

**Amateurist Network (AN) operates through a series of public meetings with the stated aim of promoting open and critical discussion around the economics of creative practice and cultural production. By examining the position of the artist or cultural worker within precarious and informal working practices the AN aims to define self-organisation through its ability to produce a site of learning rather than by self-reliance.**

**Sharing ideas and experience in this way, the AN hopes to validate self-organisational strategies and strengthen networks within the arts community. Discussions approach the question of art as work and the implications of this assessment in terms of an individual artist or cultural worker's rights and responsibilities. Furthermore, the AN aims to create consciousness about the narrowing access-routes to becoming a practicing artist, and the creeping normalisation of commercial interests. The AN seeks to reclaim the autonomous status of the amateur as distinct from the inambition of a hobbyist, dilettante or dabbler.**

'Not surprisingly, the history of this project is a series of false starts and paths that peter out, of projects that dissipate or are absorbed. Exemplary among this garden of ruins is Duchamp's failure to sell his Rotorelief optical toys at an amateur inventor's fair. What better description of the artist than amateur inventor? But this was 1935, decades before widespread fame would have assured his sales, and he was attempting to wholly transplant himself into the alien context of commercial science and invention. In his own analysis: "error, one hundred percent." Immersing art in life runs the risk of seeing the status of art—and with it, the status of artist—disperse entirely.'

Seth Price, DISPERSION, 2008  
<http://www.distributedhistory.com>

Access to computers and anything which may teach you something about how the world works should be unlimited and total.

Always yield to the hands-on imperative.

Mistrust Authority.

Promote Decentralization.

Do It Yourself.

Fight the Power.

Feed the noise back into the system.

Surf the Edges.

G Branwyn, CYBERPUNK MANIFESTO  
<http://www.wrongplanet.net/postt78931.html>, 2000ave

'The Pedagogy of Work', a process developed by Celestin Freinet and a European network of radical educators in France (1930s–70s), for example, rejected the idea of learning by doing in education as career development. Instead they believed that the school was a place in which to invent forms of life and work based on the needs and desires of people. Freinet's idea of "Cooperative Learning" involved students and teachers in the collective production of newspapers, food, and spaces...'

CARROT WORKERS GUIDE, <http://carrotworkers.wordpress.com/>, 2011

In a more exact way the word professional is often used to mean the opposite to an amateur. Amateurs are people who take up a subject, such as painting, writing of music, as a spare-time hobby. As it is not their job it does not matter how well or badly they do, so long as they enjoy themselves. But anyone who becomes good enough at doing something to make money at it is a professional.'

Theodore Rowland Entwistle & Jean Cooke (eds)  
THE JUNIOR GENERAL KNOWLEDGE ENCYCLOPEDIA  
London, Octopus, 1978 (reprinted 1985)

'We aim to be amateurs, to act in the unsecular forbidden margins. The professional may cast a colonising eye, but the tangle will go to a corporeal convulsion beyond her power. We may hide behind our speech at this appalling moment.'

'Specialisation means losing sight of the raw effort of constructing either art or knowledge; as a result you cannot view knowledge and art as choices and decision, commitments and alignments, but only in terms of impersonal theories or methodologies[...] Specialization also kills your sense of excitement and discovery. In the final analysis, giving up to specializations, I have always felt, laziness, so you end up doing what others tell you, because that's your specialty after all.'

E Said, REPRESENTATIONS OF THE INTELLECTUAL, New York, Vintage, 1994

'For us the goal was really the fee, because this was the first time we were crossing this bridge. We didn't care if it was five dollars or five thousand dollars; we just wanted the symbolic gesture to take place, that fees could be included for the artists in the show. We wanted to find out whether this institution would include this in their exhibition budget and how that would work.'

Nato Thompson Interviews WORKING ARTISTS AND THE GREATER ECONOMY (W.A.G.E.), Artforum, March 2011

#### HOW TO WORK BETTER

DO ONE THING AT A TIME

KNOW THE PROBLEM

LEARN TO LISTEN

LEARN TO ASK QUESTIONS

DISTINGUISH SENSE FROM NONSENSE

ACCEPT CHANGE AS INEVITABLE

ADMIT MISTAKES

SAY IT SIMPLE

BE CALM

SMILE

Peter Fischli & David Weiss 1991

#### HOW TO BEHAVE BETTER

1 REMEMBER THAT YOU DON'T KNOW

2 LEARN TO CARE

3 SAY THANK YOU

4 WEAR YOUR HEART ON YOUR SLEEVE

5 INSIST ON TALKING FACE TO FACE

6 FOLLOW THE LIFE OF AN IDEA

7 SPEAK FRANKLY

8 TAKE YOUR TIME

9 BE MALADJUSTED

10 TOAST

TAKE CARE by Anthony Huberman  
Response to Fischli and Weiss' 10-point code  
CIRCULAR FACTS, Sternberg Press, 2011

## OCCUPATION CO-OPERATION & SELF-ORGANISATION BY AMATEURS

Salon organised by the Amateurist Network with invited guests to discuss the following questions:

- what is the potential of self-organised activity?
- what can we learn from the autonomous status of the amateur?
- how does a self-organised amateur negotiate his/her rights and responsibilities?

amateurist  
Network

02/12/2011

14.30–18.30

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'Co-operatives are a global movement of contract-based enterprises whose purpose is to fulfil the common economic, social and cultural needs of their members. They employ more people than all multinational companies, and a third of the world's population depends on them for its livelihood. Co-operatives values of solidarity, equality, honesty, openness and altruism. These values are encoded in seven internationally agreed principles - open and voluntary membership; democracy; member economic participation; autonomy; education; co-operation between co-operatives; sustainable communities. Co-operatives attempt to transcend conflicts over personal and property rights by creating economic forms that protect and extend common ownership, at the same time as fostering the confidence and creative autonomy of individual human beings.'

- Open, voluntary membership.
- Democratic governance.
- Limited return on equity.
- Surplus belongs to members.
- Education of members and public in cooperative principles.
- Cooperation between cooperatives.
- Concern for community

International Co-operative Alliance 1966 review of Rochdale Pioneers' original 7 COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES from 1937

'Self-Organisation is:[...] A social process of communication and commonality based on exchange; sharing of similar problems, knowledge and available resources. A fluid, temporal set of negotiations and social relations which can be emancipatory—a process of empowerment...'

Anthony Davies, Stephan Dilleuth, Jakob Jakobsen from *Art and It's Institutions*, ed. Nina Montmann THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE: THE FUTURE IS SELF-ORGANISED, PART 1, London, Black Dog, 2006

'Self-organization links outwardly not as identity, interest, or affiliation, but as a mode of coexistence in space.'

J Aranda, B Kuan Wood @ A Vidokle, ARE YOU WORKING TOO MUCH? POST-FORDISM, PRECARIETY, AND THE LABOR OF ART, *e-flux Journal*, Sternberg Press, 2011

'There is only one way to read, which is to browse in libraries and bookshops, picking up books that attract you, reading only those, dropping them when they bore you, skipping the parts that drag—and never, never reading anything because you feel you ought, or because it is part of a trend, or movement. Everywhere, if you keep your mind open, you will find the truth in words NOT written down. So never let the printed page be your master' you are badly taught—you should have been taught to read your way from one sympathy to another, you should be learning to follow your own intuitive feeling about what you need: that is what you should have been developing, not the way to quote from other people.'

Doris Lessing, *Preface to the 1971 edition of THE GOLDEN NOTEBOOK*, 1962

'No Art Sold Here.  
The Hole is not retail.  
PHOTOGRAPHY AND  
VIDEO RECORDING  
NOT PERMITTED  
The Hole is for art, not art history.'

THE HOLE, July 2011,  
conceived and directed by Simon Bedwell

**'We realize that this Agreement is essentially unprecedented in the art world and that it just may cause a little rumbling and trembling; on the other hand, the ills it remedies are universally acknowledged to exist and no other practical way has ever been devised to cure them. Whether or not you, the artist, use it, is of course up to you; what we have given you is a legal tool which you can use yourself to establish ongoing rights when you transfer your work. This is a substitute for what has existed before—nothing. We have done this for no recompense, for just the pleasure and challenge of the problem, feeling that should there ever be a question about artists' rights in reference to their art, the artist is more right than anyone else.'**

**Using the contract doesn't mean that all your relationships in the art world will hereafter be strictly business or that you will have to enforce your rights down to the last penny. Friends will still be friends; you will be able to waive your rights to payments (in whole or in part), your right to make repairs, to grant reproduction rights, to be consulted—but they will be your rights and the choices will be yours. The Agreement form has been prepared to be used by any and all artists—known, well-known and unknown. Simply make a lot of copies and use it whenever you give, trade or sell your work. It will be effective from the moment you use it. The more artists and dealers there are using it, the better and easier it will be for everybody. It requires no organization, no dues, no government agency, no meetings, no public registration, no nothing—just your will to use it. Just plug it in and watch it go—a perfect waffle every time!'**

Seth Siegelaub *The Artist's Contract*, 1971, New York  
Available to download from <http://amateuristnetwork.wordpress.com/>

'Incidental Person lifts the entrenched opposition between artist and non-artist. What the creative individual (an expression covering anyone dedicated to a particular life practice) brings to bear on situations is not a set of skills honed in art school and rewarded (or not) in the market place, but an awareness of her or his relative position on an infinite and infinitely variable temporal score. This ability to see both the object qua object and the object as a dynamic web of forces allows the Incidental Person to imagine novel solutions without a particular expertise of the field under scrutiny.'

Anthony Hudek (Curator) JOHN LATHAM ARCHIVE & THE INCIDENTAL PERSON, NY, Apexart, 2010

'Maybe it's just old-fashioned of me to think that young artists should bring their own stuff with them into the art world, and bring their own friends, as well, because democratic institutions (even frivolous ones like the art world) respond to constituencies of people, not objects. That's why I still endorse Peter Schjeldahl's advice on how to become an artist: 'You move into a city. You hang out in bars. You form a gang, turn it into a scene, and turn that into a movement. Then, I would suggest, when your movement hits the museums, abandon it' [The extended adolescence imposed on art students by lengthy tenures in graduate schools has effectively isolated them from the peers among whom they might discover their true, new constituencies.'

Dave Hickey, ROMANCING THE LOOKY-LOOS IN AIR GUITAR—ESSAYS ON ART AND DEMOCRACY, Los Angeles, Art Issues Press, 1997

'Goldsmiths is now occupied in solidarity with the UK-wide strike on November 30th and the global occupy movement. We reject the privatisation and marketisation of life, and the violent transfer of public wealth into private hands. For this reason, we have strategically occupied the building housing Goldsmiths' finance offices, responsible for executing the cuts and the privatisation agenda.'

<http://occupygoldsmiths.wordpress.com/>

'The Piracy Project is not about stealing or forgery. It is about creating a platform to innovatively explore the spectrum of copying / re-editing / translating / paraphrasing / imitating / re-organising / manipulating of already existing works. Here creativity and originality sit not in the borrowed material itself, but in the way it is handled.'

AND publishing's PIRACY PROJECT <http://andpublishing.org/projects/and-the-piracy-project/>