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Exploring the Space of Resistance: Art as a Site of Re-Orientation

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Introduction

I will begin by stating my interest lies in resistance. The beginnings of this project sprouted from an experience at the Hamburger Bahnhof museum of Berlin, in late fall of 2009. I visited the Hamburger to see a retrospective exhibition of the work of Joseph Beuys—an artist who I then only vaguely remembered from an obscure art history textbook, but an artist who has now become a brilliant North Star in my pantheon of cultural revolutionaries. The museum stands tall in white marble at the end of a long, gated courtyard. Once an open train station, the interior space is flooded with natural illumination. Tall ceilings expand the volume of the gallery; upon entering I felt dwarfed and cold. But despite the luxurious space, I was most intimidated by the obvious distaste the ticket attendant displayed for my clothing. And I was most perturbed by the unapologetic security guards who swept between installations and sculptures at an unnatural pace.

I approached a cast iron sculpture set in the far corner of the gallery. Like an alien pyramid, it rose up from the ground but jutted its apex toward my throat, not sky. I moved closer to observe a wrinkling in metal. And immediately, as if my impertinence were anticipated, I was ordered to stop and retreat. A thin, black tape ran along the ground surrounding the sculpture—the symbolic reminder of a barrier. I had not failed to see it, but I had ignored it. And the fierce bark of the security officer reminded *me* of how powerful such imagined barriers are.

As the deadline for this thesis approached, I began to feel disheartened. (I doubted myself, I was certain my final comments in this paper would be considered naïve. Among countless other things this venture has inculcated in me a deep respect for writers, and has precipitated my own confidence in writing.) After a morning of reading and tedious citation work, I fled the library for the abandoned Jamesville Rock Quarry which is located East of 481-South. I had heard tales of an Earthwork hidden in the basin of this quarry—a deep triangular recession in the rock, which is tiled with small, white stones. According to legend, during spring, after a rain, the ramp fills with water; the stones turn turquoise. Earthworks such as this one—works of environmental art-- provide the point of departure from which I later argue certain art-spaces can foil the commodification process. I was eager to come across one on my own.

I scanned a satellite image of the quarry to learn the terrain. After throwing my body over a rusted, chain link fence, I walked around the wooded area that forms a perimeter to the basin. I was looking for a security tower, a guard, cameras, activity—anything that might suggest my presence was unwanted. Broken shards of rock tumbled ahead of me, as I crawled down a steep pitch to the flat bed of the quarry. An hour passed; I had yet failed to find the narrow crevasse in the earth. And just as I had resolved to cross the great expanse of space to search the west side of the basin, I heard the low rumbling of a vehicle approaching behind me. I sighed deeply, already troubled by the encounter I knew would soon occur.

I was informed that afternoon trespassing, in New York State, is a serious crime. This experience with the law—this firsthand confrontation with forbidden spaces—refocused my attention on the questions I pursue in this project. And even after working toward an open conclusion, the question of how to challenge those forces that retain the power to forbid land from my wanderings still arrests my thought.

This is the perspective I sought; this is the work that lured me into Jamesville Quarry but which remains an enticing mystery:



William Bennet, *Abandoned Earthwork*, 1976-1986, Jamesville Rock Quarry, New York.¹

¹ The Center for Land Use Interpretation, *Jamesville Quarry* (Culver City: The Center for Land Use Interpretation, 2010) [database on-line] <http://ludb.clui.org/ex/i/NY3185/>.

When I express my interest in resistance, I do not propose that our greatest struggle concerns the elimination of black-taped areas in museums (although that objective may be entailed in this project.) Nor do I endeavor to offer a critique of museums. Susan M. Pearce² has exposed the relics of colonial thought still operating within the administration of museums in Europe and the U.S.; Judith Kapferer³ has denounced the sacrifices imposed on artists whose work is subsumed into the highly curated and esoteric ranks of the most prestigious art collections. (Nor is my project is to explore the interior proceedings of petty court.) Though perhaps still incomplete, these critiques have inspired in me the curiosity that I assuage through the course of this study. And this curiosity concerns, namely, wherefrom the incredible suffocation I experienced in the Hamburger? In what space, beyond the confines of the museum or gallery space, does/can art occur? What are the conditions of possibility for a work to challenge existing structures of order, oppression, and ideology? And possibly the most important question--what are the processes of a resistance?

This thesis is the project of evoking a conception of art spaces that provoke alternative ways of being in the world. But more simply, it is an inquiry into the question: Why is the space of resistance important?

²Susan M. Pearce, *Museum Studies in Material Culture*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999.)

³Judith Kapferer, *State and the arts: Articulating Power and Subversion*, (New York: Bantam Books Ltd., 2003.)

Beginning with Earthworks: The Role of Space and Time

Visiting a museum is a matter of going from void to void. Hallways lead the viewer to things once called 'pictures' and 'statues.' Anachronisms hang and protrude from every angle. Themes without meaning press on the eye. Multifarious nothings permute into false windows (frames) that open up into a variety of blanks. Stale images cancel one's perception and deviate one's motivation. Blind and senseless, one continues wandering around the remains of Europe, only to end in that massive deception 'the art history of the recent past'. Brain drain leads to eye drain, as one's sight defines emptiness by blankness. Sightings fall like heavy objects from one's eyes. Sight becomes devoid of sense, or the sight is there, but the sense is unavailable. Many try to hide this perceptual falling out by calling it abstract. Abstraction is everybody's zero but nobody's nought.⁴

Robert Smithson's artistic career, largely dedicated to the creation of earthworks, testified to his distaste for museums. Smithson found museums—the industry of high art, appraisal and curatorship in general—to threaten the efficacy of a work of art. Art, he believed, was something to be lived, experienced and felt; art endeavors to communicate concept, and evoke response. He believed industry built around the trade and possession of art is antithetical to art's objective, insofar as it confines art, narrows its audience, apotheosizes it, and hoards it. As we witness the expansion of this industry from the great marble columns of Bloomsbury and Parisian pyramid into the streets of quotidian consumption we become bystanders to the commodification of art. We become witnesses, of a kind, to the

⁴ Robert Smithson, "Some Void Thoughts on Museums", *Selected Writings from Robert Smithson*, 1967. [database on-line] <http://www.robertsmithson.com/essays/void.htm>.

mummification of culture. “Museums are tombs,” Smithson wrote in February of 1967, “and it looks like everything is turning into a museum.”⁵

In defiance of the tyranny the industry of high art exacts upon artists, art, and public, Robert Smithson along with many other artists of his era began conceiving work that would occur outside tomb-like spaces. Whether by coincidence or purpose, as artists embraced the move past gallery walls the earthworks movement asserted profound desertions from the common practice of institutionalized art.

Suzaan Boettger describes monolithic Earthworks constructed during the 1960s. She writes:

These earthen works appeared as an open grave, a disorderly mound of dirt, an arrangement of bins of sand or rocks and, when made on open land, were located not in felicitous pastoral countryside but in remote wilderness terrains accessible only over rough dirt roads.⁶

This image of an open grave, the depression in earth that is both hollow and hallowed, inverts the model of tomb-like spaces Smithson so passionately spurned. The tomb memorializes the deceased and encloses the decay of the body. Outside its walls, the stone shields us from observing the organic processes of death; the structure is engineered to convey timelessness, immortality. The tomb shields us from entropy. And like the museum, it intends to preserve its tenants from the progression of time.

⁵ Smithson, “Some Void Thoughts.”

⁶ Suzaan Boettger, *Earthworks: Art and Landscape of the Sixties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 24.

Earthworks, however, are no such monuments. Earthworks do not seek to be memorialized; the construction and material of earthworks lends the work to disintegration. And as such capricious works, they clash against the intensive conservationist purpose of the museum. Earthworks seek no representation outside the material of their medium. Earthworks are rock, dirt, grass, water, clay, light, ice, tides. Earthworks are not abstracted from their material composition, but rather their composite material lend to the totality of their conceptual objective.

The earthwork *Spiral Jetty* is one such work that demonstrates Smithson's particular revulsion against acquiescing to museums as exclusive art-space, and is easily his best known creation. Construction on *Spiral Jetty* began in April of 1970 off the shore of Utah's Great Salt Lake. By assembling saline crystals, mud and endemic rock, Smithson extended a 1500-foot long salty tendril into the lake.

Earthworks, like Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*, accomplish something that seems an intrinsic consequence to their production and existence outside the museum space. That is, earthworks naturally become rooted in their environment; these works are dedicated spatially and temporally to a finite location, and the location participates not only in their conceptual objectives but also in their formal composition. As the tide rises and falls on Great Salt Lake, the visibility of *Spiral Jetty*, fluctuates and adopts striking variations in color; the black basalt rock of its foundation manifests as vibrant blood or coral pink, according to its level of submergence and the blanket of

microorganisms that coat the rock's surface. And in the years since its initial creation, time has affected its own metamorphosis on the structure; subtle erosion perpetually alters the work, as salt crystals blossom and pebbles break away from rock. The physical object of *Spiral Jetty*, from the moment of its inception, was not a static art object, but conceptually addressed the organic processes of entropy and decay.



Robert Smithson, *Spiral Jetty*, April 1970, Great Salt Lake, Utah.⁷

The earthworks movement continues to challenge the notion of what constitutes an art space. Outside the temples of curated culture, earthworks-minded artists such as Robert Smithson push against the modes of selection that seek to distinguish High Art from all else. I offer this brief introduction to earthworks and their history to whet the reader's appetite for compelling (and

⁷ Estate of Robert Smithson, "Robert Smithson Gallery," Robert Smithson 2010. [database on-line]
http://www.robertsmithson.com/index_.htm.

unusual) works of art. While I do not believe earthworks are unique in their existence outside the museum space, I suggest these works present certain properties that frustrate the process of their commodification—properties that I argue allow for the potential of radical political and social provocation. Our struggle begins with the battle against the commodification of art. And the anchor of resistance to this foe rests upon our ability to escape the commodification process.

Space or Site as an Obstacle to Commodification

The greatest transgression committed by the Industry of High Art occurs in its attempts to dogmatize the canon of Art History. Through institutions that aim to preserve monoliths of our purported cultural history, this industry produces the social capital of art. It lionizes individual works, apotheosizes artists, and consequently alienates the public from art in two ways: we confront a tacit yet distinct division between high art that merits our veneration, and the works of the *amateur*. (We may wonder if there is meaning to the title “*artist amateur*” other than the state of being yet unaccepted by the ruling body of *connaisseurs d'art*.) Furthermore, the industry devotes itself to the monetary evaluation of art. When this second activity takes place, the art object begins the transformation into a commodity.

We must invest our attention in the peculiar non sequitur that is the commodified art object to understand how it alienates the art object from its audience, and ultimately strips it of its operative purpose.

Consider this: In May of 2004, Sotheby's auction house in New York sold Picasso's 1905 painting *Garçon à la Pipe* for more than \$104,000,000.⁸ The painting passed into the private possession of an anonymous individual. New York University professor of art history and world-renowned Picasso expert Pepe Karmel commented on this sale the following day, "I'm stunned that a pleasant, minor painting could command a price appropriate to a real masterwork by Picasso. This just shows how much the marketplace is divorced from the true values of art."⁹ What sense of "value" does Karmel express? He points to a notion of aesthetic value, which is essentially constituent to the work. As such an essential part, it is inextricable from the painting *Garçon à la Pipe*; its aesthetic value does not accidentally occur, nor is it exteriorly imposed. A theory of essential aesthetic value allows Karmel to maintain that innately, some objects constitute art due to their having the property of aesthetic value, while other objects do not.¹⁰ To the degree that a *minor* work such as *Garçon à la Pipe* is less aesthetically valuable than a major work of Picasso's, Karmel ostensibly assumes the minor work should command a lesser market price. His confusion rests in his misunderstanding of

⁸ "Picasso Painting Sells for \$104 Million," *BBC News*, May 6, 2004 [database on-line] <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/3682127.stm>.

⁹ "Picasso Painting Sells."

¹⁰ Gregory Currie, "Supervenience, Essentialism and Aesthetic Properties," *Philosophical Studies* 58.3 (October, 1988) : 243-257.

how *value* in the market occurs, particularly for art objects. For even if a theory of essential aesthetic value were soundly contended (and few reputable, contemporary philosophers seem to find it defensible) it would fail to address the chimeric apparition of exchange-value—a value that is not located in the physical object, but comes into being in the helical political, economic and social nexus. Indeed, we may also wonder how the value of such a work is determined in the market.

I rely on Marx to guide my quick survey of this question, since a discussion of how art becomes commodified is but an interstice before our devotion to the subject of what that system of commodification potentially imposes on our selves. In volume I of his work, *Capital* (1867), Marx defines a commodity as “an external object, a thing which through its qualities satisfies human needs of whatever kind and is then exchanged for something else.”¹¹ He further explains, “It is not the exchange of commodities which regulates the magnitude of their value; but, on the contrary, that it is the magnitude of their value which controls their exchange proportions.”¹² That is to say, the magnitude of value concentrated in an object is relatively determined by the value of other objects in the market. The pecuniary figure that asserts a commodity’s exchange value is not essential to that object-- it is not a physical property, it is not inherent in the object. The market presents the

¹¹ Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume I*, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (London: Lawrence & Wishard, Ltd., 2009), 125.

¹² Marx, *Capital*, 69.

space of exchange in which a commodity's commensurate magnitude of value materializes.

In such a market-relation of commodities, we might indicate the value of *Garçon à la Pipe* not as \$104,000,000, but as 1,733,333 college textbooks; as 69,333 laptops; as 14,857,143 pounds of coffee...etc. Such equivalence relations can be made, according to Marx, because these equivalences operate without differentiation of the particular labor involved in the production of these distinct commodities; the labor invested in the production of a singular commodity becomes abstracted into general labor, or, the socially necessary labor time required for the production of that commodity. It is through this abstraction, and the competition of the market, that similar or even identical commodities (pens, for example) may originate from different producers, yet exact an approximately uniform exchange value when sold.¹³ (Consider that one single laborer produces pens by hand, making only one pen per day. Her competitors each have pen factories, and produce one hundred thousand pens per day. Given that the pens are of equal quality, the first pen maker will be forced to sell her single pen at the price of her competitors' pens, though this exchange of her pen for the market price may not reflect the necessary labor time required to produce the pen by hand.)

The use-value also proportionately affects the magnitude of value an object has once it becomes a commodity. The use-value of a commodity connotes the function of the commodity, or the social need for the commodity.

¹³ Marx, *Capital*, 69.

The use-value of a commodity is therefore relative to the consumer. But it may be contended that the use-value of such a work as *Garçon à la Pipe*, or every relative instantiation of an art object's use-value, is superlatively so; that is, one person may regard the work as an appalling eyesore, and another find it enthralling—a necessary totem to their aesthetic health. But I doubt whether a work of art is initially recognized as an object with an aesthetic and consequentially social use-value is left to subjective opinion of the consumer, also understood in this case as the work's audience. Rather, the use-value of a work, and accordingly its magnitude of value, is the product manufactured by the Industry of High Art.

Like all commodities, the labor time encompassed within a work of art, determines the exchange-value, or equivalence relation the work will procure on the market. However, given Marx's explanation of how all productive labor becomes abstracted into general labor, the labor that yields a creative work presents an interesting anomaly.¹⁴ The production of art does not comply with an averaged/standardized socially necessary labor time. The labor of the artist is not abstracted from her product; the undifferentiated labor of all artists cannot be congealed into the production of art as a homogenous commodity. It is the labor invested in the creation of a work that yields the

¹⁴ Marx distinguishes productive labor as that labor which ultimately bears surplus value, but notes how the kind of work that is considered productive labor is historically and socially contingent. Yet, among those productive labors are a variety of enterprises, the diversity and specification of which are necessary to society. Because labor is so divided, the definite work of producing pens, for example, is not perceived in the market as pen-work but is synonymous with the general category of productive labor and is hence, abstracted from the specific work of pen making.

varying degrees of its evaluation (often by appealing to an essential aesthetic value, previously expressed by Karmel.) Yet, an ancillary function exerted by the Industry of High Art develops the estimate of a work beyond its purported possession of aesthetic value. To mobilize art as a commodity in the market, the Industry of High Art performs the labor of producing social capital of a work of art, in order to incur an assumed use value. It is the labor of the High Art Industry, the work of museum and gallery curators, appraisers, auction houses, et al., to produce the social capital of prestigious works and therefore to determine the magnitude of value such works will assert in the market.

The motivation behind the efforts of High Art Industry to inflate (and instigate) use-value for art lies in the need to perpetuate its own survival as a producer-apparatus. This industry exerts a parasitic, managerial relationship with art—which it must first assert as a commodity via the production of social value of art objects—and then mediates the exchange of the art object, with commission. Envisioning the art object as the *site* that is itself capitalized by the owner, Marxist geographer David Harvey likens the art object to land and uses the analogy of rent to describe its superintendence.

It is not the land, resource or location of unique qualities which is traded but the commodity or service produced through their use. The land or resource is directly traded upon... Scarcity can be created by withholding the land or resource from current uses and speculating on future value. Monopoly rent of this sort can be extended to ownership of works of art (such as Rodin or a Picasso) which can be (and increasingly are) bought and sold as investments. It is the uniqueness

of the Picasso or the site which here forms the basis for monopoly price.¹⁵

Like land, he suggests, the owner of a work of art accrues profit from the artwork by restricting access to it. Both land and the art object have limited maximum “occupancies;” land and art objects are spatially restricted and fixed. Unable to modify the fixity of land or the art object, the owner resorts to imposing temporal restrictions on access to the work, and so capitalizes on the art as a *site*. Paying for periods of access or use, Harvey points out that we often rent the experience of an art work no differently from our apartments. And the variables that determine the marketability of land and art undulate over the same plane: scarcity and uniqueness, the socially perceived use value, and the site’s aesthetic value all fuel competition and increase its price in the market.¹⁶ That capitalism responds analogously to land and art by exploiting *access* begs the question: which sites are themselves insular to the capitalist system?

Initially it may seem this query offers bleak hope for the existence of such spaces. But take heart! We must recognize this industry retains curatorial power and the power of access by maintaining the construction of its own authority. Precisely, this industry presumes to determine what is true art, what is truth in art. A stamp of approval, or recognition from this body of experts admits a work of art to the market, determines its magnitude of value, and

¹⁵ David Harvey “The Art of Rent: Globalization, Monopoly and the Commodification of Culture,” *Generation Online*, 2010. [database on-line] http://www.generation-online.org/c/fc_rent1.htm.

¹⁶ Harvey “The Art of Rent.”

monopolizes its audience.¹⁷ And in simply noticing the false pretense of this prerogative we are already reorienting ourselves toward a site outside the market space.

Once the commodification and exchange transpires, the work becomes immured in the Industry's project of preserving. For only in motion, in its potential for further exchange, can the commodity accrue further capital. (The art object as a commodity becomes a site of investment capital.) The most esteemed works are elected into the annals of art history-- an irreversible shift into the canon of cultural import. But once this shift takes place, the revelatory power behind the work, and in some cases its conceptual impetus, is severely obstructed if not destroyed.¹⁸

The direct threat the commodification process poses to *artists* as it attempts to insulate their work from temporality is addressed by Robert

¹⁷ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, (London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 1972).

¹⁸ For example, consider the coup achieved by the Tate Modern collection of London in 2008: the work of street artist Banksy was installed on the museum's monolithic north face. Prior to this commission, Banksy obtained underground infamy by asserted himself as a radical artist-terrorist by illegally and secretly installing his work in private galleries and museums. His other works of street art, painted on urban surfaces belonging to both public (State) and private property, denoted Banksy as a criminal. Yet his intrepid, unapologetic creations and choice of site led to his explosion as a sub-culture/pop-culture celebrity. While this social capital evolved exterior to the Industry of High Art, it was nonetheless seized. The Tate Modern successfully obtained an *original* Banksy for its collection, which transformed his work into a Tate-specific site—the access to which could not only be controlled, but capitalized upon. And by divorcing his work from its original dedication to challenging the use of public (State) spaces—by further asserting its project of preserving work that was initially *removed* by state forces and prosecuted—the Tate Modern nullified the natal power of Banksy's work.

Smithson in his essay, “A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects.” He writes,

...Any critic who devalues the *time* of the artist is the enemy of art and the artist. The stronger and clearer the artist’s *view* of time the more he will resent any slander on this domain. By desecrating this domain, certain critics defraud the work and mind of the artist. Artists with a weak view of time are easily deceived by this victimizing kind of criticism, and are seduced into some trivial history. An artist is enslaved by time, only if the time is controlled by someone or something other than himself. The deeper an artist sinks into the time stream the more it becomes *oblivion*; because of this, he must remain close to the temporal surfaces. Many would like to forget time altogether, because it conceals the “death principle” (every authentic artist knows this). Floating in this temporal river are the remnants of art history, yet the “present” cannot support the cultures of Europe, or even the archaic or primitive civilizations; it must go into the places where remote futures meet remote pasts.¹⁹

In so far as works such as *Spiral Jetty*, and the general set of earthworks resist an ontologically static objectivity; to the extent that they may not be materially possessed, nor physically exchanged, they resist commodification within the network of exchanges that constitute the Industry of High Art. We can more clearly understand how these works frustrate the commodification process if we recognize that the constant metamorphosis exacted by time—the work of erosion, in the case of Smithson’s *Spiral Jetty*—metaphysically establishes these works as *events* rather than art objects. Because, the time of capital is one of persistence; it is a future time committed to the expansion of value. And like a small crack in the rock of an

¹⁹ In *Art in Theory 1900-2000*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2003), 881.

ominous mountain, it is the fault from which an alternative, anti-commodity art may spring.

Earthworks' Peculiar Properties and the Time of Capital

Upon reflection on how the problem of commodification of art occurs, we observe its reliance on at least two fundamental processes: firstly, art as a commodity is exchanged in the market physically. The commodified art lends itself to physical circulation in a similar sense that any thing-- a coat for example-- may circulate among consumers, pawnbrokers, and secondary consumers. Access to the work is controlled and turned for profit.

Secondly, commodified art also occurs as an instantiation of social capital. This social capital mutates into investment capital during circulation, which only sustains as such if the longevity of the art object may be ensured. Expressed more fully, the investor who purchases monetarily the social capital of the art object hopes only secondarily that she or he can resell the object for a surplus value in the future, and firstly assumes that the work will still exist at this future date. Hence, persistence through time is an integral facet of the process in which art objects become investment capital in the form of a commodity. This tacit assumption of perpetuity spawns an extended network of securities and cultural dogmas built around the preservation of both the object and its social capital—networks we can circuitously sense with the observation that an education in art history rarely deviates from the

established canon (so undemocratically composed), or a moment's consideration of why the security systems installed in the Louvre, the Tate Modern, and the Uffizi Gallery boast such menacing security technology.

The move, then, toward the creation of art that resists commodification lies in the work's innate capacity to refute at least these two integral steps to its introduction to the market. It must defy physical exchange in the market, and perhaps more importantly, must preclude itself from the investors' interest in perpetuity. Hence, works of interest to this discussion present these two essential properties: 1) the work being of a temporally reactive nature, and 2) the work being spatially sensitive. What conditions of possibility lie in the space, or site, or grounding, of those works that avow these properties and therefore orbit the nowhere-land outside commodification?

My meditation on this question is rooted in an ontological method. When we investigate into the ontological properties of an object, or being, we inquire after the ways that object or subject exists in the world—in reality. An ontological consideration examines which characteristics of a thing determine its interaction with, and participation in, reality. For example, we may ask whether a table is a table in virtue of having a horizontal surface supported by a base. Or, whether a table is rather something upon which we can set plates, or onto which we can toss our car keys. And in doing so we would be considering the ontology of the table. Furthermore, ontological questions seek to edify how objects relate to the world. These questions may address physical relations—such as what happens to a ball of clay when I mould it into a

sculpture, then crush it with my palm (does the identity of the clay change over time from ball to sculpture?) And in another vein, ontology addresses the relations subjects construct with abstract objects, structures, and systems such as ideology, identity, language, and orientation.

The work of Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* offers a foundation for the discussion of what potential non-commodity art spaces may offer. Specifically, she provides us with the tools for theorizing the precipitation of a relationship between such an artist, such a work, and such an audience. Ahmed theorizes the "grounding" of our orientation in space to objects and subjects. She writes:

Perceiving an object involves a way of apprehending that object. So it is not just that consciousness is directed toward objects, but also that I take different directions toward objects: I might like them, admire them, hate them, and so on. In perceiving them in this way or that, I also take a position upon them, *which in turn gives me a position...* Orientations involve directions toward objects that affect what we do... Turning toward an objects turns 'me' in this way or that, even if that 'turn' does not involve a conscious act of interpretation or judgment.²⁰

An object grounds us, orients us in the world, by evoking the internal orientations already present within our conscious bodies. And yet grounding is furthermore, existential. Grounding, or orientation, is the fulcrum of our experience. It is both a starting point from which we base interaction with things and others, and the lens that both augments and distorts the cast of our participation in the world. Internally, hidden within the nuanced behaviors, learned convictions and compartments—veiled by our predilection for

²⁰ (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 27-28.

individualism—we each respond to the world according to those imbibed ideologies that orient us. These ideologies steer our actions, our thoughts, our formulation of new ideas and opinions. They pierce the core of our being, guiding even our emotions. Ideologies form the program according to which our world operates; and as programmed bodies in that world, we reflect, project, and impress this program onto others. We are victims, and perpetrators; oppressed, and oppressors. Such is the existential grounding according to which we orient ourselves in space.

Objective and existential groundings—both the physical and abstract objects that orient our selves—operate within an entwined duality. We receive sensory information regarding the material world around us; we organize this information into a model. Our *knowledge*, the order according to which everything in this material world subscribes, is then projected into that space. This projected organization becomes reified in material objects, and illustrates the twofold objective and existential grounding from which we participate in the world. Stimulus of one inextricably affects the other.

So, unlike a road-sign that orients our direction in space, ideologies that prescribe certain interior orientations are not concrete objects. Imagine them instead as an internal point of departure—an interior grounding—and concurrently the social pattern of these departures. The State for example, notes Louis Althusser in his essay “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” is not in fact an object but is a function of State power. Its functioning requires an internal grounding in its constituent bodies that *a*

priori acknowledges State power. Similarly, other organs of control, of repression and subjection, are conducted through our bodies and our internal groundings. We may imagine Ideology according to this abstraction. Intangible, yet felt; invisible, yet present; ideology is the event-horizon we approach within the activity of every social relation, as well as object-subject relation. “What is represented in ideology is not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals,” writes Althusser, “but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live.”²¹

Ideologies such as Religion, Education, Family, Communications, and Culture are not only mechanisms of exerting and maintaining state power, but are also “the site of class struggle,”²² according to Althusser. These perform complementary functions: ideologies establish the status quo of relations between classes, races, genders, etc. while simultaneously preserving those relations. Ideologies react, like programs or autoimmune diseases, to the introduction of new ideas, ways of being, modes of production, by subsuming them into the extant hegemonic ideology. Ideologies react, and neutralize. Dominant modes of production seem to digest deviant modes, or those modes of relating and producing that challenge (even in the most minute, isolated spaces) the ideologies insulating our social infrastructure from critique. And given that ideology thus manifests in material and social relations, as well as

²¹ In *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, ed. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 165.

²² Althusser, 165.

initially within the individual, the process of observing the subject's orientation toward bodies in space—becomes one in which we can question our orientation toward (and receptivity of) ideology.

Consider this example of how objects (exterior groundings) and ideology (an internal grounding) coalesce to orient a subject. Ahmed describes a scene in which the philosopher Husserl sits down at a table in his study, ready to embark on philosophical reflection. The table itself is a place of work, of productive activity of a determined nature (namely, writing.) The table grounds Husserl's actions in this way, toward writing. The table is also arranged so that Husserl's front is directed away from other rooms in the house. His family, his domestic responsibilities are placed in the background by the orientation stipulated by the table.²³ These objects ground Husserl in the activity of philosophy. Ahmed proposes what this orientation toward the desk and Husserl's philosophical project *turns away* from:

By reading the objects that appear in Husserl's writing, we get a sense of how being directed toward some objects and not others involves a more general orientation toward the world. The objects that we direct our attention toward reveal the direction we have taken in life. If we face this way or that, then other things, and indeed spaces, are relegated to the background; they are only ever co-perceived. Being oriented toward the writing table not only relegates other rooms in the house to the background but also might depend on the work done to keep his desk clear, that is, the domestic work that might be necessary for Husserl to turn the table into a philosophical object. Some things are relegated to the background to sustain a certain direction, in other words, to keep attention on the "what" that is faced. Perception involves such acts of relegation that are forgotten in the very preoccupation with what it is that we face.²⁴

²³ "Orientations: Toward a Queer Phenomenology." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12.4 (2006): 543.

²⁴ Ahmed, "Orientations," 544.

The orientation toward the desk allows Husserl to forget certain features of his workspace. Insofar as grounding in space identifies the conditions of possibility for events and subjects in that space, we should ask what conditions make it possible for Husserl to write.²⁵ For it is not only those objects which are present on the desk, but the invisible work to keep his desk clean, to keep his children from interrupting his study, that make his enterprise possible. Husserl's orientation in this example not only turns his back to the space occupied by the family, but is made possible by the housekeeping labor of his wife.²⁶ His orientation is determined in part by an interior grounding built upon an ideology of the family, according to which the conditions for Husserl's writing are established.

But what if an invasive object were present on the desk? An object that triggered a radical reorienting of Husserl's activity? A dirty rag might do the trick—the same innocuous rag used to dust his desk, left in the corner near the inkwell. Such a rag might evoke a crisis or re-orientation in the philosopher. No longer able to turn away from the necessary labor that provides for his own study, would Husserl be recalled to reckon with institutionalization of marriage? Would he be reminded of the differentiation of labor assigned to each gender? And could this rag do more than arrest his attention on his acquiescence to the ideology of family, but in fact provoke critique, if not resistance?

²⁵ Ahmed, "Orientations," 544.

²⁶ Ahmed, "Orientations," 547.

Ahmed asserts that a queer orientation in the world might be one like this in which we invert our perception backwards and inwards—behind us in space, as opposed to an orientation locked within the fore-grounded objects directly before us. A work of art, like any object, may serve as the exterior grounder onto which we can reposition ourselves and subsequently our orientation. It may be the magnetic object outside our bodies that beckons us *over there*. Art that occurs outside the commodity space—an abstract space that is less intrinsically structured to support dominant ideologies—can be an alternative pole for the internal compass that is grounding. Art existing in this space can challenge us to ask why we may be *here* and not *over there* in the first place.

I contend in this way we can conceive of art as a grounding from which we can orient ourselves in opposition to those ideological apparatuses that form the social superstructure of our productive and reproductive processes.

Almost everything hitherto presented is theoretical. We need tangible, defined, historical illustrations of the relationship between the commodification process of art and ideology; between art that challenges existing orientations and those subjects who are re-oriented. I suggest the following case studies to demonstrate these relationships.

The NASA Artists Commissioning Project

The inception of the National Air and Space Agency occurred in 1958 with the National Aeronautics and Space Act. The Soviet Union had only recently launched the satellite Sputnik in 1957; NASA's debut occurred in the frenzied aura of fear that marked the height of the Cold War. The threat of mutually assured destruction bred fierce tension within United States and Soviet relations. These tensions posited a difficult marketing obstacle to the nascent Space Agency. In an era of clandestine government operations, exploding advances in technology, and the continual threat of nuclear apocalypse, NASA faced the difficult challenge of presenting its objectives to the world as research and exploration-oriented and not an extension of the United States' military complex.²⁷ The longevity of NASA relied heavily upon its political and public image, both at home and abroad.

James Webb, a key administrator in the early management of NASA, proposed a solution to this problem in the beginning of 1960. A campaign would be instituted to educate the public on the objectives of space exploration, and would employ contemporary artists to provide the medium of this didacticism. This campaign was named the NASA Artists Commissioning Program, and recruited American artists such as Robert Rauschenberg, Norman Rockwell and Jamie Wyeth.²⁸ Webb and other NASA administrators

²⁷ Anne Collins Goodyear, "NASA and the Political Economy of Art, 1962-1974," in *The Political Economy of Art*, ed. Julie F. Codell (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2008), 192.

²⁸ In *The Political Economy of Art*, 192.

invited a curator of the National Gallery, Lester Cooke, to select artists and direct the commissioning agenda.

Cooke and Webb conducted the commissioned works within the vein of NASA's political objective by stipulating explicit themes each work must elicit. Anne Collins Goodyear describes these objectives in her essay, "NASA and the Political Economy of Art, 1962-1974." She writes, "By committing resources to Art, which promised to outlast the ephemeral benefits of media coverage, NASA found a way to translate and communicate its objective of dominance in extraterrestrial exploration into qualities broadly compatible with human excellence... The patronage of art promised to serve the space program by shaping public perceptions of it and thus promoting the agency in the eyes of Congress and the Public."²⁹

We see from the very beginning, this project encompassed a definite teleology; artists were expected to produce works that engineered a particular political identity for NASA. This identity posited the power of American nationalism by conveying images of heroic American astronauts, the American flag, and American landmarks. They united technological zeal with American patriotism. NASA encouraged artists to appeal to nostalgic references to the time of Westward American expansion. This ideology, further accompanied by the vision of reaching the new Promised Land, advanced via these works a new (and yet recycled, redirected) American narrative. NASA would be the instrument for realizing the new American

²⁹ In *The Political Economy of Art*, 193.

dream—conquering the *final* frontier. Artist Paul Calle, one of the greatest contributors to the project, expressed the sentiment, “I like to use the analogy of oneness that I see between Neil Armstrong’s boot sinking into the dust of the moon and the moccasined foot of a man like John Colter sinking into the snow as he entered Yellowstone River Valley for the first time.”³⁰ To achieve a successful re-orienting of the public toward NASA, the state invested its power in producing works that would communicate an explicit archetype, and which would furthermore lend themselves to the commodification process.

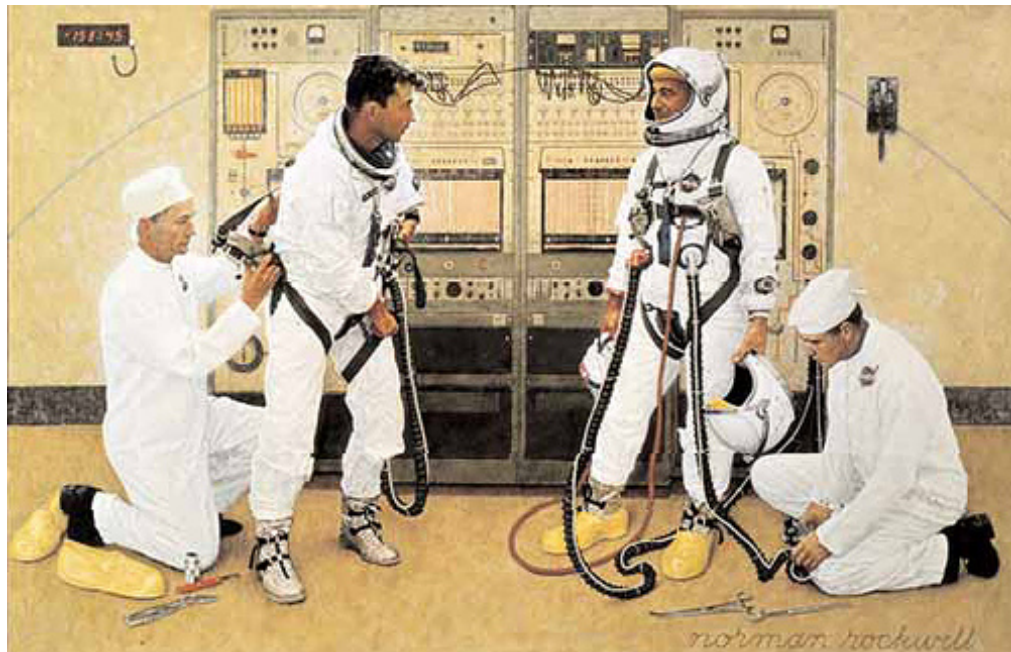
Among those works commissioned by this campaign, Norman Rockwell’s *The Longest Step (Grissom and Young Suiting Up)*, (1965), and Paul Calle’s, *Mercury* and *Gemini* series unequivocally capture the themes put forth by this project’s administrators. And for the purposes of our investigation, these paintings offer specific examples that demonstrate the process of commodification that was so integral to the triumph of the NASA Artists Commissioning Project. In order for these works to act as grounding for the new, pro-NASA ideal, a point of contact—a medium for exposure—was required through which the public would encounter these themes. The state relied upon its citizens’ primary capitalist activity to self-effect this exposure.

For example, the image of Rockwell’s *The Longest Step (Grissom and Young Suiting Up)* (1965) was printed and distributed in the April 20, 1965

³⁰ In *The Political Economy of Art*, 193.

edition of LOOK Magazine.³¹ Selected works from Calle's *Mercury* and *Gemini* series became the reproduced image on a line of U.S. Postal Service stamps in 1967. The state utilized the organic circulation and consumption of commodities to conjure from within the public's quotidienne consumerism the grounding of the new space-culture and ideology.

And here they are:



Norman Rockwell *The Longest Step (Grissom and Young Suiting Up)*, 1965.³²



Paul Calle, U.S. Postal Service Stamp "Gemini Space Twins," 1967.³³

³¹ In *The Political Economy of Art*, 194.

³² Norman Rockwell, *The Longest Step (Grissom and Young Suiting Up)*, 1965. (Rutland: The Norman Rockwell Museum of Vermont, 2010) [database on-line] <http://www.normanrockwellvt.com/FramedPrints.htm>.

The NASA Artists Commissioning Project demonstrates the symbiosis between capitalism and the production of state ideology, but particularly it testifies to how these forces seize art as a site for orienting individuals toward prescribed ideologies. In this case, the prescription induced a re-shaping of public opinion toward space-exploration alongside nationalist and patriotic appetites. But given that this method of locating art in the space of commodification to provide grounding for state-sponsored re-orienting, we may be wise to heed similarly constructed projects that pursue more nefarious, surreptitious goals.

Joseph Beuys and the Building of Social Sculpture

The work of German artist, professor, and political activist Joseph Beuys (1921-1986), will in no way be thoroughly analyzed in this brief, demonstrative case study. I hope only to offer a snippet of Beuys' oddness in the beginning, so that it does not become a point of disturbance later.

Throughout his artistic career, Beuys created a wealth of material works in painting, sculpture, installation, film, and drawing. He expanded the treasury of art theory in written treatise; He broke new ground in the sphere of performance art with such performances as "I Like America and America

³³ Larry McGlynn, "Stepping on the Moon with Paul and Chris Calle," *Space Artists*, [database on-line] <http://spacearttribute.blogspot.com/2008/06/stepping-on-moon-with-paul-chris-calle.html>.

Likes Me,” (1974) during which he spent a three-day visit to New York in the sole company of a coyote, isolated from people, American culture and media, protected only by a blanket.³⁴ And as a radical political figure, Beuys declared a cultural war on governing bodies and tenets of hegemonic society. A professor of art in Düsseldorf, Germany, Beuys would hold free and open lectures to all who would attend—a practice that put him at odds with not only his own university but also the greater clique of academic institutions of his time. Though only a small informative capsule of Beuys’ life and work is thus given, I hope I have communicated that Beuys was not a person who capitulated to dominant modes of thought, behavior, or intellectualism in society.

Humanist social theories, however, did arrest Beuys’ attention. As Beuys pushed the limits of avant-garde art in the 1960s, and into the beginning of the 1970s, his fascination with humanism engendered what became his theory of social sculpture.³⁵ Comprised in this theory is the premise that society and art are indivisible from one another, and as such, every member of society is an artist who is responsible for the form society assumes en masse. Claudia Mesch describes how Beuys’ understood the role of the individual in social sculpture. She writes,

Beuys would render his theory, which posited the existence of radical individual freedom or agency in the contemporary world, into the

³⁴ Götz Adriani, *Joseph Beuys: Leben und Werk* (Köln: DuMont, 1981).

³⁵ Thierry de Duve, “Joseph Beuys, or the Last of the Proletarians,” in *Joseph Beuys the Reader*, ed. Claudia Mesch and Viola Michely (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007), 134-150.

practice of inter-subjective communication within the sphere of art. Beuys believed that deep social and political reform could be realized beyond the cultural sphere in this art... As Beuys implemented it, the exchange of individual opinions within an open public dialogue and debate comprised social sculpture; a functioning and unmediated public sphere therefore became the realization of social sculpture.³⁶

Beuys himself explained the details of how social sculpture works through the co-creative labor of its members over the course of talks held and recorded at Documenta V (1972).³⁷ Conversation on the subject of social sculpture and intense debate over the best technique to instigate a grass-roots (*Volksabstimmung*) cultural revolution became, essentially, Beuys contribution to Documenta V—an installation, he would call it. In the following excerpt from this prolonged dialogue, Beuys expresses the keystone to his theory of social sculpture: every member of society is an artist.

We have to ensure that it [society] is structured organically so that it functions like a person functions internally, like the organs function... To realize [free democratic socialism] one needs the model of decartelization³⁸ on a large scale, so that the domain of culture, all that which makes up intellectual life, is administered on its own... I just want to encourage everyone to take this into their own hands, the education process. Everyone that already can or who could at the moment--we don't need a brilliant talent somewhere. Precisely the ability that one has at the moment must be put to work... No area of life will be free from this concept [everyone is political] in the future. That means that people will recognize the social organism, and they must think within this context. They must not only think about schools

³⁶ “Institutionalizing Social Sculpture: Beuys *Office for Direct Democracy through Referendum* Installation (1972),” in *Joseph Beuys the Reader*, ed. Claudia Mesch and Viola Michely (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007), 198-217.

³⁷ Documenta is a 100 day-long art exhibition held in Kassel, Germany, every five years.

³⁸ Decartelization is the transition of a national economy from monopoly control by groups of large businesses, known as cartels, to a free market economy.

but also about the legal system and economic structures. They must always think through the entire social organism.³⁹

Beuys draws a parallel--a coordination-- between sculpting of the individual, and the restructuring of social systems such as the legal and education systems. In this model, the individual assumes responsibility for generating change in society; in doing so she orients her body, her activity, her productivity, toward social reformation. And in doing so, she averts her body, her activity, her productivity, away from reproducing the hegemonic orders of ideology and repression currently in place. Her subjective grounding—the conditions of her consciousness that allow for certain possible actions—offers the springboard for her reification of new potential political apparatuses; this grounding offers a launch pad for new conceptions of her relationship to the state, to modes of exchange, and to others. Social sculpture occurs as the product of concurrent interiorly and exteriorly directed sculpting.

Beuys shepherded such an instance of social sculpture through the work *7000 Eichen (7000 Oaks)*, which was launched in Kassel, Germany in 1982. *7000 Eichen* would be the planting of 7000 oak trees, each attended by a short pillar of basalt rock that marked it as one of the seven thousand

³⁹ Joseph Beuys, “Every Man an Artist: Talks at Documenta V by Joseph Beuys”, ed. Clara Bodenmann-Ritter, in *Joseph Beuys the Reader*, ed. Claudia Mesch and Viola Michely (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007), 189-197.

plantings.⁴⁰ Over the course of the five years, the planting-sites for 7000 *Eichen* were proposed by neighborhood councils, elementary schools, charity organizations, student groups, individual residents— the “organs” of society directed and designated the space of this geographically fragmented yet conceptually amalgamated earthwork and sculpture.



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⁴⁰ Lynne Cooke, “Joseph Beuys: 7000 Oaks,” Dia Art Foundation, 2010. [database on-line] <http://www.diaart.org/sites/page/51/1295>.

⁴¹ A row of Oaks that partially constitutes 7000 *Eichen*, located in Kassel, Germany. Photo Copyright: Dieter Schwerdtle Fotografie. Arts Council England, “Joseph Beuys 7000 Oaks: Land Art Meets Urban Renewal.” Arts and Ecology, <http://www.artsandecology.org.uk/magazine/artworks/project-6>.

⁴² Joseph Beuys planting the first sapling of 7000 *Eichen* in Kassel, Germany, 1982. Photo Copyright: Dieter Schwerdtle Fotografie. Arts Council England, “Joseph Beuys 7000 Oaks: Land Art Meets Urban Renewal.” Arts and Ecology, 2010. [database on-line] <http://www.artsandecology.org.uk/magazine/artworks/project-6>.

Beuys' *7000 Eichen* binds those peculiar features of earthworks with an ideology of community and citizenry intrinsic to his concept of social sculpture. The site of their planting speaks to the power of the public—each citizen's self-capacity to change the landscape. With disregard for the distinction between public and private space, each planting of these oaks and pillars was an also ecological protest.

I believe that planting these oaks is necessary not only in biospheric terms, that is to say, in the context of matter and ecology, but in that it will raise ecological consciousness--raise it increasingly, in the course of the years to come, because we shall never stop planting. Thus, *7000 Oaks* is a sculpture referring to peoples' life, to their everyday work. That is my concept of art which I call the extended concept or art of the social sculpture.⁴³

And this act of protest—the social sculpture that is the planting of *7000 Eichen*—cannot be usurped by the market. Though materialized in pith and stone, these objects that constitute the merely physical features of the work are deeply rooted in the land; the relocating tentacles of museum hoards cannot incarcerate this work. *7000 Eichen* responds to and renews with entropy; the trees and rock will each respond to passing time at different rates of change. (The oaks mature, bud, wither and rot, as the rock slowly becomes chipped, sinks lower into the earth, tilts slowly as dirt erodes underneath... These elements present how *7000 Eichen* defeats the gravitation toward consumer capitalism. As *7000 Eichen* organically deteriorates—annually germinates and shrivels toward extinction—it precludes the capitalist's pathological desire to

⁴³ Johannes Stüttgen, *Beschreibung eines Kunstwerkes* (Düsseldorf: Free International University, 1982), 1.

make it an object of investment capital; *7000 Eichen* cannot be bought, nor sold later at inflated prices. But it would undermine the magnitude of this work to only focus on its material existence outside the market space.) The concept of Beuys' social sculpture, and particularly of *7000 Eichen*, prevails beyond its embodiment in physical objects; it is a continuous turning away from—a perpetual redirecting, reorienting-- as the powers of repression change to adapt to our new forms of resistance.

I see *7000 Eichen* as an example of what great possibility art retains as a grounding for our orientation in this world, in society, not only toward ideology but more specifically toward inter-subjectivity. Beuys' work provokes an especially radical reorienting; it works to both instigate and constructively direct class struggle.

It is not simply that Beuys' political positions as an artist and German citizen fell into alignment with those of the broader proletarian class (although that parallel may be evident.) Beuys' very manner of production in conjunction with his theory of the singularity of art and society, addresses this reorienting. Beuys created his art outside the sphere of commodity production. He asserted his work as an artist as creative labor, not productive labor which yields surplus value. And furthermore, he considered this creative labor not unique to himself or for that matter only the labor of an "authentic" artist; Beuys saw this creative labor to be an innate activity to the life of every human being, intrinsic to our humanity. He proposed creativity is our natural work, and hence rejected the production of commodities as an essential human

quality. “Der Mensch ist das kreative Wesen,” Beuys expressed at Documenta V. And in saying so, Beuys provides a methodological grounding for how capitalism can be challenged by creative beings. Capitalism attempts to alienate both the consumers and producers of its commodities from the labor that yielded those commodities and corresponding value. But to the extent each productive laborer also retains the power of creative labor, we retain the potential for working and being outside the modes of producing and accumulating capital.

Concluding Thoughts

The beauty of looking to art as a grounding lies in the fluidity and multifariousness its potential sites may assume. The site of reorientation can be surprisingly simple, even accidental. (The dirty rag left on Husserl’s desk speaks to this serendipity.) The site of re-orientation may be congealed in the matter of a work, and furthermore in the activity of its creation as in the union of oak and basalt and society in *7000 Eichen*. Interiorly too, we are grounded. And thus ultimately we must recognize our own subjectivity as a grounding in this world. This last site of reorientation within our bodies calls upon us to address how the creative work of every being as an artist requires an attention to how we not only project our creative labor into the world, but how our creative labor may be interiorly directed also. It is not enough that we become reoriented toward social ideologies by external (art) objects. The project of

constructing our internal grounding itself requires sensitivity to those same elements embraced by earthworks. Namely, entropy and the critical attention to spatial location.

Our bodies move continuously through space, and as such locomotors we perpetually confront new external groundings. For this reason, the project of constructing our internal grounding remains fluid; must forever remain in an elastic state. Only by not becoming fixed in rigid modes of production and consumption can that internal grounding be a site of resistance.

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Summary

Museum establishments, curators, art auction houses, appraisal experts, the canon of art history, and the broad record of our cultural memory—these institutions aggregate to form the broad network of the High Art Industry. Curatorial power—the power to distinguish *high* art from all else—is almost solely monopolized by this industry. Yet without relying on a notion of aesthetic essentialism, according to which one could ostensibly assert the aesthetic value of a work of art to be one of its innate properties, the question of *how* this industry determines value in art becomes a piercing question. We find this industry in fact produces the social capital of the pieces it puts forth in circulation in the market; works of art become commodities, vehicles for mobilizing capital, and a repository for investment capital.

This process of commodifying art begins with works that appeal to our mode of accumulation by expecting future returns on investment capital. But this seizing of a work of art as a vessel for accumulation assumes that the work will persist through time until that investment can be realized. (An investor does not pour capital into an object that may disintegrate tomorrow.) Furthermore, these objects circulate physical in the market. Perpetuity and mobility hence arise as two features of art that facilitate capitalist exchange.

Yet some works of art resist this process. Earthworks, for example, do not circulate in the market of art exchange. They are rooted in the land; earthworks become fixed in their site of creation. Earthworks also undergo a metamorphosis over time: they erode, grow, sink, change color, reproduce,

breathe, molt, expand. Nor do they appeal to a notion of persistence through time. Earthworks constantly move toward a more entropic state. These unique and peculiar properties of earthworks frustrate the process of commodification, and serve as an example of how art has the capacity to exist outside the spaces of capitalist production. What can such art provoke?

Our bodies, too, occupy spaces of capitalist production. Our bodies are the site of commodification—not only the target, but concurrently the object of this process. (Our desires are constantly being shaped, molded, formed by exterior forces.) Forces of ideology direct us toward becoming better consumers, toward becoming better patriots, toward becoming better mothers and fathers and citizens. But for such ideology to have effect, we must be receptive to its operation of orienting us toward such ideologies; to be oriented by such forces requires that we face the grounding of these paradigms.

If we were to turn away, what would happen? If our movement and participation in space were not complementary to such forces? Art that occurs outside the space of capitalist production (art that does not yield surplus value for the capitalist) can lure us into such spaces.

One more point to note: Sarah Ahmed develops the idea of how an internal grounding also works to construct a point of departure, from which we conceive action in the world. This internal grounding, according to her theory, is also the sounding board against which all exterior groundings are bounced, and checked for compatibility. This internal grounding is not fixed, but is malleable and even mercurial. By aligning a critical, internal grounding

with site of art work that occur outside the space of capitalist production (an external grounding) can we develop a mode of resisting ideology that posits resistance as a *way* of being, a *way* of responding to repression rather than singular acts of violence?