



machete

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Margin of Utility

DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL IMAGINARY

"Democracy—this is what's important—is a matter of educating citizens, something that does not exist at all today."

- Cornelius Castoriadis

Urgency of an Untimely Question

The unprecedented and ubiquitous valorization of democracy in our day and age runs the risk of foreclosing any intense critical interrogation. A normative consensus has imposed itself with such force that it is extremely difficult today to talk about democracy without presupposing its intrinsic value, without accepting that it is indeed the only possible historical option, if not the "end of history" and the political endgame of humanity. We don't have to accept Fukuyama's demagogic and debilitating historical thesis to participate in the same political culture that produced it. Progressive leftists have proven this again and again by playing a 'good' democracy against a 'bad' one, thereby confirming the unique option we have for thinking politics.

It is essential to remind ourselves that this political imaginary is only approximately 150 years old, and that the massive valorization of democracy occurred *after* the founding of the United States of America. Many of the "founding fathers" were indeed extremely skeptical of democracy, and the original documents of the country tend to refer to the U.S. as a republic instead of a democracy. However, as Thomas Paine acutely stated in one of the early defenses of democracy, "time makes more converts than reason." And the last 150 years have converted almost everyone, especially in the wake of the supposed collapse of the socialist alternative in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Resisting Normative Blackmail

My objective here is to open space for a critical reflection on democracy. The first task that imposes itself is to resist the ideological blackmail of the current political imaginary, which tries to force us to be either *for* or *against* democracy. This is one sign among many others that democracy has become more of a value-concept, an emblem of allegiance, than an analytic notion simply used to describe a state of affairs. This normative blackmail is aimed precisely at dulling

Calming the Rage of the Wounded and Defeated

All art, from the crassest mass-media production to the most esoteric art world practice, has a political existence, or, more accurately, an ideological existence.

-Martha Rosler

With the completion, on May 2, 2010, of Zoe Strauss' decade-long *I-95* photographic project, she has reopened the wound of social documentary that concerned the most demanding and exacting photographic practices in the 1970s. Social documentary, as Allan Sekula reminds us, challenges the "prevailing dogma of art's fundamental 'irresponsibility'" and, at the risk of "dragging in a dead cat," forces art to confront the social reality and economic structures that conditions its production and reception. It thus provides a potent challenge to the attempt to maintain art's autonomy with respect to politics and to the tendency to turn the photograph's iconic power into an "anti-intellectual weapon."



I-95 consists chiefly of photographs taken in Philadelphia, but in recent years Strauss has ventured further afield, including places such as Anchorage, Biloxi and Las Vegas. Her interest in the social function of the document is not merely reflected in her choice of subject matter and the place indexed by the photo, but also in her concern with the presentation of the photographic series, often favoring the format of the slide projector or site specific installation. She insists that the annual installation—photographs displayed for 3 hours on the pillars under *I-95*—is the work. Thus her concern is not merely with the document as such, but also with the politics of representation that complicates its social reception.

On the surface, her interest in the politics of representation would seem to renew the concerns motivating the critical assault mounted by Martha Rosler and Allan Sekula, for example, on the pernicious characteristics of the *new documentary* practices of artists such as Diane Arbus, Gary Winograd and Lee Friedlander, championed by John Szarkowski. Rosler and Sekula were concerned with how these new documentarians made use of the genre in a manner that actively stripped it of its progressive agenda. By directing "the documentary approach," as Szarkowski puts it, "towards more personal ends," the new documentarians no longer aimed to criticize the world in the interests of changing it, but to elevate and redeem the commonplace. By shifting the register of the documentarian from the political to the personal and self-expressive, Szarkowski restored a typically romantic conception of art, saving the pictorialist impulse and neutralizing the corrosive effects that Walker Evans' practice had, for example, for those interested in defending photography as an autonomous art.

There is no doubt much to commend in Strauss' ambitious attempt to construct an "epic narrative" (her words) that charts out a terrain between the clichéd and sentimental truisms of American life whose signs (literal and figurative) contaminate the urban landscape—e.g., the photographs "Together We Make Dreams Come True" and "If You Can Dream it You Can Do It"—and the brute reality of a country which does little to conceal its hatred of the poor, its racism and cruelty.

However close she comes to breathing new life into the *flâneur's* vocation—bearing considerable witness to Walter Benjamin's claim that "no matter what trail the *flâneur* may follow, every one of them will lead to a crime"—her project seems deeply compromised by the kind of expressivity promoted by Szarkowski. Doesn't Szarkowski's description of the new documentarians serve equally well as a description of much of Strauss' work? Does her work not betray "a sympathy—almost an affection—for the imperfections and the frailties of society"? Does she not "like the real world, in spite of its

terrors, as the source of all wonder and fascination and value—no less precious for being irrational"? Although she avoids the pitfalls of depicting her subjects as victims and refuses that most liberal of sentiments, pity, she tends to avoid documenting any activities that could be conceived as political, favors the intimate portrait and often portrays acts of consumption.

Despite the fact that she sets the scene of her drama within the socio-economic desolation of the modern city, her focus is not on the rage that these conditions legitimately engender, but on the coping mechanisms of those who suffer its effects, the ways in which it is managed (hence her at times lurid interest in addicts) and the scars that are silently and resiliently endured. There is little interest in signs of agitation and rebellion, but, rather, management and endurance.



Furthermore, Strauss often makes use of the photograph's dramatic expressivity to aggrandize her subjects, to elevate them, making their struggle and forbearance "epic." She routinely chooses compositions that soften the brutality of her subject matter or monumentalize her subjects, and effectively excises from her 'aesthetic' the cold, neutral and objectivising aspects associated with the photograph's analytic power, stressing poetic expressivity. The desire to aesthetically elevate her character's struggle betrays her belief in the redemptive and healing power of art. Her interest, to paraphrase and invert Jeff Wall's description of Roy Arden, is to 'calm the rage of the wounded and defeated.' She seems compelled to provide some meaning for suffering, effectively providing a religious framework for those imprisoned by the American dream. Her "epic narrative," therefore, shifts the register of social documentary from the social-political to the personal-religious. Her vision of art is thus thoroughly romantic.

Strauss attempts to resolve the tension between the aesthetic and thus formal elevation of her subjects and their literal poverty by emphasizing the site specificity of the work's presentation. Her insistence on *I-95* being the proper place for the work's exhibition thus tacitly acknowledges the problems associated with the romantic elevation of her subject matter. But this gesture is crudely populist, deceptively democratic and unintentionally condescending, the equivalent of selling designer brands in Walmart. We thus see the danger of that "courage" that Szarkowski praises, which consists in "looking at [the commonplace] with a minimum of theorizing." Populism becomes the populism of the market and politics becomes a matter of making people feel better about themselves.

-Alexi Kukuljevic



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all critical acumen in the name of a simple ideological alignment: you're either for us or you're against us! The relatively recent change in the content of the category "enemy" reveals to what extent it is the form of the opposition—and its flexibility—that is important: yesterday, the "communists" were against democracy (which would have been news to Lenin), today "terrorists" and "tyrants" are the opponents of democracy (see the *National Security Strategy of the U.S.A.*).



In resisting this ideological blackmail, it is important to return to the analytic, descriptive use of the term "democracy." It is only in doing so that we can see that we are most definitively not living in a democracy. According to the categories that go back to Plato and Aristotle, we are, strictly speaking, living in an oligarchy, and more specifically a plutocratic oligarchy that markets itself by constructing an administered, representative pseudo-democracy: an elite class of specialists manages the power of the people and largely constructs public opinion (see Sheldon Wolin's excellent book *Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism*). Indeed, "democracy" is a class ideology that serves to legitimate the excessive control exercised by a very small minority of decision-makers. Democracy, in our day and age, is not the power of the people; it's an ideological smoke screen allowing for a massive limitation of the power of the people.

"Democracy" and Capitalism

Politics has been commercialized, and the ruling minority is largely bankrolled by corporate elites, if they're not corporate elites themselves. The 'revolving door' between government and big business has become a simple breezeway! This should raise serious questions regarding the compatibility of democracy and capitalism: can a system in which the people are supposed to rule function in conjunction with a hierarchical system founded on the proletarianization of the people for the economic gain of the few? Aren't dollar democracy, corporatocracy and kleptocracy the inevitable results of wedding a "representative" system

Legendary History, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Ryan Trecartin

As Philadelphia-based artist Ryan Trecartin continues his rise through the art world two positions have coalesced around his work. One position articulates a kind of postmodern discourse: Trecartin is showing the dissolution of all subjects, all genders, all relations. There is free-play, free-affect, free-love. The other, which I have argued for in a specific context, is a Marxist/Situationist line, which sees in Trecartin's work primarily an affirmative act of culture which, in its failed subversiveness, serves only as a mirror and reflection of the dominant mode.

Trecartin's recent artist talk at the Institute of Contemporary Art in late April gives me cause to return to the questions raised by his work and its place in contemporary U.S. culture. As I am considering here a quick look of the pieces he showed at the lecture and his general reception, my aim is not so much to understand the work itself as its place in these contemporary debates. Moreover, the analysis is primarily formal, and therefore necessarily partial.

His lecture showed precisely why reception of his practice has been so split. For example, when asked about the appellation "queer" to his work (Trecartin is part of the ICA's new show, *Queer Voices*), he deflected the meaning of queer as a gender or sexuality-based phenomenon. Rather, and I paraphrase, he stated that queer for him was a general sense of opposition to the norm. Then, he tellingly added, "Maybe."

What exactly Trecartin means by opposition or by norm is not entirely clear. Again, if the norm is conceived as the policing of identity, specificity of relations, fixity of subject-positions, then, sure, Trecartin's work is oppositional. If norm is defined, alternatively, as the "new spirit of capitalism," that is, as flexible, adaptive and creative, then, well, queer has just become the new norm. The partially dialectical status of these positions is affirmed in the dissolution of both queer and norm in their mutually interchangeable positions within the opposing discourses.

What I want to suggest in returning to Trecartin's talk here, then, is that we need to seek a position outside this mutually destructive dialectic which relies on the vast theorization norm / opposition and thereby cannot take account of the variegated planes of contemporary existence. As postmodernism has been the frame of *Machete's* reading group this month, we can begin by asking how that term, primarily theorized in the late 70s and early 80s, relates to Trecartin's work nearly 30 years later. Indeed, if there is an increasing belief that the idea of postmodernism is no longer an adequate name for contemporary culture, it is precisely because of practices like Trecartin's which, in particular, bring to the fore questions of technology, interactivity and networks which are simply outside the analysis of say, E.L. Doctorow's *Ragtime* or Andy Warhol's *Diamond Dust Shoes* – the documents which defined postmodern culture as historical depthlessness for Fredric Jameson.

There is a brief moment in Jameson's work on postmodernism where he compares his project to Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Jameson is explicitly trying to understand how postmodernism represents contemporary reality, akin to how Auerbach sketched the forms of mimesis from Homer to modernism. In returning to Auerbach's framework, I want to raise the question, "What is at stake in the methods Trecartin uses to represent reality?"

In the opening chapter of *Mimesis*, Auerbach makes a distinction between history and legend. He writes, "Even when the legendary does not immediately betray itself by elements of the miraculous...it is generally quickly recognizable by its composition. It runs far too smoothly." Legend eliminates, synthesizes, reduces. History is contradictory, confused, complex. The characters of legend are "clearly outlined men who act from few and simple motives and the continuity of whose feelings and actions remains uninterrupted." Auerbach, writing in the shadow of Nazism, finds such motives, logics and rational actors completely absent from history proper.

Now it might seem at first as if Trecartin's work should be characterized as historical: the characters are fluid, the actions are complex and confused, the logic of actions is unclear. But this is the postmodern reading. The critical reading is quite the opposite: Trecartin's work is ahistorical; there is a smoothness in its very appearance of striation; there is a simplification of the complexity of history and domination. My counter proposal is that both positions are in a sense accurate, or, more specifically,

that Trecartin's work in fact represents a dissolution of the opposition between legend and history.

In an interview in 2009, Trecartin stated, "I see my characters exploring a technologically driven yet non-gender-centric psychologically complex transitional world which is inherently positive and energetic as opposed to neutral and formulaic." History (the speed of current events) becomes legend (the smooth fluidity of energy). The complexity of the present is not represented as smoothness; rather it is that very smoothness.

My point is not that such a reflection is uninteresting and misrepresents "the way things really are." Nor that Trecartin's works are unsophisticated, sophomoric or uninteresting – they are not. My interest rather is to get at the meaning of this "transitional world," which, it seems to me, is precisely posed to conflate the distinction between legendary and historic narrative. And I am questioning the grounds on which Trecartin can claim this world to be "inherently positive," when every technological innovation has varied potentials for both positivity and negativity.

For Auerbach, the distinction between legend (more often found in the Homeric epic) and history (more in the Biblical narratives) allowed him to articulate a relationship between narrative strategy, representation and authority. More history meant more "background," (that is, more unspoken meanings), which meant more authority via mystery and a "demand" for interpretation. It meant a kind of text that did not try to let one escape from reality, but to make its own reality construct the meaning of the world as such. Again, Trecartin appears to present both at the same time: one escapes from reality into a reality which it turns out was the reality of the world all along. At least, this is the claim.

I cannot offer yet a direct assessment of the meaning of such a dissolution, or such a view of technology. Suffice it to say I am skeptical. My concern with the reception of his work has been and remains to be that it overshadows more concrete, more critical, and more self-reflexive practices which do not fit as easily into the demands of today's mainstream curatorial practices. But still, like technology itself, Trecartin's work has various potentials (both positive and negative) and a serious consideration of them cannot begin when we are simply making claims about Trecartin's capacity to represent the "contemporary condition," or even future conditions.



To think in these terms might move us past Jameson's framework of a singular identity of the present which can be synthetically stated and either affirmed or opposed. Auerbach's subtler thesis in *Mimesis* is that there are multiple modes of representation available at any given time and that these modes bear directly on questions of interpretation, authority and history. It is not in fact the case that in "our contemporary moment" we have lost the ability to distinguish between legend and history; but I do feel that this is the case with Trecartin's work. The stakes of such a dissolution will be the subject of future deliberations.

For now, I am thinking here in some un-figured way of the scene in Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, when Major T. J. "King" Kong, unaware that his mission has been aborted, jumps on an atomic bomb and rides it out of the plane like a cowboy, triggering a global destruction system and bringing an end to nearly all life on earth.

-Avi Alpert

Administering Picasso

The contemporary museum experience is administered and managed. Major exhibitions are organized around the titans of ‘modern’ art to attract the masses to the temples of consumerism for the cultivated. Preference is given to the ‘genius’ figures whose singular trajectory and talent attest to an individual originality we are called to adulate. Tickets are expensive and often need to be reserved in advance. The galleries are packed, and the public is ushered through a congested narrative of heroic creativity. In the isolated world of individualized information, which takes its extreme form in the obligatory headsets explaining what is being seen, we are—in a swarm of other people—invited to privately identify with the iconoclastic beauty of the heroic genius. Our individual experience is administered in such a way as to have us conform to the social imaginary of radical individuality at the precise moment at which we are but one more wandering headset in an endless sea of headsets (all subject to the same administered experience of individuality). At the end of this edifying process of cultural elevation and the massification of individuality, we are churned out into the museum shop so that we can purchase the imperturbable signs of our privately shared originality.



The recent exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, *Picasso and the Avant-Garde in Paris*, is no exception. It is structured by a running narrative of artistic innovation opposing the “fundamental assumptions of Western art since the Renaissance” to the iconoclastic virtuosity

of an artistic *toro*. Through a structured chronology of linear development, we follow Picasso as he pushes the envelop of art history by repeatedly calling into question the norms of representation. His work in analytic and synthetic cubism, his sculptural experiments and collages, his encounters with Surrealism, all teach us the same basic lesson: Picasso broke with representation and drove history in the direction of anti-representational art. The audio and printed commentary is replete with the savvy omniscience of those who—like us—can now snicker at the idea that cubism used to be affiliated with the ‘more representational’ work of Jean Metzinger, or that Joaquin Valverde Lasarte’s highly representational *The Hunters* (1931) was considered in its day to be as revolutionary as Picasso’s *Three Musicians* or Léger’s *The City*. The message is clear: we now know what is truly representative of the most important artistic developments in recent history: Picasso’s anti-representational experiments.



It is subtly ironic that the narrative of anti-representation, which seeks to establish a linear history of artistic iconoclasm, is always a representational narrative. In other words, the glorification of anti-representation is embedded in a narrative that is such a part of the representational tradition that it is not even aware of it! There is therefore something disturbingly hollow about its embrace of anti-representation, as if it were acceptable as long as it could be explained, situated, and analyzed in such a way that it can be institutionalized, commercialized and administered. Ultimately, as we wind our way through the final rooms of the exhibit, we realize how bankrupt this narrative is. In one of the most interesting and revealing rooms, the spectator is told that

Picasso’s “return to figuration in his neoclassical period of the 1920s can be linked with the cultural backlash



against Cubism, although the artist never viewed his groundbreaking earlier work as progressing away from classical ideals, despite its revolutionary appearance.” This apparently opens a space for a critical reevaluation of Picasso’s work in terms of his engagement with classical ideals and his attempt to articulate a new relationship to the past (instead of simply breaking with it). However, this space is immediately closed down as we are told that Lasarte’s *The Hunters* is much more representative of the ‘return-to-order’ movement. Nonetheless, the anti-representational narrative trips at this point and can only stumble to the finish line. And what a finish line it is! For the last room is dominated by a sculpture whose title is as “representational” as its content: *Man with a Lamb*.



(due in part to narratives such as the narrative of anti-representation). The photographs also add an interesting vitality to the exhibit, and they help create a sense of the social dimension of the avant-garde. Indeed, the moments when the march of innovation is interrupted by a contextualisation of various social circles are extremely refreshing antidotes to the naiveties of linear history. And the attempt to weave art history into the history of cafés, friendships, jazz performances and more or less formal salons needs to be lauded. Ultimately, the P.M.A. has a strong pedagogical agenda that can be extremely beneficial, as evidenced as well by the last Cézanne exhibit. Pedagogy, however, when it is made to be the handmaiden of administered historical narratives and commercialization, can only lead to the reification of debilitating social imaginaries. If the P.M.A. truly wants to praise iconoclasm and anti-representation, why doesn’t it begin by *breaking with its own representational narratives*?

- Theodore Tucker



of rule with an economic system of exploitation? We simply need to refer to the recent Supreme Court ruling to remind ourselves of the utter absurdity of our situation: corporations were given the right to make unlimited campaign donations based on their right to free speech! The first amendment of the Constitution, which purports to protect the freedom of speech, has been perverted into meaning the freedom for corporations to buy political candidates on the open market!

Since my stark realism runs the risk of being labeled a dark pessimism, what is to be made of those who protest that ‘we do have elections!’ ‘public opinion does matter!’? In the 18th century, Rousseau chided the English for thinking that they were free because they elected representatives every five years, when indeed they were only free one day every five years. We only need to add that the freedom on this single day is in fact an administered freedom insofar as we are “free” to choose candidates who have already been selected for us. Denis Kucinich’s exclusion from the 2008 democratic debate hosted by MSNBC in Las Vegas is a prime example of choices being made for us: NBC fought tooth and nail to avoid having any candidate who might voice a strong anti-war, anti-nuclear position, for fear that it might compromise the work of their proprietor, General Electric. Indeed, GE, NBC and the defense contractor Raytheon (also owned by GE), contributed substantially to the campaigns of Obama, Clinton and Edwards, and the last thing they wanted was to provide a public platform for someone calling for the closure of Yucca Mountain (a nuclear dump in Nevada) or the end of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Indeed, attorneys for General Electric’s NBC argued that “A television station does not have to grant unlimited access to a candidate debate. If anyone’s First Amendment rights are being infringed, they are MSNBC’s.” Regarding public opinion, this is one sign among many that the “public” sphere has been privatized. This means that “public” debates are in fact chosen and administered to the public by professional politicians, business elites and the corporate media. Public opinion is managed in the name of diverse political causes and economic agendas.

Constructing “Democratic” Subjects

The plutocratic oligarchy dressed in the clothes of a representative democracy is only part of a larger political imaginary. It would therefore be a mistake to simply criticize a set of political and economic institutions, as if there were a simple conspiracy from behind closed doors. On the contrary, to go to the



Machete Group Meeting

The Great Refusal: The Neo-Avant-Garde Then and Now

May 21st, 2010

8-10pm

319 North 11th st. Philadelphia PA

As with our previous treatment of post-modernism, in the following session we shall approach the notion of the neo-avant-garde not merely as a historical designation or a particular theoretical fashion, but as an attitude and orientation towards the present that inspires artistic practices today, practices that position themselves critically and aspire to the legacy of refusal for which the avant-garde stands. Our discussion shall center on the manner in which the contemporary artistic concerns framed by Seth Price's "Dispersion" and David Joselit's "Painting Beside Itself" renew the set of problems and issues addressed – according to Hal Foster's account in "What is Neo about the Neo-Avant-Garde?" – by artists in the 1960s. These texts shall serve as a springboard to further interrogate what it might mean to refuse to be an apologist for what exists.

In addition to Alexi Kukuljevic and Gabriel Rockhill, New York based artist Sean Paul will also be present to facilitate the discussion.



Make It Rain on Dem Unpaid Interns

In an economy bleaker than a go-go bar in Jamaica Plains, unpaid internships are gold. The competition to be able to copy paperwork and update FileMaker spreadsheets at the Whitney (the Whitney!) is cutthroat. Indeed, my brother—a student with professor recommendations galore and an astronomically high GPA at his well-known liberal arts college—was unable to secure a volunteer gig with our hometown public library. The reason? Too many applicants. That's correct. He just wasn't 'Solana Beach public library material'.

Damn. And while of course the notion is hilarious, it comes as no great surprise. Volunteer positions and unpaid internships, especially for young people pursuing interests in the humanities, are the only jobs available. Even before the financial collapse, the resumes of graduating college seniors were filled with impressive internships and apprenticeships, and the unflattering barista job was kept secret.

I have always had an icky feeling about unpaid internships in the arts. Something about them just feels a little seedy and manipulative on the part of the organization. Of course, I'm a hypocrite; I have held unpaid internships with a variety of employers—everyone from independent curators to large non-profit foundations. But my diverse experience has perhaps only made me more wary of them. Really, I just think they're illegal.

Unpaid internships are violations of wage and hour laws. What were once paid jobs are now unpaid internships and apprenticeships, exchanging labor for experience and possible networking opportunities. I understand how that benefits an employer but if states have wage and hour laws in place which require all except exempt employees be paid a minimum wage then I don't understand how an employer can get away with paying that same person no hourly wage. In other words, if you can't get away with paying someone \$2.00/hour how is it legal to pay them no dollars an hour?

On April 2, 2010, the *New York Times* confirmed my suspicions. In an article titled "The Unpaid Intern, Legal or Not", Steven Greenhouse reports that authorities in states like Oregon and California have begun to investigate employers who use unpaid interns. They are fining companies citing, of course, the obviously unfair employment practices. The only issue is that these companies are for-profit, whereas most museums and arts organizations are non-profits. As such, the crackdown has left the art world mostly unscathed. Of course, I recognize that in the arts industry, most employers couldn't even afford to pay an employee \$2.00/hour. Particularly at independent galleries and small organizations, unpaid interns are an invaluable resource, performing some of the blander administrative tasks so the directors can focus on larger goals. But if an arts organization can muster up its staff to apply for huge grants to hire a public relations representative or graphic designer, as I have seen occur in organizations with unpaid interns, it can apply those efforts to securing similar grants to compensate their interns. Or, at the very least, it can work with universities to create subsidies for interns in school.

The art world, both for-profit and not, does not like to talk about salaries and money, though those are of course the very things that drive the industry. Especially in the DIY sphere with independent curators, small galleries, and start-up nonprofits, there is a romanticized notion of a 'labor of love'. That's all well and good, but at what point does it turn into unfair labor practices? When an intern spends ten to twenty hours per week, excluding travel, endlessly updating contact lists in sales force for a resume line? When an intern spends months and months in a dark file room without any new contacts or a job offer to show for it? Or when an intern is sexually harassed and unable to file a complaint because she is not an employee, as referenced in the *New York Times* article?

So not all organizations offer the internship from hell (though I have heard far too many horror stories to feel very kind about the practice as a whole). Some of them offer genuinely rewarding experiences, lasting careers, and meaningful relationships. But rewarding or not, all internships need to offer some kind of compensation, legal protection, and regulation.

These positions open in the arts have gradually morphed over the years from paid jobs into unpaid internships. A decade or two ago, internships were relatively rare and only lasted for brief amounts of time. Now, every arts organization in Philadelphia offers an internship—from the Philadelphia Museum of Art to the Slought Foundation to Space 1026. It is rather jarring that 28-year-old screen-printing skateboarders have interns. Not just interns, but interns that were selected from a pool of applicants. This has just got to stop.

For a scene as familiar with Marxist theory as it is with the day of the week, the quiet acceptance of an exploitation of labor is somewhat surprising. The art world, much like media, radio, and television, has always relied on the labor of smart graduates for little or no pay. But the system is one that favors privilege; in a burst-bubble art market like this one, there are increasingly few candidates able to afford a pay-free job. There may be a surplus of eager volunteers at local libraries, but surely organizations are missing a much large (and more well-qualified) applicant pool by not offering concrete incentives. Sure, dinner cruise photographer doesn't have the same ring to it as MOMA intern, but a job's a job.

-Manya Scheps

Organization	Job
College Art Association New York, NY, United States	Intern: Membership, Marketing, and Development Internship unpaid Read Complete Description Approved on 05/12/2010
APA New York New York, NY, USA	Summer Interns for a Photography Non-Profit Organization Internship unpaid Read Complete Description Approved on 05/11/2010
White Columns New York, NY, United States	Summer Internships - TWO Internship unpaid Read Complete Description Approved on 05/11/2010
Studio Miriam Cabessa Brooklyn, NY, US	Studio Manager Assistant Internship unpaid
Riley Illustration New Paltz, NY, US	Digital image manager Internship unpaid Read Complete Description Approved on 05/10/2010
Bloomsbury Auctions New York, NY, USA	Internship Internship unpaid Read Complete Description Approved on 05/10/2010
New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) Brooklyn, NY, USA	Marketing & Research Program Intern Internship unpaid Read Complete Description Approved on 05/07/2010
Johnson Trading Gallery New York, NY, USA	Intern Internship unpaid Read Complete Description Approved on 05/07/2010
Gavin Brown's enterprise New York, NY, USA	Internships Internship unpaid Read Complete Description Approved on 05/06/2010
D'Amelio Terras New York, NY, United States	Internship Internship unpaid Read Complete Description Approved on 05/06/2010
Marvelli Gallery New York, NY, United States	Summer Intern Internship unpaid Read Complete Description Approved on 05/04/2010
Collector Systems New York, NY, USA	Registrarial / Marketing Intern Internship unpaid Read Complete Description Approved on 05/03/2010
Laurel Gitten (Small A Projects) New York, NY, United States	Internship Internship unpaid Read Complete Description Approved on 05/03/2010
Ester Partegas Studio Inc Brooklyn, NY, USA	Internship Internship unpaid Read Complete Description Approved on 05/03/2010
Confidential New York, NY, United States	Gallery Intern Internship unpaid

heart of the question of democracy today, we need to advance into the field of political anthropology and show that the "democratic" political imaginary forms and models subjects at various levels. Indeed for a politico-economic system like ours to function, a set of institutions is insufficient. A compliant and willing social body has to be formed.



The "democratic" subject is one who recognizes that there is only one true value: capital. He or she is inserted, moreover, within a framework of social atomism in which individual "needs" and wants are of primary urgency and undo reflection is considered a waste of time. The anti-intellectual subject intuitively knows what is best: whatever has risen to the top through competition. He or she is an "intuitive" animal of the present who has no need for the historical perspective of the past or for the utopian horizons of the future. Everything is "right here, right now!" The "democratic" subject knows the true meaning of freedom: the freedom of enterprise. He or she also knows the true meaning of democracy: the power of those people who have risen to the top. For ultimately, the democratic subject is a resigned subject who accepts as 'natural' things that are manifestly absurd, such as a plutocratic oligarchy *selling itself* as a democracy.

- Etienne Dolet



Images suggested by Rebecca Kennison. Top: Tina Modotti, "Mexican Peasants Reading El Machete," 1928. Bottom: Tina Modotti, "Workers Parade," 1926.