

## **L'économie politique de l'atelier d'artiste**

Wednesday, 15 February 2017 at Corner College

Tonjaschja Adler, Delphine Chapuis Schmitz, Vreni Spieser, and Nina von Meiss and Christina Pfander of Mickry3 in conversation with the curators Nadja Baldini, Dimitrina Sevova and Tanja Trampe. Followed by a plenary discussion with the audience. And soup and bar.

The panel discussion critically reflects from the various perspectives of the invited artists how the artist's labor is performed today under post studio conditions, to what extent the precarity and precarization inherent in the current economic conditions and the financial structures that operate within the cultural sphere signify the art production, the artist's working environment and living situation.

The focal point is on the relation between the studio, artists' labor, art-work, aesthetic practices and their economic conditions. The studio might be a space with a certain degree of autonomy. The panel discussion asks how productivity in art depends today on the relation between the artist's liberty and the economic and social conditions of art production. The studio is part of the productive flow of relations, subjectivities, institutions, places, architecture, materials, techniques, and infrastructures. At the same time it is in the grammar of autonomy, aesthetics and politics. There are many possible places and non-places of the studio, but it can still be found in two main orbits, as an independent space of solitude where the artwork is produced, and a more open idea of the studio, where the artwork is performed by artist-labor.

What is the role of the studio in the urban fabric and how is its public support planned? What is the role of self-organized studios on the economic map, and how is art-work organized in the studio today?

How do cultural policy and state financial support to the studios impact and shape the production of art, and the lives and existence of the artist, too? Even under post studio conditions, the artist's working space marks a zone of autonomy, where a 'non-sanction' context of art practices and 'unruly' relations can take place. At the same time, how can sociality be seen as an expanded or scattered studio? How can the studio induce cooperative forms and self-organized structures within the urban tissue and art practices, art labor, art-work and at the same time organize vibrant forms of life.

What path of critical inquiry and what kind of methodology can be applied in a research about the (post) studio conditions, to reflect on the phenomena of unsettling the studio, mobility, and immaterial production? At the same time, the studio still designates and signifies a space where art labor is performed, and the forms of organization of the working process of the art production. It stays relatively in the shadow of the private space and the hidden economy, unlike the museum, the art space or art taking place in the public environment.

How can artists sustain their working environment relying on income from their artistic labor and art-work? Often, they inhabit the studio mostly for a time in-between several other jobs, while the studio is transformed and adapted to multitasked functions driven by project-oriented work, digitalization and internet. The productive process is automated between two applications for grants, in a diversity of institutional commands by e-mail and research work based largely on Google searches. Being an artist is a day-to-day job of professional occupation, and at the same time a form of life that can scatter into a new sociality. Hito Steyerl describes the instrumental precarization in the third stage of institutional critique that leads merely to "integration into precarity" of artist labor and working and living conditions. "What remains hidden in this – a new 'hidden abode,' the

practicing artist remains outside of the employment.” At the same time, nowadays the art production process has been connected to digital productive flows, automated and highly professionalized by accelerated competition on a global scale that disempowers the possibilities for collective, community forms of art, work and life.

Artists often and openly strive to gain cheap and large places in the city for working. The struggle for free space and more space in the city, as in Zurich and other cities in the 1980s, makes the studio issue resonate within the resistance against gentrification processes, that has sometimes ended up even in the occupation of buildings. How can it open new forms of resistance, and to what extent are artists and cultural workers today able to perform a revolutionary force and political subjectivity when the nature of work is changing? How can they re-claim and negotiate in these social changes? Lacan’s statement “I replaced Freud’s energetics with political economy” goes one step further and openly engages psychoanalysis with the ‘immanent’ critique of liberal capitalist society. Following psychoanalytic practices, the project *Part I: Critique de l’économie politique de l’atelier d’artiste* incorporates an ‘immanent’ critique of the politico-economic relations in the production of art to reflect and analyze the current conditions of artist-labor and art-work-life social relations in terms of movements and vectors.

What is the impact of the open studio, as a form of activating and mobilizing audiences and a different way of organizing art? How does the format of the open studio reflect the current tendency of international art exchange to be residency driven? How does it impact the process of production (working conditions and labor economic conditions)? How does the studio display ‘other’ experimental forms of exhibition making that can unfold in the studio?

*Selected and reworked excerpts from the text by Dimitrina Sevova for the exhibition Theorem 4. Aesthetic Agency and the Practices of Autonomy. Part 1: Critique de l’économie politique de l’atelier d’artiste, in collaboration with Alan Roth*