

RAD- MIN READER 2020





RADMIN 2020

Edited by Angela Piccini and Kate Rich

ISBN: 978-1-5272-9330-4

URL: <https://fo.am/radmin-reader-2020>

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Printing RADMIN READER 2020.

Image: Angela Piccini, University of Bristol

11th February

This amount of
printing is not allowed
on our office machine.
No-one else had access to
this printer for more than
3 hours this afternoon.
I have alerted the SDS
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Printing RADMIN READER 2019.
Image: Kate Rich, University of the West of England (UWE)

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Image: FoAM



Organising through a RADMIN lens

Feral Business Research Network /
Kate Rich and Angela Piccini

What is radical admin? We digress. We are nomadic. We are interrupted. We are peripatetic. We steal time and space to organise - from parks, libraries, hotels, coastal paths. We are the administrators. We consider admin as a site for meaningful work.

ORIGINS

We could start with the working conditions of producing this reader. How we have organised the editorial and the co-writing of the introduction itself becomes the subject and the project, not just procedure. Snags, comms, interruptions and attacks from other workflows. The consequences of working at 100% of capacity, with no 10% temporal contingency, leads to system failure. Hearts skip a beat, eyes twitch, the task list waits, impatiently.

At our first editorial meeting in October in the café of Arnolfini gallery, AP emails her excuses to a line manager. While this work ostensibly 'counts' as 'research' it has little to do with her university research, which is focused on the moving image and material culture. So while one day a week is accounted for in her workload for research, she needs to complete a range of other past-the-deadline tasks that are publicly funded and therefore take priority.

The editorial meeting commences with a short software storm, Adobe vs Linux and the interesting stuff around not being able to edit, or in some cases see, PDFs. The contributor texts (largely PDFs, as we omitted to instruct otherwise) travel neatly between desktops, but the comments, existing on another plane somewhere, keep getting lopped off or erased. AP was trying to edit an .odt file, her comments are there but not highlighted, rendering them invisible as her intrusions. This is just a slice of the things that are ever present yet rarely acknowledged: the administrative haze that does not often make it out of the background layer or level and into the context of Making the Work. The ringfence around this is mindbogglingly mysterious. And, yes, we all know this already. But this is also the point.

We could also start with the festival (READER p. 10). The RADMIN festival (devised and delivered by KR in partnership with Chiz Williams and numerous others from the Feral Business Research Network, the Institute



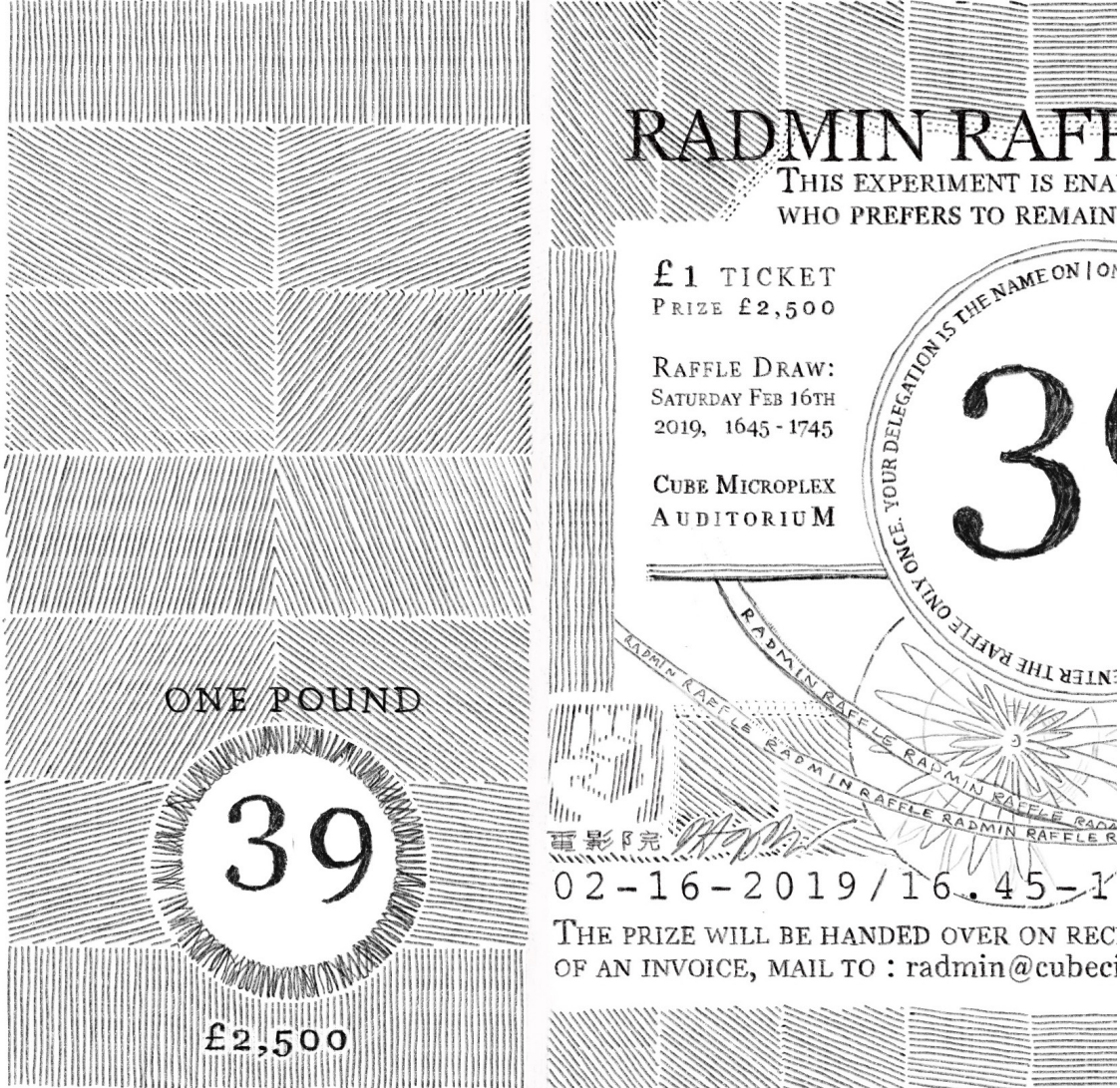


Image: David Hopkinson

for Experiments with Business and Bristol's Cube Cinema) was conceived as an ice breaker: its intention was to open up a field. Its 120 or so attendees included artists, academics, administrators and organisations in an array of organisational forms (READER p. 64). Some of these entities are doing a lot already in the way of radical and experimental administration, but it's not in the workflows or the reporting. We note the extra effort implicit in subliminal processes - in not having a vocabulary for this kind of work - in that it is not specified or filed as anything.

Even at the Cube Cinema where the term 'RADMIN' first unfurled, excitingly, from a conversation on the Cube Volunteers email list about laminating,

the idea of administration as an art practice, programme area or existential stance is not yet part of the working vocabulary. So doing RADMIN in the form of a festival was in the first place an act of uttering or tuning. It was about centring the background of organising, processing, accounting and maintaining as categories to celebrate, while at the same time opening up the possibility for hacks and acts of transcendence. The idea that we might together imagine ways to do these things better.

The seeds of this thinking come from further back in autobiographical time. As an artist, KR took the Linux path 20 years ago, a choice she came to pre-formatted as someone who could most likely only work in such a way. She explains this by reference to art collective Artist Placement Group (READER p.16) and their slogan, '*Context is Half of the Work*'. There is also something in anthropologist David Graeber's suggestion that bureaucracy (like its near neighbour admin) is the first and only social institution that treats the means of doing things as entirely separate from what is being done. Using Linux adds a friction to just about every computer-based transaction, but this is something to which KR is by now effectively acclimatised.

AP has spent the last 20 years working between academics, artists, institutions and bureaucratic structures to push at the boundaries of where art is meant to happen. A recent 5-year research programme involved two universities and eight community organisations with very different funding and organisational structures working together to co-produce new ways to think about regulation - specifically, regulation that would better involve people in decision-making. Its development was characterised by lengthy debates about the knowledge value of art and whether it serves primarily to drive social science research, or to communicate social science to non-specialist audiences or, whether art can in fact contribute new ways of thinking and doing regulation. It's the latter point that most interested AP and connects her to RADMIN.

In 2018, AP hosted an Art + Regulation event in Bristol. A group of around 20 academics, artists and policy-makers gathered to discuss questions including these ones: *How is art regulated in and by participatory and/ or collaborative research? How does art itself (its aesthetics, institutions,*

funding, infrastructures) regulate the collaborative research in which it participates? How might art participate in productive critiques of regulatory systems and infrastructures? KR was one of the few contributors who responded to the brief directly. While the conversation was framed to provoke discussion of administration and bureaucracy as central to participatory art practice, it was very difficult to move many of the event delegates beyond the easy critical space of pushing back against community-washing. AP wanted to know how these dynamics were produced, enacted, repeated and how an understanding of regulation and administration might produce more interesting and effective art. However even when given centre stage, the topic of regulation created a curious void or field of avoidance around it: a space where it seemed impossible for the conversation to tread.

What we are both interested in is the quiet and long-standing *cordon sanitaire* - in the artistic sphere but also slicing across fields of domestic, entrepreneurial and academic activity - between the work of administration and the 'real', sanctioned or valorised work of making (art, things, ideas, the world). We acknowledge the many artists who work with administration as gesture, aesthetic, form, frame and process. Phil Collins set up a working office at the Tate as part of his 2006 Turner Prize nomination show. Suzanne Lacy centres a range of administrative and management practices in her work. Yet, there remains a sticky refusal to acknowledge admin as 'the work', which is evident both in its apparition in a separate administrator class (at the institutional level) and in classing the administration that we all do - as individuals and in organisations - as an infernal necessity, categories apart from the creative practice. This segregation is both deeply disturbing and also bizarre. While in the case of the institutions it is no longer possible to overlook gender, race and disability, there remains a class divide or chasm around admin as a role and an activity. The cleaner-organisers are paid less than the enforcer porter-security guards; the secretary-conveyancers are rendered invisible by the lawyers. The manuscript writers are thanked as typists. Nonetheless admin is something we all have in common, even while largely experienced as a place of individual shame or stoic-perverse personal competence. RADMIN opens up the space to think about administration as not just something we are subject to but a site for (collective) action.

RECUPERATION AND EVIL

Of course, in focusing on the hinterground there is a need to watch out for its anaesthetising and the risks inherent in making grey areas explicit. From a theoretical point of view, in placing something at the centre it is framed. From the myriad possibilities of what might have been before it's uttered, the utterance crystallises it. Moreover, and more overtly political, the transparency that comes from centring (as another anthropologist, Marilyn Strathern notes) potentially deprives administration of its *queerness*¹: of its powers on the margins. There is also the risk of recuperation, the annoying younger sibling of all resistant practices about which the Arnolfini (the gallery attached to our editorial meeting venue) wrote so eloquently (Trevor, Cox, Haq, 2010). However, with its deep association with being boring and

TBEX: 37. 20th Century Flicks!

20th CENTURY FLICKS:

20th Century Flicks has two private hire cinemas which always have to be for private events. What I propose to do with the money to run a public programme with free entry, we'd put breakfast on and it would be for early morning movies for people who might need a bit of company without any conversation.

TBEX: 38. Rabbits Road Press!

RABBITS ROAD PRESS:

I'm from Rabbit's Road Press, we're an open access risograph printing press in East London and what we'd do with the money is buy another risograph but purely for activist printed matter - you don't have to be an activist to print but the machine would be an activist in its own right.

TBEX: 39. Display Distribute!

DISPLAY DISTRIBUTE:

Because we just decided to enter this raffle, our collective is in Hong Kong and I haven't had time to gain consensus on what our proposal would be from my collaborators who are probably asleep. I was going to use this opportunity to issue an apology and a contingency plan for the bamboo shoots that I lost, that were in transit for Feral Trade and are probably in a bus depot somewhere between London and Bristol and say that I would use the money to allocating the resources to find the bamboo shoots.

TBEX: 45. Minipogon!

MINIPOGON:

Minipogon - you all know what Minipogon is about, we are basically doing a plastic business in a refugee camp. So thinking about what we would like to do in Minipogon, the

first idea we came to is that we would really like to convert water into wine, but then it came out it's not so original so thinking back to plastic, we would like to convert plastic into gasoline. And we're going to do it!

RAMDIN: Anyone who has a ticket who wasn't on the list?

OK then it's time to do the draw.

Anyone here who is not in the raffle? First one to the front of the auditorium does the draw.

[Human drumroll.....]

TBEX: Number 39! Display Distribute!

1. See RADMIN READER 2019 https://feraltrade.org/radmin/RADMIN_READER_FINAL.pdf p.45

IBEX: 22. Network for Creative Enterprise!

NETWORK FOR CREATIVE ENTERPRISE: I'm Tyrone, I'm representing the Network for Creative Enterprise which offers business support for creative individuals and small companies within the Bristol local area. It's a place where people can take their creative ideas to make them into an economically sustainable business. This money would help these people to realise their ideas.

IBEX: 23. Market Gallery!

MARKET GALLERY: We're Market Gallery, an artist-run arts space in Glasgow, run on a voluntary basis with a committee of five. Our idea is quite practical. Our current structure is becoming really unsustainable and we want to have a radical programme, but all our time is taken up with maintenance, admin, and we also have no time to programme because we're all working other jobs. We want to use the money to pay ourselves for five weeks and focus the dedicated time to use our current funding to make a truly radical programme.

IBEX: 24. Newbridge Gallery!

NEWBRIDGE GALLERY: Daniel Russell here. If lucky enough to win the money, I will organise the first non-artist in residence at the Newbridge project in Newcastle. The first part of a plan to have an alternative art school whose contributors are all radicals from non-art disciplines. This concludes my presentation.

IBEX: 25. Bristol Co-operative Gym!

BRISTOL CO-OPERATIVE GYM: We're Bristol Co-operative Gym, we're the first co-op gym and if we get this money we're going to save it! Try and be a bit more resilient, with some reserves - that's it.

IBEX: 26. ButCH!

BUTCH: 37 Looe street, Plymouth is the home of the base of Bureau for Contemporary and Historic. It's got a gallery space, it's got workshop space and we want to be able to invite a million Susans, refuseniks from institutes, creative and non-creative people to be able to come there and do and show their work.

IBEX: 28. Conway and Young!

CONWAY AND YOUNG: Now Jessy's at the top of the property ladder, we want to experiment with setting up a temporary live-in design studio based in Bristol where all studio members would direct their paid working hours to researching and designing actions addressing a lack of affordable housing in this city.

IBEX: 29. General Performances!

GENERAL PERFORMANCES: I'm undecided. I'm working on an Unlearning Centre in Switzerland and I want to use a grand for up to three people, for you guys, if you're interested, you could come and unlearn something that you decide to unlearn. If you are not interested I would put it into a project called farmers without borders, which is an indoor agriculture with migrants and unemployed people doing experiments with plants.

IBEX: 36. Intervall!

INTERVAL: A queer beauty salon offering body positive treatments for all genders and body types, and creating spaces for people to explore their body image. The emphasis is now the client feels in their own body and giving them what they want, rather than making anyone look a standard way. We would offer beauty treatments eg. eyebrows, eyelashes, waxing, facials, skill-sharing workshops for people to learn to do treatments on their own bodies and one-on-one performances for arts spaces.

its caricatured personnel armed with fluffy bears, sweets and vicious gossip, admin is perhaps the least likely outsider practice to be recuperated by the art world.

Fifty years after Mierle Laderman Ukeles' Maintenance Art Manifesto proposed placing the routine chores of cleaning and maintaining at the heart of artistic practice², we are still ready for that trend to ignite!

RADMIN has a further potential to speak back to Hannah Arendt's (1963) use of the term 'banality of evil' to locate the violence of the Third Reich at its administrative centre. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer also placed administration on the side of evil: in their 1950 radio interview and in Adorno's 1956 book, *Dissonances. Music in the Administered World*. In our own times, administration is placed in the context of the economies of attention and distraction: an approach to information management that treats human attention as a scarce resource (which comes, we note, with the overwhelming desire to rid the working self of the administration that makes the concept of work possible). The administrator's complaint is that each distraction opens up a new world in potential (the vortex of untold, uncounted tasks), while the non-administrator marginalises all the administration as distraction from the core work of creation. But, as Walter Benjamin argues, there's something to be said for distraction: 'the distracted masses absorb the work of art into themselves' (1936). If administration has the capacity to be both centred and distracting, to produce both violence and practices of care, then perhaps paradoxically this situates administration as in fact a charmed or protected space. Perhaps it works less *from the margins* (as bell hooks proposes) and more *in the seams*: a final seam of resistance to capture.

& PROCEDURES

We close out our meeting with procedures. How to co-write this editorial text. We could make a shared Etherpad document (done) and even animate it. Animating Etherpad³ is amazingly confronting: you can't edit out any step of the editing process so every undo and retype remains visible in a stop-motion parade of semi-sublimated thought. So an animated Etherpad could be a good way to get a working draft, which we could then pull out into Word/Open Office. KR just switched from Libre Office to Open Office but she thinks it could have been a backwards step. And maybe a Framatalk⁴ session over the new year, to avoid the lazy grammar of calling everything Skype. KR will be in Australia, an 11 hr time difference, necessitating an early morning meeting GMT. Need to check in with Chiz Williams (CW) who co-organised the RADMIN festival on how he would like to be acknowledged in this intro (CW: as coming from both the Cube Cinema side and a live music/festival angle). And we need to keep the whole thing

2. See RADMIN READER 2019 https://feraltrade.org/radmin/RADMIN_READER_FINAL.pdf p.66

3. Etherpad.org

4. Framatalk.org

to a max of 72 pages or it won't staple. The layout is in Indesign, one area where Adobe's gigantism is overwhelming. A solution to that one is not obvious, but the effort is to keep the texts editable by non-designers until the last minute. The designer is flying to China in late January so we need to work around that (as it turned out, coronavirus preoccupied her short stay there, it was hard to get online but she emailed us from her phone that she was changing travel plans to fly back early). We aim to have it ready for February. For the contributors that means mid-December, but we need to do a false deadline - November 30th for the revised texts - in order to confidently get the materials in before Xmas. With luck. This is also our deadline to draft this introduction, with the realism over timing that we are allowing everyone else.

OTHER QUESTIONS AND PRELIMS

These texts (READER p.3) emerge from their writers having been part of the RADMIN festival. But the intention for this reader is not a point-to-point mapping of the event. Instead, these artists have used the festival as their point of departure (or arrival): an opportunity to unearth already existing and deeply embedded takes, tricks, loops and swerves on the administrative. This collection therefore excavates some rich seams from the charmed spaces of administration and transfers them to a different kind of page. Maybe we aim for this book to be a desk manual, a handover document, part of the office archive, a task-and-finish group, a work of art.

FoAM (READER p.44) can issue it an ISBN number, which means that it can be catalogued by a library, although in fact that costs £89 a throw so we decide to let that sleeping task lie. KR to contact the designer and contributors, does AP want to be cc'd in? No. We exchange documents and audio files. AP doesn't know why she can only see Arnolfini Open wifi and not Eduroam. It's now not showing up - she tried to join it before when it was appearing. We revert to USB, remembering to return the USB stick to KR when done. We look at Memory of the World Library. Maybe we could get the reader onto that.

& ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

etherpad, framataalk, openoffice, firstbus, lenovo, uwe it services, 3d3, microsoft, samsung, the internet, wessex water, ovo energy, bristol city council, bristol university workload models, fo.am, adobe, viruses, cortisol, the atmosphere, internal microphones, twitter, duck duck go, brave web browser, debian linux, sustrans, letts of london, bristol library, state library of tasmania, memory of the world library, thesaurus.com, transferwise, sydney airport wifi, the void of inactivity & the cube cinema volunteers mailing list.

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TBEX: 12. Businesses!

BUSINESSES: I'm at the beginning of setting up Bristol Tool Library, and I'd like to use two and a half grand to do that!

TBEX: 13. 3 Stages of Succession!

3 STAGES OF SUCCESSION: Alright so we have two ideas, one of which we have no intention whatsoever of doing which is if we win the money we will hire a high-powered consulting agency and charge them with the idea to give us a full long-term plan to end capitalism.

TBEX: 14. Rosalind Turner!

ROSALIND TURNER:

I'm Rosalind Jane Turner, I'm an interdisciplinary practitioner and social artist, I would use the two and a half thousand pounds to facilitate micro-workshops and curate micro-exhibitions exploring womens' spirituality through mixed media, film, ritual, voice and performance.

TBEX: 15. Less-stuff!

LESS STUFF: OK so it's when you're very unsettled and you want to get a drink but you're feeling really furious: it's a bar full of really nasty bar people and it's all sticky and disgusting but the bar people are there to let you argue with them. And no matter how drunk and obnoxious and nasty you get, you will not get a hangover.

TBEX: 16. TOFU!

TOFU: Institute of Misery
Appointments - IMA in Japanese, a noun - it defines happiness as continuously avoiding misery at any moment in your life. A monthly paid mobile app, you pay in 2 or 3 quid every month and you get some support from all different places, keeping you away from misery.

TBEX: 17. Esther May Campbell!

ESTHER MAY CAMPBELL: I'm Esther - and I would put the money towards a programme I'm doing called Storyworks which is for women exploring stories

- that are cultural, historical, personal
- and to explore it with the remit to change those stories.

TBEX: 18. Drawing Exchange!

DRAWING EXCHANGE:

We're Drawing Exchange and recently experienced going on to Universal Credit, from Working Tax Credit. So this is an experimental subscription business to help artists who live on low incomes to deal with the complexities of recaching the basic income floor that you have to achieve - I don't fully understand it yet because I'm just recently on Universal Credit, but this is a way of enabling artists [HENDO: 4 seconds!] OK!

TBEX: 19. Francis Harvey!

FRANCIS HARVEY: My example might seem a bit selfish and unimaginative compared to the artists who you've heard so far but it does have an altruistic side-effect. I'm not representing any organisation, I'm just an individual. My idea just consists of de-cluttering my collection of books records and papers, however there is a philanthropic indirect effect of that which is that I pass things on to people and organisations who I think might make good use of them [HENDO 8 seconds!] - articles, books and magazines, videotapes to people who have VHS players, CDs to charity shops - that's it.

TBEX: 20. Richard Youngs!

RICHARD YOUNGS: I'm not going to dazzle you. I'm a musician. I need to do stuff. Some of this stuff costs money. I'd use the money to fund this stuff. Maybe if I won this raffle, I would be called to full administrative seriousness. Maybe not. I'll leave you hanging there...

TBEX: 21. Ad Hoc Collective!

AD HOC COLLECTIVE:

Ad Hoc Collective! I've just become a member. Ad Hoc is a catering company and they - we! - would use this money to get some kits to continue to support activist groups and people working towards social change.

FOAM: Miracle morning is an artist-run hospice: a funeral home and burial clinic for businesses suffering from terminal growth syndrome. We exist because their leaders need support in the process of death and transformation of their business as usual. We do this by designing rituals to sacrifice their businesses and support them through the mourning process of their growth addiction.

IBEX: Number 2, Port Eliot Festival!

PORT ELIOT FESTIVAL: For transparency, I'm representing my partner who couldn't be here because she's sick. Imagine yourself in a chamber, face to face with someone you are meeting for the first time. The invitation is to use this space to share a secret about yourself with the other person. As you journey into the exchange, the chamber you are in detects changes in your body - your skin temperature, sweat on your palms, your heart rate - and the structure adapts, through light and sound. The secret space project is an exploration into human connection. It's about how technology can improve our wellbeing [HENDO: 3, 2...] and relationships [HENDO: 1!]

IBEX: 3, Amber Spark!

AMBER SPARK: Conscious wedding planning toolbox. A kit that enables you to prepare a wedding that is not only eco-conscious but is an enriching and creative learning experience for all the people involved, for the community around you as well: a little festival of creation and love - it starts a few months before, when you have someone to teach you about love, in all its different aspects.

IBEX: 4, Gainsborough Wharf? 5, Port O'Bristol? Not here!

IBEX: 6, PlumbMaid!

PLUMBMAID: PlumbMaid enterprises will take on artists and see them through any construction

trade training, will fit them up with an experienced tradesperson to skill them up and gain professional level qualifications that they can take with them around the world to support their practices, and as part of the training you will be required to maintain a studio practice and engage with critical debate in whatever your practice is. Thankyou!

IBEX: 7, Cube Cinema!

CUBE CINEMA: In the Cube, there's a myth that each night costs £250 to run. So I propose that we do a 10 day festival of risk, which is programmed by someone who hasn't programmed anything before, a different person for each night, and responding to the idea of risk and reward.

IBEX: 8, Tandem!

TANDEM: This project is coming to a website or bookshelf near you: A beautifully illustrated guide for administrators titled: The Administration of Think Chapters include: 1. Typing and stereotyping, 2. How to count minutes, 3. The questionable existence of the untracked change, 4. Frequently unanswered questions. Order now, no guarantees. Thankyou.

IBEX: 9, Incidental Unit! HENDO: 2, 1 Go!

INCIDENTAL UNIT: The Incidental Unit would like to invite someone to work through the open brief format within Incidental Unit.

IBEX: 10, Starter Culture!

STARTER CULTURE: Starter Culture would like to find a woodland with the largest number of microbes, to build a log cabin impregnated with mycorrhizal fungi and to grow a large mushroom growing shack and invite everyone back there to make the largest loaf of sourdough ever.

IBEX: 11, Brave New Alps!

BRAVE NEW ALPS: Hi. As part of a group called La Foresta, the forest or female foreigner, we would like to set up a local currency and use the money to print some money.

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Feb 14–16 2019
Feral Business
Network presents:
RADMIN – A festival
of Administration
Cube Microplex,
Bristol UK



Image: RADMIN

IBEX: So we'll go through in number order, bearing in mind I may have inaccurate records here of exactly who has which ticket. So correct me if I'm wrong.

Number 1: FoAM!

FoAM: From here or over there?

IBEX: From your seat, we're going to try to move swiftly. Stand up!

HENDO: The countdown will start from 5 for the lead-in.

HENDO: the countdown's there so - are you ready? 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, go!

Q : If you win, who invoices for the money?

A : The delegation would invoice. You don't have to be incorporated, but if you were, the invoice would need to come from the corporate entity. I would like to take this opportunity to note that there are 68 different delegations registered at RADMIN, representing a wide array of shapes: businesses, networks, charities, co-ops, collectives, self-employed individuals, people who formed an organisation specifically to come to RADMIN. We are welcoming that diversity of organisational forms.

Q : Is the money taxable?

A : It's a good question. In the UK, lottery winnings and gambling are both exempt from tax. However this raffle probably does not fit those categories. There is not of information regarding raffles with cash prizes, which is a reminder that this raffle is really an anomaly: normally raffles are there to raise money, not to give it away. There are other ambiguities particular to the RADMIN context. For example under UK tax regulations, prizes in general are subject to tax if they're considered income generated by your business. In relation to literary awards and prizes, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs says, 'the determining factor in considering whether or not such an award etc is taxable is the quality of the award in the hands of the recipient. If it comes to the individual as an incident in the exercise of his or her profession or vocation (including a subsidiary or part-time activity), it should normally be treated as a professional receipt and included in the computation of the taxable profits'. So if you were to be awarded a prize as in the exercise of a hobby, the outcome might be that you wouldn't have to pay tax. This points to a blurry line at RADMIN, being something between business and something else. Where should that line lie?. On the other hand, unlike other arts and business awards or grants, your chances of winning the RADMIN raffle are unrelated to the quality of your proposal, so where this fits an idea of professionalism is hard to tell. Beyond that, intriguingly, some advice states that grants for artists are not taxable if they are used to buy your time, not to fund expenses . As you can see there are multiple grey areas. Having said all that, many of the raffle-entering delegations are not based in the UK for tax purposes which means that none of this would apply if they were to win.

Q : And the delegation that wins, do they have to carry out their business idea?

A : There are no reporting or accounting conditions, according to the rules.

Q : Based on the other financial experiment that happened earlier in the festival (READER p. 12) - I realise time is limited but does anyone want to create any ground rules for the person who wins the money? Do we want to have three bullet points on how they should spend it, or does everyone want to keep it completely open? I guess part of this question is acknowledging the responsibility of the person who receives it and how they might feel, as part of this community.

A : Under the conditions of the raffle I can only reconfirm that the rules state the prize is issued without any reporting or accounting conditions.

Q : Are the stubs meant to be in the hat? Because I still have my ticket stub.

A : Yes!

CUBE : We should also just explain, this is Hendo, who are artists who work at the Cube.

Hendo, do you want to just quickly explain what you're doing?

HENDO : It's a night where experimental work is done inside the Cube - and this is the 30-second visual countdown you will have to present your business idea.

Q : Do you have a raffle ticket?

HENDO : Yes, as the Cube.

IBEX : Shall we begin?

EVERYONE : Yes!

Q : Is this being recorded?

CUBE : I'm recording it.

Q : What kind of recording?

CUBE : Video, but I guess it will be used just for transcription.

WHAT CAN ARTISTS DO FOR BUSINESS?

At a time where the legitimacy of 'business as usual' has been called spectacularly into doubt, new thinking and practice around how we do business is urgently sought.

Open to individuals and collectives, artists, producers, administrators and creative organisations, we will gather at RADMIN, Britain's first festival of Administration, to erase, ghost-write and re-file, over three days of receptions, discussions, dinners, provocations and office parties.

RADMIN is a summit in which we will reconsider the 'dull' spaces of administration, managing, trading and maintenance, not as a set of largely hostile impediments which invade or co-opt arts practice but as sites for critical and creative enquiry, radical histories, experiments, politics, wild imaginaries and meaningful work.

Programme features: Gala Dinner, Convention, Office Party, Professional Development Bonanza!, Trade Show and 100 Ushers/Screening.

With: *3 Stages of Succession, The Ad Hoc Collective, Bristol Co-operative Gym, Centre for Plausible Economies, Common Wallet, Company Drinks, Cube Cinema, CUPS (Creative University Professional Services), Different Space, Drawing Exchange, Feral Trade, FoAM, The Incidental Unit, Institute for Experiments with Business, IRRATIONAL.ORG, Legal Eagles, Polar Produce, Port O Bristol, Plumbmaid, Richard Youngs, The School for Organizing, Trade Show, UWE Business School, The Viriconium Palace AND OTHERS.*

'The Shares' a Meal and a Bucket of Money

This text has been written with the attendees of 'The Shares' a meal in mind.

The Viriconium Palace



Image: RADMIN

Conditions: Only open to RADMIN delegations. Each delegation can enter the raffle only once. Your delegation is the name on your conference badge.

Each entering organisation will be obliged to stand up & deliver a 30-second (maximum) brief, plan, or dream for an art/business experiment they would be thrilled to play out with £2,500. This presentation will happen during the Raffle Draw on Saturday. The Raffle Prize will be issued with no reporting or accounting conditions & will be randomly drawn from a hat. The prize will be handed over on receipt of an invoice, mail to radmin@cubecinema.com. This experiment is enabled by a sponsor which prefers to remain hidden.

The Raffle Draw: Saturday Feb 16th 2019, 16:45. The raffle contestants, other delegates, Cube volunteers and general public assemble in the Cube Microplex Auditorium for the Q & A with raffle host, institute for experiments with business (IBEX).

Q: Where does the money come from?

A: See the small print on the raffle ticket (READER p. 68): it states that this experiment is enabled by a sponsor who prefers to remain hidden.

Q: I have an administrative point to make. The ticket says the prize will be issued with no reporting or accounting conditions and the winner will be randomly pulled from a hat. But underneath in the smaller print - now I don't have my glasses - it says the prize will be handed over on receipt of an invoice. Which I would say is an accounting condition.

A: There is some ambiguity there. The point is that unlike most other arts or business grants or awards, there are no reporting or accounting conditions placed on what you will do with the money if you win. There's still a transaction involved when the prize is issued.

Q: So that's more about accountability rather than accounting?

A: That could be right.

Q: What is the legal status of this raffle? Do we need use the Chatham House Rule, in that we might not want to talk about it outside of this room? As far as I know, in the UK you're not allowed to gamble without a license?

A: Under the Gambling Act 2005 it is legal to hold a raffle in the UK if the prize is under £20K. This raffle also qualifies under the incidental non-commercial lottery category (no license needed), so long as the sale of all tickets takes place at the event, and the organisers don't spend more than £100 of the raffle income on expenses. In the case of this raffle, takings were £32 (32 tickets sold at £1 each).

Q: Can we blog about this?

A: Sure.

Q: I just wanted to double-check: if somebody can't be here because she's sick, is she disqualified?

A: The rules say that you have to be registered as a RADMIN delegation and also to be here to deliver your 30 second pitch in order to be entered in the draw.

Q: The pitch isn't going to be judged?

A: Right.

Q: So you can say any old shit?

A: Yes, although it's whatever you want to say in a room full of people who might then see you walk off with £2.5K.

Q: Can you represent someone else's project?

A: Under the rules no. We are aware that there are a number of delegates unable to be with us today, for various reasons, many of them health-related. It's good that we listed the National Health Service as a supporter in the festival budget (READER p. 34)

Q: Can I make a suggestion? Why don't you call that person and say you will become a collaboration. Then you can have a collaborative business experiment and you could present the idea on behalf of the group.

Q: Can you represent the other people in your delegation?

A: That's what being a delegate is...

Q: Where will the money be paid from - is that anonymous too?

A: If you win you will need to send an email to radmin@cubecinema.com, you will then be instructed on who and how to invoice.

Business Experiment Raffle

RADMIN

RADMIN Business Experiment Raffle

Ticket £1, Prize £2,500

The Viriconium Palace were invited by Kate Rich to host part of RADMIN 2019, specifically to supply the venue (Ashton Court Mansion via our connections with Artspace Lifespace), food and environment for the gala dinner opening of the festival.

To give you some background information, The Viriconium Palace is an ad hoc gallery project programmed and designed by Lucie Akerman and Sam Playford Greenwell. At the beginning of the project in 2014 we established a working structure devised in response to our conflicts with the rampant professionalisation of the art (DIY/ Institutional or otherwise) 'landscape' at that time. Our agenda was to enable a maintained 'low output', a forced limit on our ambitions to avoid the temptation to seek public funding and an 'easy' development of a platform/conduit of sorts, to test out small scale experiments with finance, systems and the general public.

The finance behind our program was a 'what we could make' in our immediate environments kind of hustle meaning we regularly either financed the activity personally or structured it around a donations scheme. It was structured around donations with one particular activity, dinners with someone smart and interesting for an audience of 8-12 people. Attendees were invited to contribute a private and unguided donation in a casket in the toilet at some point during the event. We would then deduct the cost of food and pass the rest onto the contributor who had joined us for that evening.

The invitation to contribute to RADMIN was born from one of the above dinners, so our response to this brief was to transfer this working method to RADMIN, a pre-ticketed festival and to scale up the concept from 12 to 90 people. This required some negotiation on our part about what to carry through and what to adapt.

It felt important to maintain the relationship the project had to its donation scheme, so we adapted the system to allow for a preknown and guaranteed budget.

We agreed with the organisers of Radmin on £780 (READER p. 34) to cover the costs of feeding 90 people on the opening event. This broke down to £8.67 per person. We do not take wages from The Viriconium Palace activity, so we were able to allocate this budget in full to the ingredients, sourced from local organic suppliers and based on a vegan diet. We decided to position this budget in cash in the toilets for all attendees to then either take from or contribute to in relative privacy from the main event. This action was designed to be packaged with a breakdown of intention and reason and signposted clearly, to offer the opportunity for guests not familiar with our previous events to assess their contribution already made and adjust accordingly. Due to an unexpected life event that took place the evening before RADMIN our small team halved and with this loss of resources came a rapid reduction in the management of the food and also the money.

What landed on the night was a scaled down dinner for 90 people, a serious shortage of spoons, and an unlabelled bucket of money in denominations of £1.00, £5, £10 and £20 to the tune of £780 in the ladies bathroom (converted to unisex for the night). What remained at the end of the evening was £60.00 in denominations of £1 and £5.00

We have learnt of many different reactions to the bucket of money, during the evening and after. This information has come via friends and colleagues, a little bit of social media and conversations with the RADMIN crew post event. Rather than provide a conclusion, below are some thoughts we have had and had around it.



FIG. 1. A portion of the postural typology used in the compilation of data for this paper. Drawings are for the most part based on photographs in the ethnographic literature. Head and arm positions, unless stated otherwise in the accompanying discussion, are not typologically significant. No. 23, for example, could be standing with his left hand on his hip, or resting it on his left shoulder, and his standing posture would be considered the same for present purposes.

Image: Hewes, Gordon W 1955 'World Distribution of Certain. Postural Habits', *American Anthropologist*, vol. 57, no. 2, pp. 231-244.

NECK:

If your neck feels tight, try pressing your head against your hand for a few seconds, almost as hard as you can. You can hold your hand against the side, front and back of your head, all while keeping the neck in a neutral position - looking forward.

SHOULDERS:

We can mobilise the shoulders by taking them through their full range. Swing your arms in circles and across your body until they feel freer. You may want to strengthen the muscles on the back of your shoulders too - try lying on your front with your hands at your lower back. Trace a big circle with your hands from this position to above your head - like making a snow angel, but face-down. Keep your elbows as high as you can throughout.

MID-SPINE:

Our thoracic spine (everything that isn't your lower back or neck) can be wonderfully mobile - able to arch, round, bend, shift side to side and twist. Anything that you do that encourages this movement can feel good. Try standing up then pushing your bum back until you can rest your hands on your knees. From this position, tuck your pelvis and your chin and round your back. Then raise your chin, stick your bum out and arch your back. In yoga, this is Tadasana Bitilasana Marjaryasana (standing cat cow). Do a few of these and then add other movements too - moving your hips side to side, twisting etc. Keep things gentle and keep moving.

LOWER SPINE AND HIPS:

It's very common to experience lower back pain. Reasons for this are very complicated, but it can sometimes feel good to strengthen our glute muscles. Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. From here, imagine peeling your pelvis

and lower spine off the floor, vertebra by vertebra, tilting your pelvis towards you and then squeezing your glutes to push your hips up into a "glute bridge". Don't go too high or you will lose tension in the gluteal muscles - make sure your bum is tense. If you feel this more in the back of your legs, try moving your feet closer to your bum or putting your toes against a wall and pushing gently against it. If you feel it in the front of your legs, move your feet away a little. When in this bridge position, you could push your knees apart and feel the muscles on the outside of your hips get involved, or squeeze your feet and knees together to target the inside of your hips.

ANKLES:

An all-round good position to try, which will get into the unusual ranges of your ankles, hips and mid-spine, is to sit in a deep squat with your heels on the floor. From standing, push your bum back as though you were going to sit on a chair, and then sit all the way down, ideally trying to rest your hamstrings (back of the top of your leg) on your calves (back of the bottom of your leg). If you feel unstable here or find your heels leave the floor, try holding onto something in front of you and lean back against that anchor point - a door frame works very well. While in this deep squat, you can round and arch your back, twist, shift your weight side to side etc.

With all of these exercises, try for 20 repetitions or so, or holding a position for 30-60 seconds. If you can do that comfortably, make it more difficult by adding more resistance or doing it again.

We have to hold our hands up with this one and say, in part it was a strange kind of accident that happened as a result of some unexpected diversions so there is no neat explanation or analytical package we can provide, our intentions were different to what actually played out on the night and without the ownership of those intentions we will focus on something that is more subjective and meandering.

On the night we were surprised by the outcome but not disappointed, it was elating and exciting, albeit frenzied perhaps, to understand that the money reducing to the degree it did evidenced an engagement we had not anticipated or previously experienced at any of our other events. We heard of many reactions to the money and its bucket, that people wanted to protect it, count it, damage it, collectively discuss it, move it away from the bathroom, throw it on the floor, wear it. We understand that people encountered it in small groups and privately and that some did not make it past the threshold of the doorway. We know that some people put money in, definitely that people took some out, it got burnt and it flew through the air in the dining hall. We understand people were enticed by it, felt guilty about it, angry, disappointed and attacked, that it created a lot of space for conversation but that it held an unpleasant, uneasy existence for many.

Despite the delivery of the money diverging from our original intentions, there were interestingly in the outcome a lot of crossovers in terms of our wider interests. The money appeared to us to become a shapeshifter. In the absence of a framework for assessment or any kind of anchor, it somehow quite successfully held multiple and asymmetrical values simultaneously.

In our previous Viriconium money hustling, one of the core agendas was to challenge the notion of money as a fixed entity by disrupting the nature of the transaction surrounding it. In the case of RADMIN, the lack of any transaction around it, specifically information about how to interact with it opened up what seemed like all the possibilities and all at the same time.

You could say The Viriconium Palace bought everyone dinner that night, Kate Rich bought everyone lunch the next day (READER p. 34) though but for whatever reason our money received more attention than hers. You could argue our money was unreasonably taken, or that the project was highly successful and provided an interesting prism to think through for a limited time. However you perceive it, that perception sits alongside another which is likely to be quite different and so the shapeshifting goes on.

In part we have written this to clarify the reason why the money was in the toilets because there is a suggestion that it will leave people with uncomfortable feelings if it goes unexplained. We understand this on the one hand and don't like the idea of the uncomfortable feelings, but on the other disagree. Before this was released an unknown belonged to us all, we know why the money was in the toilets, we don't know why it wasn't at the end of the night and you didn't up until this point know why it was there. We were all in the dark, limited to just a section of the full picture.

In terms of a conclusion to the story of the bucket and what it means after the fact, we don't really have one. It is here, where the absence of a neat package is felt most. We can say we are grateful that it worked out the way it did, that it was better than we planned it to be. And though we struggle to draw any lasting conclusions we think this lack of a clear definition is what made it all so interesting in the first place.

W5: Workshop on the Open Brief

Incidental Unit / Marsha Bradfield

Image: Marsha Bradfield



Incidental Unit at RADMIN 2019 (Bristol, UK)

*image anonymised as not all the consent forms were collected

As Gilman describes, the purpose of these positions were to enable soldiers to load, shoot and reload in unison. Collections of these illustrations were called “posture books”, and this posture was “manly, erect and upright”. It was not natural - it was mechanically rehearsed as a means of enforcing military discipline and collectivism.

In the 18th century, this training of the body moved into civilian life. “Posture-masters” taught gentlemen how to walk in this military way and by the late 19th century this had spread to women too.

Evolutionary theory incorporated posture. Charles Darwin, in his *Descent of Man*, claims “I can see no reason why it should not have been advantageous to the progenitors of man to have become more and more erect or bipedal”. To be less upright is to be less human! It doesn’t take long before this pseudo-scientific concept is weaponised against the “savages” of European colonies, and against perceived moral degeneracy (of the working class) within Europe.

The industrial revolution brought interesting developments that mirror the current postural paranoia. Machine work is blamed for encouraging poor posture, and further machines that mimic farm work are invented to counteract this, alongside programmes of “systematic remedial exercises”... I would argue that nothing has really changed that much since then.

In 1986, the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu introduced the idea of “cultural capital”, extending Karl Marx’s idea that economic capital determines our position in society into the symbolic capital realm of skills, tastes, mannerisms, clothing, accent etc. This capital may be “institutionalized” in the form of qualifications and skills, “objectified” as goods, and “embodied” as dispositions of the mind and body, accumulated through what Bourdieu calls “habitus” - ingrained habits and routines of our lifestyle or “life conduct”. This would include sedentary work.

UNDOING SITTING

Keeping an organisation running often involves sitting at a desk for long periods of time, and our bodies are very good at adapting to this demand. We may develop weakness and loss of mobility around our hips, shoulders, mid-spine and ankle joints. This may contribute to pain and discomfort, as well as movement restrictions.

Part of the problem is that we all tend to sit in the same way, on chairs that are designed to hold us in a specific position - knees and hips at ninety degrees, head slumped forward, chest down. It can be useful, instead, to try out various resting postures, as gathered from across the world by the anthropologist Gordon W. Hewes in 1955.

We may also want to do some specific work to counter the effects of sitting - mobilising those restricted joints and strengthening weaker muscles. Here are some suggestions:

UPSTANDING CITIZENS

Bristol Co-operative Gym /
Guy Lochhead

CONCEPTUALISING POSTURE

The idea of “good posture” is vague, with opinions varying pretty wildly within and between the worlds of fitness and medicine. Our general feeling is, perhaps, that if we don’t sit and stand “correctly”, we are damaging ourselves. Interestingly, most recent evidence suggests that this is not the case. Why, then, does the idea persist? The historian Sander L. Gilman begins his *Notes Toward a History of Posture* by identifying the double meaning usually hidden within the word:

- 1 . Posture as a means of optimising performance of a particular activity
- 2 . Posture as an expression of social rules about how to sit, stand and present oneself in order to be considered human, modern, civilised etc.

The idealised, upright, static position that we probably would all adopt if asked to assume “good posture” has its origins in late 16th century military drills - specifically, the resting posture or “attention”:

*Rigid spine
Tucked-in chin
A straight line from top
of head to feet*

INTRODUCTION

‘When “business as usual” has been called spectacularly into doubt, new thinking and practice around how we do business is urgently sought’. RADMIN’s invitation to **Incidental Unit** to participate in Britain’s first festival of Administration presented an opportunity to think about administration, business and art by other means. It catalysed the convening of Incidental Unit’s Education Working Group, whose first organisational act was to wrestle with the conditions of its own possibility.

Incidental Unit is an open organisation that began to form in 2016 following a series of ‘incidental meetings’. They had only one agenda item: ‘unfinished business’. These meetings aimed to informally share information and knowledge about **Artist Placement Group** (APG) (1966-89), as well as its successor **Organisation and Imagination** (O+I) (1989-2009).

Incidental Unit is the third iteration of Art Placement Group, which was one of the UK’s most critically acclaimed cultural networks. Founded by Barbara Steveni and others in 1966, the group struggled with the value of art to champion its potential beyond the studio, the gallery, the auction house and other sites of the art world. This began with placing artists in extra-artistic contexts. Artist Placement Group’s exceptional experiments took place in administration (government departments and public policy), industry (manufacturing and technology), commercial enterprise (trade and urban renewal) and beyond.

WORKING CONDITIONS

I offer these reflections as a founding member of Education Working Group. From the start (2019), there was little our self-selecting membership could take for granted. Like so many who self-organise, our precarious work in this capacity is part-time, volunteer and distributed (group members live in Brighton, Dover, Edinburgh and London). That we aspire to be a flat hierarchy is both inspired and complicated. While teeming with possibility, this approach to self-governance involves sensitive forms of decision-making that can be slow. Suffice to say that Education Working Group came together against the odds.

Responding to an invitation to contribute to this publication, after several false starts in coordinating a co-authored text, I opted to write a personal account of Education Working Group’s work for RADMIN. My thanks go to the group members who shaped this text through their feedback, an exchange that also nurtured our current and future practice. The following is one of many possible accounts of the salad days of Education Working Group. It offers a few thoughts on the Who, How, for Whom and, crucially, the Why of its first phase of becoming.

On 6 November 2018, I joined Sarah Andrew, Tessa Marchington, Anthony Schrag, Joshua Y'Barbo, Louise Webb and Polly Wright¹ at Flat Time House² (London) to hatch a plan for how we would participate in RADMIN.

We started gathering two hours before Incidental Unit's general meeting which takes place monthly.³ Some would meet face-to-face while others connected via internet programmes and speaker phone.

Education Working Group quickly and unequivocally adopted a popular web-based office suite to track our emergent thinking, co-author content and archive our agendas, minutes and the like. One of our number suggested we colour code our typed contributions to better grasp who was thinking about what. Perhaps in future we'll rue using the popular web-based office suite to organise ourselves and our efforts. We know, of course, there is no such thing as a 'free' online platform. *[Try Etherpad! Eds]* However, with zero budget and little time we agreed to this dodgy deal, telling ourselves we would revisit our decision if/when possible.

What seems certain, and I think I speak for everyone involved, is that our preparations for RADMIN were productive, at times even energising. There was terrific goodwill. This spirit of mutual support and experimentation felt at odds with the social-political-economic deadlock that gripped the UK in late 2018. It is worth remembering the country's first festival of Administration took shape in the shadow of Brexit and its swirling cocktail of fear, anger, malaise, uncertainty—a hot bureaucratic mess. Although immersed in this reality, Education Working Group aspired to function differently. We aimed to be a supportive space of shared learning: learning about Artist Placement Group but also, and importantly, learning how to work together to advance its legacy.

Before RADMIN, few of us had collaborated with each other. Then as now, none enjoys specialist knowledge as art historians or curators of Artist Placement Group. Our experience was more interpretive; our interest was more speculative, much of it connected to our own work in the arts and education. We were eager for an occasion to engage with Artist Placement Group's sensibilities—to question, interpret and perhaps evolve these into something with new relevance. Education Working Group was especially fascinated with how the fraught histories of Artist Placement Group, as well as its esoteric methods

If you find yourself in doubt, call on Calvino's guidance. He'll remind you that you can bring lightness to paperwork, by removing all of the unnecessary details and formalities. If you are stressed by deadlines, know that quickness does not always mean speed, but finding an appropriate rhythm for each of your administrative tasks. Administration, like writing, demands exactitude, clarity and meticulous preparation. The more prepared you are, the more effortless the work will be. If you're frustrated by administrative rules and regulations, see them as creative constraints that prevent you from getting lost in the vastness of possibility. If administering and accounting feels dry and boring, try to see them as parts of a larger whole, that connects to a multiplicity of tasks and people.

Calvino died before he finished his last memo about consistency, so you can interpret it as you like. At FoAM we see it as a consistency of process, a determination that our administrative work enables other types of work to develop and our collaborators to grow. Our contingency reserves are perhaps not stockpiles of money, food and medicine, but rather relationships, carefully cultivated over time and across continents. Relationships with people and places that give us hope.

“Hope is not a door” says Rebecca Solnit⁹,
“Hope is a sense that there might be a door
at some point, some way out of the problems
of the present moment even before that way
is found or followed.”

Endnotes

1 . Aleister Crowley. *Magick in Theory and Practice*

2 . Italo Calvino. *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*

3 . Martin Kaevats. *Estonia considers a 'kratt law' to legalise Artificial Intelligence (AI)*
<https://medium.com/e-residency-blog/estonia-starts-public-discussion-legalising-ai-166cb8e34596>

4 . Guy Lochhead. *Administrative postures.*
<https://www.guylochhead.com/blog/administrative-postures>

5 . Julia Kagan and Chris B Murphy. *Double Irish with a Dutch Sandwich.*
<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/double-irish-with-a-dutch-sandwich.asp>

6 . Cantillon. *Three years of silence on 'Single Malt' tax loophole raises questions.*
<https://www.irishtimes.com/business/economy/three-years-of-silence-on-single-malt-tax-loophole-raises-questions-1.3293313>

7 . terra0. <https://www.terra0.org/>

8 . Anna Tsing. *The Mushroom at the End of the World*

9 . Rebecca Solnit. *Hope in the Dark*

This article can be found online at:
<https://fo.am/publications/dark-arts-grey-areas-and-other-contingencies/>

1 . Polly Wright had recently been appointed Programme Coordinator for Incidental Futures, the first of Incidental Unit's public programmes (2018 – 2019). She also agreed to help with RADMIN by cofacilitating Education Working Group. When it formed in the fall of 2018, I was awaiting news on my application for Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK. I am grateful to Polly for her close and generous collaboration. My thanks go to all the members of Incidental Unit for their support. I'm pleased to be continuing our work together from my London base.

2 . Flat Time House (FTHo) was the studio home of John Latham (1921-2006), who is recognised as a significant and influential British post-war artist. In 2003, Latham declared the house a living sculpture, naming it FTHo after his theory of time, 'Flat Time'. Until his death, the artist opened his door to anyone interested in thinking about art. It is in this spirit that FTHo posthumously re-opened in 2008 as a gallery with a programme of exhibitions and events exploring Latham's practice, his theoretical ideas and their continued relevance. FTHo also provides a centre for alternative learning, which includes the John Latham archive, and an artist's residency space. Visit <http://flattimeho.org.uk/about/> for more info.

3 . Incidental Unit presently meets the third Tuesday of every month. Everyone is welcome.
Please email info@incidentalunit.org for more info.

Most artists engage in some form of informal economy. Where simple monetary transactions become muddled, entangled in a complex ecosystem of different types of exchange. While teetering on the edge of poverty or making do with lower-than-minimum wage is still seen as part of the archetype of a struggling artist, things become complicated when there are families and collaborators to take care of. In many collectives, co-operatives, networks and intentional communities economic exchange often happens in-kind, through some form of barter or favour trading. Some of these entities incorporate into organisational structures, to be able to interface with more mainstream economies. Some experiment with organisational structures themselves, as part of our creative process. The experiments vary in organisational shapes and sizes, depending on time, people and available resources. While co-creating and co-organising economic entities of our own making feels empowering, it also requires straddling different worlds. Shapeshifting from one world to another, speaking their different languages, being pulled in different directions and challenged to overcome violent attacks, insecurity and self-doubt.

Our dedication to a cause or a movement can lead to an escalation of commitment. We can perhaps allow ourselves to fail, but not to give up. Most of us have probably experienced self-exploitation, resulting in some form of burnout or other work-related illnesses. Not knowing how and when to give up can also lead to other losses that economists are very aware of. The sunk cost fallacy, for example, explains the difficulty of giving up a project due to the amount of time and resources that have already been invested in it. Even when the outcome is becoming increasingly dubious. Even if it would take much more investment in the future to possibly make it work. And while we keep on with the drudgery of this hopeless project, our opportunity costs are mounting. The hidden costs of missed opportunities, of all the things that we didn't do because we were too busy escalating our commitment.

“I can't help but worry” says Anna Tsing⁸
“when the scrap metal will run out, and
whether there will be enough other stuff
in the ruins to make continuing survival
possible. And while not all of us enact
such a literal figuration of living in
ruins, we mostly do have to work within our
disorientation and distress to negotiate
life in human-damaged environments. Without
the singular, forward pulse of progress,
the unregularized coordination of salvage
is what we have.”

And yet, we know how to work with contingencies. All of us still wake up and get to work on things that we believe are good, without any certainty of success. Whether we run co-operatives, host workshops, create artworks, teach, learn or play. Working with RADMIN isn't easy, but it is worthwhile.

and uncompromising values, might be made available to current and future generations. To this end we began thinking about a workshop for RADMIN that would introduce Artist Placement Group to new audiences while deepening our own understanding of this specific approach to cultural production.

Looping back to self-organisation: RADMIN's admin-positive context got me thinking about a critique which often plagues organisations that value good practice in their administration. I have sometimes heard it said that Artist Placement Group fetishized bureaucracy. You don't go to see an exhibition by Artist Placement Group but to read it. There are too many systems, structures, formats and mountains of paperwork.

When this same critique has been made of organisations I've worked with or worked for, I've been amused by the source. It's rarely if ever the administrators, those doing the day-to-day and often invisible activity of organising. Those who decry the fetishization of bureaucracy are instead often indirectly involved, e.g. users and managers. It seems this distance means that instead of systems, structures and formats, what users and managers see is something else—something mysterious, though not in an interesting way. Just something unknown. Potentially threatening but also exquisitely banal.

This prompted me to revisit my own relationship with what French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu neatly dubs 'structuring structures'.⁴ I both love and hate the technologies that administrate my life, though mostly I love to hate the explicit ones. This has proven a powerful cultural bond with other administrators, one that grows tighter when our organisational reproduction is questioned by the powers that be or when it's beholden to external forces beyond our control. Is it any wonder this is the same moment we become less peeved by our systems, structures and formats and more proud of them? The very ones we love to hate?

Like many at RADMIN, none of those in Incidental Unit's Education Working Group self-identifies as an administrator, despite spending a large percentage of our time doing administration. We work as self-employed project makers or employees in public institutions or formerly public institutions, many of which are constantly being restructured. Incidental Unit's Education Working Group's self-organisation is therefore part of a much larger and growing administrative programme that coordinates our jobs and projects with those of the people with whom we live and work. They in turn coordinate their jobs and projects with people with whom they live and work, ad infinitum. If I am personally guilty of fetishizing administration it's because this labour of reproducing complex forms of interdependence receives little appreciation and even less respect.

WHAT

Mindful of Artist Placement Group's purported bureaucratic fetish, I joined my colleagues in Education Working Group in exploring one of Artist Placement Group's pro forma approaches: the Open Brief. We began by

4 . Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984)

researching its significance and thinking about its role in what I've come to call the 'historical placements'. These were the ones carried out between the 1960s and 1980s; they were either facilitated directly by Artist Placement Group or recognised by or in association with this network. We went through some of its archives (at Flat Time House, Tate Britain and photo documentation of the recent retrospective of Artist Placement Group in Edinburgh).⁵ We were searching for something that described the Open Brief or, better yet, committed it to a specific and succinct definition.

Given the charge of bureaucratic fetish, I expected a glut of information on the Open Brief. In the Artist Placement Group's paperwork and archives I anticipated finding evaluative reports detailing the Open Brief's potential and perils. Or, at the very least, a step-by-step protocol. What was instead forthcoming was a pithy statement: 'That the artist brief remains open. Negotiations are contingent upon both [parties] having this understanding and mutual confidence. This requires intelligence and strength in art and a reciprocal response from its administrators.'⁶ This was hardly the stuff of bureaucratic fetish. Of course aping administrative phraseology is a familiar strategy of institutional critique but in and of itself, this isn't especially bureaucratic. Some might even say the above-quoted statement is rather pragmatic, assertive without being prescriptive.

The statement's concision cast into doubt claims of Artist Placement Group's bureaucratic fetish. Perhaps it was a case of perception being mistaken for reality? I frequently meet people who express their great appreciation for Artist Placement Group but can't give any specific examples of their placements. So great seems to be the intuitive appeal of the principles that fans simply assume they know what they are. Equally, Artist Placement Group's purported fetish may have been an instance of mistaken cause and effect.

Mountains of paperwork aren't necessarily evidence of an obsession with administration.

They may just be mountains of paperwork, to rephrase a familiar expression often misattributed to Sigmund Freud.⁷

At this point we approached Barbara Steveni (1928 – 2020), co-founder of Artist Placement Group. John Latham (1921 – 2006), another co-founder, was well known for his penchant for opaque language which he used to inoculate his and proximate thinking against too-easy appropriation. To ascertain if

itself. In this grey area we're looking at the birth of exconomics, a field focusing on what were traditionally seen as economic externalities, like clean air, the wellbeing of a microbiome or the beauty of the atmosphere. Soon we may be studying animist exconomics alongside free markets, modern monetary theory or steady-state economies. Here too we might have to call on techniques from the dark arts, shamanism or animism to be able to commune with "planetary others".

Whether you believe in other-than-human sentience or not, we can explore the idea of a multispecies, animist exconomics as a proposition. A lure for feeling a world that might be. A world in which everything is animate and engaged in reciprocal economic, social and cultural relationships.

Imagine yourself in a time and a place in a not too distant future, when animist exconomics is the stuff of everyday life...

You are at home, working.

Where is your home? What does your home look like? If there are windows, what can you see outside, what are the surroundings like?

Who are you? What do you look like? What are you wearing? What is your body posture? Are you sitting, standing, lying down, moving?

What are you doing? What is your work? Are you working to live or do you live to work?

Do you work alone or are you surrounded by your collaborators, human or otherwise? How are other entities engaged in your work? What do they look like? How do you communicate with them?

Does your work support your livelihood? Is there money in your world? If so, what is the role of money in your life? If not, what is valued, what is exchanged?

Now imagine that you have only a month left to live in this world. What would become important?

How would you spend this last month? Who would you be with, work with, share your life with? What if you had only a few minutes of life left in this world? What would you really care about? What would you want to take with you, if anything? What matters?

Remember that you already exist in multiple worlds. There is no clear-cut dualism of black and white, us and them. All of us exist in grey areas. The sum total of our actions consists of many shades of grey, many shades of shadow.

RADMIN AND THE PRECARIAT

In our struggle to survive neoliberalism or consumer capitalism we may find ourselves crossing lines defined by our own ethics. You can expect that you will continue to be confronted with ethical dilemmas. You will have to straddle different beliefs and world views, because there is no single, easy way out of the convoluted circumstances we live with today. It's becoming essential to increase our economic literacy. If for no other reason than to demystify strategies corporations and institutions deploy on us. Or, as a more tactical approach, those of us operating on the fringes of mainstream economies can re-mystify existing financial instruments. By conducting experiments with alternative forms of exchange.

⁵ . Context is *Half the Work: A Partial History of the Artist Placement Group* was curated by Naomi Hennig and Ulrike Jordan, Summerhall, Edinburgh, 2016.

⁶ . There were several Artist Placement Group manifestoes. The one quoted here (which we reference as an unpublished handout) comes from a text submitted by Artist Placement Group to the Zentrum für Kulturforschung in Bonn (1980). It describes the Group's principles for an effective form of association of artists with organisational structures. This manifesto can be found in the public domain in an interview between Barbara Steveni and Emily Pringle, 'Organisation and Imagination (formerly APG, the Artist Placement Group)', *Seconds*. Available at <https://www.slashseconds.org/issues/002/004/articles/bsteveni2/index.php> (accessed 10 December 2019).

⁷ . The expression is, 'Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar'. For an interesting and amusing discussion on the misattribution that has plagued this phrase, see Alan C. Elms, 'Apocryphal Freud: Sigmund Freud's Most Famous "Quotations" and Their Actual Sources'. *The Annual of Psychoanalysis* 29 (2001): 83-104.

Estonia again provides an excellent example of discussing emerging technologies in the public sphere. Their willingness to involve civil society in technological policies is admirable. For example, there is a recent discussion around algorithmic-liability laws, which is often too abstract and complicated for most of us to understand. So instead of wrapping the whole issue in techno-legal jargon, they drew on Estonian folk tales. A “kratt” is a magical creature, well known to Estonians from their mythology. Kratt is made from household objects, then given a soul, by the devil. Once it acquires a soul, the newly animated kratt will take on any task it is given. However, it must be constantly put to work, otherwise it becomes dangerous for its owner. So the greedy or lazy owners end up devising increasingly impossible tasks to try to get rid of the creature. As you can imagine, this usually goes very wrong. The kratt have been known to self-combust and burn down houses, for example. Stories of the kratt warn about the hidden costs and responsibilities of engaging with beings and processes capable of affecting the world on our behalf.

Image: FOAM



Complex technologies such as AI and machine learning are increasingly involved in our economic and governance systems. They will likely generate a multitude of grey areas that we can't even begin to fathom yet. Grey areas that could bypass humans altogether. We already have technologies to assist landscapes in becoming co-operatives, rivers which can act as legal entities. terra0⁷, for example, is an augmented forest that claims to own and utilise

this was factored into the Open Brief, (as it is set down in the statement above and embodied in the Group's tacit understanding) we needed an authority who could help us dispel our conjecture and posit the facts.

Steveni, who sadly passed away weeks before this text went to press, played a key role in developing the Open Brief, making her an invaluable source. As we prepared for RADMIN she performed her practice, guiding us back in time, to the early days of Artist Placement Group. From here Steveni explained the Open Brief was more of an agreement in principle than a pro forma contract. Informality was as important here as authority was elsewhere in the placements.

Later I would recognise that Steveni's authority as a white middle-class administrator mixed with her negotiating skills was the WD40 in the historical placements. As exploring this in detail outstrips my immediate account, I'll instead hazard a three-point schematic of the Open Brief.

1. The Open Brief (Particular) is Not A Brief (General):

We tend to think of a brief as a set of instructions that are given to someone so they can complete a specific task or job. A designer's brief, for instance. But the Open Brief has other plans. It has no truck with specifying outputs or outcomes that provide the client with guaranteed results. The Open Brief instead seeks to support something more emergent. Each placement responds to its immediate context/context in ways that open these up, creating space for new possibilities. In this way the practice statement is descriptive: the Open Brief is open because it opens, it opens things up.

2. Managing Expectations - The Artist Sets the Agenda for Maximum Mutual Benefit; Value Accrues Variously in Time and Space: The logics of the Open Brief differ from those of standard grant and funding applications. Many of us are all too familiar with these requirements, with explaining what we want to do and by when (intentions), what we need to accomplish these things (materials, space, technical and other support, fees), how this develops our practice and contributes to the field (relevance and originality). By contrast, the Open Brief turns on the conviction that very little of this can be anticipated in advance. In this way the practice statement is descriptive in a second sense: the Open Brief is open because it is not closed by a predetermined course of action. This makes it open to change.

As a result, those doing the placements or those organising them (when it comes to the latter, read: Steveni - at least historically) need to 'manage expectations' to use au courant managerial speak. There are various reasons why the hosts, those people providing the placements in the industry, business, government departments, etc. may be perplexed by the Open Brief. These include its reconfiguration - if not reversal - of the client-consultant relationship. In keeping with the openness of the Open Brief, it's the artist who sets the agenda by self-directing their activity. This makes it quite different from a commission. Because the Open Brief prohibits the artist

from being tasked with painting a mural, illustrating a treatise, sculpting a bust or the like, it's the artist who decides what they do and what significance this has, what is art and what is something else. This evaluation may occur during the placement but it may also occur after the fact.

3. **Placement not Residency:** 'Placement', as Artist Placement Group understands the term, should not be confused with 'residency', as in an artist's residency. If anything, the former inverts the latter. If in general, residencies give an artist an opportunity to shake up their routines by living and working in a new place, placements are about shaking up the routines of the organisation where the placement occurs. We get a sense of what this entails by coupling two mottos of Artist Placement Group: 'context is half the work' and 'disrupting business as usual'. It is entirely possible for the artist to forego producing anything like an artwork on a placement. What they make instead is some kind of difference. This may result from little more than their presence in this context as an Incidental Person.⁸ Much more important than a discrete object resulting from a placement is that it takes place beyond the familiar circuits of the art world (think: studio > residency > biennale) and instead places artists in business, government, industry or some other extra-artistic sphere. In this way the practice statement is descriptive in a third sense: as a means of administering placements, the Open Brief actively opens up new contexts where art can develop, where it can be practiced, valued and change things for the better by benefiting the greater good.

My three-point schematic of the Open Brief is indebted to conversations with Steveni and Katherine Jackson, an art historian specialising in Artist Placement Group, as well as ideas expressed in the meetings of Incidental Unit and Education Working Group. But my schematic says nothing about how the Open Brief actually works in practice. Fortunately there is a growing body of research, to which Incidental Unit aims to contribute, most immediately through the Online Directory.⁹ (See also the six examples of historical placements featured in Naomi Henning and Ulrike Jordan's fascinating exhibition brochure for Context is Half the Work: A Partial History of the Artist Placement Group.)¹⁰

Education Working Group takes its mandate from our umbrella network, Incidental Unit, which was established with original members of Artist Placement Group, including Steveni. Additionally, Andrew of our Education Working Group had learned directly from Latham and Steveni, while Schrag, also part of our ranks, had worked with Steveni on his walking projects, and Y'Barbo and I had tangentially been involved in Steveni's own walking

in their home jurisdiction. It's most commonly associated with secretive investments, money laundering and tax avoidance by criminal syndicates, corrupt politicians or opportunist multinationals.

Tools like offshore finance are not necessarily limited to international companies in the Channel Islands or Bermuda. British charities use complex financial instruments to facilitate work in disaster areas or war zones. The companies managing royalties for The Rolling Stones and U2 both share an address Amsterdam's Herengracht. Working in economic grey areas can be interesting for different reasons. What if you could use some of these instruments to pay your collaborators who are unable to get work permits in your country? Or if you could facilitate sharing of infrastructure amongst distributed collectives? What if you could reduce administrative complexity? What current obstacles that you are facing could be overcome with experiments in the grey areas of global finance?

One of the most peculiar grey areas emerging in the last decade has been the rise of cryptocurrencies and public blockchains. What began as a sparkle in the eyes of a few self-declared cryptoanarchists has captured a small (but significant) shard of the popular imagination. Cryptocurrencies are decentralised, peer-to-peer digital cash systems. They enable transactions between people without the need for trusted third parties (such as a bank or a state). Such transactions are now more-or-less accessible to anyone with a smartphone.

It is currently possible (with some initial effort) to transfer "money" to anyone connected to the internet in a matter of minutes and for only a few cents. This transfer does not have to be authorised, vetted or approved by a central authority. Since these systems are still in their infancy, they all have certain quirks and dysfunctions. And yet, they are quite convincing sketches for a more decentralised global financial system.

Contemporary cryptocurrencies began their rise in the wake of the GFC in 2008. This was a time when the institutions to whom we entrusted our hard-earned "money" let many people down. After this massive "crisis of confidence", unsurprisingly, many people began searching for alternatives. With cryptocurrencies trust shifts away from state institutions and banks toward supposedly impartial, decentralised, heavily encrypted digital systems. By extension, we also place our trust in those who are programming it, or attempting to attack it. It is therefore crucial to engage with programmers, computer security experts and other blockchain wizards to ensure that the systems they are building remain as inclusive as they promise to be. It will be interesting to observe what happens at the interface between the digital and local economies, between people and the trustless technologies that the blockchains rely on.

Blockchains can provide insight into a grey area where machines are beginning to gain agency in economic transactions and other aspects of daily life. From self-driving cars to e-governance, technologies are emerging to perform tasks and make decisions on our behalf. While we may be relieved to outsource paperwork to AI administrators, what might be their hidden costs?

8. 'Incidental Person' is one of the most opaque terms in the language of Artist Placement Group. See Marsha Bradfield and Polly Wright, the glossary for 'IU Workshops on the open brief: New Professional Functions for the Incidental Person,' in RADMIN READER (Bristol: Feral Trade, 2019), p. 22-26. Available at https://feraltrade.org/radmin/RADMIN_READER_FINAL.pdf (accessed 30 July 2019).

9. Incidental Unit's Directory is an online repository of projects that embody the principles of Artist Placement Group. Visit incidentalunit.com for more info. We welcome submissions.

10. Naomi Henning and Ulrike Jordan, Context is Half the Work: A Partial History of the APG, exhibition brochure, 4 August - 5 October (Summerhall, Edinburgh, 2016) Available at <https://bit.ly/2kxHi7d> (accessed 30 July 2019).

Contemporary economic actors also deal in more oblique strategies, including offshore finance, complex derivatives, or blockchain based autonomous organisations. There are creative accounting practices with seemingly harmless names like the Double Irish, Dutch sandwich⁵ or Single Malt⁶. These strategies inhabit or create legal and ethical grey areas.

Grey areas can be seen as places where different beliefs about how the world should work overlap, interfere or create gaps. In grey areas fixed rules dissolve into edge cases. They point to flaws in existing systems. They allow economic outliers to emerge from a legal limbo. They can become a temporary refuge to those of us whose lifestyles don't always conform with consensus reality. Artists working with communities across borders. People working between monetary and non-monetary economies. Migrants who fall between the gaps of national tax regimes. To name but a few.

If you're interested in operating in grey areas, you need to remain vigilant. Rules and regulations keep changing, so what might be perfectly legal one day, could be a definite no-go zone the next. But, if you are comfortable with a degree of uncertainty and enjoy being somewhat adrift, grey areas can be fertile grounds for experimentation.

Image: FOAM



Let's look at a specific example. Most of us have heard about offshore finance. In its simplest form, offshore finance means transferring payments, debt or fees between legal entities in low tax or low administration jurisdictions. It's called "offshore" because of the historic prevalence of islands who attracted business to an otherwise resource poor region (e.g. Panama or Malta). However, there are also landlocked countries in the middle of Europe, like Luxembourg or Andorra who are also considered offshore centres. Most entities who use offshore finance do so to avoid administrative or financial obstacles that exist "onshore",

tours. These entanglements, Steveni's encouragement and our raw enthusiasm gave Education Working Group the confidence to represent Incidental Unit at RADMIN. This involved resourcing and using two documents from the vaults of Artist Placement Group.

The first of these documents featured in our contribution to the pre-RADMIN festival reader.¹¹ It sat alongside a glossary of Incidental Unit's key terms.¹² Permission was granted by Antony Hudeck and Athanasios Velios, the co-editors of *The Portable John Latham: Documents from the John Latham Archive*, for us to reproduce 'New Professional Function for the Incidental Person: The Problem with Motivation in Post-Capitalist Societies'.¹³ We carefully formatted our submission to the RADMIN reader, ensuring it respectfully reproduced the original text. Unbeknownst to us, the reader's status as a zine gave its editors license to cut up our contribution. The result was a mashup between Latham's earthy conceptualism and the ripped and torn aesthetic of punk graphic designer Jamie Reid. Let's just say we haven't sent Hudeck and Velios a copy of the zine in thanks for their permission to republish Latham's text. This perhaps makes the situation sound more serious than it really is. More poignant is how the zine meshed different but overlapping types of authorial regard: on the one hand, fidelity to archival fragments as discrete worlds in a cosmos of an existing practice; on the other, an anarchic re-conjugation of source material in the service of creating new relations and realities.

The title for our RADMIN contribution came from Latham's document, 'IU Workshop on The Open Brief: *New Professional Functions for the Incidental Person*'.¹⁴ Compact at a single page, Latham's text begins with its artist-author reflecting on 'The problem of motivation in post-capitalist societies'.¹⁵ Latham sketches a selective socio-historical background, singling out the trade union movement en route to outlining what he perceives we lost with the collective benefit the unions helped us to acquire. As a result, opines Latham, artists and others have been stripped of their 'intuition, personal input, long-term and community-based direction, motivation'.¹⁶ The artist-author goes on to recommend this should be regained through a development programme, one using the social structure worked out by Artist Placement Group.

¹¹ . John Latham, 'New Professional Function for the Incidental Person: The Problem of Motivation in Post-capitalist Societies', in RADMIN READER 2019 (Bristol: RADMIN, 2019), 27. Available at https://feraltrade.org/radmin/RADMIN_READER_FINAL.pdf (accessed 30 July 2019).

¹² . Marsha Bradfield and Polly Wright, Glossary for 'IU Workshops on the open brief: *New Professional Functions for the Incidental Person*', in RADMIN READER 2019 (Bristol: RADMIN, 2019), 22-26. Available at https://feraltrade.org/radmin/RADMIN_READER_FINAL.pdf (accessed 30 July 2019).

¹³ . John Latham, op. cit. 'New Professional Function for the Incidental Person: The Problem with Motivation in Post-Capitalist Societies,' in *The Portable John Latham: Documents from John Latham Archive*, eds. Antony Hudek and Athanasios Velios (London: Whitechapel Gallery, Occasional Papers, 2010), 67.

¹⁴ . Bradfield and Wright, Glossary for 'IU Workshops on the open brief: *New Professional Functions for the Incidental Person*'.

¹⁵ . Latham, 'New Professional Function for the Incidental Person: The Problem of Motivation in Post-capitalist Societies', in RADMIN READER, 27.

¹⁶ . Ibid

I'll return to this development programme and the social structure in question soon enough. First, though, it's worth acknowledging that although 'New Professional Function for the Incidental Person' represented Education Working Group in the pre-RADMIN reader, it did not feature in our actual workshop. It was inadvertently eclipsed by another document: the Artist Placement Group's Manifesto.

I can't recall why we plumped for the 1980 version, one of several manifestos produced by Artist Placement Group and Organisation and Imagination. Perhaps it was because the opening remarks acknowledge the organisation's iterations and this anticipated the coming of other ones, including Incidental Unit. The text begins, 'Artist Placement Group, now known as Organisation and Imagination (O+I) (Manifesto, 1980)...'.¹⁷ One can only imagine what authorial, ontological and other types of struggle may be elided by this simple line of generational succession.

But these weren't things we were focused on in Education Working Group at the time of RADMIN. It was the Manifesto as an embodiment of the Open Brief that had our attention. All six of the Manifesto's points provided fodder for discussion. In time we would come to appreciate each one as a portal into its own universe of significance. But expansive thinking like this outstripped our then-current capacity. Our workshop strategy was much cruder: We would mobilise the value that Artist Placement Group, especially Steveni, afforded to the state of Not Knowing. A dematerialised art practice for sustaining uncertainty, we would use it as an alibi for our own not knowing, our own lack of knowledge, expertise and experience with Artist Placement Group in general and the Open Brief in particular.

I don't recall this approach being especially reflexive, resourceful or clever. It was more that we knew we didn't know (the second rung, 'unconscious incompetence', on Martin Broadwell's hierarchy of consciousness).¹⁸ But in keeping with Steveni's sense of Not Knowing, we tried to embrace this as a productive instead of debilitating state of mind.¹⁹ This tracks with artist Ryan Gander's observation about the creative process: 'Once you know you don't know, you can begin to explore'.²⁰

FOR WHOM

It has been suggested that Incidental Unit turns its attention to creating placements for artists, especially blue chip practitioners, critically and/or commercially bankable ones. The assumption being they'll do interesting work while advancing the project of Incidental Unit and so garner both the artist and the Unit art world prestige. I can see the appeal, particularly the

17. Artist Placement Group + Organisation and Imagination, 'Manifesto' (1980), unpublished. Available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xa-SIzddNsFmzybnaxAPUTS8SgFQXuU/view?usp=sharing> (accessed 30 July 2019).

18. 'Four stages of competence,' Wikipedia, *The Free Encyclopedia*. Available at https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Four_stages_of_competence&oldid=929550593 (accessed 30 July 2019).

19. Bradfield and Wright, *Glossary for 'IU Workshops on the open brief: New Professional Functions for the Incidental Person'*.

20. Ryan Gander as quoted in Elizabeth Fisher, 'In A Language You Don't Understand' in *On Not Knowing: How Artists Think*, eds. Elizabeth Fisher and Rebecca Fortnum (London: Black Dog, 2017), 8.

you will have the freedom to develop your work with more resources. If you aren't you will strengthen your capacity of improvisation and resilience while being free to pursue other opportunities. And if it doesn't work, don't give up. Restart the cycle — reframe your question, scry the context, invoke your intent, summon your helpers and apply yourself to the process with abandon, yet without attachment to any particular result.

When you're done, you might consider making an offering, to underline your commitment to the reciprocal relationship between you and the funder. This could be a thoughtful binding of the application package. A well designed front page. A kind word in the cover letter. Or a symbolic wax sigil on the envelope.

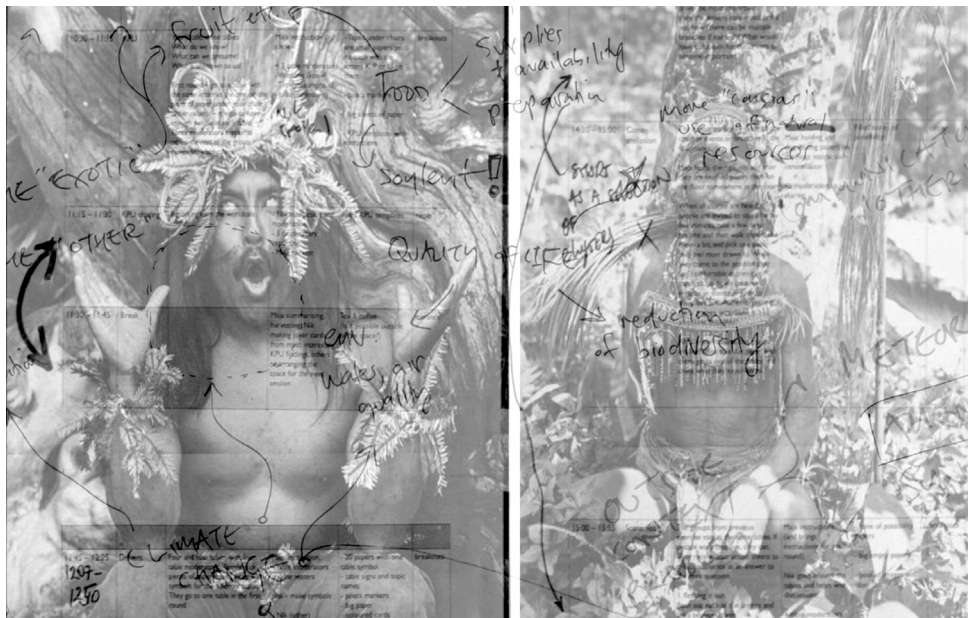
When the application is submitted, it is time to ritually close the circle. Pack all the paperwork away, cleanse the space of any residual proposal language, then celebrate. Do not forget to hold a celebration every time you submit an application. Even if it is just stopping for a few minutes to toast to all of the human and beyond-human entities who were involved in the process. A celebration will help you cross the threshold back into your everyday. Also ensure that every time you receive a result, no matter if it's positive or negative, to celebrate again. As a token of gratitude, to yourself and everyone involved. Remember to never take the funding for granted.

If successful, the reality you want to invoke will become legible to the funders, who in their turn might become enchanted into giving this reality their blessing. And if this happens, you can unabashedly call yourself a mage of chaos magick. Chaos mages use techniques from a wide range of occult systems. They experiment with applying them in different contexts, while remaining aware that the techniques are effective due to the belief of the practitioner. You believe that by submitting a funding application there is a chance that your life will improve. The funding agency believes that if they approve your report you have done everything according to their rules.

If we look at funding and administration not as vehicles of absolute truth, but as manifestations of a particular belief system, we might give our sense of agency a boost.

WORKING WITH GREY AREAS

Let's zoom out a bit to observe the wider economic realities that have shaped the current guise of funding and administration. Economies can be seen as specific kinds of belief systems. These economic beliefs are encoded in legal statutes, financial conventions and patterns of behaviour. You believe that if someone gives you pieces of paper or metal named "Pounds" or "Euros" you will be able to exchange them with someone else for a sandwich. Most of us engage in this most straightforward economic exchange — buying and selling — without much thought. By trusting that we can use money to support our livelihoods, we become complicit in maintaining this particular belief system, reinforced by governments, central banks and international markets.



When it comes to writing a funding application, we do not have to dig deep to find its kinship in the dark arts. Applying for funding is obviously a form of invocation. In any invocation, the force of intent is directed to convincing forces beyond our control to help with a given predicament. This could equally be a divinity, a spirit, or a disembodied many-headed bureaucracy. We invoke one or more of these entities to assist us in a conjuration of resources, within ourselves or in the world. A prayer is a form of invocation, as is a spell. The purpose of both casting spells and fundraising is essentially extraction of favours from a fickle universe. We ask for favours because we cannot achieve something on our own, be it unrequited love, gold at the end of the rainbow or money to develop an art project.

If you happen to be writing a funding application, try focusing all of your intent into communing with the institutional spirit that lies within. Frame your intent in clear language. When you cross the threshold into the magic circle of application writing, commit yourself fully. Focus. Monotask. Like skilled readers of tarot cards, use language that is ambiguous enough, yet not too vague, so that it conveys what you want to say in a way that the funders want to hear. Concentrate your energy in well a delineated Time and Place.

Believe that the force of your intention will steer your proposal towards higher probability of success. If nothing else it will be more enjoyable than if you approach proposal writing as a boring necessity. Do your best, then let go. Even the most skilled invocations can not control the outcome. Trust that whatever happens will contribute to your liberation. If you are successful,

argument for gaining credibility-for-criticality. But who, I have to ask, will assume the role that Steveni created and held historically of Artist Placement Group's uber administrator? Creating, organising and administrating placements is a lot of work. Henning and Jordan both reveal and conceal a great deal when they write the following: 'Barbara Steveni was a key driving force behind creating contacts and maintaining correspondence with hundreds of companies as well as potential sponsors and advocates. John Latham was very present in public appearances and defined much of its language and cosmological ideas...'.²¹ The division of labour in this account is striking: the feminised work of administration and maintenance is on one side and the occasional and public masculinist authorship is on the other. Having not spoken to Steveni about this at sufficient length, I will leave my analysis there. More interesting in my view is what it means to re-engage with Artist Placement Group at a time when reproductive and other gender rights are being rolled back with the rise of the Far Right. Could we in Education Working Group or Incidental Unit again find ourselves in a situation like the dynamic described above? This is to say: feminised labour opens up opportunities (placements and others) but is precluded from taking advantage of these because doing administration, maintenance and other care work disqualifies this feminised labour from either being taken seriously as artistic practice or from pursuing other ways to make art?

This question is a personal one that comes from my own lived experience. It relates to what in the language of Artist Placement Group might be termed 'self-placement' in an expanded sense. It has been the struggle of placing myself in cultural production that has defined who I am as a hyphenate: an administrator-artist-curator-educator-researcher-writer-and, and, and. The legacy of Artist Placement Group appeals to me as a critical context in which to locate my practice and kindred ones that may also feel marginalised as a result of their hybridity.

I am less interested in further advancing those already advanced (blue chip artists, male or otherwise - art world operators). Working for them in this way is best left to others. I instead want to work with Incidental Unit as an open organisation that convenes a motley crew of Artist Placement Group enthusiasts. This is deeply political: instead of me doing it for others, it's about being part of a we who is doing it for us. And who is this 'us'?

Recall that Latham's 'New Professional Functions for the Incidental Person' and the artist-author's recommendation that 'intuition, personal input, long-term and community-based direction, motivation'²² should be regained through a development programme, one using the social structure worked out by Artist Placement Group. Latham's document offers no guidance on this development programme or the social structure in question. But if we assume

21. Henning and Jordan, *Context is Half the Work: A Partial History of the APG*, exhibition brochure.

22. Latham, 'New Professional Function for the Incidental Person,' in RADMIN READER, 27.

WHY

the latter involves using the Open Brief to realise the former, then we need to ask other and more probing questions about the qualities of openness espoused by this brief. This begins with enquiring about open to whom and, vitally, by whom? The 'us' must then be as open as the Open Brief and be a hybrid 'us' continually performed through acts of administration.

I say above that Education Working Group aspires to be a supportive space of shared learning, learning about Artist Placement Group but also, and importantly, learning how to work together to advance its legacy. This includes contributing to RADMIN by facilitating the workshop and also being part of Trade Show.²³ This experience, especially RADMIN's preoccupation with the perils and potential of business as usual brought to the fore another rationale for convening Incidental Unit: the changing nature of work--the work of art, the work of the artist, the work of administration and other questions of labour.

As is well known, artists Gustav Metzger, Stuart Brisely and critics, including Peter Fuller, attacked Artist Placement Group for failing to foreground class conflict while currying the favour of social elites.²⁴ A great deal has changed since this wave of critique took place in the early 1970s while much remains the same. Even if we wanted to, most of Incidental Unit's current membership can't ignore class struggle to focus on personal cosmologies as, for instance, Latham did.²⁵ As members of the growing precariat, work and political economy are necessarily front and centre as our personal and professional lives become increasingly blurred. We're too busy and tired to entertain sophisticated but ultimately ineffective debates and besides, we've lost patience with discourse and practice that offer critique without consequence. That said, we know that we cannot present the current reality as inescapable if we want other worlds, other economies and other kinds of work and labour relations. At a time of growing authoritarianism and rampant risk aversion, the experiments of Incidental Unit and others operating in the lineage of Artist Placement Group become politically charged with added energy as we work and rework the potential of art not only in the worlds of culture, but crucially in the worlds beyond.

23 . 'Trade Show is an ongoing research and exhibition programme on trade as a wider socio-cultural activity'. An iteration featured in RADMIN 2019. For more info, visit <http://trade-show.info/shows/trade-show-cube> (accessed 30 July 2019).

24 . Claire Bishop, 'Incidental People: APG and Community Arts,' in *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art the Politics of Spectatorship*. (London: Verso, 2019), 163 – 193.

25 . *Ibid.*, 171.

of Dark Arts; of magicians, witches and fortune-tellers. They know that the entities they're engaging with are not innocuous. They also know that communing with these entities has the power to transform lives and sometimes reality itself. There are similar Entities in the economic sphere. Binding ourselves to them can be as dangerous as practicing black magic. We already know that if we don't consciously engage with administration, its effect on our practice and its consequences for our lives can be far reaching. We must therefore approach administration with a certain degree of care and with all the protections that we would use when summoning an otherworldly daemon. Especially when administration is our subject of experimentation.

So could the tools of the dark arts help us engage with the bureaucratic and economic strategies deployed around us? Or, if we want to go a step further, how do we consciously engage in the manipulation of reality through administrative activities? There is a wide range of techniques from magic, alchemy, religious rituals and other occult practices, that can be applied to different aspects of administration and financing. Let's take funding and divination as an example.

FUNDRAISING AS DIVINATORY PRACTICE

In fortune telling and divination, great attention is paid to crafting clear and powerful questions. You don't want to mess things up by asking a question that could be misunderstood by the entity or entities you are communing with. So before engaging with a funding agency, know well what it is that you want to ask. Prepare yourself to be in the right frame of mind. Then divine the most auspicious time and place to engage with this particular entity. Know what you are asking for, to understand what's on the cards.

First, acquaint yourself with the entity's traces in consensus reality. In this case, it could include Funding Calls, Programme Frameworks, Funding Criteria or Thematic Priorities. For some of us reading these documents closely might induce nervousness, panic or self-doubt. Instead of burying yourself in the details of bureaucratic minutiae, it might help to call on the arcane technique of scrying. Scrying traditionally includes gazing into crystal balls, candles, entrails or tea leaves. Scrying with funding documents allows you to get behind the jargon to uncover hidden meanings. Scrying facilitates an intersubjective scanning of an application form. You can reach towards the minds behind the document and ask them directly what they really want from you, and determine the real costs of engagement. Scrying requires you to let go of your resistance to the material, to let go of prejudices, fixations and expectations. Until you can function as a medium, able to commune with the spirit of the call.

During scrying your mind is highly alert, yet open and relaxed enough to be able to read between the lines. Scrying can feel like staring at a "magic eye" stereogram. In order to see the three dimensional image in a two dimensional texture, you mustn't focus on the surface. Instead, you have to relax and "unfocus", so you can glimpse the image embedded within. When you're fully absorbed in scrying you can uncover synchronicities between the funding demands and your own needs.

contact of your body with your office chair or the floor. What do these materials feel like? The smooth texture of printing paper, cool spikiness of paperclips? What can you hear? Clicking of the keyboard, shuffling of paper, the whirring of a shredder... something else? What does your office space smell like? The scent of paper archives, or dusty floors, or the slightly plasticky waft emanating from hot computers?

Breathe and observe... Notice what effect this situation has on you. How does your body feel — your shoulders, throat, chest, your hands or your belly? Is there some tightness, cramping, squeezing? Breathe into this tension. Try to soften, relax the sensations that feel too constrained. What thoughts arise? What emotions? Watch them come and go, without grasping. Without resisting anything. Now let the whole situation dissolve in your mind's eye, until your breath fills your attention.

Breathe, in and out. Occasionally remind yourself to stop planning and return to breathing.

After you do this exercise, try stretching out a bit, perhaps using some “administrative postures”⁴ (READER p. 56)

Know that whenever you feel in the grip of uncomfortable administrative tasks, it can help to pause and take some distance from it. Whether by using meditative techniques, going for a walk, enjoying a cup of tea. One of the proven methods at FoAM is to put on headphones, play some loud black metal (or other energetic music to your liking) and/or dance like a banshee for a few minutes.

When engaging with administration, we must always remain aware of its insatiable urge to swallow every precious minute and every unclaimed bit of headspace we don't insulate from it. Administration must be confined to heavily guarded summoning grids; to protect ourselves and our loved ones from its ever expanding, time-sucking appendages.

You might wonder — why would I engage with administration at all if it poses such an existential threat to my wellbeing? Because as much as you'd like to pretend that you cannot be touched by it, administration is always and already here. If you want to be paid for the work you do, you necessarily engage with administration and financing. They have insinuated themselves into most of our conversations. Oscar Wilde was onto something when he said “When bankers get together for dinner, they discuss Art. When artists get together for dinner, they discuss Money.”

We commiserate. We complain. We blame, and occasionally wallow in despair.

What, or what can we artists do...

When handling financial instruments feels dangerous?

When funding applications read like incomprehensible occult texts, and accounting spreadsheets are as indecipherable as the Kabbalah?

When the language of funding appears too obscure, impenetrable, as if fuelled by a hostile alien logic?

Considering that many of us depend on some form of funding for our livelihoods, funders can seem to acquire supernatural powers over life and death. Engaging with such faceless entities beyond our control — yet with ability to change the course of our lives — was traditionally the domain

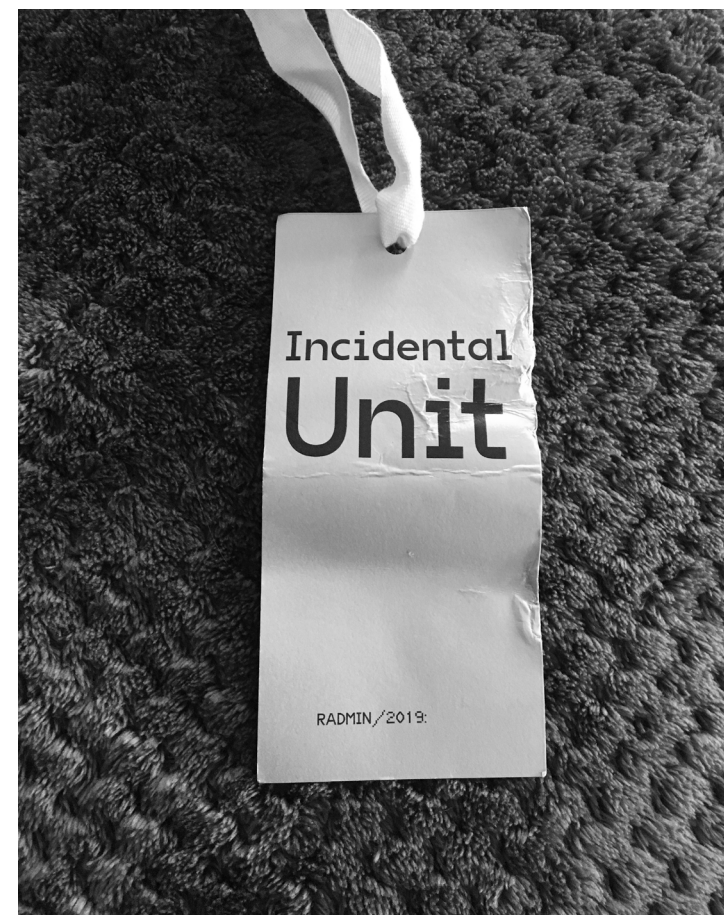


Image: Marsha Bradfield

Common Wallet – an experiment in financial commoning

Common Wallet / Ingrid Vranken

15 QUESTIONS EVERYONE ASKS ABOUT COMMON WALLET

Common Wallet is an initiative of ten Brussels-based people, including myself, who committed themselves to living from the same bank account. All income we individually receive through wages, unemployment or other benefits is wired onto our shared account. We take from it not what we put in, but whatever it is we feel we need to live our lives. Through this endeavour we want to develop a more radical form of solidarity, kinship, trust and a thorough questioning of and experimenting with different relationships towards money.

Rather than allowing administration to infect our creative process, how can we keep it in check? How do we imbue it with something like the ideals from Calvino's Six Memos² — lightness, quickness, exactitude, visibility, multiplicity and consistency? Lightness could be encouraged with seasonal purification ceremonies known to substantially reduce paperwork. Business plans should stimulate imagination by bringing visions into focus. The multiplicity of bureaucratic regulations could work together, like alchemical techniques leading to the union of opposites. Quickness and exactitude of accounting could be improved. Regular banishment rituals could make overly complicated procedures more consistent.

Estonia provides a good example of a nation state attempting to reduce bureaucratic inertia in much of its public administration. Through the Digital Nation initiative they are simplifying administration where possible and automating where appropriate. They are attempting to decentralise the financial system and creating protocols for exchange between previously unconnected entities. Most importantly, they are involving their citizens in the process, without hiding behind opaque regulations and complex technologies. According to a National Advisor, Marten Kaevats “*The main reason to start this discussion now is that the Estonian public administration feels that these challenges are imminent, and we have to be able to discuss them in our kitchens and saunas and with our e-residents around the world.*”³

ADMIN CRAFT

How could we reclaim tools of business administration and realign them with more inclusive ethics and an aesthetics of generosity? Can we increase the probability of success through the numerology of creative accounting? What promising ways could we imagine of transmuting administration into a creative practice?

First of all, we need to acknowledge that we cannot escape administration. We can try to fight it, but we will likely lose. Resistance is futile. Whatever we do we must not freeze, blocked by fear of a complicated spreadsheet. Instead, we can try to calmly attend to administration, while keeping a tight watch on our own boundaries. Administrative work could be practiced as a detached, out-of-body experience. Techniques used for lucid dreaming can help in moments when we get swept up by the strange inner logic of administration. Alternatively, you could try administering things in a gnostic state, to bypass conscious thought and objective truths. Or you could look at your paperwork through the eyes of a Zen monk.

Here is a meditative exercise for you to try when feeling the mental squeeze of administration.

Make yourself comfortable, stretch out a bit if needed. Then close your eyes or lower your gaze without focusing on anything in particular. Take a few deep breaths — count to five for an in-breath, five for an out-breath. Then let the breath resume its natural rhythm.

Bring to mind a situation in which you do paperwork. Notice what is around you. Perhaps a computer, some filing folders, stacks of receipts, or whatever else comes to mind. Notice the

Dark arts, grey areas and other contingencies

FoAM / Maja Kuzmanovic and Nik Gaffney

Drawing on the dark arts, the domain where magicians and fortune-tellers commune with unknowable, faceless entities, we explore economic and cultural grey areas to reclaim tools of business administration as an artistic medium.

Disclaimer: This article discusses works and techniques that are often frowned upon in our techno-materialist society. So if some of this content appears dubious, feel free to substitute our words with others that you might feel more comfortable with. Magic, for example, can otherwise be referred to as “advanced technology”. Those who resonate with baroque ceremony may be comfortable with spirits and spells, while those of you who align yourselves with more pragmatic lineages might prefer naming these things “clear mind” or “prayer” or “contemplation”. And for the more hardline rationalists or skeptics, you can consider this session as an experiment in meta-belief.

“In this book it is spoken of the Sephiroth and the Paths; of Spirits and Conjurations; of Gods, Spheres, Planes, and many other things which may or may not exist. It is immaterial whether these exist or not. By doing certain things certain results will follow; students are most earnestly warned against attributing objective reality or philosophic validity to any of them.” – Aleister Crowley¹

LIGHTENING THE LOAD

In a world entrained by market economics sooner or later every artist is faced with the existential dilemma — “how do I finance my work”. Day jobs? Commissions? Government funding? Direct sales? A gallerist? The informal economy of the precariat? Most of us end up grappling with some combination of them. Whatever form the financing might take, it almost always requires an engagement with bureaucratic institutions or profit-driven corporations and individuals.

Over time, such engagements can gradually infiltrate all aspects of our work. Business administration has spread through other domains like a plague of zombies or hungry ghosts. In its wake crawl hordes of burnt-out, semi-living artists, scientists, academics, SMEs and miscellaneous members of the cultural proletariat. Researchers who spend most of their time complying with bureaucratic procedures instead of conducting research are unfortunately all too common. Artists who become so overworked by endless fundraising that they have no energy left for creative work. Social entrepreneurs whose business acumen is overrun by the red tape involved in transparency and accountability.

01.

DO YOU REALLY PUT ALL OF YOUR INCOME IN THE COMMON WALLET ACCOUNT?

Yes, we put all of our income in the Common Wallet account. This means all income derived from fees, wages, social benefits, author’s rights, etc.

02.

DO YOU REALLY DO ALL OF YOUR SPENDINGS FROM THE COMMON WALLET ACCOUNT?

Yes, all of the daily spending one would normally do from a checking account is done with the Common Wallet account. This includes mortgage payments, rent, utilities, child care, monthly savings, groceries, hobby’s, going out, and all the unnecessary consumerism we are drawn to.

03.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN DOING THIS?

Common Wallet started as an experiment on the 1st of January 2018.

04.

HOW MUCH DO YOU EARN ALL TOGETHER ON AVERAGE?

It depends from month to month, since most of us are freelancers. But on average we land somewhere around 15,000 – 17,000 EUR a month.

05.

YOU MUST ALL HAVE VERY SIMILAR LIVES THEN?

Yes and no: the members of Common Wallet all work in the art field – though in different disciplines – and work in Belgium as well as abroad. Along with the 10 adults, there are 7 children who through their parents are part of the Common Wallet. Some of us are single, some of us have partners, but not all of those are part of the Common Wallet.

06.

HOW DO YOU MAKE IT WORK? WHO KEEPS TRACK OF WHO IS SPENDING WHAT?

We do not keep track of who is spending what, but we do have a couple of tools to help us out. We have a weekly breakfast meeting, where all who are in Brussels try to be present. This is an important moment to keep the CW alive and makes the community 'real'. It gives us the opportunity to check in with each other and understand where we are all at, not only financially but most of all personally. It is also a moment where we can discuss possible problems and develop solutions. Next to the weekly meetings, we have more irregular longer meetings that we use for in-depth discussions on specific projects and issues such as our desire to open a long-term savings account for example. We have a Telegram group, where we update each other about small practical things such as big bills that need to get paid, or when money will arrive into the account. And last but not least, we have the rotating role of the monthly secretary. The monthly secretary keeps track of the general in's and out's and keep us up to date on possible cashflow bottle necks or other issues. We don't track individual expenses, but we do make an overview of expected income and the average expenses per day. Since most of us are freelancers who get their money in chunks spread across the month, this overview helps us be prepared and have a general idea of our financial status.

07.

WHAT IF ONE OF YOU SPENDS MORE THEN THEY BRING IN?

That is absolutely possible. If we would all be spending exactly what we bring in, then what is the point of making our money a commons? We do not keep an accounting on an individual basis, so we do not even know if people are spending more or less then what they bring in. The important thing is that it is possible for all of us together.

08.

WHAT IF YOU DISAGREE ON WHAT SOMEONE IS SPENDING THEIR MONEY ON?

We choose for a non-judgmental approach. We don't want anyone to conform to a certain lifestyle. We want to make it possible for each other to have a (modest) comfortable life. There are no added politics around what we do or don't spend our money on. We want to move away from a culture of control and policing, to a culture of radical trust. For example as a vegetarian, I accept that some people spend their money on animal products. Simultaneously others make it possible for me to spend my money on books and Japanese stationary. We don't negotiate our individual lifestyles with each other, but negotiate a collective lifestyle, where we take responsibility for the whole, each within our own means, possibilities and interests.

I.

Product Distribution

research & contact with distribution places
product certificate -
'denomination of origin'
transportation
direct sale
sale on temporary markets and fairs
internet sale

J.

Admin & Accountancy:

bank transfers & payments
collecting and keeping up invoices
communication with the bank and accountant
evaluation, and preparing financial reports
redistribution of created values (monetary and symbolic)

K.

Building a Supportive Environment:

maintaining relations with similar organisations and individuals
developing and extending cooperative principles

L.

Maintenance:

equipment & tools
working space
website

M.

Misc:

healthy food
good music
good mood



For over a year, Minipogon's workspace was installed in the refugee camp Krnjača on the outskirts of Belgrade. The camp was built in Yugoslav socialist times, as a part of the industrial compound of the giant infrastructure factory Ivan Milutinović. Like other socially owned properties it had been subject to decay and the company went bankrupt during the 1990's 'transition'. The same accommodation unit for temporary workers (popularly called 'barracks') was curiously used for accommodating refugees from the Yugoslav wars during the 90's. With the outbreak of the 'migrant crisis' in 2015 the camp was 'adapted' with the help of EU funds - that is to say, reinforced with walls and system of control - to house Middle Eastern refugees. Adjacent to the camp are informal Roma settlements which lack basic living infrastructure: water, electricity, etc. Its inhabitants, like most of the Roma population in Serbia, base the majority of their economy on informal waste recycling.

During a one year period (Nov 2018 - Dec 2019) Minipogon developed a continuous work dynamics in the camp with a regular time-table, working three full days a week. Throughout this process, various groups of young inmates (Krnja a camp is designated to house underage refugees and to a lesser extent families, in reality, the average age of residents is around 20) engaged in our work process and received economic compensation for it, proceeding from the sales of products. Furthermore, a sourcing channel for raw materials (recyclable plastic waste) was established with the neighbouring Roma community. The project was not limited only to the aspect of monetary economy. Over time, our workshop became a dynamic space of encounter, hosting visits from art and design students, activists, artists and others who were attracted by Minipogon's work.

WORKING TASKS / MINIPOGON

- A.** Field Research:
in technology and engineering
in socio-economic theory
for funding opportunities and collaborators
- B.** Planning:
general planning of work and working tasks
writing proposals, letters, applications
discussing the development & general orientation
budget planning (excel)
- C.** Means of Production - Building:
concept & engineering
technical drawings
suppliers research & ordering
offers for machine components and services
building machines, devices and moulds
/ welding
/ grinding
/ other mechanical procedures
/ electronics
/ programing
taking account of local suppliers and prices for the further use
machine maintenance
- D.** Product Design:
concept idea
3d modelling or technical drawings
open call for young designers
mentoring the development of the prototype

- E.** Material - Resources:
establishing and maintaining private and public voluntary collection canals
acquisition of bigger quantities from informal recyclers sector (Roma community)
transporting plastic material
washing
selecting
cutting into smaller pieces
shredding
- F.** New Objects Production:
compressing, injecting, extruding
finishing the products (cutting, sanding, melting, polishing, assembling)
embossing stamps (plastic typology and MP)
- G.** PR & Communication:
photo-documentation
video-documentation
website building
website updating (image+text)
maintaining social network canals (Vimeo, FB...)
communication with collaborators & partners
public communication
community radio (to be developed)
designing promotional material (fliers and posters)
- H.** Education & Training:
introduction of new people into the work process
editing manual (text, image, translations, layout)
printing and distribution of the manual
public presentations, visiting lectures in schools

09.
WHAT DO YOU DO WITH SAVINGS?
We currently have a small savings account that mainly functions as a cashflow buffer. At this moment we are still saving individually and contemplating the possibility of common savings. This however brings in a whole new level of complexity and negotiation: Do we collectively save for individual goals and what if we have to select between goals? Do we collectively save for collective goals? How do we decide on those goals? And likewise some individual goals (like putting your kids through university) are obviously non-negotiable. So currently long term saving is still done on an individual level.

10.
WHAT IF SOMEONE DECIDES TO BUY A FERRARI?
First of all, it would really surprise me if anyone from the Common Wallet would want a Ferrari. Their style is a bit obnoxious and finding parking space in Brussels is a whole problem of its own. But imagine that someone would indeed want to buy a Ferrari, then the same logic applies as if they would buy it outside of the Common Wallet. Do we have enough money on the current account to buy a Ferrari? If so, then this kind of expense would have to be announced to the group. However, if we don't have enough money on the current account, then the aspiring Ferrari-owner would have to save up for the Ferrari. It is possible to put some monthly savings aside from the Common Wallet, like one would from an individual current account.

11.
WHAT HAPPENS IF IT GOES WRONG?
It is an experiment and we committed to engage with the not-knowing. We chose to have a system that is based on only minimal rules, rather than spend our time and energy preparing for all possible disasters and failures. We commit to open and honest communication, even when it gets uncomfortable, and take it from there. Whatever might go wrong, will have to be solved in that moment.

12.
THIS ONLY WORKS IF YOU ARE ALL GOOD FRIENDS, RIGHT?
We were not all friends from the beginning, when I joined the Common Wallet, I didn't even know some of the people involved. I did however trust those who invited me in and was trusting that we would be a group with a common base ideology.

13.
HAS THE COMMON WALLET SOLVED YOUR MONEY PROBLEMS?
No, but it has given me a lot of insight in money and my relation to it. The common wallet has not made us rich (yet), but it does react to issues like cash flow. Most importantly it de-individualises stress and issues connected to money.

• How to conceive the working process in which one's own needs and interests are aligned with the collective and general ones?

• How do we value the work which has been performed and what has been jointly produced? How is this value reassigned to individual collaborators, the working collective and the wider social and natural environment? What are the prospects for these new values to compete on the capitalist market, which we all depend upon for securing our basic living necessities?

• How should these jointly produced assets and values be distributed in order to permeate the limits of the working collective, and not weaken it? Could the experience of collaborative work generate more sustainable social and natural environments and livelihoods which in turn would function as a support for developing more socially and economically equitable relations?

• How do we protect and secure the

communal status of the outcomes of collaborative work within individualised and privatised systems of value? What is shared and how, to what ends and through which channels, and how might this be mobilised to resist privatisation and support the ongoing production of common values?

All the efforts that go in the direction of answering these questions - not just those that provide immediate solutions - are highly valuable. It is clear that in the present socio-political framework solid answers are practically unattainable. For this reason, investing in the development of collective, critical practical-intellectual skills through the organisation and enactment of collaborative work has the capacity to underpin alternative forms of organising small-scale production. This is the most significant challenge we all face in confronting social inequalities and environmental devastation.

15.

WHAT IF YOU WANT OUT?

It is of course also possible to leave the CW. We have had one member leave after one and a half years. When a member wants to leave they have to inform the group and we will discuss how to organise it on a case to case basis.

14.

CAN OTHER PEOPLE JOIN?

In principle other people can join, and we even had a new member join in September this year. However there is no clear procedure at the moment, nor is it our ambition to grow without limits. The smallness of the group makes clear and intimate conversation possible. It would be preferable that more Common Wallets start to exist, rather than ours growing bigger.

AS THE WORK OF MINIPOGON CONTINUES,
OTHER QUESTIONS ARISE FOR US.



Image: Minipogon

Personal reflections on kinship, generosity and its limits

One of the biggest realisations (or confirmations) I had through being part of the common wallet, is that money is not just a means to an end nor a matter of accounting, it is rather a highly emotional entity. I started to notice how money has a tight grasp on my emotional life. Within Flemish (Belgian) culture, money is rarely talked about, asking someone how much they earn is considered extremely rude. There was something radically intimate and challenging in all of a sudden sharing my entire financial being with 9 people unrelated to me. It was confronting for me at first to talk about earnings and spendings or our feelings around money at our weekly breakfast meetings. However a striking confession came from one of the couples in the Common Wallet when they noticed that where money used to be a tense issue between them, this has been largely taken away because of the Common Wallet.

Money provokes in me feelings of anxiety and mostly guilt. Guilt for having more money than someone else, guilt for spending money, guilt for not having enough money,... Throughout my life I have learned to equate my financial status with my idea of self worth and my worth for society. I have unknowingly and unwillingly become the perfect neoliberal subject, with money as the instrument for its emotional blackmailing. People often ask me if I trust the others in the common wallet. My response is a wholehearted 'yes', the common wallet is after all based on radical trust. The questions I ask myself are rather: do I trust myself enough? Do I believe I deserve the others' trust? And am I doing enough? Am I, in other words, a good provider to the group? This is where the complexity of our emotional intertwining with money comes in. The mistrust that our society is constantly feeding, has become in my case completely internalised. It is also striking that in the questions I pose myself I continue to individualise myself, rather than thinking 'are we doing enough?' 'how can we be good providers for each other?'. Recently we came onto a friction point. During the past summer holidays we got overly courageous and overspent. There was a tiny crack that showed us how fragile this experiment was. It was interesting to observe that my first (self-)interrogation was not focused around incomes and spending, but rather to how I should react to this situation and how I could not let certain emotions get the best of me and undermine my trust and the principles of the project. We made a first experiment in July and August to join our holiday savings for the summer. So everyone put quite a nice amount of money on the CW and left the country. But somewhere half-way it became clear that we would not make the end of the summer without running into problems. Simultaneously peoples reaction times were slow because we were abroad, in the mountains, out of touch. My mind went something like this: "Oh shit! I should not have bought that dress in the beginning of the summer!" "But I put more than enough money on the account, I'm sure I have not spent that much..." "Should I check how much I spent?" "Oh shit, can I even think this way?" "Am I being a bad member of the Common Wallet now, for wanting to check how much I have spent" ... I started to feel like a traitor to the project. It was clear that my knee-jerk reaction was to re-individualise and internalise the problem, rather than approaching and addressing it collectively. This was amplified by the fact that we were not able to come together on a weekly basis, since it was summertime and many of us were abroad. When coming together after the summer, it was clear that we are not only up against a common financial challenge, but that what is at stake, at least for me, is a tremendous unlearning of individualisation, and the learning of a kind of radical generosity that even after almost 2 years of practice still seems hard to grasp.

The Common Wallet has as an effect that it provoked for me a profound psychological questioning, trying to unlearn the psychological tricks that money within capitalist society is playing on us and how this is shaping our relations towards each other, emphasizing mistrust in the other and fear through installing the belief that one themselves can not be trusted, which is strikingly misanthropic. The collective politics that Common Wallet proposes force me to relate differently, beyond binaries of trust or mistrust, what is mine or the others', and what can be seen as valuable or not. What the experiment with the (limited) savings over the summer also made clear was that at the end of the day the inequalities between us have not been solved. Some of us were not stressing out because they had other financial pillows and credit cards to fall back on, and others did not. When the going gets tough, we are not all in the same boat (yet). We still carry along our learned anxieties around money, or our more relaxed attitudes. Some of us know that we can always count on a safety net here or there, and some of us don't. This observation has strengthened me in the desire to push the project further, and to get excited about it again. After almost two years, part of the practice becomes normalised. This confrontation with our limits is a good reminder that the project is worth our while and has a potential for change.

RADMIN

A festival of Administration

Feb 14-16 2019
Arts Mansion and
Cube Microplex, Bristol

Budget

Income	
Ticket sales @ £25 Festival ticket	£1375
Ticket sales @ £50 Suspended ticket	£950
Ticket sales @ £100 Super-suspended ticket	£200
Ticket sales @ £5 Fri evening / Sat day tickets estimate	£200
Workshop fee cross-filed from Network for Creative Enterprise Feral Business workshop	£500
RADMIN reader sales, estimating 50 copies at £1	£50
Cube Membership sales at £1 incl VAT (estimate)	£40
Poster sales at £1 (estimate)	£10
RADMIN bag sales at £5 incl VAT (estimate)	£120
Cube Bar sales incl VAT (estimate)	£700
Donations	£
Total Income	£4145

Non Budget

Bonded, incommensurable, in kind, gifted, gleaned, granted, non-enumerated, non-remunerated, loaned, poached and post-transactional extra-budget value. Including & not limited to:

Uncounted meetings, walk-throughs, emails, planning sessions
Etherpad hosts RADMIN organising documents
Graphic designer fee overhanging from other budget
Cube artist designs poster, bag
Cube artists design Cube February programme
UWE graphics students design reader and lanyards
A4 B&W printing gratis at UWE
Other workplace laser printing and laminating on the sly
Cube and Trade Show websites host programme content
Local ticket-seller website sells festival tickets for a reasonable percentage
Ticket sales self-market entirely via word of mouth

Expenditure

ones and, as a consequence, practical knowledge is degraded and instrumentalised. Denied any of the creativity that has now been assigned to the managerial structures which have to organize it, technical/manual work is reduced to boring and repetitive jobs, corresponding to lower salaries and indicating lower-ranked positions in social hierarchy.

While practical knowledge might be seen as more firmly tied to material reality and, therefore, more concrete than its intellectual counterpart, abstract intellectual knowledge tends to accumulate agency by operating as a mediator and representative of practical knowledge. Put simply, intellectual knowledge presents the story of the work that technically has been done by others, and at the same time it takes credit and recognition for this work³. However, as Bruno Latour asserts, this knowledge is fragmented and not directly based on practical experience, so it remains abstract and detached from reality⁴. In the practical as well as in the political sense it could be claimed that representation, story or theory without immersion in concrete social and productive relations remains vacant and futile. Something has to be made first so that it could be explained or, to paraphrase Bogdanov, ‘one has to make a brick first in order to explain the brick’.

Conceiving of work and relations of production as the intertwining of practical and intellectual knowledge is inherent to the work of small organisations informed by creative, artistic or activist practices. Minipogon tries to organise its activities outside dominant divisions of labour that exploit practical knowledge and subsume it to intellectual knowledge. In its work structure, over 60 different types of distinct tasks have been identified including: welding, grinding, cleaning, maintaining, accounting, conceptualising, planning, reflecting, programming, all of which need to be performed in order to take the work forward. As no one person can master and perform all of those tasks, some form of division of labour is required. For this reason, an awareness of the totality of tasks is expected on behalf of each collaborator. Moreover, it is expected that each person will engage in tasks that should combine technical and organisational knowledge, so that everyone is given a possibility to advance their learning and personal development while appreciating the work of others. The technical tasks are none the less seen as more fundamental than organisational ones, so each collaborator is encouraged to get acquainted with all stages of specific production processes in order to be able to make further decisions and plan the general orientation of activities. For example, a person cannot create good product design without previously becoming acquainted with the technical aspects of making moulds and the limitations and affordances of tools and materials. Nor can a collaborator make adequate working plans without their full comprehension of concrete tasks, accountancy, and so on. Conceived in this way, a (self-) organising work process becomes the focus of production, while the final objects manifest as the materialisation of the totality of relations which have been involved in their production. More importantly, we undertake that the relations inscribed in such objects do not involve exploitation in a social or environmental sense as the products made out of recycled waste are put into circulation and use in order to become ‘promoters’ of more consequential and equitable relations between people and towards the environment.

3 . [The mechanisms of contemporary educational structures habitually operate work to confirm this. Experts are trained in various disciplines which imply distinct methodological approaches in order to produce knowledge about social facts: Eds.].

4 . Bruno Latour elaborates the topic along these lines in One More Turn after the Social Turn: Easing Science Studies into the Non-Modern World, in: Ernan McMullin (ed.) The Social Dimensions of Science, Notre Dame University Press, Notre Dame, 1992, pp. 272-292.

Minipogon's Philosophy

In order to counter perceived trends of how to become better exploited or, eventually, to exploit others better, in Minipogon we took up a challenge of devising and employing different kinds of production relations that would be more respectful towards material and social surroundings.

For this reason we chose to operate from the margins of the dominant society by placing our first working studio in the refugee camp in Belgrade outskirts, Krnja a refugee camp.

Here we commenced to build our own means of production (machines for processing waste plastic) and to work with the rejected by-products of capitalist production, both in material terms (plastic, an oil derivative, today's most exploited element in nature), and in social terms (people excluded from or highly precarious within the dominant society/labour market such as immigrants, the unemployed and informally employed, etc).

In administrating this process, Minipogon explores alternative methods of production, cooperative relationships and self-management. By jointly directing the manufacturing of new designed objects (recycled plastic bowls, clipboards, a replica of the refugee camp/ barracks in the shape of a gold bar), we are trying to create a field for the production of new values and supportive environments. But we also aim to create a place where the politicisation of production relations would be possible.

Before entering wider discussion related to operational problems that alternative modes of production encounter in the present socio-political and economic conditions, it is worth initiating this inquiry with a different question. How is it possible to generate equality through the process of collaborative work, given that each individual comes with different kinds of experience that produce diverse knowledge and levels of expertise and different needs, ambitions and ways of doing things?

Aleksander Bogdanov, a proto organizational theorist active in the early period of the Soviet Union, observes that 'urged to complete common working tasks, co-workers are confronting their different visions and ways of doing'¹. Through shared experience of this negotiation, and through consecutive failures and successes, it is possible for workers to acquire new knowledge through which multiple group interactions and exchanges are accepted as common sense. This knowledge is itself dynamic and changeable, constantly susceptible to modifications, improvements and eternal substitutions.

For Bogdanov, working tasks are distinguished by their technical rather than organisational nature². Each corresponds to distinct types of physical or mental experience and each produces distinct types of practical or intellectual knowledge. Technical tasks entail manual skills gained through practical experience of interacting with concrete materials and are acquired in the form of practical knowledge, while organisational tasks correspond to the mental experience of operating with concepts and ideas and result in an intellectual type of knowledge. Urged by the demands of efficiency and productivity typical for capitalism, technical tasks corresponding to physical work are becoming subordinated to intellectual

1 . Bogdanov, A., *Essays in Tektology*, Intersystems Publications, Seaside, Ca., 1980;

2 . *Ibid.*

Cash payments, cash reimbursements, bank transfers, credit card, paypal.	
Travel + accommodation	£202
Hull-Bristol train x 2 + baby + railcard	£150
Amsterdam-Bristol train	£20
London-Bristol bus x2	£96
Glasgow-Bristol flight + airport bus	£82
Falmouth-Bristol train	£50
Ifracombe-Bristol train	£121
Airbnb 3 nights [x2]	
Total travel + accommodation	£721
Non-travel	
Feral Trade goods to locals hosting RADMIN presenters [x8]	£200
Food for Gala Dinner [x90 served]	£780
Sail Cargo wine for Gala Dinner [x25 bottles excl VAT]	£250
Breakfast pastries for earlybird Convention workers	£20
Feral Trade coffee for Convention [2.5KG]	£45
Lunch provider fee for Convention packed lunch [x115]	£460
Tigermilk/milk for convention	£20
RADMIN programme, budget , lanyard printed on	
A3 remnant paper	£91
Poster risograph printing	£65
Safety pins	£7.50
RADMIN bag printing	£210
Office party performer fees [x3]	£240
Cube Bar stock consumed estimate	£300
Feature film hire	£130
Total non-travel	£2818.50
Total event expenditure	£3539.50

Delegates haul Feral Trade products to Bristol
Delegates haul Company drinks London-Bristol
Artists plan, prepare, decorate and serve Gala Dinner
Office plants, cafeteries on loaned by from Cube volunteers
Dinner speakers, MCs, workshop hosts deliver walks, talks, trainings
Bristol networks accommodate numerous travellers
Delegates use RADMIN travel to cross-sponsors own side-trips and encounters
Various salaries, day rates, research stipends, student debts and other un/official outside budgets fund delegate tickets, travel and accommodation, thinking time
Cube staff usher, do front of house, bar, projection, sound-tech, banking, organise, make signage, read/write minutes, drive and clear up
Bristol City Council and Microplex Holdings own venues
Artspace Lifespace and Cube Cinema heat, insure and license venues
Varied other venue overheads
Road, rail, bus and air infrastructure
Drivers' own cars
A host of pre-existing social relations, expertise and good will
Self-documentation (photo, video, ethnography, transcription)
Delegates clear up venues
Delegates and general public usher the Cube
Delegates supply bios, take time off other pursuits, show up
Trade Show traders supply texts, images, populate stands
Delegates care for at least 4x baby
People do childcare elsewhere
The NHS
Gmail
A host of other, autonomous email servers
Office places photosynthesis
Herbal teas from delegates' own stocks
Feral Business Network self-caters post-event debrief breakfast

RADMIN is organised by the Feral Business Network and the Cube Microplex. Supported and resourced by: Artspace Lifespace, FoAM, Constant VZW, The Viriconium Palace and others.

MINIPOGON

Working tasks

Minipogon / Vahida Ramujkić



Image: Minipogon



Image: Minipogon

Minipogon is an experimental production and recycling unit dedicated to processing and transforming residues of the capitalist system into useful and beautiful objects, lively environments and more just economic relations. It is also a collective initiated in 2017 in Belgrade by a group of artists, scientists and activists.