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For the love of money

An exegesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Massey University,
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Abstract

This thesis is an investigation into the place of art in a world dominated by money and the role art plays in affecting change. By adopting interventionist strategies and adhering to the subtlety of the small gesture it highlights the irrational way value is constructed in our global capitalist society. The thesis places particular emphasis on participatory and interactive modes of practice as tools for critique in the pursuit of alternative systems of power, control and agency. How we might shift the way we operate within the difficult framework of a market-driven public discourse is a question to which it repeatedly returns.

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Introduction

An interrogation of money

In 1919 Marcel Duchamp drew a cheque and used it to pay for dental services (*Tzanck Check*); from 1959-62 Yves Klein exchanged ownership of empty spaces for gold then threw the gold into the Seine (*Zone de Sensibilité Picturale Immatérielle*); between the years 1968-71 Marcel Broodthaers produced an unlimited edition of stamped gold ingots and sold them at twice the value of the market price (*The Financial Section, Museum of Modern Art, Department of Eagles*); in 1969 Lee Lozano recorded what transpired over a period of a few months after she offered visitors to her studio a jar full of money (*Real Money Piece*); since 1984 J. S. G. Boggs has meticulously hand drawn paper currency that is then exchanged for goods and services (*Untitled*); in 2007 Cesare Pietroiusti opened a shop in Birmingham where he sold 10 and 20 GBP notes for a determined amount of time (*Eating Money*); for the day of May 27, 2009 Superflex entered into a contract with the ANZ bank, Karangahape Road, Auckland, stating that all employees could not use the word dollars (*Today we do not use the word 'Dollars'*); in May 2011 Jhana Millers took out a credit card of \$2000 to pay for an ingot of gold, then used that ingot to make a solid gold credit card (*Valid Thru*); in November 2011 Jhana Millers sold one of each denomination of New Zealand currency on Trade Me (*Medium of Exchange*); beginning 01.01.2013 Jhana Millers tagged 500 \$5 (NZD) notes with QR codes and spent them back into circulation, tracking the notes and creating a discourse with consumers (*For the love of money*).

This is just a small selection of examples that constitute almost a century of artists' engagement with and interrogation of money, exchange and economics. As many of these projects infer, the ceaseless pursuit of money is without doubt the dominant rapacious force underpinning high and late capitalism.

Seventeen years ago, philosopher and editor of the *International Journal of Political Economy*, Paul Mattick, reflected "The domain of money seems wider and more secure than ever before.... the present moment, combining economic decline with multiple looming ecological disasters, finds us at the brink of a period of catastrophe that might again make thoughts of alternative social orders thinkable".¹ This statement accurately describes the economic and political situation we are still in, almost two decades

later. Reading this article, which also describes the history of art's close connection to capitalism, it is easy to feel provoked and exasperated, while paradoxically, powerless and apathetic.

This thesis is an interventionist investigation into the position and efficacy of art as a tool for change in a world dominated by money, and specifically the irrational way value is constructed in our global capitalist society. It frames and locates specific conceptual and context-dependent artistic modes as offering crucial value in the pursuit of alternative systems of power, control and agency. How we might shift the way we operate within the difficult framework of a market-driven public discourse is a question to which I repeatedly return.

It places particular emphasis on participatory and interactive modes of practice as tools for critique, and positions my practice in relation to specific artists whose practice and methods inform my own. It is informed by the writings of art critics, philosophers, academics and curators, in particular the work of Noam Chomsky, Slavoj Žižek, Hal Foster, Claire Bishop, Jacques Rancière, Mika Hannula, Olav Velthuis and Franco Berardi. The first part of this thesis responds to theories raised by these commentators, analysing the historical, socioeconomic, political and theoretical framework of my practice, as well as considering how we, as citizens and artists, might set about to instigate change. Part two discusses two early projects that set out to intervene in the socioeconomic context of the art award (*Art Money Win*) and the art fair (*Intentions*). These works examine the monetary agendas of art curators and organisers, as well as the ways in which interaction and participation might activate a greater level of engagement and self-reflexivity in the art audience. They situate the practice within the confines of the art establishment. In contrast, the final work *For the love of money* (and part three of this thesis), continues the interventionist strategies developed in part two but locates the practice within the reality of day-to-day exchanges. This piece focuses more on the investigation of money itself, in particular the financialisation and fictionalisation of the economy. Finally this thesis analyses the successes and failures inherent in an aleatory body of artwork.

Part One: There is no alternative

Globalisation and the triumph of money

Along with other 1980s political figures, including Ronald Reagan and Helmut Kohl, Margaret Thatcher adopted the neoliberal doctrine of monetarist totalitarianism.² During her reign Thatcher reiterated the phrase “There is no alternative” to explain the hegemonic political and economic policies of deregulation, privatisation, less government intervention, a diminishing of social service and a reduction in the power of trade unions. All of these market-driven changes were justified in terms of a liberation of the market and the freeing of the individual from instrumentalised state control, enabling instead greater individual profit, economic growth and ‘competition’. The accumulation of money and wealth became the driving force behind most of contemporary daily life. The dismantling of capitalism’s *bête noir*, the Soviet Union, in 1989 gave a huge boost to this ideological and institutional position. The effect of this privatisation and deregulation was manifest in the 2008 financial crisis and the ongoing precarious global economic situation. In his recent book on the crisis, *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce*, Slavoj Žižek bemoans “it is as if recent events were staged with a calculated risk in order to demonstrate that, even at a time of shattering crisis, there is no viable alternative to capitalism”.³

With the largely unchallenged adoption of a global neoliberal programme, political power has shifted markedly from Governments and politicians to multi-national corporations, financial institutions and “the masters of mankind”, as classical economist Adam Smith called the wealthiest one percent.⁴ Neoliberalism means that power is exercised and administered not democratically but by corporate entities such as shareholders and corporate boards.⁵ Attempts by individuals at progressive reforms, including the ‘trust busting’ efforts led by President Teddy Roosevelt in the first decade of the 20th Century, and the nationalist policies of left-leaning heads of state, did little to stem the corrupt and illegal practices of monopolistic corporations.⁶ In addition to a perennially precarious global financial situation, this shift in power has resulted in substantial public and private debt, burgeoning poverty, escalating economic inequality, extensive unemployment and the assorted social problems that go hand-in-hand with these conditions. Many leading philosophers, academics and journalists, including Noam Chomsky, Pierre Bourdieu, Slavoj Žižek, Ulrich Beck, and Naomi Klein, have dissected and analysed globalisation and its detrimental effects on contemporary social life. Partly as a result of these, and

other critiques, a significant global movement has evolved to challenge unfettered capitalism: from the 1999 Seattle WTO protest through to the more recent 2011 Occupy movement. Despite the impressive scale and ambition of these protests no fundamental change has occurred, suggesting that ordinary citizens are essentially powerless.

In his book *After the Future* theorist and activist Franco Berardi asks “What if society can no longer resist the devastating power of financial accumulation?”⁷ Such a question is a sobering if ultimately nihilistic one, suggesting as it does that a tipping point not dissimilar to global warming has already been reached. This is certainly the view of Noam Chomsky, who presciently argued that

*Today, there’s been such success in depoliticising society, in atomising people, in breaking down popular organisations, that we’re just not in a position to carry out the steps that would be taken in a functioning democratic society. But they are not unimaginable.*⁸

These steps need to be taken, and there needs to be an acute change in the mindset of the global population, if only on a micro level, towards a sustainable and sociable economy. As artists, do we have an ability, an outlet, which we can use to tackle this global systemic issue?

Small steps, small gestures

Two of the fundamentals of a democratic society are freedom of speech and equal participation. In a healthy democracy, critique is encouraged and citizens feel they are able to challenge and transform dominant ideals and political processes. Yet as I have outlined, those simple ideals continue to be elusive in our globalised world. In *Problems and Transformations in Critical Art*, French Philosopher Jacques Rancière reflects on the challenges inherent in political and social art and explains “critical art intends to raise consciousness of the mechanisms of domination in order to turn the spectator into a conscious agent in the transformation of the world”.⁹ Moreover he believes that “artists hold an awareness of the ‘limitations of art’ - but they also play on this “limitation of its powers and the very uncertainty of its effects”.¹⁰

There is a wide range of historical precedents of artists or art movements who believed in a utopian future and thought art was an effective tool with which to challenge the dominant mode of thinking and behaving. The Italian Futurists orchestrated participatory performances for the masses in the public sphere. The Dadaists sought to abolish art and eradicate the separation between art and everyday life. In the 1960s the Situationists, led by Guy Debord, used *détournement* (the technique of recontextualising images in order to subvert their original meaning and create a new, antithetical or politically charged meaning), as a critical and transformatory tool with a view to realising a more active and revolutionary society. Also in the 1960s, artists tried using performances and happenings as resistant forms against the commodification of everyday life. In Germany, Joseph Beuys promoted Social Sculpture (a socially focused and politically active art mode) as a means to transform society, and the global art movement. Fluxus encouraged ideals of immersion and community as an alternative to the alienating effects of capitalism.

The failure of these idealistic artist groups and movements to create lasting change is manifest in a society and art world that are even more commodified, corporatised and market-driven today than they ever were in the 20th century.¹¹ This raises the debate around the efficacy of critical art praxis for political or social change. These concerns were articulated recently by *Frieze* co-editor Jennifer Higgie in an article, *State of the Art*: “art, say the doubters, is simply a reflection of its times; it’s a response not a solution, and change is brought about not by performance or images but by direct political action”.¹² When speaking of his own political practice Spanish artist Santiago Sierra professes “we do our work because we are making art, and because we believe art should be something, something that follows reality. But I don’t believe in the possibility of change”.¹³

How can we continue to work and believe in the possibility of change with all this historical evidence to suggest it is impossible? Another *Frieze* article, *What the world needs now*, expands on this debate and provides an insight into how some artists are addressing this problem: French artist Pierre Bismuth expresses that artworks can awaken minds by providing eloquent and striking critiques. The German photographer Wolfgang Tillmans articulates a genuine confidence in art’s ability to encourage viewers to “question preconceived ideas of certainty and truth”. Likewise, emerging artist Marko Lulic believes political art can be effective, but perhaps, he tells us, only in the realms of

the art world.¹⁴ These opinions/quotes suggest artworks in themselves might not be able to create large-scale change but instead might plant in the minds of viewers potentially transformatory seeds of knowledge.

While the historical avant-garde in the 20th century responded to an industrial capitalist society, working and making art in 2013 has a very different set of challenges. The utopian dream of overcoming the gap between art and life and in the process usurping capitalism never eventuated and the last three decades have arguably seen a dystopian, or at least cynical mindset, underpin western societal thought. The very concept of utopia in fact seems absurd when the present suggests a future that is so undesirable and frightening. In response to this and in contrast to the grand ideals espoused by Beuys, Debord and others there is a tendency in contemporary art today towards a less aggressive and less all-encompassing vision for art.¹⁵ This intellectual position, more micro than macro, is reflected politically in the anti-globalisation movement and is candidly articulated by Žižek who argues “The task is not to conduct the castration in a direct climactic confrontation, but to undermine those in power with patient ideologico-critical work” .¹⁶

A theory raised by writer and critic Mika Hannula, of *the small gesture*, is outlined in her book *The Politics of Small Gestures*. She reasons the small gesture is a micro-level activity that doesn't need to take part in the shouting match, and rebels against the aggressiveness and arrogance of the spectacle or the 'big gesture'.

*The small gesture is all about the process of striving towards a certain goal....a goal that we want to move towards in small, significant steps...
.a small gesture is very happy if and when it is sometimes able to make a smallish dent in our ways of comprehending and perceiving ourselves in our surroundings....it survives only along with the series of other small gestures that precede it, happen at the same time, and will materialise in the future....¹⁷*

As Hannula, Žižek and others suggest, we must operate in small steps, with small gestures, locating our work somewhere between education, confrontation, and accessibility, with the intention of creating incremental change in the formulation of knowledge.

The possibility of intervention

While arguing for the value of smallness, at the same time there is also a need for a viable and effective strategy of intervention. Guy Debord in *Towards a Situationist International*, argued that “we must develop an intervention directed by the complicated factors of two great components in perpetual interaction: the material setting of life and the behaviours that it incites and that overturn it”.¹⁸ What results from this is a rehumanising of society and a reversal of the alienating and divisive effects of capitalism. Yet how might it be possible to intervene in a manner that does not re-stage avant-garde tropes of antagonism and transgression?

As well as the global societal renaissance of alternative economies, barter and gift economies, artists too have initiated alternative currencies (Ithaca Hours and e-flux Timebank are artist-run time banks where groups and individuals can exchange time and skills, bypassing monetary exchange). Other artists have carried on the interventionist legacy of the Situationist International, but in a more subtle and sophisticated way: selling their exhibition rights, along with various other things, on eBay; setting up mock companies and international biennales; creating and selling their own currencies; living off coupons and money back guarantees; displaying bank statements with their work.

While some artists (J.S.G Boggs, The Yes Men, The Art Guys and Matthieu Laurette) choose to operate within the entertainment or business world,¹⁹ most operate within the confines of the art world, or art institution, leading to the potential for fracture and distortion in the criticality of a critical practice.

Two projects by Christian Jankowski, *Point of Sale* (2002) and *The Finest Art on Water* (2011), exemplify the beauty and criticality that can be achieved by a small interventionist gesture as opposed to a ‘spectacular’ work. *Point of Sale* is a video work that elegantly juxtaposes the selling strategies of his gallerist, selling art, and a retailer, selling electronics, to highlight the blurred boundaries between art and business. In contrast, *The Finest Art on Water*, commissioned for the 2011 Frieze Art Fair was a ‘spectacular’ exhibition consisting of a readymade sculpture in the form of a limited edition Aquariva Cento speedboat as well as a model of a built to order, CRN super yacht. The yacht could be purchased as a yacht for 65 million Euros or as a Christian Jankowski original artwork for 75 million. The speedboat, a slightly more affordable \$500,000 as a mere

boat, or \$625,000 as an artwork. The scale and location of the exhibition grant the work a certain ridiculousness and undermine the wit and humour normally present in Jankowski's work.

The analysis made by British art historian Julian Stallabrass of the global contemporary art world in his book *Art Incorporated* could explain the reason artists choose to operate within the art institution confines. Stallabrass suggests the marketisation of the artistic field as well as a highly competitive global market has created a situation where, to be seen as successful, artists must first "undergo the sanctioning of the market place".²⁰

Moreover Dutch academic Olav Velthuis proposes:

*On the basis of the conviction that it is, on the one hand, impossible to operate outside the dominant system and, on the other, that their economic approach will be ignored as long as they behave as outsiders, they (artists) position themselves within the market. That may cause their work to have little consistency, but it does provide it with a certain cogency.*²¹

Intrigued, I focused my project towards the idea of modest interventions in existing art markets that could provide an institutional and financial context that could be *détourned*.

Part two: The marriage of art and money

“Money is like muck, not good except it be spread”²²

With the two iterations of her project, *Free Store*, New Zealand artist Kim Paton highlighted the necessity of redistribution in combating the damaging effects of the neoliberal agenda. As a *Letting Space* commission, Paton created Free Stores in central Wellington and Henderson, Auckland that gave away surplus food, donated by local businesses and Supermarket giant, Foodstuffs, to people in need. As with other projects of this kind, *Free Store* sits somewhere in between an art project, a philanthropic enterprise and a social service. When speaking of the project Paton challenged the economic theories of renowned macroeconomist Greg Mankiew, who believes in liberalisation of the markets, competition, meritocratic societies and that “economics is a unified discipline that sits in isolation from people and the environment”.²³ Through this work Paton recognised the need for alternative systems, intervention and regulation of the free market for a functioning democratic society.

In projects like *Free Store*, the act of redistribution and ‘gifting’ becomes a criticism of ‘not giving’, and the “capitalist economics that normally permeate our public lives and interactions are scrutinised and transformed”.²⁴ In an anthropological and sociological sense redistribution has its roots in archaic and tribal societies that functioned using the gift cycle. When analysing those societies in his seminal text *The Gift*, French Sociologist Marcel Mauss commented that it was the moral and social obligation, as well as expectation, of the wealthier members to redistribute their wealth and provide for their less fortunate fellow citizens.²⁵ In an economic sense, it is the transfer of income, and/or wealth, predominantly in the form of taxation and welfare that is the mark of a civilised society. What is concerning about the global shift in the political spectrum to the right, and the rise of corporate power, is the reduced emphasis or desire for a fairer and equal redistribution of wealth, not only by those sitting comfortably within the top one percent²⁶ but by the majority of the population.

If we turn to German writer and academic Professor Claudia von Werihof, an advocate in the anti-globalisation movement, she asserts that democracy under capitalism is a myth and that “the primacy of politics over economy has been lost. Politicians of all parties have abandoned it. It is the corporations that dictate politics”.²⁷ It is not only that the wealthy consume far more than their share of the world’s unsustainable resources,

but also that along with multi-national corporations and financial institutions, they now hold too much political power,²⁸ undermining any sense of community and leading to a contemporary malaise, or apathy, and a 'paralysis of the will'.²⁹

To counteract these feelings of powerlessness, and to encourage a sense of democracy and community, artists are moving towards participatory art projects. Art writer and historian Grant Kester advocates an art that reacts to this condition and suggests that art is uniquely placed to counter a world in which "we are reduced to an atomised pseudocommunity of consumers, our sensibilities dulled by spectacle and repetition".³⁰ In the 2006 book, *Participation*, Editor Claire Bishop discusses the social position of participation in art and its theoretical framework. Bishop suggests participation is mainly motivated by three concerns: activation, authorship and community, and proposes that artworks as objects are pacifying and divisive, while participatory art has a social dimension that encourages collaboration and collectivity.³¹ The practice of Rirkrit Tiravanija perhaps best embodies this artistic movement. He is known for cooking meals for gallery goers, originating with *Pad Thai* in New York in 1990, as well as creating living spaces, music events and film screenings. This form of convivial participatory art has been named *Relational Aesthetics*. In his seminal text of the same name Nicolas Bourriaud writes that relational art takes "as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and *private* symbolic space".³² He encourages discursivity and sociability in order to fill the cracks in the social bond.

A considerable amount of literature has been produced debating the criticality of *Relational* art. Claire Bishop argued that the genre removes contradiction from dialogue and conflict from democracy; moreover she attacks Kester and Bourriaud's support of the dialogical and convivial practices of artists like Tiravanija.³³ She reinforces this idea by discussing the critical practices of Santiago Sierra and Thomas Hirschorn:

*These artists set up "relationships" that emphasise the role of dialogue and negotiation in their art, but do so without collapsing these relationships into the work's content. The relations produced by their performances and installations are marked by sensations of unease and discomfort rather than belonging.*³⁴

Hal Foster extends the discussion, raising the problems inherent in a post-critical art and a post-critical society: “for all its discursivity, ‘relational aesthetics’ might be sucked up in the general movement for a ‘post-critical’ culture”.³⁵ Moreover Foster argues that criticality has taken a back seat since the 1980s in favour of affirmation, attesting that “most academics no longer stress the importance of critical thinking for engaged citizenry, and most curators, dependent on corporate sponsors, no longer promote the critical debate once deemed essential to the public reception of advanced art”.³⁶ In ditching criticality in favour of conviviality we are announcing that we accept the current situation, believe it to be immovable and instead of change we only wish to make the present a little bit more comfortable, while the perilous future gets closer and closer. Foster sums it up best when he asks, “surely it is a bad time to go post-critical”.³⁷

Art Money Win

My research began with a project entered in The National Contemporary Art Award (NCAA) in Hamilton. A conceptually-based project was the location of my first attempt at a site-specific intervention within an art institution. In her influential analysis of site-specific art Miwon Kwon suggests that site-specific works today:

*No longer seek to be a noun/object but verb/process, provoking the viewers critical acuity regarding the ideological conditions of their viewing. In this context, the guarantee of a specific relationship between an artwork and its site is not based on the physical permanence of that relationship but rather on the recognition of its unfixed impermanence, to be experienced as an unrepeatable and fleeting situation.*³⁸

Moreover “‘to be ‘specific’ to such a site, in turn, is to decode and/or recode the institutional conventions so as to oppose their hidden operations”.³⁹ The critique that Miwon Kwon offers is that for site-specific works to be meaningful the context must move beyond physical location and be directed instead towards the psychological, social, historic and economic context. This model or approach affected my initial investigation by directing my focus to the political and socioeconomic conditions of the NCAA. Hans Haacke established a unique and important context for recasting the site of the artwork in social, political and economic terms. In *Manet-Projekt* of 1974, he examined the socio-economic status of individuals who were the successive owners of Manet’s

painting, *Bundle of Asparagus*. In *The Chocolate Master* of 1981, he made a thorough investigation into the aesthetic and commercial activities of German Chocolatier and art collector Peter Ludwig and the capitalist system that enabled him to build one of the largest collections in the world while exposing his workers to dangerous and unethical conditions.

For the NCAA award I proposed a redistribution project and competition that would only be activated if my proposal won the main prize, which consisted of \$15,000 cash. Were this to happen the cash would be redistributed via a competition where visitors to the exhibition could compete for the chance to buy one of the artworks on display. In effect this would redistribute the prize money to the viewers in the form of capital for purchases, and thence to the other artists who entered the award, The NCAA's terms and conditions stipulated that all entries must be in the form of a single image and a 200-word artist statement. My entry, titled *Art Money Win*, was an A0 poster advertising my proposed competition. The poster contained instructions for the participants as well as my own list of terms and conditions, which were modeled closely on the award terms and conditions. It was my intention to feature and parody the bureaucratic, aleatory and conforming nature of art awards. To do this, the language of the site and conditions of entry were employed and mimicked, for example:

All applications must be on the form provided; photocopied forms will not be accepted

Applications must be in written in blue or black pen

At no time prior to the award ceremony will the entrant be in communication with the judge in regard to the entry

The poster also stated the judge of the NCAA, Caterina Riva, would be the judge of my proposed competition. The 200-word artist statement, which would be affixed alongside the work in the exhibition, provided more information about the judge of both awards and the poster commanded 'See artist statement for judging details.'

Art Money Win set out to investigate and intervene in the art institution's, and judge's, attitude regarding capitalist ideals towards redistribution and competition. If accepted into the award it would then have become an examination of the level of engagement, as well as value systems, of the audience.

ART MONEY WIN

COMPLETE THE FORM FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN
UP TO \$15,000 TO SPEND ON A WORK FROM THE
2012 NATIONAL CONTEMPORARY ART AWARDS.

JUST TELL US WHICH ONE YOU WANT & WHY
YOU DESERVE IT.

WHICH WORK WILL YOU HAVE?

WINNER/S WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN THE GALLERY
SUNDAY 18TH NOVEMBER 2012 AT 4.00PM
BY JUDGE CATERINA RIVA.

SEE ARTIST STATEMENT FOR JUDGING DETAILS.



TERMS & CONDITIONS

Conditions of entry: Please read carefully

1. The prize will be awarded if this artwork wins the 2012 National Contemporary Art Award.
2. The prize is \$15,000, which may be given to a single entrant or shared between several entrants, at judge's discretion.
3. The prize may only be redeemed in the form of artwork as stated; strictly no cash alternative.
4. The competition will run for the duration of the exhibition:
17 August 2012 – 18 November 2012.
5. Applications close 5pm Friday 16 November 2012.
6. The winner/s will be announced at the gallery on Sunday 18th November at 4pm.
7. Entry is open to all visitors to the gallery.
8. There is no entry fee.
9. All applications must be on the numbered form provided. Photocopied forms will not be accepted.
10. One entry per person.
11. Applications must be pinned to the wall, not posted, faxed or emailed.
12. All forms must be handwritten.
13. Applications must be in the space provided and not exceed the boundary box.
14. Do not mark the margins.
15. All writing should be original.
16. All applications must be in blue or black pen.
17. Your entry can not be changed or added to once it has been submitted.
18. At no time prior to the award ceremony will the entrant be in communication with the judge with regard to their entry.
19. The judge's decision is final.
20. If an artwork has sold during the exhibition, the application will no longer be valid.
21. Any remaining prize money will be held by the Waikato Museum and distributed at their discretion.
22. The artist will not use your personal information for any purpose other than that for which it was collected.

Entries cannot be accepted without total acceptance of these terms & conditions.
All enquiries regarding any of the conditions of entry can be made to the artist directly on 021 1670 896.

Fig. 1. Author. *Art Money Win*, 2012

The possibility of failure, in the form of not being accepted into the award, was always a potential pitfall within the project and, interestingly, my proposal wasn't accepted as a finalist. No explanation was offered but speculating on a range of possibilities, I feel it may have been because the delicate balance of audacity, simplicity and good taste was not configured as it needed to be to surreptitiously intervene in the system.

This experience did not deter me from developing this type of work; instead, it identified the potential problems with works of this genre – approach, context and 'gatekeeper's' approval – and expedited my search for another market or institution into which to intervene.

Intentions

Having been unsuccessful in actually intervening in the prize-based contemporary art system, I changed the scope of my approach to investigate and intervene in quite targeted ways in the behaviour of an art audience. Although there are several venues and situations in New Zealand that could be seen to provide an appropriate site, as well as a guaranteed audience in which to answer or raise this question, an art fair (a ubiquitous symbol of the art market) seemed an ideal context. The Auckland Art Fair, New Zealand's premiere contemporary art event, runs biannually and was not held in 2012. The New Zealand Art show (NZAS) however was scheduled for August 2012 in Wellington and operates similarly to an art fair. The NZAS is a three-and-a-half day 'cash and carry' sales event that aims to "encourage New Zealanders to celebrate our identity and culture by buying local art".⁴⁰ They pride themselves on their sales, widely publicising the previous year's sales totals and number of artworks sold in the lead-up to the event. It was previously branded the New Zealand *Affordable* Art Show and because of this, as well as its separation from dealer galleries and art institutions, it is widely seen by many in the New Zealand contemporary art world as a second-rate event, not of the same calibre as the Auckland Art Fair. This thinking reveals the elitism, access and class structures prevalent within the contemporary art world. By dropping the description *affordable* and framing the event as *The New Zealand Art Show*, while promoting their art as an accessible purchasable commodity (ie, for living spaces and decoration), the NZAS has situated itself ambiguously in between the prestigious art fair and the local craft market.

Intrigued, and encouraged, by the monetary ambitions of the NZAS, as well as its class-climbing aspirations, I planned an intervention into the economic conditions of the event. The proposed project, *Intentions* would track the actual sales figures against visitors' intended spend over the course of the event. The intended spend would be obtained through questioning the visitors upon entering the venue, and the actual spend would be collected from the sales desk every hour or at the end of every day. These changing figures would then be output on a pair of LED moving message signs. If gaining the updated sales figures for the actual spend proved too problematic or complicated I would use the previous year's average sales figure. The engagement of the audience was the key component of the work and I hoped the discussion of their intended spend might prompt a self-reflexivity on the part of the audience around the hype of the event and their purchasing decisions.

Essentially art fairs are for the buying and selling of art, and their existence seems to rely on the fact that art *is* a commodity, like everything else. The occurrence of the art fair has exploded in the last decade, with fairs in most major cities in every country in the world. The model is so successful that satellite events (Art Basel, Art Basel Miami, Art Basel Hong Kong, Art Basel Switzerland, Frieze New York, Frieze London etc...) and derivatives from the fairs, including performances, talks, VIP tours and dinners are commonplace. Terry Smith analyses this phenomenon in *What is Contemporary Art?* Affirming the close relationship between contemporary art and the accumulation of wealth and power, he comments: "Art fairs are the most evident manifestation of the contemporary emergence of the super-rich, those who have benefitted most from the intense concentrations of wealth made possible by the expansion of capital markets within globalisation".⁴¹ As well as Christian Jankowski's exhibition for Frieze 2011 (mentioned earlier), Michael Landy intended to comment on this development, while highlighting the preoccupation with money in the art world and at this type of event. His *Credit Card destroying Machine*, is an elaborate Tinguely-inspired sculptural machine that whirs into life whenever someone agrees to destroy his or her credit card. On the surface that might seem a playful yet critical gesture, but in return for the gesture they were given a machine-drawn work of art, signed by Landy. An analogous spectacular project was the installation *Algorithm* at the US Pavilion during the 2011 Venice Biennale, by Jennifer Allora and Quillermo Calzadilla. The work attempts to make transparent the financial might and power of the US banking system. The interactive sculpture, one of six installations created by the duo, consists of a large pipe organ, equipped with a functioning ATM, that translates financial transactions into clamorous

musical sounds. The striking fact that both of these projects were audience favourites⁴² suggests that art audiences love a work with an element of interaction, particularly when it creates a spectacle.

In Don Thompson's analysis of the contemporary art market, specifically the chapter on Art Fairs, he describes how environment and context affect audience responses to purchasing artworks:

*Fairs offer collectors a high level of comfort...the sheer number of people and 'sold' stickers at a fair alleviates the collector's uncertainty. The psychology at a fair is referred to as herding: when a buyer does not have sufficient information to make a reasoned decision, reassurance comes from mimicking the behaviour of the herd.*⁴³

This analysis perfectly articulates the thinking behind the project and I was eager to investigate it in a practical way.

Although I had been accepted into the event, the initial proposal didn't enter into much detail about the project, and for it to transpire the manager needed to give permission, as well as provide access to the live sales figures. When I attempted to gain this permission the manager became concerned by the intentions of the project and its reception. She felt the critical aspect of the project wasn't suitable to the spirit of the event, suggesting something more affirming would work better. She voiced her concerns over several emails. Some of her comments were:

I am not totally convinced with this project - as mentioned earlier; we already conduct a survey and I am not comfortable with our guests surveyed twice.

Do you have another project in mind that doesn't have a focus on money? I feel that this concept doesn't fit in with the spirit of the show. Accessing our data over the show period will prove to be problematic.

I need convincing.

Why do these results interest you? Do you think that this survey you are proposing is art in itself?

After much debate we came to an arrangement a few days before the event that meant the project could move ahead, but with modifications that ultimately diluted the project to the point that my enthusiasm for the work dissipated. Along with the modifications imposed there were several other factors that contributed to this: my panels were located towards the back of the venue, hidden away where it was hard to see or find; they refused access to their sales figures (even though they were being constantly collected and analysed, as well as promoted in the media); the organisers didn't want the project implemented during the gala evening, which is when sales reached over a million dollars; the LED signs were too small and the purpose-built case obscured the signal from the remote, so changing the figures necessitated removing the signs from the wall. Lastly and crucially I was unable to activate the audience as I had hoped. This was in part due to the factors I have described and because the organisers had found a way to neuter the agency of the work so that it was unable to transform the general tenor of consumption based on aesthetic criteria and bargain prices.

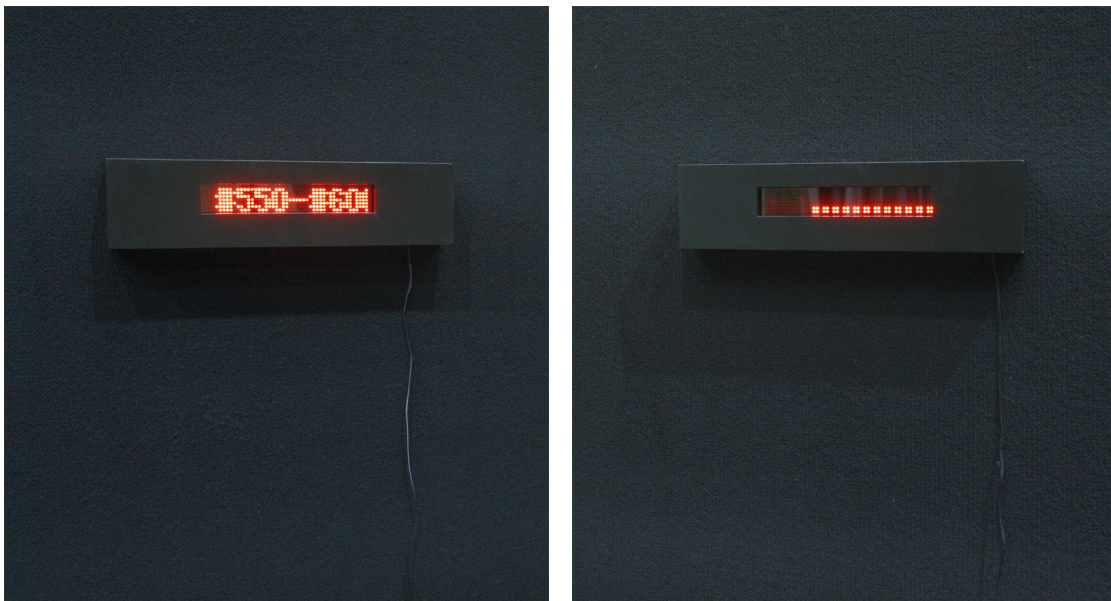


Fig. 2,3. Author. *Intentions*, 2012

While the project did not meet my initial expectations or intentions, it did instead provide a series of profoundly important if unexpected outcomes. A curious outcome of this research is that the majority of visitors responded to my engagement with them by stating they hadn't intended to spend anything, while other attendees knew precisely what they wanted to purchase by the time they arrived at my section. This intelligence served to highlight the way in which the location of certain artists were placed to draw people in, and how sales figures were skewed to reflect a particular accessibility. Finally, the ongoing correspondence had become the most compelling part of the whole project, revealing as it did, the manager's and the events commercial, rather than artistic, agenda. This was something that could be investigated further in the future.

There are times when artists choose to use records of correspondence with an individual, organisation or government as an artwork,⁴⁴ but a notable example where a project was modified by the organisers of an event, prompting the artists to use the correspondence instead of the proposed artwork is *Money* (1969) by Robert Morris. For an exhibition at the Whitney in New York, Morris proposed to invest some of the museum's money in 'Blue Chip' art to be quickly resold at inflated prices in Europe for a profit. The trustees of the Whitney wouldn't give up the money unless he guaranteed it would be invested 'risk free'. Morris couldn't promise this, so was only allowed to carry out the work with a modest investment in sheltered bonds, carried out under the supervision of one of the museum's Trustees. Morris' output for the project was a record of the correspondence with the trustees who were determined to make a profit for their institution.

Although *Intentions* initially felt like a failure to me, the struggle of executing a project like this exposes the complex networks operating within art institutions. At a different event, on a different scale, with more planning and support from the organisers, this project might prove to be a fascinating analysis of the art audience at these types of events. And even though they relate to two vastly different contexts and timeframes Morris' *Money* indicates that knowledge can become just as, or even more, powerful and challenging than the initial work set out to be.

A living reality

"The line between art and life should be kept as fluid, and perhaps indistinct, as possible".

Allan Kaprow⁴⁵

Along with Robert Morris' *Money, Intentions* and *Art Money Win* exemplify the problems associated with situating critical work inside the art institution, where artists are beholden to public reaction, public funding and the agendas of local councils and shareholders, who foremost want the arts to be economically viable, aesthetically pleasing, convivial and socially inclusive.⁴⁶

The semi-failure of the above projects, the lack of any more suitable existing art market situations during the course of this thesis, as well as my own inability to penetrate the mechanisms of control and dissemination, led me to re-evaluate the decision to intervene solely within the confines of the art institution. At this point, it is worth returning to Guy Debord's request to return to "the material setting of life and the behaviours that it incites and that overturn it". Lars Bang Larsen reiterates this position in his essay, *Social Aesthetics*, advocating art to be located in a 'living reality', "Social processes should happen where people are, in direct relation to what they do".⁴⁷ In revisiting this intellectual position, as well as responding to the position of my practice, the next logical step for me was to move the location of my practice to an investigation into the 'material setting of life' and the commercial and financial mechanisms that control it.

Part three of this thesis examines the results of this shift.

Part three: For the love of money

An abstraction

“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows”.

1 Timothy 6:10, King James Bible

Money is an entity that we use every day, and many of us dedicate our lives to accumulating more of it. There is no better symbol of the complete domination of the global neoliberal programme than money. Even so, many of us don't actually understand the value, function and creation of it, let alone the power structures behind who controls it. As a global society we have wholly adopted it as the sole medium of exchange and arbiter of value. We also all have our own unique ideas and methods of using it. In her *Real Money Piece* (1969) American artist Lee Lozano conducted a simple but discerning investigation into peoples' behaviour towards money. Lozano recorded what transpired over a period of time as she offered visitors to her studio a jar full of money, as if she was offering them candy. The jar started off containing \$585, which slowly disappeared over a period of a few months. The artist's records show peoples' profound differences when dealing with money: “Keith Sonnier refused, and later screws the lid very tightly back on: Dan Graham takes \$30 from jar: Dan Graham puts \$50 in jar: Claire Copley doesn't take any she seems insulted & offended that I offer it to her (in such a 'vulgar' way?)”.⁴⁸

Since paper currency was first designed and circulated, money has been represented and recontextualised in art as a political and social comment. Artists have used money as a subject matter, used physical currency, notes and coins, as a material for sculpture and as a canvas, made their own currencies or intervened into existing currencies: Cildo Meireles created his own banknotes, *Zero Dollar* (1978-84), *Zero Cruzeiro* (1974–78) and *Zero Centavo* (1974-78) and released them into circulation. Meireles printed them in an unlimited quantity, which diluted their value as an artwork, mimicking the quantitative easing policies of the Brazilian government at the time.⁴⁹ This is what we are seeing today repeated in the largest economies around the world. David Greg Harth's project,

I am, ongoing since 1998, stamps messages on United States currency (*I am not a dollar, I am not afraid, I am America*), in an intervention into circulating currency that is both social and political.

Particularly interesting is artist J.S.G. Boggs' lifetime commitment to using his own alternative monetary system in day-to-day exchanges. Boggs meticulously hand-draws/copies bank notes from whichever country he happens to be in, and then *exchanges* them for goods and services. He assigns value to his drawings based on the face value of the notes he copies and for every transaction he requires the correct amount of change. Boggs enthusiast Robert Krulwich addresses the basic premise of Boggs' practice "Boggs has found a way to illustrate, to act out, the essential nature of exchanges and money. He forces us to see, among other things, how it's all fiction, there's nothing backing it, it's all an act of faith".⁵⁰ Boggs' practice sits historically with the goldsmiths' (in drawing money he is similar to the scribes writing promissory notes), which is a far cry away from the reality of money in today's world, which is moving to digits on a computer screen.

After Richard Nixon repealed the Bretton Woods agreement and abandoned the gold standard in 1971,⁵¹ the value of money became completely abstracted. When addressing the phenomenon of money since the 'Nixon Shock' (the term used to describe the results of this abandonment), Professor Jakob Arnoldi concluded, "Marx's theory of money as a universal equivalent which gradually becomes more and more self-referential and abstract rings true in today's global world".⁵² No longer backed by gold, money has no intrinsic value, is regulated by governments, and is unhooked from all gauges of objectivity. In fact under this new system (termed Fiat Money), more currency can be printed whenever the government decides to increase the money supply, devaluing all existing currency in circulation. This is exactly what the dominant economies, the US, UK and the Euro, are doing at the present moment to deal with the precarious situation modern economic activity has created. The Banks add to this indefinable and fictional nature of money by increasing the supply through the Fractional reserve banking system, whereby they retain only a tiny fraction of their reserves and deposits then lend out the rest, multiplying the money supply and creating the illusion of growth and wealth. Add to this the rise in credit and debit cards, online banking and the financialisation of the economy, and we have a situation where money is moving from a physical commodity to online information.

In a recent web video on *Big Think*, behavioural economist Dan Ariely explains why humans have difficulty designating valuing when using electronic transactions and how this distances us from the reality of consumption; “when we pay by cash we feel a little bit guilty but when we pay with credit we don’t think about it until later”.⁵³ This finding could be used to explain the extensive levels of private debt, borrowed to fund an extravagant and unsustainable standard of living.

Taking a cue from the previous projects that examined specific aspects of the relationship between money and art, I wanted to continue my investigation as to how to intervene in the monetary system but to do so with a more focused investigation on money itself. In particular I sought to hone in on the *value and meaning* of money at a time when radical and profound shifts have occurred in relation to the virtualisation and fictionalisation of money.

A quick response

In his 2004 book *Art Incorporated* Julian Stallabrass references Walter Benjamin’s old point “A radical art needs to do more than make politics its subject matter; it must change the way it is made, distributed and seen”.⁵⁴ Cesare Pietrouisti extends Benjamin’s argument in his own practice: “an artist’s intervention in an urban context should not be easily recognisable as art. He prefers ‘Who knows what that is?’ rather than, ‘It’s art, so it’s not intended for me’”.⁵⁵ Meireles, Boggs and Harth understand that there is no better way to intervene and comment on the monetary system than to target its main medium, bank notes, then send them back out into circulation. This introduces a new and unknown audience to their ideas and concepts. The possibilities here intrigued me; however I wanted to truly link the notes with digital money so needed to append to them something other than a URL, caption or image.

While researching the *National Contemporary Art Awards* I encountered the 2011 winning entry, *Blue Poles*, by Andre Hemmer. Hemmer’s work was a large painting of a QR code that when scanned opened a Google map showing where Jackson Pollock’s *Blue Poles* is located. QR denotes Quick Response, and the codes are square, black and white, matrix-type barcodes that have become increasingly common as a tool for direct marketing on consumer advertising and packaging.⁵⁶ When scanned by a reader application on a smartphone, tablet or computer, the code directs the user to a specific

webpage. These small codes can be mass-produced and are the perfect tool with which to connect these two systems of money. I printed the codes as stickers on clear vinyl, with the intention of tagging banknotes and then spending those notes back into circulation.

Although there is growing awareness of their use, I realise that QR codes could further limit an audience for this project. Several factors: the right technology, the right application, as well as the knowledge, need to align before someone may discover the code or scan it. However, this potential for failure can also be seen as an interesting or different outcome whereby people might conceivably feel 'left out' of the project due to their status or position in society, mimicking hierarchies that are inherent in a capitalist system. Because QR codes still aren't ubiquitous they hold a curiosity value, an attraction and this was something that I felt was worth pursuing. What I hope to contribute with this project is to personalise exchanges, and create more awareness and criticality around money and the global economic and financial systems. I wasn't after a large-scale difference, but a small intervention in our daily realities.

An education

"The best investment you can make in your future financial security is an education in how money works".

Linda Sanders⁵⁷

In the nineties the Internet was heralded as a new neoliberal Utopia, a utopia of an infinite, virtual space where economic expansion seemed unlimited.⁵⁸ Although the Internet has the ability, and is sometimes used, as a democratic platform for the dissemination of information, it is mainly used today as a tool for communicating, shopping, infotainment and targeted marketing. "The overwhelming sense of what the web has to offer is akin to the model's library—filled with many pretty things, but mostly containing hints of artistic value masked by an overwhelming but vacant beauty".⁵⁹ Since the nineties many artists have turned to the net as an outlet in which to create projects that promoted criticality and social and political change.⁶⁰ Moving art to the Internet negates ownership and changes to a non-commodifiable, truly dematerialised work. When debating the intellectual properties of Internet art, Jeremy Pilcher wrote,

“The susceptibility of material online to be copied and recontextualised has meant the Internet has proved to be an effective site from which to critique behaviour through irony and parody in art”.⁶¹ This resonates in a text by art critic Julian Stallabrass that engages with art and shopping “the combination of productive and reproductive technologies in the digital world handed astonished artists a route back to social and political engagement, sidestepping art institutions and promptly raising once more the spectre of the avant-garde”.⁶² Although we can be skeptical that any critically engaging projects will receive as many views as the latest Gangnam style video, the Internet does provide us with a tool to disseminate information, as well as reach people, on a global scale.

The first iteration of *For the love of money* took a pedagogic stance. Popular contemporary philosopher Alain de Botton stated in a Ted Talk that “art should be didactic”.⁶³ Although de Botton is not an art academic, this simple statement resonated with me at the time. The best way to plant seeds of knowledge for an audience seemed to be to find ways to provide alternative points of view. I proposed that the first lot of QR codes would direct users to a page running on the back of my own website (jhanamillers.co.nz/money) that would randomly redirect to a number of different webpages comprising articles and information on various monetary topics: the global economic ‘crisis’, alternative economies, incidents within the financial system, information on money etc.... The first set of URLs were:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gift_economy

<http://timebank.org.nz/about>

http://demonocracy.info/infographics/usa/us_deficit/us_deficit.html

<http://www.xe.com/ucc/convert/?Amount=1&From=USD&To=NZD>

<http://www.rbnz.govt.nz/news/2012/4819626.html>

<http://www.google.co.nz/search?q=what+is+money>

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/22/world/europe/france-and-germany-face-delicate-talks-on-economy.html?_r=1&ref=business

http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune500/2012/full_list/http://www.forbes.com/billionaires/list/

To gauge an initial reaction to the project, I handed out several tagged notes during a critique session. As well as providing feedback, this session allowed me to test the results on an array of smartphones and different QR readers. There were several problems with the redirect function: the webpages were not designed specifically for smartphones, so were hard to read and took too long to load; despite all of the readers ability to scan the codes, several of the readers would cache the pages, so if someone rescanned the code it was likely to return to the same page, suggesting the site was an advertisement for that URL; also some of the readers would display the URL to my website for a second or two before it redirected. This felt problematic as the project would work best if it was anonymous, I didn't want the user to know what the project was or who had created it. Ultimately, people didn't consider the project to be interesting or clever, and pronounced a level of disappointment once the initial excitement of finding the code was over.

Additionally, defacing currency is illegal in most countries, including New Zealand, inviting a \$1000 fine, so it would be prudent if the project weren't instantly traceable back to me.⁶⁴ When faced with legal battles it is common for projects of this genre to gain publicity, benefitting the project, but they can also prompt lawsuits and the demise of the work.⁶⁵ With this in mind I purchased a new domain name and hosting, forthe love of money.biz. The site is traceable back to me via my billing address, therefore illegality is still directly connected to me, but is one step removed so that ordinary users won't know where or whom it came from.

For the site to draw in and crucially hold the user's interest it needed to be interactive in some way. It could still be educational or knowledge based, but on reflection I preferred a form that was less didactic, so more layers to the project could unfold. Furthermore by defining myself as an educator I was also asserting my superiority over the receiver, which is not something I wanted to do.

What is money?

"You think money's gonna fix this?"

"What else is there?"⁶⁶

The second iteration of the project took the form of an online questionnaire; the QR code took users to a simple set of questions and multi-choice answers, all related to the value, creation and history of money. For example: What is Money? Who controls the money supply? What is Debt? What is your money worth? There were 20 questions in total and all of the answers were arguably correct, depending on your ideological viewpoint. Each click on an answer would take you to a new question, and once all 20 questions had been answered the site would return to the start. There was no tally, reward or summary advising what the site was about or what the results were; just a repetitive cycle of polysemous questions.



Fig. 4-9. Author. *For the love of money (iteration 2)*, selection of screenshots, 2012

When signing up for online products and services we are often asked to fill out personal questionnaires and relinquish personal information in exchange for services, rewards and memberships. This gives brands the ability to build 'interactive' and 'personalised' relationships with us and to create more sophisticated user-targeted advertising. Google, Yahoo and Facebook use algorithmic filters to edit and target content based on our personal information, location, browsing history etc.... Executive Chairman of Google Eric Schmidt recently pronounced "it will be very hard for people to watch or consume something that has not in some sense been tailored for them".⁶⁷ In his Ted talk and new book 'Filter Bubble' Eli Pariser argues that this effectively isolates people in their own cultural and ideological bubbles.⁶⁸ It is through activities like this that corporations have undermined the utopian aspirations of the Internet's impact on society by channeling its features into the pursuit of profit.⁶⁹ Paradoxically this type of technology provides the ability to track any note with a code on it. The free online service Google Analytics, which is running on the back of the site, maintains detailed statistics about visitors' behaviour, including, their location, the time spent on the site, to what device and browser were used to scan the code.

My intention with these questions was again to prompt consideration of economic issues, as well as highlighting the embedded nature of money. Finance and economics are the dominant characteristics of the global money supply, with currencies rising and falling depending on overseas investments and exchange rates. Although change can begin at a local level, for any significant or lasting monetary change to occur it needs to consider the networked global system. Of significance to this project is Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's concept of *Empire* as the new form of global sovereignty. They claim Empire has replaced imperialism and political sovereignty and is "a decentered and deterritorialising apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers".⁷⁰ Consequently when the opportunity arose to travel to Europe for a research trip in August 2012, I set out to test the project internationally.

Over four weeks from mid-August to mid-September 2012, with the help of a group of 20 people I spent back into circulation approximately 500 tagged Euro and Great British Pound mixed denomination notes in several cities throughout Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands and England. Testing the project during the trip produced mixed results: several of the codes were pulled off by shop assistants; some sales people thought they were counterfeit notes; machines at train stations and supermarkets wouldn't accept

them; for the project to travel globally it needed to cater for diverse languages. However, the majority of notes were put back into the cash drawers where they were hopefully redistributed to other consumers. Over the course of the trip which denomination was tagged and where or when it was spent was not recorded. While in Germany I spent a day in Potsdam attempting to track the codes in a more controlled way, targeting only 5-euro notes and recording where and what they were spent on. However because we had already tagged notes in Germany this experiment proved pointless. At the end of the trip there had been 59 hits, in 20 cities in 6 countries, an average visit of 2 minutes and 32 seconds with an average of 6 pages per visit. The analytics clearly show the notes moving around Europe, but there was no way of tracking the circulation of individual notes or the lifetime of the codes.

After returning home and reflecting on the project, several problems came to light: the site was still not interactive or interesting enough; it was still too didactic; it wasn't actually designed for a multi-cultural international audience. However, I felt the project still held potential to be really interesting, but for this to happen it required a far more sophisticated approach regarding the dissemination and tracking of information. It also called for an incorporation of this aspect into the website. Instead of barraging users with stoic questions, the site needed to use humour or artistic language with which to unpack the serious and complicated ideas. An observation made by Olav Velthuis in *Imaginary Economics* had a particular resonance with the work at this point, "Art can constitute an alternative to knowledge - an illustration that accompanies some existing economic thought, and therefore a source of knowledge in itself".⁷¹

The \$5 note

The third and final iteration of *For the love of money* only targets \$5 (NZD) notes, based on the assumption that the smaller the denomination the longer it is likely to circulate. Over the course of 2013, 500 \$5 notes will be tagged with unique QR codes and spent back into circulation, beginning 1 January 2013. The website is based on the previous questionnaire, but simplified and personalised as well as requiring a greater extent of interaction. The user's interaction, combined with analytics, programming and a database, allows the user to enter information as well as see information about the tagged note, including: where and when the note was tagged and last scanned, what

items the note was involved in the purchase of, the value of the note on scanning and the difference compared to the value on the date of the last scan, the name of the other users and what they think money is. The last question asks 'To receive updates on the future activity of this \$5 note please enter your email address (optional).'

The final page of the site contains a link to the web page - <http://fortheloveofmoney.biz/report.php> - that contains a constantly updating list of all tagged codes in circulation, for example:

001 - 1 visits, 0 complete. Loaded: 01-01-2013, The Warehouse, Tory street, Wellington

004 - 1 visits, 1 complete. Loaded: 01-01-2013, BP 2 go, Brooklyn, Wellington

016 - 0 visits, 0 complete. Loaded: 04-01-2013, The Hop Garden, Wellington

026 - 0 visits, 0 complete. Loaded: 16-01-2013, New World, Whitianga

029 - 0 visits, 0 complete. Loaded: 13-01-2013, New World, Waipukurau

033 - 0 visits, 0 complete. Loaded: 11-01-2013, Aro Video, Wellington

041 - 1 visits, 0 complete. Loaded: 15-01-2013, Olive Cafe, Cuba Street, Wellington

042 - 1 visits, 1 complete. Loaded: 16-01-2013, Toi Poneke, Wellington Arts Centre

044 - 0 visits, 0 complete. Loaded: 20-01-2013, Lost at Auckland Airport

048 - 0 visits, 0 complete. Loaded: 18-01-2013, Deli Bake, Ponsonby, Auckland

060 - 0 visits, 0 complete. Loaded: 18-01-2013, Havana Bar, Wellington

068 - 0 visits, 0 complete. Loaded: 20-01-2013, Green Cabs, Wellington

074 - 0 visits, 0 complete. Loaded: 20-01-2013, Willis Street Markets, Wellington

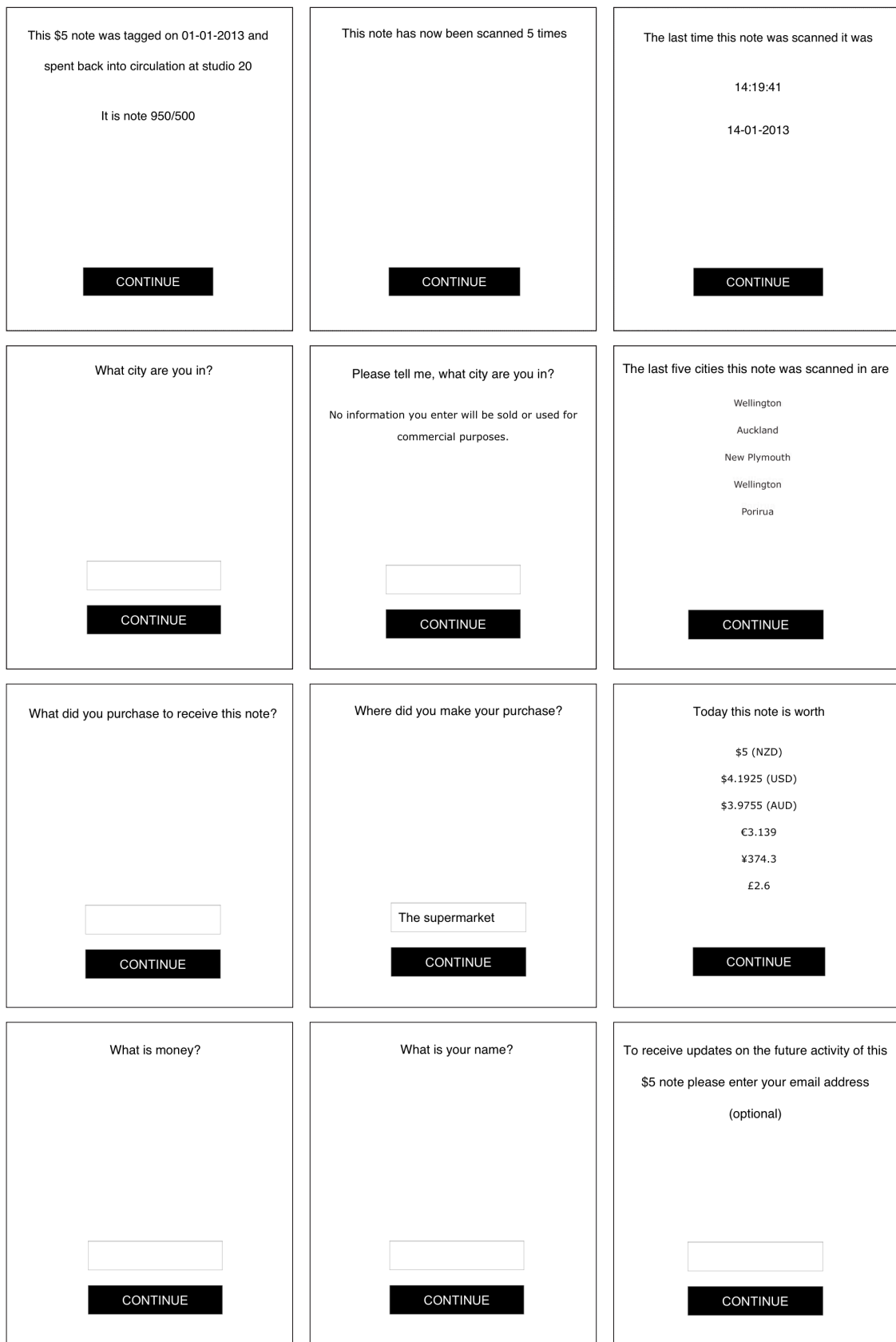


Fig. 10-21. Author. *For the love of money (final iteration)*, selection of screenshots, 2012

As well as providing viewers with the date and location of where the tagged notes were initially spent back into circulation, this growing list allows the user a comprehensive insight into my personal consumer decisions. This aspect of the work denotes a type of surveillance or voyeurism and honesty, akin to American artist Haim Steinbach's inclusion of bank statements with some of his works.⁷² This list will remain online for all participants in the work to examine, and additionally will provide an online record of the work.

For the love of money is reminiscent of another time-based project instigated by English artist Simon Faithful. Faithful's *Accident Book: An inventory of falls, mishaps and slips* is an intervention into eight Accident and Emergency wards across London and Cambridge. In June 2009 he deposited 500 self-published accident books into the waiting rooms of those hospitals. The individually-numbered books contain 33 stories of accidents that befell the artist over a period of 42 years. Readers are encouraged to take them home, register them on Faithful's website - simonfaithful.org - and upload their own stories. 11 stories have been registered since the books were distributed in 2009. The site remains active for all those readers who one day might happen across his books. Faithful documented the project on his website with two images and a register of all the books. When a reader registers a book, the register entry becomes an active link that you can click on - sending you to a new page with the reader's own story of why they were at that Accident and Emergency ward.

Following in the footsteps of *Accident Book*, *For the love of money* is time-based, and because it was instigated towards the end of this thesis, it doesn't fit neatly within the parameters of a Masters project. I can only speculate as to the future success or failures of the site and the dissemination of the notes, with the true outcome unfolding only after an extended period of time. The site, however, will remain live after all 500 notes have been spent, allowing acquirers of the notes to activate them over several years, or until all codes appear to have been removed.

Conclusion

Be the change

Reflecting on the success or failure of the three projects undertaken during this thesis it feels appropriate to return to Mika Hannula's writings on the small gesture. "A small gesture is an act that has a certain impossibility inscribed into it, a certain productive failure. A certain specific and singular presence that does not strive for a predetermined goal".⁷³ All three projects were aleatory in nature, leaving them open to failure, or to an unexpected outcome. Even though *Art Money Win* and *Intentions* didn't fulfill my initial expectations, this doesn't mean the projects failed, but rather, raises and reiterates some interesting questions on the problematics of critical and interventionist, site-specific, and participatory art practice. For example: does participation or interaction activate the viewer, creating a greater level of engagement and control over their own social and political existence? Is the art audience interested in criticality and politics or merely aesthetics and affordability? Can a critical art project be taken seriously when operating within the confines of the art establishment? And how can you produce a critical work within the art establishment when the controllers are only interested in conviviality and accessibility?

Although the preliminary results for *For the love of money* reflect either a low rate of engagement with the work or a delay between spending the notes and them going back into circulation, this doesn't diminish its criticality. The real potential of the project lies not with the number of views, but in the future life of the tagged notes. There is the hope that they will continue to circulate and might one day be scanned and 'reactivated'. One effect of the piece is to anthropomorphise the note, providing it with a life and a history, leaving you wondering where it is and what happened to it. This is not a safe or guaranteed practice; rather there is a level of uncertainty and potentiality built into the works.

These investigations over the course of this Masters thesis have left me with more questions and uncertainty over the efficacy and power of art as a tool for change: can we assist the creation of a slow-moving paradigm shift through our critical analysis and forms of creative resistance, in the form of art, film, literature, and alternative economies? and can the projects we create, and contribute to, enable a better more sustainable economic, and therefore sociable, future?

However, this has in no way dampened my enthusiasm for this type of critical practice; instead, it has endorsed my desire for more thoughtful, playful and critical explorations. What I hope for is that these small gestures, encompassing large ideas, are able to intervene in our everyday experiences to create a moment in time where we might question our preconceived ideas of reality. And I also believe that as citizens we need to trust that we have the potential to make a difference, if only a small one.

Notes

- 1 Mattick, P. (1995, Summer). Romance of art and money. *International Journal of Political Economy*. 3-8. Pg. 7.
- 2 Following the theories of scholars like Milton Friedman and the Chicago school of economics, neoliberalism is propagated throughout the world through the World Bank, WTO, IMF and CIA. For further reading:
Berardi, F. (2011). *After the Future*. Edinburgh: AK Press.
Chomsky, N. (2004). *Hegemony or Survival: America's quest for global dominance*. NSW: Allen & Unwin.
Klein, N. (2007). *The Shock Doctrine: The rise of disaster capitalism*. London: Allen Lane.
Soros, G. (1998). *The crisis of global capitalism: [open society endangered]*. London: Little, Brown and Company.
Werihof, C. (2008). *The Consequences of Globalisation and Neoliberal Policies. What are the Alternatives?* Retrieved 7 November 2012, from <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-consequences-of-globalization-and-neoliberal-policies-what-are-the-alternatives/7973>
- 3 Žižek, S. (2009). *First as tragedy, then as farce*. London: Verso.
- 4 Žižek, S. (2009). *First as tragedy, then as farce*. London: Verso. Pg. 16.
- 4 Smith, A. (1991). *The Wealth of Nations*. London: Everyman's Library. Pg. 448.
Adam Smith (1723-1790) was a Scottish moral philosopher and one of the dominant theorists and personalities of the eighteenth century. Smith was concerned with rationalization and observation and is recognised as the father of the classical school of economics. To promote individualism neoclassical economists have adopted Smith's term 'the invisible hand' suggesting the accumulation of individual wealth will benefit society, regardless of any altruistic intentions of the 'masters of mankind'.
- 5 Werihof, C. (2008). *The Consequences of Globalization and Neoliberal Policies. What are the Alternatives?* Retrieved 7 November 2012, from <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-consequences-of-globalization-and-neoliberal-policies-what-are-the-alternatives/7973>
- 6 President Theodore Roosevelt led a series of reforms known as 'Trust Busting', during his presidency, 1901-1909, which sought to increase the regulatory power of the federal government. On June 4 1963, a few months before his assassination, President Kennedy signed a Presidential decree that stripped the Federal Reserve of its exclusive right to print and loan US currency to the federal government. Many South American, African and Middle Eastern heads of state that started nationalising assets were 'replaced' in wars and CIA backed coups.
For further reading see note 2.
- 7 Berardi, F. (2011). *After the Future*. Edinburgh, Oakland, Baltimore: AK Press. Pg. 147.
- 8 Chomsky, N. (2008, October). *It's Fantasy Economy! Some Expert Views on What Should Happen Next*. Retrieved from <http://www.chomsky.info/articles/20081019.htm>

- 9 Rancière, J. (2004). Problems and Transformations in Critical Art. In: Bishop, C. (Ed.). (2006). *Participation* (pp. 83-93). London/Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel/MIT Press. Pg. 83.
- 10 *Ibid.* p.92.
- 11 Fraser, A. (2005, October). How has Art Changed? *Frieze*, 94. Retrieved from http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/how_has_art_changed/
- 12 Higgin, J. (2012, September). Shouts & Murmurs: State of the Art. *Frieze*, 149. Retrieved from <http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/shouts-murmurs/>
- 13 Sierra as cited in: Squibb, S. (2012, July). Santiago Sierra's "NO, Global Tour". *Art Agenda*. Retrieved from <http://www.art-agenda.com/reviews/santiago-sierra%E2%80%99s-no-global-tour/>. The source of the quote apparently comes from an interview with Sierra in 2001 - "What makes them angry" by Liutauras Psibilskis
- 14 What the world needs now. (2004, November-December). *Frieze*, 87. Retrieved from <http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/what-the-world-needs-now-/>
- 15 For further reading, see:
- Bang Larsen, L. (1999). Social Aesthetics. In: Bishop, C. (Ed.). (2006). *Participation* (pp. 172-183). London/Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel/MIT Press.
- Bourriaud, N. (2002). *Relational Aesthetics*. Dijon: Les presses du reel.
- Dezeuze, A. (Ed.). (2010). *The do-it-yourself artwork: From Fluxus to new media*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Gillick, L. (2006, Winter). Contingent Factors: A Response to Claire Bishop's "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics". *October*, 115. Retrieved from http://www.practiceincontext.net/wp-content/uploads/04_gillick_responds_to_bishop.pdf
- Kester, G. (2004). *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press
- Nesbit, M., Orbist, H U., & Tiravanija, R. (2003). What is a station? In: Bishop, C. (Ed.). (2006). *Participation* (pp.184-189). London/Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel/MIT Press.
- 16 Žižek, S. (2009). *First as tragedy, then as farce*. London: Verso. Pg 7.
- 17 Hannula, M. (2006). *The Politics of Small Gestures: Chances and Challenges for Contemporary Art*. Istanbul: Art-ist. Pg 14-16.
- 18 Debord, G. (1967). Towards a situationist International. In: Bishop, C. (Ed.). (2006). *Participation* (pp. 96-101). London/Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel/MIT Press. Pg. 96.
- 19 The Yes Men, an activist duo, intervene in the business world by impersonating CEOs and spokespeople to expose corruption and the hidden truth of corporations: The Art Guys, Michael Galbreth and Jack Massing, sold sponsorship rights, of themselves, to corporations for a year. Matthieu Laurette mainly uses the media to cite a variety of interventions, his most well known works are: *Produits remboursés (Money-back Products 1991-2001)* and *El Gran Trueque (The Great Exchange, 2000)*.

- 20 Stallabrass, J. (2004). *Art Incorporated: the story of contemporary art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pg. 70.
- 21 Velthuis, O. (2005). *Imaginary Economics: Contemporary Artists and the World of big money*. Rotterdam: NAI Publishers. Pg. 128.
- Olav Velthuis has written extensively on the processes contemporary artists use to contextualise and critique capitalist and economic processes and suggests there are three views on the relationship between art and economics: the critical, the affirming and the playful, but because of the observation noted above, the dichotomy between these distinctions is unclear.
- 22 Bacon, F. (1909-14). Of Seditious and Troubles. In: *Essays, civil and moral 3*. New York: P.F. Collier & Son. Retrieved <http://www.bartleby.com/3/1/15.html>. Para. 11.
- 23 Paton, K. (2010, May 27). *After Supermarkets* [Podcast]. Retrieved from <http://nowfuture.org.nz/sites/nowfuture.org.nz/files/audio/dialogues-after-supermarkets-27-5-10/after-supermarkets-kim-paton.mp3>
- 24 Purves, T. (Ed.). (2005). *What we want is free: Generosity and exchange in recent art*. New York: State University of New York Press. Pg. 102.
- 25 Mauss, M. (1990). *The Gift: The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies*. London: Routledge.
- 26 Discussion of economic inequality and the famed 1% peaked recently with the Occupy movement, whose unifying political slogan and economic claim "We are the 99%" made headlines worldwide. The top 1% of Americans have a minimum income of \$516,000 while the lowest 60% earn a maximum \$59,000.
See: Khimm, S. (2011, October 7). Who are the 1 percent? *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/post/who-are-the-1-percenters/2011/10/06/gIQA4JDQL_blog.html
- In New Zealand is it lower but the top 1% owning 16.4% of the total net worth of the country while the bottom 50% own 5.2%.
See: 2012 Household Incomes Report – 'At a Glance'. (2012). *The Ministry of Social Development*. Retrieved from <http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/monitoring/household-incomes/index.html>
- 27 Werihof, C. (2008). *The Consequences of Globalization and Neoliberal Policies. What are the Alternatives?* Retrieved 7 November 2012, from <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-consequences-of-globalization-and-neoliberal-policies-what-are-the-alternatives/7973>
- 28 Corporatocracy and Plutocracy are two terms coined in response to this and are used to suggest an economic and political system controlled by the wealthy, corporations or corporate interests. Whether this results from large campaign contributions, globalisation shifting power away from workers, the power of corporate lobbies or the close relationship of business and politics, it is undeniable that wealth equals power.

- 29 Berardi, F. (2011). *After the Future*. Edinburgh: AK Press. Pg. 59.
- 30 Kester, G. (2004). *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Pg. 29.
- 31 Bishop, C. (2006). Introduction: Viewers as Producers. In: Bishop, C. (Ed.). *Participation* (pp. 10-17). London/Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel/MIT Press.
- 32 Bourriaud, N. (2002). *Relational Aesthetics*. Dijon: Les presses du reel. Pg. 14.
- 33 Bishop, C. (2004, Fall). Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics. *October*, 110. 51-79.
- 34 *IBID*, Pg. 70.
- 35 Foster, H. (2004). Chat Rooms. In: Bishop, C. (Ed.). (2006). *Participation* (pp. 190-195). London/Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel/MIT Press. Pg. 195.
- 36 Foster, H. (2012, Winter). Post-Critical. *October*, 139. 3-8. Pg. 3.
- 37 *Ibid*. Pg. 8.
- 38 Kwon, M. (2002). *One place after another: site-specific art and locational identity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Pg. 24.
- 39 *Ibid*. Pg. 14.
- 40 For further information visit their website: <http://artshow.co.nz/>
- 41 Smith, T. (2009). *What is Contemporary Art?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pg. 145.
- 42 See Carol Vogel's review of Algorithm in Arts Beat and Liv Siddall's account of Landy's work in It's Nice That:
 Siddall, L. (2011, October 13). *Michael Landy: Credit Card Destroying Machine* [Web log comment]. Retrieved from <http://www.itsnicethat.com/articles/michael-landy-frieze-2011>
 Vogel, C. (2011, June 3). Venice Biennale: Money Talks, Make That Sing. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/06/03/venice-biennale-money-talks-make-that-sings/>
- 43 Thompson, D. (2008). *The \$12 million stuffed shark: The curious economics of contemporary art*. London: Aurum Press. Pg. 171.
- 44 Other projects that have used correspondence as the output of the work are:
 Sean Landers , *Attn. Miss Gonzales*, 1991
 Amy Balkin, *Public Smog: Earth's Atmosphere as UNESCO World Heritage Preserve*, 2012
 Faivovich & Goldberg, *The weight of uncertainty*, 2012
- 45 Kaprow, A. (1966). *Assemblages, Environments and Happenings*. New York: Harry N. Abrams. P.188.
- 46 For further reading:
 Bishop, C. (Ed.). (2012). *Artificial Hells*. London: Verso.
 Stallabrass, J. (2004). *Art Incorporated: the story of contemporary art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Thompson, D. (2008). *The \$12 million stuffed shark: The curious economics of contemporary art*. London: Aurum Press Ltd.
- Wu, J. (2002). *Privatising culture: corporate art intervention since the 1980s*. London; New York: Verso.
- 47 Bang Larsen, L. (1999). Social Aesthetics. In: Bishop, C. (Ed.). (2006). *Participation* (pp. 172-183). London/Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel/MIT Press. Pg. 177.
- 48 Lee Lozano: *Real Money Piece*. (n.d.). Retrieved April 10, 2012, from http://www.e-flux.com/projects/do_it/manuals/artists/l/L002/L002C_text.html
- 49 This is what we are seeing today repeated in the largest economies around the world - The USA, European Union and the UK are printing money as a means of financing debt repayments. Recently Green Party co-leader Russell Norman suggested quantitative easing as a tool to lower the high value of the New Zealand dollar.
- 50 As cited in: Weschler, L. (1999) *Boggs: A comedy of values*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Pg. 32.
- 51 The Bretton Woods system is a form of monetary management negotiated towards the end of World War II. 730 delegates from all allied nations gathered at the meeting (held at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire) and signed the agreement that stated all countries would tie their currency to the US dollar, which at the time was fixed to the gold standard – a system where the price of gold was fixed to approximately \$35 per ounce.
- 52 Arnoldi, J. (n.d.) Money: Abstraction, Time and Desire. In: Dickhoff W., & Steinweg, M. (Eds.). (2012). *Inaesthetics 3: Money* (pp. 39-43). Berlin: Merve Verlag. Pg. 40.
- 53 Ariely, D. (2010, June 10). *Big Think Interview with Dan Ariely* [Video File]. Retrieved from <http://bigthink.com/ideas/20748>
- 54 Walter Benjamin, as cited in Stallabrass, J. (2004). *Art Incorporated: the story of contemporary art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pg. 191.
- 55 Pietroiusti, as cited in *Make art extra-ordinary Pietroiusti's way, through Nov. 18*. (2004, November 17). *MIT News*. Retrieved from <http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/2004/arts-pietroiusti-1117.html>
- 56 QR codes were first designed for the automotive industry in Japan in the early 1990s and due to its fast readability and adoption in Smartphone technology businesses, advertisers and marketers have adopted it.
- 57 Sanders, L. (2012, September 15). Becoming Money Savvy. *Listener*. Retrieved <http://www.listener.co.nz/current-affairs/money/becoming-money-savvy/>
- 58 For further reading:
Berardi, F. (2011). *After the Future*. Edinburgh, Oakland, Baltimore: AK Press.
- 59 Platzker, D. (2004). *Blah Blah*. Retrieved from <http://www.closky.info/?p=10026>
- 60 A master of Internet art is French artist Claude Closky. Running since the mid nineties www.sittes.net provides a wealth of almost two decades worth of subversive, critical and seductive projects. A selection of my favorite projects are: *+1* (2000), *Hands and Arrows* (2001), *Search* (2003), *Source html* (2011), *Loading, unloading* (2012)

- 61 Pilcher, J. (2010, September 25). *Parasitic Art*. Retrieved from http://www.academia.edu/780794/Parasitic_Art. Para. 1.
- 62 Stallabrass, J. (n.d.). Shop until you drop. In: Grunenberg, C. & Hollein, M. (Eds.). (2002). *Shopping – A Century of Art and Consumer Culture* (pp 222 - 230). Frankfurt: Hatje Cantz Publishers. Pg. 227.
- 63 de Botton, A. (2011, July). *Alain de Botton: Atheism 2.0*. [Video file]. Retrieved from http://www.ted.com/talks/alain_de_botton_atheism_2_0.html
- 64 *The Act governing currency issue in New Zealand*. (1989). Retrieved June 25, 2012, from <http://www.rbnz.govt.nz/currency/money/0094129.html>. Section 28
- 65 Of note are: etoy.CORPORATION'S lengthy legal battle with online toy company Etoys after they hijacked over 1.5million web-surfers in their 1996 project *Digital Hijack*. Rachel Baker faced legal action from Tesco's lawyers in 1997, and her website was eventually shut down after she set up a para-site, *TM Clubcard*, mimicking the supermarket chains online royalty system in an examination of consumer loyalty and corporate exploitation. J.S.G Boggs continually faces lawsuits, seizures and harassment from police and government departments over his representations of global currency.
- 66 Jarecki, N. (Director). (2012). *Arbitrage* [Motion Picture]. United States: Green Room Films/Tree House Productions
- 67 Schmidt, E. (2010, September 25). *Eric Schmidt On the Future of Search*. Retrieved from <http://googlesystem.blogspot.co.nz/2010/08/eric-schmidt-on-future-of-search.html>
- 68 Pariser, E. (2011, September). *Eli Pariser: Beware online "filter bubbles"* [Video File]. Retrieved from http://www.ted.com/talks/eli_pariser_beware_online_filter_bubbles.html
Pariser, E. (2011). *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet is hiding from you*. New York: Penguin Press
- 69 Pilcher, J. (2010, September 25). *Parasitic Art*. Retrieved from http://www.academia.edu/780794/Parasitic_Art
- 70 Hardt, M. & Negri, A. (2000). *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Pg. XI.
- 71 Velthuis, O. (2005). *Imaginary Economics: Contemporary Artists and the World of big money*. Rotterdam: NAI Publishers. Pg. 12.
- 72 Paul Ardenne discusses the Stainbach's work in his text *The Art Market in the 1980s*. He suggests Steinbach did this to show that art couldn't be separated from the market. Ardenne, P. (1995). The Art Market in the 1980s. *International Journal of Political Economy*. 25:2. 100-130.
- 73 Hannula, M. (2006). *The Politics of Small Gestures: Chances and Challenges for Contemporary Art*. Istanbul: Art-ist. Pg. 11.

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Appendix

1.

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