirty minutes according to the topic of each meeting that was made available on the DPE's YouTube channel<sup>42</sup> and SoundCloud<sup>43</sup> a couple of days before the live conversations; hence, both panellists and attendees could have some time to watch them in advance and familiarise with each other's practices to come prepared for the live conversation. Following the 'Usological turn', I have applied the principles of Arte Útil to the symposium, in particular regarding the long-term sustainability of the project. The symposium was intended as a 'research event with art professionals (such as artists, curators, and directors of cultural organisations), academics, researchers, constituencies and practitioners who apply art as a tool to be used as a resource for social, political and economic change'. Making every recording available online enabled users to approach the symposium-as-syllabus and toolkit beyond the project itself, for example, by using the scores of the workshops. To organise the panel discussions, I worked on a series of keywords and concepts that have been explored in the different sections of DPE (Blog and Library), such as usership, curricula, toolkit, economy, speculation, dreams, imagination, praxis, hacking, education, and market. These concepts were intended as tags to add another possible categorization of the meetings.

The symposium started on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021 with a workshop *Towards an Oneiric Pedagogy* led by artist Daniel Godínez-Nivón, who guided the participants through exploring dreams as an experiential knowledge tool in a three-hour workshop. Starting from the artist's collaboration with midwives in Mexico, he has been unpicking the potential of dreaming as a method for rethinking the world. As carried on by traditional midwifery, dreaming is a form of collective work, a way to connect

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<sup>42</sup> The video recording of Decentralising Political Economies: Roaming Symposium is available at: [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7UleT5ekNkaAOHWbS7h\\_UDHDd2xn9hd](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7UleT5ekNkaAOHWbS7h_UDHDd2xn9hd) [Accessed 13 January 2023]

<sup>43</sup> The audio recording of Decentralising Political Economies: Roaming Symposium is available at: <https://soundcloud.com/user-325010256-955126476/sets/dpe-roaming-symposium?si=d166bc24160642739473fb76f1e1ff96> [Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2023]

to time beyond the material world, and it is perceived as an act of resistance. During the session, Godínez-Nivón shared some exercises that constitute a pedagogy for practising dreaming as a collective experience. At the outset of his research process, this method led to the artworks *Propedéutico Onírico* and *Ensayo de Flora Onírica*.

On 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021, I led the workshop *The Coefficient of Art* with art historian Gemma Medina Estupiñan, where we proposed to start from Marcel Duchamp's definition of the *Art Coefficient* (Duchamp, 1957) and how the Asociación de Arte Útil has applied it under the lens of usership. During the workshop, we explored questions such as 'How do we calculate the coefficient of art?', 'Is it possible to do so?', 'Is it rather the sum of everything that creates what we call art?'. Because one of the instances we were investigating was how to think about the economy differently, with this workshop, we intended to introduce the notion of 'post-scarcity'. As Stephen Wright (2013) argues, if art is perceived with a different coefficient, it manifests potentially everywhere; therefore, art is available everywhere, and there is no scarcity of it anymore. Then, what does it mean for the economy of art to think about it in use-value terms rather than in exchange-value? Later in this chapter, I will include the score for *The Coefficient of Art*.

In the afternoon of the same day, I moderated the panel discussion *The Usological Turn and the quest for inclusive education* with artist Daniel Godínez Nivón, curator, educator and PhD researcher Gabriela Saenger Silva and curator of education at Boijmans van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam (NL) Lisa Heinis. Here, we discussed how to imagine, produce, and apply new methods conceived as tools that the panellists have been developing in their context respectively. I encouraged them to think about how the 'art project' could become the central knot for conceiving education programmes within the context of museums and other art events such as biennials. Even though the panellists came from different standpoints, the discussion led to thinking about the convergence of curatorial, artistic, and educational work as the 'artwork as a manual', which was also discussed in the conclusive panel.

After a week's break, we reconvened on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2021 for a workshop led by Owen Griffiths, *Dig where you stand*, followed by the panel discussion *Decentralising Political Economies as a Hacking Strategy* moderated by Prof. John Byrne, with Manolo Callahan and Annie Paradise from the Centre for Convivial Research and Autonomy, lecturer at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw Kuba Szreder, Lead officer and cultural coordinator at Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Sarah Lovell, and me.

In both sessions, the topic of the pandemic emerged for the first time. For example, Griffiths, during his workshop, encouraged the participants to think about the 'pandemic as a portal' for rethinking the relationship with the place we inhabit. The proximity with nature and other people was at the centre of the panel discussion that examined how the (economic and artistic) system of circulations works and how to find new forms of tactical activism to break those circles. Another topic in both sessions was the collective desire to fight against the atomisation and the separation of people caused by neoliberalism – and definitely accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic – to put the encounter back at the centre of social relationships.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of November, the day was opened by a workshop led by the Alternative School of Economics - ASE (Ruth Baele and Amy Feneck) in collaboration with artist Marcus Coates about *Neoliberalism and the imagination*. ASE links artistic practice with self-education to study economics and different economies as part of their working methodology. The workshop was intended to offer a framework for investigating the effect of neoliberalism on our everyday life through interdisciplinary research. For this reason, they invited artist Marcus Coates to lead a guided meditation to explore our personal and everyday relationship with neoliberal structures, values, and imagination. The evocated images were organised in a map and used for collective brainstorming and a group discussion to understand what

neoliberal imagination might be and how this economic system shapes our understanding of the world, including our imagination.

In the afternoon, the panel discussion *Reclaim the Economy as a Social Activity by Means of Art*, moderated by Poppy Bowers, included presentations by Arts Catalyst Director Laura Clarke, and artist and founder of *Weird Economies* Bahar Noorizadeh. The discussion gravitated around the notion of ‘infrastructures’ as Irit Rogoff (2013) put it, and how they might be ordered as connecting systems and protocols that organise our world. Bowers directed the speakers to use their practice-based research approach as a starting point to consider what tactics we might use to generate new infrastructures for art, allowing us to enact new economic models.

The conclusive panel discussion, *Institution as Praxis*, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 2021, included artists Tania Bruguera and Suzanne Lacy in conversation with the former director of The Whitworth, Alistair Hudson. This panel intended to hear from three of the innovators of socially engaged art practices (Lacy), *Arte Útil* (Bruguera) and institutional change (Hudson) about how and through which tools they were able to put into discussions pre-existent models of doing art within institutions of art and education. I asked them to address the initial provocations: ‘If artists would change the world, what would they start from?’ and ‘Are institutions the best allies to achieve that change?’ Hudson introduced the notion of ‘exhibition as a manual’ to enable constituencies to use the artworks on display to form new projects relevant to the city. This method was unpicked from Lacy, adding pedagogy to the equation. As I argued in chapter two, for Lacy creating a pedagogy means delivering capacities to her collaborators in order to find what they are good at and to rise them into a position of power. As noted by Bruguera, using pedagogy within art institutions is fundamental because it changes the tempo of the practice. Thus, if the exhibition becomes a manual to be used, the commitment level changes, with it also its sustainability in time.

Despite my concern that having all the meetings online could have deterred users' and constituencies' enthusiastic participation, the symposium was well attended. Overall, one hundred fourteen people across the globe registered for the events, and a considerable amount of them came to every session. The format of the symposium helped to achieve a feeling of 'radical intimacy' as put by one of the participants. DPE began to situate itself as a point of convergence between museological, artistic and pedagogical research.

As I wrote elsewhere (Byrne and Saviotti, 2022), especially during the past three years, it became more and more evident for institutions of art and education that the need to renegotiate their operational systems continuously has become urgent. Therefore, if art and educational institutions are serious in their desire to offer real alternatives to the centralised logic of global neoliberalism by reconfiguring themselves as constituent institutions, they must find ways to share their power. In brief, the constituent institution must allow itself to be hacked and facilitate ways in which that hacking can happen if they want to survive. Hence, DPE was conceived as an attempt to reconcile the multiple approaches and praxis of art and education, read through the lens of the economy 'which fashion the formation of constituent institutions whilst, at the same time, allowing for institutions to maintain and more clearly identify, their singularity through the individuation of useful practice'.

At the time of this writing, DPE is moving into the next phase focusing on providing a shared platform across the different departments of The Whitworth for thinking around, through and beyond *Economic the Blockbuster*<sup>44</sup>, a key exhibition on the horizon of Summer 2023.

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<sup>44</sup> A brief description of the main ideas that inform the exhibition *Economics the Blockbuster* can be read at <https://www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk/whats-on/exhibitions/upcomingexhibitions/economicstheblockbuster/> (accessed 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023)



## 4. Understanding the Coefficient of Art: an exercise

One of the key concepts I have been using for delineating a methodology of Arte Útil is the coefficient of art. The definition is not mine, as it comes from Marcel Duchamp's famous lecture *The Creative Act* (1957) and has been revisited by Stephen Wright (2013) in the context of the Usological turn. As I argued in Chapter one, the coefficient of art and the concept of 1:1 scale are the two theoretical pillars on which the presuppositions of Arte Útil are developed.

Even though it is clear to some who are acquainted with contemporary art history, such words might sound like jargon to most art students, users and constituencies who approach Arte Útil for the first time. As I argued previously, usership manifests both within and outside the art context; nevertheless, its principles must become accessible to be discussed.

Marcel Duchamp (1957) introduced the concept of the 'art coefficient' as a subjective mechanism that produces art in a 'raw state'. According to him, artists move from intention to realisation through a series of subjective reactions, which often result in a gap between their initial intention and the outcome of the artwork. In other words, the 'art coefficient' represents the relationship between the artist's intention and unintentionally expressed, which manifests through the reception of the artwork by the audience. Consequently, the viewer interprets the artwork independently from the author's intention. Hence, the viewer completes the artwork by bringing its inner value to the external world.

According to Kyoko Nakamura and Yukio Pegio Gunji (2020), an example of something with an 'art coefficient' zero is a plastic food model. These artefacts aim to show customers in advance what the food is like exactly, and they are expected to be as similar as possible to the food. In this case, there is no gap between the intention and the realisation because the food (the intention) must be as similar to the plastic artefact (the realisation) as possible. Neither the customer nor the cook is

expected to add their interpretation. Such food plastic models are also as far as possible from the definition of 1:1 scale; they are quite the opposite.

Under the lens of usership, Stephen Wright offers a different perspective on the ‘art coefficient’ by posing a series of questions that read the coefficient of art from a different angle. He asks: ‘Could it be that art is no longer (or perhaps never was) a minority practice, but rather something practised by a majority, appearing with varying coefficients in different contexts?’ ‘What coefficient of art have we here? Or there?’ and yet again, ‘What is the coefficient of art of such a gesture, object or practice?’

Together with Gemma Medina Estupiñan, we developed a practical exercise to explain and potentially translate into practice what the coefficient of art implies and how to apply it to understand different practices according to usership. Because a fundamental component of the exercise is the eight criteria of Arte Útil, we designed a simple mathematical exercise (Fig. 3.8). The coefficient of art would be the result of the sum of an assigned value between one to ten to each of the eight criteria divided per their number. However, this method was demonstrated to be incoherent with the notion of *impossibilist creativity*, which, in cognitive sciences, refers to the fact that creative acts not only explore the existing state space (defined by known variables, such as the criteria, for example) but transforms that state space. According to Liane Gabora (2002), creativity involves spontaneously generating new states with new properties. Therefore, mathematics is inadequate to provide a solution because a creative concept possesses characteristics we can define as emergent, which are not true of the constituent ideas from which it was formed.

To prove that many students intuitively refused to give their practice a fixed number or location in the space. Some objections consisted in affirming that in evaluating a 1:1 scale project with a strong double ontology, the gap individuated by Duchamp

(between intention and realisation) might have been too big for viewers to realise that an artwork can be perceived as two different identities rather than one with a double ontology. Therefore, while each concept is different, nevertheless they are inseparable because they exist together.

The coefficient of art is then something in motion, a coming and going between one ontology to the other. This movement was acknowledged while practising the exercise, and some decided to move from one point to another in the room rather than choosing a position.

I argue that the most accurate method that can be applied to understand the coefficient of art in scientific terms, comes from quantum theory in the definition of entanglement. As Nakamura and Goji (2020) argued, entanglement in the creative act might be understood as the art coefficient for, in quantum theory, it refers to different pure states tangled together. As a result, an entangled state is a new form with new properties. Such properties can be activated through usership, for example.

We wrote a score for DPE's *Roaming Symposium* after a process started in 2019 at the international Master Artist Educator at ArtEZ, described earlier in this chapter and available on [www.hackingeducation.art](http://www.hackingeducation.art).

In the context of DPE, we focused on the idea of 'speculation' to imagine how the meaning of such a word changes when applied to the arts and the economy to understand the different effects that might produce whether it is used in one context or the other. The coefficient of art was identified as the tool to understand 'speculation' in these terms.

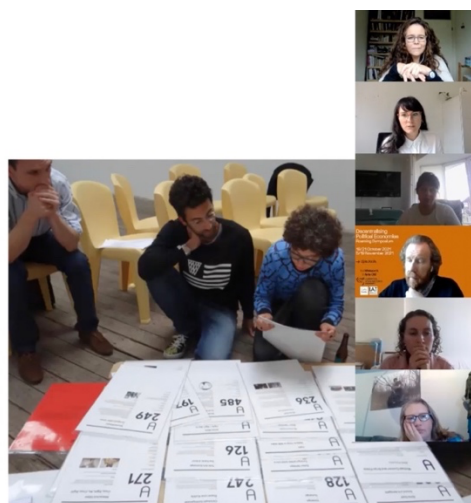
We designed the workshop by borrowing the language of mathematics and quantum physics to pose a problem to the group. Then, we took as a starting point the definition of 1:1 scale to investigate questions such as: if there is no separation between what art is and what is not (entanglement), it is potentially everywhere. Therefore 'How do we calculate the coefficient of art?'; 'Is it possible to do so?' and 'Is it rather the sum of everything that creates what we call art?'

What is the Coefficient of Art of a project?

By using the Arte Útil criteria as a formula determine the Coefficient of Art. You can apply the criteria to your project or browse the archive at [www.arte-util.org/projects](http://www.arte-util.org/projects)

Work in small groups [breakout rooms] - 30 min

- **assign to each criteria a value from 1 to 10**
- **sum the total**
- **divide it for 8, as it is the number of the criteria**



The result is the Coefficient of Art

Fig. 3.8 The Coefficient of Art, an online workshop for *Decentralising Political Economies: Roaming Symposium*, 2021. Photo © Alessandra Saviotti

## 5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I built on the theory of the constituency museum and of ‘study’ furthered by the undercommons to design a series of toolkits to facilitate the development and implementation of the constituency-led curriculum. In applying action-research, I articulated the methodology of Arte Útil throughout the application of the toolkits over ‘hacking’ as the primary operational mode. I argue that the methodological approach that Arte Útil proposes is to: 1) encourage the formation of constituencies as sites of social and political struggle that use art for anticipating change; 2) put conversation, cooperation and kinships at the centre of a dialectical exchange as suggested by feminist-engages pedagogy; 3) produce a self-directed and flexible curriculum to be applied in both museums and universities.

To demonstrate that, I carried out qualitative research through semi-structured interviews to evaluate the impact of the multiple manifestations of the project (a course, a two-day workshop, a series of short modules, and a symposium), which was presented respectively at the international Master Educator, ArtEZ, at the Artistic High School ‘Duccio di Buoninsegna’, at UNIDEE and on *Decentralising Political Economies* platform.

The research presented in this chapter highlighted the challenges of designing new learning spaces that push the boundaries of institutional protocols. Nevertheless, applying the Arte Útil methodology helped me and the cohorts who co-designed the activities with me to find ways to adjust our understanding and application of educational methods in different contexts.

In short, I argue that this thesis delineates an educational methodology that stems from Arte Útil, which reconciles the separation between action and theory into a new praxis that takes usership as a new ontological category. Hence, *Hacking (Art) Education* can be successfully applied in the context of art and education to foster curriculum change in both sites.

## *Conclusory Remarks*

As I have argued throughout this thesis, Arte Útil and the principles on which it is based, enable its application in the context of museums, universities and art schools as a new educational methodology. It is my contention that the Usological turn (Wright, 2018), which introduced usership in contrast to spectatorship, represented the main obstacle to the emergence of a theory of use in the art field. The necessity for this thesis stems from the need to reconcile art and use on a theoretical level through the analysis of case studies included in the Arte Útil archive that demonstrate the operational application of the discipline.

As I examined in Chapter one, the attempt to combine art and use is not new. As my research on the term's appearance highlighted, Arte Útil emerged in other translations such as Arte Utile (Poggi, 1965) in Italian and Usable Art (Costa, 1969) in English throughout the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries. Reading through the words of John Ruskin (1870), Juan O’Gorman (1934), Pino Poggi (1965), Eduardo Costa (1969), John Perreault (1981) and Tania Bruguera (2012), it is clear how the concept evolved in order to respond to the current urgency of the time when it appeared. Yet, the presuppositions have been the same: art must be re-introduced in everyday life through usership to enable its potential to provoke change.

As I have argued, until the formulation of Bruguera's theory supported by the composition of the Arte Útil archive, use applied to art was considered critical speculation confined to the realm of representation rather than becoming operational. Nevertheless, as the archive reveals, using art as a tool for change is a praxis that emerged in the nineteenth century and became one of the new ways of doing art in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. I argued that the radicality of the propositions stems from artists' attempt to place art at the service of non-trained art audiences, dissolving itself into life – being a 1:1 scale practice possibly without the mediation of an institution. Proposing a shift between spectatorship and usership puts art's recognition and validation in contrast with its manifestation on a 1:1 scale. I argue that this is why, despite several attempts to advance Arte Útil's principles within the mainstream art context, the conversation has slowly faded until it was stimulated again by someone who ignored the previous attempts.

As I described, the latter theory that appears on the uses of art formulated by Bruguera seems to have gained enough institutional traction. For this reason, at the core of the discussion is the museum's structure and what it should become to respond to the current social, cultural and political changes. If institutions who support Arte Útil's practices embrace their status of museum 3.0 (Wright, 2013) and allow themselves to be hacked by users and constituencies, 'What is in it for those institutions that endorsed the hacking?' This inevitably takes into question the physical and conceptual architecture of museums, galleries and art schools and what usership would imply for them. Nonetheless, every attempt at a definition of use and art has been complicit with the very same institution trying to subvert, precisely because - as a practice embedded in everyday life - the instituting is part of the process. As argued by Jesus Carrillo, working as part of a 'conspiratory institution' (Carrillo, 2018) can become an exhausting practice in the long term. Even though, for him, conspiracy has always been a common practice to overcome institutional control by those who work toward institutional change from the inside, it is

ineffective. Carrillo described how this modality of institutional self-sabotage does not achieve change because it guarantees the continuity of inadequate institutional systems. However, if conspiracy starts to detach itself from the traditional structures of legitimation and ignites a process of dialogue with a different constituency, for example, it can lead to change:

‘Conspiracy involves a detachment from our traditional structures of legitimation and may bring unexpected travel companions, people you would have never recognised as your peers since conspiracy means negotiating with others. Conspiracy means a commitment to a collective cause, but it also implies secrecy, to operate within a dead angle from which you will not be seen by power and the risk of being discovered, exposed and erased. Conspiracy, the act of blowing together may be the only way we have to build institutions today.’ (Carrillo, 2018)

Likewise, as I have contended, the undercommons suggest the same conspiratory approach that finds its practical application in the Arte Útil methodology.

Throughout the study of artworks included in the archive, such as *Tequiografías* (Godínez Nivón, 2010) and the *Para-Site School* (Castelblanco, 2011) and those born in the framework of the Asociación de Arte Útil, such as the *Escuela de Arte Útil* (Bruguera, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and Asociación de Arte Útil, 2017) and *Broadcasting the Archive* (Medina Estupiñan and Saviotti, 2015) I contended that the potential for change that usership entails manifests particularly in the formulation of an art pedagogy that puts at the centre the uses of art. What arose from the analysis of *The Para-site School* (Castelblanco, 2011) and *Tequiografías* (Godínez Nivón, 2010) is critical for clarifying how the realm of art may be viewed as an opportunity not just to experiment but also to affirm via the practice that the idea of an equal, inclusive, and fairer education system is possible. Godínez-Nivón



and Castelblanco reinterpreted what they could do as artists who are already part of an institutional environment to experiment with their responsibilities. They utilised their instituting power to undermine the same institutions from which they operate, hacking them and allowing others to access and redistribute agency.

Through the *Escuela de Arte Útil*, Bruguera ‘updated’ her seminal project *Cátedra de Arte de Conducta*, introducing the principles of Arte Útil. She employed pedagogy as the vehicle for structural intervention. As I contended, contrary to *Cátedra*, which did not give credits to students although being part of the Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA) in Havana, *Escuela* in being a 1:1 scale project, provided credits to every student who enrolled through their university. As I argued, this approach to pedagogy connects with the concept that teaching may be thought of as occupying multiple structural locations.

Whilst writing this thesis, I found myself in accord with Abbott’s assertion (2012) that occupying different locations means for an artwork to intervene in the physical dimension of the space (such as buildings and institutions), in the representational (such as policy or curriculum) and finally in the perceptual (such as for subjectivity formation). Therefore, I argue that education generates subjectivity through the content of what has been taught, the form that content takes, and the learning models that correspond to it. As I have contended, this is the turning point for the conception of Arte Útil as a methodology.

Hence, *Escuela* represented a way to rethink the structure of the art school and the museum or gallery. It illustrated art *in the form of* education to encourage the transformation of existing structures through the incursion of ideas associated with artistic imagination.

Arguably, *Broadcasting the Archive* – carried on in parallel with the development of *Escuela de Arte Útil* - was the turning point for conceiving a toolkit to infiltrate and

be dispersed through the institutions of art and education. It provided the operational basis for this thesis.

As I argued in chapter two of this thesis, the educational methods applied by socially engaged art, feminist-engaged pedagogy and the undercommons are the practical and theoretical references of the conception of a methodology of Arte Útil. Therefore, individuating Arte Útil as an educational methodology is essential because, unlike the previous proposals to hack the curriculum that emerged in art and education theory, it successfully implements institutional changes. As I explained in the analysis of the case studies described in this chapter, they apply art as an alibi to simultaneously intervene in museums and art schools. Hence, Arte Útil articulates its own methodology *across* and *because of* the application in both fields.

In this research project, I utilised a multi-method approach since producing such a unique and experimental contribution to a theory of use in art and education through elaborating a methodology requires various and different data collection channels. Although all the methods used were suitable and effective, the qualitative method, accompanied by semi-structured interviews in tandem with autoethnography writing, stood out. I engaged in participatory action research to develop practical aspects, such as the curriculum-as-toolkit, which involved participants—specifically students and residents who participated in the courses I conducted—to scrutinise curriculum constraints and propose enhancements. Rooted in the principles of critical education, this participatory action research methodology empowered me to question the prevailing hierarchical dynamics between research and action, as well as between the researcher and the subjects of research (students and participants). To design action research to realise the practical aspect of this thesis, I built on the theory of the constituency museum and of ‘study’ furthered by the undercommons to design a series of toolkits to facilitate the development and implementation of the constituency-led curriculum. In applying action research, I articulated the

methodology of Arte Útil throughout the application of the toolkits over ‘hacking’ as the primary operational mode. Moreover, I decided to use autoethnographic writing to describe how my personal experience has intensely influenced the scope of the research. As I have argued, I am profoundly invested as a theorist, educator and, above all, human being who believes that art can be used to think of the world otherwise because I have experienced it in the first person, especially during this research. As I have contented, autoethnography allowed my personal relationship to the case studies analysed in this thesis to describe and interpret practices at the intersection between the self and social life (Adams, Ellis and Jones, 2017). Utilising autoethnographic writing alongside semi-structured interviews and action research, I critically examined a decade of work and personal experiences in collaboration with the Asociación de Arte Útil. Autoethnography provided me with the means to contextualise my personal journey within broader cultural, political, and social theories while composing this thesis. I could recognise my connections with others involved in the research through autoethnography while demonstrating the thesis's evidence-based nature. As noted by Bishop (2012, p.6), the more I became involved in the research, the harder it was to be objective and critical, especially when a vital aspect of a project like this thesis concerns forming personal relationships that inevitably impact the research.

I argue that the methodological approach that Arte Útil proposes is to: 1) encourage the formation of constituencies as sites of social and political struggle that use art for anticipating change; 2) put conversation, cooperation and kinships at the centre of a dialectical exchange as suggested by feminist-engages pedagogy; 3) produce a self-directed and flexible curriculum to be applied in both museums and universities. To demonstrate that, I carried out qualitative research through semi-structured interviews to evaluate the impact of the multiple manifestations of the project (a course, a two-day workshop, a series of short modules, and a symposium), which was presented respectively at the international Master Educator, ArtEZ, at the

Artistic High School ‘Duccio di Buoninsegna’, at Unidee and on *Decentralising Political Economies* platform.

Whilst developing action research, I faced the challenges of designing new learning spaces that push the boundaries of institutional protocols. Nevertheless, the methodological application of Arte Útil’s principles helped me and the cohorts who co-designed the activities with me to find ways to understand, adjust and apply educational methods in a new way responding to different situations. Within this formulation, I acted as a ‘co-conspirator’ with the institutions that allowed me to develop the project and those who co-created the curriculum.

As I contended in the last chapter, change does not come without conflict. Sharing authorship and enabling usership implied a shift in working habits that required more time and different configurations of space from everyone involved in the process. Nevertheless, I consistently got back to the Arte Útil archive to learn how to enable collective experimentation that concretely affected the perception of the curricula I proposed.

This thesis demonstrates how the archive became the tool to be used to infiltrate and question working protocols within educational institutions and, at the same time, to enable users to activate a process of collective action. Nonetheless, *Hacking (Art) Education* exposed the classroom and the museum as not neutral environments. As the emergence of frictions demonstrated, the teachers’ power and the institution’s authority reflect the larger society.

Over the course of action research, I decided to take more risks in my pedagogical practice with students, as recommended by bell hooks (2014). Therefore, I designed the syllabi and the modules’ programmes to push the boundaries of what art can do when used. As a matter of fact, the *use* of something defines its meaning. As Ahmed argued, ‘the more a path is used, the more a path is used’ (2019).

Since the beginning of this research, I have struggled with the contradiction of the meaning of ‘change’ and how to measure it objectively. As I have contended, my focus was not to suggest new policies because it would have been a contradictory approach to the methodology of Arte Útil I proposed. If, following the principles of Arte Útil, artists shift from authors to initiators of a process, they lead the way until the moment users take over, and then again, the process repeats until a change becomes visible to the many. This thesis provides a series of methods to be applied and, ideally, improved upon.

Nevertheless, after ten years of engagement with the Arte Útil archive, I came across projects implementing policy changes. In addition to those discussed in the previous chapters, the *Legislative Theatre* of Augusto Boal is another example. Boal, through his practice as a performing artist and politician, proposed a new way of practising theatre to promote social and political change. During his tenure as city councilor in Rio de Janeiro (1993-1996), he introduced *Legislative Theatre* as a novel approach to enable his constituents to express their opinions. This format fostered a form of so-called ‘transitive democracy’, using the medium of theatre to translate constituency desires into legislative proposals. During Boal’s mandate, around thirteen laws were created and approved through the legislative theatre method. Therefore, I have included an exercise by Boal as part of the curriculum<sup>45</sup> to advocate for a new beginning towards change. Hence, my focus has been on exploring various educational frameworks, encompassing both formal and informal systems in The Netherlands, Italy, and the United Kingdom, rather than delving into the policies of these countries. As I argued, policies inherently entail the involvement of a select group responsible for drafting guidelines (effectively forming a policy) and subsequently enforcing it as the predominant model for all. Such an approach would directly oppose the research question of this thesis. Arte Útil does not assert itself as a universally applicable model; instead, by promoting

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<sup>45</sup> *Observation – The Choir* is an exercise is an adaptation from Boal's *Games for actors and non-actors* (2021). The exercise combines individual and collective perceptions of a place to understand how we react to our surroundings. It is available online at <https://www.hackingeducation.art/the-choir>

usership, it offers a methodological framework as a fresh starting point, intended to be tailored to specific socio-political contexts by its users. Nevertheless, I insist that this thesis contributed to change, and I propose to look closely at the data that emerged from the interviews. Breaking hierarchical boundaries between students and teachers, accepting that a project can change when it is a collective endeavour, the inadequacy of the time frame of a master's program, and the liberating feeling of learning outside the classroom were mentioned by almost every person I interviewed for this thesis.

A vital contribution of this thesis is delineating an educational methodology that stems from Arte Útil that reconciles the separation between action and theory into a new praxis that takes usership as a new ontological category in art and education. I would argue that *Hacking (Art) Education* can become operational in museums, universities, and art schools because the curricula developed have also been evaluated as part of the educational institutions, museums, and galleries. It is my contention that this thesis supplies the lack of activation of structural interventions from the arts, particularly socially engaged practices. This helps me to reiterate that Arte Útil produces tools to infiltrate and hack universities, art schools and museums for long-term change. Moreover, the practical part of the thesis – such as the website - will put the research in the hands of others who might expand its uses beyond the disciplines it starts from. For example, one of the potential development could be to understand from a mathematical perspective if the notion of the coefficient of art could be arrived at through a specific algorithm.

As this research project draws to a close, I think it is crucial to affirm that the application of Arte Útil methodology is not about reproducing what we already know or what already exists. Yet the syllabi which constitute the practical part are not supposed to become a fixed protocol. Instead, I argue that *Hacking (Art)*

*Education* should be intended as a new beginning. Borrowing the words of Hannah Arendt (1977):

‘Our capacity for action – and hence our freedom – crucially depends on the ways in which others take up our beginnings... In order to be able to act, we therefore need others – others who respond to our initiatives and take up our beginnings’.

After all, this is what users do.

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## *Appendix*



# ESCUELA DE ARTE ÚTIL

**June 20–August 10, 2017**

**Class Hours:** Tue/Wed/Thu, 4–8 PM (required of full-time students);  
Fri, 2–6 PM (optional)

**Instructors:** Tania Bruguera and invited guests

**Coordinator:** Alessandra Saviotti

**Facilitator:** Gemma Medina Estupiñan

Tania Bruguera’s socially engaged, political projects apply the aesthetics of art to everyday life. Focusing on the transformation of social affect into political effectiveness, they are intensive interventions into the institutional structure of collective memory, education, and politics. This project continues Bruguera’s interest in, and use of, transitional institutions—in this case an art school—to harness the potential of art to shift perspectives and to initiate and contribute to social, political, and cultural change.

*Escuela de Arte Útil* is an updated version of her earlier long-term pedagogical project *Cátedra Arte de Conducta*, which took place in her home in Havana from 2003 through 2009. The focus on *arte útil*, a term suggesting art as a tool or device for social change, is coupled with the aims of the Arte Útil Archive (2013–ongoing), the main tool for the school that is presented here for use. It is also available online at [arte-util.org](http://arte-util.org).

Bruguera has conceived a new curriculum for this project that uses the concept of *arte útil* to address the challenges facing artists today by looking at a group of art projects and methodologies that may constitute a parallel art history. This is the central pedagogical and installation component of the exhibition that runs concurrently at YBCA, and Bruguera is in residence for the duration of the school. Students enrolled at collaborating academic institutions receive credit toward their undergraduate and graduate education degrees, and are will be part of the YBCA Fellows program as well.

While the school's core group of attendees are required to have a systematic engagement with the project, the general public is welcome to participate on a drop-in basis with paid gallery admission or membership.

Escuela de Arte Útil, *a commissioned art project for the exhibition Tania Bruguera: Talking to Power / Hablándole al Poder, is organized by Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in collaboration with California College of the Arts, San Francisco Art Institute, the University of California at Berkeley, San Francisco State University, the Asociación de Arte Útil, and the YBCA Fellows program.*

### **Course Description**

Whether through self-organized groups, individual initiatives, or user-generated content, people are developing new methods and social formations to deal with issues that were once the domain of the state. These initiatives are not isolated incidents, but part of an art history that has yet to be told, and they are shaping our contemporary world. This class focuses on the concept of *arte útil* and the shifting role of contemporary art, and will consider institutional self-criticism, active hyperrealism, a legality, reforming capital, beneficial outcomes, sustainability, intersections with other disciplines, and modes of creative collaboration.

### **Attendance and Participation**

Students are expected to actively participate in the class sessions, do the required reading, contribute substantively to the conversations, and generate a new project that will be shown at the end of the course. Consistent attendance and punctuality are essential. The class involves discussions on how to create an *arte útil* project, including the implementation of the criteria and their relation to the public realm.

### **Learning Outcomes**

1. Understand the history, strategies, and challenges of *arte útil*
2. Become familiar with the lexicon, especially concepts such as “beneficial outcome,” “initiator,” “usership,” “sustainability,” and “implementation”
3. Test *arte útil* strategies and resources
4. Understand the differences between relational aesthetics, public art, and socially engaged practices
5. Learn new fieldwork and collaboration skills
6. Create your own *arte útil* project

## **Assignments**

Students have two weeks to work on and present each assignment. Incomplete assignments will prevent you from participating in the final show.

### **ASSIGNMENT 1**

Weeks 1 and 2

Think about a recurrent injustice that affects you, and propose new ways in which the issue could be addressed. Research the Arte Útil Archive to find similar projects and use them as starting points and references for your proposal. Present and discuss with the class; touch on your proposal's references to the archive and how it differs from those examples. Produce a prototype. A respondent will be assigned for every prototype. He or she will question how the project tackles new uses for art within society, its effectiveness, its feasibility, and who benefits from it and how.

### **ASSIGNMENT 2**

Weeks 3 and 4

Choose one relational aesthetics, public art, or socially engaged art project that does not fit the *arte útil* criteria and transform it into an *arte útil* proposal. Present it to the class. Submit a written description of your prototype idea from weeks 1 and 2, taking into account the respondent's feedback. The instructors will review your submission.

### **ASSIGNMENT 3**

Weeks 5 and 6

Present your project prototype to the class. Describe your strategies for its potential sustainability, including how it challenges the field within which it operates, how it works on a 1:1 scale, and how it can evolve considering the current urgencies it faces. Identify your potential users, and strategies to transition it to its constituency. Explain how aesthetics are established during the process. Present your implementation timeline.

## **Class Schedule**

(subject to change)

### **WEEK 1**

**Introduction to Arte Útil Instructor: Tania Bruguera**

**Tue, Jun 20**

4–5:50PM: Understanding the differences between relational aesthetics, public art, socially engaged practices, and *arte útil*

6–8PM: Lecture and discussion: Introduction to *arte útil*

**Wed, Jun 21**

4–5:50PM: Session 1—Analyzing the *arte útil* criteria

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis: Manifesto de *arte útil*

6:30–8PM: Session 2—Using the archive and the lexicon, review of case studies by category and strategy. SFAI students present the tool kit realized during the collaborative class “Evolving the Archive: Arte Útil in the Bay Area”

**Thu, Jun 22**

4–5:50PM: Session 3—Successes, challenges, and side effects of *arte útil*

6–8PM: Students’ assignment #1 discussion

**Fri, Jun 23**

2–6PM: Critique, studio, drop-in time (by appointment with instructor)

**WEEK 2 Institutional Self-Criticism**

Guest instructor: Alistair Hudson, Director, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art

**Tue, Jun 27**

4–5:50PM: Reading discussion with instructor

6–8PM: Lecture and discussion: Institutional self-criticism

**Wed, Jun 28**

4–5:50PM: Session 1—Museum 3.0 concept and practicalities

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 2— Meeting with other *arte útil* practitioners TBD.

**Thu, Jun 29**

4–5:50PM: Session 3—The museum as a civic institution

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 4—Students' assignment #1 discussion

**Fri, Jun 30**

Site visit to Bay Area case study TBD (by appointment with instructor)

**WEEK 3 Active Hyperrealism**

Guest instructor: Debt Collective (Thomas Gokey and Karissa McKelvey)

**Wed, Jul 5**

4–5:50PM: Reading discussion with instructor

6–8PM: Lecture and discussion: Active hyperrealism

**Thu, Jul 6**

4–5:50PM: Session 1—Working on the 1:1 scale

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 2—Meeting with Bay Area *arte útil* practitioners: Karissa McKelvey of Strike Debt Bay Area presents the activities and actions carried in our region

**Fri, Jul 7**

4–5:50PM: Session 3—Removing the frame

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 4—Students' assignment #2 discussion

**WEEK 4 Reforming Capital**

Guest instructor: Jeanne van Heeswijk

**Tue, Jul 11**

4–5:50PM: Reading discussion with instructor

6–8PM: Lecture and discussion: Reforming capital

**Wed, Jul 12**

4–5:50PM: Session 1—Crossing over

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 2—Meeting with Bay Area *arte útil* practitioners:  
Fieldfaring

(Ted Purves and Susanne Cockrell) present *Temescal Amity Works*, Arte Útil  
Archive project #121

**Thu, Jul 13**

4–5:50PM: Session 3—Scaling impact

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 4—Students' assignment #2 discussion

**Fri, Jul 14**

Site visit to Bay Area case study TBD (by appointment with instructor)

**WEEK 5 A-legality**

Guest instructor: WochenKlausur

**Tue, Jul 18**

4–5:50PM: Reading discussion with instructor

6–8PM: Lecture and discussion: A-legality

**Wed, Jul 19**

4–5:50PM: Session 1—Loopholes versus illegal and a-legal strategies

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 2—Skype meeting with other *arte útil* practitioners

**Thu, Jul 20**

4–5:50PM: Session 3—Affect versus effectiveness in art

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 4—Students' assignment #3 discussion



**Fri, Jul 21**

Site visit to Bay Area case study TBD (by appointment with instructor)

**WEEK 6 Sustainable Outcomes**

Guest instructor: Rick Lowe

**Tue, Jul 25**

4–5:50PM: Reading discussion with instructor

6–8PM: Lecture and discussion: Sustainable outcomes

**Wed, Jul 26**

4–5:50PM: Session 1—Steps toward building community

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 2—Meeting with Bay Area *arte útil* practitioners: the Anti-

Eviction Mapping Project presents their platform, Arte Útil Archive project #558

**Thu, July 27**

4–5:50PM: Session 3—Securing permanency and change

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 4—Students' assignment #3 discussion

**Fri, Jul 28**

Site visit to Bay Area case study TBD (by appointment with instructor)

**WEEK 7 Usership**

Instructor: Tania Bruguera

**Tue, Aug 1**

4–5:50PM: Reading discussion with instructor

6–8PM: Lecture and discussion: Usership

**Wed, Aug 2**

4–5:50PM: Session 1—Audiences, constituencies, and usership

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 2—Meeting with Bay Area *arte útil* practitioners: Bonnie Ora

Sherk presents *A Living Library*, Arte Útil Archive project #503; *Crossroad Community: The Farm*, Arte Útil Archive project #007; and *Portable Parks I–III*,

Arte Útil Archive project #008

**Thu, Aug 3**

4–5:50PM: Session 3—Aest-ethics and social ecology versus services

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 4—Students' assignment #3 discussion

**Fri, Aug 4**

Critique, studio, drop-in time

**WEEK 8 Conclusion**

Instructor: Tania Bruguera

**Tue, Aug 8**

4–6PM: Students' prototype and implementation discussion

6:10–8PM: Discussion of successes, challenges, and side effects of implementation I

**Wed, Aug 9**

4–6PM: Students' prototype and implementation discussion 6:10–

8PM: Discussion of successes, challenges, and side effects of implementation II

**Thu, Aug 10**

4–6PM: Students' prototype and implementation discussion 6:10–

8PM: Discussion of successes, challenges, and side effects of implementation III

## ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

### Sat, Jul 15 SFAI symposium

Details TBA

### Thu/Fri/Sat, Sep 28–30

#### The Arte Útil Summit 2017: “Does Art Have Users?”

Organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art’s Education and Public Practice department and the Asociación de Arte Útil. The program is part of SFMOMA’s Phyllis Wattis Distinguished Lecture Series.

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- Scott, Emily Eliza, and Kirsten Swenson. "Contemporary Art and the Politics of Land Use." In *Critical Landscapes: Art, Space, Politics*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015.
- Sherk, Bonnie Ora. "Position Paper: Crossroads Community (The Farm)." In *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader*. Edited by Charles Esche and William Bradley. London: Tate Publishing, 2007.
- Wallis, Jonathan. "Interview with Tania Bruguera." *Art and the Public Sphere* 4 (2015).
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- Yank, Sue Bell. "From Freehouse to Neighborhood Co-op: The Birth of a New Organizational Form." *FIELD: A Journal for Socially Engaged Art Criticism* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2015).

## The School of Arte Útil / Institute for Contemporary Art Spring 2018

**Semester:** Spring 2018 / 15 weeks: 8 weeks in class; 7 weeks to develop group project(s)

**Credits:** 3 Credit Hours

**Time:** Wednesdays, 2:00-4:30 pm

**Location (Bldg/Room):** The Depot, Classroom

**Instructor(s):** Tania Bruguera, ICA Visiting Artist, Arte Útil Founder and Stephanie Smith, ICA Chief Curator **Instructor Stephanie Smith office hours:** 12-1pm Wednesdays

**Facilitator(s):** Liang Luscombe, Graduate Assistant, ICA

**Visiting Faculty:**

Juan-William Chavez, Artist, Cultural Activist

Laurie Jo Reynolds, Artist, Policy Advocate, and Researcher

Free Egunfemi, Founder and Leader of UntoldRVA

Vaughan Whitney Garland, Artist

Mark Strandquist, Artist and Cultural Organiser/Activist

Noah Simblist, Chair of Painting and Printmaking, Curator  
and Critic Paul Rucker, Artist

**Type (On-campus class; hybrid; online):** On-campus class

**Full Course title:** The School of Arte Útil

**Short title for Bulletin:** Art as a social tool

**Course description and rationale:**

The School of Arte Útil (*The Escuela de Arte Útil*) is project of the ICA's inaugural exhibition *Declaration* (Spring 2018), conceived by artist Tania Bruguera to address art's use as a tool for social and political change. In The School of Arte Útil (*The Escuela de Arte Útil*) students will learn about the creation of "useful art" from Bruguera, ICA Chief Curator, Stephanie Smith, and influential guest instructors.

Whether through self-organized groups, individual initiatives, or the rise of user-generated content, people are developing new methods and social formations to deal with issues that were once the domain of the state. These initiatives are not isolated incidents, but also part of an art history that has been neglected, yet shapes our contemporary world. This class will introduce the concept of Arte Útil, which roughly translates into English as "useful art" while also suggesting that art can be a tool

or device. Studying the shifting roles of contemporary art, the class will consider factors of the practice of Arte Útil such as institutional self-criticism, active hyperrealism, a-legality, reforming capital, beneficial outcomes, sustainability, intersection with other disciplines, and modes of creative collaboration. The course will include guest lectures, case study presentations drawn from the [Arte Útil archive](#) and [lexicon](#), and fieldwork to connect with relevant Richmond-area projects and sites.

Students will be expected to participate in classroom discussions and critiques, do the required readings, and generate a new project proposals during the final 7 weeks of the course. Members from the ICA, Tania Bruguera and guest artists will regularly mentor students throughout the final 7 week period to ensure that project proposals are fully developed and conceptually rigorous. Every student is expected to propose a final project that will be reviewed by ICA staff and Tania Bruguera on Week 15 of the course.

**Learning Outcomes:**

- Understand the history, strategies and challenges of Arte Útil.
- Familiarization with key concepts as used within Arte Útil, including *beneficial outcome, initiator* , *usership* , *sustainability* and *implementation* .
- Test strategies and resources used by Arte Útil.
- Learn new project development and collaboration skills.
- Propose an Arte Útil project.

**Assessments:**

- Consistent attendance and punctuality.
- Demonstrated completion of readings assessed through prepared questions in discussion and presentation of Assignment One.
- Substantive participation in class discussions.
- Substantive development of Arte Útil proposal that meets the instructor's specifications.

**ASSIGNMENT ONE: ARTE UTIL CASE STUDY**

PRESENTATIONS WILL TAKE PLACE WEEK 4-7, in class presentation.

Present a 5-minute response on one assigned case study from the online Arte Util archive. Research the Arte Útil archive case study to identify how its operates in relation to the criteria of Arte Util and how it tackles new uses for art within society, as well as its effectiveness, feasibility and who benefits from it and how. Place this case study in relation to the class assigned readings. This presentation will facilitate discussion of the texts and should reflect the student's deep engagement with the concepts in the readings and critical engagement the argument made by its author.

**ASSIGNMENT TWO: 3 PAGE WRITTEN**

**RESPONSE PAPER DUE 5PM, FRIDAY FEBRUARY 23.**

FOR FEEDBACK SEND ASSIGNMENT INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE BY 5PM, THURSDAY FEBRUARY 15.

Think about a recurrent injustice that affects you and propose ways in which this issue can be dealt with differently. Research this injustice to better understand how you could create an Arte Util proposal that has a needed impact. Also research the Arte Útil archive to find one similar project and use this project as starting point and as a reference for your discussion. EXPLAIN and DISCUSS.

Write 3 pages. All papers should be double-spaced, with 12-point Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins. All papers must be emailed to [icastwk1@vcu.edu](mailto:icastwk1@vcu.edu) by 5pm, Friday February 23.

### **ASSIGNMENT THREE: ARTE UTIL PROPOSAL GROUP PRESENTATION**

DUE WEEK 15, May 2, in class presentation

Groups identified during Weeks 7 and 8 will work independently to produce a final comprehensive proposals. Office hours will be available with course facilitators weekly to support each group's proposal development. There will be one scheduled work-in-progress class meeting so that each group can workshop/exchange ideas, on Wednesday 11 April with Tania Bruguera. Each group will present a 10 minute in-class presentation of their project plan to Tania Bruguera and Stephanie Smith, highlighting the project's underlying application of Arte Util, with discussion to follow.

#### **PRESENTATIONS**

**MUST**

**INCLUDE: -**

Drawings  
of the project.

- Presentation of prototype of elements of project if appropriate.
- Identification of potential users and impact of the project.
- Detailed explanation and discussion as to how this project functions as an Arte Util project.
- The social justice impacts of the project.
- Detailed budget for the project.

#### **Syllabus + Class Schedule:**

*Subject to change. Some guests may participate in course via Skype..*

#### **WEEK 1 - Orientation/ Introduction to Arte Útil**

Instructor: Tania Bruguera (Skype)

Facilitator: Stephanie Smith/ Liang Luscombe

- Introduction to the Course / Stephanie Smith and Liang Luscombe
- Review course expectations, assignments, visitors

- Co-establishing ground rules for engaging with each other
- Introductions to each other
  - Introduction to Arte Útil and discussion / Tania Bruguera
    - Understanding the premises of Arte Útil
- Analyzing the Arte Útil criteria
- Using the Arte Util archive and the Lexicon; high-level overview of projects by category and strategies
- Familiarizing with the successes, challenges and side effects of Arte Útil

Readings:

Tania Bruguera, *Reflexions on Arte Útil*, in 'What's the Use', Valiz, 2016  
 Stephen Wright, *Toward a Lexicon of Usership*, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2013  
 Review Arte Útil criteria and browse online archive

**WEEK 2 - Arte Útil History and Formation**

Instructor: Tania Bruguera (Skype)

Facilitator: Stephanie Smith/Liang Luscombe

- Continued discussion of Arte Útil and its histories
- Discussion of Week 2 selected readings

Readings:

Lucy Lippard, 'Time Capsule', in *Art and Social Change*, 2017  
 Marcel Duchamp, *The Creative Act*, 1957  
 Pino Poggi, *Arte Utile I, II, III, IV Manifesto*, online at [www.arte-utile.it](http://www.arte-utile.it)  
 Eduardo Costa, Manifesto on Useful Art, 1969

**WEEK 3 - Use of the Public Space as a common good**

Instructor: Stephanie Smith

Facilitator: Liang Luscombe

Guests: Free Engunfemi and Vaughn Whitney Garland

- Guests' presentations of their projects and practices followed by discussion
- Discussion of Week 3 selected readings

Readings/Videos:

Martha Rosler, 'Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism, Part 3' in *e-flux journal #25*, May 2011  
 Chantal Mouffe, 'Radical Politics as Counter-Hegemonic Intervention: The Role of Cultural Practices' in *Ethics of the Urban: The City and the Spaces of the Political*, 2017, p209-231.  
 Free Engunfemi, *Untold RVA TED Talk*, published December 6, 2017, [link](#).



John Cage interview, *Silence*, published July 14, 2007, [link](#).

Driving Richmond project, [link](#).

#### **WEEK 4 - Sustainable Outcomes + Institutional Repurpose**

Instructor: Stephanie Smith

Facilitator: Liang Luscombe

- Students to present Assignment One
- Stephanie Smith to present lecture *Museum on fire* followed by discussion
- Discussion of Week 4 selected readings
- Group brainstorm in relation to Institute of Contemporary Art, VCU, topic: how can we act out our declaration?

Readings:

Stephanie Smith, 'Museum on fire'

Nick Aikens, 'Beyond the Exhibition?: a speculation on how the museum might be put to use' in *What's the Use?: Constellations of Art, History, and Knowledge, A Critical Reader*, 2015, p328-345.

Watch lecture by Alastair Hudson for Yerba Buena:

[link here](#). Pack of Institute of Contemporary Art

VCU documents.

#### **WEEK 5 - Reforming Capital**

**ADDITIONAL EVENT 7pm Wednesday February 14: pizza with Juan-William Chavez.**

Instructor: Stephanie Smith

Facilitator: Liang Luscombe

Guest: Juan-William Chavez

- Students to present Assignment One
- Guests' presentations of their projects and practices followed by discussion
- Discussion of Week 5 selected readings

Readings:

Emily Eliza Scott and Kirsten Swenson, *Contemporary Art and the Politics of Land Use*, in 'Critical

Landscapes. Art, Space, Politics', University of California Press, 2015

Chris Kraus, *Lost Properties*, 2014

IV TWO EFFORTS in Public Art for Public Health, Interview with Mel Chin on Revival Field p.384

#### **WEEK 6 - Legislative Change**

**ADDITIONAL EVENT 7pm Wednesday February 21: pizza with Laurie Jo Reynolds and Mark Strandquist.**

Instructor: Stephanie Smith

Facilitator: Liang Luscombe

Guests: Laurie Jo Reynolds and Mark Strandquist

- Students to present Assignment One
- Guests' presentations of their projects and practices followed by discussion ● Discussion of Week 6 selected readings

Readings:

Christine Aushana, 'Collective Difficulty, Feminist Interventions' in *What's the Use?: Constellations of Art, History, and Knowledge, A Critical Reader*, 2015, p 286-294.

Melinda Guillen, 'Time Spent' in *What's the Use?: Constellations of Art, History, and Knowledge, A Critical Reader*, 2015, p290-294.

Elizabeth Renstrom, 'How Art by Inmates Could Help Change the Prison System' *VICE*, published October 19, 2015, [link](#).

### **WEEK 7 - The Social Practice That is Race**

Instructor: Stephanie Smith

Facilitator: Liang Luscombe

Guest: Paul Rucker

- Students to present Assignment One
- Guest presentations of their projects and practices followed by discussion ● Discussion of Week 7 selected readings
- Pause/ Processing: reassessing Arte Util, preparing for team project work:
  - Assessment of course to date + revisit Arte Util core concepts and criteria in relation to topics, readings, and visitors to date
  - Review expectations for team project work, confirm working groups, and develop collective list of questions / concerns to discuss with Tania Bruguera in Week 8
  - Workshop on practical tools (including planning, budgeting), and conceptual / ethical considerations in developing project proposals

Readings:

Dan S. Wang & Anthony Romero, *The Social Practice That is Race*, 2016 Marina Garcés, *Honesty with the Real*, 2012

### **WEEK 8 - Usership**

**ADDITIONAL EVENT 12:30 pm, Wednesday, March 14: Tania Bruguera Public Lecture, co-presented with Painting and Printmaking Department.**

Instructor: Tania Bruguera ( in-person)

Facilitator: Stephanie Smith and Liang Luscombe

- Instructor / guest presentation and discussion

- Discussion about conceptual, ethical, and pragmatic issues to consider in developing and assessing Arte Util projects
- Discussion of Week 8 selected readings

Readings: review Lexicon of Usership

John Byrne, 'Social Autonomy and the Use Value of Art', *Afterall* 42, 2016

Gemma Medina and Alessandra Saviotti, *Broadcasting the Archive: Redefining the City Through Socially*

*Engaged Practices, Community Art and Cultural Activism*, In *Temporary Art Review*, February 29- 2016

### **Week 9-14**

**ADDITIONAL EVENT 1-2pm Wednesday April 25: brown bag lunch with Tania Bruguera and invited students from Lupe Morazan and Hope Ginsberg classes.**

Groups identified during Week 7 will work independently to produce a final comprehensive proposals. Office hours will be available with course facilitators weekly to support each group's proposal development. There will be one scheduled work-in-progress class meetings so that each group can workshop/exchange ideas, this is scheduled for Wednesday April 11.

Schedule for this will be sent separately as part of Assignment 3.

### **Week 15 - Final Presentations**

Instructor: Tania Bruguera and Stephanie Smith

Facilitator: Liang Luscombe

- Final group prototype materials submitted to facilitators.
- Final group prototypes to be presented to Tania Bruguera and Stephanie Smith.

### **VCU Policies**

Please review VCU's policies on the following topics at <http://go.vcu.edu/syllabus> :

- Campus emergency information
- Class registration required for attendance
- Honor System: Upholding academic integrity
- Important dates
- Managing stress
- Mandatory responsibility of faculty members to report incidents of sexual misconduct
- Military short-term training or deployment
- Student conduct in the classroom
- Student email policy
- Student financial responsibility
- Students representing the university – excused absences
- Students with disabilities
- Withdrawal from classes
- Faculty communication about students

**Biography:**

**Tania Bruguera:** Born 1968, Havana, Cuba; Lives in Cuba and elsewhere

**About the artist:** Bruguera received her BFA from the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana, Cuba and her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Select solo exhibitions: Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco, California (2016); Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, Netherlands (2013); Tate Modern in London, England (2012), Queens Museum in New York (2011); Centre d'Art Pompidou in Paris, France (2010); Neuberger Museum of Art Purchase, New York (2010); Madre Museum in Naples, Italy (2010); Beirut Art Center in Beirut, Lebanon (2009); Havana Biennial, Cuba (2009); San Francisco Art Institute, California (2002). Select group exhibitions: Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (2017); Serpentine Gallery in London, United Kingdom (2017); La Biennale di Venezia in Venice, Italy (2015); Santa Monica Museum of Art (SMOA) in Santa Monica, California (2014); Guggenheim Museum in New York (2014); National Museum Wales in Cardiff, United Kingdom (2012); Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum in Miami, FL (2009); and 7th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea (2008). Collections include: National Museum of Wales, ART/OMI, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, Contemporary Art Museum of Istanbul, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and Tate Modern. Select awards: Meadows Prize (2013), The Bronx Museum of the Arts' recognition (2011), the Prince Claus Prize (2008), Cuban Arts Fund Grant and Merit Scholarship (2002-2004), and Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship (1998).

# Escuela de Arte Útil

En el marco de la exposición *Tania Bruguera. Hablándole al Poder*

**Agosto 7 - Septiembre 7**

**Sala 4**

**Martes a jueves / 15:00 - 19:00 h. Viernes / 11:00 - 15:00 h.**

**ALEGAL:** lo que la ley aún no ha concebido.

La Escuela de Arte Útil es un programa de cinco semanas que está orientado al estudio, análisis y práctica del Arte Útil, un movimiento artístico que tal y como enuncia su concepto, incluye la cualidad adjetiva de utilidad en el arte para centrarse en el carácter sustantivo del arte como herramienta. Más allá de su carácter pedagógico, la Escuela se plantea como un dispositivo crítico que se infiltra en el museo para compartir y ampliar conocimientos en torno a estas prácticas y que aspira a convertirse en catalizador de procesos artísticos, sociales y políticos conectados con las urgencias y el contexto específico que la acoge. Usar la Escuela para generar un beneficio más allá del mundo artístico.

El MUAC, como museo universitario, se convierte de esta forma en un contexto de gran relevancia para discutir sobre temas de trascendencia social y política. Dado el momento de emergencia sociopolítica y la controversia planteada por las elecciones presidenciales en México, consideramos fundamental hablar de diferentes estrategias y prácticas que han involucrado un enfrentamiento jurídico desde lo simbólico, pasando por lo afectivo y con implicaciones directas en una modificación real del contexto jurídico y legislativo, transformando la realidad directamente a partir de las leyes.

Por ello se plantea como eje temático el concepto estrategia **ALEGAL**: es decir, aquello que no está regulado ni prohibido que funciona sin estar reglamentado.

En resumen, se trata de mostrar procesos, estrategias y prácticas que no necesariamente pretenden ser arte, y que pueden beneficiarse de la coyuntura de la exposición, de la Escuela y del Archivo. Para ello, queremos invitar a artistas, activistas y personas vinculadas con la política directamente desde el ámbito local.

## **INSTRUCTORES INTERNACIONALES:**

Semana 1 · **Tania Bruguera** Semana 2 · **Nuria Güell**

Semana 3 · **Graciela Carnevale**

## **LECTURAS LOCALES:** Semana 4 · **Carla Fernández**

Semana 5 · **Sofía Olascoaga**

## **CASOS DE ESTUDIO / INVITADOS LOCALES:**

- **Mónica Mayer** | Género, performance, gráfica, archivos y participación
- **José Miguel González Casanova** | Arte, educación y economía
- **Lorena Wolffer** | Performance, activismo, género y violencia
- **J. Samuel Morales Escalante** | Arte y educación
- **Oswaldo Sánchez / Josefa Ortega** | Insite
- **Paulina Cornejo** | 100 tácticas de creatividad ciudadana
- **Fran Ilich** | Autonomous Zapatista Coffee
- **Lucía Sanromán** | Curaduría Hablándole al Poder

## OBJETIVOS Y RESULTADOS DEL APRENDIZAJE

1. Comprender la historia, estrategias y desafíos de Arte Útil.
2. Familiarizarse con el léxico, especialmente, conceptos como «alegal», «resultado beneficioso», «iniciador», «uso», «sostenibilidad» e «implementación».
3. Someter a prueba las estrategias y recursos de Arte Útil.
4. Comprender las diferencias y aproximaciones del Arte Útil con la estética relacional, el arte público y las prácticas socialmente comprometidas.
5. Aprender nuevas habilidades de colaboración y trabajo de campo.
6. Crear su propio proyecto de Arte Útil.

## TAREAS

Los estudiantes tendrán una o dos semanas para trabajar y presentar cada tarea. Las tareas no terminadas impedirán la participación del estudiante en la muestra final.

## PROGRAMA DE CLASE (sometido a posibles cambios)

### SEMANA 1: Introducción al Arte Útil.

**Instructora: Tania Bruguera** caso de estudio: Osvaldo Sánchez / Josefa Ortega | inSite Casa Gallina  
caso de estudio: José Miguel González Casanova | Arte, educación y economía  
caso de estudio: Lucía Sanromán | Curaduría Hablándole al Poder

### SEMANA 2: Alegal

**Instructora: Nuria Güell** caso de estudio: Lorena Wolffer | Performance, activismo, género y violencia. caso de estudio: Mónica Mayer | Género, performance, gráfica, archivos y participación.

### SEMANA 3: Pasado y presente: resultados beneficiosos – repurposing (reconvertir/readaptar)

**Instructor: Graciela Carnevale** caso de estudio: Paulina Cornejo | 100 tácticas de creatividad ciudadana.  
caso de estudio: Proyecto nuevo de la Open Call

### SEMANA 4: Reciprocidad extraterritorial

**Instructora: Carla Fernández**

**Coordinadora: Gemma Medina**

caso de estudio: Fran Illich | Autonomous Zapatista Coffee. AU.n.544 caso de estudio: Proyecto nuevo de la Open Call

### SEMANA 5: Alegal

**Instructora: Sofía Olascoaga**

**Coordinadora: Gemma Medina**

caso de estudio: J. Samuel Morales Escalante | Arte y educación

caso de estudio: Proyecto nuevo de la Open Call

**MU&C**  
MUSEO  
UNIVERSITARIO      ARTE  
CONTEMPORÁNEO



**The international Master Artist Educator (iMAE) - ArtEZ Hogeschool voor de Kunsten**

Asociación de Arte Útil: Module 'The Netherlands'

January - July 2018

Intensive Workshop: 22-25 January 2018

**Instructors:** Gemma Medina, Alessandra Saviotti

**DESCRIPTION**

This intensive module is organized by the Asociación de Arte Útil in collaboration with Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven), Stichting Freehouse (Rotterdam), Stichting NAC (Rotterdam) and het Vluchtmaat (Amsterdam).

Students will have the opportunity to hear from different individuals who are directly involved in the Arte Útil movement, the strategies put in place to develop their projects.

Arte Útil, a concept developed by Tania Bruguera, roughly translates into English as "useful art," but it goes further suggesting art as a tool or device. The notion of what constitutes Arte Útil has been arrived at via a set of criteria formulated by Bruguera and curators at the Queens Museum, New York; Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; and Grizedale Arts, Coniston.

The module is organized as an intensive 4-days workshop, where the instructors will give a broad introduction to the Arte Útil archive, the criteria and the development of a constellation of projects worldwide, which have been developed since 2013 by a flexible group of engaged artists, curators and citizens.

Students will work in groups to engage with the selection criteria and the theoretical framework these criteria embody, as well as the partners invited to present their projects.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. Gain and hone collaboration skills
2. Gain experience in selecting work for the archive according to the developed criteria
3. Learn fieldwork skills
4. Experience firsthand the process and dynamics of producing an ambitious and evolving project
5. Explore the relationship between research, authorship and art production

## **DAY ONE**

January 22

### **Course introduction: Understanding Arte Útil (criteria, archive, association, website and the role of the institution)**

10:00 - 11:00 Brief Introduction by Gemma Medina and Alessandra Saviotti  
11:00 - 12:00 meeting with Charles Esche, Director Van Abbemuseum  
12:00 - 13:00 Lunch Break  
13:00 - 14:30 The Museum of Arte Útil  
14:30 – 14:45 Break  
14:45 – 16:00 Exercise, assignment and discussion

Readings and other Resources: [www.arte-util.org](http://www.arte-util.org)

*We were Learning by doing*, an interview with Charles Esche, [oncurating.org](http://oncurating.org) '(New) Institution(alism)', Issue 21/December 2013

Stephen Wright, *Toward a lexicon of Usership*, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2013

Location: Van Abbemuseum, Bilderdijklaan 10, 5611 NH Eindhoven - Meeting at the Office Entrance

## **DAY TWO**

January 23

### **Eindhoven: Inside the institution**

11:00-12:00 Guided tour collection of Van Abbemuseum: 'The Making of Modern Art' and 'The Way Beyond Art'  
12:00 -13:30 Meeting with Steven ten Thije, Research Curator Van Abbemuseum  
13:30- 14:30 Lunch Break  
14:30 - 15:30 Introduction to the Werksalon and the project 'Agents of Change'  
15:30 - 16:00 Exercise

Readings and other Resources: <http://www.internationaleonline.org>  
<https://vanabbemuseum.nl>

Steven ten Thije, *The emancipated museum*, Mondriaan Fond, 2017

Location: Van Abbemuseum, Bilderdijklaan 10, 5611 NH Eindhoven - Meeting at the Office Entrance

## **DAY THREE**

January 24

### **Rotterdam: The City**

10:30 - 12:00 Stichting Freehouse  
12:00 - 13:30 Lunch Break and visit to the street market  
14:00 - 16:00 Stichting NAC

Reading and other Resources:

Alexander Vasudevan, *The Autonomous City*, Verso, London, UK, 2017 (Introduction, Chapter 3)



Case Studies from the Archive: Stichting Freehouse, Stichting NAC, Convention on the Use of Space, Granby 4 Street Regeneration.

[www.myafund-nac.blogspot.nl](http://www.myafund-nac.blogspot.nl) [www.icuartprojects.com](http://www.icuartprojects.com)

[www.Stedelinks010.nl](http://www.Stedelinks010.nl) Location: Gemeentehuis, Pretorialaan 141, Rotterdam

We'll conclude the visit at Godschalkstraat 5, Rotterdam

## **DAY FOUR**

January 25

### **Amsterdam: Migration**

10:30 - 11:00 tour of the Vluchtmaat with the residents

11:00 - 12:00 Q&A

12:00- 13:00 Lunch Break

13:00 - 16:00 Exercise; Discussion and wrap up

Reading and other Resources: <http://vluchtmaat.nl/>

Location: Joan Muyskenweg 32, Amsterdam Duivendrecht

Additional readings will be added during the course of the workshop.

**Lunch:** the Van Abbemuseum is located in a very convenient position with several food options; Stichting Freehouse in Rotterdam is located by the weekly street market, but it would be good to bring some food in advance just in case there are not many food options around.

Het Vluchtmaat is located far from the city center, there is a kitchen available in the building, but it would be good to bring some food with you.

## **The international Master Artist Educator (iMAE) - ArtEZ Hogeschool voor de Kunsten**

Asociación de Arte Útil: Module 'The Netherlands'

September 2018 - July 2019

Intensive Workshop: November 12-15 and January 8-11

**Instructors:** Gemma Medina, Alessandra Saviotti

### **DESCRIPTION**

This intensive module is organized by the Asociación de Arte Útil in collaboration with Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven) and guests.

Students will have the opportunity to hear from different individuals who are directly involved in the Arte Útil movement, the strategies put in place to develop their projects.

Arte Útil, a concept developed by Tania Bruguera, roughly translates into English as "useful art," but it goes further suggesting art as a tool or device. The notion of what constitutes Arte Útil has been arrived at via a set of criteria formulated by Bruguera and curators at the Queens Museum, New York; Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; and Grizedale Arts, Coniston.

The module is organized as two intensive workshops, where the instructors will give a broad introduction to the Arte Útil archive, the criteria, some notion around radical pedagogy and the development of a constellation of projects worldwide, which have been developed since 2013 by a flexible group of engaged artists, curators and citizens. Students will work in groups to engage with the selection criteria and the theoretical framework these criteria embody, as well as the partners invited to present their projects.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. Gain and hone collaboration skills
2. Gain experience in selecting work for the archive according to the developed criteria
3. Learn fieldwork skills
4. Experience firsthand the process and dynamics of producing an ambitious and evolving project
5. Explore the relationship between research, authorship and art production

Readings are available as pdf or links in the ELO. Additional readings will be added during the course of the workshop.

**Lunch:** the Van Abbemuseum is located in a very convenient position with several food options. For the other days students should organize autonomously.

## **DAY ONE**

November 12

### **Course introduction: Understanding Arte Útil (criteria, archive, association, website and the role of the institution)**

10:00 - 11:00 Introduction by Gemma Medina and Alessandra Saviotti 11:00 - 12:00 Exercise: what's the coefficient of Art?

12:00 - 13:00 Lunch Break

13:15 - 14:30 Meeting with Annie Fletcher, Chief Curator of Van Abbemuseum

14:30 – 14:45 Break

14:45 – 16:00 Exercise, assignment and discussion

Readings and other Resources: [www.arte-util.org](http://www.arte-util.org)

*We were Learning by doing*, an interview with Charles Esche, [oncurating.org](http://oncurating.org) '(New) Institution(alism)', Issue 21/December 2013

Stephen Wright, *Toward a lexicon of Usership*, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2013

ed. by Silvia Franceschini, *The Politics of Affinity*, Cittadellarte, 2018

Location: Van Abbemuseum, Bilderdijklaan 10, 5611 NH Eindhoven - Meeting at the Office Entrance

## **DAY TWO**

November 13

### **Eindhoven: Inside the institution**

11:00 -13:00 Guided tour collection of Van Abbemuseum: 'The Making of Modern

Art' and 'The Way Beyond Art' with Queering the Collection with Olle Lundin 13:00 -13:45 Lunch Break

13:45- 15:00 Meeting at the Werksalon with the constituencies (Minsung - Dasy)

15:15 - 16:00 Exercise and conclusion

Readings and other Resources: <http://www.internationaleonline.org> <https://vanabbemuseum.nl>

Steven ten Thije, *The emancipated museum*, Mondriaan Fond, 2017

Jonas Staal, *Assemblism*, e-flux Journal #80, March 2017

Location: Van Abbemuseum, Bilderdijklaan 10, 5611 NH Eindhoven - Meeting at the Office Entrance

## **DAY THREE**

November 14

### **Arnhem**

10:30 - 12:00 Meeting with Kevin van Braak

12:00 - 13:30 Lunch Break

14:00 - 16:00 Working in class. Individual presentation on the chosen materials by the students. And wrap up discussion

Reading and other Resources:

WochenKlausur, *Let's talk about another Concept*, oncurating.org 'After the turn: art education beyond the museum', Issue 24/December 2014 <http://kevinvanbraak.com/>  
Kevin van Braak, Danielle Hofmans, Olga Leonhard, Josien Pietrse, *Pressing Matters*, exhibition's handout, Framer Framed, 30 March – 27 May, 2018, Amsterdam  
Location: Kevin van Braak Studio IPKW - Westervoortsedijk 73, 6827 AV Arnhem and iMAE

#### **DAY FOUR**

November 15

##### **Utrecht**

10:30 – 12:00 Meeting/workshop with Annette Krauss  
12:00 – 13:00 Lunch Break  
13:00 – 14:30 Visit to Casco and BAK  
14:30 – 16:00 Discussion and assignment

Reading and other Resources:

James Macanally, *Working for the Commons: A conversation with Binna Choi of Casco Art Institute*, Temporary art Review, 30 November, 2017 <http://siteforunlearning.tumblr.com/http://casco.art/projects/site-for-unlearning/more>  
Location: Casco, Lange Nieuwstraat 7, 3512 PA Utrecht

#### **IP+iMAE module**

#### **DAY ONE**

January 8

**Course introduction: Understanding Arte Útil (criteria, archive, association, website and the role of the institution)**

10:00 - 11:00 Introduction by Gemma Medina and Alessandra Saviotti  
11:00 - 12:00 Visit to the Van Abbemuseum  
12:00 - 13:00 Lunch Break  
13:15 - 14:30 Meeting with Annie Fletcher, Chief Curator of Van Abbemuseum  
14:30 – 14:45 Break  
14:45 – 16:00 Presentation of selected materials by the students.

Readings and other Resources: [www.arte-util.org](http://www.arte-util.org)

Petra Bauer & Annette Krauss, *Read the masks. Tradition is not given.* <https://vimeo.com/53495267>  
*The Constituent Museum*, Valiz, Amsterdam, 2018  
Location: Van Abbemuseum, Bilderdijklaan 10, 5611 NH Eindhoven - Meeting at the Office Entrance

#### **DAY TWO**

January 9

**Art embedded in the political struggle**

11:00 - 11:30 Introduction of The People's Parliament in Rojava  
11:30 – 13:00 Exercise in Groups  
13:00- 13:40 Lunch Break  
14:00 – 15:30 Meeting with Matthijs de Bruijne and Cecilia Vallejos  
15:30 – 16:30 Recap Q&A

Readings and other Resources: <http://www.internationaleonline.org> <https://vanabbemuseum.nl>  
Steven ten Thije, *The emancipated museum*, Mondriaan Fond, 2017  
Cecilia Vallejos, Matthijs de Bruijne, *Take a Risk and Explore: The Visualisation of the Dutch Cleaners' Movement*.  
No Work No Pay! <https://vimeo.com/49909059>  
Location: Van Abbemuseum, Bilderdijklaan 10, 5611 NH Eindhoven - Meeting at the Office Entrance

### **DAY THREE**

January 10

#### **De-colonising the Museum: a proposal from the Tropenmuseum**

10:30 - 12:00 Guided tour of 'The afterlife of Slavery' at Tropen Museum in Amsterdam

12:00 - 13:30 Lunch Break

14:00 - 16:00 Discussion with Clare Butcher

Reading and other Resources:

Pablo Helguera, *Education for Socially Engaged Art*, Jorge Pinto Books Inc., 2011

Stefano Harney & Fred Moten, *The Undercommons. Fugitive Planning & Black Study, Minor Compositions*, 2013

Marie Laure Alain Bonilla, *Some sketches for a hypothetical postcolonial theories for museums handbook*, Qalqalah Vol. 2, Feb 2016

Gloria Wekker, "...For even though I am black as soot, my intentions are good: the case of Zwarte Piet/Black Pete" in *White Innocence*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2016.

Location: Tropen Museum, Linnaeusstraat 2, 1092 CK, Amsterdam

## **The international Master Artist Educator (iMAE) - ArtEZ Hogeschool voor de Kunsten**

Asociación de Arte Útil: Module 'The Netherlands'

September 2019 - December 2019

**Instructors:** Gemma Medina, Alessandra Saviotti & Guests

### **DESCRIPTION**

This class is a collaboration between the Asociación de Arte Útil, iMAE and a series of guests and institutions that are invited to be an active partner in this module focused on Arte Útil practices taking place in the Netherlands.

Arte Útil, a concept developed by Tania Bruguera, roughly translates into English as "useful art," but it goes further suggesting art as a tool or device. The notion of what constitutes Arte Útil has been arrived at via a set of criteria formulated by Bruguera and curators at the Queens Museum, New York; Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; and Grizedale Arts, Coniston.

The module is organized as practice-based training, where instructors will give a broad introduction to the Arte Útil archive, the criteria, some notion around radical/critical pedagogy and the development of a constellation of projects worldwide, which have been developed since 2013 by a flexible group of engaged artists, curators and citizens. Moreover, students will have the possibility to visit some pioneer institutions in the Netherlands, which have been developing different approaches to socially engaged practices and political art as well as challenging how art history has been told. Students will work in groups to engage with the selection criteria and the theoretical framework these criteria embody, as well as the partners invited to present their projects. For 6 weeks students will work closely with artists and organizations in order to gain insights into the practice through a learning-by-doing approach.

Finally, through a series of reading groups, students will engage with different theoretical approaches to the practice and they will help in identifying new works to add to the archive, and to explore ways to support the expansion and mediation of the Arte UÚtil archive as a project in itself.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. Gain and hone collaboration skills
2. Gain experience in selecting work for the archive according to the developed criteria
3. Learn fieldwork skills
4. Experience firsthand the process and dynamics of producing an ambitious and evolving project
5. Explore the relationship between research, authorship and art production

Additional readings will be added during the course of the workshop.

### **Week 39**

25-26 September

**Course introduction: Understanding Arte Útil (criteria, archive, association, website and the role of the institution) - Eindhoven: Inside the institution**

#### **25/09/2019**

11:00 - 12:00 Introduction by Gemma Medina and Alessandra Saviotti 12:00 - 12:30 Exercise: what's the coefficient of Art?

12:30 - 13:10 Lunch Break

13:15 - 14:30 Visit of the Van Abbemuseum and Tour with the museum's choir

14:30 - 14:45 Break

14:45 - 16:00 Reading Group Stephen Wright, *Toward a lexicon of Usership*, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2013

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#### **26/09/2019**

11:00 - 12:00 Meeting with Foundation We Are

12:00 - 13:00 Lunch break

13:30 - 14:30 Meeting with Baltan Laboratories

14:30 - 16:00 Exercises and Discussion at Van Abbemuseum

Readings and other Resources:

[www.arte-util.org](http://www.arte-util.org)

*We were Learning by doing*, an interview with Charles Esche, [oncurating.org](http://oncurating.org) '(New) Institution(alism)', Issue 21/December 2013

ed. by Silvia Franceschini, *The Politics of Affinity*, Cittadellarte, 2018

Steven ten Thije, *The emancipated museum*, Mondriaan Fond, 2017

Locations:

- Van Abbemuseum, Bilderdijklaan 10, 5611 NH Eindhoven - Meeting at the Office Entrance
- Foundation We Are, Kanaaldijk-zuid-Hugo van der Goeslaan, 5613 LE Eindhoven
- Baltan Laboratories, Kastanjelaan 500 - 5616 LZ Eindhoven

### **Week 40**

2-3 October

**Amsterdam and Utrecht**

#### **2/10/2019**

11:00 - 12:00 Guided Tour at The Black Archives

12:00 - 13:30 Lunch Break

13:30 - 15:00 Visit 'Afterlife of Slavery' at Tropen Museum

15:30 - 16:00 Exercise and conclusion

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#### **3/10/2019**

12:00 - 13:30 Visit 'Silence is a Commons' at Casco

13:30 - 14:30 Lunch Break

14:30 - 16:00 Visit 'Trainings for the Not-Yet' at BAK

Readings and other Resources:

Jeanne van Heeswijk: "The artist has to decide to whom to serve", in *Social housing, housing the social*, SKOR: Rotterdam, 2012., pp.79-89.

Gloria Wekker, "...For even though I am black as soot, my intentions are good: the case of Zwarte Piet/Black Pete" in *White Innocence*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2016.

Locations:

- The Black Archives, Zeeburgerdijk 19b - Amsterdam (Bus 22 from Centraal)
- Tropen Museum, Linnaeusstraat 2 - Amsterdam
- Casco, Lange Nieuwstraat 7 - Utrecht
- BAK, Pauwstraat 13A - Utrecht

**Week 41**

9-10 October

**Unjust Peace: a tour and a workshop with Lodovica Guarnieri**

**9/10/2019**

11:00 - 12:30 Unjust Peace: tour in Den Haag

12:30 - 13:30 Lunch Break

13:30 - 15:30 Workshop and Discussion

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**10/10/2019**

10:00 - 16:00 Workshop with Lodovica Guarnieri at iMAE

Reading and other Resources: <https://www.unjustpeace.eu/>

Location:

- Meeting at den Haag Centraal
- iMAE

**Week 43**

23-24 October

**Studio/Project Practice Training and Reading Groups**

**23/10/2019**

10:00 - 16:00 Studio Practice Training

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**24/10/2019**

10:00 - 16:00 Reading Group with Gemma Medina and Alessandra Saviotti

Reading and other Resources:

Tania Bruguera, *Reflexions on Arte Útil (Useful Art)*, in: *What's the Use?*

*Constellations of Art, History and Knowledge: A critical Reader*, Valiz, Amsterdam, 2016

**Week 44**

30-31 October

**Studio/Project Practice Training and Reading Groups**

**30/10/2019**

10:00 - 16:00 Studio Practice Training

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**31/10/2019**

10:00 - 16:00 Reading Group with Gemma Medina

Reading and other Resources:

Foucault, M: 'On other spaces: Utopias and heterotopias', in: *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité*, October, 1984; ("Des Espace Autres," March 1967. Translated from the French by Jay Miskowiec.

**Week 45**

6-7 November

**Studio/Project Practice Training and Reading Groups**

**6/11/2019**

10:00 - 16:00 Studio Practice Training

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**07/11/2019**

10:00 - 16:00 Reading Group with Gemma Medina

Reading and other Resources:

Marina Garcés (2012) 'Honesty with the real', *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture*, 4:1

**Week 46**

13-14 November

**Studio/Project Practice Training and Reading Groups**

**13/11/2019**

10:00 - 16:00 Studio Practice Training

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**14/11/2019**

10:00 - 16:00 Reading Group with Alessandra Saviotti

Reading and other Resources:

Condorelli, C. (2014) *The Company She Keeps*, Book Works, Chisenhale Gallery, London, and Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven

**Week 47**

20-21 November

**Studio/Project Practice Training and Reading Groups**

**20/11/2019**

10:00 - 16:00 Studio Practice Training

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**21/11/2019**

10:00 - 16:00 Reading Group with Alessandra Saviotti

Readings and other Resources:

Groys, B. (2014) 'On Art Activism', In: *e-flux Journal #56*, June 2014

**Week 48**

27-28 November

**Studio/Project Practice Training and Reading Groups**

**27/11/2019**

10:00 - 16:00 Studio Practice Training

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**28/11/2019**

10:00 - 16:00 Reading Group

Readings and other Resources:

Preciado, P. B. (2018) *Letter from a trans man to the old sexual regime*, In: *Texte Zur Kunst*

#### **Week 49**

4-5 December

#### **Self Study and working on projects**

#### **Week 50**

11-12 December

#### **Presentations of Studio Placement**

**1/12/2019**

Presentations

Reading and exercises from Binna Choi, Annette Kraus E.a.: *Unlearning Exercises, Art Organizations As Sites For Unlearning*, Valiz: 2017. (iMAE Library).

**12/12/2019**

Presentations

PARTY

#### **STUDIO PLACEMENT**

##### **1. Libia Castro and Olafur Olafsson (In Search for Magic – A Proposal for a New Constitution for the Republic of Iceland)**

**Website:** <http://www.libia-olafur.com>

**Bio:** Libia Castro (Madrid, Spain) and Ólafur Ólafsson (Reykjavik, Island) have been working together since 1997. Their work deals with critical questions around migration, racism, socioeconomic inequalities, identity, citizenship, and the lack of channels for participation within democratic systems. They explore Art's agency, blurring the lines between conceptual-artistic interventions and the possibilities of affecting authentic transformation. To do so, they collaborate with activist groups, communities, individuals and other artists to bring aesthetics into spheres of conflict and vice-versa. Libia & Olafur produce situations, music, photography, performance, audiovisuals and experiential installations: spaces to address the audience as the principal figure to activate the change in our current political and economic system. Basis Prize of Prix de Rome in 2009 and the Icelandic Pavilion, 54th Venice Biennial, 2011. Since 2011, Libia & Olafur have been engaged with activist groups in the process of implementing the new Icelandic Constitution. It is commonly known as the Constitution of the People & Nature, because it was written in consensus by a mixed group of population and approved in 2012 in a national referendum to replace their former colonial constitution based on Danish rule. However, its implementation is still pending of a political decision. Nowadays, they are immerse in the co-creation and production of a symphony-performance that will showcase the new constitution on National TV.

**Resources:** [An Iceland Story: Artists Who Inspire Public Engagements, April 4, 2019](#)

**Location:** Rotterdam-Reykjavik

##### **2. Kevin van Braak**

**Website:** <http://kevinvanbraak.com/>

**Bio:** Kevin van Braak's work is set around politically and ideologically problematic issues. In recent years, he turned his attention to the visibility and invisibility of the display of power in buildings, people, location, and artefacts and how our historical consciousness functions in relation to the history behind it. He is particularly interested in reproducing, restoring and transforming ideological images and metaphors through sculptures, installations, events and performances. It makes it possible for him to touch political and ideological sensibilities, and in his most recent projects also a personal story, to explain the histories of buildings, objects and contexts. Time tends to change events and how hard we try to keep the facts, the written and visual materials that witnesses to these events, seem to be subject to transformation. Through imitation, restoration, adaptation and transformation of these relics, he tries to give their historical development and (former) ideological features a voice through visualization and interpretation.

**Resources:** [Pressing Matters - online publication](#)

**Location:** IPKW - Westervoortsedijk 73 - 6827 AV, Arnhem

### 3. Hans Kalliwoda (BeeCare Amsterdam)

**Website:** <http://www.blindpainters.org/beecare> /

**Bio:** German-born artist Hans Kalliwoda has been living and working all around the world for almost twenty-five years, creating numerous exhibitions and installations in the countries he has visited. This nomadic lifestyle is central to his oeuvre and has played a significant role in the development of his projects. BeeCare Amsterdam is an interdisciplinary art project that combines sociological, ecological and educational elements through performative acts, 3D objects and scientific research. BeeCare Amsterdam has at its goal to engage in the global pollination problematic by creating Bee protection zones within inner-city areas. A bee protection zone is a place where human hospitality supplies the necessities needed by pollinators, especially for wild bees. Hospitality, provided in the form of a 5-star board and lodging.

**Resources:** [Bee Totems and Bee Hotels for Refubees](#)

**Location:** Nieuwe Teertuinen 17 - Amsterdam

### 4. Foundation We are (FWA):

**Website:** <https://foundationweare.org>

**Bio:** Foundation We Are was founded in 2017 by Austrian designer Bernhard Lenger. It promotes collaborative design in order to transform social and legal systems, providing a platform that enables the cooperation between designers and decision-makers, and creates space to redesign societal and legal fields. The foundation fosters collaborative design techniques and co-creation where expert knowledge cross-pollinates with creative thinking in order to generate alternative solutions. The project "We are Human Rights" paired designers and Human Rights defenders from seven countries to develop tools for change in specific contexts dealing with issues like illegal settlements in Nicaragua, the lack of protection and safe space for human rights activist in Kenya or the criminalisation of homosexuality in Burundi. This year they will develop a second chapter. "Triangulating Evidence", was looking into the democratization of evidence-collection to fight territorial crimes. In 2019, FWA will explore possibilities to develop tools to collect evidence against environmental crimes to be used in court against private and state companies. In collaboration with Fontys school, FWA is starting a research about how to apply ethical theory into decision-making algorithms used in systems like Alexa for selecting-provide information.

**Resources:** [Audio-guide \(Excerpt\) We are Human Rights Exhibition](#) n

**Location:** Campina Terrain - Kanaaldijk-zuid, Hugo van der Goeslaan, 5613 LE - Eindhoven

### 5. Rebeca Gomperts (Women on Waves) Website: <https://www.womenonwaves.org/>

**Bio:** Founder and Director of Women on Waves and Women on Web Rebecca Gomperts studied medicine and visual arts in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. After graduating Gomperts became an abortion doctor and sailed with the Greenpeace ship, Rainbow Warrior, as its doctor and as an environmental activist. While sailing in South America she encountered many women who suffered greatly due to lack of access to reproductive health services and safe, legal abortions. These women and their stories inspired Rebecca Gomperts to start Women on Waves. In response to a growing number of help emails from women around the world, Rebecca founded Women on Web, an online medical abortion service in 2005. The service supports women living in countries where safe abortion is not available, to obtain information and access abortion pills. Every year Women on Web helpdesk members answer more than 100.000 emails from women all over the world.

**Resources:** [Video interview with Rebecca Gomperts](#) **Location:** Amsterdam

### 6. Freehouse

**Website:** <http://www.freehouse.nl/>

**Bio:** Freehouse, a project by Jeanne van Heeswijk, has focused on the micro-urbanism emerging in small communities across the city of Rotterdam. After a research in the Afrikanerwijk in particular, the initiators developed a foundation with the help of the residents. Freehouse comprehends 3 studios: Wijkatelier, wijkkeuken (kitchen) and wijkwinkel (shop). Here residents can share their skills and create new products in the communal workshops, which are then sold in the shop. Every activity is based on

community participation, co-operative cultural production and self-organisation. Freehouse has recently developed a skill-based neighbourhood co-operative. The sewing atelier has already received commissions from several designers to produce their clothes; the wijkkeuken has become a catering service; all the participants earn money for their work; the market has improved its offer and services, after a struggle against municipal rules.

**Resources:** [From Freehouse to Neighborhood Co-op: The Birth of a New Organizational Form](#)

**Location:** Sint Andriesstraat 192 - Rotterdam

## 7. Gluklya

**Website:** <http://gluklya.com>

**Bio:** Born in St. Petersburg (1969) Natalia Pershina-Yakimanskaya (artist name Gluklya) lives and works in Amsterdam and St -Petersburg. Considered as one of the pioneers of Russian Performance, she co-founded the artist collective The Factory of Found Clothes (FFC) using conceptualized clothes as a tool to build a connection between art and everyday life and the Chto Delat Group, of which she has been an active member since 2003. In 2012, FFC was reformulated into The Utopian Unemployment Union, an inclusive project uniting art, social science, and progressive pedagogy, giving people with all kinds of social backgrounds the opportunity to make art together with the help of artist method embracing the human *Fragility*. In 2017, Gluklya passionately threw herself into the research of the *Integration politics* and its implications for newcomers and rent for these purposes the studio at the former prison Bijlmer Bajes. The long term project was concluded with the performative demonstration *Carnival of Oppressed Feelings* on October 28th, 2017 and presented in the Van Abbe museum in 2018-2019 within Positions-4. Gluklya's work *Clothes for Demonstration Against False Election of Vladimir Putin* has been presented at the 56th Venice Biennale of Art, *All the World's Futures*, curated by Okwui Enwezor (2015).

**Resources:** [Building Social Interdependency: Gluklya's Feminist Practice](#)

**Location:** Marnixstraat 150 - Amsterdam

## Workshop (9 - 10 October 2019)

### 1. Lodovica Guarnieri - Unjust Peace Website: <https://www.unjustpeace.eu/>

**Bio:** Lodovica is a researcher and designer working at the intersection between design and politics. In her work storytelling is used as instrument to unveil the connections between culture, history and matter through installations, performances and texts. Lodovica is currently working as research assistant of Lorenzo Pezzani (Forensic Oceanography). She worked as researcher and assistant curator for the exhibition [The Way Beyond Art](#) currently on show at Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, and as curatorial research assistant for [Manifesta 12](#) *The*

*Planetary Garden*. Besides working Lodovica is a postgraduate researcher in [Research Architecture](#) at Goldsmiths University of London. She holds an MA in Social Design from Design Academy Eindhoven, The Netherlands, and a BA *cum laude* from Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti, Milan, Italy.

(UN)just Peace is an architecture tour which explores The Hague as a battlefield. The urban identity of The Hague is connected to the United Nations' supra-national political project. From the Peace Palace to the International Criminal Court, from Europol to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the city's architecture materializes the evolution of Western values of internationalism, democracy and justice.

**Resources:**

**Location:** Den Haag

## EXHIBITIONS

1. Van Abbemuseum - [The making of Modern Art](#) & [The Way Beyond Art](#)
2. Tropen Museum - [Afterlife of Slavery](#)
3. [The Black Archives](#)
4. Casco Art Institute - [Silence is a Common](#)
5. Basis voor Actuele Kunst - [Trainings for the not-yet](#)

Dear Students,

Welcome to this seminar that is also a practice-lead research, a meta-artwork and a pedagogical experiment. I would like us to forget about succeeding in this seminar and rather let's concentrate on the most possible transformative energy out of our time together.

Alas, we are going to meet online for now, hence let this seminar be an open encounter and allow us to travel in and out of it for the time being.

I am the instructor of the seminar, [Alessandra Saviotti](#), and we are meeting as part of the collaboration that is already in place between myself (as member of the [Asociación de Arte Útil](#), Toolkits editor of [DPE.tools](#) and PhD candidate at Liverpool John Moores University), [Lle Celf Ddefnyddiol](#) and Glyndwr University, and I can be contacted via email at [a.saviotti@2019.ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:a.saviotti@2019.ljmu.ac.uk)

It may seem unusual to receive the information about the seminar in this format, but I would like to clarify that for me, meeting you, is going to be part of a journey that I've started long time ago in order to understand how art (and in this particular case Arte Útil) could be used as a mean of [1:1 scale](#) transformation through [usership](#).

This syllabus then is also the concept we are going to analyse during our encounters.

Let's start even from this short message-as-syllabus, 'paying closer attention to the gestures we make in the world, particularly the ones we identify as pedagogical and/or aesthetic.' (Lucero, 2011, p.110)

To get familiar with some of the concepts we are going to explore together I would recommend watching these videos in advance:

[Alessandra Saviotti introduces The Arte Útil archive at Lle Celf Defnyddiol in Tŷ Pawb](#) (28min)

[Nick Aikens interviews Tania Bruguera](#) (10min)

[Director Charles Esche talking about The Museum of Arte Útil](#) (10min)

Please come to the seminar with a question or a thought that you'd like to share with me about what you've watched.

We are going to start with a breaking-ice exercise taken from the [Theatre of the Oppressed](#) by Augusto Boal, then I'd like to propose to you to explore your [Coefficient of Art](#). For this you don't need to prepare anything in advance. After the session, I would like you to share with the group something you learned from the meeting and to come to the next session with a question for the group.

If there is anything that we are talking about in our virtual class that you find to be uncomfortable in some ways, please do not hesitate to let me know. I will take your observations very seriously and they will be used to improve the experience of the seminar, also for others after you.

I am looking forward to meeting you on October 5th.

Best,

Alessandra

**UNIDEE RESIDENCY SPRING/SUMMER 2021:  
GROUNDWORK FOR EMBEDDED ARTS PRACTICE**

**RESIDENT INFORMATION PACK**

We are delighted to have you as a resident on the UNIDEE 2021 program. Please **read through and familiarise yourself** with the important information below prior to the opening seminar on **Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> May** when we very much look forward to connecting with you.

**CURATORIAL STATEMENT**

The spring/summer 2021 UNIDEE Residency continues to explore facets of embedded arts practice as a tool for uncovering, understanding and helping build and develop new realities. In 2020 the thenemerging conditions of the pandemic invited a revisiting of the fundamentals of these practices. What does it mean to commit to a sustained intervention into a place or community? How does it start? Where and when does it end? How do we plot the journey and what can we collectively share and learn from the challenges and obstacles met along the way? How do we do it together?

The pandemic context for the residency was a reminder that embedded practice is built on a solid foundation of trust and deep understanding of a place and people. A necessary first step in building this foundation is to create a connection. The residents' diverse practices demonstrated innovative modes of connecting in challenging times through: listening and observing, growing, living, communicating, caring, learning, exploring, dreaming, building and even burning. Among the many shared questions we had at the end of the 2020 residency was 'How can we create sustainability, for ourselves and our worlds?' (note 1)

The UNIDEE 2021 spring/summer program aims to pick up from where we left off last December:

continuing to explore - through the sharing of our situated practices and contexts - methods, strategies and approaches for identifying, creating and developing the foundations necessary for embedded arts practice to thrive. What new ecologies of practice exist or can be formed? In which spaces and places can this grow? What are the ideal conditions? What groundwork is required, and how do we get started here and now? In this sense we also draw inspiration and knowledge from the recent past such as freethought collective's large-scale investigation into infrastructure for the 2016 Bergen Assembly (note 2), and Valerio Del Baglivo's 'Modes of Instituting' UNIDEE programme from 2019 that was dedicated to imagining the role of art organisations in times of perennial crisis. (note 3)

The specificities of the global COVID-19 pandemic may have been unforeseeable but it was not an unprecedented 'event'. (note 4) Rather the pandemic can be understood as symptomatic of a failing, outmoded, dead-on-its-feet 'zombie' politico-economic system. (note 5) Today we find ourselves caught in a clash of tempos. From politicians and experts on television we hear how the pandemic has locked, 'frozen' or seized the cogs of economy and society. At the same time local businesses explain how it has accelerated existing trends in work, commerce, and technology. Likewise the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs acknowledge within their Sustainable Development Goals that the pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated existing inequalities (note 6); revealing and widened the cracks in an unevenly developed system.

As artists in this frictious and fractured landscape we can help reveal, understand and contribute to the new social and organisational forms that propogate in the shadows - the 'other' ways of being and acting together based on co-production, collective agency, mutual aid, care, commoning - and that offer alternative narratives to endless productivity and growth. As Dr Susan Jones from the Rewild The Arts campaign (note 7) has put it 'place-specific activists and interest groups in arts and culture spheres perceive the pandemic's exceptional circumstances as opportunity to imagine a radically different, fairer, inclusive arts ecology'. (note 8) Through the UNIDEE 2021 spring/summer program we will together explore the groundwork for a more sustainable future under the banner of Cittadellarte's holistic and interconnected understanding of art and creativity as a catalyst for social change. (note 9)

Andy Abbott

Visiting Research Curator

**Key Words**

Groundwork, Infrastructure, Arts Ecology, Socially engaged and Embedded Practice, Post-pandemic Futures, Slow Art and Sustainability, Art and the Everyday, Tools and Technology fro Social Change, Site and Context Responsive work, Invisible Art/Dark Matter, Participation and Co-production, Grassroots Organising, Self-organisation and DIY collective agency (Demopraxy/Pandemopraxy), Co-operatives, Socially Applied Practice, Diverse and Community Economies, Cultural Dark Matter, Postwork Futures, Postcapitalism, Universal Basic Income,

Transition to Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm (Third Paradise), Building the new (Digital/Virtual) Commons.

Notes:

- 1 - <https://unidee2020.hotglue.me/>
- 2 - <http://2016.bergenassembly.no/en/freethought/>
- 3 - [https://issuu.com/cittadellarte/docs/web\\_unidee\\_notebook\\_2019\\_def\\_pagina\\_singola\\_compre](https://issuu.com/cittadellarte/docs/web_unidee_notebook_2019_def_pagina_singola_compre)
- 4 - <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4608-on-the-epidemic-situation>
- 5 - <https://socialistworker.co.uk/art/17914/Zombie%20capitalism>
- 6 - <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>
- 7 - <https://www.rewildthearts.org/want-to-contribute/>
- 8 - <https://corridor8.co.uk/article/reset-or-rewild-perspectives-on-future-arts-infrastructures/> 9 - <http://www.cittadellarte.it/unidee/info.html>

## METHODS AND TOOLS

In order to accommodate ongoing global social distancing measures and travel restrictions the bulk of **the residency will be delivered and accessed remotely, with an option to undertake your one-week intensive in Cittadellarte-Fondazione Pistoletto, Biella for those able and willing to travel.** We wish to emphasise that those who are only able to take part remotely will not miss out on the core experiences of the residency.

**Participants will bring their ongoing practice, research or project to the residency to share and develop over the ten weeks.** The development of your project will be facilitated by a programme of peer-to-peer learning including group critiques, seminars, meetings/visits and collective exhibition and publication, facilitated by the UNIDEE team.

### Seminars and presentations

The core of the programme is a series of **weekly webinars on Saturday afternoons** (normally 2 – 4:30pm CET) that we expect all residents to take part in. These will mostly take the form of a presentation and group Q+A from a guest, followed by smaller group discussions or activities using Breakout Rooms. All seminars will take place on Zoom.

In addition to the weekly seminars we will programme presentations and discussions with other guests in response to the content of the residency, including those based in Biella and Cittadellarte. All seminars and presentations will be recorded and archived on the Padlet space.

### Action Research and Traces

For the bulk of the residency you will work and **develop your ongoing project/action research independently in your locale.** We find it useful to use the term '(artistic) action research' rather than 'art project' as a way to acknowledge the situated, open-ended and process-orientated nature of the work. Whilst we do not expect a predetermined or final outcome from your project you will be asked to give regular updates and **share a 'trace' or 'mark' of the project** at various points across the residency (using the online platform, in group critiques, at the end of



your one-week intensive, and towards the end of the residency on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> July). As such you are expected to be regularly capturing or producing shareable material as part of your process.

### **Padlet**

We will be using Padlet as the online platform for documenting and sharing the progress of your action research with the rest of the cohort. You will receive a separate email with an invite to use this. It is a free service and if you do not already have an account one will be created for you automatically when you accept the invite. We have found Padlet a simple and intuitive platform for creating a shared space for collective projects. The UNIDEE 2021 Padlet will be arranged in columns. The first two will be for announcements and resources (administered by us). Here we will post any important info (that you will have also received by email) but also links to texts/articles/videos or other content we think you should access (including the archived presentations). Please **check these columns daily throughout the course of the residency**. The rest will be individual columns for each resident.

When you log on and open the UNIDEE 2021 Padlet please find your column and **add some brief content about yourself and/or your practice by end of Friday 30<sup>th</sup> April** at the latest. This should be brief and could include text, images/video, and links that will give the rest of the cohort a sense of who you are, where you are, and your interests and aims relating to the residency. You could also include contact info if you'd like other residents to be able to get in touch with you.

As you develop your Action Research Project we would like you to document the process using your Padlet column. In this way the Padlet will become like a virtual open studio where the rest of the cohort are able to gain insight into your working process. We expect you to make at least **one update a week**. The Padlet may be part of the documentation of the residency and as such made public so please bear this in mind in terms of content you may post.

In your one-week intensive there will be opportunities to share this through facilitated group critiques. Outside of this time if there are other residents that you wish to communicate with, learn more about, or share your practice and methods with we encourage you to self-organise your own discussion groups by Zoom or another video conferencing platform.

### **Group Critiques**

During your one-week intensive you will be asked to **share the progress of your Action Research**. We will use a group critique format. For those that may be unfamiliar, this is a peer-to-peer method for presenting and gaining feedback on your work in progress. It involves **short (10 minutes) presentations (via Zoom) by each participant** to garner reflections from the group.

You will be part of two 'group crits' during your one-week intensive. The first ('Group Critique A' on the Tuesday) will be an opportunity to present the current status of your Action Research project as it has been applied in your locale. Please arrive prepared to show/present material that has resulted from your ongoing Action Research. In this session we will aim to think about how this could be applied/tested during your one-week intensive. The second ('Group Critique B' on the Sunday) will be an opportunity to present any material/documentation/learning

produced during your one-week intensive. The aim in this session will be to decide how the learning can be manifested/shared and presented for other residents as a **trace to share on the Monday**. The group critiques will be facilitated by the Visiting Research Curator and a guest mentor. In some instances the guest mentor may wish to play with the format of the group critique in which case we will let you know of any additional preparation that may be required from you.

### **One-to-ones**

There will also be opportunities for sign-up one-to-one sessions with the guests, curators and directors of the programme via Zoom. In general these are offered by email on a first come-first served basis for the Wednesday afternoon following the guests' Saturday seminar (although this may vary). At these you will have up to 30 minutes to discuss your practice and/or ask questions of the mentor(s).

### **Informal and Self-organised Activity**

One of the core principles of the UNIDEE Residency Program is an appreciation of the importance of the informal and self-organised aspects of the residency experience i.e the unplanned and responsive interactions between residents. Whilst we are disappointed that due to the ongoing pandemic we are not be able to provide space and facilitate this aspect as we would normally, we will encourage residents, especially those in their one-week intensive, to **make efforts to connect and interact with the rest of the group outside of the planned sessions**. This self-organised activity may lead to new connections and collaborations, or simply be a way to gain further insight into your own practice. In any case we will be keen to discuss how you and your group may keep connected at a distance and support and resource this where possible.

### **General Conduct and Guidelines**

Where possible we use email/text-based platforms for communication of practical information and suggest any more nuanced discussion is saved for (video call) meetings.

Whilst it may seem obvious it is worth clarifying here that we expect you to at all times (through the Padlet and in discussions) to **act in a respectful and considerate manner** – being mindful of content, language and tone that may cause offence or make others feel uncomfortable or unsafe. We are a group from all over the world with a range of experiences and backgrounds so expect there to be some negotiation around this – especially when some of you may also be working with sensitive or contentious issues. That said, we have faith that we can conduct ourselves in a way that works for everyone, and your willingness and ability to do this is one of the reasons you have been selected for the residency.

In the unfortunate case where we feel individuals or groups are not upholding these values (or contributing/engaging in the residency meaningfully) then we have the option to moderate or intervene, and, if this continues to be an issue, then you could be removed from the residency.

### **KEY DATES AND SCHEDULE**

All times are CET/Italian time and schedule is subject to change and additions

**All seminars / guests mentoring / other activities will take place at the same Zoom link:**



### **Content submission deadlines**

5pm Friday April 30<sup>th</sup>: Introductory post for Padlet (see Padlet instructions above)

5pm Monday July 5<sup>th</sup>: Final Trace Submission (information and guidelines to come)

### **Seminar schedule**

- Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2pm – 5:30pm: Opening seminar with introductions from Juan Sandoval and Andy Abbott, keynote video presentation from Katherine Gibson, presentation and Q+A from Jeanne van Heeswijk, and small group ‘icebreakers’ for residents.
- Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2pm – 4:30pm: The Interdependence (Kathrin Böhm, Kate Rich, Bianca Elzembauer) with Aria Spinelli
- Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2pm – 4:30pm: Decentralising Political Economies (Alessandra Saviotti and Owen Griffiths)
- Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2pm – 4:30pm: Cráter Invertido
- Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2pm – 4:30pm: Wharf Chambers
- Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2pm – 4:30pm: Institute of Radical Imagination (Mao Mollona, Marco Baravalle and Emanuele Braga)
- Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2pm – 4:30pm: Pyramid and Jade French
- Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2pm – 4:30pm: Marlo De Lara
- Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2pm – 5pm: Closing Seminar with group reflections and Gregory Sholette endnote presentation

### **Guest Mentoring Schedule**

- Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> – Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May: Jeanne van Heeswijk
- Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> May: The Interdependence, Aria Spinelli and Katherine Gibson
- Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May: Decentralising Political Economies (Alessandra Saviotti and Owen Griffiths)
- Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> – Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> May: Cráter Invertido
- Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> May and Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June – Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> June: Wharf Chambers
- Sunday June 20<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June: Marco Baravalle and Emanuele Braga
- Sunday June 27<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June: Pyramid and Jade French
- Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> July and Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> July: Marlo De Lara

- Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> – Friday 9<sup>th</sup> July: Gregory Sholette (TBC)

### **General One-Week Intensive Schedule**

- Sunday evening – arrival of those taking part in presence at Cittadellarte
- Monday 2 – 4pm – handover session with departing group (where applicable), followed by welcome session
- Tuesday 2 – 5pm – group critique A
- Wednesday – Friday – any additional presentations / meetings / one-to-ones
- Sunday 2 – 5pm – group critique B
- Monday 11am – submission of one-week intensive trace
- Monday 2 – 3pm – handover session with arriving group (when applicable)
- Monday evening / Tuesday morning – departure of those taking part in presence

The rest of the time in your one-week intensive is for you to reflect / unpack, share and develop your action research and engage otherwise with your group which, depending on the geographic location of the members may require some evenings and/or early mornings

**You will receive a finalised schedule and additional information by the end of Thursday prior to your oneweek intensive.**

### **GUESTS BIOGRAPHIES**

**JEANNE VAN HEESWIJK** is an artist who facilitates the creation of dynamic and diversified public spaces in order to “radicalize the local”. Her long-scale community-embedded projects question art’s autonomy by combining performative actions, discussions, and other forms of organizing and pedagogy in order to assist communities to take control of their own futures. <https://jeanetworks.net/>

### **MASSIMILIANO (MAO) MOLLONA / INSTITUTE OF RADICAL IMAGINATION WITH MARCO BARAVALLE AND EMANUELE BRAGA**

**Massimiliano (Mao) Mollona** is a writer, filmmaker and anthropologist. He is senior Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology, at Goldsmiths College, London. He has a multidisciplinary background in economics and anthropology and his work focuses on the relationship between art and political economy. He conducted extensive fieldwork in Italy, the UK, Brazil and Norway, looking at the relationship between economic development and political activism through participatory and experimental film practices in favelas and poor neighborhoods. His practice is situated at the intersection of pedagogy, art and activism. He is a member of the collective freethought, Programme Director of the Athens Biennale 2015–2017, and editor of Focaal Anthropology and Visual Anthropology (AVA) Blog.

<https://www.gold.ac.uk/anthropology/staff/m-mollona/>

**Emanuele Braga** is an artist, researcher and activist, operating on the relationship between art, economy, and new technologies. In the past years he co-founded and developed several projects as Balletto Civile dance company in which he operated as a choreographer, performer and teacher, Macao, new centre for art and culture in Milano, Landscape Choreography cross-sectors, performative and research project, in which he operated as director, curator and researcher, IRI Institute of Radical Imagination, transnational artistic think tank questioning postcapitalism alternative, Ebony decolonize work, design platform for asylum seekers, and KIN lab, an art space in Milano. <https://instituteofradicalimagination.org/tag/emanuele-braga/>

**Marco Baravalle** is a member of S.a.L.E. Docks, a collective and an independent space for visual arts, activism, and experimental theatre located in what had been an abandoned salt-storage facility in Dorsoduro, Venice, Italy. Founded in 2007, its programming includes activist-group meetings, formal exhibitions, and screenings. Baravalle is a research fellow at INCOMMON. In praise of community. Shared creativity in arts and politics in Italy (1959-1979), a project hosted by IUAV, University of Venice. He is a member of IRI (Institute Of Radical Imagination), a think-tank inviting political scientists, economists, lawyers, architects, hackers, activists, artists and cultural producers to share knowledge on a continuous base with the aim of defining and implementing zones of post-capitalism in Europe's South and the Mediterranean. <https://saci-florence.edu/marco-baravalle>

#### **DECENTRALISING POLITICAL ECONOMIES (PRESENTED BY RESEARCHER/CURATOR ALESSANDRA SAVIOTTI AND ARTIST OWEN GRIFFITHS)**

A new platform conceived as an open-source environment to understand and re-think how art can be used as a tool for social, economic and political change. dpe.tools is developed by the Whitworth (Manchester, UK); Liverpool John Moores University's School of Art and Design; and The Association of Arte Útil. <https://dpe.tools/>

**Alessandra Saviotti** is a curator and educator who lives in Amsterdam. She is a PhD researcher at the Liverpool John Moores University - School of Art and Design. Her focus is on socially engaged art, collaborative practices and Arte Útil. She is currently busy researching how alternative education models framed as Arte Útil could be successfully implemented within the institution of education fostering sustainability, hacking the institution itself. [www.alessandrasaviotti.com](http://www.alessandrasaviotti.com)

**Owen Griffiths** is an artist, workshop leader and facilitator living and working in Wales. Using participatory and collaborative processes, his socially engaged practice explores the possibilities of art to create new frameworks and resources. This takes many forms, including events, rituals, dialogues, making gardens, codesigning spaces, curating events and cooking feasts. Griffiths explores climate, landscape, urbanism, social justice, food systems and pedagogy, creating projects and events that prepare us for the work of the future. In 2020 Griffiths founded Ways of Working, a social enterprise in order to work in ways he feels are urgent. Ways of Working is currently developing several community urban green spaces in collaboration with local communities, questioning how civic spaces are planned, made and owned. Griffiths graduated from the School of Walls and Space at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen and is a member of the Social Sculpture Research Unit at Oxford

Brookes University. He is part of the DPE research project at Manchester Whitworth Gallery and the City Lab at John Moores University. [aboutreconnection.com](http://aboutreconnection.com) [waysOfWorking.org](http://waysOfWorking.org)

#### **PYRAMID (JAMES HILL) AND DR JADE FRENCH**

**Pyramid** invests in people with learning disabilities so that they can discover the arts, develop as artists and disrupt the barriers that prevent artists with learning disabilities from progressing. Pyramid is a collective of around 150 artists with and without learning disabilities who work together to explore and develop their and infrastructure, but that artists with learning disabilities need particular support that is often missing. We strive to provide that support.

**James Hill** has been Director of Pyramid since 2013. Prior to that he worked on Leeds City Council's Arts & Regeneration Team setting up and managing arts events. In 2013 he completed an MA in Activism and Social Change at the University of Leeds.

<https://pyramid.org.uk/>

**Jade French** is an artist-facilitator, museum professional and academic whose research interests emerge from practical experience of facilitating inclusive and community-led projects in museums, galleries and heritage sites.

<https://ccsmgh.leeds.ac.uk/research/irregular-art-schools/>

#### **WHARF CHAMBERS CO-OPERATIVE CLUB**

**Wharf Chambers** is a not-for-profit multi-use venue in Leeds City Centre. Set up in 2011 as workers coop and artist-centred space, it provides space for music, art, film, politics and discussion that brings together people from communities across Leeds.

An important venue in UK DIY music culture, it actively encourage 'trying things out' without commercial expectations. Whether a performance is classical, avant-garde, electronica or noise, their audiences expect to be challenged. Inclusivity and affordability are it's core principles and Wharf Chambers creates a community who pride themselves in collaboration and self-organisation. <https://www.wharfchambers.org/>

#### **THE INTERDEPENDENCE (KATHRIN BÖHM, KATE RICH, BIANCA ELZEMBAUER) IN CONVERSATION WITH ARIA SPINELLI**

A platform to make visible and support people and organisations who are practising community economies worldwide and wish to signal their alliance with a larger movement to create economies that have the well-being of people and the planet at their core. Artists involved in the alliance will discuss their projects in conversation with researcher and curator Aria Spinelli.

[www.communityeconomies.org/index.php/interdependence](http://www.communityeconomies.org/index.php/interdependence)

<https://companydrinks.info/whats-on/economy/> [www.brave-new-alps.com](http://www.brave-new-alps.com)

**Kate Rich** is a trade artist and feral economist. Since 2003 she has run Feral Trade, a long-range economic experiment and underground freight network, utilising the spare carrying capacity of the art world for the transportation of groceries. Kate is volunteer finance manager at Bristol's artist-run Cube Microplex, system administrator for the Irrational.org art-server collective, satellite member of the FoAM network of transdisciplinary labs and land-based member of the

Sail Cargo Alliance. She is currently trialling the curriculum for the Feral MBA, a radically different kind of training course in business for artists and others.

<http://bureauit.org/data/krcv>

**Aria Spinelli** is an independent curator and researcher, currently a Lecturer at NABA - New Academy of Fine Arts in Rome. She is a PhD student at Loughborough University with a project on relations of curatorial practice to social imagination and performativity. Her main area of research is the investigation of the relationship between art, activism and political theory. She holds a bachelor's and master's degree in art history, visual arts and curatorial studies. Founding member of the artistic and curatorial collective Radical Intention, from 2018 to 2020 she was associate researcher and member of the curatorial team of the project The Independent at the MAXXI - Museum of the XXI century for art (Rome). Between 2014 and 2018 she collaborated as external curator at the Pistoletto Foundation (Biella) and BOZAR, Center for Fine Arts (Brussels). She is the editor of the publication 'Shaping Desired Futures' (NERO, 2018). Between 2009 and 2012 she was curator at the Isola Art Center (Milan).

### **CRÁTER INVERTIDO**

**Cooperativa Cráter Invertido** is a Mexico City-based collective born in 2011 and part of Arts Collaboratory from 2014. Composed of shifting numbers of members educated in visual arts and free media, they are the space that brings together art practices and collective processes to create a common imaginary.

The multidisciplinary projects held by Crater are crossing through dimensions of self publishing, both radio and riso printed; self organization, self learning and collective imaginary process, sharing tools and knowledge, as well as participating in the independent editorial network in Mexico.

<http://www.craterinvertido.org/>

### **MARLO DE LARA**

Born in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, artist Marlo De Lara received a PhD at the University of Leeds and an MA in Psychosocial Studies at the Centre of Psychoanalytic Studies at Essex. Her practice works within the realms of sound performance, visual distraction, and film. Often under the moniker 'marlo eggplant', her textural compositions develop from microscopic tone landscapes into dense and expansive states of noise. Her works aim to blur the definitions of the (un)intentional and the myth of permanence. Using found objects, installation, and various forms of amplification, environments/structures use sound to impart meaning and affect for the participant. As the child of Filipino migrants of the 'brain drain' coming of age, De Lara's unabashed feminist sociopolitical practice/research editorializes on contemporary global conditions. Her investigations on art collectives and creative work as political action fuels Ladyz in Noyz, an international arts collective that promotes emerging artists/musicians who are women.

<https://marlodelara.squarespace.com/>

**KATHERINE GIBSON** - economic geographer with an international reputation for innovative research on economic transformation and over 30 years' experience of working with communities to build resilient economies. As J.K. Gibson-Graham, the collective authorial presence she shares with the late Julie Graham (Professor of Geography, University of Massachusetts Amherst), her books include *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy* (Blackwell 1996), *A Postcapitalist Politics* (University of Minnesota Press, 2006) and *Take Back the Economy: An*

*Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities*, co-authored with Jenny Cameron and Stephen Healy (University of Minnesota Press, 2013) and *The Handbook of Diverse Economies* co-edited with Kelly Dombroski (Edward Elgar, 2020).

[www.westernsydney.edu.au/ics/people/researchers/katherine\\_gibson](http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ics/people/researchers/katherine_gibson)

**GREGORY SHOLETTE** is an artist, activist, writer, curator of the mobile project *Imaginary Archive*: (a collection of documents about the past whose future never arrived). He is Professor at Queens College, City University of New York, where he co-directs the Social Practice art program with Chloë Bass, and he is a founding member of the collectives, *Political Art Documentation/Distribution* (1980–88), *REPOhistory* (1989–2000), and *Gulf Labor Coalition* (2010–). Sholette attended the Whitney Independent Studies Program, New York (1996); University of Amsterdam (PhD: 2017); University of California, San Diego (MFA: 1995); and Cooper Union, New York (BFA: 1979). He is author of *The Art of Activism and the Activism of Art*, (Lund Humphries, forthcoming 2021); *Art as Social Action* with Chloë Bass (Allworth Press, 2018); *Delirium and Resistance: Activist Art and the Crisis of Capitalism* (Pluto Press, 2017); *Dark Matter* (Pluto Press, 2010); *Collectivism After Modernism* with Blake Stimson (2007); *The Interventionists* with Nato Thompson (MIT 2004). <http://www.gregorysholette.com/>

#### UNIDEE TEAM

Director: **Juan Esteban Sandoval** Visiting Research Curator: **Andy Abbott** under the supervision of **Paolo Naldini** Programme Coordinator: **Clara Tosetti**

**Juan Esteban Sandoval** (1972), Head of projects and Director of the Art Office of Cittadellarte. Artist, he has exhibited internationally since 1994. He is the cofounder of “el puente\_lab” art collective in Medellín, a platform for artistic and cultural production, which uses contemporary art as a tool for the social transformation. Since 2002 he has been the director of the Art Office of Cittadellarte, coordinating the realization of 13 editions of “Arte al Centro” exhibitions within the Foundation’s premises and a number of exhibitions in other locations, such the MuKHA in Antwerp, San Servolo Island for the 50th Venice Biennial, The Galleria Civica of Modena, MAXXI Museum in Rome, among others. He co-curated the exhibition “Cittadellarte.sharing transformation” at Kunsthaus in Graz, the first two editions of the seminar “Methods-research project on art-society relation” and two workshops of shared interdisciplinary planning in Venice and in Gorizia, Italy. Juan is ex-resident UNIDEE (2000).



**Andy Abbott** (1980) is an artist, writer, curator and arts organiser who lives in Bradford, West Yorkshire, UK. He has exhibited and performed internationally as an individual artist and in various collaborations including the art collective Black Dogs. He has undertaken exhibitions, commissions and residencies for Tate Modern, London; MK Gallery, Milton Keynes; SWG3, Glasgow; Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art,

Gateshead; Museum of Oxford; and Yorkshire Forward; and has completed residencies for Gasworks,

London; in PiST, Istanbul; and Convivio, Oaxaca. He is an alumnus of the Unidee residency at Cittadellarte, which he completed collaboratively with his partner Yvonne Carmichael in 2006. In 2012 Andy was awarded a practice-led PhD from the University of Leeds with a thesis on "art, self-organised cultural activity and the production of postcapitalist subjectivity". His research interests are in Do-ItYourself culture, artist-led initiatives, alternative economies and postwork futures. Recent and forthcoming writing includes articles and book contributions on the creative case for Universal Basic Income. As an arts organiser and curator he has produced a public programme for the embedded arts organisation In-Situ in East Lancashire, piloted the Centre for Socially Applied Arts at the University of Bradford, and was a director of the Community Interest Company Art in Unusual Spaces. [www.andyabbott.co.uk](http://www.andyabbott.co.uk)

**Clara Tosetti** (1989), Programme Coordinator, UNIDEE residency programs. Graduate in Architecture (Polytechnic of Milan, 2014), in 2016 she obtained a Master in Economics and Management of the Art and Cultural Heritage at the Business School of the Sole 24 Ore specializing in the areas of communication, organization of exhibitions and cultural events and educational programs. During the Master she has co-curated the exhibition "Legami" at the Carcano Theatre in Milan that probed the different types of bonds between women. She worked for the Studio Art&Co. in Turin collaborating in organizing the exhibition "Sigmar Polke" at Palazzo Grassi in Venice and by accompanying the contemporary art advising and cataloguing for prestigious private collections. Clara has always been interested in the links between art and public space and how this might relate to the individual and collective growth to create the identity of a community that is both local and global.

**Paolo Naldini** is Director of Cittadellarte since 2000. In 1996 he got his degree in Economics at Turin University with a dissertation on urban derelict buildings and lands, in connection with Turin Polytechnic University of Architecture. As a writer, apart from texts on art and its role in societal fabric, Paolo has published short fictions and founded a web project dedicated to exploring creative collaboration by meeting and writing in nomadic and interwoven patterns. He has conceived and developed the theory and method of the Art of Demopraxy.

### Partners

**UNIDEE patrons** are Regione Piemonte, Compagnia di San Paolo, CRT Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Torino, Creative Europe for "Alexandria (re)activating common urban imaginaries" and for "STARTS4Water", illycaffè S.p.A.

**UNIDEE AIR partner** is A.M. Qattan

## UNIDEE LABS 2022:

### ARTWORK AS TOOLKIT / TOOLS FOR THE COMMONS

#### RESIDENT INFORMATION PACK

We are delighted to have you as a resident on the UNIDEE 2022 Arts Lab. Here you will find some useful information to familiarise yourself with ahead of your arrival including details on preparations and preliminary reading so please read through carefully upon receipt.

#### OVERVIEW

Continuing the research arc around embedded arts practices curated by Andy Abbott, UNIDEE Residency programs (Cittadellarte-Fondazione Pistoletto's educational ecology inception in 1999) the labs are opportunities to share, unpack and apply your ongoing practice or action-research with a group of peers, the UNIDEE Residency Programs team and guests including researcher/curator **Alessandra Saviotti** (Italy/The Netherlands), art historian, independent researcher and curator **Gemma Medina Estupiñán** (Spain/The Netherlands), artist **Owen Griffiths** (UK)\*, artist, researcher and activist **Emanuele Braga** (Italy), artist-choreographer, curator, activist and researcher **Gabriella Riccio** (Italy/Spain), writer, researcher, and political activist **Keir Milburn** (UK), and freelance cultural worker **Gareth Brown** (UK). \* *Owen will be taking part remotely due to the rescheduling.*

Through group critiques, facilitated workshops, collective trace-making, and informal and responsive activities we will make space in which you can gain multiple perspectives on the work you are undertaking in your locale, with a focus on identifying, testing and developing tools, technologies and methodologies that may be usefully applied in the situated contexts in which you are working.

#### CURATORIAL STATEMENT

The 'embedded practice' residencies in 2020 and 2021 brought together a broad range of practitioners from all over the world to share and develop their situated practices and actionresearch. In a time of changeable travel restrictions and social distancing measures, we found that residents valued the opportunity to share experiences of making socially-engaged work that is inextricably linked to its context and often relied on intimate connections and engagement with audiences, participants and collaborators.

The Labs are an opportunity to continue this process together in presence.

We hope to reconnect and make new connections between practitioners and researchers who feel they would benefit from an intensive week of 'putting their practice under the microscope'. This will be done not so much to accelerate or 'push forward' projects, but rather as a way to 'zoom in' and get a better sense of the detail of the practice: the 'what' and the 'how' of the practice as well as the 'why'. We hope that this intimate collective examination will reveal the sometimes imperceptible movement and trajectory of such projects; helping each other over

the humps and sticking points, as well as identifying potentially overlooked problems and obstacles in the road ahead.

The **'Artwork as Toolkit'** lab will begin with the question 'What are our tools?' This lab stems from the intersection of two online platforms such as [www.arte-util.org](http://www.arte-util.org) and [www.dpe.tools](http://www.dpe.tools) presented by Alessandra Saviotti in collaboration with Gemma Medina and Owen Griffiths. Starting from the recent usological turn we will look into a set of tools and exercises developed as part of both platforms - such as the 'Coefficient of Art' and 'A Capitalist Reading of our Usual Breakfast' - that place art at the outset of the development of a set of tactics to achieve societal change. Analysing the idea of 'the-artwork-as-toolkit' the mentors will propose to look at how socially engaged art can be understood as an expanded technology that manifests itself as practices on a 1:1 scale. From our diverse and often specific practices and projects what surplus can we share, preserve, ferment and take forward for the future?

In the **'Tools for the Commons'** lab we hope to bring together the experiences of artists and activists creating spaces for the growth of the commons; from the micro level of the individual, personal or subjective, through to the reclaiming or occupation of urban space, and the influencing of planning and policy. Mentors Emanuele Braga and Gabriella Riccio will draw upon their experiences in occupied art and cultural spaces MACAO (Milan) and L'Asilo (Naples) as well as the postcapitalist think-tank the Institute of Radical Imagination. Long-term comrades and collaborators Keir Milburn and Gareth Brown will bring a UK perspective on creative activism including the use of political strategy games, utopian consciousness raising sessions, and the establishment of Public-Common-Partnerships. What tools (or toys) for establishing and developing the commons can we identify, adapt or invent? Which of these are we able and willing to share, and under what terms?

#### **HOW WILL IT WORK?**

The labs will take place at Cittadellarte-Fondazione Pistoletto using the UNIDEE Residency Programs space as a shared studio for group discussions, sharing sessions and presentations, with the opportunity for exploration and engagement with the postindustrial and rural landscapes of Biella. Participants will visit the exhibition platform dedicated to Cittadellarte's demopraxy local chapter of Biella, the archipelagus as an entry point to its practice.

The methods we will draw upon include group critiques - at which you will be expected to give a short presentation of the practice or action research you are sharing as part of the lab - as well as group exercises, workshops and less formal activities (group meals, walks etc.). At the end of the lab you will be asked to leave a trace of your experience as a contribution to a toolkit for embedded practices.

#### **PREPARATIONS**

As outlined above the Labs are primarily an opportunity for you to share your ongoing practice or artistic action research in a peer-to-peer learning environment. We will be setting aside time in the schedule for both 'traditional'/individual and more playful/collective modes of sharing. Please **arrive prepared to share your practice as a short presentation** in a group critique setting.

### **Group Critique Presentation Guidelines**

Using the group critique format you will have approximately 30 minutes (including discussion) to present the ongoing situated practice or action research you are bringing to the lab. Please prepare a 10-minute presentation that gives a sense of

- where you are undertaking your action research and who/what you are connecting with
- the question you are investigating and/or your line of inquiry
- what artistic/creative methods you have been using and applying in the research
- the material you have gathered so far and any learning
- what tools, technologies, methods or strategies you could derive from your practice

and then we should have 20-minutes per person reflections, comments and questions from the group. There will be technical facilities for a projected slideshow (with sound) but please do not feel your presentation has to take this form.

In addition please also **give some thought to alternative ways of sharing**, or offering a window into, your practice or action research e.g through experience, performance, workshop, participatory process etc. These methods may help inform resident-led activities as part of the lab, and the 'toolkit' or traces we create.

### **Preliminary Reading/Viewing**

The Labs are follow-ups to the hybrid 'Embedded Arts' UNIDEE residencies that ran in Autumn 2020 and Spring 2021. Please familiarise yourself with the webzine outcomes from the residencies here:

'Embedded Practice in a Post-pandemic Future': <https://unidee2020.hotglue.me/>

'Groundwork for Embedded Practice': <https://unidee2020.hotglue.me/groundwork>

Please also watch the keynotes seminars, and presentations from the guests participating in this Lab:

UNIDEE 2020 Plenary Seminar including Keynote from Paul O'Neill

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8INX5okh4E8&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8INX5okh4E8&feature=emb_title)

UNIDEE 2021 Opening Seminar Katherine Gibson/Jeanne van Heeswijk

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQJFMsfmRQ&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQJFMsfmRQ&feature=emb_title) UNIDEE 2020 Seminar with Gemma Medina & Alessandra Saviotti <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DGaCeXxEzw>

UNIDEE 2021 Seminar with Decentralising Political Economies

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAZkbzFSBbg>

UNIDEE 2021 Seminar with Institute of Radical Imagination

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDZs0WeO0QI>

### **Other links and resources**

Artwork as Toolkit <https://www.arte-util.org/> <https://dpe.tools/>

<https://soundcloud.com/user-325010256-955126476/usological-turn>

<https://soundcloud.com/user-325010256-955126476/1-1-scale>

## Readings

\* From Stephen Wright, *Toward a lexicon of Usership*, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2013 read the introduction and the terms Coefficient of Art; 1:1 scale; Extraterritorial Reciprocity. The book is available at the link below: <https://www.arte-util.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Toward-a-lexicon-of-usership.pdf> \* Familiarize with the Arte Útil archive available at [www.arte-util.org/projects](http://www.arte-util.org/projects) and the criteria available at <https://www.arte-util.org/about/colophon/>

\* Watch this short video on DPE.tools blog: <https://dpe.tools/dpe-toolkits-explained> Alessandra Saviotti talks about the DPE's Toolkit section, emphasising on usership within the education context

\* Watch this short video on DPE.tools blog: <https://dpe.tools/dig-where-you-stand> Owen Griffiths explain the concept of 'Dig where you stand'

## Tools for the Commons

<https://instituteofradicalimagination.org>

<https://instituteofradicalimagination.org/the-school-of-mutation-2020/>

<https://instituteofradicalimagination.org/zapatista-forum/> [www.redplentygames.com](http://www.redplentygames.com)

(launches January 1<sup>st</sup> 2022)

Also see links in guest bios and you can also find names and websites (where provided) of the residents below.

## **SCHEDULE - MARCH 2022**

*The labs are conceived as being open-ended and responsive to the input by the participants. Accordingly, all activities are provisional with exact timings to be decided.*

### **'Artwork as Toolkit' Lab**

#### **Sun 20<sup>th</sup>**

Arrivals

#### **Mon 21<sup>st</sup>**

**9:30AM** Meet at Cafetteria for coffee and Introductions and Icebreakers with Andy Abbott, Alessandra Saviotti and Gemma Medina in the UNIDEE project space.

*lunch all together offered by UNIDEE at "Bistrò le Arti", the restaurant of Cittadellarte*

**2.30PM** Orientation and tour of Cittadellarte by Alessandra Bury

#### **Tues 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Group Critiques by residents (3 sessions of 3 presentations) with Andy Abbott, Alessandra Saviotti and Gemma Medina *dinner all together offered by UNIDEE at "Bistrò le Arti", the restaurant of Cittadellarte*

#### **Weds 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**10 AM** Talk with Armona Pistoletto on the [Let.eat.bi market](#) visit to Oropa with typical lunch

**PM** Roundtable with Alessandra Saviotti, Gemma Medina and Owen Griffiths\*

**Thurs 24<sup>th</sup>**

DPE activity / Resident-led sharings / One-to-ones with Owen Griffiths\*

**Fri 25<sup>th</sup>**

DPE / Resident co-designed activity / One-to-ones with Owen Griffiths\*

**Sat 26<sup>th</sup>**

Tracemaking / toolkit making, and reflection facilitated by Alessandra Saviotti and Andy Abbott

**Sun 27<sup>th</sup>**

Residents and Mentors Depart

*\* Owen will be taking part remotely due to the rescheduling.*

**'Tools for the Commons' Lab**

**Sun 27<sup>th</sup>**

Arrivals

**Mon 28<sup>th</sup>**

**9:30AM** Meet at at Cafetteria for coffee. Orientation and tour of Cittadellarte *lunch all together offered by UNIDEE at "Bistrò le Arti", the restaurant of Cittadellarte*

**2PM** Meet at UNIDEE project space. Introductions and Icebreakers with Andy Abbott, Emanuele Braga and Gabriella Riccio

**4-6PM** Talk with Paolo Naldini, Director of Cittadellarte on The Art of Demopraxy

**Tues 29<sup>th</sup>**

Group Critiques by residents (3 sessions of 3 presentations) with Andy Abbott, Emanuele Braga and Gabriella Riccio *dinner all together offered by UNIDEE at "Bistrò le Arti", the restaurant of Cittadellarte*

**Weds 30<sup>th</sup>**

**10AM** Talk with Nicholas Ferrara on [Hydro and Better places](#)

**PM** Roundtable with Emanuele Braga, Gabriella Riccio, Keir Milburn and Gareth Brown

**Thurs 31<sup>st</sup>**

Keir Milburn and Gareth Brown activity / Resident led sharings

**Fri 1<sup>st</sup>**

Keir Milburn and Gareth Brown / Resident co-designed activity

**Sat 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Tracemaking / toolkit making, and reflection facilitated by Keir Milburn and Gareth Brown

Sun 3<sup>rd</sup>

Residents and Mentors Depart

### GUEST BIOGRAPHIES

**Alessandra Saviotti** is a curator and educator who lives in Amsterdam. She is a PhD researcher at the Liverpool John Moores University - School of Art and Design. Her focus is on socially engaged art, collaborative practices and Arte Útil. She is currently busy researching how alternative education models framed as Arte Útil could be successfully implemented within the institution of education fostering sustainability, hacking the institution itself. She was part of the curatorial team of the 'Museum of Arte Útil' at the Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven, NL); She led online and offline seminars at the San Francisco Art Institute (2017), California College of the Arts (2017), SALT Istanbul (2018), The Whitworth (2019), Chicago Architecture Biennial (2019), Accademia di Brera, Milan (2020), and she was the coordinator of the Escuela de Arte Útil at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco (US). She currently teaches at ArtEZ - International Master Artist Educator, Arnhem (NL) and she is a tutor at Accademia Unidee, Biella (IT). Since 2007 has been working in collaboration with several institutions such as SFMOMA (US), MAXXI, Rome (IT), Delfina Foundation, London (UK), Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (UK), Visible Project (IT), Manifesta 7 (IT), UNIDEE – Cittadellarte (IT), SALT (TR), Estudio Bruguera (USA) e Studio Grilli (BE). She is a 2013-14 van Eyck Akademie fellow, a 2015 Mondriaan Foundation grantee and a 2014 Demo Movin'Up grantee and she has been awarded an international mobility grant from i-Portunus – Creative Europe in 2019.

[www.alessandrasaviotti.com](http://www.alessandrasaviotti.com) - <https://dpe.tools> [www.arte-util.org](http://www.arte-util.org)

**Dr. Gemma Medina** is an art historian, curator and educator based in Eindhoven (NL). She focuses on the relationship between art, art institutions and society, researching arte útil, socially engaged art and collaborative practices. She participates in curatorial and pedagogical projects that fall outside standard discourse to bring art closer to non-specialized audiences, fostering connections and collaborative processes between artists, designers, and different communities. Since 2007, she has worked in diverse projects with the Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven, NL), like Be(com)ing Dutch (2007-2008), Play Van Abbe (2009), the residency program Artistic strategies in Psychiatry (2018) and Agents of Change (2015-2020). She was part of the curatorial team of the "Museum of Arte Útil" (2013-2014) and together with Alessandra Saviotti she co-curated "Broadcasting the archive" (2016-2018). Since 2015 she works with the Asociación de Arte Útil to facilitate and promote the use of the archive as a tool. She holds a PhD in Contemporary Art and Humanities (Universidad de La Laguna, ES). She has facilitated seminars at Design Academy Eindhoven (2016), Universidad del País Vasco (2017), La Manufacture Atlantique, Bordeaux (2017), SALT Istanbul (2018), MUAC, México City (2018), The Whitworth (2019), Chicago Architecture Biennial (2019) and Iceland University of the Arts (2021). Currently, she teaches at ARTEZ - International Master Artists Educator and is a guest lecturer at ARTEZ - Master Kunsteducatie (Arnhem, NL). She is a founder member of Axioma, Laboratorio de mediación artística (Canary Islands, ES). A platform encouraging the uses of art and archives as communal resources of knowledge. <https://gemmaledina.tumblr.com/>  
<https://broadcastingthearchive.tumblr.com/> [www.arte-util.org](http://www.arte-util.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/axiomalaboratorio/>

**Owen Griffiths** is an artist, workshop leader and facilitator. Using participatory and collaborative processes, his socially engaged practice explores the possibilities of art to create

new frameworks, resources and systems. This takes many forms, but includes reclaiming and rethinking events, rituals and spaces of dialogue through making gardens, codesigning spaces, curating events and making feasts. Griffiths explores climate, landscape, urbanism, social justice, food systems and pedagogy, creating projects and events that prepare us for the work of the future. Griffiths graduated from the School of Wales and Space at The Royal Danish Academy of the Arts, Copenhagen. He is a member of the Social Sculpture Research Unit at Oxford Brookes University. In 2020 he established Ways of Working, a new community participation platform created to work in ways he feels are urgent; speaking to climate crisis, localism and radical collaborative projects. The companies goals are based around ideas of the long term, of collaboration and the practice of digging where you stand, in order to develop the collective radical imagination and realise projects which empower and create change.

<https://www.aboutreconnection.com/> <https://www.waysofworking.org/>  
<https://www.ahoiwhatgrows.com/>

**Gabriella Riccio** is artist, activist and researcher based in Madrid and Naples. With a background as performer as well as in political studies, alongside her activity as choreographer, Gabriella is engaged in the movement for the commons and for self-governed cultural spaces. Recently she co-created the performance One Income, many worlds mixing performance and social research. As resident member of L'Asilo in Naples, she contributed to the drafting of the "Declaration of urban civic and collective use". Gabriella is co-founding member of the Institute for Radical Imagination a trans-local think-tank producing knowledge on post-capitalist forms of life and models of cultural production as processes of social transformation. She published essays at the intersection of aesthetics, ethics and politics in contemporary prefigurative practices. [www.gabriellariccio.it](http://www.gabriellariccio.it)

**Emanuele Braga** is an artist, researcher and activist, operating on the relationship between art, economy, and new technologies. In the past years he co-founded and developed several projects as Balletto Civile dance company in which he operated as a choreographer, performer and teacher, Macao, new centre for art and culture in Milano, Landscape Choreography crosssectors, performative and research project, in which he operated as director, curator and researcher, **IRI Institute of Radical Imagination**, transnational artistic think tank questioning postcapitalism alternative, Ebony decolonize work, design platform for asylum seekers, and KIN lab, an art space in Milano. <https://www.macaomilano.org/>

**Dr. Keir Milburn** is a writer, researcher, and political activist. He spent over a decade teaching political economy and organization at the University of Leicester but now works on municipalism, economic democracy and political economy for the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung London Office. His most recent book Generation Left has proven highly influential provoking debate across several countries on generational political divides driven, in part, by generational imbalances in asset ownership. He is also a research associate of the think tank Common Wealth developing and implementing Public-Common Partnerships, an alternative model for the ownership and governance of assets which aims to build a self-expansive dynamic into the commons. His most recent work in this area designed democratic models of urban development for common ownership projects in London and Plymouth. He is currently working with the artist collective Cooking Sections to design and develop Public-Common Partnerships for regenerative aquaculture on the Isle of Skye as the next stage of their Turner prize nominated Climavore project. As a member of the Red Plenty Games Collective he designs and runs political strategy games and with Gareth Brown uses game play to research common



political imaginaries. He is also a member of the #ACFM project through which he co-hosts the popular #ACFM podcast on Novara Media and runs Acid Communist consciousness raising sessions which build on the ideas of the late social theorist Mark Fisher.

<https://www.common-wealth.co.uk/reports/public-common-partnerships-building-new-circuits-ofcollective-ownership>

<https://www.common-wealth.co.uk/interactive-digital-projects/a-new-model>

<https://novaramedia.com/category/audio/acfm/>

**Dr. Gareth Brown** is a freelance cultural worker from Leeds, UK. He was a lecturer working in organisation studies at the University of Leicester until a recent purge of union activists and anticapitalist scholars. Gareth is one third of the left-wing game design collective Red Plenty Games with which he creates and runs games that explore utopian thinking, strategising for radical social change, and multi-actor political negotiation and coordination. He was formerly a founder member of the political organisation Plan C and is a long-term participant in the international surrealist movement as part of the Leeds Surrealist Group. He was for many years a professional musician, most notably as a member of the band Hood. Gareth's publications in both academic and civil society press centre on the radical imagination, experimental revolutionary organisations, altered states of consciousness, and work.

<https://ulsb.uculeicester.org.uk/> <https://www.weareplanc.org/>

<https://leedssurrealistgroup.wordpress.com/>

#### UNIDEE TEAM

Director: **Juan Esteban Sandoval**

Visiting Research Curator: **Andy Abbott** under the supervision of **Paolo Naldini**

Programme Coordinator: **Clara Tosetti**

Programme Assistant: **Annalisa Zegna**

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