

## CuMMA PAPERS #6

CuMMA (CURATING, MANAGING AND MEDIATING ART) IS A TWO-YEAR, MULTIDISCIPLINARY MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMME AT AALTO UNIVERSITY FOCUSING ON CONTEMPORARY ART AND ITS PUBLICS. AALTO UNIVERSITY IS LOCATED IN HELSINKI AND ESPOO IN FINLAND.

# TAKING TIME TOGETHER A POSTHUMOUS REFLECTION ON A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT, AND POLYORGASMIC DISOBEDIENCE A DIALOGUE BETWEEN GIULIA PALLADINI AND NORA STERNFELD

What remains after the intensities of an engagement in the project-based polis? In April 2013, we found ourselves spending two weeks as a curator and a 'resident theorist' on the *Antidote 6\_Taking Time* project, inhabiting the white space of the island of Suomenlinna in Helsinki, as guests of Galleria Augusta. Now, five months later and with the summer over, we want to think back to this period, to find out more about what we have experienced together, and to think about the time and effort that have gone into the project.

**GIULIA** Could you give an introduction to the project in which you invited me to take part? What was the concept, and what was your intention?

**NORA** *Taking Time* was a collective art project with the concept of time as its focus.

The project was an experiment in a post-representational curatorial practice that I have been thinking about and aiming towards in recent years. By this I mean a form of curating that is not about the mere representation of social relations, but which lays the ground for intervening in them – an intellectual practice that understands itself as involved, dissensual,

and situated in solidarity with existing social movements. In other words, post-representational curating is about the possibility of something happening. But since this is unplannable, I am working on curatorial strategies that could be explored to create such a space of agency.

The starting point for *Taking Time* was exploring how time is used, managed and fought over in capitalist societies. Teemu Mäki and I directed the project,<sup>1</sup> and we invited 15 participants (from the Fine Arts and CuMMA programmes at Aalto University, as well as guest speakers, theorists, artists and educators) to participate in the process, focusing on this common theme to reflect on forms of (counter-)production with an open outcome<sup>2</sup>. The opening of the project took place in the empty space at Galleria Augusta on Suomenlinna, where the participants spent time together, in different ways. The topical framework was the four coordinates: art, politics, time and capitalism. During the course of the two weeks, the results of the encounters that took place were discussed and presented to the public.

Especially because of your own research centring on the logics and politics of time, you were invited to follow the project for its duration: in fact, during *Taking Time*, you also slept on the island, in Galleria Augusta's residency building. Your contributions were so important within the open process that you became more and more a co-curator of the project. Before we can think about this process and our roles, it would be very good if you could describe your starting points and give some insights into your work.

<sup>1</sup> Antidote is an ongoing series of exhibitions and events involving critical and political art directed by Teemu Mäki.

About the series, which he initiated at Aalto University, he writes: "The idea of art as a holistic form of critical thought is officially accepted in Aalto University's policy of education and research, but, on the other hand, this kind of art is the underdog or at least belongs to the minority in a university that was created as a merger of the University of Art and Design, Helsinki School of Economics and the Technical University. I see this as a good sparring ring: at Aalto art is constantly challenged by sceptical notions that require art to justify itself again and again:

What's the point of philosophically/politically inclined art that's neither a part of "hard science / natural sciences" nor (usually) a part of economically profitable entrepreneurship either? The ANTIDOTE exhibitions and events try to answer these sceptical questions by focusing on topics such as gender issues, globalization / global class society, immigration, racism, ecology, consumerism and so on – which

I see clearly as issues and problems that can not be successfully dealt with by mere hard science nor by the parliamentary political system either."

<sup>2</sup> The participants were: Ahmed Al-Nawas, Franco Berardi, Helena Björk, Roy Brand, Lora Dimova, Petja Dimitrova, Salvatore Elefante, Ana Fradique, Ana Gutieszca (Arta), Laura Kokkonen, Aino Korvensyrjä, Teemu Mäki, Alicia de Manuel, Ahsan Masood, Marianne Niemelä, Julia Nyman, Hanna Ohtonen, Melanie Orenius, Claudia Pagès Rabal, Giulia Palladini, Leena Pukki, Sepideh Rahaa, Marianna Serocka, Friederike Siebert, Nora Sternfeld, Selina Väliheikki, Akseli Virtanen, Christopher Wessels

GIULIA In recent years, my work has focused on issues of temporality and labour, and I have in particular been investigating modes of artistic production in contemporary capitalism: a context in which labour is often not recognized as such in the moment of its enactment, but is constantly projected toward the horizon of its potential realization as value. In particular, I have been reflecting on unpaid artistic labour as a specific form of amateur labour: a labour of desire inhabiting a time seemingly dependent on a future outcome, which could retrospectively turn 'love labour' into what could be considered proper work. Reflecting on the paradoxical, projective temporality of this labour of desire, I have elaborated the notion of *foreplay*. Defining the set of activities preceding what is conceived of as 'proper' sexual pleasure, foreplay is in principle a parasitical entity, a slippery territory of *crescendo* that cannot claim the status of an arrival. In my hypothesis, the idea of foreplay points both to the constructedness of the progressive temporality of sex (according to which there is a duration considered preliminary insofar as it prepares for a 'real' event) and to the androcentric

model which such a temporality has historically supported. Female orgasm, in fact, has long been regarded (and treated) as a problem, precisely because of its structural 'failure' to meet the androcentric logic of pleasure, according to which orgasm marks a point of no return in the sexual act: the potentiality for reaching multiple orgasms during sex is itself a powerful threat to the idea of ejaculation as the ultimate goal of coitus.

In my proposal, the logic of foreplay points to the potential autonomous temporality which artistic labour might elaborate as its own measure, undermining the constructed progressive temporality of work in contemporary capitalism. Foreplay is a way of thinking about the endurance of pleasure as a tactical occupation and organization of time, exceeding the mere trajectory of finality haunting the temporality of a potential value realization. This reflection has two related implications: on the one hand, the notion of foreplay addresses the mode of production of artistic labour outside of a logic in which 'preparation' (in the form of workshops, training, stages, etc.) is either something already

marketed as a consumable commodity, or an antechamber of supposed productivity, haunted by an always forthcoming future career. On the other, the dynamic of foreplay names a temporality inherent to certain artistic practices, disavowing their 'eventfulness' (in an economy of ephemerality and disappearance) and playing with the pleasure of multiplying their own units of accomplishment, outside of a progressive logic of completion. I responded to the invitation to participate in *Taking Time* by sharing this theoretical hypothesis with the project participants, experimenting with the unusual duration and form offered by the unplanned, undisciplined, idle time of those two weeks in Galleria Augusta. At the same time, this also meant taking the opportunity to interact with the peculiar forms of artistic labour fostered by the utopian space of suspension offered by this curatorial project: a space hosting the simple luxury of having – or imagining you have – *all the time in the world*. And what was your starting point? Could you say something more about the concrete framework of the project?

**NORA** Teemu and I have tried to limit ourselves to a minimal curatorial framework in order to create experimental conditions that would leave the maximum space and time for the process itself. We basically established only the basic framework that makes a project a public event:

*Taking Time* took place in a gallery on Suomenlinna over the course of two weeks.

It was advertised with a poster and a blog.

It opened with a public lecture in an empty

exhibition space and ended in the same space, with a showing of some results and some marks left by the process, as well as another public lecture. We also decided to cook a late lunch every day at 3 pm for everyone who would like to join in. The opening hours of *Taking Time* were: Mon–Fri 10 am–5 pm, Sat–Sun 12–6 pm.

The structure of the project was conceptualized in such a way that nothing was planned in advance: on the first day we prepared the space together, then we attended the opening lecture by Petja Dimitrova. On the two following days participants presented themselves and the ideas that they wished to develop in the following two weeks. We discussed their proposals and then went on from there.<sup>3</sup> The rest was filled with situations and discussions, distraction and dissent, excitement and exhaustion, coffee and conflict...

<sup>3</sup> Concretely we decided on: two reading groups – one organized by Akseli Virtanen, which prepared a Workshop with him and Bifo, and another organized by the CuMMA students Helena Björk and Laura Kokkonen on Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*; the date for a collective sleepover in the exhibition space, organized by the Fine Arts student Melanie Orenius as an artistic practice; the elaboration of three performances by Fine Art students Christopher Wessels, Sepide Rahaa, Ahsan Masood and Lora Dimova during the course of the project. The art and CuMMA students Claudia Pages Rabal, Salvatore Elefante maintaining a blog and an educational programme during the course of the project, while Friederike Siebert, Julia Nyman and Marianna Niemelä did an amazing job of coordinating the whole group.

## ART AND POLITICS

Petja Dimitrova presented a contribution on political strategies in antiracist projects. She took a clear stand, deliberately presenting her direct involvement in political struggles as an artistic gesture and a contribution to critical thinking. Concretely, she talked about the refugee protests in Vienna, and about the occupation of a church and the hunger strike that the protesters carried out in 2012. In her narrative, she positioned herself as a participant in and contributor to the refugees' protest<sup>4</sup>.

The discussion following her lecture became controversial at the moment when someone in the audience asked from a Deleuzian perspective about the relevance of these activist strategies in the 21st century, and criticized what they saw as the over-simple relation between art and politics expressed by Dimitrova's form of engagement. There emerged two very different understandings of art and politics, strategies and tactics, which in a sense accompanied the project throughout its duration. This question from the audience echoed so many other discussions that I have been involved in in recent years, and it made me realize how absurd I consider reflections on art and politics that are deeply embedded in the fashionable logic of the field of art theory – a logic that labels concrete struggles as anachronistic, while not questioning its own position in terms of political resistance.

<sup>4</sup> Art and Activism are very much thought of together and are much debated at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. As an example I would like to draw attention to a political moment in autumn 2013: On 29 October 2013 a discussion with the title "Art, Activism, Academy" was announced, to be held in the main hall of the Academy of Fine Arts, with activists from the Refugee Protest Movement Vienna, as well as teachers and students: "The Academy's frequent involvement in the ongoing refugee protests is characterized by the active participation of students and teachers since it began in autumn 2012. The initiative Kunst\_Kultur: Stop Deportation – a platform for supporters connected with the Academy of Fine Arts – has drawn attention to the situation and the demands of refugees, and shown solidarity through a variety of activities. The active exchange that began at events such as a solidarity picnic in Vienna's Servite Monastery will continue and be renegotiated in an effort to mobilize the wider public. The current dynamics of the refugees' resistance require constant networking in order to achieve solidarity between the different struggles." - Rex Osa, refugee activist (D). Join the Vienna Refugee Protest Movement! Participate in the discussion on the future of the movement!" After the meeting on October 29, activists from the refugee protest movement in Vienna occupied the Academy. "They forced us to live in a basement. Somehow they want to do the same with the movement. And today they kicked us out of the Kloster [monastery]." the refugees write in a declaration to the Rector of the Academy of Fine Arts, 'Academy employees, professors, students, activists, friends, old and future supporters'. It closes with the following paragraphs: "The strategy of the church was to make the protest smaller and smaller. And now? They want to split us up to their pensions and bring us back to the point where we started. But we won't go back! As the University had already shown strong solidarity we decided to look for support here. And stay here. We need a public place! The protest needs to be seen! We need to bring the protest to the universities. At the same time we want to look for an autonomously run building where we also have rooms for other refugee activists and supporters, which will be the centre of the movement in the future. Dear friends! Support us in resisting these laws! The authorities will not silence us! We want legal status, or they should erase our fingerprints. Those are our demands! We will fight! Only together can we rise. Let's start organizing again!" cf. <https://linksunten.indymedia.org/en/node/98345>. The Rector of the Academy, Eva Blimlinger, immediately declared that she wants the refugees to leave – which they had to do after an ultimatum on November 4, <http://refugeecampvienna.noblogs.org/post/2013/11/04/letter-from-the-academy-brief-von-der-akademie/>

## TIME AND CAPITALISM

When you presented your concept of “foreplay” we discussed the possibilities and of horizons, concrete aims and goals, and I asked you if such an idea of “an orgasm” (posited as a climax in terms of value, and of an event) could be part of the concept of foreplay. Your answer was clear: “One orgasm? Why not many orgasms?” From this point, I think you proposed a slightly different approach to the theme of time and capitalism in that context. While the framework of the project reflected on the capitalization of time from a more analytical and critical perspective, it was enriched with a playful dimension – which we often referred to during the process.

GIULIA Yes, first of all the playful dimension of *Taking Time* was certainly crucial to my own ‘production’ during the process. In fact, instead of working on a long piece of writing (as happens when I am hosted by an institution in the form of a study or writing residency) on Suomenlinna I ended up producing a manifesto, which I wrote specifically as a playful (but absolutely serious) critique of the notion of event.

The idea of the *Manifesto of Polyorgasmic Disobedience* (see p. 13) took shape in the course of ongoing conversations with the project participants, conversations which, on the one hand, drew from the hypothesis that I had proposed, and, on the other, entailed forms of pleasure and labour which our own endurance in artistic and critical work in that space could engender.

My own presence in the project, of course, was part of this conversation too: I was not invited to teach a seminar, or to give a lecture, but to work alongside other people in peculiar circumstances. In a sense, I was myself confronted with the dialectic between eventfulness and

endurance, about which I am writing: I was invited to *stay*, rather than to perform one task. And in this staying there was, of course, not only production, but rather the demand – or more precisely an invitation – for reproduction, since inhabiting a dwelling of any sort, as a lot of feminist work has underlined, entails a daily labour of reproduction, both material and affective. A reproduction encompassing needs, thought and intimacy.

What interested me in these circumstances was the possibility of deploying the ‘project’ logic (a logic which, as the etymology of ‘project’ suggests, postulates the present as always already a prelude to what comes after) in order to reflect on how we measure our own labour. Or to put it another way: to think about artistic and curatorial practices which may enable an opening up of time to a different measurement of work, one that escapes the logic of market value, or of progression or training (notions deeply embedded in the logic of market value itself).

In this respect, *Taking Time* encompassed the structures of a learning situation (such as a seminar), of a lecture (including the presentation of one or more arguments, and subsequent discussions) and of a residence (entailing the permanence and continuity of the work in one space). Indeed, the hybrid structure of this project encompassed elements that all these circumstances offer: the hospitality that enables the production of thought and art, as much as the quality of resistance to a heteronomous logic of work postulated by capitalist production.

To think about time and capitalism means first of all to question our own mode of production, however; and to be able to do so, as we know too well, is a privilege. One of the questions which

this project posed is, in fact: who has the right to take time? To be sure, both the activity of writing and that of art-making are privileged forms of time-taking: I am reminded of Georges Bataille's argument in *Literature and Evil*, where he suggests that, to some extent, literature (which here can stand for many other forms of intellectual or artistic praxis) can be regarded as an evil in itself, insofar as those who devote themselves to writing necessarily disobey a standard logic of productive work: writing, he suggests, retains in itself the profound awareness of being *the contrary of working*. Of course, this is a paradox, but it is interesting that in specific relation to this argument, Bataille defines writing as having something fundamentally puerile in its nature, in its relation to the 'adult' work of productivity. And in my view, one crucial aspect of this puerility has to do with time: the possibility of art-making, as well as writing, to have in view an unlimited duration is something that is mimetic to children's time, and – I suggest – precisely because of that, is potentially relevant on a political level. This other duration, that is, can be a strategic laboratory for expanding the horizon of work itself.

To say it otherwise, I think it was crucial to confront the privilege which a project such as *Taking Time* offered to its participants, exposing – in a sense – the inner privilege of writing, of art-making itself, in the possibility they offer for inhabiting a different temporality of work:

the privilege of extracting a portion of time from the neoliberal organization of work, which today (differently from the time of Kafka and Baudelaire, to which Bataille referred) presides over and affects both the praxis of writing and that of art-making, domesticating – so to say – their puerile temporality.

The proposal of a “polyorgasmic disobedience”, then, assumed the practice of taking time as a platform of struggle for a different horizon of work. It claimed the privilege of taking time as something inherent to a praxis of work capable of bearing its own agency, and hence conflicting with a logic postulating value realization as the measure of work itself. It claimed that pleasure may be a tool for enduring a struggle with time structures that validate labour, restrict its duration, and postpone its possible enactment.

In this context, then, the demand for time came to overlap with a political demand placed on production itself: taking time appeared to me to be an experiment in demanding time to stand up for the rights of labour within production; an experiment in measuring labour in conditions in which a time is opened up for it, as if in suspension, offering itself as a utopian dimension of space.

*The Manifesto of Polyorgasmic Disobedience* ended up being written on the walls of Galleria Augusta, and more or less consciously became an object in the post-representational space of work opened up by the project.

The playful dimension you referred to could also be observed in the collective relation established by all the participants with their mode of work on Suomenlinna. Some of the ideas enacted in Galleria Augusta seem to me significant examples of a notion of artistic work suspended between its production and its consumption, entailing the possibility of actualizing its “value” in a multiplicity of encounters: remaining potential, and yet shared as potential in a specific place, regardless of its accomplishment.

One of the works I am thinking about is Christopher Wessels’ performance project *The poetry of invisibility/the musings of invisibility*, conceived as a potential performance piece to be actualized by casual encounters with gallery visitors. For the duration of Taking Time Christopher was present in the space of the gallery every day, wearing the prototypical uniform of a Finnish male cleaner. At some point during the day, he would either clean the space with a vacuum cleaner or mop the floor. If someone entered the gallery, he would walk up to the visitor and ask if he could read her a poem. If the invitation was accepted, Christopher would choose one of the two poems he had selected<sup>5</sup>, which he alternately repeated for each visitor, according to each encounter – according to the surprise, disorientation, confidence or sympathy which the ‘receiver’ displayed to the poem and to the performer himself. As the title suggests, Christopher’s project was also a work dealing

with visibility and invisibility, namely that of cleaning employees in Finland, most of them foreigners like Christopher himself, who negotiate their space as workers and as racialized bodies in the highly racist Finnish society. At the same time, Christopher’s presence in the space of the gallery was *at work* in a number of other directions: not only was he active in the two reading groups, and in the collective listening session organized by me, you and Claudia Pages Rabal, gathering together revolutionary songs from different historical contexts; he drew on the wall a map of the world turned upside down, on which he asked visitors to leave their fingerprints when they entered the space, as a form of landing in a foreign land.

In Christopher’s work during the project we could envision many dimension of the mode of labour I am pointing to – a labour evoking, in some respects, our own conditions of production. It was a constant labour of preparation, with a view to an event – the reading of a poem – which might indeed not take place, if no one, as it happened, entered the gallery. It was a labour of pleasure, coinciding with the pleasure of preparing, and unexpectedly actualizing this labour, while also enjoying the time spent in the gallery. And it was a labour disavowing its own nature as an event, existing alongside others’ labours and taking part in them unobtrusively, playing around a certain horizon of visibility.

<sup>5</sup> The two selected poems were: *A Dream Deferred* by Langston Hughes and *Sha-Clack-Clack* by Saul Williams.



## CONTACT ZONE

The proximity of the different actions and conversations, which took place during the project was itself a material of work and discussion. It is interesting that you have proposed looking at them in relation to the concept of the “contact zone”, which you have been elaborating in your work in relation to the systems of knowledge, power and solidarity opened up by transnational and political relations. How would you describe and address the contact zones opened up and enabled by *Taking Time*? What is the specificity of a contact zone when it happens in an art space/context?

**NORA** Opening up a space always means that you open it to the possibility of conflicts and struggle. In this sense we have experienced two weeks in a contact zone that James Clifford described as a space of negotiation, but also as a conflict zone. We had quite tough and controversial discussions, for example, about:

- Feminism and work: the division of “productive” and “reproductive labour” within the project (namely, who had to take care of making the place a ‘home’ for the project’s participants, cleaning up after the process, organizing its archiving, etc.)
- How hierarchies, commodification, authority and authorship, common to the art field, were reproduced within the project
- The use of Swastikas in Artistic Practices, which occurred in the preparation of one performance
- The issue of the boycott, which was raised in relation to an invited speaker working in an Israeli institution, namely Roy Brand, who teaches at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem and is curator of the Yaffo 23 art project
- Who has time for taking time?
- How to open up the processes to the public? And how to organize education?

Each of these topics has been difficult and emotional – they were part of our group dynamics, but also part of broader political discussions within social movements today. In fact, I quite often thought about one of Mary Louise Pratt’s definitions of the contact zone, as she writes: “Along with rage, incomprehension, and pain there were exhilarating moments of wonder and revelation, mutual understanding, and new wisdom – the joys of the contact zone. The sufferings and revelations were, at different moments to be sure, experienced by every student. No one was excluded, and no one was safe.”

**GIULIA** Can you say a bit more about one or two examples?

**NORA** One moment that really remained special in my memory was the solidarity that the artists Sepide Rahaa and Ahsan Masood expressed when the issue of boycotting someone employed by an Israeli University was discussed. When the call for a boycott came up on the email list, I decided to post only one sentence, namely that I propose to judge people by what they say and what they do, and not by where they work or where they come from. After this, Sepide made clear that she stands behind this sentence – she referred to a personal experience of being judged by her origins or institution in Iran. Ahsan Masood also talked about his experiences and took a stand from his situated perspective,

which he explicitly called “pakistanian” in his plea against the boycott. This solidarity gave me strength from within, but also against mobilizations against Israeli politics in leftist discourses. This moment was a small and yet very important interruption to everyday discourses. And it is exactly this potential of small gestures and changes that seems to make post-representational experiences so worthwhile – no one had to represent a position, and this was exactly where an unexpected alliance occurred.

Another moment that I want to reflect on was the discussion of hierarchies, commodification, authority and authorship, common to the art field, and how they were reproduced within the project. We realized that it is not possible to simply withdraw from representation. We even encountered the fact that some power relations worked even better when I tried to give up my role as a controlling curator. The experiment of giving up dominance came with some insightful moments, but also with some problems, maybe because by doing this I could not take enough responsibility for some moments, when representation came in by the back door. Maybe it makes sense to think more about the meaning of “care”, that is the basis of the word “curator” – as it comes from the Latin word *curare*, which means to care. Maybe we should ask: what do we want to care for as curators? – instead of: what do we want to show? I am now proposing, drawing on this reflection, to think more about

“re-appropriation” than about “withdrawal”. How can we intervene with small gestures in a time that is as much “our time” as it is always already the “time of capitalism”?

Thinking back to all these discussions, I nevertheless loved our (and especially your) ability to relate criticality and anger with the fun of acting and thinking together. This reminds me of something that Valeria Graziano said during a lecture in Helsinki, when she proposed trying: “to explore the uncanny, uncomfortable intimacy between engagement industries and the critical practices (aesthetic, pedagogical, of care) that conspire against the present post-neoliberal regime from the perspective of the pleasures they afford.” What do you think about all this?

**GIULIA** I think this is indeed one of the crucial points that this project opened up, and interestingly it still resonates today, as we decide to write about Taking Time. Bringing the project outside of the protected space of its enactment, in fact, means addressing one of the questions that became central during the project itself: the question of *accountability*. How do we take the responsibility to account for what happened during the time we spent in Galleria Augusta? How do we account for the promise of what we could imagine happening, and for everything we could not imagine? How do we account for our desire, as well as for the potential value of its accountability? How do we account, in a sense, for the production, as well as for the waste, of our common work in time? And perhaps more crucially: should we do so?

Accountability is a word, an idea, a horizon, which we are keen to oppose, in a struggle that has presided over our encounter, and the beginning of our dialogue. It entails a logic of economic and of productive discourse which has largely contributed to the construction of unbearable conditions of work, life, and thought for workers in all sectors, and which is also at stake beyond the ‘work’ domain. In fact, accountability (or its phantasm) also affects spheres that are conceived as other than, or preparatory to, ‘work’ proper: among them, education appears paramount, and especially one of its more recent, aberrant systematizations in the structures of the neoliberal university, where the transmission of and experimentation with knowledge, as the concept of the ‘training course’, have become increasingly subject to the scrutiny of ‘accountability’. Students are, in fact, supposed to give an account of, or take account of, or account for the skills and competencies they ‘achieve’ in the university and the activities they partake in, and accordingly complex systems of accountability have been envisioned in order to make this accountability work in compliance with the structures of discontinuous employment, unequal divisions of labour (for instance, among teachers, administrators, scholars) and task-oriented programming, which now serve as the basic grammar of the neoliberal university. Furthermore, students’ accountability is not only relative to the necessity of giving evidence of and systematizing their engagement in university activities (through systems of acquisition of credits, which often structurally fragment

the educational process itself, preventing self-determined experience of learning). But, in the context of the most recent politics that addresses transnational mobility, students and scholars are also increasingly asked to account for their own presence in a given place on the basis of educational purposes and achieved records. They are asked to offer evidence of their engagement in university activities by means of the above-mentioned credits-based system, which, on the one hand, fragments time and experience, and, on the other, secures the possibility of the workers' (or would-be-workers') permanence, as visitors, in a specific geographical space. Accountability, on the other hand, is one very powerful dispositif that even beyond its material or bureaucratic fallout, *de facto* haunts the work experience of most of us – students, writers, artists, curators – especially since the 'outcome' of our labour is not immediately recognizable as something 'other' than its own process of enactment, or proceeds outside of a certain horizon of remuneration.

How does one account for one's daily labour outside of a regulated work time and space? How does one account for one's own labour outside of a wage relation (which is mostly the case with artistic and intellectual praxis today)? How does one account for one's labour and its continuity despite, or alongside, a wage relation that temporarily supports one's life (i.e. precarious employment, temporary involvement in a funded art project, the curating and organization of an event, or – even more dangerously – the supposed, potential opportunity for future

paid work)? Accountability, therefore, is also a phantasm that inhabits our own work experience, transforming the conditions of a potential autonomous work (echoing the way in which Andre Gorz, for instance, defined a work liberated not only from necessity, but itself being the bearer of a freedom of agency and temporality) offering our labour-power for continuous exposure to potential exploitation. More dangerously, this accountability also affects our desire: the longing for work, which in the first place had moved our engagement with the work itself. As opposed to autonomous work, in which the subject is able to critically assert the task she performs, in this context labour becomes dependent on its potential realization as value, whatever value it will happen to achieve in the course of its becoming work.

In this scenario, the 'event' (understood as a phenomenological unit, in which work is certified and accomplished: the finishing of a book, the public presentation of a performance work, the setting up of an exhibition, the achievement of a title) becomes the stable signifier of the accountability of labour itself, in its present, and in its future survival in memory and recognition (directly traceable in the space of a CV, or in the symbolic capital which the event itself, in its circulation, will be able to achieve).

One of the most interesting aspects of this project for me was the challenge it posed to accountability, as well as to the notion of event, and to some extent this conversation between us is part of that challenge.

## MANIFESTO OF POLYORGASMIC DISOBEDIENCE GIULIA PALLADINI

WE DISOBEY THE IDEA THAT EVENT IS A STABLE  
SIGNIFIER OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TIME

WHEN IS THE EVENT COMING?  
IS IT FORTHCOMING, OR HAS IT COME?  
(IN THIS MOMENT THERE COULD BE SOMEONE READING YOU A POEM)

WE CHALLENGE BOREDOM AS SYNONYMOUS WITH WAITING

WE EXPERIMENT IDLENESS AS A  
DURATION PREGNANT WITH NECESSITY

TAKING TIME IS TO MULTIPLY THE POTENTIALITY OF EVENT

TAKING TIME IS TO EXTRACT THE EVENT  
FROM ITS OWN VALUE REALISATION

TAKING TIME MEANS TO DISPLACE  
THE POTENTIALITY OF VALUE REALISATION

TAKING TIME IS TO HAVE TIME BEING  
THE UTOPIAN HORIZON OF SPACE  
(UTOPIA: NO PLACE, NO SINGLE CHARGED VENUE OF HAPPENING)

TO WELCOME POTENTIALITY IS TO CHALLENGE  
PUBLIC APPEARANCE, AS WELL AS TRACES,  
OF EVENTS WORTH PARTICIPATING IN.

GIULIA PALLADINI is a researcher and curator in Performance Studies, and currently an Alexander von Humboldt fellow at the University of Erfurt. She co-curated the Performance Studies international project Affective Archives (Vercelli, 2010), and the lecture series Living Rooms (LAquila, 2011). She has a PhD in Visual and Performing Arts from the University of Pisa and was a Visiting Scholar at New York University (2007-2008). She has published in several international journals of performance studies and contemporary art, and her first monograph, *The Scene of Foreplay: Theatre, Labor and Leisure in 1960s New York*, is forthcoming. Her research interests concern performance labour and free time, modes of production and value, and the circulation of affects by means of artistic practice.

NORA STERNFELD is a curator and educator. She is Professor for Curating and Mediating Art at Aalto University in Helsinki. Since 1999 she has been part of the trafo.K office for art education and critical knowledge production in Vienna. She is also co-director of the ecm—educating/curating/managing—Master programme for exhibition theory and practice at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, and has been teaching since 2004 at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, the Viennese Art School, the School of Art and Design Kassel, the Humboldt University in Berlin, the Zurich University of the Arts and the University of Education in Vienna. She works, curates and writes in the contexts of contemporary art, education, exhibition theory, history-politics and anti-racism.

## CUMMA PAPERS #6

*Taking Time Together.*

*A posthumous Reflection on a Collaborative Project, and Polyorgasmic Disobedience.*

*A dialogue between Giulia Palladini and Nora Sternfeld.*

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