

The Metropolitan Complex

Bassam El Baroni, Pip Day, Lívia Páldi, Milica Tomić, and Sarah Pierce.

On Tuesday 15 December 2020, the following conversation took place over the video conferencing service Zoom between Helsinki, Berlin, Vienna and Dublin. The conversation was recorded, and has been transcribed and edited. There was no audience present.

Sarah Pierce OK, so what's different about this paper is that usually I gather people in a studio somewhere and we hold the conversation in person. This time we're all in different places. Pip is in Berlin, Bassam is in Helsinki, Milica is in Vienna, and Lívia and I are in Dublin. One of the things Lívia and I were thinking about for this paper in particular was to reach out to people who, like us, find themselves living in places other than the place they are 'from'. While there is a virtual location/dislocation in terms of how everyone is working in the pandemic, hovering over this conversation are questions about being 'of' a place, not necessarily in a nativist way, but because it is a ground for your work or your project, right now. Lívia, is there anything you want to add?

Lívia Páldi I've had a lot of discussions with Sarah about location/dislocation over the years. I've been here in Dublin for four years and I'm leaving in March, temporarily moving back to Budapest. So, for me, one of the questions is the transferability of specific experiences, whether it's an experience of a specific political or social context, or the different ways you actually develop yourself through different contexts and then come across problems that you want to do something about. But then you have to learn the hard way that some lines of interest and approach to problems it might not fit that 'new' context. I've had two positions as a curator with this type of set four-year contract. The rest of you might have had some similar experiences, where, by the time you realize certain things about the place you're in, you need to move on. One of the interesting understandings of this situation – plus the pandemic, plus a lot of other things – has been questions around political unrest and the different fascisms we face that also make us re-evaluate certain relations to specific historical periods and cultural-political experiences. It might sound like a bit of a mixed bag, but that's all in it when you're leaving a place or context, and figuring out how things might have happened in a different way, and also going back to a place, Hungary, which has again featured a lot in the news in the last few weeks. Obviously, not in a good way. What kind of experience can I bring back? I hate using this word 'useful', but it's kind of an extended way of talking about usefulness in the sense of adequacy.

Sarah Pierce Maybe to get started we can focus on the terms you've raised, Lívia. You mention transferability and how that perhaps relates to

context, and whether context is even relevant anymore. Should we be talking about something other than context, like atmosphere or conditions?

Milica Tomić Sarah, may I ask you something that relates to 'context': Why are you recording this conversation?

Sarah Pierce So that I can transcribe it.

Milica Tomić Yeah, but why do you transcribe this, then? What is the purpose? You had mentioned at the very beginning, before you started recording, that you will record in order to document this conversation, and that there is no copyright or authorship to this conversation, which also means that it is very much about a horizontal collective exchange and contribution, but also about the performative aspect of this conversation. So, I am asking again: Why then record? What is the purpose?

Sarah Pierce Obviously, yes, on one level, it's pragmatic. But in terms of the larger question that I think you're asking, the reason I record these conversations and then transcribe them is to stake a critical claim on other ways of producing a discourse around cultural work. It's incidental, but something I noticed when I moved to Dublin is that, when people gather for a talk, a panel or other type of formal presentation, when it's over, everyone meets up afterwards. Usually in Dublin it's at a pub. It's not unique. But this casual, immediate response is how the real talk takes place, and we learn what's at stake and what people's investments are. Through the Metropolitan Complex papers, I wanted to pay closer attention to these types of exchanges, because I think they're important. They matter in terms of what we're doing. By transcribing a conversation that takes place without an audience, it raises the stakes. First of all, as I transcribe I have to really listen and attend to what was said. And, of course, Milica, you're right: as soon as these conversations circulate as published papers, they become something else, with a different aura. They have a different palette, a formality and a performativity different to a conversation.

Milica Tomić I'm just thinking now. There is this wonderful book by Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked*, and this chapter 'The Ontology of Performance: Representation without Reproduction' where she writes about the ontology of performance, discussing the boundaries of performance, the labour involved, its representation and modes of public address. When does performance begin? What are the different forms of labour involved in its production? When does it actually end? She argues that this live moment of the performance has to be unrecorded and, if so, there might be a possibility to have another, unexpected development of what happened. She also thinks that the locus of performance lies in the live moment: performance thus is that which disappears. She says that there are no leftovers of performance: 'It saves nothing,

it only spends'. It produces blind images and non-static objects, which cannot be caught on media. For me, this all relates to this particular moment of our conversation now. So, I wonder: What are the effects of an unrecorded discussion, and how should we consider events and memories that cannot participate in the circulation of representation? For art institutions, the recorded document (paper) plays a crucial role. If it is not there, space is opened up, which allows for thinking outside the logics of the existing institutions and their hierarchical order. Do we allow this by recording this conversation, now?

Sarah Pierce Well, the book is called *Unmarked* because Peggy Phelan understands, too, that the writing of performance marks it. She writes and she marks; it is not about remaining silent. It is to write in ways that attend to what is unmarked and unclaimable through representation. That's what I mean by 'staking a claim' on conversations that don't perform within the space of official talks, and therefore leave no institutional trace. It's actually very connected to the unmarked. When this conversation circulates, it's changed, it's different, we've marked its difference.

Bassam El Baroni Philosophically, it's a very interesting point of discussion, because if we take what Milica was saying, then we're sort of saying that the 'real' is the unrecorded, right? And that the recorded is a performative moment that somehow is not on an equal footing in terms of the real. While I understand that kind of mental operation, the question is to what degree is the absence of tools, the absence of the eye of a camera or the microphone – in what way does that absence make that experience more real, or touch the real? This is an interesting philosophical question that I don't have an answer for, but I think it needs further interrogation.

Milica Tomić Phelan thinks that 'not recording' is the means of redesigning relations within society. To ponder upon this, in relation to our current context (pandemic crisis), the time of total surveillance on the one hand and, on the other, the time of the demise and dissolution of society in general, through this non-physical presence, has a lot of sense, I think. It's interesting to think about what kind of future this conversation could have, by not being recorded. If we live now, at a moment of the total distraction of society, you know, I am interested to think about the 'not recorded'.

Sarah Pierce What if the paper is a performance, with the conversation, that includes its moments of inscription, the transcribing, the editing, the printing and the circulating? There's value in these secondary activities, which relates to some of what Phelan is interested in, in terms of not tracking everything through what can be bought and sold, packaged or documented, but to instead think about performance as resisting or resistant to its own

commodification. I think there's an ontology to the paper that is equally resistant. It is limited, it runs out, it is not transacted as precious, and its failure as a documentary object frustrates it being understood as anything other than mediated/mediation.

Milica Tomić I am not against recording and the paper per se, but it is important to go back to Phelan, I think, especially if we discuss the notion of context in this conversation.

Sarah Pierce I appreciate that. You should always ask, 'Why are you recording?' It's a good question. Bringing us back to this idea of transferability, the questions that are asked when we find ourselves in different places or contexts or situations – however we want to think about this – are shared questions that institutions ask, that artists ask. The answers returned tell us something about where we are. What I'm hearing you get at, Milica, is that we can't ignore the atmosphere we're in right now, in terms of gathering and having a conversation like this. It's not a given.

Pip Day And what do we then do with this sort of document? If the document needed? What is the relationship of the document to the real, to come back to this term? I have an anecdote as well from a recent workshop I was running in Berlin. Instead of proposing that we record the workshops, I worked with poet-writer-translator Mayra Rodríguez Castro, who's just edited a book of Audre Lorde's *Europe* years, and who has an interesting relationship to the document, having spent much time in the archive. That book is itself a record and is also about how and what we record, and in it Mayra presents not just Lorde's texts and letters of the moment. She also brings in other archival material to contextualise, to add layers, to people the book with other voices, and also to move away from this notion that we can ever get at the real. For the workshop, Mayra was invited to generate a written response, or to 'record', using methodologies of her choosing. Our first conversation about what kind of form her response could take also addressed what was implicated in that role as an Afro-Colombian writer being the note-taker. Our conversation opened up to a history that I was unfamiliar with, in that enslaved people in Colombia were actively taught to write and read, and became scribes. Their labour, – one of their many labours – was as scribes. So my invitation to her unwittingly called up this whole other history. This comes into play, in oblique ways, in Mayra's response, or the product that she made, which is a blog that both is and is not at all a document of this six-week-long gathering of folks in Berlin and that does not at any point camouflage the subject-position of the one documenting.

Sarah Pierce That's key – and I like this meta-chat about the conversation that we've entered into, unexpectedly. There's something about using the

document as evidence of the visible-real, to go back to Peggy Phelan, where she cautions us to not hold on to the visible-real as a truth effect for what took place. There is a disconnect. The paper is not documentation. It's a different thing. It's Other. What you were saying, Pip, too, about how the document circulates and what is done with it also has to do with what is irreproducible as documentation on the one hand and transacted as a 'real document' on the other.

Pip Day Yes.

Long pause

Sarah Pierce So that's a wrap!

Pip Day Thanks, everyone!

Bassam El Baroni Ha, yes, I don't know if we'll continue the rest of the conversation on this meta-level, but just one more thing is: if we take this point and push it to its ultimate conclusion, it's implying that solitude or non-communication offers something realer about it than communication. And I don't think that's the case. It's hard to argue that is the case, right? Because even in solitude – and it is interesting to think about that – I mean, I don't think it's the case, but it's interesting as something that appears when a particular industry or economy, or life in general, is driven to communicate excessively. We can use Jodi Dean's concept of 'communicative capitalism', for example, as a maxim here for thinking about this, heightened by this ongoing crisis, and the fact that communication in one way has been accelerated, but not necessarily in a positive way. It's tempting to think that an anti-communicative stance is somehow more authentic. But I don't know if that's the case. I don't have a position on that, but I'm questioning that position. One thing we might need to acknowledge is the drive to be more specific and more considerate about things, through having access to more local knowledges and all sorts of areas of expertise, and the vast expansion of the field through the inclusion of people from different areas, backgrounds, disciplines, knowledge bases that were previously filled in by figures like the curator, for example. People tend to be more careful, tend to be more cautious, of where they tread. I think that's good. It's a positive thing. But it's also a sign of the way the general economy is going. I'm talking here about the general economy in a wider sense, not just in a financial sense – the knowledge economy and so on. The sense that there is more specialism, but that specialism, in one way, as far as what people were doing in the '90s and up until the first decade of the 2000s, was much more intuitive. You could fill in the gaps. I think now few people dare to do that. Even through their research. What does it mean to have a research profile, for example? You have to align to specific tendencies and subjects and topics. Yes, of course, topics get overloaded, and we see certain trends emerging and

so on. But there is a growing awareness that you can't fill in all the gaps. You need to reach out to people who have more specific knowledge, and you need to include people from different areas of specialism and different knowledge backgrounds. All this makes this particular kind of conversation challenging in ways that, ten years ago, it wouldn't have been.

Sarah Pierce I'm hearing the word 'authentic' in relation to truth – and this isn't necessarily something I want to bring in – but for the sake of thinking about the document further: the claims of fraud in the recent US election relied exclusively on a mediated understanding of truth. So, you're looking at a video of a room in Philadelphia where votes are being counted and someone is narrating, 'There's a woman taking a suitcase out from under a table, and she's taking ballots out of the suitcase, and, look, there you can see she's counting the ballots', with the implication that this is scandalous when it's in fact really banal. It's a weird affect in relation to the recorded document, this need for a necessary marker that something took place, and otherwise it never happened. And I think you're right, Bassam: ten years ago it was different.

Bassam El Baroni The complexity of the question of truth at this particular moment in history that has emerged over past five, six years is really pivotal. It's part of this challenge.

Sarah Pierce Not to completely shift gears, but thinking about all of us and how we work, we're all very connected to a younger generation. I'm curious, in relation to these ideas, in terms of truth effect, credibility, legibility and the recorded document – What do they know that we can't know? Pip, you mentioned the work you were doing in Berlin and decisions around recordings. There is a familiarity with the recorded document and also a relationship to it that makes it innocuous for a generation that is savvy, and who's possible retort to the question 'Why record?' would be: 'We are always recording!' I'm interested in that way of knowing. I'm interested in what the 'always recorded' subject knows. What do they know?

Pip Day Well, what do they know? To come back to the to the recent workshop in Berlin, the participants completely rejected having any photographs or recordings of the sessions – the document was not at all innocuous – and the performativity among themselves was really something else. As a group of Berlin-based, first- or second-generation, early career practitioners, there was an everydayness to the performativity, which had a lot to do with staking claims to, let's say, activist positions, or tear-down-the-institution credentials, right? But the resistance to recording was really a resistance to the institutional uses of the recording. They were rejecting or anticipating that the white institution would take these photographs and then splash these photos of all the POC participants in

the workshop across social media, and this would be used to gain cultural capital and to claim itself as institutionally diverse – or I think the language here is 'inclusionary'; it's still stuck at that term here. As quite a young group living in a world in which everything is documented, surveilled and shared, it was clear that countering their instrumentalisation by the institution was where their resistance lay. And they were also initially suspect of Mayra's role as a 'documenter'.

Sarah Pierce Were they recording on their own devices?

Pip Day I don't know. Maybe. This is pretty standard now, in classroom situations, but it wasn't a classroom situation.

Livia Paldi I would also ask – because, Milica, we chatted recently, and we discussed that you also have worked a lot with younger generations of artists, researchers and curators. So, it would also be interesting to hear about see the specific projects that you have collaborated on; it's a very different kind of collective work.

Milica Tomić Can you be more specific?

Livia Paldi I just wanted to ask you to talk about your ways of working within a research situation, let's say in Graz. When you work on a very specific project, for example for the Steirischer Herbst festival in 2018 [Exhibiting on a Trowel's Edge. Research and investigative processes of Aflenz Memorial in becoming, Forum Stadtpark], which was very much connected to a specific site in Austria with different layers of history. I'm curious how the younger generation would respond to specific questions. space Milica Tomić To discuss the younger generation's response to different contexts? Maybe I can go back to the times when I was 'the young generation'? It goes back to your invitation, and Sarah's project, organising conversation related to 'context' and then exposing these often hidden parameters of every collaboration. I can't think of anything that better depicts my experience concerning the change of context and how powerfully it defines us than this: The time of the demise of Yugoslavia, with war and the constitution of new nation states, at the very beginning of my artistic life. I was born and living in Belgrade, and it was the capital of Socialist Yugoslavia. The change of context was so sudden that our existential context changed literally overnight. Everything was different. I went to bed in Yugoslavia, didn't move an inch, from my home or my room, but when I woke up in the morning, I stepped out of my bed into country called Serbia. It wasn't just a different context, it was another state, with an unknown anthem and an uncanny flag. Everything was completely different. Today I have the same feeling with the changes we are experiencing in relation to the pandemic.

Sarah Pierce Kathleen Stewart is an anthropologist

who talks about atmosphere as alternative to thinking about situated understandings of context. What you were just saying, Milica, is evocative – having one's context change overnight without moving, without going anywhere, and that change as something that can be inventoried. I'm trying to connect that to what Pip was describing in terms of a very performative moment that some of the group understood they were in. Perhaps instead of context we can think about the atmosphere we are working in right now. Pip and I were living in New York in the '90s, and you couldn't escape the idea of context as somehow performative. Remember when Scandinavia was the sexiest place to be from as an artist? Or how the collective was performed? There were real differences between Superflex and Group Material, for example, in that each practice arose out of and reproduced context as work. I'm wondering how that plays out now? Does context matter for a younger generation?

Livia Paldi I'm curious about that too.

Sarah Pierce I suppose it's OK for us to not know how it plays out.

Bassam El Baroni In terms of context, it's important in these moments that Milica was describing, in some contexts, in some places, in this particular moment, that the general milieu wasn't a shaping milieu, in the sense that what existed at that particular moment wasn't something that people wanted to be identified with. So, if I'm talking about the context of Cairo, or Egypt in general in the late '90s, a lot of the people there ... Of course their work was contextual, but I'll describe that in a different way. It wasn't like they felt they were shaped by the context that they were in, because a lot of people didn't feel that this was an interesting context in terms of the general approach to artistic practices or a particular politics, because of all sorts of subtle things that are difficult to describe. The educational context and pedagogical concepts that people emerged from were very different. It wasn't the kind of context that would be inspiring for a challenging artistic practice to emerge from. In a way, the practices, ideas and ways of doing that arose in these environments emerged against the context, in friction with the dominant context. I think this is often overlooked. I'm not claiming at all that this was born out of nothing – that's not what I'm trying to elaborate. But, in some places, when I started travelling early on at the beginning of my career and coming into contact with artists who emerged from a milieu, it felt really strange. The moment of the late '90s – and to be clear, I'm not saying that there weren't any interesting artists practising before that – but there wasn't a comfortable milieu that you could somehow acknowledge as being part of a particular lineage or heritage. I think that was the feeling of many people working at the time. The feeling was a certain mode of friction with the contextual, with the idea of context specificity in the sense of not having to commit to belonging to a context shaped

by the infrastructures of the past. That's how a new context began to emerge. But it was always in friction; it was a constant friction. I think that friction still remains today and is part of a healthy creative environment, even though there is a lot – perhaps too much – holding back that environment. What I'm trying to say is that context is important, but when we're talking about the emergence of an art scene or particular outlook, it's not everything. And, actually, sometimes a problematic context – or a context seen as problematic – can be just as generative as a continuation of a particular milieu. I think that's important to take into consideration when we think about context.

Sarah Pierce Thinking of some vocabulary that was circulating in the late '90s, a term that seemed fixed in relation to context is 'identity politics'. There's been a mostly unreconstructed return to identity politics recently, and I'm curious what you all think about that?

Milica Tomić You're right: there has been some kind of revival of identity politics, not just in art but in general.

Bassam El Baroni Can we be more specific? Or is it too sensitive?

Milica Tomić You mean that Sarah explains more specifically what she means?

Bassam El Baroni Yeah ... ?

Sarah Pierce I'm guess I'm thinking about an alignment with politics that has to do with visibility on one level. That's nonspecific. I suppose I'm wondering about how one's investment in certain conversations, how they take place and disseminate, seems to be read as a visible identity politics. Which connects to what we were talking about in the beginning of this conversation, where visibility is the truth effect for one's investment, for one's connection, for one's context. OK, for an example, maybe I would cite the 2017 Whitney Biennial in New York, where identity politics played out very differently to the Whitney Biennial in 1993, which was curated by Thelma Golden, with works like Daniel Martinez's I Can't Imagine Ever Wanting to Be White. In 2017, there was the particular moment with a painting by Dana Schutz's that depicted, or commemorated, or made a spectacle of – depending on the argument – Emmett Till's open casket. The artist and writer Hannah Black's response was an open letter calling for the painting to be destroyed. That a white painter could paint this image and have it circulate, and – whether the painting is for sale or not – that it would exist in the context of capital and the art market was reprehensible to many.

Bassam El Baroni Sorry, so what are you trying to imply with these particular cases?

Sarah Pierce I guess it's an example that foreshadows a moment we find ourselves in now. Hannah Black was calling out the use of an image and connecting this to context, but also I would argue to an atmosphere of protest, of violence, of violation. It may not be the best example, because I'm also talking about general politics that is decontextualised and somehow only locatable within a visible, outward projection of identity.

Bassam El Baroni Yeah, this example, or the example of an anti-racist trajectory that is intertwined with the context of US politics, when we're talking about identity politics in relationship to that, it's a very different thing than talking about how identity politics operates in the expanded field of art at large. Because there's a very specific, vernacular fight that is going on in your example, and its sites change, but the fight continues. In a way, more nuanced arguments emerging from philosophical, theoretical and artistic semantics, conceptualisations and ethics are irrelevant and will be pushed to the side, because they interfere with the bigger picture. The fight's purpose is to depreciate and devalue institutional racism per se, so it extends everywhere: to the museum, to the streets, and so on. But when we say identity politics at large, then there's a different dynamic. 'Identity politics' – somehow this terminology isn't sufficient today. It's lacking. I don't know what it's lacking exactly. Maybe it's a specific capacity to express the different scales and different encounters where the political intersects with the site of art and the context of art, and vice versa. One text that I appreciate in terms of thinking about the larger idea of identity politics and its history within artistic practices is by David Hodge and Hamed Yousefi, called 'Provincialism Perfected', which turns the whole idea of global art on its head. It's saying that that the major aesthetic component of modernism was provincialism, and that extended into contemporary artistic practices and the so-called global art scene. I don't know if we can even use that term anymore. The sense that 'globalism' or the much maligned idea of 'global art' was a series of reinforcements of provincialisms according to the needs of the centres. These needs are intellectual needs, they're philosophical needs. And because that's where the money is, of course. So, the idea of inclusion could only work, could only function, by a kind of surrendering to a global map of provincialisms. In that sense, when a person perceived as being from outside those centres argues for a universality, it's not accepted, because it seems universality or a global, wider idea of inclusion that isn't just depicted as a map of provincialisms is not accepted. Even though someone in the US or in the UK, or wherever, might have written a text against universality, it's still the case that such concepts are the stronghold of the West. You're not supposed to – as person from the so-called periphery – have a claim to it. You have to be provincial. From that perspective, there's a conversation that we're not even allowed to have. That's annoying, because

there's something about inequality there in terms of communication that's problematic. It's very difficult to break down.

Sarah Pierce What you were saying, Bassam, about the frustration of not being able to have a conversation that we want to have, as well as thinking that we're having a conversation that we're not having, reminds me of something Paul Gilroy notes about the global politics of the art world. At a certain point, according to Gilroy, the image of the veiled woman started to appear in art, and it made people think a conversation about women and religion and politics was taking place. This image was present, but the conversation wasn't happening – at all. Is identity politics the particularisation of interests, or a universality of interests?

Bassam El Baroni The problem with the word 'universality' is that it's not the right word, because it is so loaded. It's really more about 'transformability'. Is it possible to think towards transformability – like having a conversation, having a dialogical approach towards things that would end up transforming things instead?

Sarah Pierce Right. Identity politics, on the one hand, is about trying to forge a place for new subjects in the world that aren't represented within the hierarchies and systems available to us, versus an identity politics, on the other hand, that is about securing a place for subject identities that already exist. No matter what those are. Maybe that's a difference. It's not that one understanding is good and one is bad – it's a difference in terms of a shared project.

Bassam El Baroni Yes, exactly.

Pip Day I'm really interested in this configuration, Sarah, especially at this very specific moment of identity and political formations. Having recently moved to a new place, being new to Europe, I still feel ill equipped to address what form identity politics is taking here, while continually being exasperated and shocked at the context, which I shouldn't be I guess, of Germany and Berlin. I live now a block from Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz and to see the ways – of course, this has been happening for some time – but the very clear ways during the pandemic, following the emptying out of the public sphere or public space in Berlin, the ways the vacuum created during the pandemic has been filled here. For example, by the right-wing populists and extremists who are using terminology of the left and of identity politics. These strategies are deepening here in Germany. As I understand it, the early right-wing protests here on Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz, the very early ones in the pandemic, were also peopled by leftists, those who took the site itself – Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz – as an indicator of the leanings of the protest, and so occupying that particular urban space was already an extremely bold strategy

of the right. And then the language they used around democracy, around anti-surveillance, and the folding in of potentially leftist positions into the right's strategies. There's a parallel with language around identity politics. I'm thinking about ways where the historically 'transformative' identity politics – to refer to what you said earlier, Sarah – is maybe shifting into a 'strategic' one? Similarly to 'politically correct', which came to be used as a pejorative, now there's this white tendency to say, 'Oh, yeah, this is identity politics', as a way to dismiss and erase the transformative history and potential of identity politics.

Bassam El Baroni Angela Dimitrakaki edited an issue of Third Text, where she contributed a long essay around democracy and its usage as a platform where the political right has emerged in artistic practice. She argues that we're in what she calls a 'democracy of equivalence'. There's actually no neoliberal democracy that has a strong ethical centre in terms of what politics is – the centre is empty. This is what people like Chantal Mouffe argue for, but they try to radicalise it to the left. In that void as to what its ethical centre is, it's a democracy of equivalence that makes any point of view – if argued, or rather disseminated and mythopoeticised, hard enough – valid. It's a 'winner takes all' kind of democracy. We're sometimes surprised: 'Oh, this is actually a leftist idea, but it's been adopted by the right wing'. And there are also right-wing ideas that have been adopted by the left. For example, the recent conversation around universal basic income, which is a core neoliberal idea. The original neoliberals developed that as negative income tax. The original idea was basically that you give people money without doing work for it, then just leave them alone and don't develop the infrastructures of care, and let them depend on themselves through a kind of free market, and everything will be OK. Now its seen more as a leftist idea, because it's been rethought and reappropriated. All of that happens within what Dimitrakaki calls this democracy of equivalence. Of course, I'm surprised, too, about what's happening, but somehow, we shouldn't be surprised, because the limits of the democratic model we have all point towards these emergences. It feels like it's almost a natural progression of what this kind of system would lead up to in a hypermediated world.

Sarah Pierce If we exclude my rambling introduction when we first joined this online meeting, we're now at an hour of conversation. A lot has been said. I want to suggest that we wrap up, but I'm also aware that it feels like we've just started. Nothing has to be resolved, but if there's last comments, or if anyone feels there's something they didn't get a chance to say or raise, we can raise it, and then it's there for whoever picks up this paper.

Pip Day On a last note, Livia, to come back to your question about transferability, I would mention my deep interest in the incommensurable, or that

ill-equipped

it's

embracing the 'incommensurable' as a practice is a thing that I carry or that I am trying to carry with me. Maybe this is a transferable practice: to engage deeply with place-specific incommensurables.

Livia Páldi That's great. I was simply listening, because there's so much to address. I think a lot about moving contexts, where certain knowledges or approaches might not work because of the lack of vocabulary and space, or simply not being ready or interested in discussing many of the things we talked about. What we were not able to discuss further here is instituting, as an important question to consider, whether we work or don't work for specific institutions: How do you reclaim the public space, or create spaces, for discussions such as this one? Also, Sarah and I have discussed institutional practice a lot, and what it means when you have a physical space that you might not be able to use, as has been the case at Project since last year. And if you do, what if that physical space doesn't give you that option to create an in-betweenness, to create a conversational situation, because there is a huge demand for more exhibitionary outputs? My interest within this conversation probably would have arrived at looking at exhibitions and the current relevance of this 'classic' format. What can this format do? I'm interested more in the reassessment of certain learning situations and figuring out how to resituate these experiences within the understanding of the contextual variables of the ongoing cultural-political changes and challenges.

Sarah Pierce Milica and Bassam, do either of you have thoughts that you want to put out at the end here? That's not an imperative.

Bassam El Baroni I've been very happy to listen to Pip, Milica, Livia and yourself, and nothing comes to mind at the moment.

Sarah Pierce And Milica?

Milica Tomić Milica doesn't have any thoughts!

Sarah Pierce Well, thank you all so much. It's been a pleasure amidst the displeasures of late. I will be in touch with a written document, and we can talk more about how that works, but in general - returning to the beginning of the conversation - don't feel like you have to go deep into that document. I don't want to give you work to do - this was the work. You can look at what you've said and modify, but don't feel like you have to turn it into a collectively written tome.

Milica Tomić So we can just leave blank pages? Or black lines.

Pip Day Redacted!

Sarah Pierce You can redact it all. You can do Adrian Piper: 'I have nothing to contribute'.

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