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Being With, Across, Over and Through: Art's Caring Subjects, Ethics Debates and Encounters

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As an increasing number of artists site their practice within the social fabric of everyday life, the 'encounter' has been placed at the heart of a newly defined aesthetic experience. Participatory, relational, collaborative and biopolitical methodologies now proliferate both within and beyond the white walls of the art institution while documentary modes, deployed by artists or curators, often play a pivotal role in mediating the scenarios produced. These moves into the terrains of lived experience are concomitant with what Nikos Papastergiadis has identified as the first *truly* global movement in art, which, precipitated as the economies of cultural circulation replicate the globalised movement of capital and labour, responds to incessant demands for communication, information and knowledge production (Papastergiadis 2011, 276). If, then, art's latest re-emergence as a social practice demands hyper-local face-to-face encounters, it also remains enmeshed within, and constituted through, broader socio-economic realities. While this volume proposes that these transformations have been underpinned by the emergence of an economic subject, there are of course other decisive features which attend – not least art's apparent endowment with a renewed and expanded ethical significance. Here I intend to look at how indeed the 'encounter' is constituted: what actually finds its way into contemporary art's address to real life? And, why is this address persistently theorised in terms of ethics? What does the invocation of ethics bring into, or conversely occlude from, view?

Ethical delirium

There can be little doubt that ethics has risen to new levels of prominence at the outset of the twenty-first century. Ethics committees proliferate across our institutions while ethical issues dominate both the media and political arenas. The term has also been resuscitated within academic discourse where a resurgent interest in relational ethics, from Emmanuel Levinas's work on alterity to the more recent development of an ethics of care, has been matched by a particularly vociferous set of positions which warn of the threat posed by the triumph of ethics in the wake of postmodernism.[1] Here, ethics is frequently equated with the emphatic emergence of a globalised liberalism after the end of the Cold War. In the words of Chantal Mouffe, this 'moralisation of society is [...] a consequence of the lack of any credible political alternative to the current dominance of neoliberalism' (Mouffe 2000, 86). Similarly, Alain Badiou's *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil,* written in 1993, is an attack levelled against the contemporary 'ethical delirium' based on the de-politicising ideology of human rights. Dedicated to the preservation of the *status quo*, this defensive brand of ethics is intimately linked with both the logic of capital and the perceived impotence of parliamentary democracy. On the one hand, this correlation engineers an apathetic form of public consensus around the *spectacle* of the economy while, on the other, it blocks the possibility of active, emancipatory politics. In short, for Badiou, ethics amounts to 'a genuine nihilism, a threatening denial of thought as such' (Badiou 2001, 3). What Mouffe and Badiou point to is a connection between the assumed completion of capitalist globalisation and a privileging of an ethical value system well suited to the 'end of history' (as argued most famously by Francis Fukuyama 1992), based around, or at least implying, notions of consensus and natural rights.

It should come as little surprise that contemporary art has participated in this revival. While the production, dissemination and consumption of images have historically dominated debates around ethics and aesthetics (indicatively, see Costello and Willsdon 2008), artists' engagements within the social realm have brought a new, more urgent, focus. Given that ethical discourse is principally concerned with ways of dwelling, or forms of being in the world, and – importantly for this discussion – *being with* others, this is understandable. Yet the discussions to date have often

1 For an interdiciplinary examination of the ethical turn, see Garber, Hanssen and Walkowitz 2000.

placed a narrow emphasis upon the ethical valance of artworks, producing a prolonged shock-versus-salve critical impasse.[2] Both polarities can of course be easily incorporated into capitalist economic imperatives and it is with this point that examinations of the connections between ethics debates and economic relations in art tend to stop. My aim in this chapter is to show that, in the present phase of capitalism, just as art *reveals* the economy to be a suppressed matrix of human relations, the debates and discourses surrounding art's potential as political praxis today are effectively displaced into the territories of ethics. At the same time, the complex artistic practices under discussion serve to show how this primacy of ethics is *reproduced and reinforced* by the contemporary artwork. My observations are not intended to negate ethics as a discrete field of enquiry but instead call for a more integrated account of how discourses on ethics are subject to historical processes that necessarily entail an economic dimension – a dimension that becomes critically manifest under pressure from neoliberalism. It is to be hoped that the same observations also help to bring forth the political contradiction at the heart of radical artistic practice today: is critique compatible with the reproduction of the relations being critiqued?

Care: in or out of the economy?

The demand for a theoretical framework better suited to the interrogation of socially minded art practices has led some critics to touch upon relational ethics: that is, enquiries which view the basis of ethics as a relation (or response) to a particular other. Grant Kester's work has been highly prominent in this field. Foregrounding the corporeal and discursive dimensions of collaborative cultural production, his analysis deals with 'dialogic projects' that unfold beyond the usual confines of the art institution. Deriving his concept from the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin's model of dialogical experience, Kester also calls upon Levinas's 'face-to-face' encounter and Jurgen Habermas's discourse theory to flesh out an analytical system grounded in concrete (rather than abstracted) intersubjective – or 'discursive' – ethics. Within Kester's schema, communicative interaction is integral to the formation of subjectivity and the possibility of transformative action. Conversation

2 More recently, attempts have been made to consider afresh the relationship between art and ethics. Situated in the light of Badiou's critique, one example is Möntmann 2013.

is positioned at the heart of his account of dialogical aesthetics which calls for an alternative skill set defined by the artist's ability 'to catalyze understanding, to mediate exchange, and to sustain an ongoing process of empathetic identification and critical analysis' (Kester 2004, 118). Though he mentions forms of reciprocal exchange which do not prioritise speech acts (specifically listening and gesture), Kester's focus on dialogue ultimately limits his ability fully to articulate and address the affective components that play such a crucial role in artistic practices performed within the social interstice. One way to address this gap would be to expand into the relatively recent discussions around the dynamics of care.

Associated primarily with feminist approaches, care ethics similarly proceeds from a point of particular interpersonal relations rather than the deployment of impartial and universalised rules or principles.[3] Characteristics of attentiveness, openness, directedness and empathetic responsiveness continue to be privileged while the development of emotional sensitivity together with feelings (specifically those that have been educated and reflected upon) are considered crucial in terms of ascertaining what morality recommends in a given situation (Held 2006, 10). The insistence upon mutual interdependence not only prioritises the cooperative well-being of all those involved in the relation; it also carries with it a critique of liberal individualism. The predication of 'care' on unequal power relations may account, at least in part, for Kester's hesitancy.[4] Such relations may refer to the bond between a mother and child, care-giver and patient or, beyond the immediate personal context, between citizens of wealthy societies and 'persons who are suffering deprivation in distant parts of the globe' (157). Arguing against moralising 'paternalistic' approaches, Kester cites an array of projects in which he claims artists have worked with 'politically coherent communities' (Kester 2004, 151) to build creative frameworks for mutual learning and support. Yet the same examples address particular needs within *communities marked by precarity*: migrant workers, rural communities hit by financial

3 Virginia Held locates the beginnings of care ethics discourse with the essay 'Maternal Thinking' by philosopher Sarah Ruddick 1980 and observes that the quantity of published material on the subject expanded dramatically after 1990 (Held 2006, 26 and 28).

4 In *Conversation Pieces* Kester (2004) is at pains to contrast the reciprocity of dialogic practices with a style of community art which he likens to Victorian-era social work, engaged not only in the alleviation of the effects of poverty but also in reform – more specifically, the moral regeneration of the poor.

crises and victims of domestic abuse. Furthermore, by their very nature care relations shift and change over (a life) time: they go beyond 'saintly' gestures and require 'a deep and thoughtful knowledge of the situation, and of all of the actors' situations, needs and competencies' (Tronto 1993, 136). In short, the ethics of care offers a highly productive grounding for the kind of practices Kester champions. Recognising this identifies and illuminates hitherto under-analysed aspects of social art practices, and allows for a more incisive critique to be drawn.

The occlusion of the substantive emotional, psychological, somatic and care- (even love-) orientated facets of the contemporary artwork is not, however, restricted to Kester's accounts.[5] From Nicolas Bourriaud's 'relational aesthetics' (Bourriaud 2002) through Miwon Kwon's 'discursive site' (Kwon 1997) to Alfredo Cramerotti's 'aesthetic journalism' (Cramerotti 2009), the focus has been squarely placed upon communication, negotiation, information and knowledge production. In the field of philosophy, the hostility encountered by advocates of the ethics of care has been attributed to its perceived 'soft' and gendered associations with the private sphere, neediness and sentimentality. At the same time, care has typically been excluded from theorisations of the formal economy. What forms, then, do care relations take in the encounters produced through the contemporary artwork? Focusing on two practices the analysis that follows considers how these relations can be grasped and theorised.

Addressing needs: care and the division of labour in two art practices

WochenKlausur's project *Participatory Economics* (2013) exposed many of the hazards artists face when working on the political terrain in an era when the latter becomes a battleground centred on economic privilege and economic deprivation. Yet the challenges facing critics who seek to address socially engaged practices are considerable, particularly as only parts of durational artworks are accessible to non-participants, that is, to those who are not intended to be directly involved in the production of the artwork. Accounts are usually based on public-facing elements such as events and narrative documentation, or via the reflections of artists and participants gleaned through reports or interviews conducted

5 A critical account of artistic engagements with the concepts and practices of care since the 1960s remains to be written. On the pitfalls of this, see Reckitt 2013.

after-the-fact.[6] Commissioned as part of the ECONOMY exhibition, *Participatory Economics* was an opportunity to gain greater insight into the processes involved, though, even as one of the curators, my experiences inevitably remain fragmentary and develop as the work of art, literally, continues to shape over time.

Orientated around an intensive four-week residency based in the Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) in February 2013, WochenKlausur's initial proposal was developed following preliminary discussions and research, then further honed in the summer of 2012 after a brief site visit. In line with their usual approach, two artists representing the Austrian collective travelled to Scotland and met with key 'stakeholders' as part of a tour organised and facilitated by the curators. Their resulting plan built around the concerns of the CCA as the host institution and their existing connections with Drumchapel L.I.F.E., a grassroots organisation operating in an area of the city with high deprivation levels and led by a particularly dynamic Director.[7] This tactic of enmeshing their work with local partners from the outset enabled the artists to tap into existing on-the-ground knowledge and went some way towards ensuring the long-term sustainability of the project. At the same time, the artists were keen to capitalise on their own 'outsider' status (and symbolic capital) by identifying a distinct set of needs and offering something additional to the local context. The ensuing proposal to 'encourage and support the formation of a worker self-managed cooperative' in Drumchapel specifically set out to engage with unemployed local women and address the nutritional issues that stem from limited access to fresh fruit and vegetables.[8]

Over the course of the month-long residency, four artists (including Alex Wilde, an invited Glasgow-based practitioner) set up what is best described as a 'caring infrastructure'; accruing knowledge on business models and legal structures, securing the support of local politicians, fundraising, building new connections between existing agencies and

6 Though documentary materials are usually the only means by which experiences of collaborative and 'socially-engaged' projects can be communicated to a wider public; in this case, WochenKlausur's project office was based at the Centre for Contemporary Art in Glasgow during the exhibition. The office was open to the public and exhibition viewers were invited to discuss the development of the project with the artists.

7 See the organisation's website: www.drumchapellife.co.uk (accessed 11 October 2013).

8 Class and access to nutritious food is a long-standing issue in Glasgow. See www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-27309446 for an outline of the notorious 'Glasgow Effect' (accessed 19 July 2014).

institutions, arranging offers for free training workshops and hands-on assistance and setting up an advisory board to provide long-term development support. Beyond the frequent brainstorming sessions and long hours of work, the relative ease with which WochenKlausur set up this infrastructure was, however, not repeated in their attempts to bring together a group of unemployed female participants willing to commit to the project. Amidst considerable challenges, a fragile circle, fluctuating from seven to three individuals, was eventually established. Working under the name 'Vegin Out', they decided to centre the new business around the sale of 'meal bags', which contain a simple recipe card together with the exact quantities of required ingredients. Recognising that the cooperative would require some time to evolve, at the end of the short residency WochenKlausur appointed the local artist as a temporary facilitator and tasked her with carrying the project through the next stage of development. At the 'concluding' public forum organised by the curators and held at CCA WochenKlausur presented their report. Yet the artists did not feel it was appropriate to invite the nascent group as it was yet to cohere and, as publicly stated, they did not want to 'make an exhibition' of the women. At the time of writing (October 2013), Vegin Out continues and is looking to a new phase operating under the aegis of the CCA's education programme. Its achievements to date include a successful pilot project realised by three local women together with the artist-facilitator, securing further development funds and the establishment of an infrastructure of individuals and organisations committed to supporting the initiative.

WochenKlausur's model of setting up relatively small-scale art projects which address concrete – and often highly urgent – needs emerged in 1992, at roughly the same time as Rick Lowe's *Project Row Houses* in the USA (1993).[9] Though Lowe's durational engagement with a particular community in Houston, Texas contrasts sharply with WochenKlausur's highly temporary catalytic interventions, they both constitute alternative models of artistic practice which were among the first to tackle *problems*

9 Working collaboratively with a group of fellow African American artists, Rick Lowe's pragmatic interventions in Houston's Third Ward responded to the effects of rapidly changing economic conditions: escalating poverty on the one hand and the juggernaut of gentrification on the other. Like *Participatory Economics*, *Project Row Houses* employs existing levers to improve the lot of individuals and highly localised communities – building affordable homes, supporting small business start-ups and developing programmes for young single mothers while integrating art and creativity into daily experience. www.projectrowhouses.org (accessed 11 October 2013).

that clearly emerged out of existent economic relations. Nearly twenty years ago, Hal Foster's identification of an 'ethnographic turn' in art took aim at artists' move into the 'expanded field of culture' which he regarded as fraught with the risk of dilettantism and based upon an appetite for cultural alterity (Foster 1996). However, in these works – and in numerous others like them – alterity opens up on an *economic* register. WochenKlausur's experiences in Drumchapel, though very specific to the context, reflected aspects of previous projects through which they have worked with communities marked by the effects of long-term unemployment. In the case of *Participatory Economics*, the artists cited the considerable challenges they faced in asking potential members to lead a cooperative enterprise based on their own ideas and interests. In the first instance, many women either thought that this was yet another activity with which they had to become involved in order to continue receiving unemployment benefits or that they were being asked to 'help out' with the artists' project. WochenKlausur's observations echoed the frustrations of Drumchapel L.I.F.E who have repeatedly argued that local residents are rarely asked to contribute their own ideas or be included in decision-making processes which affect their lives. In this sense, the 'subject' WochenKlausur tackle is none other than the one produced through disempowerment: internalised disempowerment guaranteed to crystallise as inability to proceed to even reformist (let alone, revolutionary) action. Or, in capitalist governance's parlance, as a 'lack of motivation', widely encountered 'among the poor' and seen as the real reason why they cannot 'lift themselves' out of poverty. However, WochenKlausur saw the apparent passivity they often encountered as the result not only of a deeply rooted lack of self-confidence but as part of a *survival mechanism*. Though the aim was to foster a sense of agency as well as 'realistic' employment opportunities through the establishment of a cooperative venture, in practice the artists and institutions involved have so far been required to mediate every part. The role of the institution – especially, the licence of the art institution to act experimentally – is therefore something that merits further analysis.

The 'encounter' structured around care is constituted very differently in the work of Dani Marti, which moves into the intimate private spaces of the home and bed. Mining his own relationship networks and forging new ones, Marti creates and films scenarios with homosexual men from the art world, gay scenes in his home cities and the more loose-knit communities generated by online sites like Gaydar. Encounters with each individual last anywhere between a few hours and many months

but the terms of the transaction are always clear: he offers intimacy, attention and sometimes sex in exchange for access to the inner lives of his participants. The edited documentation of these semi-constructed, yet real-life, scenarios is then displayed in the gallery. Presented as part of the ECONOMY exhibition, his work *Good Dog* (2012) offered an insight into the impact of economic relations on the formation of (sexual) subjectivity. The protagonist, Graeme, is a staff manager at a bowling alley where he has been employed since the age of 16. Ground down and emptied out, he finds release in his spare time by descending into an elaborate role-play in which he performs as a dog. The 16-minute film shows him acting out this temporary escape in the presence of the artist, capturing both his fierce need for submission and the intense self-loathing that accompanies it. Another work, *Jim Solo* (2011), depicts Marti's relationship with a vulnerable, overweight man from a town in West-central Scotland. Struggling to articulate his feelings yet desperate for physical interaction, his frustration and desire for the artist are plain. The brutal exposure of Jim's bloated, aging body is matched by a disturbing depiction of extreme emotional poverty: ashamed of his sexuality, with no support network or indeed language to express himself, Jim appears as the antithesis of the artist who offers him comfort, acceptance and sexual experience. This, now rather familiar, power dynamic between artist and subject has of course been extensively explored in the documentary genre. While Allan Sekula talked of filmmakers' predilection for 'aiming the camera downwards', Brian Winston later lambasted what he called 'the tradition of the victim' (Sekula 1978, 237 and Winston 1988). The complication that the artist's conspicuous presence poses for the direct application of such a critique here is made more apparent in *Bacon's Dog* (2011), a visceral account of the first sexual experience of Peter Fay, a 65-year-old writer, curator and art collector from Sydney, Australia. Condensing footage captured over a five-month period into an oppressive 11-minute vignette, Peter's need for touch, care and support is countered by his marked eloquence, self-awareness and social status. In this case, placed squarely within the network-driven economies of the art world, the artist is recast in a considerably less secure position as a sex therapist/worker.[10]

Marti's relentless focus on the corporeal, somatic points of encounter

10 *Bacon's Dog* can be read as an attempt to engage with, and ultimately manipulate, the asymmetric power relationship between the curator and the artist. Tanja Ostojić used a similar tactic in her *Strategies of Success / Curator Series* (2001–03).

(caressed skin, eager embrace, mingled breath) is matched by an attempt to capture the emotional dimensions of the experience; moments of unbound desire, pleasure, jealousy, shame and loneliness. Yet the economy of production – the transactional underpinnings of the care (or love) relations presented – are made apparent to the extent that they constitute a central theme in the work itself. Eva Illouz's research is illuminating in thinking through the incursions of market logic into the terrains of intimate life. Specifically, she introduces the concept of 'emotional capitalism' in terms of

> a culture in which emotional and economic discourses and practices mutually shape each other, thus producing […] a broad, sweeping movement in which affect is made an essential aspect of economic behaviour and in which emotional life – especially that of the middle classes – follows the logic of economic relations and exchange. (Illouz 2007, 5)

Aside from the insatiable demand for the public exposure of private life (to which Marti's documents patently attend), the salient consequence of this preoccupation with emotions has been the rise of a therapy culture in which such emotions' evaluation and effective management have become ever more central to both home and work life (should such a distinction be upheld). Illouz argues that the emotional competence (skills in linguistic expression together with analytic and interpretative abilities) gained through exposure to therapy culture reinforces class stratification: a well-developed emotional habitus enables contemporary subjects better to compete both in relationships and in the workplace.[11] In her words, 'there are now new hierarchies of emotional well-being' (Illouz 2007, 73).

The performative frame of art is brought to bear on Marti's and WochenKlausur's social experiments primarily through processes of documentation which deliver 'live' social realities into the presentation (and market) contexts of the art world. Audiences – the 'secondary public' for the art of encounter (Karlholm 2005–06) – are thereby able to witness and register the emergence of a variety of economic subjects either from the safe confines of exhibitions or through the narrative accounts

11 Illouz's research brings up to date the sociologist Norbert Elias's (1897–1990) observation in *The Civilizing Process*, published in 1939, that the longer bonds of dependency established through the formation of the state made the management of emotions central to the stability and success of societies. See Elias 2000.

offered online and in publications. Significantly, given the centrality and *visibility* of artistic labour within the reconfigured contemporary artwork and its documentation, these subjects now include the artist him/herself. The production of the lens-based or narrative document not only opens up this position for critical reflection, it also provides a grounding for (and perhaps actively invites) ethical interrogation of the social relations presented.

Care machines: alterity, affect and the art encounter

Within the field of relational ethics 'care' has been variously elaborated as a practice, a concept, a motive, a virtue and work. Held's attempts to overcome the associated debates have led her to prioritise a consideration of 'caring relations' and the 'practices of care'. In doing so, she frequently distinguishes work from emotion and motive, arguing that though care incorporates labour, its intrinsic relationality and basis in values (such as the commitment to meeting needs effectively) mean that it is also much more (Held 2006, 36). Her account has not kept pace with transformations in understandings of what constitutes contemporary labour, particularly in terms of the integration of production and reproduction.[12] While Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri proposed that 'today labor and society have had to informationalize, become intelligent, become communicative, become affective', sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild has convincingly argued that emotions have become a *resource*: 'love and care have become the "new gold"' (Hardt and Negri 2005, 109; Hochschild 2002, 26). The question that arises then, and which has seemingly radicalised a range of art practices in the past two decades, is: what are the implications for 'care' when capitalism has 'married the emotional skill of being together with the dead calculus of the economy' and become increasingly reliant upon affective labour? (Cederstrom and Fleming 2012, 37)

In recent years artistic labour has often been framed as cultural mediator of broader socio-economic conditions: Miwon Kwon established that in the late 1990s, artists' roles and practices could be seen as part of the move towards a service- (rather than industrial production-) based economy while others have made an explicit connection between the rise of pedagogic or documentary strategies and the so-called new

12 See John Roberts' chapter in this volume for a fuller discussion.

'informational economies' (Kwon 1997; Cramerotti 2009).[13] The cognitive dimensions of artistic practice, together with the inherent precarity of creative work that accord with Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello's observation that in contemporary capitalism life 'is conceived as a *succession* of projects', has been discussed at length elsewhere (Boltanski and Chiapello 2007, 110). Yet the demands of affective and caring labour in the production of artworks (and the careers of their makers) has, by contrast, received considerably less attention. Overall, the category of care serves to foreground the material, emotional and moral dimensions of affective labour. Though affect encompasses both the mind and body, reason and emotion, it is usually discussed in terms of cognitive labour. Operating by means of what can be described as *bouts of extreme care*, the 'art' case studies under discussion here reveal some of these demands and demonstrate the multiplicity of forms such labour can take.

Care in *Participatory Economics* was performed at a remove 'in public', through a pragmatic engagement with the local context and the administrative routes of negotiation, fundraising and networking. WochenKlausur's artistic labour is – in the main – performed in front of laptops set up in temporary offices (in this case a converted artists' studio), in the virtual spaces of the internet or through telephone calls and meetings. If, by embedding himself within a particular community, Rick Lowe could build relationships and evolve strategies over the course of many years, the 'residency' labour model through which WochenKlausur operated for *Participatory Economics* afforded no such luxury. The accelerated pace required the near complete surrender of the life of the artists to the project over the four-week residency period. In an apparently constant state of 'active listening', they cultivated an image of openness and responsiveness, attempting to remain alert to all potential avenues of development. To forge an effective care infrastructure they had to remain responsive not only to the needs and interests of the members (or potential members) of the cooperative but to those of the social worker, healthcare provider, university lecturer, real estate agent and commissioner. Knowing that the success of the project was to a large extent dependent on their ability to generate trust and 'experimental' relationships among a broad range of constituents, they facilitated connections by employing a warm and empathetic yet

13 Note that Kwon was specifically referring to artists' provision of a 'critical-artistic' service: 'Generally speaking, the artist used to be a maker of aesthetic objects; now he/she is a facilitator, educator, coordinator, and bureaucrat'. Kwon 1997, 103.

serious disposition. Here we saw the precarious worker's availability and hyperactivity in action.

Yet the central demand placed on WochenKlausur was to be *constantly inspiring*. It is this cheer, positivity and belief (described by more than one stakeholder/participant as 'infectious') that constituted the driving force as the artists sought to will the project into being. And, indeed, as transient outsiders, they must offer something different, something more than that which is already in play. In the absence of time, energy was yoked to a moral purpose in a way that tapped into local stakeholders' ambitions to effect a concrete improvement in circumstances. The desire for the project to work and be 'successful' was (and remains) remarkably strong among those involved in the caring infrastructure.

WochenKlausur's diplomacy and altruism contrasts sharply with the ambiguities that surround Marti's motivations, as inferred from the filmed chronicles of alienation and fulfilment he carefully prepares for the audiences of art institutions. The artist's knowledge of the contexts where these chronicles become public is a salient factor in the process of the artwork's production. The oscillation between sensitivity and opportunism – even cynicism – is left unresolved by the recorded extract which does *not* elaborate on the artist's broader relationship with his participants. Questions regarding whether harm was caused in the process of production or if genuine and even enduring bonds developed remain purposefully unanswered. What is clear is that Marti's personal charm (what is referred to as 'personality') plays an important part in facilitating the encounters, enabling him to set up a form of therapeutic relationship, which passes beyond accepted norms, and elicits confessional storytelling. Though sexual encounters hardly constitute unfamiliar territory for contemporary art, the level of *emotional* promiscuity required on Marti's part is discomfiting. After all, while Andrea Fraser's sexual liaison with a collector was, according to the record of her artwork *Untitled* (2003), a one-night stand, Marti must provide something more akin to the durational intimacy of the 'girlfriend experience' offered by sex workers who exceed the parameters of traditional prostitution.

Dimitris Papadopoulos and Vassilis Tsianos's conception of 'embodied capitalism' offered in this volume is useful when considering Marti's labour. While recognising that the whole of the worker's life has the potential to produce value, the regime of embodied capitalism operates by dissolving and recombining the working subject, selecting and appropriating only parts of the subjectivities required: 'The individual

only looks like an individual in its apparent bodily shape, but in reality it becomes a genetic source, an automated client, a host to a virus, a set of competencies, a self-creating assemblage of skills, a register and a code, a body capable of extreme mobility'. Marti's labour in the 'personality marketplaces' of internet dating and the art world demand a high degree of careful and protracted self-marketing, self-cultivation and persuasive skills in order to set up repeatedly productive scenarios. Though the films document concrete interactions between two individuals, when we see him step in to comfort Graeme (or, in other works, gently to question his subjects, touch them or become aroused), Marti himself is oddly peripheral. He remains muted to the extent that that his own identity appears to have been hollowed out in order to arrive at a condition of pure responsiveness that spurs his informants to expand into the gap he leaves. In short, this is artistic labour that requires, and relies upon, the consistent re-production of a highly specific artist-subject. Furthermore, the *type* of subjectivity demanded – a 'good listener', a self-effacing, sexy and yet compassionate and supportive individual – clearly does not square with conventional gender roles. But, as analyses of what 'feminisation of labour' might describe in contemporary art are conspicuously lacking, it is hard to place Marti's work, and subject, of care into a historically specific production context of demonstrable, recognisable characteristics.

The respective practices of WochenKlausur and Dani Marti reveal how differently care can be calibrated under the conditions of post-Fordism: the name given to a capitalist economy liberated from the old, redundant order of the strict production line. Referring to the common distinction made between those who 'care about' and 'take care of' issues or people and the hands-on activity of care-giving, Joan Tronto argues that it is gendered, raced and classed (Tronto 1993, 115). In the examples drawn from the art world considered in this chapter, however, the role of *public* 'fixer' is occupied by a group of women while the *private*, intensely physical caring-giving is performed by a homosexual man.[14] In both cases, care and love are not only seen to be produced but also to *be productive*. Never mind the *flâneries* of what Hal Foster mockingly called the 'empathetic intellectual' (Foster 1996, 180), the level and

14 The delivery of a project by an all-female group was an unusual situation for WochenKlausur. The collective was originally founded by Wolfgang Ziggl and there are five men and four women in the core team.

intensity of affective labour required within such project cycles often renders the artist wrung out, anxiety-laden and emotionally exhausted.

The 'order of love': a capitalist affair?

Are these works, then, closer to an ethics of care or an economy of service? Hochschild's analysis of an altogether different order of experiences – those of female migrant labourers – underlines the complexity of this question, and renders visible a 'global capitalist order of love'. Provocatively framing love as a resource which is extracted from the poorer regions of the globe to address a 'care deficit' in wealthy countries, she describes the processes by which the love offered by nannies has been displaced and then partly produced or assembled in the rich North. She quotes a Filipina woman who cares for the baby of a professional couple in California: 'I love Ana more than my own two children. Yes, more! It's strange I know. But I have time to be with her. I'm paid. I am lonely here. I work ten hours a day, with one day off. I don't know any neighbors on the block. And so this child gives me what I need' (Hochschild 2002, 24). The love professed here – which involves providing a service, the development of affective bonds and a thoroughgoing commitment to the child's well-being – is both absolutely integral to her care labour *and* an excess. The nanny's account exemplifies the inherent difficulties in seeking to distinguish between care labour, caring attitudes and the production of moral values. As an 'active emotional labourer', she shows that when care is part of capitalist production, the personality is not merely sold or put to work. Rather, this labour of intensive emotional self-management becomes a process of *subjectification* (Hochschild 2012).

The issue of payment, or value attached to labour, further complicates matters. These are not 'elite' artists whose name and marketing finesse allow them to command the market: all but one of the WochenKlausur team subsidise their involvement with the collective through second jobs (one is employed to run their office in Vienna) while Marti finances his video production through a patchwork of commissions, residencies and other precarious income streams.[15] That the artists' means of subsistence is *not* obviously apparent cannot only be put down to the continuing necessity to maintain – at the very least a convincing veneer of

15 For a discussion of female art and curatorial collectives being forced to distinguish between income-generating and 'creative', yet unpaid, work, see Dimitrakaki 2013, ch. 6.

– unconditional passionate absorption in the work of creative production (particularly when switching from project to project). The perception that WochenKlausur were not operating within the conventional wage-labour format was in many senses valuable in terms of the production of the artwork itself: they were not seen as working for a salary but because they cared. The framework of a 'practice' (as opposed to a job) not only gives them additional space to manoeuvre it also enables them to connect their work more conspicuously to the ethic of care that plays such a vital role in terms of the 'motivating excess' they offer. In Marti's case, the ambiguity underpinning his engagements moves the question on from prostitution or exploitation to the complexities of outsourced intimacy and commercialised feelings. He offers a type of care that many would find unpalatable, even repellent, but that the recipient cannot access by other means.

In fact, 'payment' for both WochenKlausur and Marti takes a suitably indirect and affective form within the complex web of twenty-first-century artistic patronage: increased recognition within the art world which offers the possibility of securing the new working opportunities that ultimately sustain a practice.[16] This dependence on invitations (and the submission of numerous funding applications on the part of the institution) to realise new projects underlines that an address to the art world underpins – indeed *must* underpin – the production of art in the social realm.

Care ethics in art: for whom? and what for?

The above suggest that we need to review the question of the 'encounter' in contemporary art as a platform for intriguing ethical entanglements. Indeed, we need to think carefully about its poles: who is drawn into its orbit and what are the processes of implication? Only then can we proceed to negotiating the meaning of the encounter. For, contrary to what ethics discourses in art tend to tell us about the primacy of the engagement between artist and participant, I want to suggest that the old-fashioned 'spectator', rather than the trendier 'participant', is ultimately addressed when a narrative of care is stitched together, performed and pictured by means of the document. Boris Groys has argued that in the biopolitical

16 Marti has acknowledged that his engagement with Peter Fey in *Bacon's Dog* dramatically increased awareness of his work within the Australian art scene (email conversation with the author, 11 October 2013).

age a dependency on the narrative document is the indispensable flip side of art's urge to become life itself:

> Today's consumer of art prefers art to be brought – delivered. Such a consumer does not want to go off, travel to another place, be placed in another context in order to experience the original as original. Rather, he or she wants the original to come to him or her – as in fact it does but only as a copy. (Groys 2008, 63)

The artist, then, is tasked with, first, intervening in and shaping lives, then producing abridged versions of their encounters through texts and images. The examples cited here demonstrate the range of formulations currently in play. While Marti's video documents attempt to deliver a taste of the somatic experience of his carefully constructed scenarios, WochenKlausur present brief written 'reports' accompanied by snapshots of quotidian scenes on their website archive and, at the invitation of curators, on posters ready for exhibition.[17] Yet, though Groys offers an incisive account of the new viewership dynamics at the heart of biopolitical art, he does not elaborate on the conspicuous appetite among curators and consumers for these condensed accounts of durational lived experience. Or, more specifically, for engaging summations of particular types of intersubjective experience – such as those orientated around caring relations and care labour.

Franco 'Bifo' Berardi's approach to contemporary alienation focuses on the experiences of the 'cognitariat', describing the impact of a prevalent mediatisation whereby anguish and frustration stem from 'the social, linguistic, psychic, emotional impossibility of touching the thing, of having a body, of enjoying the presence of the other as tangible and physical extension' (Berardi 2009, 109). It is under these circumstances – Bifo's 'paralysis of empathy', Hochschild's 'care deficit' – that the art document has presented visions of proximity, care and action. Of course, in doing so, it simultaneously addresses the lack *and* reinforces it: the encounter is performed by others, their bodies remain remote. Moreover, as the cases analysed here illustrate, these documents affirm that caring attitudes and values can be generated within and even *through* capitalist relations. In art as in other areas of life, then, the capacity of care to generate new and unpredictable bonds can make the current economic order appear viable and acceptable. And we have to consider to what extent art is inadvertently participating in the valorisation of such an

17 See the collective's website: www.wochenklausur.at (accessed 11 September 2014).

acceptance. After all, returning to Hochschild's migrant informant, why should we oppose a nanny's emotional attachment to children she has not given birth to or, for that matter, a man willingly offering another much longed for physical intimacy? As observers, when presented with such scenarios, any unease we feel implicitly identifies us with a tired morality, a remainder of a past organisation of life, out of step with an era when the commercialisation of feeling is renewing the very meaning of love and human bond. In the new emotional economy care and intimacy are outsourced to (among others) artists. Apparently, it is up to us, as spectators, to appreciate and embrace the prospects when, as famously put by Marx and Engels (1848), 'all that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned', once more.