

# BETWEEN REVOLUTION AND HERESY

Pt.1

Constructing a practice that uses Biennials as a platform to interrogate the spatial reach of art

I want to make a series of statements that meditate on the semiotics, terms, categories that make up the attributes of what has come to be understood by **CONTEMPORARY ART** in conjunction with the attributes that constitute a dialectic of **THE BIENNIAL FORM.**

I also want to look at how the definition of contemporary art and the biennial form constitute **A LIMIT OR AN EDGE** to what we can say and think about art, which is at the same time **A BARRIER** to further thinking and development in art

And in working through this idea of a limit I propose locating an unknown space, which we will call X  
a new object for thinking and art, beyond what is understood by contemporary art and the biennial form, as a new space around which our thinking can coalesce.

These two elements constitute a basic framework of research for the formation of two similar overlapping practices

Post Autonomy as formulated in 2008

a new institutional critical practice

The reason for linking these together is to formulate the problems posed by the framing of contemporary art and the biennial form as part of the methodology of a Post Autonomy practice (along with a new institutional critical practice) – both grounding their research within the biennial form.

**Problem 1**  
This problem mirrors exactly the complex shift society and art have experienced and are still going through since the 1990s – to its maximum (Wallerstein's) periodization: 1945-90 constitutes a time of transition, and the period from 1990 until now marks both a moment of continuous crisis and Globalisation and also a fundamental shift away from whatever we understood by art. Ronald M. Lee in "Tearing the Art World" 2012 goes so far as to say that 50 years of theorisation defining art are unable to capture and define existing conditions – this shift is only now being widely registered. So now it is possible to recognize and retrospect the first crude formulations of Post Autonomy in the early 1990s as the first evidence of these symptoms, and the increasing verifications of these and subsequent claims.

**Problem 2**  
If we are to agree with the initial, but crude, observations formulated for Post Autonomy – then we need to state this issue in its starkest form

**A**  
How to formulate and analyse something without language, concepts or terms of reference, where we assume only symptoms and evidence of a loss of art's manifestation, peeling away each attribute that makes up art, one by one.

**B**  
"How to respond to the emptying out, absence and the negative space of art that remains?" Then how to adequately frame these sets of problems without soundings melodramatic, making empty generalisations, or without leaving art?

Summary

How to adequately describe the existing state of affairs?  
How to conceptualise and frame this state of affairs?  
How to acknowledge the emptying out of a former definition of art?

**Biennial 1**  
Framing these issues within the biennial form

The methodological limit where this shift pushes art is addressed in the show presented in the Venice Biennale – **The Transformation of Art** – which uses a broad range of material means within the concrete context of the biennial form and information that cannot be described, seen or fixed within existing means. The difficulties revealed in the existing state of affairs were directly confronted step by step in test runs leading up to Venice in online collaborative diagrams containing drawings and texts.

technology  
plurality  
reductive thinking  
opinion

**Biennial 2**  
What is the necessity for staging a material practice looking at examining the biennial form, within the concrete context of the biennial?

This isn't strictly speaking a site specific practice but a tangible form to focus our thinking to pose concrete questions concerning the spatial reach of art. One principle reason for doing this is to consciously hone down what can realistically be said and tested out within a context, rather than what we can speculatively say limited to the existing elite – in other words, in order to break down and shift existing power blocks and meaning and the recycling of power – we need to develop a specific methodology where issues and questions can be brought together, engaged and tested out within a concrete framework.

How do we account for the fact that there's a vast amount of written material and descriptions about art?

**In Search of PA**  
Where is the appropriate place to pose questions about PA? Who poses these questions, and what questions do we need to ask?

**Biennial 3**  
How to define the biennial form? (variation)

But in reality, if what I have said so far is correct, **"How can you interrogate the biennial form if concepts and attributes defining it are no longer in place?"**  
(How true is this account? And if it is, how do we familiarise ourselves with the nuances of the landscape where our normalised idea of art is disappearing?)  
In other words, if concepts, ideas, thinking are no longer in place to agree what art is, how and where do we locate the criteria to define contemporary art and the biennial?

Pt.2

Mapping a scheme of PA as the negative space of art

How are the issues resolved in art and philosophy?

The current definition of the Biennial form modelled on **Deleuze's notion of PROCESS** is a site where current thinking into what constitutes contemporary art takes place in a continually developing idea of what constitutes the site for art.

(It seems if we continue down this path we will remain fixed inside this circuit, repeating the same platitudes).

It seems that the issues defining what we understand by the category Biennial and the category art meet around the cardinal points of Globalisation, Neoliberalism, Neoliberalism and cultural capitalism.

**The Deleuzian revolution**  
linking aesthetics to philosophy

The current solution to attacks against art, to the contempt that the general public has for contemporary art (according to Charles Esche), and to the crisis in Western culture, seems to have fallen to Deleuze and Guattari's asymmetrical thinking, whose scope and ambition I have already mentioned – which seems to reconfigure a dilemma already pointed out by Nietzsche in **"Thus Spoke Zarathustra"** – the problems with existing forms of thinking and art.

A further problem I have noticed with artists and institutions who adopt the Deleuzian revolution is that they end up entrenching existing institutions and power, halting any further discussion of change to existing institutions.

But I think this over-reliance on Deleuze and Guattari by academia merely obscures the difficulties we face, or, to be more precise, this marks academia's determination to save art and thinking from the market by confining it within academic institutions.

That is not to say that there are no significant works, in fact it seems whatever we understand by development a significant work can be found in this area. One work of considerable significance and needs to be mentioned here: **"Deconstruction": 2011** by Angela Moutopoulos and Maurizio Lazzarato

Around the globe, the safeguarding of art within the confines of academic institutions can be seen as a site for the reconstruction of a new academic practice

**Reconstructing a new form of institution**

**Confronting the erosion of art and thinking**

Equally it is important to recognise attributes, residues of thinking, criteria, massive production of artworks under the umbrella of **"EVERYONE IS AN ARTIST"**.

To proceed it seems that we need to do a number of things – map out in more detail the territory that has opened up at the point when the dissolution of art and thinking began, along with the successive and periodic insights that clarify what we understood by Post Autonomy but given the erosion of thinking, concepts and language what terminology and basic or sufficient reasoning do we adopt to make a description of this state of affairs? These problems are clearly shown when we move away from the logic of Colonial language and role of Modernism inherent in the structuring of territorial intention of "Binary oppositions" that define centred, self-art work project/other, replaced by the terms self, project and participatory practices.

We are faced with defining whatever it is that we once knew by art whose properties, attributes and concepts have slipped away since the 1990s – then the object, practice, thinking that remains in its place, which we are unable to mentally fix.

If we define PA by the attack and loss of a coherent reading of art, does this mean that, by implication, we are advocating a conservative reading of art, a reductive reading of art or advocating non-thinking and non-developments in art or encourage the destruction of art or the reconstruction of an earlier idea of art? These presumptions are all false. Instead, PA plots out a completely different scheme, which I want to look at, further on in this text.

The loss of modernist language has bifurcated into two directions:  
The one where the **temporal dimension** is severed which is characterized by **decentered/centered/linear** conceptualizations to predominantly neo-classical  
The other is the **Systemic Theory** as defined by the **Load** from defining the **work, author, critic, audience** and at the same time recognizes that the apparent **unity** of thinking and concepts can only be understood through contemporary new thinking that address the complexity of the current state of affairs

Assembling basic statements about Post Autonomy

At its limit what we are looking at is a form that allows us to retain a memory of the whole entity that has disappeared and is now invisible.

While I pose these elementary questions, I am also assembling the line of inquiry a PA practice ought to or is capable of asking and working through

In other words, a form of inquiry that is fluid and flexible, that constantly criss crosses inside and outside the boundary of the field of art, that registers its physical and negative properties.

The crux of the matter is whether this appearance of the dissolving of all the definable attributes of art since the 1990's is something real or are we witnessing a complete change and mutation of art that hasn't reached a final stage so we are unable to recognise what this change actually is.

I think it is almost impossible and premature to make a definitive judgement, except to say that there appears to be recurring opinions that validate the idea according to which we are continuing to experience a process that PA registered in the 1990's.

Another possibility is that we are just watching the effect of market forces which require constant change and renewal.

**A.**  
How to deal with the absence or the negation of all the attributes of art? How to engage with and confront its absence or negative space, something that is gradually turning inside out, an absence of materiality and concepts?...

Since we are unable to make a conclusive decision, what are the strategic uses of PA?

**B.**  
Then what is the proximity of the position occupied by PA to the existing framework of art and its history?

**This hints at or starts to mark and pull out hidden structures.**

In these accounts, we are starting to locate the attributes of this unknown space which we can now recognize as **the space opened up by PA**

**The use of the term PA**

so we need something else to occupy, populate and navigate this new space, then start to articulate what we understand by this new space.

With the current opinion that the available terms, signposts, categories to define and allow us to navigate recent developments are meaningless.

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Defining the attributes of a post-political state of affairs

What our thinking revolves around is the gravitational pull of the end point marked by PA, as a trigger for another process.

the rationale behind being in Venice – you can't do anything without being in Venice

Words standing in for objects  
Language as a picture of the World  
Statements  
Truth-claims

**DO WE TAKE THIS LITERALLY?**

so if we take the initial crude formulation of PA as a label, term – that is the only possible means at our disposal to signal an end point of art

Which this end point as registered within the logic of the narrative of PA is **not an end of art** but the recognition that whatever self-definitions and concepts we have been operating with are no longer useable.

the end of art or to define art or the literal destruction of art

and the use of the only available sign to signal the end point of the thinking and concepts to access art

The term PA therefore doesn't say anything, it doesn't define a space, practice, methodology instead it functions as a lack, absence and a negative space.

How else are we to articulate an end point in articulating this end point and entry into a new space without concepts, thinking and language?

In an early account of PA, it was suggested that artists move away from commodified art production and, in another, that artists go on strike and withdraw their creative labour from the art industry – strategies that artists and art critics are now proposing

Given the attacks against art and artists, a radical act is required.

# Develop strategies to face up to this moment

But what seems quite clear is that this moment offers a unique opportunity to imagine and redefine art in as yet never before imagined way.

In what other way can we identify this negative space?

Here I think we begin to enter what I call the potential of PA – which revolves around how the emptying out of art is read – and what I understand by the space of PA – which reveals a new space that needs to be constructed.

How to formulate this presentation as a formulation of a text work that exists within the completely dissolved state – outside/beyond all existing terms, categories and material framework of art.

What seems obvious and almost too simple to register is that what at first appears to be a problem, an empty space (the degrading of the thinking and manifestation of art that leaves an empty space) is, once we turn the problem around, one of the most significant moments in recent times:

How we understand the space of art as a new space needs to be constructed in proximity to the existing art and its history

# AN OPPORTUNITY TO RE THINK AND REIMAGINE ART.

**A**  
perpetual space that shows the loss of the object of art

This text is not just a text, but a mechanism registering the dissolution of the material and conceptual residues of what was once known as art, that goes on to construct another space

A new space that can now be explored, given a shape and structure

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