

Moderator: Amy J. Elias

EDITOR'S FORUM: "THE COMMONS AS NETWORK"

As shared public space in which everyone has an equal stake, the commons has undergone radical transformation and redefinition in the twenty-first century. The arts have taken up the cause of commons preservation in a variety of ways, from the creation of media commons to the exposure of commons destruction in protest art to the enactment of commons principles in certain forms of participatory art, accelerationist aesthetics, and affect theory. But the arts may be being redefined as forcefully as the commons itself, forced to collude with a globalized market environment or marginalized as a harmless entertainment through variegated social, political, and economic mechanisms.

Q • *I asked a group of artists and scholars in different arts fields to consider what the “networked commons” means for art and artists today—when “networked” is defined not only in terms of technological connections but also in terms of affective and social relations. Does the commons become redefined, reanimated and re-politicized if conceived not only in terms of spatialized geographical and legal territory but also in terms of timely networks, broadly defined? Might the arts intervene to redefine the commons—beyond copyright law and jurisdictional legalisms—and shift paradigms for shared environments from geography to flow, group to network, statement to dialogue, space to time, mind to body, solo to chorus, self to networked community?*

ing, and I must feel my presence in it. This is in part what my work has been about: making people aware of what they share beyond mere ownership or beyond subjectivity and objecthood. Laying out diffraction film on windows, diffracting light into colored spectrums, installing mirrors on the floors to walk on, or simply inhabiting a space with a sound piece goes a long way. If I feel, when an audience enters the space, that they become suddenly aware of light, of air and sound—if their bodies are inhabited by a sudden presence that transcends the need to “own” a space, or own an object or a person—then I feel that I have fully investigated the poetic potential of a space.

What we share, and how we share it, has also been defined by the migratory experience in my native country of Korea. To think of commonality is first and foremost in my practice to think of migration, to think of property as a flow that never attains to a stable form, or to a stable state of being. In pursuing video performance work I have often established my body as a transient element of nature, which I always envisioned as the passing of a needle, and only through movement or the act of passing through did I experience conformity between being and time. Our energy is mostly dedicated to making our resources and our living spaces a permanent and definitive object. I have always felt the concept of ownership to imply a certain violence: that which possesses a thing—or worst yet, another being—cannot fully grasp a greater domain of the sensible realm we inhabit. I have often

experimented with lending my body to public spaces: I became a static object, or simply an eyewitness; I tried to refute the idea of “making” as an essential proponent of artistic engagement. Little is required for being in space; little is required to make a full use of it. Standing and breathing alone, if they are well attended to, can perform the full premise of an experience of being in space. It is in such a state of being, which for me translates into a state of non-doing, that one can also raise a greater awareness and greater respect for what we commonly share and imagine to be our space and time.

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KIMSOOJA is a South Korean multi-disciplinary conceptual artist based in New York, Paris, and Seoul. She represented Korea for the 24th São Paulo Biennale in 1998 and the 55th Venice Biennale Korean Pavilion in 2013 and has participated in more than thirty international biennials and triennials. She has had solo exhibitions at MoMA PS1; Cristal Palace, Reina Sofia; Kunsthalle Wien; Kunsthalle Bern; Baltic Center for Contemporary Art, UK; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan; the Museum of Contemporary Art Lyon; and numerous other venues.

CLAIRE TANCONS

African American spatial practices belie the notion of a static commons. Among these, none do so more than parading traditions in New Orleans. Historically descended from the mutual aid organizations and benevolent societies of enslaved Africans and mixed Indian and African maroon communities, contemporary Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs and Mardi Gras Indian tribes have upheld second line parades, jazz funerals, and street masking

as territorial assertions of a transient commons. Year-round and nearly daily, parades in New Orleans celebrate community and display creativity across downtown wards and uptown neighborhoods, often through back-of-town alleys but also along main streets, during daytime and nighttime. In so doing these parades and processions, whether in the context of carnivals or festivals or as everyday life practice, innervate the city with a network of parental filiations, social affiliations, and political affinities as a commons in motion and, sometimes, as a commotion. Resistant and remedial practices against the encroachment of gentrification and the threat of further displacement, parading has all but reemerged from the floodwaters and oil spills of the last decade to provide time-space linkages for New Orleans' African American working class communities and cultural bearers.

My research in and practice of processional performance is imbued with these immediate examples and their immemorial antecedents. Whereas processional performance was a dominant mode of public display in Europe until the seventeenth century, its marginalization paralleled the destruction of the commons. African diasporic performance aesthetics—processional performance in particular and public ceremonial culture in general—have used mobility as a placemaking device, a practice in which place is not a fixed locale but a mobile network, and sites are nodal points within it. Peripatetic and circumambulatory, ranging from marching to stepping, parading, and demonstrating, processional performance

offers a vast array of territorializing tactics to reclaim public space, cultural strategies to make visible marginalized communities, and creative tools for participatory experiences. Largely unstaged and minimally rehearsed, open to improvisation and inclined to disruption, the processional performances that I co-elaborate with both invited and self-selected participants are a testament to the fact that there is power in numbers and that the street remains a sustainable arena for the formation of a temporary and mayhap more spatially integrated commons.

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CLAIRE TANCONS is a curator, writer, and researcher with a focus on Carnival, public ceremonial culture, civic rituals, and popular movements. *The Associate Curator for Prospect.1 New Orleans (2007-9)*, a curator for the *7th Gwangju Biennale (2008)*, *Guest Curator for CAPE09 (2009)*, *Associate Curator for research for Biennale Bénin (2012)*, and a curator for the *Göteborg Biennial (2013)*, Tancons has developed genealogies and methodologies for thinking about and presenting performance – including reclaiming the processional as exhibitionary mode. She has written extensively about Carnival, the carnivalesque, performance, and protest in NKA, Small Axe, Third Text, and e-flux Journal. Tancons was most recently guest curator for *Up Hill Down Hall: An Indoor Carnival as part of the 2014 BMW Tate Live series at Tate Modern*.

HSUAN HSU

The recent surge of interest in Paleo diets and other hunter-gatherer-inspired practices is grounded in an argument about the common health practices of the human species: contemporary diseases and health problems supposedly arise from humanity's tendency to neglect how we're (supposedly) optimally evolved to live and eat as hunter-gather-